

THE TOTAL LEADER: MASTERING THE THREE LEADERSHIP DOMAINS

FIVE LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES TO HELP YOU
LEAD YOURSELF, LEAD OTHERS, AND LEAD
WINNING ORGANIZATIONS



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INTRODUCTION

The best leaders seem to have it all figured out. They are high-performing individuals who are influential inside and outside their company, and they always seem to know where they are going and how to get others to go with them. This doesn't happen by accident. Great leaders deliberately cultivate the skills and attributes they need to lead. Many people believe these traits come naturally, but the truth is that you don't have to be a "natural born leader" to be great at leading others. And despite what Hollywood tells us, you don't have to be a charismatic extrovert to be a great leader.

Leadership is largely about your mindset. It's about being deliberate about how you approach the whole concept of leadership and being intentional about how you lead.

The Total Leader concept helps leaders think about developing their leadership skills across three important domains:

- Leading self
- Leading others
- Leading organizations

Great leadership comes from mastering leadership skills across these domains. Deficiencies in any one of these areas detracts from a leader's effectiveness.



5 EAGLES LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Great leaders approach life based on principles that help them figure out what to do in any given situation. Learning to develop skills that help you live and lead consistent with your values and principles is a huge step towards fulfilling your leadership potential.

The following five leadership principles have proven to help leaders thrive across the essential leadership domains:

- Understand First: Develop Leader Insight. See the world with greater clarity
- Understand Yourself: Be a Self-Aware Leader. See yourself with greater clarity
- Master the Art of Influence. Build trust, challenge the way people think, and role model the way
 - Lead through Culture. Culture drives how people treat each other, how they accomplish their jobs, and how they treat your clients; fostering a winning culture is a primary leader task
 - Develop and Drive Strategy. It isn't enough to lead people, you need to know where to lead them and how to get there.

Total Leaders who see themselves and the world around them clearly, unbesmirched by their assumptions and biases, lead themselves and others better. Mastering the art of influence helps leaders lead others and organizations without having to resort to bossiness and micromanagement. Understanding how to cultivate a healthy culture and developing winning strategies helps leaders shape the future of their organization.



It isn't enough, of course, to know these principles. Leaders must deliberately develop the skills to consistently apply them.

BEING DELIBERATE ABOUT YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

Most leaders don't really think about the way they lead others. Many don't routinely ask themselves how proficient a leader they are, how they are perceived by others, where and how they can be more effective, and how their leadership style does or doesn't help them lead.

Developing leadership skills isn't vastly different from developing other skills. It takes:

- Instruction or knowledge
- Doing it
- Candid, specific feedback

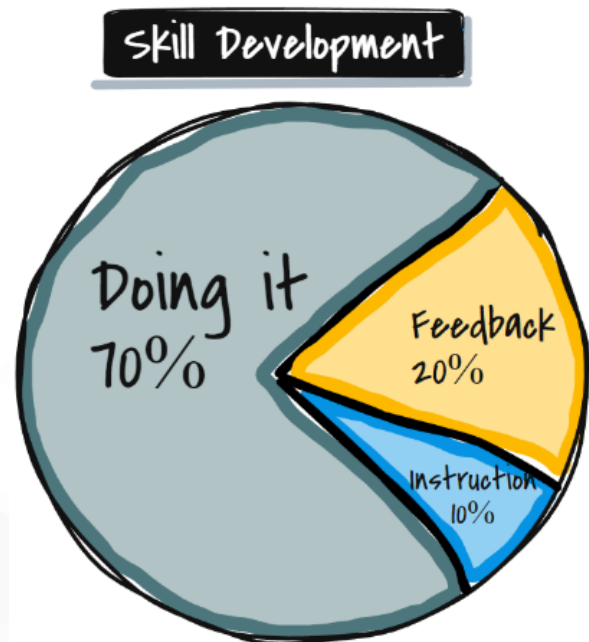
Deliberately developing leadership skills requires a bit of learning, either through observation, reading, or some other form of instruction. But the bulk of development comes from doing. It comes from working with others to achieve a goal or accomplish a task. This is where leaders learn from their successes and failures and make adjustments to achieve better results each time they lead.

