

F.L.O.P. CLUB



SESSION TWO

For this session we'll flip-flop the script. We'll still have you going room-to-room (now that you are all experts at it), but this time for a couple minute conversation to answer questions from the senior leaders about what your budding leadership philosophy looks like and how you would apply to certain situations ... and give some guidance and feedback ... quickly.

As promised, what follows and what is attached will help you think about that next session (as well as all the material on the Teams page).

1. WITH THE QUALITIES LISTED BELOW, OR ANY YOU THINK OF, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING MADLIBS.

To me, leadership means _____, _____, and _____. I believe, as a leader I should _____, _____, and _____ in order to be effective. I will inspire my team to _____, _____, and _____. In myself and in my team members, I value _____, _____, and _____. I will not tolerate _____ from myself or those I lead. My ultimate goal as a leader is _____.

Key leadership qualities

While there are many different qualities that can contribute to a great leader, there are a few common ones that can be helpful when developing leadership skills:

1. Accountability

It is important that leaders hold themselves and their teams accountable for the work each is responsible for. Ownership is a key part of leadership.

2. Active listening

Leaders may receive feedback from team members and they need to not only hear them but really listen. What is the person trying to tell you but may not be saying exactly? Leaders do well when they learn how to ask the right questions to find out helpful information.

3. Collaboration

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together," African Proverb. Many leaders need to collaborate across direct reports, the organization and outside the organization with vendors, third-party companies and contractors. It is key to find the common goal and create a partnership instead of unhealthy competition or confusion on responsibilities.

4. Courage

Leaders must have courage in many various instances, such as correcting behavior or making unpopular decisions.

5. Communication

Communicating in an articulate and positive style creates a clear path for the rest of the team, project or meeting you are leading to follow.

6. Empathetic

It is important for leaders to understand how the people around them are feeling about projects, decisions, morale, direction and company or team vision.

7. Flexible

Working with a team of people means tasks, goals and responsibilities will shift. A flexible leader is able to adjust and maintain ownership of the team, project or meeting as needed.

8. Focus

Being clear on goals will help the rest of a leader's team be efficient and focused.

9. Growth mindset

Leaders do well when they adopt a growth mindset. Circumstances often change from when a project, challenge or issue originally surfaced. Leaders have to take into consideration that technology may have evolved or personal issues may have arisen for their team. If they can keep a growth mindset and are willing to adapt, they can usually keep the project moving—even if adjustments need to be made.

10. Humility

Great leaders admit their mistakes and elevate those around them. Humility is essential when leading a team.

11. Innovation

Leaders should be able to develop ideas, filter the ideas of others, solve problems and complete many other tasks that require innovation and creativity.

12. Passion

Teams are motivated by a drive towards a common goal. The leader of a team should be passionate about the goal, creating unity among their team to work together.

13. Patience

Mistakes, miscommunications and failures are inevitable. It is important for leaders to be patient and offer guidance through these times.

14. Problem-solver

Developing problem-solving skills allows teams to move past roadblocks with minimal disruption.

15. Resilience

Leaders bear the responsibility to improve the areas of the business or team that they own. This might mean creating new processes, hiring new people or changing the status quo.

16. Respect

Great leaders treat their teams with respect, gaining respect in return. They value feedback and want to hear the opinions of their teammates.

17. Transparency

Being open and honest makes work more efficient and enjoyable.

18. Trust

Leadership requires delegation. When leaders trust their team to complete what they are assigned, it encourages positive morale and mutual respect.

19. Self-awareness

Many leaders are leaders because they express the skills and knowledge required for a certain role in an organization or a specialty. Consider authors or keynote speakers. These “experts” need to possess the self-awareness to be able to hone in on what they really know, what they may not be an expert in and how to bring in that knowledge. It’s ok to not know everything and a leader relies on the other subject matter experts around them.

20. Hunger for knowledge

Leaders are effective and inspirational when they stay knowledgeable of moving trends and the topics they are leading. Not only does this help leaders hone their crafts and contribute to their purposes, but it also helps to inspire the team to continue learning too.

2. TIPS FOR WRITING A LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

Find your leadership style. Along with leadership philosophies, leadership styles are important in understanding how you lead. Leadership philosophies are unique to you, and you craft them yourself, but leadership styles tend to be broad categories and ways of leading that you can identify with and adopt. Knowing your leadership style can help you form your leadership philosophy.

Think about how you work currently. To start, you should consider how you lead presently or how you've led in the past. Your most effective leadership philosophy will be one that feels natural to you, so starting with what you already do is a great start.

