Continuing research from the Center for Creative Leadership reports what kind of actions contribute to skillful leadership—a leadership that generates direction, alignment, and commitment among managers, peers, employees, and senior leaders. Guiding a team or an entire organization toward these outcomes requires an interrelated set of knowledge, skills, and perspectives (commonly called competencies) that address predictable and unpredictable situations.

This book is for leaders and managers looking to develop specific competencies in themselves and others. It is also for training and development professionals, whether inside companies or working as independent consultants, who can use the book as a coaching tool and as a blueprint for leader development plans.

"Leadership is navigation—lots of choices, hazards, and currents. The future will require great clarity of direction, but great flexibility of execution. You will need this Compass to find and hold your clarity."

—Bob Johansen, Distinguished Fellow, Institute for the Future and author of The New Leadership Literacies

"You’ll want a copy of Compass! The authors have done a brilliant job of combining a ‘self-help’ book for leaders with a guide for professionals who are in the business of developing leaders. As a leader, the book is like having your own personal coach with its wealth of insights, self-reflective questions, and useful online tools. As an industrial/organizational psychologist, I appreciate the years of research that underpin the ideas and the potential to apply the many resources for executive leadership programs I develop and deliver."

—Vicki L. Flaherty, Ph.D., IBM Executive Leadership Development
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INTRODUCTION

You know this much about yourself at least—you’re strong in some areas and weak in others. Who isn’t? Because you’re reading this, you might have received feedback about your leadership strengths and weaknesses from a trusted source or learned from a formal feedback program at work. Do you know when to rely on your strengths to carry you through? Are you aware of weaknesses you want to improve? And do you know how to round out your abilities so you don’t count on the same remedy in every situation? This book can help you answer those questions and spur your development as a leader—at your pace and according to your priorities. And if you’re a coach or a manager responsible for developing others, you can use this book as a support for developmental conversations and for devising developmental activities.

Through research and practice, CCL has confirmed what kind of actions contribute to effective leadership—the kind of leadership that generates an inclusive process among managers, peers, employees, and senior leaders and is marked by direction, alignment, and commitment. CCL calls these outcomes DAC, and when they are present, effective leadership is at play. Conversely, underdeveloped or overused competencies can act as a detriment to leadership, and their absence or willful avoidance can derail careers and even entire companies.

What’s in This Book and Why It’s Important

Leading often requires that you bring to bear a generous range of abilities on any given situation. Some of these situations, such as strategic planning or resource management, are predictable. Other situations, such as an unexpected competitor entering the scene or a radical turn in the marketplace, arise from unforeseen circumstances. Expected or not, when you confidently address those situations you ensure the sustainability of your organization. Given the consequences of globalization, the contemporary sea
change in demographics, continuing technological, economic, and market disruptions, and other markers of a world in flux, leaders well versed in a broad set of abilities can help ensure that their organizations and the people in them and associated with them thrive in uncertain times.

**Who This Book Is For**

This book is for leaders and managers looking to develop themselves and others. It is also for training and development professionals, either inside companies or working as independent consultants, who can use the book as a coaching tool, a blueprint for leader development plans, and in other ways. For anyone concerned with his or her development as a leader, dedicated to developing their people for more responsibility, and committed to organizational sustainability, this book will help in those efforts.

It’s the goal of every leader at every level of an organization to create sustainability, whether for a business, a community service, or a government agency. H. Smith Richardson, whose ideas formed the foundation of CCL, was most concerned with the questions of why some organizations thrive while others wither. He sensed that organizational sustainability depended on creative leadership—a leadership capable of adapting, inventing, and renewing itself with changing times. The competencies at the core of this book are a distillation of the characteristics, actions, and perspectives
at the heart of creative leadership—always becoming what is needed in any circumstance to galvanize organizations and help people move toward a thriving future.

**How You Can Use This Book**

Use *Compass* as a guide to figure out what skills you need to improve or what skills you need to develop in others. It makes an excellent companion to CCL’s suite of 360-degree assessments*, from which many of the competencies are drawn. The book can also be used effectively with assessments from other vendors. Browsing the table of contents or thumbing through the chapters will likely spark a response about one or more leadership competencies areas that haven’t received enough attention. A list of those competencies is the first step to building a framework for setting and achieving development goals. Dive into the relevant chapters to learn what kinds of results can be achieved with the addition or improvement of a competency. See what kinds of activities and tactics are especially suited for developing specific skill sets and knowledge. Consult the developmental opportunities in each chapter for ideas about how to practice those competencies or how to create those experiences for others.

There are many other uses for this book, depending on the role you play in your organization. Team leaders might address a competency area from a group perspective, for example. A manager can use the book as a guide and resource for developing direct reports. HR leaders and training consultants can use the book

- to support a mentoring program
- to create classes for early-career managers
- to pair with an executive coach
- as a focal point in coaching conversations
- to design a development path for high-potential employees

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* CCL’s 360-degree assessments include *Benchmarks for Executives, Benchmarks for Managers, Benchmarks for Learning Agility, Benchmarks by Design* (collectively known as the Benchmarks 360 Assessment Suite), and *Skillscope*. More information can be found at [https://www.ccl.org/lead-it-yourself-solutions/assessments/](https://www.ccl.org/lead-it-yourself-solutions/assessments/)
It should be noted that this book works equally well outside of corporations and industry, as many of the same competencies are essential for community organizations, nonprofit groups, and government, even though the settings and challenges differ from commercial enterprises.

**How This Book Is Organized**

The book is divided into four sections. Part One concentrates on the four essential competencies every leader needs to develop: communication, influence, learning agility, and self-awareness. Part Two contains 48 additional competencies, derived from CCL research and practice, and Part Three deals with five career derailers and what you can do about them to avoid that fate. Part Four is a guide to goal setting, using an approach that CCL's research and practice have shown to be very effective.

Each of the book’s competency chapters opens with a simple description of the competency and a brief overview of the competency to provide some context—why it’s important to leaders, what effects its mastery can produce, and the consequences of not developing the competency. Following the overview, Leadership in Action tells a story drawn from real-life accounts of leaders displaying their skill in the competency area. You can look to those stories for examples to emulate, for inspiration, and for understanding the effect of that competency on other people and on organizations.

What High Performance Looks Like lists descriptive words and phrases for how leaders appear to others when performing the competency well. What’s in Your Way? presents common obstacles to development. The Coach Yourself section poses reflective questions designed to spur thinking about the areas of focus in which the competency can be developed. The sections Improve Now and Developmental Opportunities provide tactics and suggestions for developing skills. Improve Now items are quick changes, and Developmental Opportunities are longer in duration and might require buy-in and support from a boss, team, or someone else.