But the part that many leaders miss (and many leaders crave!) is the honest, specific feedback that really helps them grow as a leader. Similar to trying to fix your golf swing by only watching YouTube, leading without candid feedback dramatically hinders a leader's development.

Feedback can come from introspection – learning to assess yourself honestly is a valuable skill. But since leadership is mostly about how you impact others, getting external feedback is essential. This requires developing a culture of candid feedback so that no matter how senior the leader gets they will hear from trusted advisors when they are screwing up.

Many senior leaders also engage leadership or high-performance coaches to help them create the self-awareness clarity and develop the candid culture that helps them be their very best.

If you are interested in learning more about how to give and receive caring and candid feedback, or working with a certified leadership coach, [book a Leadership Breakthrough Call here](#).



1

UNDERSTAND FIRST: DEVELOP LEADER INSIGHT

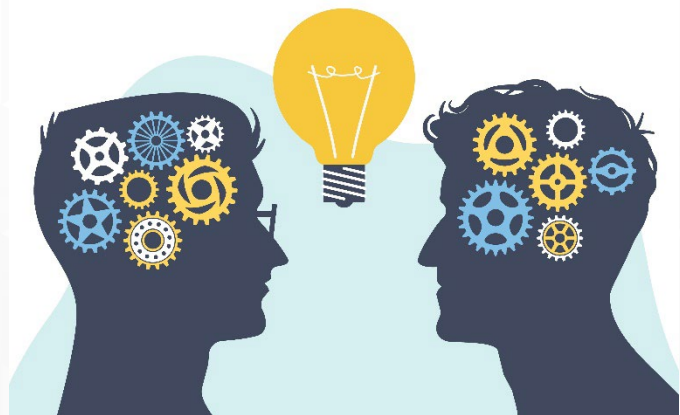
Great leaders have the ability to see and understand things that others don't. They seem to have a sixth sense that allows them to predict the future and chart a course to favorable outcomes. Insight is developed over time and is a learnable skill.

Understanding first and learning faster than your competitors require a different way of thinking, and an openness to considering different approaches or outcomes. Insightful leaders think in terms of systems, seeing how seemingly unrelated things are connected, and sensing how they can be influenced to create advantageous results.

Developing insight means working to understand how we naturally take in and process information. Our brains create shortcuts so we can react faster to changes around us.

We use:

- Mental models
- Assumptions
- Theories
- Biases



These are the background software we use to quickly assess and analyze what is going on around us so we don't have to figure things out every time something happens. Great leaders understand that although these functions are extremely useful in day-to-day life, they are a hindrance when they become outdated. Learning to update your software when it gets outdated is the key to being an insightful leader.

Insightful leaders also develop their ability to think critically, creatively, and to think in terms of systems. They understand when they are letting their quick-response intuition make decisions and when it's time to be more deliberate. They frequently ask themselves and their team, "how do we know that?"

2

UNDERSTAND YOURSELF: BE A SELF-AWARE LEADER



Leadership is people-centric. Leaders are judged by how they relate to, motivate, inspire, direct, manage, and develop other people. A leader's strength in relating to other people depends a great deal on their relationship with their inner self. Understanding who we are, how our feelings, emotions, mental models, biases, and assumptions affect our behavior and decision-making helps us to understand and relate to other people.

There are two sides to self-awareness: internal and external. Internal self-awareness is how we see and understand ourselves: our emotions, values, goals, aspirations, how we fit in, and our strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. External self-awareness is how well we understand how others perceive us. Leaders must develop both.

