



Everyday Leadership™ Practices

1

**Be
Self-Aware**

2

**Showcase
Your
Strengths**

3

**Prioritize
Wellbeing**

4

**Focus on
Inclusion &
Belonging**

5

**Cultivate
Healthy
Resilience**

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This material is based upon the research of Lynn Perry Wooten, PhD, President of Simmons University and was first presented at the 2021 Virtual Gallup at Work Summit.

1. Be Self-Aware

Continuous Learning About Yourself	Identity	Values	Inner Dialogue
Benefits To You As A Leader			
Really knowing your strengths and weaknesses and seeing yourself as others see you is strongly related to success in both your professional and your personal life. The most important thing is to unearth the unknowns—not knowing your strengths and challenge areas can limit your performance significantly more than knowing and having a strategy that leverages strengths and compensates for challenges.	Your social identity informs how you approach your work, your relationships, and your life. Other people see you through their social identity and life experiences. Taking time to become aware of social identity—yours and others—provides important context to your relationships in and out of the workplace.	Many of us haven't actually taken the time to think about our values and instead think we "just know" what they are based on what we learned as children or what we have absorbed from society around us. Actively examining and embracing our values creates a reliable guide for decision-making and responding to challenging situations. Clearly defined values form the core of our leadership identity.	It's up to you to take responsibility for who you are as a leader and how you want to develop and grow. Paying attention to your inner dialogue and coupling it with what you are observing around you will help guide you to areas that demand change and adjustment. Continue to fine tune your sense of who you are as a leader and tap into that leadership identity to make decisions, connect with others, and solve problems.
Benefits To Others Through Your Leadership			
The more you learn about yourself, the more aware you become about the strengths and challenges of others. As a result, you bring empathy to your relationships and a strategic ability to create diverse teams that leverage these varied strengths.	Leading inclusively requires bringing together people with varied lived experiences, cultures, perspectives and values. Gaining a greater understanding of social identity helps you navigate leadership situations and be open to different perspectives and opportunities.	When we know our values we have alignment in what we say and do. Others find our behavior consistent. They see us as leaders who can be counted on. When we are transparent about our values, others are more likely to trust us and find us authentic. Team members and colleagues are looking for people with whom they share values.	Your inner dialogue is the foundation for your relationships with others. By observing how others react and respond to you, you add to your inner dialogue and your core leadership identity. Others benefit from your continuous improvement and your clarity of purpose. Your inner dialogue reflects who you are as a leader and is the first test of your behavior towards others.
One Step You Can Take			
Get some feedback: People don't often volunteer feedback, you usually have to ask for it. Don't be defensive. Take in what others share with you, reflect on it and decide whether it is useful data for you to use in your development as a leader.	Map your identity: Look at the multiple elements of your identity; at what is externally visible and what is not. Think things that are "givens" such as age or physical characteristics vs. characteristics you actively chose such as where you live or your occupation. Reflect on how your identity plays out in the context of your leadership.	State your values: Identify your top 5 values. State each in a sentence. Then write down 3 examples of a situation and a related consequence for each value. Then think about at least one time where you have had to deal with the opposite of each of your values—for example, if honesty is one of your values, how have you handled dishonesty in the past?	Write your rules: Take a moment to create your top 10 list of beliefs that guide your leadership identity. Write down 10 statements that begin with, "I believe..." and see if you can capture what you think about when you are engaged in leadership activities. For example, you might say something like, "I believe in clearly communicating."

2. Showcase Your Strengths

Your Special Recipe

Purpose, Vision & Impact

Benefits To You As A Leader

Many who study leadership recommend a strengths-based approach. Understanding and building on your unique collection of skills and abilities leads to greater engagement and performance. Part of being an effective leader is understanding what is required in a leadership situation, aligning your strengths, using your strengths to work around challenge areas, and continuously working to discover and build on your strengths.

As leaders it is important to attend to purpose, vision, and impact. These are not just intuitive feelings, but deliberate choices that leaders need to make. Take the time to hone in on what your leadership purpose is, how you plan to achieve that purpose, and what impact you hope to have as a result. These concepts are ever-evolving and need to be tended and tuned frequently.

Benefits To Others Through Your Leadership

Effective teams are strengths-based. By looking for the strengths in others, you communicate that others matter and have something to offer the team, organization, or society. Blending a variety of strengths leads to higher performance. It's important to identify and value the strengths of others.

One of the most frequent requests from colleagues is clarity—clarity of purpose, vision and impact. Leaders who provide this clarity to their teams and organizations are well-respected and effective. People want to be part of something that will result in a future that is better than the present. Clear purpose, vision, and impact offer an aspirational path for all to follow.

One Step You Can Take

Find your strengths:

Use an assessment or seek feedback to identify your strengths. Do you know how to make things happen? Are you influential? Do you invest in and build strong relationships? Are you a strategic thinker? Consider the Gallup Four Domains of Strengths-Based Leadership as a guide.

3 sentences:

Write one sentence each to capture your personal leadership purpose, vision, and impact. Revisit these three sentences annually as you would a New Year's resolution to update and adapt your thinking.



