

SELF-STUDY GUIDE

Women and Leadership: Owning Your Strengths and Skills



Supervisors and Managers Series

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How to Use This Guide

This Self-Study Guide is designed and laid out in a way that will guide student learning much in the same way that an instructor would. This workbook is comprised of modules called Sessions. Each Session focuses on a major concept in the course.

In each Session, we have included short-answer and (in some instances) multiple choice questions which relate directly to the session material. Throughout the guide, you can take the opportunity to internalize what you have learned by completing various self-reflection exercises.

Session One: Course Overview

Course Overview

Women have played a vital role in the workforce throughout history, serving in positions ranging from front-line workers to visionary founders and leaders. This course examines the influences and barriers that have impacted women’s leadership. It also explores the advantages they bring to organizations with their unique strengths.

In this course, you will explore the history of women in the workplace while engaging in personal reflection and skill-building activities designed to identify and strengthen your own leadership skills.

Learning Objectives

After you complete this course, you should be able to:

* Understand a brief history and evolution of women and leadership.
* Recognize barriers to women’s leadership and learn how to overcome them.
* Define social and emotional intelligence and explain its importance in workplace leadership.
* Demonstrate the value of self-awareness in identifying one’s own strengths and skills.
* Develop a basic vision and brand for leadership.
* Examine steps and skills for good decision-making.
* Create your own Philosophy Statement and Action Plan.

**Why did you take this course? Use this opportunity to consider your personal learning objectives and reasons for taking this course.**

Pre-Assignment

Complete the following assignment before beginning your course on **Women and Leadership: Owning your Strength and Skills**.

Reflection Journal

A great way to add reflection to your work practice is to keep a Reflection Journal. Prior to starting this course, record some recent events at work that include:

Examples of your leadership

Examples of another person’s leadership

Situations where clear leadership could have improved the outcome

Reflect on the following questions:

What skills did you bring to the situation?

What skills could you have brought to the situation?

What skills do you think you need to acquire or strengthen? Why?

Pre-Course Assessment

1. **True or False: It is only in the last decade that women have been in leadership roles.**
2. **True or False: Social and emotional intelligence can be more important than IQ for effective leadership.**
3. **True or False: A barrier to leadership can also present an opportunity.**
4. **True or False: Self-awareness can help people form successful relationships and make better decisions.**
5. **True or False: Self-management skills are something you are born with.**
6. **True or False: Reflecting on your actions over time allows you to modify how you react to situations.**
7. **True or False: Good leaders do not need to sell their skills or develop a brand.**
8. **True or False: The ability to show your passion is a strength in leadership.**
9. **True or False: There is no place for instincts in a strong leadership style.**
10. **True or False: A Philosophy Statement is just for philosophers, artists, and dreamers.**

Session Two: Women and the Workforce

In this session, you will learn a brief history of workplace evolution and meet some women who demonstrated their own brands of leadership style and success. You will then learn basic types of workplace leaders and begin the process of self-identification.

Learning from History

Women’s roles in the workplace have evolved — so have types of leaders.

Effective workplaces do not define their leaders by age, gender, or job title. Leaders are defined by their ability to create, encourage, motivate and deliver superior experience to coworkers, clients and the business community.

There was a time when “workforce leader” referred to the male company president or chairman of the board. Women were hired for roles with lower pay that were deemed to be related to the work they did in the household — the company president’s secretary, for instance, who pulled everything together behind the scenes.

Yet, even within these limitations, trailblazing women began to break barriers and redefine what leadership could look like.

Consider these examples:

**Julia Child**

Julia Child persevered in the male-dominated world of the gourmet kitchen to become a chef, entrepreneur, and television personality, who, a decade after her death, remains the face of French cooking in North America and an oft-quoted part of popular culture.

**Rachel Carson**

Rachel Carson was an American marine biologist and author of the *Silent Spring*, a book that graphically chronicled the environmental impacts of pesticide use and led to the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States.

**Coco Chanel**

Coco Chanel popularized comfortable, loose clothing for women in a time when corsets and lace were wardrobe staples and went on to become the first major fashion designer to introduce a perfume.

**Marie Curie**

Marie Curie revolutionized the traditionally male-dominated field of science, demonstrating the impact women could make on science. She discovered polonium and radium, became the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, and was the first person to win two Nobel prizes. Her work remains the foundation for radiation therapy, a common cancer treatment today.

(from Time Magazine’s The 25 Most Powerful Women of the Past Century: <http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2029774_2029776_2031824,00.html>)

Women themselves played a vital role in shaping the evolution of women in leadership. Over the past century, several global and societal shifts also contributed to expanding opportunities for women:

* Increased international trade, as transportation systems became more efficient and knowledge of the globe expanded both literal and mental horizons
* Two world wars, which influenced art and culture and shifted women to the front lines of the workforce as men were conscripted into military service
* Post-war economic growth, alongside changing social attitudes and movements for gender equality

Choose a character from history who influences you, either positively or negatively. Develop a list of characteristics, both positive and negative, and identify characteristics you see mirrored in yourself.

Character:

Characteristics:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Positive | Negative |
|  |  |

Characteristics mirrored in yourself:

Leadership Examined

Leaders are found in multinational corporations, sole proprietorships, grassroots organizations and community collectives. Here are some types of leaders.