The Activity Center contains links to worksheets and exercises that help to develop skill and competency. Activities can be accessed and downloaded from the book’s resource site at www.ccl.org/compassbook. A list of Related Competencies follows. If you build your skill in those areas (or some of them), that will support development of other competencies. And finally, Resources suggests additional places to look for help and advice.
Take special note of Part Three, which deals with common career *derrailers* that CCL research identifies as damaging to careers. A derailed leader is one who, after having reached a level of success in the organization, is fired, demoted, or involuntarily reaches a career plateau. Before these managers derailed, their organizations saw them as having high potential for advancement, an impressive track record of results, and holding a solidly established leadership position. But then something happened. CCL research shows that the most common causes of career derailment are predictable. The chapters in this section show what kinds of skills and knowledge need to be developed to keep a career on track and reduce the risk of derailing.

Finally, in Part Four, *Compass* covers how to set development goals as you make the personal changes necessary to gain the skills you need. This section talks about the essential ingredients for development and how to best go about it. It also discusses how to make yourself ready for development, actions to consider for getting others to notice the changes you are making, and information on goal-setting that will increase the chances of your success, according to CCL research and practice (hint: don’t start with a goal). Finally, *Compass* looks ahead to the frontier, beyond the competencies we’re familiar with. Diverse fields such as neuroscience, network analysis, mindfulness practice, and others may generate competencies that become significant, even critical, to leader success in the future.
Part One
THE CORE FOUR

Of all the competencies leaders bring to bear on challenges and use to create results, CCL highlights four that are crucial to generating direction, alignment, and commitment. These are communication, influence, learning agility, and self-awareness. The fundamental nature of the core four is backed by CCL’s research and its experiences training thousands of leaders. These competencies are relevant to leadership at any stage in your career and at any level of an organization, no matter its size or status (commercial, educational, nonprofit, or community).

As described in this book’s Introduction, CCL believes leadership involves more than the person identified as the leader. It is a social process that enables individuals to work together to produce results they could never achieve working as individuals. Central to the process are the interactions and exchanges between leaders and group members and among group members themselves.

It’s not hard to see, then, why communication, influence, learning agility, and self-awareness are such critical competencies. Plainly, a leader cannot inspire commitment, encourage alignment, or guide others in a common direction without communicating to them. And leadership cannot emerge if leaders don’t remove obstacles to communication so that organizational members can interact freely to establish trust and collaboration. Influence operates similarly—without the skill to influence others and the willingness to be influenced, leaders are hard pressed to move people toward a common goal.

Self-awareness is somewhat more subtle but no less critical. To interact with others in ways that contribute to direction, alignment, and commitment, leaders need a sound idea of how others see them. Self-awareness isn’t navel gazing. On the contrary, the self in self-awareness is the self that
others identify as you. Your attention to how you affect others influences how others respond to you and helps others know what to expect from you.

Rounding out the core four, learning agility accompanies leaders throughout their careers. Leaders who embrace new experiences and who can learn quickly from them and apply those lessons to new situations and challenges will face fewer career roadblocks. No matter how insightful a strategy, unforeseen challenges always occur to potentially disrupt the leadership process. The ability to take what is learned in one situation and use it in a similar situation keeps leadership on track toward results that matter.
Learning Agility

Seek out diverse experiences and apply lessons learned to new challenges.

Learning agility is a constellation of behaviors that support curiosity, insight, resourcefulness, adaptability, and resilience. Beneath all these behaviors stands a single principle that has held up through years of research from CCL and others and untold generations of everyday routines and practice: experience is the best teacher.

Learning-agile leaders have a talent for knowing what to do when they don’t know what to do. They are committed to broadening their skills, and seeking new challenges makes them versatile and adaptive, capable of succeeding in a variety of situations. They often develop a reputation for leading the organization through changing, ambiguous times. Further, learning-agile leaders quickly grasp the lessons of experience. They can rapidly size up a new situation, compare it with previous experiences, and apply what they have learned previously that is analogous to the current circumstances.

Learning agility doesn’t draw only from successful experiences. Leaders who become learning agile also take lessons from setbacks, hardships, and failures. Every experience is fodder for development in the eyes of the learning-agile leader. And, as we see when we visit the lab of James Lovelock, the benefits of learning agility aren’t confined to corporations.
Leadership in Action

Thirty years after their initial publication, the ideas presented in James Lovelock’s *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* finally percolated into the mainstream of environmental science. In his book, Lovelock explores the idea of the planet Earth as a kind of “super-organism,” a unified system of interdependent cycles. The idea is that the super-organism is resilient and ever-changing, but too rapid a change can break down enough smaller systems that the major system itself is thrown into collapse. This interpretation of ecology is now so widely accepted that it’s a part of popular culture. What gave Lovelock the idea?

In brief, it was the sum of Lovelock’s desire to learn new things. Fantasy and eco-thriller author Ian Irvine describes how Lovelock began his scientific career directly out of secondary school with an apprenticeship program at a firm of consulting chemists. He was able to earn a scholarship with his work and then studied at the University of Manchester, where his work was so exact (a credit to his apprenticeship) that he was initially suspected of cheating. His dedication to exact measurement led him to invent the electron capture detector, a device that can detect tiny particles in the atmosphere. But it was his observations about the atmosphere of Mars that led to his theory about the Earth as a super-organism.

When asked by NASA how scientists could go about testing whether life existed on Mars, he suggested measuring the chemistry of the Martian atmosphere. Because living ecologies create a broad, dynamic mix of gases, the relative nothingness of the Martian atmosphere suggested no life existed there.

Lovelock applied that idea to Earth’s ecology and developed his Gaia theory. Initially published for a layman audience, the theory was scoffed at by scientists. But decades later, in the face of rapidly expanding ecological change on earth, the Gaia theory commands much more respect.
What High Performance Looks Like

Learning-agile leaders

- seek experiences that might change their perspective or provide an opportunity to learn
- are willing to be novices, open to unexpected learning, and motivated to explore and discover
- are observant of their surroundings and pay attention to what they’re learning
- look for patterns and potential order among their experiences
- change their behavior in response to feedback
- practice new skills, trying them out and refining them
- often outperform peers
- adapt well to working globally
- are seen as adaptive, reflective, perseverant, self-aware, quick studies, and emotionally competent
- use tools or frameworks that help them make sense of what they’re learning
- surround themselves with people who can provide help and guidance
- develop and test personal theories against the situations they experience

What’s in Your Way?

Many organizations see learning agility as a sign of potential in a leader. If you struggle to adopt learning-agile habits, you can hurt your chances of advancing in your career and miss opportunities that
often go to people identified as capable of taking on roles with important responsibilities. A reputation for not adapting quickly and easily to new challenges and having a limited comfort zone might keep you in narrowly defined roles. Take a look at the following list and mark what you think might prevent you from honing your learning agility.

- You avoid challenges to your knowledge or skills.
- You’re not willing to make the effort to learn.
- You’re in a later stage of your career and don’t feel a pressing need to learn.
- You have yet to experience failure and the learning that can come from it.
- You’re overconfident or complacent.
- You prefer stability and comfort.
- You take on learning assignments that pull you away from your core career path.
- You draw the wrong conclusions from your experiences.
- You apply lessons from one situation to a new situation that don’t fit.
- You spend too much time learning and not doing.
- You respond defensively or dismissively to feedback.

