

About SLII®

Creates a shared language for leadership

Increases the quality and quantity of conversations

Develops self-reliance

Key vocabulary...

Goal/Task

Competence

Commitment

Direction

Support

About SLII®

Your conversations...

1. **Alignment** (you lead) – setting clear expectations and goals.
2. **Directing** – giving clear guidance when competence is low.
3. **Coaching** – balancing direction and support to build competence.
4. **Supporting** – listening, encouraging, empowering.
5. **Delegating** – turning ownership over to the performer.
6. **One-on-One** (they lead) – regular connection to review progress and needs.

Your 3 skills...

- 1 **Goal Setting** – Aligning on what needs to be done, when
- 2 **Diagnosing** – Collaboratively assessing an individual's competence and commitment on a specific goal or task
- 3 **Matching** – Using a variety of leadership styles, comfortably, to provide individuals with what they need

ALIGNMENT

1 Goal Setting

Aligning on what needs to be done, when

Writing SMART Goals

Specific – what exactly is the goal or task? What does a good job look like?

Motivating* – Am I excited and interested in this goal?

Attainable – Is the goal realistic and achievable?

Relevant – Is the goal important and aligned with team and/or organization goals?

Trackable – Is there a way to track progress, are there measures?

1 Goal Setting

Aligning on what needs to be done, when

*In SLII, SMART goals are slightly redefined from the traditional business version. Instead of “Measurable,” the M stands for Motivating – because leadership in SLII® isn’t only about achieving outcomes; it’s about fueling engagement and ownership.

Why it matters:

- A goal can be measurable but still uninspiring.
- In adaptive leadership, you want goals that energize the performer, not just track performance.
- Motivation connects the goal to the individual’s values, strengths, or sense of purpose – which drives commitment (the “C” in competence + commitment).

Example:

- Traditional SMART: “Complete 10 code reviews per week.”
- SLII SMART: “Complete 10 code reviews per week to help the team release higher-quality features faster.”

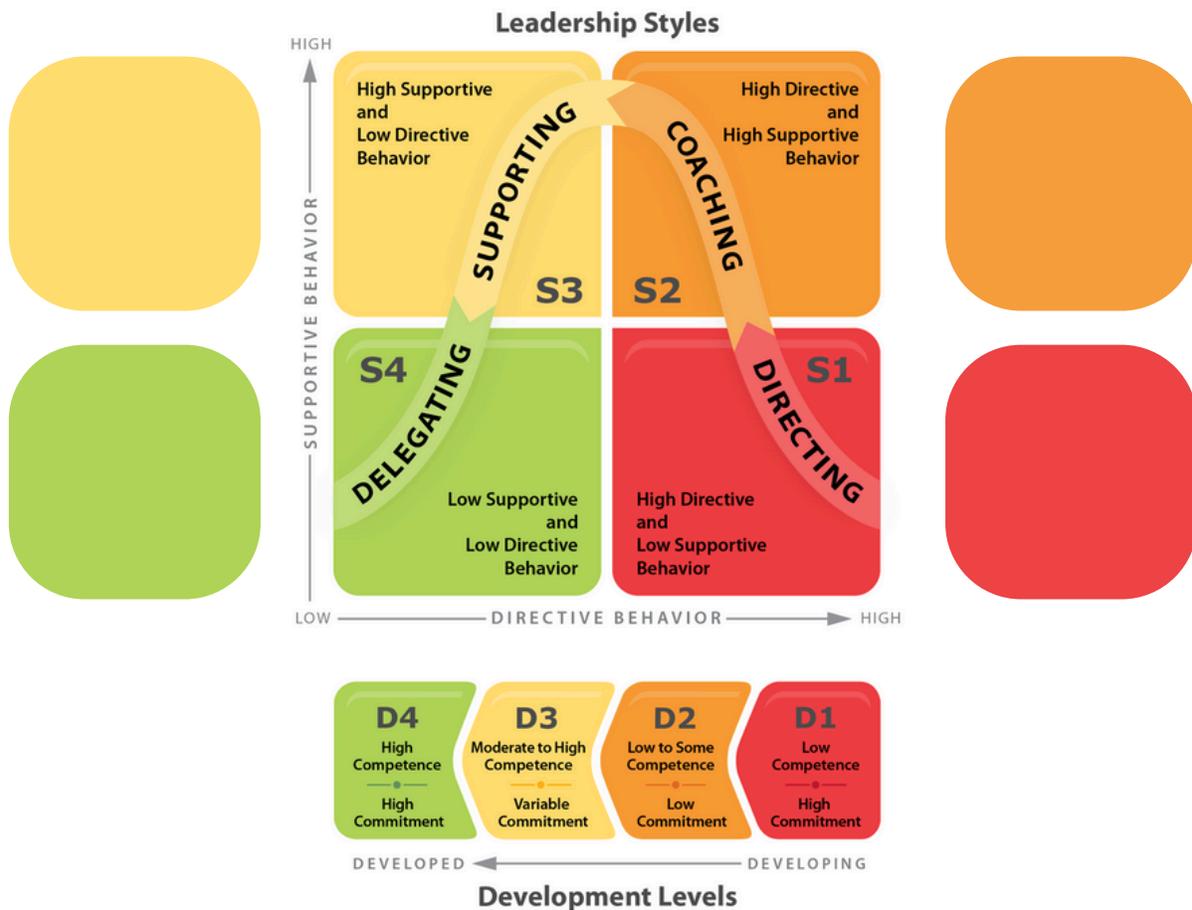
The difference? The second goal ties the task to impact and meaning, which strengthens motivation and deepens engagement.