Think about your future. How do you want to be perceived as a leader? Thinking about the future of your leadership and skills is a good way to get on a path that will lead you there. Consider how you would like to lead in the future and how you want to work with your team.

Talk with other leaders [DONE!!]. Getting advice from other leaders is a great way to think about your leadership values. Ask them about how they lead and what general principles they bring to all of their leadership roles.

Consider your goals. Think about where you want to be in the future and how you can get there. Your leadership goals should fall in line with your broader career and life goals, so make sure everything is consistent.

Think about your personal values. At the end of the day, leadership philosophies are extremely personal and reflect who you are. Turning to your values is a good way to incorporate your beliefs into the way you lead others.

Find leaders you admire. Just like looking at leadership philosophies can help you determine your personal perspective. Looking at the leadership styles of leaders you admire can help you find what you like.

Look at prominent figures and take them as a leadership model. Think about what you like about them and incorporate those characteristics in your leadership philosophy.

3. THE STEPS TO DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

First, why even have a written leadership philosophy:

- Putting it in writing provides clarity, objectivity.
- Putting it in writing implies you are serious.
- Putting it in writing makes a commitment.
- Putting it in writing keeps it consistent.
- Putting it in writing causes you to self-reflect, to be sure you mean what you say.
- Putting it in writing makes you accountable.
- Putting it in writing makes it easier to share.

Hopefully, the above would have convinced you about the importance of having a leadership philosophy. We've talked about the characteristics of the framework, but how do you develop it? Here are the four steps you need to take in order to draft a proper leadership philosophy, which will guarantee you succeed as a leader.

The first, and perhaps the most important part of the process is defining your values and priorities. You need to look deep inside you to discover the values you want to highlight and which you think make leaders great. You need to be able to answer the following questions as part of this step:

- *What are the values I think are the most important in life and business?*
- *What are my personal strengths and weaknesses when it comes to values and behaviors?*
- *What do I feel are the priorities of a leader?*

But how do you define the core values and priorities? It's easy to create a list of things you think are important, but you need to dig deeper when it comes to a leadership philosophy. First, you need to actually understand *why you think a specific value has value*. Second, you can't have a list of 20 values as this doesn't truly clarify your position, but instead, you must *focus on just a few core priorities*. Entrepreneur and author Kevin Daum has written a great post on [Inc.](#) on how to define your values. Daum suggests taking the following steps:

- Identifying the following **moments from your life** and describing them in detail:
 - *Three greatest accomplishments*
 - *Three greatest moments of efficiency*
 - *Three greatest failures*
 - *Three greatest moments of inefficiency*
- Consider the above moments and examine the **possible common themes** between them.
- Using these common themes, identify the **advice/tips you would give yourself**. For example, if you find yourself avoiding conflict situations, your advice might be "*Don't walk away from difficult situations.*"
- **Refine your advice into a value**. For instance, the above advice could become "*Confront difficulties*"

Furthermore, once you have these core values and themed outlines, it's auspicious to take a moment to define them properly. Let's say you realized 'authenticity' is a value you cherish. Define what you mean by it by writing down a few sentences. You can use the formula:

"Authenticity to me means..."

You can do this with all of your values, whether the value is 'communication', 'family', or 'competitiveness'. It is definitely worthwhile doing this all on paper because it will help you better communicate your ideas to yourself.

When you've selected your values, you need to prioritize them further. If you have around 3-7 values selected, you should consider which ones resonate the most with you or which you think are the most essential in terms of leadership. An effective way to prioritize your values is by comparing them with each other. You can do it by simply taking two values, such as 'authenticity' and 'respect', and make the following statements with your chosen values:

- Authenticity but NO respect
- Respect but NO authenticity

Would you pick the first or the second sentence? The value you choose is the one you rank as more important. You can do this prioritization with all of your values by comparing them against each other. You should eventually have a value on top that beat all the others in comparison.

As well as defining your values, you also need to examine the outcomes you wish to achieve as a leader. In order to do this, you need to study the outcomes you want to achieve in the light of your chosen values. First, you should identify the goals for your leadership and the possible operational goals your organization is looking to achieve.

What are the actions you want to or should achieve as a leader? An auspicious way to set goals is by using the SMART method, described in the image below:

SMART Goals Definition



Furthermore, once you've identified the objectives, you need to outline and write down the actions required to achieve these goals. The actions can range from finding tools to motivate your team to enhance innovation.

