

CLD1-9-4H



Facilitator's Guide

The Influence of Personal Characteristics

Personality, Culture and Environment

This is not to suggest that it is easy to be a leader. There is no simple formula, no rigorous science, no cookbook that leads inexorably to successful leadership...But for those who are ready, most of the learning takes place during the experience itself. —

Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus

Rationale:

The foundation of leadership begins with the individual. Our personal abilities to influence others are affected by our unique personality and the impact of environment and culture. In order to grow as an effective leader, you must understand yourself as well as those with whom you interact and lead. Effective leaders must understand differences in personal characteristics of others.

Goal:

To recognize the influence of personal characteristics in developing leadership potential.

Program Objectives:

- Differentiate the effect of individual personality characteristics on behavior styles.
- Recognize the influence of personal environmental conditions on learning and development.
- Compare the influences of different cultural beliefs and values on leadership growth and development.

Pre-Program Preparation:

- Read "Influence of Personal Characteristics" and additional background reference materials as needed to become familiar with personal development concepts.
- Copy "Influence of Personal Characteristics" fact-sheet for each participant.
- Duplicate the "Circle of Influence" and "My Personal History" worksheets for each participant.

- Secure laptop, internet access, and LCD projector to show PowerPoint presentation.
- Purchase Keirsey Temperment Sorter II for each participant at:

Matrix Books
 c/o Prometheus Nemesis Book Co.
 2186 Pinar Place
 Del Mar, CA 92014
www.matrixbooksinc.com

Or complete a group example of a behavioral analysis at: <http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/instruments2.aspx?partid=0>

Introduction:

One of the simple facts about leadership is that a person can't be a leader without a follower. Although there are multiple definitions of leadership, all of them include the concept of interacting with other people. Fundamentally, leadership involves human interaction. Thus, understanding ourselves, our temperaments and why we tend to respond in certain ways is important in our development as a leader and in working with others to reach shared goals. The essence of who we are has been shaped by many factors, including our personality, as well as the influence of

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our culture and personal environment. These factors are reflected in our skills, interests, and abilities, which ultimately help us to reach our leadership potential.

Introductory Activity:

Distribute the “Circle of Influence” worksheet to participants. Ask the participants to draw a line from each descriptor to the correct area of influence on the worksheet of personality, environment, culture and beliefs. Show the PowerPoint presentation, listing the descriptors in the categories of personality, environment and culture. Summarize by sharing the following thought: *“the essence of who we are as a leader is reflected in skills, interests, and abilities, which originate from our own unique personality, environment, culture and beliefs.”*

Objective 1. Differentiate the effect of individual personality characteristics on behavior styles.

Personality can be defined as the characteristics that distinguish an individual. Style is made up of many behaviors, and becoming aware of our personality style or temperament type can help us identify our strengths and weaknesses. This will provide greater insights into why we respond in certain ways. Even more important, it will help us understand and appreciate the differences in others. Identifying your personal style is the first step toward developing your leadership core. Identifying your personal style allows you to see your behavior and responses and also provides an opportunity to see how your behavior and responses differ from those of others. Behaviors and responses are neither “good” nor “bad”; they simply are a part of us.

Learning Activity 1:

Distribute the Keirsey Temperment Sorter II to each participant. Ask participants to complete the assessment. Share the characteristics of the Myers-Briggs four preference scales of personality listed in the publication. Show the PowerPoint slide that categorizes the Keirsey Temperment sorter. Use the key to analyze their unique personality characteristics: artisan, guardian, rationalist and idealist.

Objective 2. Recognize the influence of personal environmental conditions on learning and development.

Personality is what we are born with and stabilizes over time. Our environment impacts our responses to situations. When combined, environmental impacts and personality equal behavior. The environment that surrounds us refers to conditions and factors under which we learn and develop. Environment consists of formal education found in our schools, while non-formal education consists of planned learning that occurs in groups, organizations and faith communities. The conditions in which we grow and develop combined with our personalities to play a major role in the leader we will eventually become.

Learning Activity 2:

Distribute and ask each participant to complete a copy of “My Personal History” worksheet. Pair participants and ask them to share one or more of the personal factors they listed on their sheet. Ask the pairs to discuss how these environmental factors affected their behavior in different ways during their lifetime. Ask a volunteer pair to share with the group their observations of differences in their personal history settings and subsequent behaviors.

As you can see, behavior is influenced by genetics (the innate personality with which we are born) as well as our environment. Understanding personality does not mean you can predict behavior perfectly. Our environment from childhood throughout adulthood also heavily influences our behaviors -- especially with leadership situations.

Objective 3. Compare the influences of different cultural beliefs and values on leadership growth and development.

Culture can be defined as the customary beliefs, social norms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time. Intellectually, we understand that people are different and much of those differences are cultural. Yet, we find ourselves questioning “why” they are different. Our culture is part of our everyday existence and our decisions are based upon our customary beliefs, values, and goals. Culture is an important part of what makes us effective leaders, but it is also important to remember that not everyone shares the same belief system. In leadership positions, it is important to incorporate cultural beliefs and customs into our decision making.

Learning Activity 3:

Divide the large group into pairs or small groups. Ask participants to share their experiences related to these open-ended questions:

Have you ever lived in a different part of the country than you live today? What beliefs and/or traditions did you experience that are different from our community? How do they reflect differences in culture? In what ways has your willingness or confidence in accepting a leadership role been influenced by your racial, religious, or social group?

To spark discussion, you may share the following belief:

“To be held in high esteem, women in the South have certain expectations: to be gentle in action and speech. It is very important to be kind and polite to all people.” Therefore, assertiveness, a strong leadership trait, could be viewed negatively and not used effectively in a leadership situation in organizations in the South composed of women.

Pose the following question: “How would this particular cultural belief inhibit females from assuming leadership roles or effectively leading group discussions in 4-H organizations?”

Summary

Just as there are specific factors that contribute toward an accurate definition of leadership, there are also some common characteristics shared by effective leaders. Realizing what characteristics are associated with successful leaders is important for personal leadership development, and helps give the individual a clear picture of who they are as a leader. By understanding the influence of personality, culture and environment on leadership, people can find situations in which they can excel as leaders.

References:

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- Kitchel, T. (2007). Psychological type: Practice and theory. Presentation March 28, 2007, University of Kentucky Community and Leadership Development Department.
- Martin, CR. *Looking at type: The fundamentals*. Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type, Inc., 1997.

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My First 4-H Club Meeting

1. What year did you attend your first 4-H meeting? _____

2. Who invited you to attend your first 4-H meeting? _____

3. Where was your first meeting held? _____

4. What do you remember most about your first 4-H meeting? _____

5. What activities were conducted at your first 4-H meeting? _____

6. What business was discussed at your first 4-H meeting? _____

7. Were refreshments served? _____ And if so, what was served? _____

8. Who took you to your first 4-H meeting? _____

Did that person stay at the meeting with you? _____

9. Were you excited to attend the meeting? _____

Were you nervous about attending? _____

What do you remember most? _____
