



Maximize Your Investment in SLII®

SLII®, the most widely taught leadership model in the world, changed the way people lead. Now, The Ken Blanchard Companies® offers **Optimal Motivation® (OM®)**, a program based on award-winning research that will change the way leaders think about motivation. OM and SLII are the two sides of the leadership coin—each is vital on its own and made stronger by the other.

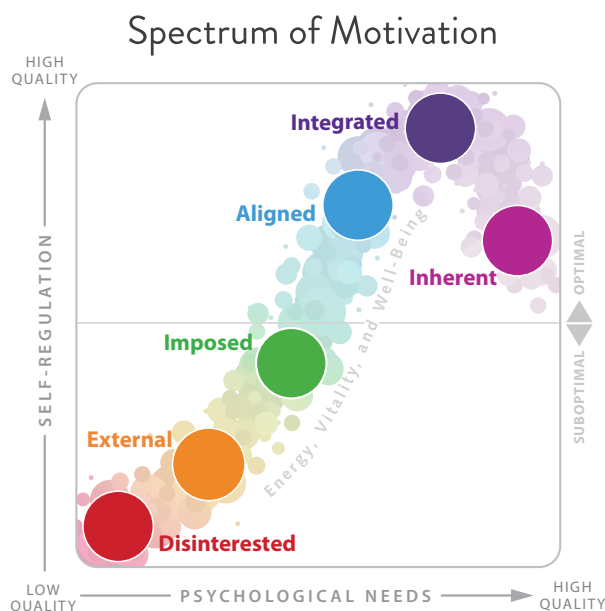
OM and SLII share an important philosophy: Leading is not something you do to people; it is something you do with people.

At the core of both OM and SLII is a deeply held set of values that considers employees' psychological health and well-being a mandate of leadership. These values underlie leadership actions that lead to increased productivity and long-term organizational health but, more importantly, they are foundational to the ethical treatment of people, which is what leads to flourishing in the workplace.

Why Optimal Motivation Is Important

Motivation is at the heart of everything employees do—or don't do—yet is one of the most misunderstood concepts in leadership. Without an understanding of the true nature of human motivation, organizations risk millions of dollars on employee-engagement initiatives, reward-and-recognition schemes, retention programs, customer service programs, and performance management systems. Perhaps most regrettable are the lost opportunities for generating creativity, innovation, and a thriving workplace.

Research tells us that people thrive when their psychological needs for Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence (ARC) are satisfied.



Autonomy

People need to perceive that they have choices. They need to feel that what they are doing is of their own volition, that they are the source of their actions.

Relatedness

People need to care about and be cared about by others without concerns about ulterior motives. They need to feel they are contributing to something greater than themselves.

Competence

People need to feel effective at meeting everyday challenges and opportunities by demonstrating skills relevant to the task or goal. They need to experience a sense of growth and learn to flourish.

OM's Spectrum of Motivation model describes a framework for understanding the nature of motivation and prescribes strategies for satisfying people's psychological needs.

The model builds on scientific evidence for motivation possibilities beyond the simplistic duality of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

The model describes the six Motivational Outlooks

Science reveals six motivational outlooks that people might experience at work every day. Three are optimal motivational outlooks—aligned, integrated, and inherent—resulting in the positive implications of intrinsic motivation and in two cases, delivering potentially greater benefits. Three are suboptimal motivational outlooks—disinterested, external, and imposed—resulting in the negative implications of extrinsic motivation.

The model prescribes action

People can experience high-quality psychological needs of ARC by shifting from a suboptimal to an optimal motivational outlook using the MVPs of high-quality self-regulation: mindfulness, values, and purpose strategies. Leaders can learn how to facilitate this shift.

*The leader's
role is to
activate
optimal
motivation*

OM training teaches leaders and individuals how to identify motivational outlooks, shift to an optimal outlook, and reflect on feelings that sustain the positive energy, vitality, and well-being that come from high-quality motivation.

The Powerful OM-SLII Connection

OM leverages the investment organizations have made in SLII training. When SLII leaders recognize how they can integrate what they learn in OM, they become even more committed to using the three skills of SLII to help activate optimal motivation.

The three skills of a SLII:

