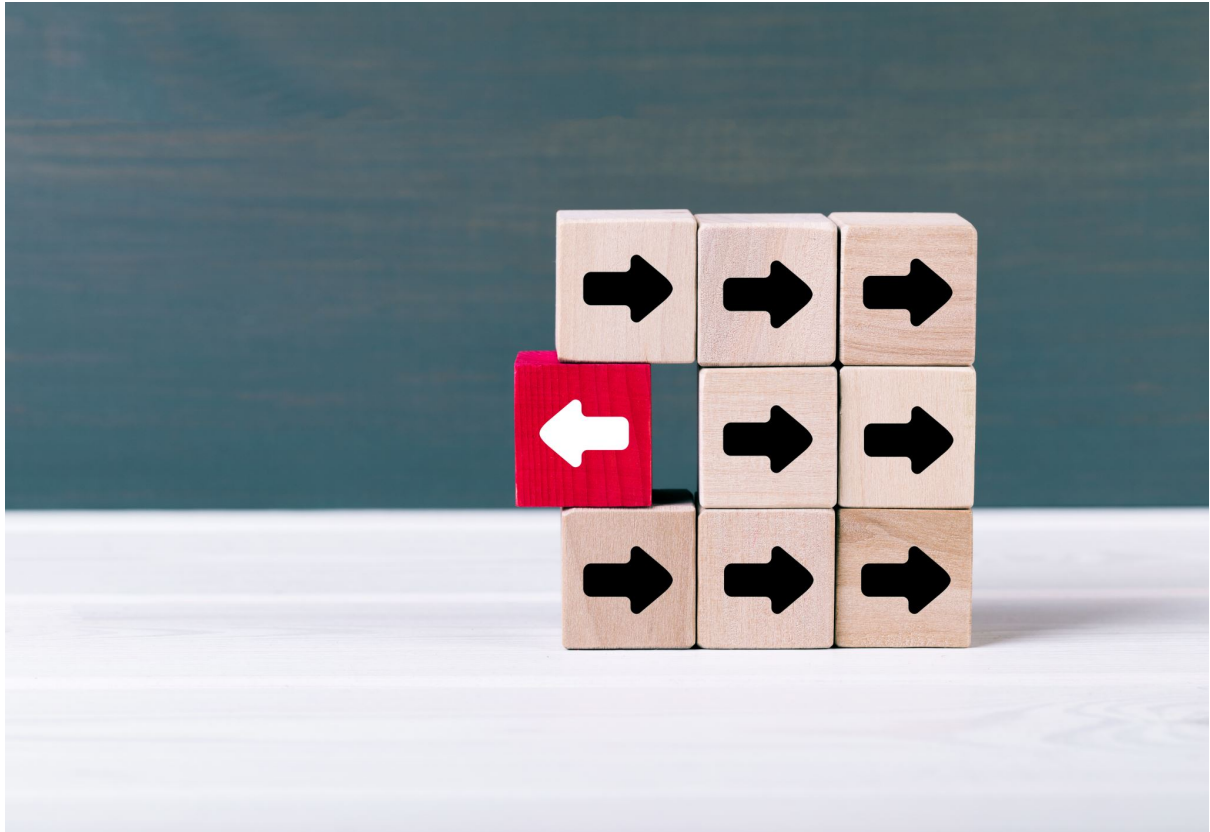




## Resilience Building Resource Hub

### *A Shilp Initiative*

TOOLKITS | PROGRAM RESOURCES | ARTICLES | ONLINE LEARNING |  
GUIDES | VIDEOS | FRAMEWORKS



## WHAT IS YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE?

Have you ever wondered what your leadership style is? Are there different styles you can adopt? Can you change your leadership style as per the situation? Do you want to develop your leadership style?

If yes, this is the right place for you. In this self-paced learning module, we will talk about different leadership styles and when it can be used.

Over many years of research and studying behaviours of leaders, we have multiple leadership models and theories. We will talk about 2 such models that are well recognised and easy to relate to. You can reflect on your leadership style to see which one is your dominant style.

This module will help you understand:

- Kurt Lewin's leadership styles
- importance of flexing your leadership style as per the situation
- self-assessment tools to help assess yourself
- additional resources to help you get to an expert level
- self-reflection and action planning

So, let's get started!

### What are Lewin's leadership styles?

Kurt Lewin's leadership styles framework is a somewhat older one, as it debuted as early as 1930. However, it is still relevant today because it divides leadership styles into three easy-to-remember groups.