Key steps to becoming a more **internally**-self-aware leader:

- Understand and articulate your personal values
- Identify your distinguishing strengths and weaknesses
- Explore where your knowledge, beliefs, values, habits, and biases come from
- Determine who you are at your core, who you are becoming, and what's your why

External self-awareness helps us understand the impact we are having on our organization. It helps us gain an appreciation for how effective our leadership style is, or how our actions, decisions, and demeanors impact the ability of our people to maximize their potential.

Determining our impact on others requires empathy: we have to be able to see ourselves and the effects of our actions through the eyes of others. In many ways, our intentions are irrelevant: people don't often perceive intention, they see our actions and hear our words. They extrapolate from those things to guess what our real intentions are. We use empathy to help close the gap between what we intend to convey and what is perceived.

Tools for increasing your **external** self-awareness:

- Get frequent candid feedback from people you trust.
- During a conversation with another person, ask yourself, "what is it like for this person in this situation to be interacting with me?" Follow up with "What do I want it to be like for them?"
- Send out "The Email that can Change Your Life" asking friends and family to provide you with top 2-3 areas of improvement. Tell them not to sugarcoat it, and that you won't be offended.

Many people are strong in one type and weak in the other (they actually use different parts of the brain). Total Leaders work hard to know and understand their inner selves and how they are perceived by others so they can be their best and have the greatest impact.

Developing self-awareness is a lifelong journey. Most of us humans are constantly evolving based on experiences and in response to a changing world. Understanding what drives us and why we make the decisions we do takes vigilance.

Knowing how to develop this important skill can be tricky. That's why I offer a [Leadership Breakthrough Call](#) where we'll identify specific strategies for you, and the #1 thing you need to do to move forward.

Book your Leadership Breakthrough Call Here!

3

MASTER THE ART OF INFLUENCE

Being a leader implies other people choose to follow you. Not just those who are below you on the organization chart, but peers, superiors, even the public will follow a great leader. Being clear about where you are going and how you are planning on getting there goes a long way towards getting people moving in the right direction. But it is just as important to build trust, lead by example, and understand what motivates others.



The most influential people do three things consistently to influence individuals and the masses:

- They teach us how to think
- They challenge us
- They role model “what right looks like”

Think about the most influential people in the world. People like Martin Luther King, Jr, Gandhi, Oprah, and Nelson Mandela, all taught us how to think. Great leaders are very deliberate in sharing how they think about topics and situations. Articulating how they work through problems and opportunities make us believe in them and want to follow them. It also helps us to think more like them as we develop our own approaches to things.

Influential people challenge to accomplish things we might not attempt on our own. Few things get our attention and energy more than a challenge that demands our best. When we stretch our capabilities to meet demands, we get better and better. Great leaders challenge people to accomplish more than they thought they could.

Influential leaders lead by example. They don’t shirk duty or hardship, and they don’t ask people to do things they wouldn’t do themselves. They have and display great personal values that are consistent with the organization’s values, and their integrity is beyond reproach. By showing people what “right looks like” leaders model the behavior they expect of their followers.

4

LEAD THROUGH CULTURE



“Culture eats strategy for breakfast,” Peter Drucker once famously quipped, and it has been proven true time and again. You can have the best strategy in the world, and it won’t make any difference if you haven’t developed the kind of culture capable of executing that strategy.

Culture, in essence, is “the way we do things around here.” Not the policies and procedures leaders often work so hard to put in place, but the real, fundamental way people approach the company, their work, and each other. Culture is an expression of the organization’s true values – not the printed values that are posted on the website, but the ones the leaders and employees exhibit every day. (In great organizations, these are the same!)

Leaders are responsible for fostering a winning culture. Great leaders hold themselves and others accountable for role modeling behavior consistent with the organization’s values. Since culture is also influenced by the behavior and actions that leaders allow to go unchecked, a leader who

tolerates a high-earning salesperson who degrades his teammates shapes the culture just as much as if the leader was toxic themselves.