Goal Setting



Diagnosing



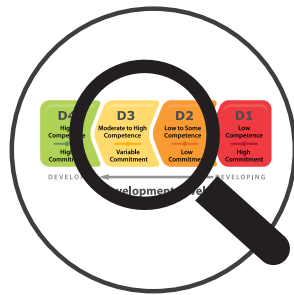
Matching





Goal Setting

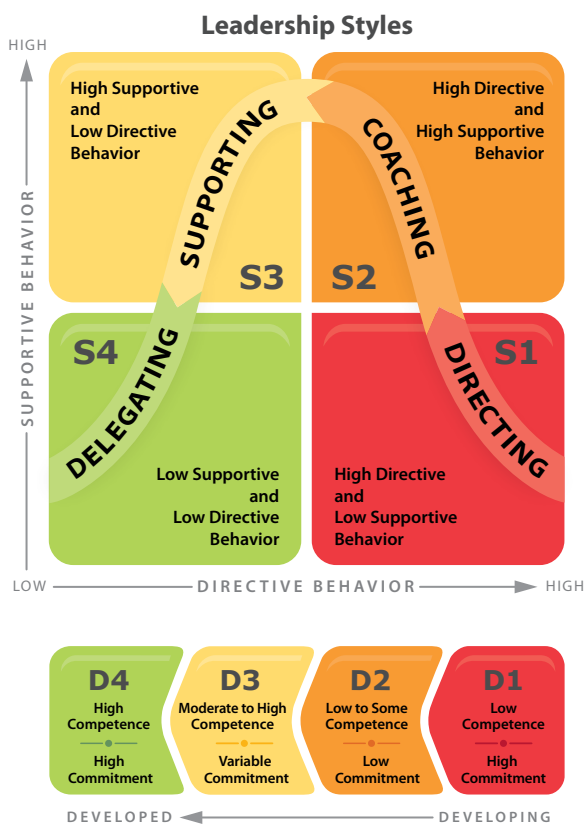
SLII begins with having agreement on a SMART goal—where the “M” stands for Motivating. A key principle of OM is that the quality of the goal is as important as its form. Does the goal promote a suboptimal or an optimal motivational outlook? Through OM, leaders learn how to facilitate a motivational outlook conversation to help people identify their motivational outlook for the goal, facilitate their shift to an optimal motivational outlook, and reframe the goal, if necessary.



Diagnosing

The goal of SLII is for leaders to guide individuals from the D1 to the D4 level of development by matching the appropriate leadership style for the individuals' development on specific tasks or goals. Development levels are determined by competence (one of the three psychological needs) and commitment (low- or high-quality motivation).

SLII leaders armed with the knowledge of OM realize they are more likely to guide people's progress successfully through the development continuum when people are optimally motivated.



Research shows that when individuals have a suboptimal motivational outlook on a task or goal, they are less likely to achieve it. Their low-quality self-regulation makes it challenging to sustain the positive energy, vitality, and well-being necessary for long-term efforts. This is why so many people get stuck at D2, feel overwhelmed, and often quit. The leader's responsibility is to help people progress from D1 to D4 with an optimal motivational outlook.

The leader may discover that a person who's stuck at a D2 or D3 development level is saddled with a suboptimal motivational outlook. Through a motivational outlook conversation, the leader can help individuals align with values, connect to purpose, and, ultimately, experience positive energy, vitality, and well-being.

It is possible, however, for people to progress through

the continuum to D4 with a suboptimal motivational outlook. Consider the salesperson who makes her numbers because she wants the reward, incentive, or status that comes from achieving the goal, or the administrative assistant who is an expert at maintaining her manager's calendar but lives in fear of incurring his wrath if she makes a mistake. So, while individuals can reach D4 with suboptimal motivation, they will be unlikely to sustain their success or will potentially suffer negative consequences with their mental and physical health or their relationships with others.

A core concept of OM is that people are always motivated. What matters most is the quality of their motivation. OM assumes that people are motivated in every development level—the question is *why*. What is their reason, or motivational outlook, for pursuing the task or goal? The answer will determine the quality of their experience along the continuum from D1 to D4 and their potential for being able to reach D4 and sustain commitment.

SLII leaders with the skill of OM are better equipped to accurately diagnose a person's development level. They are also able to conduct conversations that help people traverse the development continuum with high-quality and sustainable motivation.



Matching

At the heart of SLII's enduring success is the revelation that one leadership style does not fit all situations. A leader needs to flexibly use the four leadership styles to match people's development level on a specific task or goal so that they can progress from D1 to D4.

Leaders who use SLII's developmental approach by matching their leadership style to a person's development level help to support that individual's psychological needs for ARC:

- When people become self-reliant on a task or goal, they are able to make their own decisions and provide their own direction and support. The development from D1 to D4 is a journey toward autonomy.
- When individuals work with a manager who collaboratively diagnoses their development level and provides the appropriate leadership style, there is a good chance they are experiencing a sense of relatedness. Leadership Styles 2 and 3 provide individuals with high support, which obviously reinforces relatedness. But even Styles 1 and 4, with low supportive behaviors, can create a sense of partnership. When leaders demonstrate the sensitivity to provide the type of leadership people need when they need it, they are providing high socio-emotional support, which is essential for people to experience relatedness.
- When people develop from D1 to D4, they are satisfying their need for competence—a key indicator of progressing along the continuum. SLII's definition of competence is not as broad as OM's, which includes mastering life's circumstances in general. However, when people perceive they are growing and learning as they move from D1 to D4 on a meaningful or significant task or goal, they are apt to experience a generalized satisfaction of their psychological need for competence.
- Impact studies have demonstrated SLII's effectiveness for developing competence, gaining commitment, and retaining talent. Through OM, now we understand why.

