

WHAT KIND OF LEADER ARE YOU?

9 Leadership Types
and Their Strengths



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Leaders come in all shapes and sizes, with different approaches and values that work for them. There is no right or wrong when it comes to leadership styles, so long as you are on the same page as your team and have everyone's best interests at heart.

However, because so many people are relying on you for guidance and inspiration, it's important to examine your habits and consider how they might be perceived in your leadership role. In her book, "The 9 Types of Leadership: Mastering the Art of People in the 21st Century Workplace" (Post Hill Press, 2017), author Beatrice Chestnut, Ph.D., defines nine leadership styles.

"The nine types ... are based on the nine personality styles articulated by the Enneagram model, a typology arrayed around an ancient symbol that has roots in timeless wisdom traditions," said Chestnut. "Each type is characterized by a specific focus on attention as well as specific strengths, motivations and blind spots."

According to Chestnut, these are the focus areas of each leadership type:

1. Quality. This type of leader focuses on improvement, getting things right, making things as perfect as they can be, being ethical, following the rules and applying high standards.

2. Pleasing people. This leader focuses on being liked, creating relationships, strategically supporting others to make themselves indispensable and empowering people.

3. Work tasks and goals. This type of leader wants to be efficient and productive and have the image of someone who is a successful achiever.

4. Emotions. This leader is focused on their internal experience and on expressing themselves so that people will understand and see them as being unique and special.

5. Data and work-related information. This leader is more comfortable operating on the intellectual level (as opposed to the emotional level), and is objective, analytical, private and likes to work independently.

6. Potential problems. This leader focuses on noticing what might go wrong, forecasting problems before they happen so they can prepare for them ahead of time. This type of leader is an insightful problem solver who watches out for threats, is a good troubleshooter and specializes in assessing risks.

7. Innovation. This leader focuses on coming up with new ideas and planning for the future. This leadership style is optimistic, enthusiastic and automatically reframes negatives into positives.

8. Power and control. This leader prefers big-picture thinking to figuring out the details, likes to make big things happen, and has an easier time dealing with conflict and confrontation than some of the other types.

9. Creating harmony. This type of leader leads by consensus. They are a natural mediator and want to make sure everyone is heard and that different points of view are considered when making plans and coming to decisions.

Playing to your strengths

Each of the nine types of leaders are equal in their capacity for being effective, said Chestnut. However, some types are more oriented to being effective, based on the individual leader's motivations.

"How effective a specific type of person is ... is based on two things: First, their personality style and its characteristic focus of attention and habitual patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving; second, how self-aware, developed and healthy they are," Chestnut said. "Every type can grow to leverage their strengths more consciously and address their specific challenges so they can be more effective."

"Knowing your style, your approach and knowing how others like to be managed gives a leader the insight into how to better motivate, manage and develop others," added Peter Langton, executive vice president and chief HR officer at Pierce Aluminum. "But, you must know your own limits, your own pitfalls and your own approach to be effective leading others."

Chestnut noted that leaders are most powerful when they can model self-awareness and self-development for the people they lead. It's important to become more aware of what you do well and what gets in your way of being effective, she said. By understanding the strengths of your type, you can apply your natural talents more consciously and strategically.

"Leaders that are self-aware understand their true strengths, weaknesses and blind spots," said Langton. "Leadership isn't about being the best external motivator or the charismatic champion but understanding how you are able to influence others."

The above types of leadership offer a framework for understanding that different people have different worldviews.

"By helping leaders to see their habitual patterns, they can ... ultimately make more conscious choices about the things they do and model a greater degree of self-awareness as a way of inspiring the people they work with," Chestnut said.

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