Coach Yourself

Developing learning agility requires a willingness to immerse yourself in new and challenging situations that broaden and expand your experiences. Create goals in areas that are unfamiliar to you and then work hard at learning the lessons those experiences offer. These questions can help you focus on such areas.

- What are your most significant learning experiences and what lessons did you learn from them? How can you apply them?
How could a mentor help you learn and grow? To whom can you turn for assistance and advice?

Reflect on past struggles in your life and ask yourself what you need to learn to meet similar difficulties in the future? What were you missing in the past?

What new experiences would help you to learn and develop what you need to thrive in the future? How can you challenge yourself to get that experience?

Do you have a support network? Who will tell you the truth even if it’s unpleasant to hear? Who values you for who you are and wants to help you become who you want to be?

Do you set aside time to reflect? Is reflection part of your daily or weekly routine? How can you plan for it and make it a habit?

What is your greatest achievement and what skills did you use to accomplish it? How can you leverage these skills in other areas?

**Improve Now**

**Break up your routine.** Doing things the same way repeatedly, even if it works, is a detriment to learning and growth. Intentionally experiment with new ways of doing things. Observe what happens and monitor your results, including what doesn’t work. Once new habits start to form, continue to push yourself to reinvent.

**Commit to reflecting on and monitoring your progress and learning.** Make it a part of your work—put it on your calendar so you can make sure it happens.

**Seek feedback.** Get observations from others on your behavior to identify strengths and weaknesses. Listen openly and ask questions to deepen your understanding. Accept what others perceive as their reality and show your appreciation for their input and guidance.

**Learn your preference for how you accept, understand, and use information.** Do you talk your ideas out with others, or do you prefer to reflect on them until you feel ready to communicate them to others?
you rely on pro-and-con lists to make decisions or do you contemplate the potential reactions from others to your decision? Being aware of your preferences will help you decode the reactions others have toward you. If you prefer to reflect before acting, for example, some people may perceive you as indecisive. But you aren’t—you just prefer to fine-tune your decisions before publicizing them. Let people who consider you indecisive know your preference so they can adapt their perspective.

**Challenge yourself.** Identify your growth needs, then intentionally immerse yourself in situations that will push you to your limits in these areas. This may be uncomfortable and frightening at first, but it is important for you to reframe these threats as opportunities if you hope to gain the most learning from them.

**Take risks.** Some leaders are perfectly content to accept the status quo and remain safe within their comfort zone. In order to become a learning-agile leader, you must be willing to accept new roles, pursue new opportunities, advocate for the unusual, and risk the possibility of failure.

**Challenge the status quo.** Move beyond business-as-usual to discover new and unique ways of doing things. Innovating new practices requires considerable bravery and ingenuity but is essential to become a high-performing, learning-agile leader.

**Seek developmental relationships.** Search for members of your organization who exemplify expertise in the areas you wish to develop. Ask them their experiences in those areas, what they learned, and how they used those lessons in other areas. Use what they say to form your own path toward learning agility.

**Pursue lifelong development.** Identify your personal and professional goals, and regularly assess whether you are making progress toward achieving them. Stagnation can derail even the most promising leaders from achieving their full potential.

**Keep a leadership journal.** Opportunities for learning and practice can reveal themselves through journaling, and recording your experiences is an excellent way to capture your feelings and thoughts as you are learning. Take time to jot down your thoughts and feelings in a journal when you meet a new situation so you can review it later—much like looking at an old picture.
Developmental Opportunities

- Ask your manager for a special assignment for which he or she feels you are qualified but that also challenges your skills and knowledge. Make a list of the skills the assignment requires and candidly measure yourself on each one.

- Seek an additional job assignment that adds diversity to your work or requires you to work in a completely different context from what you’re used to.

- Start a new group, club, or team at work based on a common interest in exploring a new topic or practice.

- Take over a project that is in trouble or failing.

- Lead a benchmarking team that visits and learns from other organizations.

- Work in a short-term assignment at another office, in another region, or in another country.

Activity Center

Review and download these activities you can use for your development or with your team from this book’s resource page at www.ccl.org/compassbook.

Learning Agility: Find a Mentor

Learning Agility: Create a Mind Map
Related Competencies

- Flexibility
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Resourcefulness
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Development
- Tolerating Ambiguity

Resources


Think of a competency as an interrelated set of knowledge, skills, and perspectives. For example, think about what it takes to delegate well: the knowledge of who is capable of doing what work and who can be counted on; the skill to give clear direction to people with differing knowledge and abilities to process information; and the perspective that you don’t need to do everything yourself.

The key idea here is that a competency goes beyond an isolated behavior. A competency serves leaders in broad areas such as strategic thinking, delegation, personal resilience, resolving conflict, leading upward, and others. Developing a competency takes time. And some of what you develop isn’t visible to others, at least in the beginning. Other people might not notice right away the changes you’ve made—but as you expose yourself to more and various situations, your grasp of how to exploit your knowledge, skills, and aptitude becomes apparent. Other people will take notice and respond to your actions, and through that process of recognition, action, and response, leadership takes hold.

Most of the competencies covered in this section are drawn from several of CCL’s assessments, which have been used with more than half a million leaders. A few additional competencies, based on the fact that CCL research has highlighted their importance to effective leadership performance, were added for readers who want to develop in an important area not measured in a CCL assessment (feedback, for example). Whether represented in a CCL assessment or revealed in CCL research, all of the competencies in this section are important for your leadership development and affect your ability to lead.
Make thoughtful decisions about how to invest your time.

You can’t control time, but you can control how you spend it. Unfortunately, in today’s helter-skelter business environment, that’s not easy to do. For example, a recent CCL study discovered that managers, executives, and other business people who carry smartphones for work report interacting with the office up to 13.5 hours every workday (Deal, 2015).

To attain a meaningful sense of balance, focus on looking within rather than measuring yourself against others or copying their tactics. It’s your personal solution that will result in the kind of rejuvenating and invigorating results of a balanced life. Though balance is difficult to attain and hard to sustain, make it a goal and reap the benefits of a life (including a career) lived in harmony with your personal values and aspirations. Take a look at Jeff Stibel, CEO of Dun and Bradstreet Credibility Corp. His story exemplifies the fact that finding and maintaining balance in life isn’t a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all proposition. It’s a habit that changes over time.
Leadership in Action

Stibel’s 2012 article, “Entrepreneurs Don’t Need Work-Life Balance,” argues that inventive, ambitious people have to surrender “trivial pursuits” in order to realize their dreams. However, later in the article, Stibel suggests something different: “I may be an entrepreneur, but in my family our kids come first.” He mentions that he has left board meetings in progress in order to return home and care for his children. A more accurate title for his article might have been, “At This Time in My Life, My Children and My Work Are My Top Priorities.”

