

# 111 THE EMERGING LEADER

INSTRUCTOR

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## COURSE OUTCOMES

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At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the impacts of the four core behavioral leadership styles
2. Gain actionable insights into the importance of / how to use self-awareness tools
3. Understand the principal elements and management tools for self-regulation
4. Recognize what workplace empathy means and how to use it effectively
5. Define and understand how to deliver inspiration
6. More effectively make the shift from manager to leader

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## ***Introduction: Why Emerging Leaders Matter***

Managers and first-time leaders occupy one of the most influential and demanding roles in public venues. They translate vision into daily action, manage conflict across hierarchies, and shape culture through consistent behavioral signals. In many cases, these emerging leaders determine whether organizational values remain abstract statements or become lived realities (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013).

As venues become more complex, leadership effectiveness cannot be defined solely by technical expertise or positional authority. Instead, it depends upon a leader's capacity to manage both self and others under pressure. Research in emotional intelligence consistently shows that leaders who cultivate self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and inspiration achieve superior team engagement, retention, and performance outcomes (Boyatzis, 2018). These capacities form the foundation of emotionally intelligent leadership and bridge the gap between managerial competence and enduring influence.

### **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SHIFT: FROM INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR TO LEADER**

The transition from individual contributor to leader represents a profound psychological shift. Individual contributors are typically rewarded for technical mastery, speed, precision, and independent problem-solving. Their performance is evaluated primarily on output and task execution. Leadership, by contrast, requires a fundamentally different orientation. Leaders are rewarded for influence, judgment, emotional steadiness, and their ability to develop others (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

Failure to make this transition often produces technically skilled managers who struggle with micromanagement, conflict avoidance, reactive communication, and low trust among team members. Emerging leaders must cultivate internal disciplines that support the relational and emotional demands of their role. This internal mastery enables them to translate expertise into influence, fostering both individual and organizational success.

**Reflection Exercise:** Consider your current role. Are you operating as an individual contributor rather than as a leader whose sole focus is helping shape the performance of others?

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## **SELF-AWARENESS: HONEST REFLECTION AS THE FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP**

Self-awareness is the disciplined practice of accurately understanding how one's behavior affects others. For emerging leaders, this means examining both intention and impact. Leadership influence is experienced daily through tone, decisions, body language, and communication style. If leaders are unwilling to evaluate these factors honestly, growth is limited, and blind spots solidify into patterns (London, 2023).

True self-awareness requires courage and intentional reflection. Leaders must regularly ask themselves how their behavior influenced the emotional climate of a meeting, how their communication was received, and what assumptions they may have brought to interactions. Without this honesty, leaders risk reinforcing limiting beliefs, habitual reactions, and defensive behaviors.

### **Case Example: Discovering a Blind Spot**

Rachel is a newly promoted manager at a mid-sized venue. Rachel prides herself on decisiveness and speed, often interrupting team members to clarify or redirect tasks. Initially, she thought this was efficiency in action. However, anonymous feedback from her 360-degree survey revealed that many team members felt dismissed, unheard, and hesitant to share ideas.

Rather than reacting defensively, Rachel took the opportunity for reflection. She began journaling daily, noting moments she interrupted, the emotional tone of meetings, and her assumptions about team engagement. She also set aside brief periods of mindfulness to quietly review her interactions. Within weeks, she noticed patterns she had previously ignored—her “decisiveness” was perceived as dismissive, and her assumptions about the team's capabilities were inaccurate. Over time, her awareness led her to adjust her communication style, actively seek input, and create space for dialogue, resulting in greater engagement and trust.

## **Practical Strategies for Cultivating Self-Awareness**

**Mindfulness and Quiet Reflection:** Mindfulness enables leaders to observe emotional triggers, habitual responses, and recurring challenges with clarity and composure. A brief daily practice—pausing to review the day’s interactions—allows patterns to emerge and enables intentional change (Shapiro et al., 2006).

**Challenging Assumptions:** Leaders often act based on untested beliefs about their teams. Effective self-awareness requires questioning these assumptions and considering alternative explanations. Leaders should ask: What evidence supports my belief? What might I be missing? How might my expectations influence outcomes?

**Journaling:** Structured journaling transforms experience into actionable insight. Recording successes, challenges, and the treatment of others creates measurable patterns over time. Journaling helps leaders monitor growth and adapt behavior proactively (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Self-awareness is not self-criticism; it is the introspection required to truly understand our impact on others.

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## **SELF-REGULATION: RESPONDING WITH INTENTION**

While self-awareness reveals internal emotional states, self-regulation determines how those emotions are expressed externally. Leadership invariably involves stress, ambiguity, and interpersonal tension. Unmanaged emotional reactions can destabilize teams and erode credibility (Goleman, 2013).

Reactive leadership responds instinctively; responsive leadership responds intentionally. Self-regulation allows leaders to maintain composure, separate emotion from decision-making, model stability, and preserve dignity in challenging interactions. It shifts focus from what happened to how situations are handled.