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3. Prioritize Wellbeing

Wellbeing Domains	Energy Management	Time Management	
Benefits To You As A Leader			
Humans have been conditioned to think that there is a single best path or way to achieve a successful and fulfilling life. Fortunately, we are learning that there are many approaches to consider and that customizing the blend that works for you is what is important. Actively choosing how to design your life to include the elements that help you thrive is the way forward.	Leadership situations can be stressful, ambiguous, constantly changing, and often include severe time constraints. Leaders find themselves responding by working more hours, skipping meals, and engaging in other behaviors that do not support engagement and effective performance. Reframing our thinking to consider how we can manage our energy can lead to positive leadership results.	Our work is one of many commitments that we have. Managing our competing commitments requires understanding ourselves, setting priorities and realistic expectations, and paying attention to whether or not we are integrating all aspects of our lives in a healthy and sustainable way. We also need to take advantage of tools and technology.	
Benefits To Others Through Your Leadership			
A well-designed life with well-being at the center allows everyone to thrive. People who consider their well-being are effective and engaged at work. They are better team members, organizational contributors, and societal citizens.	Individuals and organizations that invest in building and sustaining energy find that leaders have greater capacity, productivity, and engagement—both within work teams and with external clients.	Teams and organizations also benefit from taking the time to get clear on what is most important and making sure to have a strategy for achieving these goals. High-performing teams prioritize and this clarity of purpose helps the team cultivate a culture of well-being and sustainability. Finding ways to create synergy across projects and activities also contributes to high performance and positive outcomes.	
<h2>One Step You Can Take</h2>			
Prototype it: Use the Gallup Model of Wellbeing to consider your life design. It is a framework comprised of 5 wellbeing elements: physical, career, community, social, and financial. Map out your wellbeing design and then experiment and tweak it to get the elements working together to support the life you want.	Establish rituals and change channels: Reset your rhythm to accommodate a focused 90 to 120 minute cycle of work followed by a recovery period where you disengage. For the recovery period to work, you must completely change channels—move physically, use deep breathing techniques, or eat healthily on a consistent schedule.	Identify your big rocks: One of the classic Franklin-Covey productivity hacks is to first pay attention to the big and important priorities on your plate. Make sure to schedule these first and then fill around the big rocks with smaller and less urgent items on your to do list. Identify those things that are strategically important to you and put them first.	 A photograph showing a hand holding a large green leaf over several lit candles with blue and white wax. A green fern frond is also visible on the right side of the frame, suggesting a theme of natural well-being and relaxation.

4. Focus on Inclusion & Belonging

Maximize Potential

Benefits Individuals, Teams, and Systems

Benefits To You As A Leader

Developing an inclusive lens allows you to see the potential in everyone. When you become proficient in equitable and inclusive practices, you will find a greater number of leadership development opportunities for yourself, your team, and your organization.

Developing an inclusive mindset includes: cultural intelligence, openness to different ideas and experiences, multicultural experiences, and exposure to work climates that emphasize the value and potential of diversity. (Astrid C. Homan 2019)

Benefits To Others Through Your Leadership

Training and development contributes to leadership success. Instead of limiting leadership development to a select few, the inclusion approach recommends developing talent in everyone. The result is a deeper and broader bench of leadership that maximizes potential and productivity.

Organizations with inclusive work cultures that encourage belonging often see greater engagement and commitment. They are also associated with reduced instances of interpersonal aggression and discrimination. (Elissa Perry & Aitong Li 2020)

One Step You Can Take

Find your gaps:

Take a moment to think about the gaps in your daily work. Who is not at the decision-making table? What voices are not being heard? Whose perspectives are not being included? Make a plan for how to address these gaps.

See the system:

Potential is realized for individuals, teams, and organizations when we see that the answer lies not in "fixing" individuals but in fixing the system itself. This begins with being able to see the whole system. Take some time to create a map of your leadership system. Note stakeholders, inputs, outputs, and impact.



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5. Cultivate Healthy Resilience

Dealing with Change Effectively

Modes of Action

Benefits To You As A Leader

Resilience helps individuals and organizations deal with change and crisis events and continue to function. If you feel yourself resisting change, check in to see if this is about fear and possible loss of self-worth. Examine and hone in on what makes you feel valued.

Individual leaders develop resilience by engaging in modes of action: acknowledge fears, gracefully pause, make time for learning, and build fortitude for growth.

Benefits To Others Through Your Leadership

Be part of creating a learning culture where people are encouraged to do, learn, and reflect. Cultivate a system that rewards the creation and sharing of knowledge. Look back on past experiences, conduct after action reviews, and reflect on successes and failures.

Connect with your network to collaborate, learn, share information, and understand what is happening around you. Reach out beyond your network to make new connections and affiliations. Seek diverse perspectives.

One Step You Can Take

Commit to continuous learning and reflection:

Updating knowledge, skills, and perspectives means being better prepared during times of crisis or intense change. The skills that got you here are not going to be sufficient. Both individuals and systems have to learn, grow, and change to remain relevant.

Find a model:

Choose someone you admire in terms of resilience. Think about that person's strengths and observe how they handle different situations. What can you learn from them?

