

Six Personas of a Thriving Leader

By Terre Short



I occasionally contemplate the difference between how I interacted with others as a leader in my 20's compared to in my 50's. Some years forced major leaps in self development based on the demands of my job. Other years felt more like coasting, leading with ease through minor challenges with effective teams. You might think the growing years happened early on and the cruising has come about in the last decade. This is not the case. What has grown consistently over time is my sense of self-awareness. One thing is certain, increased self-awareness enabled my leadership skills to grow exponentially.

Self-Awareness presents internal and external opportunities. In the Harvard Business Review article, [What Self-Awareness Really Is \(and How to Cultivate It\)](#), Tasha Eurich provides insight into various studies that seek to further define this leadership buzz skill. Particularly powerful is the discovery of how questioning one's actions and thoughts by asking "why" is much less effective than leading with "what." The power of "what" and "how" questions is truly underrated and something I cover in my book; [The Words We Choose: Your Guide to How and Why Words Matter](#). Eurich offers, "To increase productive self-insight and decrease unproductive rumination, we should ask *what*, not *why*. 'What' questions help us stay objective, future-focused, and empowered to act on our new insights." Indeed!

What kind of leader are you? Decades of experience, an insatiable appetite for research and knowledge, and daily learning through conversations with clients has led me to distill leadership into six personas.



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Over the course of a career, one or more may take precedent and be the skill(s) you draw on the most – the one your team or organization require of you. Ultimately, all are necessary to thrive as a leader.

Here they are:

1. **Ambassador of the Culture** – Great leaders set the tone for the culture of the organization and are expected to live the mission, vision, and values every day in all they do.
2. **Leader as Coach** – Great leaders actively coach those they serve to bring out the potential of all individual contributors.
3. **Continual Change Agent** – Great leaders embrace change as a constant and lead in a way that normalizes change for their team and key stakeholders.
4. **Life Integrator** - Great leaders integrate aspects of their true self, including personal and spiritual connections.
5. **Emotionally and Intuitively Intelligent** - Great leaders harness the power of emotional and intuitive intelligence.
6. **Proactive and Productive Juggler** - Great leaders plan well and accomplish much.

In my twenties, I was all about numbers two and six. I worked hard to provide insight to my team and organized myself into a dither to stay on top of competing demands. Did I do these things well?

Sometimes. Each of these personas include a myriad of actions or behaviors that determine how well the capability is executed. In future articles, I will drill down on each persona. I will challenge your self-awareness in these six areas of expertise and provide examples of how to develop your leadership muscle. This is how you create more win-win scenarios and find the joy in leading others.

Join us on this joyful journey, connect at [Thriving Leader Collaborative](#) to access resources and assessments. Join the conversation on social media: [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#). In the coming weeks, we will offer an assessment for these six personas of a thriving leader. We call this the Win-Win Balance Wheel.