Only two years later, Joe Robinson’s article in Entrepreneur showed how Stibel’s attitude had changed further. Under the headline “The Secret to Increased Productivity: Taking Time Off,” he is quoted as saying, “If you overtax your heart, the next thing you need to do is relax, or you’ll die. The same thing is true of the brain.” During the time between the 2012 article and the 2014 interview, Stibel’s personal priorities had shifted. He recalibrated his work habits to find a new balance. That is the real nature of balance as a habit: You don’t settle on one routine and depend on it forever. You recreate balance over and over again.
What High Performance Looks Like

Leaders skilled at maintaining balance in their lives

- set priorities well and periodically reevaluate them
- set clear expectations with others regarding their priorities
- periodically evaluate how successfully priorities are met
- make the most of their available time
- are wary of the signs of burnout
- are flexible in responding to near-term demands on their time
- have a clear understanding of what their career means to them
- maintain activities and interests outside their career
- consider the trade-offs associated with their decisions about how to spend their time

What’s in Your Way?

Achieving and maintaining balance comes down to having control over how you choose to spend your time and having those choices align with your values. Common reasons that people struggle with balance are listed below. Note which of the items on the list are keeping you from realizing a fully balanced life.

- You don’t feel that you control how you spend your time.
- You don’t feel empowered to renegotiate your responsibilities to work and/or family.
- You feel an overinflated sense of obligation to either work or family (“I must . . . ”).
- You are undisciplined in managing your time.
- You refuse to compromise or make trade-offs.
- You try to do it all.
- You hold yourself to unreasonable standards.
- You’re following the example of your parents or other influential role models.
- You take on more than you are capable of doing.
- You refuse to say “no.”
- You underestimate the time it takes to complete work.
- You don’t manage others’ expectations of what you can/should do.
- You have difficulty switching between diverse responsibilities.
- You’re unsure how your values align with what you do.
- You try to do everything yourself instead of partnering with others or delegating.

Coach Yourself

To develop your ability to achieve and sustain balance, create goals in areas that prompt you to gain more understanding and control over how you manage your time. These questions can help you define areas to focus your development:

- Start by establishing a baseline. Ask yourself “How am I currently spending my time?” Literally map it out over a course of a week. Look for patterns and themes. What surprises you?
- Identify the gaps. Pinpoint the differences between how you currently spend your time and how you would ideally like to. How many gaps are there? Which are the largest? Which could be closed the most easily?
- Consider why the gaps exist in the first place. What choices have led you to this point? How do those choices align with your values? Why haven’t you addressed these gaps up to now?
Imagine a different reality. How might life be different for you and others if you found ways to exercise greater control over your time and live in greater accordance with your values?

Identify sources of support and inspiration. Who can understand your challenges and provide you with the needed encouragement and feedback to help you on your path to achieving greater balance?

**Improve Now**

**Establish control over your boundaries.** Individuals who exercise high boundary control actively choose how they divide their time and attention between work and family. They feel that they have the authority or ability to make these decisions and to manage any resulting trade-offs. Be deliberate. Say to yourself, “I now choose to…” when making decisions about how to allocate your time.

**Break a routine.** In order to commit to a change in how you choose to spend your time, you also need to acknowledge what you have to give up along with what you have to gain. Making a change may require you to let go of routines or ways of thinking that you have grown accustomed to. Breaking a routine can, of course, be difficult. Best to come to terms with this early on.

**Save your energy.** Reduce draining activities as much as possible. If you can, hire someone to run errands, cook, or clean if that feels like a burden to you. Do you really need to do all the things you are doing? Perhaps you can trade time with someone who likes to do the things you do not and vice versa.

**Conduct a values inventory.** Knowing your current values and their priorities can help you attain more consistency between your values and your behavior. Take a valid values assessment or, alternatively, brainstorm and rank-order a list of your own personal values. Do you see your values reflected in the way you spend your time? What’s congruent? What’s in conflict? What’s missing?

**Use technology to manage boundaries.** Used thoughtfully, technology can be used to either blur boundaries (staying in touch with home from
work or vice-versa) or keep them separate (different emails for personal and business use).

**Create or manage physical boundaries.** You can use physical objects to symbolize the degree to which you integrate boundaries or keep them separate. Do you have personal photos in your office? Do you have a stack of work papers on your desk at home?

**Be the boss of your calendar.** Block time for critical activities like planning, writing, exercising, and keeping personal appointments. Set aside time each day, week, or month for specific tasks.

**Set and manage expectations.** Indicate your preferences about how you manage your time to your boss, coworkers, family, etc. Communicate your various obligations to significant people in your life so that others have an adequate understanding of your situation.

**Smooth out role transitions.** Identify rituals that help you go from one role to another; for example, listening to music, having a cup of coffee or glass of wine, or clearing your desk. Even changing clothes can help signify to yourself and others that you have changed roles.

### Developmental Assignments

- Secure a mentor or coach to provide support. Achieving a sense of balance that fulfills you can be difficult. You will require emotional, cognitive and possibly even physical support along the way.

- Agree with others that you will take a respite from either (or both) family or work obligations to clear your head, get perspective, and recharge your batteries. Keep your word.

- Pursue a fresh assignment, which will provide you with an opportunity to start fresh in setting and maintaining expectations about managing your time.

- Delegate a time-consuming responsibility. Consider assigning it to someone who would appreciate the opportunity to expand their responsibilities and develop new skills.

- Switch responsibilities with someone where you will both feel like you are making more valuable use of your time.
Activity Center

Review and download these activities you can use for your development or with your team from this book’s resource page at www.ccl.org/compassbook.

Balance: Balancing Challenge
Balance: Balance for You, Too
Balance: Balancing Goals for Life

Related Competencies

Flexibility
Leading with Purpose
Resilience
Resourcefulness
Self-Awareness
Tolerating Ambiguity

Resources


Organizational boundaries of all kinds magnify the challenges of leadership. Borders separate functional areas and leader levels, and they divide clients, stakeholders, and employees. Outside of organizations, there are stark differences between gender, ethnicity, and ideologies. Geographical distance separates team members, cultures, and markets. While leaders were once called to operate within the confines of organizational structures, that isn’t the case anymore. Too often, leaders are constrained by their inability to see past the superficial boundaries within their organizations. While 86 percent of senior executives believe spanning boundaries is critical to business, according to Chris Ernst and Donna Chrobot-Mason, only 7 percent say they are very good at it.

