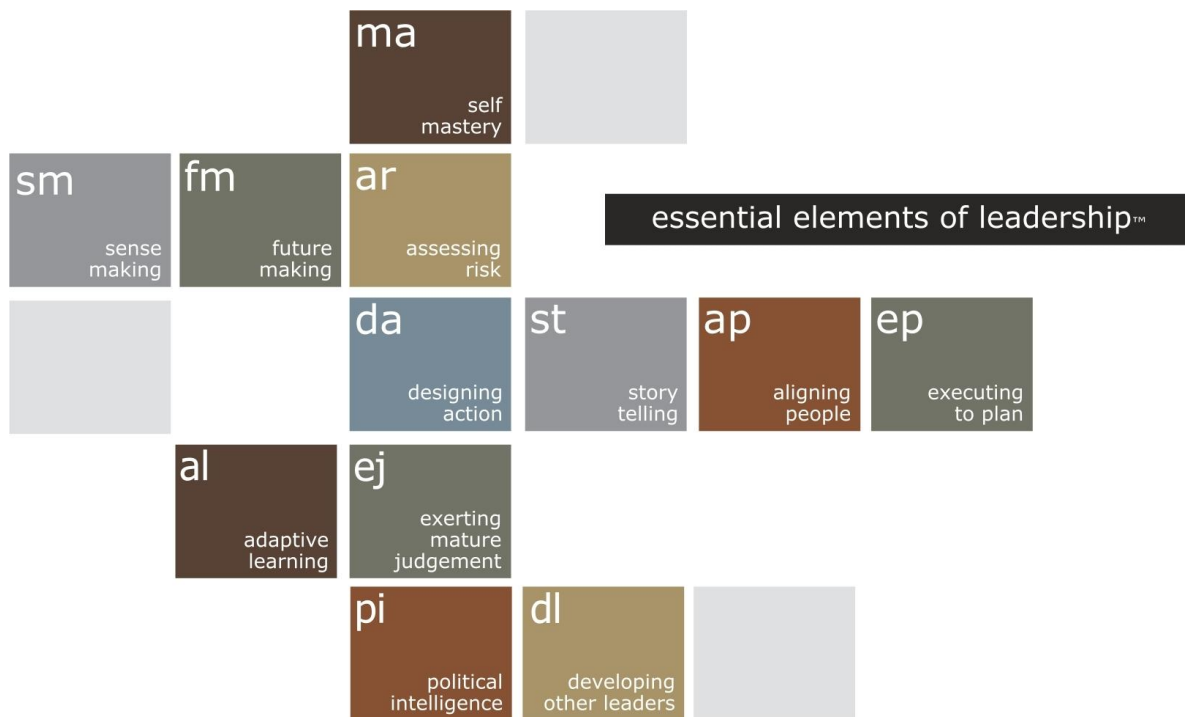


Essential Elements of Leadership™

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The Next Institute Inc.

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Self Mastery

Self mastery is the individual, continuous, lifelong journey to stronger character and higher awareness. It is the openness to feedback and the willingness to change. It is the understanding of personal greatness and weakness, and the choice to learn from experience. It is the rigorous examination of oneself in relation to others. Self mastery is the crucial quality in leaders, because it opens the door to significance, and because it entices others to follow.

Sense Making

Sense making is the radar, registering strong and weak signals from all levels of the environment. It is both intuitive and strategic – sensing change, spotting trends, seeing what’s happening. It is understanding how the past informs the future. It is translating nuance and complexity out there, into relevance and meaning for the organization.



Future Making

Future making is birthing something that does not yet exist, initially as an idea and eventually as an extraordinary reality. It is vision and imagination and creativity. It is seeing what others may not yet see. It is the courage to stake out new ground. It is a process that occurs over time, and it is holding the space as that process unfolds.

Assessing Risk

Assessing risk is knowledge and experience and intuition, brought to bear on financial or physical challenge, in service of a bold move forward. It is an expression of confidence. Emergent and seasoned leaders will assess risk differently. It calls on character, sound judgment, and openness to input. Reading and minimizing risk are critical to movement without peril.

Designing Action

Designing action is knowing the race you are going to run before you start. It is moving from the ethereal to the concrete, from the unseen to the seen. It is creating the intelligent plan and articulating that plan to others. It is strategy on the verge of tactics and leadership on the verge of management. Designing action is translating a felt sense of the future into getting there.

Storytelling

Storytelling is engaging the hearts of others, bringing a living sense of the destination throughout the journey. It animates a vision, paints a picture, creates a myth or a metaphor. Storytelling paves the long road from the brain to the heart. It evokes passion. Individual and organizational dreams are kept alive by stories, told over and over and over again. It motivates action like nothing else.

Attracting and Aligning Talent

Attracting and aligning talent is having the right people in the right roles. It is working with the willing to create champions. It is getting people telling the story in their own way. It is stopping to check for full participation. It is inspiring and supporting. It is seeking and enticing the next great hire.

Executing to Plan

Executing to plan is the means by which all focused action happens. It is building the skill and capacity to execute. It is holding oneself and others accountable. It is the pivot point from leadership to management. It is the disciplined, measurable, results-based movement from here to there. It is also knowing when and how to stay out of the way.

Adaptive Learning

Adaptive learning is real-time, continuous, lifelong learning. It is creating new maps in the middle of navigation. It is formal and informal; it must be sought; it requires humility. It is closing the feedback loop by integrating experience gathered and lessons learned. It is knowing that leadership credentials are never earned, always earning.

Exerting Mature Judgment

Exerting mature judgment is knowing and doing the right thing. It is being seen to be doing the right thing, whether or not that is popular. It is holding the highest interest of others, and the organization, above self-interest. It is often an expression of character. It is what leaders get paid to do.

Political Intelligence

Political intelligence is accepting that in any group of people there are issues of authority, status, and power, and as a result there are politics. It is understanding the political terrain, the climate, the power structures, the pressure points. It is choosing to be aware rather than naive. It is working with this extra layer of complexity and chaos in order to serve the organization's higher interest.

Developing Other Leaders

Developing other leaders is committing to the truth that leaders must beget leaders. It is holding oneself accountable for the success of one's direct reports. It is mentoring and coaching and supporting. It is leveraging one's experience by building leadership capacity in others – for the present, and for the future.