Those three leadership styles are as follows:

#### Authoritative leadership

This leader is a person who takes charge and is not interested in delegating decision-making responsibility to other members of their team. An authoritarian leader takes decisions independently and is convinced that they are the right ones. They do not take team members' feelings into consideration. There is little interaction between the leader and the team members. The leader gives orders and sets objectives for the team, along with specific instructions on how to carry out those orders.

The authoritative leadership style has both positive and negative effects. One of the positive ones is that it can be an effective strategy when working with inexperienced teams. Such teams lack the knowledge to take on a more autonomous role in the project. If a team consists of people who require specific instructions to properly carry out their assignment, an authoritarian leader might be the best choice. On the other hand, an experienced team might resist this type of leadership because it does not offer them the freedom and creativity, they feel they deserve. It is important that the leader carefully assesses the team members before deciding how to best guide them through a task.

#### Pros of authoritative leadership

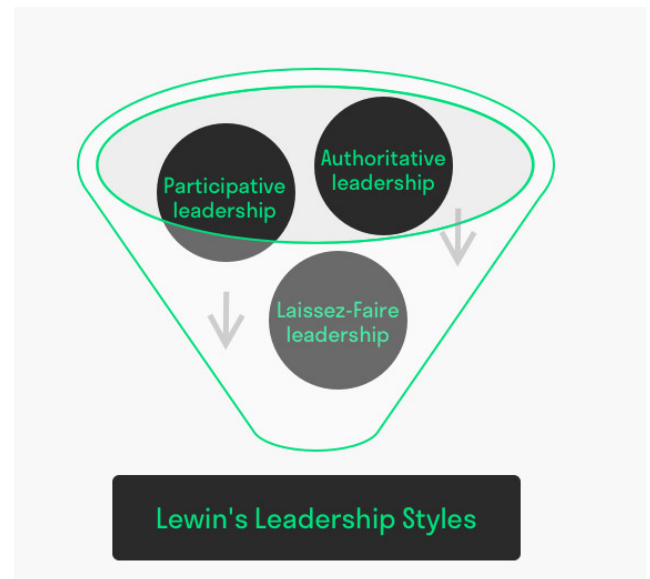
- The decision-making process is quick: with just one person making the decisions, no consultation is required, which means decisions can be taken without delay.
- Motivated managers: the style 'leading is watching' motivates managers to work hard.
- Less stress for managers: when a leader is always present, managers feel that they always have access to him.

#### Cons of authoritative leadership

- Communication usually only happens in one way: this can be frustrating for employees because they only get feedback on their work when they make a mistake.
- Fear and resentment: people don't like being the boss, and in addition employees receive a lot more criticism than praise, resulting in feelings of anxiety and negativity.
- Culture of dependency: employees will become dependent on the fact that their leader has all the ideas and makes all the decisions, possibly leading to reduced initiative by employees.

#### When to use the authoritative leadership?

Authoritative leadership can be highly effective, for example for short projects that are very complex, or for projects that have a hard deadline. Projects that do not require skilled employees, employees who need the guidance of a leader to be productive, are also suitable.



## **Participative leadership**

This leadership style is also referred to as the democratic style. The leader expresses their priorities and values when setting goals and making decisions, but also does his or her part in the group's work and is open to advice and suggestions from colleagues. The leader is still the one with final say, however. In general, this type of leader is appreciated more by team members because they see him or her as one of them.

In the case of an inexperienced team like in the previous example, participative leadership is not always the right choice. Without strong leadership, their lack of experience could turn into a major problem. A team with moderate experience and plenty of enthusiasm, on the other hand, would be an excellent fit for this option. As long as there is enough knowledge in the group to keep the project on track, the participation of the leader should only improve productivity. The team members will also remain more engaged and motivated because they feel invested as part of the process.

### **Pros of participative leadership**

- Pleasant work environment: employees at all levels feel responsible for challenging themselves. Employees are given more opportunities to enjoy their work.
- Less mistakes: because consultation takes place before decisions are made, there's less risk of the leader making a bad decision.
- Creative culture: employees who are encouraged to take initiative and propose ideas for problem solving.

### **Cons of participative leadership**

- Slow decision making; making decisions takes longer because people have to be consulted first.
- Leader hidden within the group: if the leader is insecure or weak, they can often hide this by having the group make all the decisions.

### **When to use the participative leadership style?**

Participative leadership is particularly effective in businesses that apply continuous process improvement, as everyone will be encouraged to support this process of constant improvement. It is also suitable in highly competitive and complex industries, where it helps the best ideas to reach the surface.