Solving complicated organizational challenges requires collaboration across the organization, from top to bottom, and time zones and geography. High-level collaboration includes all of the organization’s diverse voices, including those outside the organization, such as customers, vendors, and other external stakeholders. Your skill as a boundary spanner makes a direct, visible, and measurable contribution to your organization and to your career. And while your boundary-spanning efforts might not be as dramatic as those of Kobi Tzafrir, his story shows how crossing lines opens the door to positive results—even if on a small scale.
Leadership in Action

Sometimes it seems like the boundaries we make between one another are insurmountable. But it doesn’t always require a lofty approach to chip away at the walls between human beings. In Tel Aviv, local chef Kobi Tzafrir tries to heal decades of political strife with a simple promotion at his restaurant: he will take 50 percent off the price of any meal shared by Jews and Arabs. The premise behind his idea is straightforward, explains multimedia journalist Daniella Cheslow. In Tzafrir’s words, “If you eat good hummus, you will feel love for the person who made it. You don’t want to stab him.”

The list of grievances between the two peoples is too long to detail here. At the time of Tzafrir’s promotion, the death toll on both sides from recent violence was in the dozens. These are not differences to be made light of, and yet there’s something refreshing about the offer of cheap food. It’s earnest, it’s charming, and it smells good.

Perhaps Tzafrir’s hummus promotion won’t be the key to a wide-reaching solution to Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But gathering people around a meal has a long history of fostering common feeling. Instead of throwing up his hands and leaving people to their discord, Tzafrir is doing what he can, where he is, with what he has: hummus. At the very least, he hopes to send a signal: “Maybe the idea will reach politicians that we’re fed up.”
What High Performance Looks Like

Leaders skilled at spanning boundaries

- see beyond their function or department
- build buffers to separate groups in conflict and allow them to interact safely to build trust and cooperation
- break down barriers between groups by representing all sides and facilitating information exchanges between them
- suspend boundaries by encouraging person-to-person engagements that establish collaborative relationships and alliances throughout the organization
- reframe boundaries to create a common purpose among different groups
- integrate different groups to share resources and contributions in service of a common good
- understand the politics of the organization and work accordingly
- balance what is good for their unit with the organization’s needs
- view problems or opportunities from various perspectives
- work with other leaders to develop a common vision or strategy
- consider the impact of their actions on the group, function, unit, and organization
- deal appropriately with contradictory requirements or organizational inconsistencies
- collaborate and listen well
- are open-minded toward differences and inclusive of others
What Gets in Your Way?

You will make a substantial impact as a leader by facilitating collaboration across dividing lines. If you aren’t a competent boundary spanner, you might struggle to create organizational benefits, have difficulty earning organizational support for your projects, and isolate yourself from key players or groups. You may miss opportunities to broaden your organizational perspective and be perceived as too narrowly focused on a specific function or group (a common career derailer). As a result, others may regard you as inefficient, ineffective, or interested only in pursuing an individual agenda. Those perceptions create conflicts that aren’t easily resolved and limit your career potential. Which of the following might interfere with your developing skill in spanning boundaries?

- You see people in other functions as competition.
- You haven’t established relationships with key people from other functions.
- Your organizational culture encourages competition between groups.
- Your functional experience is too narrow.
- Your organization rewards individual over collaborative achievement.
- Your organization’s structure does not lend itself to cross-functional collaboration.
- You overlook opportunities to collaborate.
- You fear reigniting historical tensions or conflict.
- You worry that other people might refuse to reciprocate.
- You’re concerned that other leaders will question your motives.
- You worry that you might be seen as intruding on other areas of the company.
- You don’t want your team to think you’re disloyal.
Coach Yourself

To develop your boundary-spanning ability, create goals in areas that require broad organizational participation, put you in a different leadership role with a different unit, or place you in other areas in which you have to reach across boundaries to achieve your goal. These questions can help you define such focus areas:

- What are your fears about working across boundaries? What is the worst that could happen if you reach out across or break down barriers?
- What are your organization’s unwritten rules about collaborating across boundaries? Are you making incorrect assumptions about who you can or cannot engage to seek new solutions?
- What are the barriers to collaboration between groups?
- Who in your organization spans boundaries well and what can you learn from them?
- Which senior managers are apt to encourage more cross-functional or cross-department collaboration?

Improve Now

Start small. Begin with a tactic or two that feels easy to introduce and execute. Don’t launch a boundary-spanning campaign. Begin where you can, find some allies, build on success, and learn from failure.

Wear the other shoe. During team meetings, make time to think and learn about other perspectives. Ask team members how other departments or divisions might think about the team’s work.

Hold skip-level meetings. Meet with people who report to your direct reports. Not only will you get to hear their perspectives and ideas, but you will communicate strategic information that will help them align their work with team and organizational goals. Make sure to inform your direct reports of your plan and its purpose.
Make time to connect. Reserve time in meetings, especially when conducted virtually, to build relationships and for personal updates.

Accept and extend invitations. Eat and drink with colleagues when you visit; be the host when they visit.

State your rules of engagement. Specify how your group and other groups will interact. Set realistic expectations with other groups about what your group can and can’t do.

Be a translator. Help groups uncover their work language—unique jargon, acronyms, and processes. Then translate for other groups.

Champion communities of practice. Provide time, space, and support for people with shared expertise or technical domains to share their knowledge and practices. Do likewise for affinity groups based on shared interests or demographics.

Access other groups. Invite other groups or leaders to join your team meeting, weigh in, and share their knowledge. Extend the practice to clients or suppliers.

Span to expand understanding. Choose one of your department’s customers or suppliers, identify a problem or concern they have, and agree to bring different teams together to solve it.

Developmental Opportunities

- Launch or serve on a cross-functional team or manage a virtual team whose members are distributed in different geographical regions.
- Bring together members of two groups to work on a single project and commit to delivering a specific result.
- Take a team assignment located in part of the organization with which you are unfamiliar.
- Join your organization to another from a different industry sector (for example, pharmaceutical and aerospace) to tackle a shared problem.
- Serve simultaneously on multiple projects.
- Seek highly visible experiences in which you work across organizational boundaries or must influence without authority.
Take on a boundary-spanning responsibility previously handled by your boss.

Ask your group to generate a new idea they want to implement. Move that idea through the organization and get the necessary support from others outside your group.

Activity Center
Review and download these short activities you can use for your development from the Compass resource page at www.compassbook.com.

*Boundary Spanning: A Plan to Span*
*Boundary Spanning: Powerful Questions*

Related Competencies
Conflict Resolution
Difference, Diversity, Inclusion
Influence
Organizational Savvy
Relationship Management
Systems Thinking

Resources


How does CCL define derailment? First, let’s talk about what derailment is not. Derailment doesn’t apply to leaders who have topped out in their company’s hierarchy or who elect to stay at a particular level. As a result of extensive research, CCL defines a derailed leader as one who, having reached the general manager level, is fired, demoted, or reaches a career plateau. Interestingly, organizations often see derailed managers as having high potential for advancement, based on a solid record of results. For the most part, these managers hold an established leadership position—until they derail.

In its 1989 book, *Preventing Derailment: What to Do Before It’s Too Late*, CCL characterized five key factors that seriously jeopardize leadership careers:

- difficulty adapting to change (the most frequent cause of derailment)
- difficulty building and leading a team
- failure to deliver business results
- lacking a broad strategic orientation
- problems with interpersonal relationships

These five factors hold up across several derailment studies on different genders, populations, geographical areas, and cultures. The importance of any one factor over another may shift but the five factors have remained consistent.

