

# PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY (PLS) WORKSHEET

Putting together a PLS will greatly improve your chances of being a successful leader of a startup. Leading a startup requires mastering the very tricky balance of being selfish enough to be a driven entrepreneur and being selfless enough to be viewed as a great leader by the many people you will need to convince to change their lives in order to make your idea into a tangible reality.



**FIRST STEP:** Figure out why you really want to be a successful entrepreneur (i.e. what is your motivation for being an entrepreneur – or intrapreneur). Being a successful leader of a startup requires personal sacrifice and you want to make sure your motivations are strong enough that you'll carry through with the sacrifices when required. If you don't want to make personal sacrifices, that's fine but then understand that you'll need to team up with somebody who does.

**Why do you want to be a successful entrepreneur?**

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Your first answer to this question will likely be very superficial, so we need to dig deeper by asking some follow-on questions. Ultimately there is a very selfish reason you have for wanting to be a successful entrepreneur and most people have a hard time admitting to their selfishness.

**What fundamental desire or fear does your motivation satisfy?**

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All motivations come from some inner desire or some fear. Examples of inner desires could be: to have nobody ever tell you what to do, or perhaps to want to have people become highly dependent upon what you say and do. An example of a major inner fear could be a fear of being humiliated in the eyes of a parent, or in the eyes of a rival.

**Do you care if you are successful or not? How would you feel if you didn't succeed? Why?**

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This last question tests for whether you are getting to your strongest innermost desires and fears. You really want to feel strongly, if not terrified, about not fulfilling your strongest motivation. If you are not feeling some strong emotions then you may need to ask why do I want this so badly a couple more times in order to find the real source of your strongest motivations. Your strongest motivations will often be associated with things that made you feel the happiest or most scared growing up or some other traumatic event in your life.

**Who else have you shared your leadership motivations with? Do they believe you that these are your real motivations for being a successful entrepreneur?**

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Do their descriptions of your motivations align with yours? If not, then you need to find out why and resolve it.

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**SECOND STEP:** Find your mentors. You do not want to, nor need to, do this by yourself. If you want to prove that you do not need the help of anyone else to be successful then you will not make a very good leader. Good leaders show others how dependent they are upon the skills and support of others.

**Who are your mentors?**

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**What have they done well? What do you admire them for?**

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**What do you want them to help you achieve?**

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**Are there any mentors you wished you had? Is there anyone you can think of who might know this person or a person with a similar background? Why haven't you called and asked for an introduction?**

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**THIRD STEP:** What are your traits? How do they make it easier or harder to be a leader or entrepreneurial leader?

Trait	Describe it	How does it make it easier to be a leader or EL?	How does it make it harder to be a leader or EL?
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator			
Learning Style			
IQ			
EQ			
Physical stamina			
Mental stamina			
Neuroticism/Ability to control emotions under stress			
Phobias/Fears			
Physical Traits			

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What other traits do you have that could make it easier or harder to be an entrepreneur and/or a leader (e.g. physically imposing, speaking phobia, fear of confrontation)?

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How do you know these are your traits? Have you been tested or is this conjecture? If it is conjecture, on what is it based?

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Have you shared your list of traits with anyone else? Do they agree with your list?

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You want to be able to convince your mentors that you know yourself well.

**FOURTH STEP:** Work with your mentor to determine your level of competence at the basic skills of entrepreneurial leadership? Use the following questions to judge where you stand on this rough scale of levels of proficiency.

- **Basic:** Can perform the task under nonstressful conditions
- **Competent:** Can perform the task under varying conditions with acceptable outcomes
- **Master:** Can consistently perform the task under very stressful conditions
- **Best-in-Class:** Can consistently perform the task under the most extreme possible conditions

Your skills proficiency can improve with practice and with experienced coaching, but the level of mastery you can achieve also depends on your motivations and traits.

**Skill #1.** How self-aware are you? Do you understand why you act the way you do, particularly under stressful circumstances? Do you know what makes you feel anxious and what are your real motivations?

The traditional ways to get more proficient in self-awareness are either to create a journal where you have a debate with yourself about why you act the way that you do and what you can do to become more effective, or, to go to a professional therapist.

**Skill #2.** Do you know what you'll be called upon to do to lead your enterprise as it matures? How well do you understand projects, processes, and culture? Do you know what makes successful projects, processes, and cultures and what causes failures? Have you led and projects or processes yourself? Under stressful conditions? Have you led any organizations where you changed or created their cultures? Did these cultures make these organizations more effective in accomplishing their mission? Are they lasting? Do you understand how the demands of an enterprise upon its leader change as the enterprise matures from an idea into a self-sustaining enterprise?

**Skill #3:** Do you know how to build strong relationships? How do shared objectives create bonds? When is it good for relationships to be competitive or retreating? When are the costs of cooperative relationships justified? How have you built strong relationships? How have your relationships been tested under stressful conditions? How good are your communication skills?

**Skill #4:** Do you know how to motivate groups of people? How have you created autonomous, skill enhancing, and meaningful work or group environments that motivated people of diverse backgrounds?

**Skill #5:** Do you know how to lead change? What are the five prerequisites and what are your techniques for making sure these prerequisites are in place and stay in place? What changes have you led that others failed at doing or thought were difficult to accomplish?

**FINAL STEP:** What are you going to do to use your current motivations, traits, and skills to master the five skills of entrepreneurial leadership? Write down your strategy, including how you plan to hold yourself accountable.