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REASONS TO INVEST IN SELF-LEADERSHIP

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By Michelle Bihary

Self-leadership is a game-changer when we want to be the best version of ourselves. It helps us think, learn and relate effectively, optimizing our skills, talents and potential.

Self-leadership is leading ourselves from the inside out. It's the influence we use to shape our behaviors and thoughts to live and work in alignment with our values, aspirations, strengths, and talents.

Emotional intelligence expert Daniel Goleman highlights the value of self-leadership:

“Exceptional leaders distinguish themselves because of superior self-leadership.” Every time we speak to ourselves, we are building an internal relationship that can support or undermine us.

Why Is Self-Leadership Important?

There is a critical link between how we lead ourselves, how we perform at work and our capacity to contribute to a thriving, healthy workplace.

Poor self-leadership has a detrimental impact on ourselves, our brain functioning, cognitive and psychological agility, relationships, career, and wellbeing. Under-performance, being hard to work with, energy-draining, rigid, negative, closed-minded, impatient, competitive or even toxic are often the results of poor self-leadership.

Common ways people lead themselves poorly include perfectionism, overly focussing on weaknesses and limitations, ignoring strengths and skills, being harsh or toxic towards themselves, and neglecting one's own needs, goals and values.



7 Key Reasons to Invest in Self-Leadership

1

You can't lead others if you can't lead yourself

If you're not leading yourself well, you won't be effective in leading others. Our relationship with ourselves is the foundation for how we relate to others. If we don't appreciate our strengths, skills and talents, we're unlikely to be able to appreciate them in others. If we can't trust ourselves, we're less likely to trust others and more likely to micro-manage.

2

Sustainable peak performance

Leading ourselves well helps maintain our mental and emotional bandwidth—our capacity to be present, adaptable and agile. Self-leadership guides us to use self-awareness and self-care to optimize our energy, wellbeing and vitality. If we're not leading ourselves well, our potential may be squandered through neglecting to optimize our strengths and skills. Self-leaders understand the critical value of good self-care practices, ensuring they perform well under pressure and have the energy to engage fully in both their professional and personal lives.

3

Positive impact on others, relationships and teamwork

When we lead ourselves well, we're empowered and take greater responsibility and ownership of our energy, our presence and our behaviors, resulting in more proactivity and positivity. We're also more consistent, reliable, we have better boundaries and are more empowered in meeting our own needs and so are less demanding of others.

4

Energy and mojo

Positive self-leaders invest in building and optimizing their mojo, they have the physical, mental and emotional energy necessary to meet their professional and personal demands. They don't waste time on energy draining behaviors like unnecessarily harsh self-criticism, shaming, self-blaming or self-sabotaging or destructive habits that rob them of fulfillment.

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Capacity to adapt and learn

Strong self-leadership provides the foundation for openness to learning. Active self-leaders invest in lifelong learning. Self-awareness is a core component of self-leadership, ensuring an appreciation of strengths, values, preferences, and talents. They welcome opportunities to learn and grow and see mistakes and failures as opportunities for learning. Self-leaders are not hijacked by their ego, instead they bring a growth mindset, continually look for ways to be enriched by the wisdom and skills of others.

6

Agency and autonomy

Feeling that everything is outside of their control is a common experience of poor self-leaders, they tend to focus their time and attention on what they can't control, rather than what they can. Pushed around more by what is outside of our circle of influence makes us feel powerless and overwhelmed. Self-leaders prioritize a mental focus on what they can influence and at the same time acknowledge what they can't control.



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Determined by your values

Your values are non-negotiable; they are an important part of who you are and how you navigate the world. Strong self-leadership is when you are clear about what you value, and so your values, intentions, behaviors and actions are in harmony. Living up to everyone's expectations can create internal conflict as others' values and expectations are not always going to align with our own.

Self-leadership is a skill set that needs to be continually developed. Building self-leadership helps us fulfill our potential and make a positive impact on others around us. It leads to greater organizational success through empowering people to regain control of their direction and goals, and ensures their best selves show up on the job.

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