## **Delegative / laissez-faire leadership**

These leaders offer their team members lots of freedom regarding how they go about their job. They offer support in the form of resources and advice, but do not get involved beyond that. The leader has complete confidence in their team and will enable them to complete the assignment.

It is important to note that the laissez-faire leadership style requires a good, experienced team. An inexperienced team, or a team that is not properly motivated or focused might use the freedom offered by leadership delegation to go outside their task and fall behind on project deadlines.

Lewin's three leadership styles can each be successful, provided they are used at the right time and place. It is therefore important to first observe the group before employing a specific leadership

style. As the group evolves and changes over time, the leadership style will have to be adapted to the needs of the team as a whole.

### **Pros of laissez-faire leadership**

- Freedom of direction: when employees are motivated to successfully execute the project, the laissez-faire leadership style can offer them the flexibility to do that. That is because there's no interference from the leader.
- Less work for the leader: with the responsibility being borne by the group, there is less work for the leader. Instead, leaders can spend that time on adding value for the organisation.

### **Cons of laissez-faire leadership**

- High levels of stress: employees might feel stressed if they are not sufficiently confident as a result of the leader's absence and lack of positive reinforcement.
- Lack of ownership: there is no one to be held responsible for or take credit in the event of failures or successes.

### **When to use laissez-faire leadership?**

The use of laissez-faire leadership is often only appropriate for a team of highly effective professionals with a reputation and history of delivering excellent work.

### **Situational Leadership**

A leader's style has a direct impact on others. Successful leaders adjust their leadership style based on what's needed by others. The Situational Leadership Model, developed by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey, identifies four leadership styles: Directing, Coaching, Supporting, Delegating. Each style varies in the amount of directive and supportive behaviors used by the leader according to the employee's development level and/or the employee's willingness and ability to perform the task.

As a leader, how and when to adjust your level of direction and support will vary based on the skill set and motivation of the employee or even the situation. Let's take a closer look at the characteristics of each of the four styles and when these styles may be appropriate to use.

**Directing**—This style is high directive/low supportive. The leader provides structure and closely supervises the employee. When using this style, the leader gives instructions on tasks to be completed including specifics on how to complete the assignment. Communication is one way—from the leader to the employee. The leader solves problems and makes the decisions. This style may be used when an employee is unable to perform the job or task assigned to him or her or lacks the confidence in his or her own abilities.

**Coaching**—This style is high directive/high supportive. The leader provides guidance and explains reasons for decisions and any background information the employee may find helpful to complete the job or project. This style is best used when an employee is willing and confident but may be lacking the knowledge or skills to complete the job or assignment.

**Supporting**—This style is high supportive/low directive. The leader provides praise, encouragement and recognition to the employee. When using this style, the leader actively listens to concerns the employee may be having, provides a high amount of support, promotes discussion, and shares responsibility for decision-making. This style may be used when an employee is capable of performing the job or task but lacks the willingness or confidence to do so.

**Delegating**—This style is low supportive/low directive and allows for a high level of employee autonomy. The leader delegates responsibility to the employee and may regularly check-in to see how the work is progressing. This style is best used when the employee is competent and capable of completing the job or task in addition to being willing and confident in his or her abilities.

High	Supportive	<b>Supporting</b> Asking/ listening Reassuring Facilitating self-reliant problem solving Collaborating Encouraging Feedback Appreciating	<b>Coaching</b> Exploring/ asking Explaining/ clarifying Redirecting Sharing feedback Encouraging Praising
		<b>Delegating</b> Allowing/ trusting Confirming Empowering Acknowledging Challenging	<b>Directing</b> Defining Planning Orientating Teaching/ Showing and telling how Checking/ monitoring Giving Feedback
		<b>Directive Behaviour</b>	
Low			High

Typically, one of the styles comes more naturally, and as such, leaders have a tendency to prefer one style over another. Though each of the styles possesses benefits, leaders should be cautious that overuse of one particular style can create challenges. The ability to overcome our preferred default tendency and adapt our leadership style to the situation is the key to helping employees grow as their abilities, confidence and willingness increase.

- The directing style provides an employee with specific details and clearly defined expectations. This can be very helpful, especially for a new employee. Overuse of directing, however, can create a lack of autonomy and the focus may become more on the task than the employee. This may give the perception that the leader is a “micromanager” and can cultivate a habit where the employee waits to be told what to do next. Over time, the exclusive use of directing may lead an employee to feel an absence of trust in his or her relationship with the leader.
- The coaching style can benefit a willing and capable employee by helping him or her learn and understand processes and systems that are in place. It can also provide the employee with necessary background information needed to complete a task or project. Overuse may keep an employee too dependent on the manager and prevent the employee from developing ownership of his or her role. Exclusive use of coaching can unintentionally
- The supporting style encourages growth and development and can increase both group and individual capacity. Overuse of this style could frustrate an employee—especially a high

performer—who may feel like the constant praise is not genuine or may misinterpret shared decision-making as a lack of trust.