* **Corporate:** These can be temporary assignments such as team lead or project manager, or permanent positions responsible for departments, divisions, or entire companies within a conglomerate.
* **Entrepreneur:** These are self-starters in a sole proprietorship or co-founder in a partnership.
* **Intrapreneur:** These are people working as an employee but given leeway to create and deliver independent projects within the workplace.
* **Non-Profit Professional:** These roles are salaried and multi-tasked with supervision and/or service delivery.
* **Volunteer:** Leaders in volunteer positions provide unpaid service to a charitable cause and/or personal passion.

Regardless of salary level or employer size, each of these leadership positions requires similar traits and skills:

* Professionalism
* Communication skills
* Strong instincts
* Confidence

Successful organizations do not work in isolation. Even self-employed individuals or solo volunteers on a project must interact with others to complete tasks. Leadership often implies an ivory tower with room for one — a lone person in the big office, or a single person making all decisions. These are powerful images, which is why communication can be the single largest obstacle to productivity and growth in an organization.

In fact, those working in isolation are not leaders. It takes leadership to collaborate effectively, share information clearly, and engage others, whether they are partners, coworkers, clients or audiences.

Review the following Leadership Styles worksheet. Self-identify your personal type of leadership using the table.

Leadership Styles

In the work done by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard on the Situational Leadership II® model, they recognize four leadership styles that tend to resonate with people. As you read the different styles, think about which one best describes you.

Director’s Style

Someone with a director’s style does well with new employees, who often respond positively to clear expectations, defined processes and procedures, and a consistent point of contact for questions. The director’s style emphasizes task direction and accountability for results.

Coach’s Style

The coach’s style balances clear task direction with a high level of personal support. This style is effective when team members understand their responsibilities but need guidance to act independently and follow through.

Supporter’s Style

This style encourages people to come up with solutions and solve problems on their own. It provides them with the support they need in terms of tools and resources. The supporter’s style emphasizes guiding and empowering people rather than directing their tasks.

Delegator’s Style

In the delegator’s style, the leader retains responsibility for results while assigning the work to others. This approach is most effective with team members who have strong skills and the experience to find the resources and tools they need. They report back to the leader at agreed-upon intervals. The style is characterized by a low emphasis on directing tasks and an equally low emphasis on providing personal support.

| **Style Name** | This style is not mine at all. | This style is somewhat like mine. | This style describes mine completely. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Director’s Style** |  |  |  |
| **Coach’s Style** |  |  |  |
| **Supporter’s Style** |  |  |  |
| **Delegator’s Style** |  |  |  |

There are no right or wrong answers, nor a perfect leadership style. It is awareness of leadership types that is a benefit.

Session Three: Barriers and Benefits to Women’s Leadership

Barriers to women’s leadership come in two general types: external factors such as the workplace or home environment, and internal: layers of conditioning, anxieties, and experiences women hold inside.

In this session, you will learn more about these barriers: how to identify them, work with them, and how to turn them into benefits that can strengthen your leadership.

Barriers vs. Benefits

There are two types of barriers for women in leadership.

External

External barriers are those found in the workplace environment, social circles, or home life – anywhere an individual spends their time and interacts with others. They are systemic and individual factors that create obstacles. Examples of external barriers include:

* Gender bias and discrimination
* A hostile co-worker or supervisor
* Caring for an aging parent or child with a disability at home, leaving little energy or freedom for recharging or creativity
* A two-hour daily commute that leaves someone stressed and drained before the workday begins
* Lack of direction or goals on a project or in the workplace in general

Internal

Internal barriers are often the most challenging. These are walls, blocks, diversions – some women have described them as concrete – built up over years of training, conditioning, trauma, and experience. These can manifest as anxieties, phobias, physical issues (e.g. headaches, backaches, fatigue, rashes), lack of concentration, mood swings, and depression.

It is worth noting that gender bias can be both an external and internal barrier for women, as constant societal messaging becomes internalized.

Both internal and external factors can greatly affect leadership performance by:

* Influencing decisions
* Creating negativity
* Draining energy

When dealing with these barriers, there are two things to remember.

1. We cannot control other people or situations, only our reactions to them.
2. Within each barrier is a benefit — an opportunity to learn, do things differently, break down the concrete, and evolve.

People are often conditioned to give up their power to external forces. It is up to a doctor, not the patient, to determine if they are well. It is up to a school system, not the student or their parents, to say whether a child is learning at an appropriate speed.

Individuals on their own cannot change these massive systems or fix all societal problems. Each woman can, however, take back their choice and power. Say a co-worker is hostile towards you. What steps can you take to remedy the situation?

You can pause, reflect on your reaction, and learn from it.

Consider the following common mistakes, and ways to do better.

Learning vs. Embodying

Imagine someone with walls full of certificates, a calendar full of seminar and workshop dates, and shelves full of self-help and improvement books. These are people who have taken every course available, have accumulated a great deal of intellectual knowledge, but are not living it out in their personal life or workspace. After learning, an individual needs to process the information and take ownership of the new direction it leads to. This can also be known as putting theory into practice or embodying new knowledge.

Seeking Perfection

Consider the person who does not share an idea or launch a new program unless it is refined to the point of perfection. However, that day never truly arrives. There is no perfect. Seeking it is a distraction from the real barrier, which could be a lack of knowledge or confidence, anxiety about failure or “being wrong,” or some other reason.

It is time to stop making adjustments and promising that “someday, it will be ready.” Sit and reflect on the true obstacle, own it, and deal with it.