2 Diagnosing

Collaboratively assessing an individual's competence and commitment on a specific goal or task

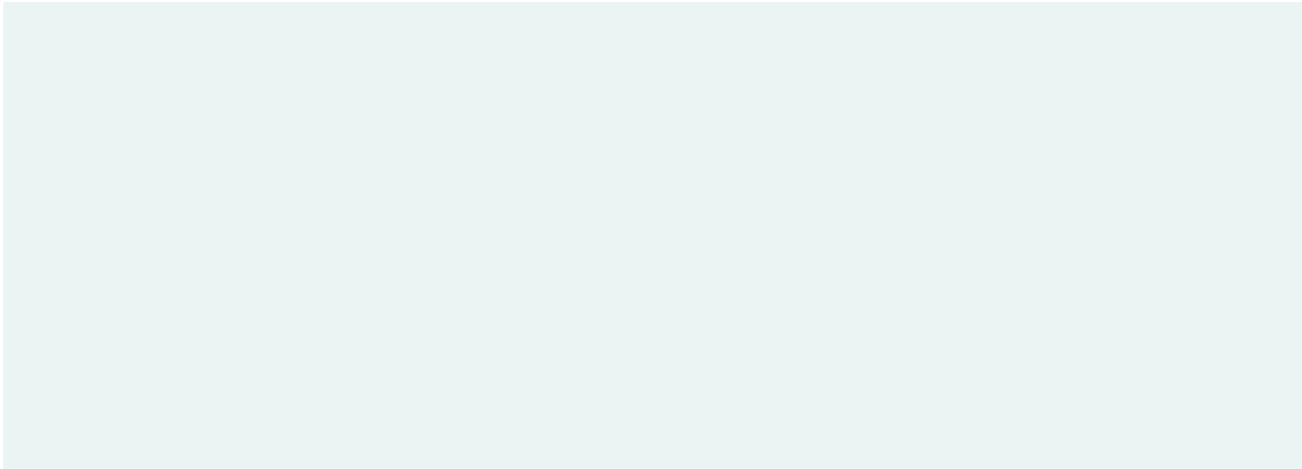
Development Level is the combination of

<p>Competence</p> <p>Demonstrated goal or task specific knowledge and skills or Demonstrated transferable knowledge and skills</p>	<p>Commitment</p> <p>Motivation Confidence</p> <p>Don't confuse commitment with competence!</p>
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2 Diagnosing

Define the goal/task clearly



What was their competence and commitment for that specific task?