Fostering a healthy culture isn't easy, but it is relatively simple. Leaders must be vigilant, consistent, and transparent when it comes to enforcing values. Here are a few things leaders can do to foster their winning culture:

- Be crystal clear about the organization's values – celebrate teammates that personify company values, and quickly address values shortfalls
- Communicate clearly, candidly, and often with your people – transparency builds trust
- Role model values every day – hypocritical leadership does more cultural damage than anything else
- Get the right people in the right seats – hire people that have the right skills and values, and get rid of the people that don't

Culture comes down to group learning. People behave in a way that is consistent with the norms that are accepted by the people they work with. Leaders don't get to set the culture themselves: everyone in the organization contributes to it. But leaders have the responsibility to influence the culture in a positive way, and that is likely the most powerful thing a leader can do.



5

DEVELOP AND DRIVE STRATEGY



People are more willing to follow a leader if they believe the leader knows where they are going. Leaders who create and share a crystal-clear vision of where they are taking the organization have greater success in getting followers consistently moving in the right direction.

Thinking strategically about your organization requires leaders to lift their heads up from the day-to-day busyness so they can look into the future. Charting a course forward requires the strategic leader to apply several different kinds of thinking:

- Systems thinking – to understand the organization’s challenges in the proper context
- Critical thinking – to better understand the problem and the organization’s capabilities
- Creative thinking – to develop novel approaches to achieving the vision

Systems thinking involves seeking to understand how the various parts of the organization and the marketplace are interrelated. Most westerners are taught to reduce systems to their components in order to understand them, but thinking about the bigger system helps leaders understand hidden connections and interactions that can help them drive success.

Critical thinking requires leaders to understand the details of the organization in a way that helps them know their true capabilities and how sustainable their actions are. Too often, leaders get bogged down in data that doesn't help them grapple with their long-term challenges. Instead, they focus on short-term data that is easier to affect but doesn't help them chart a course for long-term success. Critical thinking leaders seek to understand the why behind the organization's policies and procedures so they know what can or should be changed and what shouldn't.

Creative thinking requires leaders to consider alternatives to the approaches they have become accustomed to. Strategic leaders are open to new ideas, are curious, and ask a lot of questions that lead to new approaches to old problems. Creative thinking requires leaders to set aside ego to overcome entrenched beliefs and practices and consider new ideas from a variety of disciplines and approaches.

Once the leader has developed the vision and strategy, they must communicate it clearly and consistently. It has to be understood throughout the organization. A leader knows they have communicated it sufficiently when they hear it coming from the mouths of the employees and see it in action every day.

The value of having a clear vision and strategies to accomplish it can't be overstated. A clear vision aligns, inspires, and motivates people to achieve. In highly successful companies, vision and values guide every decision the organization's leaders make.

Making room to think big often means that the leader needs to keep at least one person between themselves and the problems the organization is facing. This means developing solid delegation practices, developing and empowering junior leaders, and fostering trust are essential to a leader's success.

Knowing how to apply this important skill can be tricky. That's why I offer a [Leadership Breakthrough Call](#) where we'll identify 5 specific things that can hold you back when developing your strategy, and the #1 thing you need to do to move forward.

Book your Leadership Breakthrough Call Here

BECOMING A TOTAL LEADER

Mastering the Five Leadership Principles above takes deliberate practice. While we are products of our experiences and innate abilities, that doesn't mean we are stuck. The best leaders are constant learners. The world changes too quickly to rely on yesterday's knowledge, and the leader who learns faster (about the world and about themselves) than their competition has a distinct advantage.

Seeing yourself and the world more clearly, being deliberate about using your influence, and shaping your organization through culture to achieve your vision are hallmarks of great leadership. Deliberately applying these principles and cultivating the skills and practices that they require will help make you into the leader you want to be.



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He is the author of [Leadership Insight: Challenging What We Think We Know](#) and [dozens of articles](#) on leadership and national security.