Taking Criticism Personally

There are many reasons why people receive critical comments. Constructive criticism points out flaws or suggestions that, if followed, can improve an individual’s work. Some people are skilled at giving constructive criticism, pointing out an issue without lowering the value of the person. Others are not as skilled, and their comments may seem abrupt, abrasive, or even mean.

It is important to remember that what a person says is a reflection on them, not on you. Whether a comment is mean-spirited or simply offered in a brusque way, do not allow it to hold you back or weigh you down.

Absorb the words and sit with the feelings, even the negative ones of embarrassment, anger, or shame. Allow your body to feel what you can learn from the experience. Effective leaders can distinguish job criticism from personal attacks. They can turn criticism into a learning opportunity, process it, glean value from it (even if that value is practice in dismissing invalid attacks), and move on.

Choose a workplace scenario — real or imagined — in which a supervisor is intent on keeping you stuck in entry-level tasks when you feel ready for more challenging work.

Identify how this situation manifests personally: attitudes, energy, physical symptoms, workplace performance, etc.

What can be learned, and how can you cope?

Two things can be gained by examining barriers:

* Insight into personal leadership style
* Insight into solutions — in other words, turning barriers into benefits

The key benefit is self-management.

Improving Self-Management through Reflection

Think back to the person with certificates and knowledge. Part of putting this knowledge into practice, and learning from experience, is reflection. With reflection, a situation shifts from a memory to a living classroom. What happened? What was your role in what happened? How could you adjust your role to get the results you want? What can be done next time?

Reflective Journal

Consider starting (or continuing) a journal in the workplace, for recording experiences as they unfold or soon after they occur. Consider the situation in light of the following questions, from Gibbs Cycle of Reflective Thought:

* What were you thinking and feeling?
* What was good and bad about it?
* How can you make sense of it?
* What alternatives did you have?
* What would you do if it happened again?

**Complete a sample page for your Reflective Journal, using a real or imagined scenario.**

* Examples of your leadership
* Examples of another person’s leadership
* Situations where clear leadership could have improved the outcome

**Reflect on the following questions:**

* What skills did you bring to the situation?
* What skills could you have brought to the situation?
* What skills do you think you need to acquire or strengthen? Why?

Reflective Journal Sample:

Session Four: Social and Emotional Intelligence

Research suggests that those with strong social and emotional intelligence are more likely to contribute to a positive work environment.

In this session, you will examine the history of social and emotional theory and be introduced to the five social and emotional competencies. Then, you will reflect on examples of good social and emotional intelligence from your own experiences.

Defining Emotional Intelligence

The study of emotional intelligence got its rather brutal start in the mid-1800s. In his book *Descartes’ Error*, Antonio R. Damasio wrote of Phineas Gage: a construction foreman who was stabbed through the head by an iron rod in 1848. Not only did Gage survive the bizarre accident, but his intellect was also unaffected. What was damaged, however, was his prefrontal cortex, the emotional center of his brain. Following the accident, he was no longer able to make good decisions.

Since then, many scientists have studied aspects of human emotions, including how they are generated, expressed, processed, stored, and used in daily life. Psychologist Daniel Goleman argues that emotional and social skills give people an edge in leadership, and that emotional intelligence is more important than IQ for effective leadership.

According to Goleman, social and emotional intelligence involves understanding one’s own feelings and behaviors, as well as those of others, and applying this knowledge to interactions and relationships.

In his work with CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning), he developed five interrelated sets of social and emotional competencies.

Self-awareness

* Recognizing and understanding one’s own emotions, strengths and challenges as well as knowing how one’s emotions affect behavior

Self-management

* Managing and regulating one’s own emotions and behavior

Social awareness

* The ability to understand and respect the perspectives of others, and apply this knowledge to interactions with people from diverse backgrounds

Relationship skills

* Knowing how to establish and maintain healthy and positive relationships with friends, family and others

Responsible decision-making

* Using critical thinking and ethical awareness to make caring, informed choices that consider the consequences for oneself, others, and the broader community

**An important note:** Emotional competencies can be learned and influenced. People can strengthen their emotional competencies and increase their emotional intelligence, starting with reflection (as discussed in Session Three) and moving through awareness and choices.

What aspects of good social and emotional intelligence would influence a positive outcome? Use examples from your Reflective Journal Pre-Assignment.

Identify a real scenario with good emotional and social outcomes.

Session Five: Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is about understanding one’s own traits, behaviors, needs, desires, feelings, failings, habits, and everything else that influences who an individual is. Self-awareness helps people make choices that are right for them and allows them to form successful relationships and make better decisions.

In this session, you will reflect on your own strengths and abilities.

Understanding Self-Awareness

Too often, people are taught to put themselves last. It is a mark of a mature and loving person to consider others' needs and feelings. In the immortal words of Mr. Spock: “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. Or the one.” However, an effective leader knows and uses every tool available. The most powerful tools are within oneself. Self-awareness is about understanding the traits, behaviors, and feelings that influence those tools. As discussed in Session Three, self-awareness can help people gain the outcomes they want by supporting successful relationships and helping them make better decisions.

Consider your strengths and skills: the ones other people recognize (from Pre-Assignment Two) as well as the strengths that others may not see.

Pick four from the following list. Circle or highlight your choices.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Strengths and Abilities** | | |
| Adaptable | Entertaining | Optimistic | |
| Articulate | Generous | A philosopher | |
| Artistic | Grateful | Practical | |
| Athletic | Hard-working | Sincere | |
| Clever | Imaginative | Skillful | |
| A communicator | Insightful | Spiritual | |
| Confident | Intelligent | A teacher | |
| Dexterous | Kind | Trustworthy | |
| Diplomatic | A leader | Understanding | |
| Energetic | Open-minded | A visionary | |

Think about the strengths and abilities you chose.