### **Case Example: Turning Reaction into Response**

Marcus is a mid-level operations manager dealing with a critically slow conversion process. Initially, he responded with visible frustration, criticizing the team in front of peers. The team withdrew, engagement plummeted, and errors increased. Recognizing

the impact, Marcus committed to practicing the STOP technique. The next high-pressure situation unfolded differently: he paused, took a breath, observed both his own emotions and the team's perspective, and responded with calm, clear guidance. Team performance stabilized, and morale improved. Reflection after the interaction reinforced the new approach, shifting leadership behavior from impulsive reaction to thoughtful response.

### **Practical Framework: The S.T.O.P. Technique**

1. **Stop:** Cease all actions when feeling overwhelmed.
2. **Take a Breath:** Calm the nervous system and interrupt automatic responses.
3. **Observe:** Notice what is happening internally and externally.
4. **Proceed:** Act with awareness. Choose to respond in alignment with leadership role and values.

Self-regulation is both immediate and reflective. Leaders should review their engagement after critical interactions, asking not "Who is to blame?" but "How can I handle this better next time?" Effective self-regulation redirects attention toward constructive growth.

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## **EMPATHY: LEADING WITH HUMANITY BEFORE AUTHORITY**

Empathy is often misunderstood as emotional softness. In leadership, empathy is a strategic capability that enhances influence, builds trust, and strengthens accountability. Sympathy feels for someone; empathy seeks to understand them (Boyatzis, 2018).

Empathic leaders recognize that employees are individuals with aspirations, challenges, and values that influence performance. Empathy does not diminish authority; it legitimizes it. Team members who feel understood are more likely to engage, collaborate, and trust leadership decisions (Ernst & Young, 2023)

### **Case Example: Resolving Team Conflict**

Julia, a venue project leader, noticed tension between two team members who frequently clashed over responsibilities. Rather than imposing a solution, Julia approached the situation with curiosity and active listening. She met individually with each team member, asking open-ended questions about their perspectives and

concerns. By reflecting back understanding and suspending judgment, she identified misaligned assumptions and unmet needs. When the team reconvened, Julia facilitated a discussion informed by these insights. The conflict was resolved constructively, and collaboration improved. Julia's empathic approach strengthened trust and increased team cohesion.

### **Strategies for Developing Empathy**

**Know Your Team:** Learn about team members' goals, interests, and motivations within professional boundaries. Authentic connection fosters engagement and alignment.

**Practice Curiosity:** Explore behavior thoughtfully before forming judgments. Ask what strengths or challenges may exist beneath the surface.

**Strengthen Listening Skills:** Empathy in leadership requires not only understanding but disciplined, intentional listening. As Berkeley Executive Education (2026) emphasizes, "[Active listening] is not just hearing words; it's absorbing meaning, reading context, and responding with intention. Leaders who master this discipline build trust, unlock deeper insight, and create psychological safety that drives collaboration and innovation".

This aligns with Covey's (2020) insight that "most people do not listen with the intent to understand but with the intent to reply," highlighting a common barrier for leaders and the importance of cultivating listening as a proactive, relational discipline. Together, these perspectives underscore that effective leaders prioritize understanding their teams' perspectives and emotions, rather than simply waiting for an opportunity to respond.

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## **INSPIRATION: CREATING HOPE AND SUSTAINING BELIEF**

At its highest level, leadership creates hope and converts it into belief. Hope communicates that employees are part of something meaningful and that their contributions matter. However, hope alone is insufficient. Belief requires trust in oneself, the leader, and the shared vision (Sinek, 2011).

### **Case Example: Building Belief in Change**

Carlos, leading in an older venue, faced skepticism about a major new initiative. To inspire his team, he first demonstrated belief in individuals by investing in skill development and encouraging risk-taking. He modeled presence, humility, and consistent integrity, earning trust. He articulated a compelling, inclusive vision of the future, showing each team member how their individual contributions mattered. As a result, the team moved from hesitant compliance to enthusiastic belief, ultimately exceeding implementation goals.

### **Strategies for Inspiring Belief**

**Belief in People:** Leaders show belief through development, mistake-tolerant learning, recognition and celebration of progress, and consistent encouragement.

**Belief in the Leader:** Teams trust leaders who demonstrate presence, humility, integrity, and alignment between words and actions.

**Belief in the Future:** Articulate a clear, compelling vision. Show how each team member contributes to organizational success. Inspiration is relational and built through daily, intentional behavior.

### **SUMMARY: FROM COMPETENCE TO INFLUENCE**

Self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and inspiration operate as an integrated system of leadership. Self-awareness informs self-regulation. Self-regulation enables empathy. Empathy strengthens inspiration. Together, these capacities produce leaders who are emotionally steady, interpersonally effective, and organizationally influential.

Emerging leaders who cultivate these learned capacities create environments characterized by trust, clarity, resilience, and engagement. Leadership development extends beyond procedural knowledge, requiring internal mastery as well as external competence. Leaders who intentionally develop these disciplines will not merely manage change—they will shape it.

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