When you have the goals defined, you must reflect on the ways your values relate to and impact these objectives. You can do this by answering the following questions:

- **How do my values support the key goals of leadership?** Remember leadership was about influencing others to follow your vision. You need to pick each value and examine how it would help inspire others and move you closer to your vision. If you value '*honesty*', then you want to consider how it is demonstrated in influential leadership.
- **How do my values support the operational goals?** You should consider the same in terms of the specific organizational objectives you've identified.
- **How can my values strengthen the actions required to achieve the objectives?** Look at each action and consider the different ways your values would have a positive impact on it. '*Honesty*' could be seen as a way to strengthen trust, which in turn would boost motivation, for example.
- **How do my values show in the way I communicate with my teams?** Think about the above and the positive or negative impact your values, actions and objectives will have on the team. You want to identify the routes that uphold your values, but create a meaningful partnership with your followers.
- **What are the behaviors and actions I expect from my followers?** Your followers don't necessarily have to subscribe to the exact same values as you do or prioritize the values the same way. Nonetheless, you need to consider the behaviors and actions, which are in conflict with the objectives you want to achieve as a leader and as an organization, and the behaviors, which are not sustainable in terms of your own values.

The above helps you to clarify what your leadership philosophy should look like in action. It makes the values turn into concrete examples in terms of behaviors and actions.

With the above steps concluded, you can start putting your leadership philosophy on paper. We briefly mentioned the importance of having a written statement in the previous section. Writing down your philosophy helps clarify your ideas and makes it all just a bit more concrete. It can improve your focus and help you keep yourself more accountable, since you can always go back and read what you've created.

To help you write down your leadership format, we propose using the format below, although you can always just write a document in your own style. The format is based on the four core elements of leadership philosophy: *theory, attitude, principles* and *behavior*.

Theory: *I believe in _____.*

Write the specific elements of leadership you believe are at the heart of being a good leader; the values you prioritize. An example sentence could be: *I believe in confronting issues head-on is the key to better communication.*

Attitude: *My thoughts will _____ and my words will _____.*

These sentences refer to the attitudes you want to foster in the workplace; the example you want to set with your own attitude. The aim is to focus on the attitude you think will boost your success as a leader and help to achieve the objectives you've set out. You might say, "*My thoughts will focus on finding solutions and my words will be based on honesty and integrity.*"

Principles: *I will lead by/with _____.*

The focus is on writing down the guiding principles you will use as part of your leadership. These are the top priorities to you as a leader; the principles you won't negotiate on and which you'll consider each time you make decisions. You'll most likely end up writing a few of these and an example sentence might be: *I will lead by understanding and embracing change and how situations and people can change over time.*

Behavior: *I expect to _____ and _____ in situations.*

Finally, you need to write down how you will behave and react in the workplace, no matter what the situation is. The behaviors should reflect your leadership philosophy and highlight the core ideas in action. The identification of your past successes and failures during Step 1 will help with the last point. You could state, "*I expect to consider the different options and listen to feedback in challenging situations.*"

When it comes to drafting the document, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, **keep it concise**; you don't want the document to be more than one page. You should be able to state the essence of your leadership philosophy in a few sentences. The other crucial point is to **aim for clarity** and this is why you also want someone else to have a look at your philosophy.

You need to define the philosophy in a manner that will help others to understand it without the need to ask multiple questions. Even if you decide not to publish it, you want at least one person to view it. Aiming for clarity will guarantee you truly understand what you are looking for with your philosophy and this will guarantee you are focused on your intentions.

Finally, it's not enough to write your leadership philosophy and continue with your daily activities; you need to actively evaluate how well you are holding on to your ideals. You must regularly reflect on how well your actions and behaviors follow your statements. Essentially, you need to hold yourself accountable.

Take time to review your leadership philosophy and go back to your previous actions. Are you practicing what you preach? What are the things you excel in and which behaviors and actions do you struggle to follow? You could look at these questions each week or every month. Write a list of the major actions you took that week; for example, consider the three successes for the week and the three possible failures for the week.

Reflect on which principles you held on to and which actions or behaviors went against what you believe in. As you identify the actions and behaviors where you didn't follow your leadership philosophy, consider what were the reasons leading to this situation. Why didn't you remember your philosophy at that moment or why did you reject it? This will help you understand what are

the areas where you need to work harder on or even identify the values and priorities that might be unattainable for you.

