

Leadership for life

A short course on leadership skills
brought to you by Library Nepal

Unit 3: Facing and overcoming the challenges of leadership

Unit 3: Introduction

This short course on leadership skills can be studied independently or delivered as a facilitated workshop for groups.

The course will give you an introduction to a range of leadership skills and styles, a framework for working through common challenges that leaders face in different contexts, and a set of exercises to work through on an on-going basis to support you as you develop your own leadership skills over time.

There are four units within the course, each of which will take up to an hour to work through, or collectively the units form a one-day workshop. The four units are:

1. Understanding leadership roles in different contexts
2. How to use different leadership styles for different purposes
3. Facing and overcoming the challenges of leadership
4. Developing yourself as a leader on an on-going basis

Benefits of this course

By the end of this course you will:

- understand the role and functions of leadership
- know a range of leadership styles and be better able to adapt your own style for different situations
- be able to tackle the challenges of a leadership role with increased confidence and capability
- have an achievable plan for further developing your own leadership skills.

Many people say that leaders are born and not made. That may be partly true, but remember that even the most accomplished sportsmen, musicians and artists reach their peak through training, coaching and practice. So it is with leadership. Training, coaching, practice. These three things help us to develop our capabilities and talent in any field.

Unit 3: Leadership challenges

Aims and objectives of this unit:

- to explore some common challenges faced by leaders in a range of situations
- to be able to identify strategies for overcoming challenges
- to understand how you respond to challenges and how you can be an effective leader in challenging situations
- to be able to expand your range of skills when faced with challenges.

Starter activity

You will need:

- a pack of post-it notes or a notepad
- something to write with.

Take a few minutes to think of a challenging situation that you have faced in a leadership role, or a situation in which you have observed a leader in a challenging situation. For example, this might be an observation of how a political leader has coped with a national crisis situation.

Make some notes to describe the situation. Then identify three things that the leader **did** that had a positive impact or successful outcome. Is there anything that the leader should have done or could have done and did not do? Add a note about that. (10 mins)

Leadership challenges

All leaders face challenging situations. It is part of the nature of being a leader, and it is in crises and in challenging situations that people most look towards leaders to be strong, effective and to lead them to a good outcome, whatever the situation may be.

Think back to the leadership styles that we looked at in Unit 2. Not all of these are equally effective in situations of crisis or challenge.

Which styles are most appropriate to crisis or challenging situations and why?
Think about the situation you described in the starter activity and assess the appropriateness of each of the following styles in that situation. What is/is not appropriate and why? (10 mins)

Authoritarian

Paternalistic

Democratic

Laissez-Faire

Transactional

Transformational

Main activity part 1

Refer to the styles of leadership we have explored. Choose a situation in which a leader faced a challenge, and assess what the leader did that was positive or negative and the impact that had. Make two lists: positive and negative. Use a notepad and pen if you are working alone, or a flipchart if you are in a group.

An example list of world leaders, good and bad, who have faced significant challenges is given below. If you don't know anything about any of these leaders you could do some research using the internet or a library, or think about a leader that you do know. If you know Nepali history, make a comparative list of how each of the kings mentioned below dealt with the challenges he faced. (10 mins)

From recent Nepali history: King Mahendra; King Birendra; King Dipendra
From the politics of revolution: Josef Stalin; Che Guevara; Nelson Mandela
From social justice: Mother Theresa; Martin Luther King; Mahatma Ghandi
From women's history: Hilary Clinton; Joan of Arc; Malala Yousafzai
From business & industry: Mark Zuckerberg; Bill Gates; Richard Branson
From religion & philosophy: Osho; the Dalai Lama; Pope Francis

Main activity part 2

Using the analysis you did in part 1, and the scenarios described by others if you are working in a group as part of a workshop, expand your lists by adding all the things you can think of that leaders did in challenging situations that were successful/positive and unsuccessful/negative. (10 mins)

Label these lists as:

1. Effective skills in challenging situations
2. Things to avoid in challenging situations

If your lists are a bit sparse, think about what you would want a leader to do and not to do in each of the following scenarios and add these things to your two lists:

- a political leader faced with a natural disaster on a national scale
- a leader of a football club faced with potential relegation of his team
- an industrial leader faced with a national safety scandal or product failure.

Review and reflect



Now think of a situation that you have personally been in as a leader, or that you think you might find yourself in as a leader, that was or is going to be challenging for you. Write down what the challenge was or will be.

Look back at the lists you created in the main activity. Do a KISS analysis of both lists, applying each item to yourself and dividing all the things from both lists in to the following categories: (15 mins)

KEEP – things from list 1 that I know I do and will keep on doing

IMPROVE – things from list 1 I do but could do better

START – things from list 1 that I don't do and should do

STOP – things from list 2 that I need to stop doing

In the final unit we will look at how to develop your skills on an on-going basis.

Thank you for working through Unit 3 of Leadership Skills.

You will find Units 1, 2 and 4 at: www.library-nepal.com

Contact us by email at any time on

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