You can ruin your leadership position and run your career off the track in all kinds of ways. An ethical lapse, a public embarrassment that puts
your company in a bad light, or a decision that jeopardizes your organization’s sustainability are just a few examples. Most of this book focuses on success skills. Weakness in any one or even a few of these skills probably won’t end your career, but they will keep you from advancing as far and as fast as you want. A weakness in one of the five derailment factors, however, threatens more than your advancement. If you don’t recognize and correct these behaviors, you might well find yourself heading for a breakup with your organization.

Difficulty Adapting to Change

Cannot adjust to, learn from, and embrace change as necessary for future success.

Change seems to be the only constant in today’s organizational life, driven by shifts in external conditions and an organization’s response to those conditions. Because of the magnitude and frequency of the changes occurring within and affecting organizations, great value accrues to leaders who can dependably adapt to and embrace change. Leaders who resist change can stall their careers and even lose their leadership positions.

English philosopher Francis Bacon once said, “He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils, for time is the greatest innovator” (1597/1986). You need no further evidence of Bacon’s claim than to look into the last days of Blockbuster Entertainment.
Leadership Derailed

The popular wisdom about Blockbuster’s downfall holds that the once ubiquitous video rental chain simply failed to compete with fledgling upstart Netflix, allowing the smaller company to sweep its market. But there’s a little more nuance to it than that.

Greg Satell describes in a 2014 *Forbes* article that early in the emergence of Netflix, its founder Reed Hastings met with John Antioco, the CEO of Blockbuster, to propose a partnership. Had Antioco accepted the proposal, the companies would have comingled their business models. But Antioco didn’t recognize the nature of the competition Netflix embodied. Although Blockbuster had the advantage of instant gratification (customers could pick a movie and rent it instantly, rather than waiting for a disc to arrive by mail), Netflix had eliminated the major inconvenience of Blockbuster’s model: late fees. Those fees were responsible for a huge portion of Blockbuster’s profits and were also the worst part of the customer experience. By eliminating late fees, Netflix provided a preferable service.

Antioco’s second mistake was in implementing adaptations incorrectly, without recognizing the context. In 2006, he eliminated late fees and implemented an online rental service using Blockbuster’s library. But the short-term loss of profitability caused his investors and board of directors to revolt, and he was fired. A few years later, Blockbuster was no more.

It can’t be said that Antioco “didn’t know what he was doing.” He had a solid reputation after massive growth for Blockbuster under his leadership. But he didn’t perceive the actual problem: his company’s profit margin depended upon a policy that punished customers. By the time the necessary adaptation was obvious, it was too late to implement effectively, and that delay cost Blockbuster everything.
What Potential Derailment Can Look Like

Leaders unable to accept, embrace, and champion change

- are intimidated by change or challenge
- cannot extract lessons from change or turmoil
- don’t speak optimistically of change
- see challenges as problems rather than opportunities
- don’t see the need to change in order to stay relevant
- aren’t resilient
- don’t take risks
- are unrealistic about the consequences of change
- don’t believe they need to learn and grow
- believe most problems are difficult to solve
- don’t learn from mistakes
- don’t use feedback to adjust behavior

Why It Derails Careers

Leaders who resist change are perceived as stuck in their ways and unaware of the trends at play within the organization and the market in which it operates. Resistance to change can hamper the responses your direct reports and others take toward changing circumstances. Upper management may see such leaders as unready to step up to the next level of leadership—too stubborn, too fearful, perhaps even weak.

It might be difficult to get your emotional bearings as you deal with change and your development at the same time, but remain resilient and optimistic. If you falter, or worse, hide your head in the sand, you may
derail because your organization recognizes that change will happen with or without your resistance—and it’s easier for others to respond positively if resistant leaders are sidelined or let go. Review the following list and note the items that you recognize as contributing to your resistance to change.

- You feel little control over how your organization’s adaptations to change are implemented.
- You fear failure or losing your job.
- You entrench yourself in the same approach to work as you’ve always used, hoping to ride out the change.
- You embrace change but haven’t thought about nor developed the skills and aptitude that are needed in the post-change organization.
- You give up when the challenges brought about by change frustrate you.
- You don’t heed the lessons of your past experience with changes.
- You disagree with proposed actions to change.
- You lack the resources (time, people, money) to implement ways to capitalize on the changes affecting your organization.
- You worry that people see you as a chameleon, shifting your position to meet the needs of every situation.
- You’re wary of your team or organization losing momentum when it responds to change.
- You are impatient with the rate of change.
- You try to do too much too soon, failing to see the smart play or recognizing the real problem change poses.
- You underestimate the scope or complexity of change.
Avoid Derailing

To develop your capacity for accepting and adapting to change, create goals in areas that allow you to take controlled risks, that put you into unfamiliar situations or roles, that require you to bounce back from failures, or that otherwise force you to not rely only on your traditional strengths. These questions can help you focus on such areas:

- Can you think of a time when you made a change and it worked out for you? What was the change and what happened?
- What are your personal strategies for coping with change? Which ones are healthy? Unhealthy?
- Do you have colleagues who cope well with change? What are their strategies? How does their view of change differ from yours?
- What changes in your organization have you disagreed with? Rather than resistance, are there more constructive ways to voice your disagreement?
- What are the risks of resisting change when that change is inevitable?
- What resources or support would make change more acceptable to you?

Improve Now

Other chapters in this book will help you devise strategies, tactics, and actions you can take to shore up your capacity for change. Here are those of most direct use:

3. Learning Agility
10. Change Acceptance
11. Change Implementation
26. Flexibility
38. Resilience
40. Risk Taking
43. Strategic Planning and Implementation
48. Tolerating Ambiguity
Activity Center

Review and download these activities you can use for your development or with your team from this book’s resource page at www.ccl.org/compassbook.

Change Acceptance: You and Change
Change Acceptance: Your View of Change

Resources


By using this book you show some level of commitment to developing your leadership skills. CCL has long recognized that leaders develop through their experiences, on and off the job. But amassing myriad experiences doesn’t guarantee learning. For that you need to be intentional about how you use experience to learn, be ready to learn, and have a plan with achievable goals that excite you.

CCL’s research demonstrates that leaders develop when three elements comprise learning experiences: assessment, challenge, and support. Assessment is information that tells you about your current strengths and needs. Challenge refers to unfamiliar experiences that put you off balance and provoke different ways of thinking and acting. Support builds self-confidence by reassuring you about your strengths, current skills, and established ways of thinking and acting.

Almost all organizations change over time in response to a continually shifting environment. Most likely, you will need to make some changes yourself. You must develop competency in new areas to remain valuable to your organization and to help it achieve sustainability. The competencies crucial to effective leadership are also changing. New areas of research into neuroscience, network analysis, health and wellness, and others will no doubt highlight new lessons of experience.

