

1.3 Reflection and Action Worksheet



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Conceptualizing Leadership

Reflection

1. Each of us has our own unique way of thinking about leadership. What leaders or people have influenced you in your thinking about leadership? Discuss what leadership means to you and give your definition of leadership.
2. What do the scores you received on the Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire suggest about your beliefs on leadership? Of the six dimensions on the questionnaire (traits, ability, skills, behavior, relationships, and process), which two are the most similar to your own beliefs? Which two are the least like your own beliefs? Discuss.
3. Do you think leadership is something everyone can learn to do, or do you think it is a natural ability reserved for a few? Explain your answer.

Action

1. Based on the interviews you conducted with others about leadership, how could you incorporate others' ideas about leadership into your own leadership?
2. Treating leadership as a relationship has ethical implications. How could adding the *relationship* approach to your leadership make you a better leader? Discuss.
3. Think about your own leadership. Identify one trait, ability, skill, or behavior that you could develop more fully to become a better leader.

2.3 Reflection and Action Worksheet



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Leadership Traits

Reflection

1. Based on the scores you received on the Leadership Traits Questionnaire, what are your strongest leadership traits? What are your weakest traits? Discuss.
2. In this chapter, we discussed eight leadership figures. As you read about these leaders, which leaders did you find most appealing? What was it about their leadership that you found remarkable? Discuss.
3. As you reflect on your own leadership traits, do you think some of them are more “you” and authentic than others? Have you always been the kind of leader you are today, or have your traits changed over time? Are you a stronger leader today than you were five years ago? Discuss.

Action

1. If you could model yourself after one or more of the historical leaders we discussed in this chapter, whom would you model yourself after? Identify two of their traits that you could and should incorporate into your own style of leadership.
2. Based on the case study of Tim T., which of his traits could you incorporate into your own leadership? Discuss.
3. Although changing leadership traits is not easy, which of your leadership traits would you like to change? Specifically, what actions do you need to take to change your traits?
4. All of us have problematic traits that inhibit our leadership but are difficult to change. Which single trait distracts from your leadership? Since you cannot easily change this trait, what actions can you take to “work around” this trait? Discuss.

3.3 Reflection and Action Worksheet



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Leadership Styles

Reflection

1. As you reflect on the assumptions of Theory X and Theory Y, how would you describe your own philosophy of leadership?
2. Of the three styles of leadership (authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire), what style comes easiest for you? Describe how people respond to you when you use this style.
3. One of the aspects of democratic leadership is to help subordinates take responsibility for themselves. How do you assess your own ability to help others help themselves?

Action

1. If you were to try to strengthen your philosophy of leadership, what kinds of changes would you have to make in your assumptions about human nature and work?
2. As you look at your results on the Leadership Styles Questionnaire, what scores would you like to change? What would you have to do to make those changes?
3. List three specific activities you could use to improve your leadership style.
4. If you make these changes, what impact will this have on others?

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Task and Relationship

Reflection

1. As you reflect on what has been discussed in this chapter and on your own leadership style, how would you describe your own style in relation to task and relationship orientations? What are your strengths and weaknesses?
2. What biases do you maintain regarding task style and relationship style? How do your biases affect your leadership?
3. One of the most difficult challenges leaders face is to integrate their task and relationship behaviors. Do you see this as a challenge in your own leadership? How do you integrate task and relationship behaviors?

Action

1. If you were to change in an effort to improve your leadership, what aspect of your style would you change? Would you try to be more task oriented or more relationship oriented?
2. Identify three specific task or relationship changes you could carry out.
3. What barriers will you face as you try to make these changes?
4. Given that you believe this change will improve your overall leadership, what can you do (i.e., what strategies can you use) to overcome the barriers you cite in Action Item #3 above?