SLII's Leadership Behaviors Made More Powerful through OM Best Practices

Leaders know when to use directive behaviors (goal setting, action planning, showing how, establishing timelines, clarifying priorities, describing roles, monitoring, and giving pure feedback) and supportive behaviors (listening, facilitating problem solving, asking for input, recognizing, rationale building, providing information about self and the organization). OM reinforces that the way these behaviors are delivered impacts people's motivational outlooks.

- Leaders cannot drive autonomy—it would result in the exact opposite effect, thwarting the positive energy people need for pursuing their goal.
- Leaders cannot dictate relatedness—just as they can't buy true friends or force someone to care genuinely about them.
- Leaders cannot force competence—pressure undermines the learning process; demonstrated competence requires time and practice.

But leaders can eliminate worst practices and deliver directive and supportive behaviors using OM best practices that help satisfy ARC.

WORST AND BEST PRACTICES

WHAT DOESN'T WORK

Apply pressure; demand accountability

Ignore feelings

Discount learning

Enable sabotaging behaviors

Rely on power

Focus on metrics without meaning

WHAT DOES WORK

A Encourage Autonomy

R Deepen Relatedness

C Develop Competence

M Promote Mindfulness

V Align with Values

P Connect to Purpose

How great leaders use directive and supportive behaviors has a profound effect on people's psychological needs. They can either encourage autonomy or impose pressure, guilt, and shame. They can either deepen relatedness or erode people's feelings and sense of meaning. They can either build competence or undermine people's growth and learning. Directive and supportive behaviors delivered as OM best practices help satisfy people's psychological needs and facilitate high-quality self-regulation.

Motivation Is a Skill

This is an evolutionary and revolutionary claim: Motivation is a skill. Leaders can learn to facilitate people's shift to an optimal motivational outlook. And, self-leaders can learn the skill of motivation to take advantage of their natural inclination to do good work and make a meaningful contribution.

Tens of thousands of managers around the world consider leading with SLII a basic skill. Many more thousands of individuals are practicing the skill through Self Leadership. Dynamic partnering results when both managers and self-leaders are bilingual, speaking the languages of OM and SLII. People cannot ask for what they don't know they need. Armed with the skills of OM, self-leaders are more capable of identifying and articulating what they really need to thrive at work: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Equipped with the tools of Self Leadership, self-leaders with optimal motivation are more apt to manage up, and every other direction, to get the direction and support they need as they pursue and achieve their goals.

A workforce with the skills of OM may be the most important key to moving the needle on engagement. Primary research by The Ken Blanchard Companies shows a direct and highly significant correlation between optimal motivation and engagement: employees who experience optimal motivation also have the five intentions characteristic of employee work passion. Optimal motivation fuels employee work passion. Suboptimal motivation fuels employee disengagement. Leaders and self-leaders who apply the skill of motivation are more likely to

- Experience active engagement and employee work passion
- Fulfill psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence
- Practice high-quality self-regulation using mindfulness, values, and purpose
- Satisfy personal concerns during major change initiatives
- Reframe goals to relieve the enervating pressure generated through metrics and competition
- Align values and purpose to assigned tasks so they are personally meaningful
- Demonstrate enhanced creativity and innovation
- Willingly observe safety precautions and standards
- Discuss feelings in a relevant, safe, and productive way
- Not depend on tangible or intangible rewards for their motivation
- Achieve high-quality and sustainable results while flourishing

From Transactional to Transformational

Too often, SLII is practiced as a transactional model—an instrument for leaders to get things done. When SLII leaders come to understand that developing people from D1 to D4 can be instrumental for activating optimal motivation, SLII becomes a transformational model. OM helps leaders and self-leaders by focusing on the meaning of work, allowing them to better appreciate why developing people is essential. OM provides a clear and empirical case for practicing SLII to meet people's psychological needs. With this awareness, leaders have the potential to go beyond transactional to transformational leadership. When leaders come to know the real story of motivation, they experience a shift in the way they live and work, and the way they lead.

OM and SLII complement each other. Both require conversation and direct communication between leaders and those they lead. Both feature research-based models that stand on their own to provide leaders with specific actions and language for helping people grow, learn, produce, and thrive. OM's Spectrum of Motivation model, on the cutting edge of contemporary science, and the SLII model, the most popular leadership model in the world, are powerful standing alone and leverage the power of the other when both are put into action.

Explore Optimal Motivation® for Yourself [KenBlanchard.com/OptimalMotivation](https://kenblanchard.com/OptimalMotivation)



Take the FREE Motivational Outlook Assessment



Download the white paper
"The Business Case for Optimal Motivation"



Read the **FREE** chapter download from Susan Fowler's best-selling book
Why Motivating People Doesn't Work... and What Does

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