Were there any surprises in the list?

What did you learn from this exercise?

Personal Inventory

What tools and skills do you possess that make you a good leader?

**Complete the following assessment while thinking about yourself at work.**

| **Statement** | This statement is not like me at all. | This statement is somewhat like me. | This statement describes me completely. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I like to take risks. |  |  |  |
| I focus on opportunities instead of problems. |  |  |  |
| I am confident the company will support my ideas. |  |  |  |
| I like to get things done. |  |  |  |
| I am enthusiastic. |  |  |  |
| I am creative at work. |  |  |  |
| I do not mind asking for help when I need it. |  |  |  |
| I always have new ideas. |  |  |  |
| I do not mind putting in hard work and long days. |  |  |  |
| I like being in control. |  |  |  |
| I know what I am passionate about. |  |  |  |
| I get excited when I am talking to others about my ideas. |  |  |  |
| I challenge the status quo. |  |  |  |
| I enjoy working with others. |  |  |  |

Debrief

If most of these statements are somewhat like you or describe you completely, you may be an intrapreneur or entrepreneur. Chances are you are passionate about your work, motivated to make your organization better, highly creative, and poised to “lead the charge” on new initiatives or workplace culture.

If the majority of these statements are not like you at all, you may be an enabler, collaborator, or connector — the quiet force of accomplishment in an organization. The intrapreneur type described above will need many people to help them bring their ideas to completion, which is where you shine. Many of us have strengths that can be used to assist our colleagues in promoting new initiatives.

Session Six: Developing a Brand

Good leadership begins with self-awareness and evolves with sharing one’s strengths and skills with those who can benefit from them.

In this session, you will consider how to create and sell your personal brand.

Creating Your Brand

Different types of leaders have been discussed in this course. You may possess characteristics of two or more types of leaders, and that is okay. In fact, that offers more choice for your personal brand.

What type(s) of leader do you envision yourself to be?

What type of leader do you want to be?

From Idea to Brand

Step One: Identifying the idea

Now that you have considered the type of leader you are, how do you want to be known? Identify branding words or key phrases that can share your idea.

Step Two: Expanding the Idea

Share your intent, words and phrases with a wider audience, such as colleagues, friends, and associates, in the branding or marketing industries who can give informed feedback.

Step Three: Evolving the Idea

Refine the words and phrases based on their feedback, and your own evolving perception of your brand.

Step Four: Selling the Idea

Your brand is a tool to help you gain opportunities, responsibility, promotion, or other goals. Whether you are having a casual conversation with a supervisor or making a formal presentation to clients, prepare for maximum impact in minimum time. Ensure key words and phrases share the personal image you want the audience to see.

Step Five: Live Tests

Test your presentation on focus groups, willing managers, or agreeable clients who offer their time and provide honest feedback that can be used to refine your brand.

Step Six: Implementation

Share your brand often, and in as many venues as appropriate. Remember that a brand can be shared without saying a word, through body language, appearance, mannerisms, and responses to the world around you.

Step Seven: Review and Revise

Watch for feedback or hints that can help refine your brand and presentation. Be sure to update it as your leadership styles and preferences evolve.

How could you implement these steps in your organization?

What other steps or methods could you include in this process for circumstances unique to your organization?

Making Connections, Part One

Take 10 minutes to list as many branding ideas as you can.

Making Connections, Part Two

**Choose two branding ideas from the previous activity. Complete the following worksheets for each idea.**

**Idea One**

What type of leader do you envision yourself to be?

What problems or issues could your leadership resolve?

Who would benefit from your leadership style?

Who would your customers be?

How does your leadership style translate into a customer-focused experience?

**Idea Two**

What type of leader do you envision yourself to be?

What problems or issues could your leadership resolve?

Who would benefit from your leadership style?

Who would your customers be?

How does your leadership style translate into a customer-focused experience?

Selling and Screening Your Brand

As explored earlier in the session, you must sell your brand and yourself — and feel comfortable doing so.

Here are some tips:

* Be clear and direct, demonstrating the ability to explain an idea quickly in simple terms.
* Give a clear picture of what you are selling. Use simple visuals if there is an opportunity.
* Capture attention with an opening statement that connects with the audience.
* Let your passion show, transferring enthusiasm and belief to the customer.
* List the benefits.

In step five of From Idea to Brand, the concept of testing a presentation to receive honest feedback was explored. It is important to keep an open mind and use any criticism as an opportunity for improvement.

Consider these questions.

* **Opportunities:** Will there be opportunities to expand this idea? Will it make money?
* **Barriers:** What are the drawbacks to this idea?
* **Focus:** Does it have a company or customer focus? Will the customer like it?
* **Impact:** Does it have a lasting impact on the company or division?
* **Strengths:** Is this something that is easy to use? Is it simple to explain to the end user?
* **Potential:** What is the potential for success?

Sample Screening Chart

Here is a chart that can be used to record feedback from colleagues.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | Below Average | Average | Above Average |
| Cost |  |  |  |
| Risk |  |  |  |
| Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Barriers |  |  |  |
| Company Focus |  |  |  |
| Customer Focus |  |  |  |
| Impact |  |  |  |
| Strengths |  |  |  |
| Potential for Success |  |  |  |

What questions would you add to the screening chart?