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Leadership Skills

Reflection

1. Based on what you know about yourself and the scores you received on the Leadership Skills Questionnaire in the three areas (administrative, interpersonal, and conceptual), how would you describe your leadership skills? Which specific skills are your strongest, and which are your weakest? What impact do you think your leadership skills could have on your role as a leader? Discuss.
2. This chapter suggests that emotional intelligence is an interpersonal leadership skill. Discuss whether you agree or disagree with this assumption. As you think about your own leadership, how do your emotions help or hinder your role as a leader? Discuss.
3. This chapter divides leadership into three kinds of skills (administrative, interpersonal, and conceptual). Do you think some of these skills are more important than others in some kinds of situations? Do you think lower levels of leadership (e.g., supervisor) require the same skills as upper levels of leadership (e.g., CEO)? Discuss.

Action

1. One unique aspect of leadership skills is that they can be practiced. List and briefly describe three things you could do to improve your administrative skills.
2. Leaders need to be *socially perceptive*. As you assess yourself in this area, identify two specific actions that would help you become more perceptive of other people and their viewpoints. Discuss.
3. What kind of problem solver are you? Are you slow or quick to address problem situations? Overall, what two things could you change about yourself to be a more effective problem solver?

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Leadership Vision

Reflection

1. Stephen Covey (1991) contended that effective leaders “begin with the end in mind.” These leaders have a deep understanding of their own goals and mission in life. How would you describe your own values and purpose in life? In what way is your leadership influenced by these values?
2. Creating a vision usually involves trying to change others by persuading them to accept different values and different ways of doing things. Are you comfortable influencing people in this way? Discuss.
3. As we discussed in this chapter, effective visions can be articulated with strong symbols. How do you view yourself as being able to do this? Are you effective at generating language and symbols that can enhance a vision and help make it successful?

Action

1. Based on your score on the Leadership Vision Questionnaire, how do you assess your ability to create a vision for a group? Identify specific ways you could improve your abilities to create and carry out visions with others.
2. Good leaders *act out the vision*. Describe what ideals and values you act out or could act out as a leader.
3. Take a few moments to think about and describe a group or an organization to which you belong presently or belonged to in the past. Write a brief statement describing the vision you would utilize if you were the leader of this group or organization.

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Setting the Tone

Reflection

1. Based on the scores you received on the Setting the Tone Questionnaire, what are your strengths and weaknesses regarding setting the tone for a group or an organization? Discuss.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

2. How did you react to the example in this chapter (pp. 133–134) of the service-learning group that developed cohesiveness? In what way do you think cohesiveness plays an important role in groups? Have you ever experienced cohesiveness in a group yourself? Discuss.
3. In this chapter, group rules and norms are stressed as being very important to effective teams. Do you agree with this? Explain your answer. Briefly comment on your own desire and ability to adapt to the rules of a group.
4. An important aspect of setting the tone is giving recognition to others. Is rewarding or praising others something that would come easily for you as a leader? Discuss.

Action

1. Imagine that you have been chosen to lead a group project for your class and are preparing for the first meeting. Based on what you have read in this chapter, identify five important actions you could take to help set a positive tone for the group.
2. This chapter argues that setting the tone demands that the leader be a role model for how group members should act. What three values are important to you in a group? How would you demonstrate these values to group members?
3. High-performing teams have strong standards of excellence. Discuss your level of comfort with encouraging others to “keep the quality up.” What leadership behaviors could you strengthen to encourage others to work to the best of their ability?

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Out-Groups

Reflection

1. Based on the score you received on the Responding to Members of the Out-Group Questionnaire, how would you describe your attitude toward out-group members? Discuss.
2. As we discussed in this chapter, out-groups run counter to building community in groups. How important do you think it is for a leader to build community? Discuss.
3. One way to engage out-group members is to *empower* them. How do you see your own competencies in the area of empowerment? What keeps you from empowering others? Discuss.