Leadership acumen is continuously developed over a lifetime. Start with the right information, create goals that are meaningful and challenging, and gather the support you will need to make changes to your perspective and your performance. With this strong, balanced position as your base, you will be better prepared and able to learn and to develop the skills and perspectives that will enable you to adapt to changing circumstances and to leave a legacy that others can build on.
Learning from experience is the number one way that leaders develop. That claim is hard to dispute. CCL has researched the “lessons of experience” and their role in leadership development since its founding in 1970. From that work, CCL has organized five categories of key developmental experiences:

- **Challenging Assignments.** A job or a task within a job that stretches you because it is new, complex, or demanding. Examples include being responsible for turning around an operation in trouble and moving from a line to a staff position.

- **Other People.** Positive and negative role models—primarily bosses and others higher in the organization—who have strongly influenced your approach to management.

- **Hardships.** Setbacks and failures that spark a sense of loss and isolation. Examples include business mistakes, demotions and missed promotions, and personal life traumas.

- **Coursework.** Formal training and academic programs.

- **Personal Life Experiences.** Experiences that occur in your family, school, or community, and that vary in nature from difficult situations to inspirational ones.

**Key Principles in the Lessons of Experience**

Some people learn more from experience than others. Just because you’ve experienced a scenario that’s rich in learning opportunities doesn’t mean you’re going to learn from it. Developmental experiences are only as
rich as you make them. Themes that run through these five categories help focus leaders on what matters most when learning from experience.

**Experience is the best teacher.** We learn more about how to be an effective leader from our experiences on the job than from anywhere else. It counts for more than the guidance you get from your boss, colleagues, coaches, and others. And, as mentioned before, it counts for more than formal development, such as corporate training and academic courses. If you’re committed to developing yourself as a leader, embed challenging learning experiences into your everyday work.

**Not all experiences are equal.** Different experiences teach different things (hence the five categories). For example, if your job is redefined to one with a bigger scope, your experience in that expanded role might teach you about handling risk and how to balance the time you spend working with the time you spend on personal, family, and community pursuits. Or if you take on a different role at the same level in your organization, you have the chance to learn how to see things from a different perspective.

**Quality, quantity, and diversity of experiences enrich learning.** The bigger and broader your experiences, the bigger and broader the web of lessons they offer. Experiences that push you out of your comfort zone are good opportunities for development. For example, experiences that include unfamiliar responsibilities, are high stakes, demand influence without authority, and involve working across cultures make an experience high in learning value. Note, however, that if you have many experiences in a certain area, you may learn the same lessons over and over, but you can also acquire a depth of learning in that area.

**Your experiences are yours alone.** Though you might share an experience with others, (working on a team that’s developing a new product line, for example), what you draw from that experience is influenced by your perspective, your role, your openness to learning, and other factors. Certainly, your experiences can’t be reduced to any other person’s experiences. But at the same time —

**The value of experience is universal.** CCL’s research shows that the learning potential of experience is constant for all kinds of people—across gender, ethnicity, and culture. The power of learning from experience transcends demographic groups and lines on the map. It’s a fundamental quality of how we learn. Learning from experience is for anybody and everybody.
Misunderstanding Lessons of Experience

Just as there are themes and patterns to our developmental experiences, there are also misunderstandings that can hinder your learning from experiences. Try hard to set these preconceptions aside and open yourself to all of the developmental potential of experience.

Your resume is a complete record of your leadership experiences. Even though much leadership development derives from work experiences, there are uncountable opportunities to learn from your experiences outside the work place. It is often the case that nonwork settings yield lessons that you can adapt to the work challenges you encounter.

Learning on the job is mostly about learning to do your job more effectively. Different on-the-job experiences teach different things. They don’t just teach you about how to work better. CCL research shows that the lessons learned from any experience can potentially fall into three different “worlds”: the world of work, the world of people, and the world of self. While the lessons in these worlds emerge and are applied differently, they don’t always translate directly to work performance. Nevertheless, they ground you in understanding, self-awareness, and in other fundamental ways that enhance the lessons available from your experiences and that you can apply in a variety of circumstances.

Learning from experience is an event. Learning from experience is an ongoing process. You haven’t really learned a lesson until you apply it. Absent application, a lesson’s value lies unrealized. And because applying a lesson is itself a new experience, the potential to learn never ends. There’s always something that might be revealed or looked at in a different light.

Readiness

You may sincerely want to develop your leadership acumen, but if you approach potential learning experiences without clear expectations, goals, or a plan to put what you learn into practice, then you may not be ready for the lessons embedded in those experiences. Increase the learning potential of experience by clarifying expectations and by understanding and increasing your motivation to learn.
Think about What You Need to Learn

Spend some time thinking about your development needs, both for your immediate circumstances and for your long-term career goals. Think hard about connecting your personal leadership development goals to your organization’s strategic goals. Take a little time to consider your level of enthusiasm for taking on a developmental experience. Reflect on the following questions to connect your development to organizational goals, to measure your enthusiasm, and to understand your motivation to learn:

- Do you struggle with motivating your employees?
- Do you want better communication between yourself and your staff?
- Do you have trouble delegating?
- Does your manager discount your ideas?
- Have you received feedback from others that contradicts the way you see yourself?
- Has a performance review indicated a serious weakness?
- Are you looking to advance in your current organization?
- Do you want to move to another company in a different industry?
- Have you been thinking about setting up your own business?
- Do you think about leaving the corporate world and contributing your talents to a nonprofit organization?
- Do you want to move from the nonprofit world to the corporate arena?
- What skills will you need for the future you have in mind for yourself?
  - Will you need to be very accomplished in selling yourself and your ideas?
  - Will you need to be able to elicit the highest contribution of other people?
  - Will you need to quickly establish rapport and trust with people you work with but never see in person?
  - Will you need to hone your ability to prioritize tasks and projects?
Motivate Yourself to Learn

One way you can increase your enthusiasm for tackling developmental experiences is to reflect on the benefits. Think about how such experiences connect with your career interests, professional concerns, and personal growth. Consider your personal values and how they play out in your work life and your personal life. Check the items below that reflect aspects of what motivates you to develop (or add your own statements to this list).

- I value development.
- I want to maximize my potential as a leader.
- I have ambitions to rise in my organization and to succeed in my career.
- I want to learn new techniques for presenting my ideas to upper management.
- I can benefit from learning how others have communicated and led major organizational initiatives.
- I want to know how I can leverage my individual strengths to be more effective in my job.
- I need time to focus on myself, my personal growth, and my career goals.
- New experiences will make me more marketable inside and outside of my organization.
- I could use more effective strategies for motivating my employees.
- I want to learn how to influence others and to lead in situations where I don’t have authority.
- I could use more effective strategies for dealing with my boss.