Session Seven: Leadership Skills

Good leadership skills start with good relationship skills.

In this session, you will learn ways in which women can deliver unique forms of leadership, and how best to maximize the benefits.

Identifying Leadership Skills

Relationship Skills

Strong workplace relationships enable leaders to build support, defuse tension, gain collaborators, avoid negativity, and improve productivity for oneself and the organization. Healthy relationships may look easy to build and maintain, but they take skills and effort.

Consider these tips.

* Always be kind, pleasant, professional and focused on issues rather than personal opinions. You will not always know the person behind the issue. Base actions only on what you know.
* Be tactful. Friends are made, and bridges built, with not only knowing what to say, but when and how to say it. Emotional pain is deep and not easily forgotten, even if inflicted in error.
* Watch body language. Exude confidence without aggression. Try to appear relaxed without sloppiness.
* Remain neutral. Issues that polarize or divide a workplace rarely have a clear-cut innocent or guilty party. Stay objective, listen to all, and find a resolution if possible. Taking sides will provide an uneven view and perhaps lead to a poor decision.

Other Leadership Skills

In her book *Own It: The Power of Women at Work*, Sallie Krawcheck warns that leadership is often equated with acting “like a man.” She suggests women have been conditioned to think leadership is about strength, confidence, and pushing ahead without fear, regardless of whether the answer is known or the project is ready. She argues that embracing oneself —quirks, fears, and all — is a crucial step to sound leadership, and avoiding frustration, stagnation, and burnout.

What leadership skills are often associated with women?

* **Strong instincts:** knowing danger, crises, or opportunities before visible signs or concrete data emerge
  + Benefit: ability to act first and fast, getting ahead of the problem or competition
  + Barrier: not trusting oneself enough to share, risk of being ignored or not taken seriously
* **Seamless shifting:** able to take a phone call from home, compose an email addressing a client’s complaint, and find an error in the monthly sales report, all in rapid succession
  + Benefit: highly efficient and productive
  + Barrier: risk of being taken for granted
* **Connected visioning**: linking news of the day to a project that is several months old to find a new way forward or engaging a client with something viewed on social media a few weeks ago
  + Benefit: flow of ideas and information leading to unique solutions
  + Barrier: internal blocks causing connections to be forgotten, overlooked, or dismissed
* **Passionate:** a depth of knowledge and care for people and things, as well as success and accomplishment
  + Benefit: unique vision for opportunities and compassionate approach to ascension and teambuilding
  + Barrier: can be overrun by more forceful leadership or internal blocks

Describe a situation, real or imagined, that embodies one of the qualities just covered.

How does the scenario play out?

What could or would you do differently?

Are there any qualities you would add to the list?

Action Steps

Read the following scenario. Then, complete the activity.

Scenario

You work for the Super Aeronautic Space Science Institute (SASSI for short). The group is international, but then, so is everything these days. The concept of separate countries vying for their piece of Earth, wealth, and power, has given way in the need for survival. You have been selected to be a part of a team of scientists and astronauts getting ready to leave Earth to explore Aspirinia, a moon that appears able to sustain life and currently orbits Earth with our original moon.

The year is 2111. A hundred years ago, there was a massive shift in space, and a catastrophic astronomical storm destroyed orbit patterns, sent moons and planets in unimaginable directions, and re-wrote the map of the universe. The storm pushed tens of thousands of pieces of rock and space junk into the asteroid belt. Many pieces burned through the outer edges of Earth’s atmosphere and crashed into Earth itself. Millions of people were killed in the constant showers of rock and minerals, earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, and severe weather. Despite celebrating the birth of the seven-billionth person in 2011, current census results indicate there are no more than one billion people left on the entire planet Earth.

In the destruction, many of Earth’s great scientific minds were killed. Air travel, cellular technology, internet connection, and contact with other regions are all extremely limited, and very costly. Shortwave radios are commonly used, and Morse code is once again the language of the airwaves. Dirty water is a constant threat. Food is scarce and rationed everywhere. There is high security around technical installations, as well as food and water treatment facilities. The greatest threat, however, is the cooling of the Earth’s core. An ice age is imminent.

The moon Aspirinia that was once orbiting around Jupiter now orbits Earth with Earth’s original moon. Earth’s own axis shifted by nine degrees, and Earth’s moon shifted so that 50 per cent of what used to be known as its dark side now faces the planet below.

One hundred years after The Shift, Earth’s fractured self is still adjusting to the changes. The ground is so unstable that earthquakes can no longer be told apart from aftershocks in several regions. Areas that were close to sea level before The Shift are now underwater. Survivors have relocated far inland, often living in family groups and communities in small villages and learning to survive by practicing ancient techniques of water treatment, farming, and sustainability.

The surviving members of the science community were left with access to a multitude of information, and a possibly crazy idea. Aspirinia seemed to quickly stabilize when it took up position beside Earth’s original moon and has remained there. The question is: can it sustain life?

Before The Shift, SASSI was involved in a terramanipulation experiment on Earth’s moon. The terramanipulation was an effort to make the Moon livable for humans and animals. Scientists were able to manipulate and secure the Moon’s gravitational pull, create thousands of hectares of farmable land, and generate drinkable water. They were in the process of completing the final touches on the ecosystem, complete with insects, birds, and farm stock, when The Shift hit and the project was abruptly ended. By the time The Shift finished its active phase, the Moon showed significant damage, with enormous craters and at least three cracks that were the size of Earth’s Grand Canyon. The scientists and settlers on the Moon all perished when the Moon’s gravitational pull returned to its pre-terramanipulation state.

