

SIGMA Assessment Systems

Talent Development

Leader Character Development Guide



How to Use the LCIA For Self-Development

This guide is designed to provide leaders and potential leaders with a structured framework for embarking on the leader character development journey. Whether you have taken the LCIA-self or the LCIA-360, you can use your report feedback to help steer you through the activities included in this guide. These activities will help you to identify your top strengths, key development opportunities, and get started with creating a development plan, including setting goals and tracking habits related to leader character.

The Leadership Character Insight Assessment (LCIA) was developed to provide individuals and organizations with a way to consider, assess, and develop leader character. The LCIA Character Model (shown below in Figure 1) includes the 11 dimensions of leader character. Each dimension contains a number of elements that help individuals express character in a way that makes character-related leadership behaviors observable, measurable, and actionable.



Figure 1. LCIA Character Model

Activity 1: Discover Your Top Character Strengths

Why it matters: Everyone has unique strengths, but many people do not recognize these unique strengths in themselves. This activity will help you to identify your top strengths using the 11 dimensions in the LCIA character model.

How to use it: Looking at either your LCIA-self or LCIA-360 results, answer the questions below about each of the 11 character dimensions using checkmarks. Mark each question for each dimension with a checkmark if it applies to you, and calculate the total number of checkmarks for each row when you've considered each dimension.

	Does this strength come naturally to me?	Do others see this strength in me?	Does using this strength feel energizing?	Do I use this strength frequently?	Number of checkmarks
Judgment					
Collaboration					
Humanity					
Humility					
Transcendence					
Temperance					
Justice					
Accountability					
Integrity					
Courage					
Drive					

Which dimensions have the most checkmarks? These three character dimensions are your top strengths:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The following steps will help you to make use of your top strengths:

1. **Appreciate your strengths.** It can be easy to take your strengths for granted. Your strengths are a key part of what makes you who you are!

Take the time to reflect on and appreciate how your strengths have contributed to the successes in your life. What benefits have they brought you?

2. **Moderate your strengths.** While your strengths primarily have a positive impact on you and others, you may take them for granted because they come naturally to you. When you don't fully appreciate a strength, it can cause problems — particularly when you overuse a strength when a different response would be optimal. As you work on appreciating your strengths, keep in mind that moderating them may be needed at times. Think about whether there are other dimensions that might help you to express your strength in a balanced way.

3. **Use them in new ways.** Think about how you can use your top strengths in new ways. Doing so will help to increase your enjoyment and engagement in daily activities. For example, if one of your strengths is collaboration, think of how you can stay connected to people in your organization in a new way.

Activity 2: Identify Your Key Development Opportunities

Why it matters: Although all 11 dimensions of leader character are important and should be developed, this activity will allow you to identify the development opportunities that should be prioritized.

How to use it: Looking at either your LCIA-self or LCIA-360 results, answer the following questions about each of the 11 character dimensions using checkmarks. Mark each question for each dimension with a checkmark if it applies to you, and calculate the total of each row when you have considered each dimension.

	Is this strength important for my career goals or my role?	Have I had feedback or experiences show me that this is a growth opportunity?	Is this a strength that I admire in others?	Am I motivated to make changes on this dimension?	Number of checkmarks
Judgment					
Collaboration					
Humanity					
Humility					
Transcendence					
Temperance					
Justice					
Accountability					
Integrity					
Courage					
Drive					

Which dimensions have the most checkmarks? These three character dimensions are your key development opportunities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Importance of Focus

Now that you understand your strengths and development opportunities, it's time to select one or two development areas to prioritize.

It is important to select only one or two areas to focus on at once, because working with too many development opportunities at the same time can be overwhelming and impede progress.

Use the following two worksheets to help you select one or two development areas to prioritize using the top strengths and development opportunities you have identified in Activities 1 and 2.

Activity 3: Are Any Top Strengths a Development Opportunity? The Importance of Balance

When choosing development priorities or opportunities to work on your expression of leader character, it is helpful to survey all 11 dimensions of character. It can also be beneficial to look at both the dimensions that feel comfortable and natural, as well as those that are less commonly used.

When you use your top character strengths, you probably feel energized and engaged. Because they come so naturally to you, you might not even be aware of how often you rely on them. Most of the time this isn't problematic, but there are times when automatically using our natural tendencies can create issues. For example, people who are high in the drive dimension often approach situations from a results-oriented, problem-solving outlook. While this perspective often produces commendable bottom-line results, in other areas of our life this might not be optimal. For instance, if someone requires coaching or a listening ear, a more open and curious mindset would be more suitable. In other words, humility and humanity would help to balance drive.

For this reason, it's important to consider whether there are ways to fine-tune or modulate your expression of your top character strengths. Use the following worksheet to help determine whether any top strengths might be development opportunities in disguise:

My Top Strengths [List top selected character dimensions below.]	Reflection Questions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How has this character strength contributed to my career success?2. What are the potential benefits of developing this strength further?3. Do I tend to overuse this strength, or is my usage balanced? What situations can create problems for me or others when I overuse this strength? What other character dimensions can help balance this strength?
1.	
2.	
3.	