2 Diagnosing

Development Needs

D1

Low Competence

High Commitment

- Acknowledgment
- SMART Goals
- Timelines and check-in points
- Priorities
- Role clarity
- Limits to autonomy/ authority
- A step-by-step plan for learning
- Direction about what and how; training
- Concrete examples/templates
- Solutions to problems
- Opportunities to practice
- Access to resources and information
- Lots of feedback on progress

D2

Low to Some
Competence

Low Commitment

- Someone to listen to concerns
- More clarity on goals and roles
- Perspective
- Explanations of why; rationale
- Opportunities to be involved in problem solving and decision making
- Alternatives; advice
- More direction about how
- Coaching to refine skills
- Feedback on work
- Reassurance and encouragement

D3

Moderate to High
Competence

Variable
Commitment

- Opportunities to demonstrate competence
- Opportunities to express feelings and concerns
- Opportunities to test ideas; a sounding board
- Good questions about the work being done
- A vote of confidence and encouragement
- Opinions about ideas, if asked; help in getting something done, if needed
- Reminders of past successes
- Acknowledgment of high levels of competence and contribution
- Suggestions for making the goal more interesting or challenging

D4

High Competence

High Commitment

- Trust
- Visibility as a contributor/an expert
- Opportunities to be creative and innovative
- Autonomy; influence
- Opportunities to grow
- Opportunities to teach and mentor others
- Resources to perform at D4
- To be valued for contributions

My Development Story



Purpose

This reflection helps you connect your personal growth journey to the ****SLII model**** — recognizing how your own competence, commitment, and leadership needs evolved over time. It will also help you empathize with what your team members might need from you today.

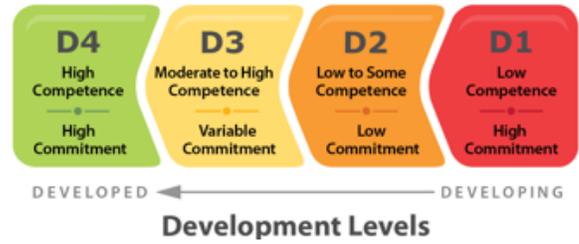
Instructions

Think of a specific time in your career when you were learning something new, taking on a challenge, or stepping into a bigger role. Write freely using the prompts below (bullet points or short paragraphs). Transfer to the next page. Share key insights with a partner — not your full story — during the debrief.

- What was the goal/task?
- How competent and committed were you at first?
- What leadership style (S1–S4) did you seek or receive?
- What helped or hindered your growth?
- How did your needs evolve?

DRAFT YOUR STORY ON THE NEXT PAGE...

My Development Story



DRAFT HERE

REFINE YOUR STORY ON THE NEXT PAGE...

My Development Story



I am
D4 at

When I started I was (competence and commitment)...

I sought help by getting (direction, support, coaching)

The actions, feedback, or encouragement I received helped...

Highlight or circle one sentence or insight from your story that surprised you – or that you think your team needs to hear.

About Misalignment

Employee Need	Leader Response	Impact
Low competence + high enthusiasm	Too much autonomy	Anxiety, mistakes, loss of confidence
High competence + low commitment	Over-direction	Frustration, disengagement
Developing competence + wavering confidence	Under-support	Doubt, stalled growth
Fully competent + committed	Micromanagement	Demotivation, turnover risk

Misalignment to Momentum

- Revisit the goal — is it clear and shared?
- Reassess competence and commitment — have they changed?
- Adjust your direction and support to fit today's need.
 - Who might you be giving too much direction to?
 - Who might you be giving too little support to?
 - Who are you leading based on who they were, not who they are now?



About Misalignment

Resolving disagreements about development level

Reclarify the goal

1

Ask for “evidence” of demonstrated task knowledge and skills

2

Benchmark the person’s performance against exemplary performance

3

If there is still disagreement, go with the person’s perception of his or her development level with a shorter-than-normal timeline