- The delegating style empowers an employee and encourages growth and development. It also allows a leader to be more productive because it frees up some of his or her time. The challenge of using delegating exclusively is that it could lead to the employee's becoming burned-out, especially if he or she is the one to whom you delegate most often. This style would also be inappropriate to use with a new employee who most likely would feel overwhelmed due to the lack of guidance and direction.

### **Self-Assessment:**

#### **1) What's Your Leadership Style?**

Learn About the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Way You Like to Lead. This quiz will help you to identify the style that you naturally lean toward, and introduce you to alternative approaches that you might find it helpful to develop, and the occasions when they may be appropriate.

Duration: 20 mins

<https://www.mindtools.com/azr30oh/whats-your-leadership-style>

### **Additional resources**

#### **The 7 Most Common Leadership Styles (and How to Find Your Own)**

Are you using an effective leadership style that works best for you and your team? Get an overview of seven common leadership styles and explore how to develop your signature style.

Duration: 10 mins

Article

<https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/the-7-most-common-leadership-styles-and-how-to-find-your-own/>

#### **Freeing the Social Entrepreneur**

To understand how social entrepreneurs can make the transition from running a start-up to creating an organization that is able to scale up, SSIR interviewed dozens of social sector leaders. From these interviews they identified the steps that social entrepreneurs must take to build a team and the five leadership roles that an organization must have for it to be successful at this stage of its development: the evangelist, scaling partner, connector, program strategist, and realist.

Duration: 20 mins

Article

[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/freeing\\_the\\_social\\_entrepreneur](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/freeing_the_social_entrepreneur)

#### **Situational Leadership Model Explained**

Watch this video to understand the concept of situational leadership explained in a simple manner.

Duration: 10 mins

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pykuvuA-QFU>

#### **5 Leadership Styles to Success**

How would you explain why some companies achieve lasting success, while others don't? And what can we change in our own companies to be successful? The studies show that success is achieved by groups that harmoniously combine employees with 5 leadership styles: Dominants, Innovators, Integrators, Protectors and Experts. Artificial Intelligence and Collaboration Analytics technologies can automatically determine those informal leadership styles by analyzing collaboration signals in Office 365, Teams, G Suite, Slack. Find out who's missing, balance out your teams, and reorganize your departments if needed. Create a culture of collective intelligence. These measures will improve your dollar performance, create effective, customer focused cross-functional teams, increase engagement and sense of well-being amongst employees, sales operations, improve your organizational agility and time to market.

Duration: 18 mins

Video

[https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_yang\\_5\\_leadership\\_styles\\_to\\_success\\_jun\\_2020](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_yang_5_leadership_styles_to_success_jun_2020)

### **Great leadership starts with self-leadership**

At TEDxUtopia, the question was asked: What would leadership in Utopia look like? To start with, imagine the best leader you have ever worked with. How did he or she get to become this type of leader? Leadership lecturer and former corporate executive Lars Sudmann argues that it's likely that they learned to overcome the "leadership formula of doom" and then developed themselves as a leader. In this funny and invigorating talk Lars walks us through the personal journeys of great leaders, shows lessons from the golden age of leadership and shares 3 strategies on self-leadership to develop yourself into a "Utopia leader".

Duration: 12:46 min

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlpKyLkIDDY>

### **The Situational Leadership Model**

The Situational Leadership Model suggests that there is no "one size fits all" approach to leadership. Depending on the situation, varying levels of "leadership" and "management" are necessary. However, leaders must first identify their most important tasks or priorities. Second, leaders must consider the readiness level of their followers by analyzing the group's ability and willingness. Depending on the level of these variables, leaders must apply the most appropriate leadership style to fit the given situation.

Duration: 10 mins

Article

<https://higdoncenter.cofc.edu/documents/The%20Situational%20Leadership%20Model.pdf>

### **Self-reflection and action planning:**

1. How would you assess your leadership style? Identify 2-3 areas that are challenging you and preventing you adapting, changing your style as per the situation.
2. What proficiency level do you want to reach in the next six months?
3. Identify 2-3 specific things that you will do over the next six months to practice becoming a better leader.