



Module 1: What is a Learning Leader?

Leadership is the art of leading others to deliberately create a result that wouldn't have happened otherwise.

A Learning Leader is someone who works with clients to help them achieve the goals, learning or outcomes they design for themselves.

There are two fundamental features of Learning Leadership:

1. The Learning Leader performs their role with a specific approach. The terms “Learning” + “Leader” have been chosen very deliberately, they describe a WAY OF BEING rather than a role. The world is full of teachers, coaches, consultants, facilitators etc. but very few of them are *Leaders of Learning*.
2. In a *Learning Leadership* paradigm clients and students play an active role in identifying their life or learning goals and then choosing the path they will take to reach them.

Leadership

Let's start with a discussion of leadership skills and attributes. Leadership is more often than not about soft skills - personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people - rather than hard skills.

While a leader who understands what drives the bottom line is valuable, it's the leader who can get others to perform at their best who ultimately creates winning organizations and successful outcomes.

In his book, *Primal Leadership* Daniel Goleman and his co-authors Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee pioneered the now accepted idea that leaders don't get effective results with logic alone - they need to deploy Emotional Intelligence (EI) to get the best out of people, organizations and themselves.

This means a leader is continuously developing mastery in the EI domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

The Characteristics of a Good Leader

So how do these EI competencies show up? Here are some of their most important characteristics of a leader:

Self-Awareness

You know yourself, including your capabilities and your limitations.

Self-Direction

You're able to direct yourself effectively and powerfully. You know how to get things done and generate energy for projects, to stay calm when frustrated or angry.

Vision

You're working towards a goal that's greater than yourself.

Ability to Motivate

Leaders cause or inspire others to want to help them – rather than telling people what they have to do. Instead. A key part of this is cultivating your own desire to help others.

Social Awareness

Understanding social networks and key influencers or players in that social network is another key part of leadership.

Lifelong Learner

They love to learn and embrace opportunities to learn.

Leader as Servant

True leadership as we define it, also includes the desire to support and serve others. In Robert Greenleaf's book, *Servant Leadership*, he surmises that great leaders are seen as a servant first and that this simple fact is the key to their greatness.

He tells this story.

"The idea of servant as leader came out of reading Hermann Hesse's Journey to the East. In this story, ...a band of men on a mythical journey, probably also Hesse's own journey. The central figure of the story is Leo, who accompanies the party as the servant who does their menial chores, but who also sustains them with his spirit and his song. He is a person of extraordinary presence.

All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without the servant Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering, finds Leo and is taken into the Order that had sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom he had known first as servant, was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble leader."

Learning Leaders

When you think of the leaders in your life who have inspired and influenced you, you might recall that they accepted you, encouraged you, recognised your individuality, saw your strengths and potential and they guided you along your own growth and learning pathway.

They told you stories to impart knowledge, they modelled humbleness through the sharing of their wisdom and they inspired you. They did not have ego attached to their wisdom. They were passionate about what they did. They were curious and open to new things. This is a learning leader.

So whether you call yourself a trainer, facilitator or teacher you have the opportunity to be a leader. You can teach and lead them at the same time, assist them along on their journey just as Leo did in Hesse's story.

Learning leaders know who they are, what they want and how to create their own vision of leadership in the learning arena. Self awareness and self management are key. These combined aspects of a great learning leader are intangible yet are the very aspects that distinguish a teacher or trainer from a learning leader.

Facilitating every ICA every teleclass is a learning leader. They are there to guide and support you. They are strong in their own sense of self and open to receiving others. They have wisdom and experience and generously impart it, sometimes their own stories, to offer insight and possibilities.

Competencies of a Learning Leader

- Demonstrate collaborative processes and values
- Create an inviting space for learning
- Clarify mutual commitment
- Assess the needs of the learners
- Create an appropriate pathway to achieve outcomes
- Foster open participation with respect to learner culture, norms and diversity
- Include multiple learning styles
- Practice active listening
- Manage group behaviour
- Evoke group creativity
- Assist learners in reflection on their experience
- Facilitate learner self-awareness
- Engage in ongoing study and learning related to your field
- Continuously gain awareness of new information in your profession
- Practice self-assessment and self-awareness
- Demonstrate a belief in the group and its possibilities
- Trust group potential and model objectivity
- Honour the wisdom of the group

Reflection

1. Create your vision for being a learning leader.
2. Align your vision with the competencies above that are relevant or add new competencies.

References

[Servant Leadership. A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness](#)

Robert K. Greenleaf

[Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence](#)

Daniel Goleman, Richard E. Boyatzis, Annie McKee

[The Eleven Skills of Leadership](#)

[How Good Are Your Leadership Skills?](#)