

Lesson 3

Significance of Self-Leadership

At the end of the lesson, the students should be able to:

1. Explain and appreciate the significance of self-leadership
2. Enumerate the ways to develop self-leadership, and
3. Explain some of the strategies on how to improve self-leadership

Introduction

Self-leadership is important because it helps an individual accomplish his/her professional goals and to be a good leader to others. Good leaders must have the ability to lead by example. It allows a leader to influence others to take action so that the goals of the organization are met.

Self-leadership is important as a foundation for personal, team, business, and strategic leadership; and it serves as a starting point for any organizational or leadership development program. It helps a leader to think effectively, behave congruently, and relate empathetically (Bryant and Kazan, 2012, p. 2).

In addition to helping an individual achieve his/her personal goals, for their life and career, the benefits of self-leadership include:

1. **Makes a person more efficient and productive**
2. **Keeps a person motivated and accountable**
3. **Builds stronger relationships with co-workers**
4. **Inspires others to follow a person's lead**

Makes a person more efficient and productive

An individual with strong self-leadership skills can manage their time effectively and stay organized in their work. This often results in the company benefiting from increased productivity and high-quality work.

Keeps a person motivated and accountable

A person with a strong sense of motivation will push through challenges when they arise, which can result in achieving more than a person thought he/she could. Being accountable for one's actions requires a person to be honest when taking self-inventory and provides him/her the opportunity to learn and develop new skills.

Builds stronger relationships with co-workers

Co-workers will be more likely to view a person with strong self-leadership as someone they can count on to complete group tasks and projects, while supervisors and managers will appreciate his/her ability to be productive without having to be micromanaged.

Inspires others to follow a person's lead

Great leadership begins with self-leadership skills. Supervisors and managers typically have minimal oversight, if an individual is in a position of leadership, he/she needs to have such skills to be able to plan and prioritize his/her tasks and remain dedicated to completing their work. Showing strong self-leadership skills has a positive influence on encouraging co-workers to be more proactive and productive.

Development of Self-Leadership

Self-leadership can be understood as the process of identifying your desired experiences and intentionally directing and motivating yourself toward them (Manz, 1986). Developing self-

leadership skills therefore requires **understanding the concept itself and its elements, developing self-knowledge, cultivating self-monitoring habits, and deliberate practice.**

- **Understanding the concept**

Self-leadership determines what we do, why, and how we do it. It involves self-knowledge, goal-setting, and self-management process. Self-knowledge implies insight into our values, strengths, personality, talents, skills, and passions. Based on our self-knowledge, in particular our values, we can identify our desired experiences and set goals around them. Self-management can be understood as strategies to facilitate behaviors that reduce discrepancies from standards (Manz, 1986).

- **Developing self-knowledge**

Understanding your personality traits provides insights into your tendencies to think and act in certain situations. Moreover, if you know your values, you understand what matters most to you, not in the sense of a particular outcome, but rather, in the sense of how you want to live (Neuhaus, 2012). Understanding your values empowers you to make better decisions and implement them more effectively.

- **Understanding and identifying desired experiences**

Having a solid understanding of yourself equips you to articulate goals about experiences that truly matter to you. It enables you to pursue them in a way that is easy and enjoyable and leaves you with a sense of meaning and purpose. This means that your motivation will be stronger and longer lasting, and your chances of achieving your goal will be greater and you are more likely to feel truly satisfied once you do so (Neuhaus, 2012).

- **Cultivating self-monitoring habits**

To fulfill the roles of both the leader and the one being led, one requires the ability to metacognition. During metacognition, the thinker takes a diffused perspective of themselves as though they were observing themselves from a distance. This allows them to monitor themselves and evaluate their actual performance against their desired goal performance. It enables them to manage themselves which is a process necessary throughout the self-leadership journey (Neuhaus, 2012).

- **Deliberate practice**

Like any other skill, the more these strategies and behaviors are practiced, the more they will be cultivated. The key aspect of developing self-leadership skills lies in continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of the relevant strategies (Neuhaus, 2012).

Simple Ways to Lead Yourself

There are three categories for improving self-leadership: Cognitive, behavioral, and motivational strategies. Here are some of the strategies that can help you lead yourself and improve your self-leadership (Neuhaus, 2012).

1. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive self-leadership strategies enable you to identify ways to implement goal behaviors and efficiently find solutions to overcome obstacles and setbacks (Neuhaus, 2012). This includes:

- Establishing connections between your values and self-leadership.
- Identifying your strengths and weaknesses.
- Identifying desired experiences.
- Challenging limiting beliefs.

- Identifying cognitive dissonance (*State of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioral decisions and attitude change*) and attempting to eliminate it.
- Practicing ongoing positivity.
- Visualizing goal behavior.
- Cultivating the ability to make good decisions.
- Identifying and managing emotional triggers.
- Developing a growth mindset, and
- Setting clear intentions

2. Behavioral Strategies

Behavioral self-leadership strategies allow you to implement the relevant plethora of management actions required to pursue your desired outcome (Neuhaus, 2012). This includes:

- Cultivating self-efficacy.
- Building habits.
- Harnessing environmental resources.
- Setting and optimizing goals.
- Establishing goal plans.
- Self-cueing.
- Frequently reviewing progress, and
- Establishing accountability from yourself and others.

3. Motivational Strategies

Motivational strategies facilitate a continuous drive toward goal behaviors and sufficient capacity for them (Neuhaus, 2012). This includes:

- Identifying internally rewarding actions to pursue your goals.
- Maximizing autonomy, competence, and sense of relatedness for your goals.
- Managing willpower.
- Cultivating a process focus.
- Identifying and celebrating wins, and
- Cultivating grit.