Aspirinia, however, appeared to be another matter. It was significant enough to be a planet in its own right, judging by its size and composition. Positioned as the next-door neighbor to Earth’s moon, scientists are confident that Aspirinia could be the savior they are looking for. At about two-thirds the size of Earth, Aspirinia shows evidence of plant growth and water on the surface, and its gravity and placement have been consistent over the past 90 years or so. Could terramanipulation, once a story in science fiction tales but partially proven on Earth’s old moon, be made to work? Could Aspirinia save humanity?

Exercise

There are several things that your team will need to do before leaving for Aspirinia.

Go through the list below and rank the tasks from 1 through 8, with 1 being the most important, and 8 the least. All tasks must be completed, and all must have a different ranking.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ranking | Task |
|  | Hire three security personnel to protect the SASSI center, including an airstrip. |
|  | Reassign resources (food, water, electricity, heating fuel, medical supplies, and water purification chemicals) from the local village to the space crew. |
|  | Visit the neighboring village to solicit their support for the project. |
|  | Make repairs to the space suits, which are now 100 years old and must be made secure against leaking. You will not know enough about the atmosphere on Aspirinia until you get there. |
|  | Form a crew to create ration packages to last at least six months. You will be dehydrating food that is harvested by the local villagers and rationed in the village. |
|  | Establish your realistic launch date. |
|  | Send ahead two unmanned shuttles with supplies. |
|  | Arrange for a launch party that includes the villagers. |

Curve Balls

Now, consider the following curve balls one at a time, and re-rank the tasks.

1. As plans get underway to leave for the mission, there is an outbreak of a highly contagious virus in three nearby villages. The virus manifests as a bronchial infection that can lead to pneumonia and death. Treatment is a long course of antibiotics and steroids, which are difficult to get. The only doctor in the area is scheduled to go on your mission. Will you still take him? What if there is a massive fatality rate and people are no longer available to provide security and support to the mission?
2. While the villagers want somewhere safe to live and raise their children, they are angry that you are demanding so much food and water purification for your trip. There is a lot of talk about preventing you from leaving on your trip, and their points are all valid. To support your crew, they will have to go without necessary supplies. What will you do?

Rankings

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Curve Ball 1 | Task | Curve Ball 2 |
|  | Hire three security personnel to protect the SASSI center, including an airstrip. |  |
|  | Reassign resources (food, water, electricity, heating fuel, medical supplies, and water purification chemicals) from the local village to the space crew. |  |
|  | Visit the neighboring village to solicit their support for the project. |  |
|  | Make repairs to the space suits, which are now 100 years old and must be made secure against leaking. You will not know enough about the atmosphere on Aspirinia until you get there. |  |
|  | Form a crew to create ration packages to last at least six months. You will be dehydrating food that is harvested by the local villagers and rationed in the village. |  |
|  | Establish your realistic launch date. |  |
|  | Send ahead two unmanned shuttles with supplies. |  |
|  | Arrange for a launch party that includes the villagers. |  |

Did your rankings change? Why or why not?

Session Eight: Making Good Decisions

Good decisions come from strong leadership, effective relationship skills, and social awareness.

In this session, you will learn tips you can use to make better decisions and some common decision traps. You will also be introduced to the decision wheel as a tool for good decision-making.

Ingredients of a Good Decision

As explained earlier, responsible decision-making is one of the social and emotional competencies introduced by psychologist Daniel Goleman. To make good decisions, leaders must be able to regulate their emotions, use effective relationship skills, and demonstrate social awareness.

Here are some tips:

* **Understand the goal.** Know what it is you want to achieve for the organization. Ensure goals support and build on what the company has already accomplished.
* **Aim for win-win outcomes.** These are solutions that meet the needs of all parties. When everyone benefits, workplace conflicts decrease.
* **Focus on the most important things.** Do not act on impulse or succumb to decision panic.
* **Consider the positive and negative results that can come from this decision.** Look for ways to mitigate potential problems.
* **Break down big decisions into smaller steps.** Consider multiple options at each step. This makes decision-making less daunting and increases the chances of a good outcome.

Good Decision – Poor Decision

Making a good decision depends on three things: accurate information, trustworthy instincts, and the ability to process information objectively. By default, humans are not 100 per cent accurate, trustworthy, or objective. Individuals are unique and effective because of their flaws as well as strengths. It is important to know and embrace both, ensuring they can work together. If not, someone can be led astray by fear or doubt masquerading as a “sign.” Consider these common pitfalls that can steer decisions from good to garbage.

Diversion

People who are unable to admit when they do not know an answer may make something up or dissuade others from pursuing a course of action. For example, a supervisor unfamiliar with social media may say there is no money or interest from executives to develop a social media campaign. This answer may be more about protecting themselves, rather than supporting what is best for an idea. Before acting on advice from others, verify facts and explore alternatives independently.

Sampling

Statistics and surveys require careful handling as they can be easily misinterpreted or manipulated. Claims such as “Everyone thinks we should do this” may reflect only a small, unrepresentative group — perhaps the two other colleagues in the lunchroom or a single person who called with a complaint. When using sampling to inform decisions, it is important to ask questions carefully, select an impartial audience, and be prepared for answers that may be unexpected or unwelcome.

