

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.