Action

1. Using items from the Responding to Members of the Out-Group Questionnaire as your criteria, list three specific actions you could take that would show sensitivity to and tolerance of out-group members.
2. In the last section of this chapter, six strategies for responding to out-group members were discussed. Rank these strategies from strongest to weakest with regard to how you use them in your own leadership. Describe specifically what you could do to become more effective in all six strategies.
3. Imagine for a moment that you are doing a class project with six other students. The group has decided by taking a vote to do a fund-raising campaign for the local Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Two people in the group have said they are not enthused about the project and would rather do something for an organization like Habitat for Humanity. While the group is moving forward with the agreed-upon project, the two people who did not like the idea have started missing meetings, and when they do attend, they have been very negative. As a leader, list five specific actions you could take to assist and engage this out-group.

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Handling Conflict

Reflection

1. How do you react to conflict? Based on the Conflict Style Questionnaire, how would you describe your conflict style? How has your past history influenced your conflict style?
2. Read the story about John Lawrence on page 198. What kind of conflict does it describe? What is John's conflict style? What is his father's conflict style? Do you agree with how John handled the conflict? How would you have reacted if you were John Lawrence?
3. This chapter describes three kinds of relational conflict (i.e., esteem, control, affiliation). Of the three kinds, which is most common in the conflicts you have with others? Discuss.

Action

1. Briefly describe an actual conflict you had with a family member, roommate, or coworker in the recent past. Identify the positions and interests of both you and the other person in the conflict. (Note: Individuals' positions may be easier to identify than their interests. Be creative in detailing your interests and the other person's.)
2. Describe how you could *fractionate* the conflict.
3. Using Fisher and Ury's (1981) methods, describe how you could separate the person from the problem and how you could work together to address the conflict.
4. During your discussions, how could you help the other party in the conflict save face? How could the other party help you save face?

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Obstacles

Reflection

1. When it comes to helping people who are having problems, how do you view your own abilities? Are you comfortable with setting goals and giving directions to others?
2. One of the central responsibilities of a leader is to help his or her followers become motivated. This means helping them feel *competent*, helping them meet their *expectations*, and helping them *value* what they do. How would you apply these three principles in a leadership situation?
3. As you reflect on the *obstacles* discussed in the chapter, which obstacles would you be most and least effective at addressing? Why?

Action

1. To be an effective leader requires that you *clarify the goal* and *define the path* to the goal. What specific things could you do in an upcoming leadership situation to clarify the goal and define the path for others?
2. As you look at your results on the Path-Goal Styles Questionnaire, what scores would you like to change? Which styles would you like to strengthen? How can you make sure you exhibit the most effective style the next time you are leading a group?
3. People vary regarding their need to be helped. Some want a lot of assistance, and others like to be independent. Are you prepared to adapt your leadership to be helpful to those who need it? Discuss.

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Ethical Leadership

Reflection

1. This chapter suggests that leadership has a *moral dimension* and that leaders have a responsibility to use their authority for the common good. Do you agree? Discuss.
2. When you consider the *character of a leader* and *what a leader does* (the leader's actions), which of these two factors is more important with regard to ethical leadership? Can a person with bad character be an ethical leader? Discuss your answers.
3. In this chapter, the circumstances at Abu Ghraib prison are used as an example of unethical leadership. Do you agree with this assessment? How do you view what happened at Abu Ghraib? What factors explain the leadership ethics in this situation?
4. This chapter includes a story about Richard Lee, the father who coached his son's Little League baseball team. What was your reaction to the story? Do you think Richard was an ethical leader? How would you have responded in this situation?

Action

1. Based on your responses to the Core Values Questionnaire, what are your core values? Do you think other people know your core values? Are you comfortable talking about these values with others? In your planning for the future (e.g., next five years), how will your values influence what you do? Discuss.
2. *Character* is a fundamental aspect of ethical leadership. What are your character strengths and weaknesses? List three specific actions you could take to strengthen your character.
3. In the Observational Exercise, you observed and analyzed the ethical leadership of a specific leader. If you were to apply the same analysis to your own leadership, how would you describe yourself? What factors best explain the ethics of your own leadership? If you were to try to become a more ethical leader, what specific changes should you make in your leadership? Discuss.