4



3 Matching

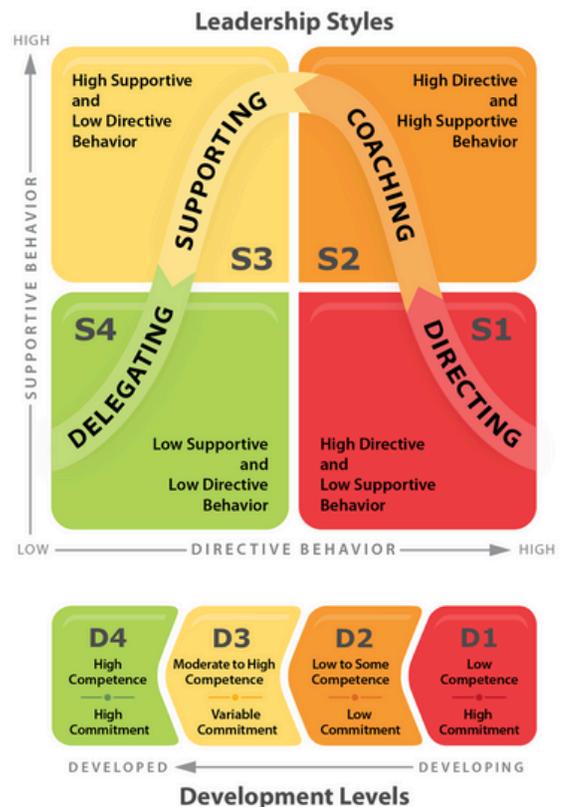
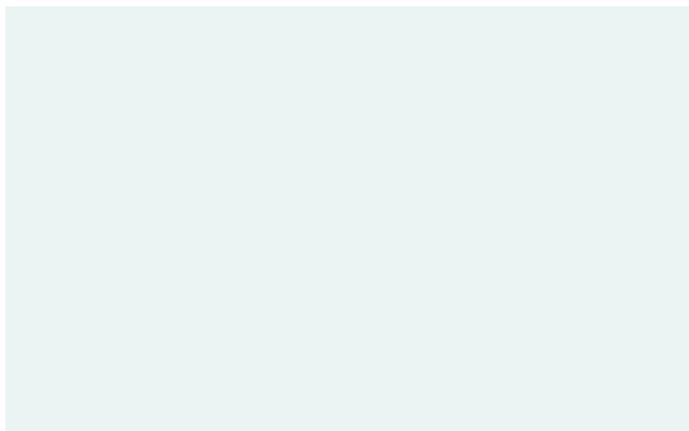


Using a _____ of leadership styles, _____, to provide individuals with what they need, _____.

What did you determine was the development level for your team member for the specific goal/task **on page 11**?



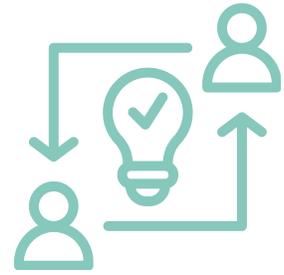
Was your instinct to direct, coach, support, or delegate?



Leadership Behaviors

Directive

1. Setting SMART goals
2. Showing and telling how
3. Establishing timelines
4. Identifying priorities
5. Clarifying roles
6. Developing action plans
7. Monitoring and tracking performance



