



Personal leadership

A guide with inspiration and tools to develop your personal leadership.

Well-being is closely linked to the feeling of being competent and well equipped for the task. We often see that the leadership of the future requires more than professionalism – it calls for human competencies such as emotional intelligence, robustness and the ability to lead with flexibility and inclusion.

In a world of constant change and high complexity, as a manager you need inner peace and a clear compass – also when the pace increases.

Four areas that can strengthen your personal leadership:

1. Understand your shadow sides – and lead with greater balance
2. Stay calm under pressure – and stand strong when the storm hits
3. Engage wisely – and use your team actively and with trust
4. Use feedback actively – as a daily discipline that creates security and clarity

Danica

1. Understand your shadow sides:

What are shadow sides?

Shadow sides are behavioural patterns that occur when your strengths become 'too much' and become a burden on yourself or others. For example, your drive can turn into dominance, impatience or, worse still, manipulation when you are under pressure.



Your strengths and core competencies



Pressure and stress



When strengths become shadow sides

Lead with greater balance – also under pressure

As a manager in a complex world, you are constantly influenced by demands and relational tensions. Under pressure, we often react automatically – both with our strengths and our shadow sides.

When you understand your patterns and reactions, you sharpen your leadership compass and become better at recognising what and who triggers you.

You can start working on your shadow sides by identifying:
What your leadership looks like on a:

Good day



Calm and in control
Clarification and direction
Focus
Collaboration and trust

Ask yourself:

What would my team say about my leadership on a good day?



Bad day



Irritation and controlling behaviour
Warning signs and state of alertness
Tension and imbalance
Distance and defensiveness

Ask yourself:

What would my team say about my leadership on a bad day?

The next step is to consider:

When do your shadow sides emerge?

What situations, relationships or forms of pressure trigger them?

Example:

When I am facing an important deadline and my team does not deliver as agreed. I feel frustration and quickly take over instead of working together.

How can I balance my behaviour better?

What might be useful for me to do more of – and what might I benefit from doing less of?

Example:

I could practise pausing and asking questions instead of taking control. I could dial down the micromangement and turn up trust and dialogue.

2. Stay calm under pressure

As a manager, you must be able to sense your emotions – but not let them control your actions. It is not about avoiding pressure, but about staying calm in the midst of it. Inner peace is about your ability to control thoughts and feelings. It is an undervalued but crucial leadership skill – especially when you need to announce unpopular decisions, deal with resistance or lead change.

These exercises can help you stay calm:

1. Pause and breathe deeply – three times

This soothes the nervous system and attenuates your stress response. You give your brain a moment to connect.

2. Ask yourself: “What is my goal right now?”

This shifts focus from your emotions (like anger or frustration) towards what actually matters – for example solving the task, maintaining the collaboration or communicating clearly.

3. Think: “Professional rather than personal”

This mental attitude helps you respond appropriately – not impulsively – to the people you face. It is about acting with purpose, not emotion.

3. Engage wisely

Engaging others is not a weakness – it is the strength of the future

As a manager, you do not need to have all the answers. You must set the direction and create security – by making others important. When you engage others, show vulnerability and ask for help, you strengthen relationships, trust and ownership.

Employees remember not only what you said – but how you made them feel. When they feel heard and recognised, their commitment and sense of responsibility grow.

How much people remember

What you said	What you did	How you made them feel
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Here are five tips for more engaging leadership:

1. Show vulnerability

Share doubts and mistakes – it makes you human and builds trust.

2. Facilitate – do not control everything

Set the direction and make room for dialogue and ideas.

3. Allow others to voice their thoughts and listen

Engage quiet voices: “What do you think?”

Perspectives increase quality and strengthen the sense of community.

4. Acknowledge the intention

See the constructive elements of every contribution – even if you disagree.

5. Share your thoughts

Be open about decisions and priorities – even if you do not have all the answers.





4. Use feedback actively

Feedback is not just a development tool – it strengthens relationships, creates direction and builds trust. As a manager, you show the way by asking for feedback and receiving it with curiosity. This requires practice – and courage. Especially when it is vulnerable. But it begins with you.

Here are three reflection questions to help you on your way:

- When was the last time I asked for feedback – and how did I receive it?
- Do I express appreciation when something works?
- What holds me back from giving constructive feedback – and what can I do differently?

A simple tool:

If you find it difficult to give or ask for feedback, you can use this tool to get started in a simple and respectful way.



What works well?

What might be useful for you to do more of?



What can be improved?

What might you benefit from doing less of or doing differently the next time?

You can use the model in conversations, in the team or for self-reflection.

Specifically, you can start by engaging your team by saying: “I am practising getting better at giving and receiving feedback – what is one thing I do well and one thing I can improve?”

Get support and advice in your role as manager

If your workplace has a health package with us, you can get online leadership coaching and psychological counselling weekdays from 9am to 9pm.

Read more and book an appointment via our Mobilpension App

Because you as a manager also **deserve a life in balance.**