Furthermore, you should occasionally have a chat with people who know you or who work with you. Finding out what they think your guiding principles are can reveal a great deal to you about how they view you and whether your philosophy shows in action. If your followers identify values that are counter to everything you've written in your statement, then you are properly doing something wrong as a leader. On the other hand, if people relate values to you, which are at the heart of your philosophy, you get confirmation you are on the right path and achieving success as a leader.

As eluded to earlier, evaluating your leadership philosophy will help you realize whether your philosophy is working or not. If it's not, you need to carefully think about the reasons behind the failure. It might be that you are simply failing in staying true and you need more time to instill these values deeper into your actions. Just continue to be more mindful of your philosophy and think more about the ways you can stick to your principles. But your failures might not be due to lack of motivation.

It could well be the actions and behaviors you chose are not truly you and do not fit into your leadership strategy. Therefore, you might have to re-evaluate each value and principle, adding in new ones and removing the ones that don't reflect your philosophy. Successful leadership is a fluid strategy and the philosophy shouldn't be too rigid either. As you gain more experience, both in business and in life, you will develop and grow as a person. This personal development might well change the way you approach leadership and therefore, you should be willing to make small changes to your philosophy if you feel like it.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Leadership philosophy is a crucial element, as it acts as the foundation for your leadership. It helps you determine the guiding principles, behaviours and actions you want to put at the heart of your leadership. By carefully considering your values, priorities and objectives, you can create a framework for effective and focused leadership.

Having a leadership philosophy creates clarity to your decision-making and your actions, which help you to inspire and to motivate the followers to support your vision. You will be a leader with a clear mission and way of operating, which makes it easier for people to respect and trust you because they will always know where you are coming from.

When it comes to drafting a leadership philosophy the key is to spend time analyzing yourself and writing down the things you believe in and value. Creating a document will ensure you are not only accountable, but can easily remind yourself to focus on the essentials. It ensures you aren't just thinking about specific actions and behaviors, but to actually implement these in your leadership.

Leadership philosophy is often based on intuition, but also a careful examination of what your strengths and weaknesses are. It's about finding the voice that truly speaks for you rather than pretending to subscribe to things you don't believe in or can't achieve.



Developing a Personal Leadership Philosophy

A philosophy is a theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behavior. A leadership philosophy, therefore, guides actions, behaviors, and ideas based on one's expectations, values, and beliefs.

To develop a personal leadership philosophy, you must first explore and determine who you are/want to be as a leader. What qualities or characteristics do you value and refuse to compromise? What ideas do you assume or believe to be true? What beliefs shape your reality?

Exercise: Identify Your Leadership Values

Identify five core values that you feel describe and guide who you are as a leader (examples are provided in the list below). Place them in the following chart and answer the questions in the matrix.

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Achievement | Balance | Creativity | Integrity |
| Activity | Challenge | Diverse perspectives | Justice |
| Advancement | Change | Duty | Love |
| Adventure | Collaboration | Economic security | Loyalty |
| Affiliation | Community | Friendship | Personal Development |
| Affluence | Competency | Health | Recognition |
| Authority | Competition | Humor | Self-respect |
| Autonomy | Courage | Harmony | Wisdom |

Identifying Your Leadership Values

Your Values	Personal definition of values	How do these values influence your leadership?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Exercise: Explore Your Leadership Assumptions

This exercise is intended to help you reflect on the assumptions that drive your leadership thinking.

1. Describe one story that describes a positive experience you've had with leadership and another story that describes a time when you had a negative experience with leadership. What kind of impact did these two experiences have on you? How does this influence your views on leadership?

2a. Write your definition of leadership and the key characteristics needed to lead.

2b. Using your definition of leadership, describe how you have come to understand your definition of leadership. Has it changed over time?

3. Describe individuals or organizations that influence how you view leadership.

Exercise 4: Write Out Your Leadership Philosophy

Your leadership philosophy doesn't have to be formatted in a certain way – but should clearly describe what you believe in and what you stand for. You can write one sentence statements, or you can write a narrative explaining your philosophy.

Example of a Personal Leadership Philosophy:

- I believe that leadership is a journey that consists of followers and leaders.
- I believe open, respectful collaboration can solve any problem.
- My thoughts will focus on what is possible even when things seem impossible.
- My words will try to encourage everyone to do their best.
- I will lead by always trying to do my best in whatever I do.
- I will lead with empathy, and listen attentively, seek to understand, and leverage the experience and talents of others fully.
- I spend time reflecting on my leadership and its implications on others.
- I value integrity in personal and professional development.
- I respect leadership from different perspectives and ways of knowing.
- I listen with respect and gratitude to others.
- I expect to respond rather than react in challenging situations.