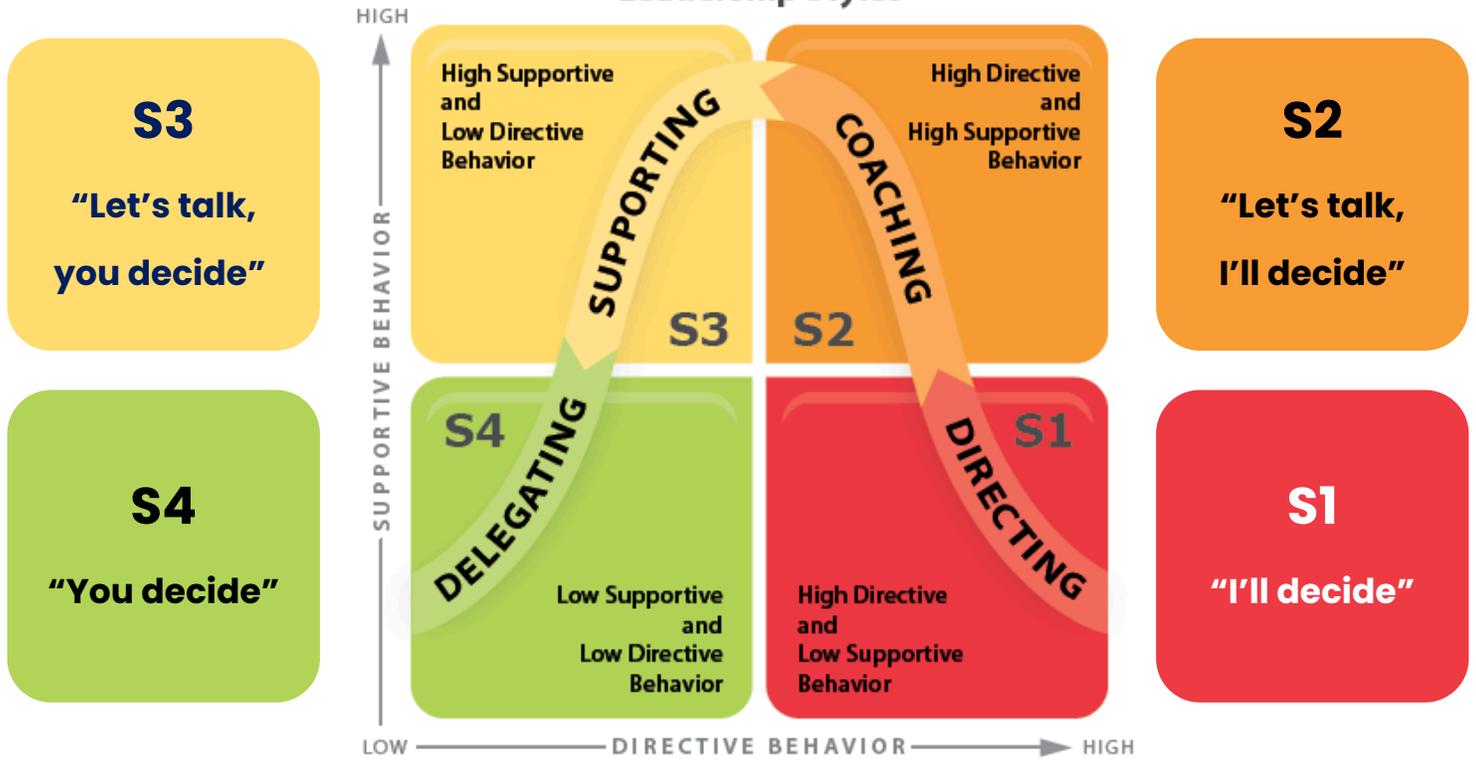
Supportive

1. Listening
2. Facilitating self-reliant problem solving
3. Asking for input
4. Providing rationale
5. Acknowledging and encouraging
6. Sharing information about the organization
7. Sharing information about self



3 Matching

Leadership Styles



Low does not mean No



- Ask D3 for input about what and how
- Listen and encourage
- Facilitate problem solving by asking open-ended questions



- Explore concerns and encourage
- Explain why
- Redirect and reteach
- Involve in problem solving



- Acknowledge expertise
- Support autonomy
- Invite innovation and ongoing learning



- Acknowledge transferable skills and/or commitment
- Give direction about what, how, and when
- Check in frequently

Conversation Prep

1) GOAL/TASK

2) DIAGNOSE

COMPETENCE AND COMMITMENT

	LOW/SOME	HIGH
GOAL-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE/SKILL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOTIVATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONFIDENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3) MATCH

LEADERSHIP STYLE

- S1—HIGH DIRECTION/LOW SUPPORT
- S2—HIGH DIRECTION/HIGH SUPPORT
- S3—LOW DIRECTION/HIGH SUPPORT
- S4—LOW DIRECTION/LOW SUPPORT

If unsure about the diagnosis (split between two), what is the trend?

PREPARE

CHOOSE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS TO MATCH APPROPRIATE STYLE

DIRECTIVE BEHAVIORS

- Set SMART Goal
- Show and tell how
- Establish timelines
- Identify priorities
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Develop action plans
- Monitor performance

SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIORS

- Listen to concerns
- Facilitate problem solving
- Ask for input
- Explain “why”
- Acknowledge and encourage
- Share info about organization
- Share info about self