Activity 4: Prioritizing Your Development Opportunities

The above reflection questions from Activity 3 should give you a sense of your clearest development opportunities to prioritize. Record them below:

My Key Development Opportunities [List key development character strengths below.]	Reflection Questions
1.	1. What are the potential benefits of further developing this character strength? 2. Is now a good time to focus on this character strength?
2.	
3.	

My current key development opportunities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Reflecting on Development Opportunities

In Activity 5, we'll explore your selected key development opportunities in greater detail.

Once you have reflected on what the underuse, overuse, and balanced usage of a given character strength looks like, it will be easier to identify next steps in Activity 6.

When thinking of next steps, consider your ultimate goal, such as becoming a wise, decisive leader. Additionally, consider the smaller steps you will need to take to get closer to reaching your ultimate goal, such as scheduling a few minutes each day to reflect on upcoming decisions.

Use the following templates in Activity 5 and Activity 6 to help you explore a character dimension that you have selected as a development opportunity.

Activity 5 – Example: Deep Dive into a Development Opportunity

<u>Development Area</u>	
Dimension: Humanity	Elements: Compassionate, Kind, Empathetic, Forgiving, Magnanimous, Considerate
<p>Underuse</p> <p>What happens without this character strength?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't make small talk with others; it feels like a waste of time in the moment I don't make time for conversations with people when they're having a hard time, or I'm too busy to notice that they're struggling I don't react compassionately when someone needs more time on a project or makes a mistake 	<p>Overuse</p> <p>What happens when this character strength is over-used and isn't balanced by the use of other dimensions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I spend so much time listening to others' problems that I don't have time for my own priorities I'm expected to help cover the workload of other people because I say yes to last minute requests I'm starting to feel resentful when people come to me for advice
<p>Balanced Expression</p> <p>What happens when this character strength is used at the right time in the right amount? What other character dimensions will I need to rely on to properly express this strength?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have healthy relationships with the people I work with; they know they can come to me when they need help and I don't feel overwhelmed by their emotions I set boundaries at work so that I have time to take care of myself and my priorities I do not try to solve every problem for others, but I help them to see how they can be more effective and successful when asked for advice Temperance will help me to balance my expression of humanity by encouraging me to set boundaries when listening to and helping others 	

Activity 5: Deep Dive into a Development Opportunity

<u>Development Area</u>	
Dimension:	Elements:
Underuse What happens without this character strength?	Overuse What happens when this character strength is over-used and isn't balanced by the use of other dimensions?
Balanced Expression What happens when this strength is used at the right time in the right amount? What other character dimensions will I need to rely on to properly express this strength?	

Activity 6: My Next Steps — Achieving Big Goals Through Small Steps

Dimension:	Elements:
Ultimate goal(s):	Smaller steps I can take to get closer to my ultimate goal:
Preparing for Goal Attainment What challenges will I face? What strengths or strategies can I use in the face of those challenges?	

Achieving Your Goals with a Development Plan

Now that you have an ultimate goal for a given character strength and a series of smaller goals, you're ready to begin your development plan in Activity 7.

A common mistake people make when embarking on a habit change plan is to set unrealistic expectations for themselves. Instead, select one or two small, easy-to-complete actions that will get you closer to your ultimate goal. By tracking your progress, you will increase the chances of successfully achieving your goals by changing your habits.

Instructions: Use the worksheet on the following page to help you track your progress. Think about how you can make this change as easy as possible for yourself, such as implementing visible reminders, rewarding yourself every day, and being accountable to someone else, as you set out on this developmental journey.

Activity 7: Tracking Your New Habits

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Did I do my best to practice my habit?					
If yes? When and where? (if not, see final question)					
What happened?					
Would I like to make this a part of my routine?					
If not, what can I do to increase my chances of success?					

Maintaining Momentum

Leadership development is an ongoing process and it is normal to go through periods of time where you cannot maintain a high level of focus on your goals.

Be kind to yourself, and remember that you can always begin again or choose new goals to pursue. When you're feeling uninspired, think about why your chosen character dimension(s) matters to you, and the impact focusing on it can have on yourself and the people around you. Some people find it more helpful to focus on what they will lose if they don't stay committed to making changes, while others find it more helpful to focus on what they stand to gain. Revisiting your work — and the progress you've already made — throughout this guide can help motivate you to achieve your goals.

If you want to maintain the habits you have identified through this process over the long term, these questions can help you to reflect on whether you need to make any changes to your plan:

- Am I getting closer to reaching my ultimate leadership development goal(s)?
- Are the daily habits becoming easier or more natural for me?
- Are the supports I rely on to perform my new habit(s) helping me to overcome challenges?

Remember that lasting change takes time, and that consistency trumps intensity. By focusing on taking small steps on a consistent basis you will achieve your goals.

Resources

Leadership Character Development Series

- Has information and tips on each of the 11 LCIA character dimensions
- <https://www.sigmaassessmentsystems.com/leadership-character-development-series/>