Bias

People view the world through a lens shaped by their unique life experiences, both positive and challenging. Being aware of this lens helps individuals recognize how it influences their perspective and adjust accordingly when listening to others.

Jumping to Conclusions

First impressions are powerful, but a decision made in haste is often one made without processing. Slow down and consider all the information.

Status

Hierarchies exist in many areas of life and work. Doctors are assumed to know more than nurses, and specialists more than general practitioners. Supervisors hold more authority than entry-level staff, and vice presidents more than supervisors. People should be aware of these hierarchies but not allow themselves to be defined by those in which they do not believe.

Consider a time when a decision had been tough to make.

What worked well (or what did not work)?

How did you remedy the issues?

Decision Wheel Method

The decision wheel is a formal process that can be applied to help guide thinking through the process of problem clarification, allowing for a decision to be made.

Imagine a situation, real or imagined, in need of a decision.

Use the Decision Wheel as a guide and then consider the questions.

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AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Questions

What is the problem?

What are the choices you have?

What do you think the consequences of these choices will be for yourself and others who are involved?

What values do you need to consider?

How do you feel about the situation?

Is there anything else you need to learn about it?

Do you need to ask for help? Who will you ask?

What is your decision?

Do you think you made the right decision? Why?

Session Nine: Creating a Workplace Philosophy

Acting on one’s own behalf is a true expression of leadership. Through planning, individuals can identify what is needed, take ownership of their actions, and adjust to stay on course toward their goals.

In this session, you will develop a Philosophy Statement and gather other components necessary to draft an Individual Action Plan.

Philosophy Statement

A Philosophy Statement describes what guides someone in their work. It is a concrete sign of your guiding principles for your actions at work and is a touchstone document that you can check back on from time to time.

Fill in the Philosophy Statement template.

|  |
| --- |
| Philosophy Statement |
| To minimize the possibility of negative workplace politics I will contribute to a healthy workplace by: |
| LEADING a life centered on the principles of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |
| REMEMBERING that what is important in life is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |
| RESPECTING excellent characteristics in others such as being \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and attempt to implement similar characteristics in my own life. |
| RECOGNIZING my strengths and develop talents as a person who is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |
| ACKNOWLEDGING that I can be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and be constantly striving to change my weaknesses into strengths. |
| ENVISIONING myself becoming a person who:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of boss) thinks is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of peer) thinks is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of customer) thinks is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of friend or family member) thinks is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. |

Building a Plan

Goal and Tasks

To begin building a plan, follow these steps.

First, identify what you want to accomplish in a strong, clear, first-person statement. I want to … (lead this project, earn this promotion, start this company, build my revenue, etc.).

**Now, consider the steps required to get you from where you are now to your goal.** Write them down. Leave space between entries, as the initial tasks may need to be further broken down.

**Determine what resources are needed to ascend each step**. Do you need to attend school or take a course? Do you need to purchase supplies or inventory? Should you enlist professional services, such as legal help or financial advice? Do not judge the list or try to start budgeting. Just keep listing.

**Make note of existing resources that can support your work.** Also note benefits that will arise along the way: to yourself or your organization/community.

**Explain opportunities to either make money** (through a new product or service, for example) **or save money** (by streamlining a process, for example). Describe the necessity of what you are doing, if possible. Companies need innovation to survive, and your leadership may be just the thing it needs.

Identify what you want to accomplish in a strong, clear, first-person statement.

Consider the steps required to get you from where you are now to your goal. Begin listing them.

Building a Team

Identify a person, department or organization that can assist with each task. Describe their qualifications and involvement with the project up to this point.

Also consider “leaders for the leader.” Which individuals or organizations could serve as mentors, coaches, sponsors, and guides? List them.

Additionally, look to different departments and organizations for expertise — people who can bring a different lens to your vision.

Use the list to help you recruit people to join your project team.

List the people, departments or organizations that can assist you with each task. Describe their qualifications and involvement with the project up to this point.

Which individuals or organizations could serve as mentors, coaches, sponsors, and guides? List them.

Making the Approach

This is the final part of the plan: setting the tasks in motion. Two things need to be accomplished here:

* A specific task list and timeline
* A list of who you will approach for your team, including details of when and how

These lists can change with circumstances and real-world evolution. Some tasks may shift, or a possible mentor might no longer be needed. Allow flexibility in the lists, but remain focused on them to move you forward, especially when life gets busy and progress is slow.

Complete your task list and timeline.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Deadline** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Use the table to list who you will approach for your team, including details of when and how.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Details** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Pitch

Expand on your sales pitch and determine how you will sell your leadership brand to the customer or senior management. Include lots of details and address answers to anticipated questions.

Pitch:

Personal Action Plan

Now that you completed this course on **Women and Leadership: Owning Your Strengths and Skills,** how will you use the things you have learned? Creating a personal action plan can help you stay on track and on target. When you take responsibility for yourself and your results, you get things done!

In this session, you will be asked questions to help you plan your short-term and long-term goals. This final exercise is a way for you to synthesize the learning that you have done and to put it into practice.

I am already doing these things well:

I want to improve these areas:

I have these resources to help me:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| As a result of what I have learned in this course, I am going to… | My target date is… | I will know I have succeeded when… | I will follow up with myself on… |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Course Summary

Congratulations! You have completed the course “Women and Leadership: Owning Your Skills and Strengths.”