Another strategy to developing readiness to learn and develop is for you to consider the implications of not participating. CCL research shows that leaders who resist making changes or ignore development needs risk derailing their careers. Consider the following questions to shore up your motivation to learn:
- Am I relying on my track record for promotion?
- Do I depend too much on my strongest skills?
- Does the feedback I’ve received about my leadership skills match the way I see myself?
- Can I build an effective team and lead it to its goal?
- If I continue with the same management tactics I use now, will my team continue to perform well?
- Can I work effectively within my organization without learning to understand diverse viewpoints, personalities, and communication styles?
- Can I afford not to develop a broader understanding of my organization’s strategy?
- Can I succeed by relegating interpersonal skills to a lower priority than technical skills?

Assessment, Challenge, and Support

During the course of your career, you will have many different kinds of developmental experiences. All of those different experiences follow a common path—they are avenues toward personal and professional growth. CCL believes there are three key elements that drive leadership development: assessment, challenge, and support. Assessment is information, presented formally or informally, that tells you where you are now; what are your current strengths, what development needs are important in your current situation, and what is your current level of effectiveness. Challenge refers to elements of an experience that are new and that may call for skills and perspectives not currently available to you, or it can refer to elements in an experience that create imbalance for you and provide an opportunity to question established ways of thinking and acting. Support is elements of an experience that enhance self-confidence and provide reassurance about your strengths, current skills, and established ways of thinking and acting.
On Your Way

Learning from experience is your best chance for developing the skills you need to promote direction, alignment, and commitment in your team and among employees and groups across your organization. In the best circumstances, you want to have a variety of experiences to gain a broad and deep source of skill and knowledge. That way, you are prepared to lead in any situation—even a situation you’ve never experienced before.

Learning from experience doesn’t happen without your attention and action. Think about the kinds of experiences you need to develop the skills that will sustain your career and your organization. Seek out those experiences. And make yourself ready to learn. Pay attention to what motivates you to learn, and use your motivation to make the most of learning opportunities. When you’re faced with difficult circumstances, use your motivation to transform difficulty into lessons. And then apply those lessons to new situations you encounter.

Think carefully about the three elements that comprise learning: assessment, challenge, and support. Make sure to include all of them in preparing yourself for development. Know where you stand and what you need, find experiences that offer the potential for learning how to do what you need or that bolster your current skills, and seek others for support and encouragement—and feedback—as you develop yourself into the leader you want to be.

Resources


ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) is a top-ranked, global provider of leadership development. By leveraging the power of leadership to drive results that matter most to clients, CCL transforms individual leaders, teams, organizations, and society. Its array of cutting-edge solutions is steeped in extensive research and experience gained from working with hundreds of thousands of leaders at all levels. Ranked among the world’s top five providers of executive education by the Financial Times and in the Top 10 by Bloomberg BusinessWeek, CCL has offices in Greensboro, NC; Colorado Springs, CO; San Diego, CA; Brussels, Belgium; Moscow, Russia; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Johannesburg, South Africa; Singapore; Gurgaon, India; and Shanghai, China.
CCL PRESS IDEAS INTO ACTION SERIES

The Ideas into Action Series of books draws on the practical knowledge that the Center for Creative Leadership continues to develop in its work with leaders at all levels and in all types of organizations. The purpose of the series is to provide leaders with specific advice on how to complete a developmental task or solve a leadership challenge. Books in the series (more than 60 at present) cover a wide range of topics, including feedback, coaching, team leadership, conflict, influence, resilience, learning from experience, and others.

Ordering Information

To get more information, to order books in the Ideas into Action Series, or to find out about bulk-order discounts, please contact us by phone at 336-545-2810 or visit our online bookstore at http://solutions.ccl.org/books/ccl-press-publications/ideas-into-action-guidebook-series.
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The Activity Center contains links to more than 100 worksheets, exercises, and other helpful resources to develop individual skills and competencies. The Activities Center can be accessed at www.ccl.org/compassbook. Following are several examples.
Here’s a quick and easy exercise that challenges you to find your own personal balance. Draw three boxes on a large sheet of paper. Label one box “Work,” one “Health,” and one “Personal.” Divide each box into quadrants. Label each quadrant as follows:

- **Goals**
- **Successes**
- **Opportunities**
- **Challenges**

Fill in the appropriate information in the quadrants for each box, except for the Successes part. You will fill that out as you use this tool. Here’s how you use the information you have compiled.

1. At the beginning of every day, review your Goals for all three boxes: Work, Health, and Personal.
2. At the end of each day, record your Successes for that day. You don’t need to re-create a new set of boxes every day—just add to the Successes quadrant each day. If it gets filled, then you can draw up a new box with quadrants.
3. At the beginning of each week: (a) review your Opportunities for all three boxes and decide if some are ready to become Goals, and (b) review your Challenges and put a plan together to address them.
4. At the end of every month review all the boxes. Are you balancing the amount of time you spend in each area of your life (Work, Health, and Personal)? Are you balancing the number of Successes you are having with each? Are you addressing a balanced number of Challenges in each of the three boxes? Continue with this assessment and begin another set of boxes each month until you are satisfied that you are balancing your thinking and your actions.
We all have embedded assumptions about people from different walks of life. Think about your assumptions. Listed are the descriptions of several people. Do this activity quickly; don’t take time to think about your response. What’s the first thing that comes to mind when you read these words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>What Comes to Mind First?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-year-old white male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-year-old Japanese man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight woman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman with a scarf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavily pierced 18-year-old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud white male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud black male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet oriental female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian living in Alabama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro basketball player</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After you have completed the activity, think about what came to mind first. How do you feel about your thoughts? Do your thoughts lead to exclusionary practices? What do you think you need to do next? If you would like to discuss this further, schedule a meeting with your manager.
Continuing research from the Center for Creative Leadership reports what kind of actions contribute to skillful leadership—a leadership that generates direction, alignment, and commitment among managers, peers, employees, and senior leaders. Guiding a team or an entire organization toward these outcomes requires an interrelated set of knowledge, skills, and perspectives (commonly called competencies) that address predictable and unpredictable situations.

This book is for leaders and managers looking to develop specific competencies in themselves and others. It is also for training and development professionals, whether inside companies or working as independent consultants, who can use the book as a coaching tool and as a blueprint for leader development plans.

“Leadership is navigation—lots of choices, hazards, and currents. The future will require great clarity of direction, but great flexibility of execution. You will need this Compass to find and hold your clarity.”

—Bob Johansen, Distinguished Fellow, Institute for the Future and author of The New Leadership Literacies

“You’ll want a copy of Compass! The authors have done a brilliant job of combining a ‘self-help’ book for leaders with a guide for professionals who are in the business of developing leaders. As a leader, the book is like having your own personal coach with its wealth of insights, self-reflective questions, and useful online tools. As an industrial/organizational psychologist, I appreciate the years of research that underpin the ideas and the potential to apply the many resources for executive leadership programs I develop and deliver.”

—Vicki L. Flaherty, Ph.D., IBM Executive Leadership Development