In this course, we talked about the history of women in the workplace and worked to identify and strengthen our leadership skills.

First, we examined some examples of trailblazing women who redefined leadership and learned different types of workplace leaders.

We also explored barriers to women’s leadership, and ways to turn them into benefits.

Next, we looked at social and emotional competencies and reflected on what aspects of emotional intelligence would influence positive outcomes.

Then, we explored self-awareness and went over personal strengths and abilities.

We also considered how to create and sell our personal brand.

Next, we identified leadership skills that are often associated with women and put our skills to the test with a scenario-based activity.

Then, we discovered tips and a tool for good decision-making.

The last part of the course asked us to develop a Philosophy Statement and Action Plan.

You should now feel ready to use and improve your leadership skills in the workplace.

Recommended Reading List

If you are looking for further information on this topic, here is a recommended reading list.

Boorstin, Julia. ***When Women Lead: What They Achieve, Why They Succeed, and How We Can Learn From Them.*** Avid Reader Press, 2022.

Brown, Brené. ***Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.*** Random House, 2018.

Krawcheck, Sallie. ***Own It: The Power of Women at Work*.** Crown Business, 2017.

Sandberg, Sheryl. ***Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*.** Knopf, 2013.

Scott, Kim. ***Radical Candor: Fully Revised and Updated Edition: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity.*** St. Martin’s Press, 2019.

Post-Course Assessment

1. **Barriers to women’s leadership are of two general types:**
   1. Fear and Loathing
   2. Pain and Suffering
   3. Internal and External
   4. None of the Above
2. **True or False: Regardless of salary or size of organization, all leadership positions require the same soft skills.**
3. **In his work with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, Daniel Goleman developed five interrelated sets of Social and Emotional Competencies. They include:**
   1. Self-Awareness
   2. Risk Awareness
   3. Social Awareness
   4. a and b
   5. a and c
   6. a, b and c
4. **Self-awareness is about understanding your own:** 
   1. Behaviors
   2. Needs
   3. Feelings
   4. Desires
   5. All of the above
5. **True or False: Good leaders need to develop a brand.**
6. **Evolution from Idea to Brand includes:**
   1. Identifying the Idea
   2. Live Tests
   3. Revision
   4. All of the above
7. **True or False: Self-management is really about controlling your reactions.**
8. **The first step in making a good decision is:**
   1. Find like-minded people
   2. Ask the right questions
   3. Know your own mind
   4. Understand the goal
9. **Decisions can be railroaded from good to poor by what factor(s)? Choose all that apply.**
   1. Diversion
   2. Bias
   3. Jumping to conclusions
   4. Closing your eyes
10. **Which of the following are part of the decision-making wheel? Choose all that apply.**
    1. Try again
    2. Just wing it
    3. Consequences
    4. Feelings

Pre- and Post- Course Assessment Answer Keys

Pre-Course Assessment

1. False. Women have a long and effective history of leadership in the workplace.
2. True.
3. True.
4. True.
5. False. Self-management skills are taught by external factors and can be refined through self-awareness and action.
6. True.
7. False. Part of effective leadership is developing and selling one’s brand.
8. True.
9. False. Good instincts are a strong quality for a leader to possess and are often a skill associated with women.
10. False. A Philosophy Statement is the foundation of an effective individual action plan.

Post-Course Assessment

1. C. Barriers to women’s leadership are either Internal (personal blocks) or External (workplace or related environments).
2. True.
3. E. Risk Awareness is important in managing projects but is not one of the five aspects of Social and Emotional intelligence.
4. E. Self-Awareness includes an understanding about everything that makes you act the way you do.
5. True.
6. D. Evolution from Idea to Brand includes all the listed answers: identifying the idea, live tests, and revision.
7. True.
8. D. The first step in making a good decision is to understand the goal.
9. A, B, and C. Decisions can be railroaded from good to poor by diversion, bias, and jumping to conclusions.
10. C and D. Consequences and feelings are part of the decision-making wheel.

Assignment Answer Key

Session Two: Women and the Workforce

Learning from History

Choose a character from history who influences you, either positively or negatively. Develop a list of characteristics, both positive and negative.

Possible answer:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Historical Figure: Margaret Thatcher | |
| Positive Characteristics | Negative Characteristics |
| * Intelligent | * Single-minded |
| * Confident | * Confrontational |
| * Passionate | * Uncompromising |

Session Seven: Leadership Skills

Action Steps

Go through the list below and rank the tasks from 1 through 8, with 1 being the most important, and 8 the least. All tasks must be completed, and all must have a different ranking.

Possible answers:

There really are no right or wrong answers on this priority ranking, if the crew can argue their position. The following ranking is based on ensuring that the crew is able to securely protect the resources for the trip and execute it as designed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1** | Hire three security personnel to protect the SASSI center, including an airstrip. |
| **3** | Reassign resources (food, water, electricity, heating fuel, medical supplies, and water purification chemicals) from the local village to the space crew. |
| **2** | Visit the neighboring village to solicit their support for the project. |
| **5** | Make repairs to the space suits, which are now 100 years old and must be made secure against leaking. You will not know enough about the atmosphere on Aspirinia until you get there. |
| **4** | Form a crew to create ration packages to last at least six months. You will be dehydrating food that is harvested by the local villagers and rationed in the village. |
| **8** | Establish your realistic launch date. |
| **7** | Send ahead two unmanned shuttles with supplies. |
| **6** | Arrange for a launch party that includes the villagers. |