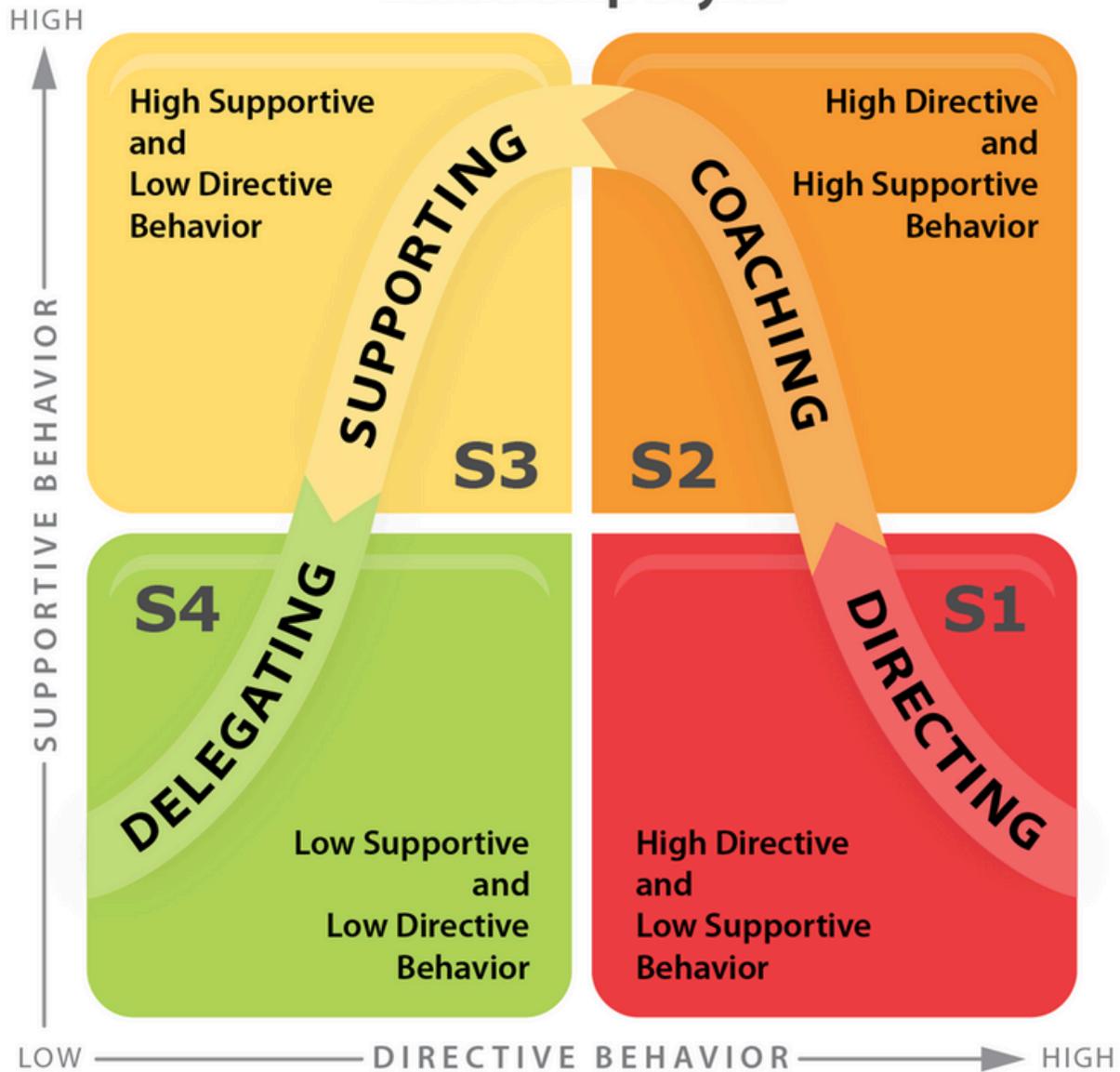
	STYLE 1 LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS	WHAT TO SAY	MY NOTES
CONNECT	Clarify purpose of meeting	What I'd like to talk to you about is...	
	Acknowledge transferable skills	Your skills of...will be really helpful.	
	Acknowledge enthusiasm and initiative	I appreciate your (enthusiasm, initiative, willingness to...)	
ALIGN	Define SMART Goals	What I'd like you to do is...by.. What a good job looks like is...	
	Get Style 1 agreement (development level and leadership style)	Since you haven't done this before, would it be helpful if I provided you with some direction, resources, information...?	
	Clarify performance tracking	We'll track your progress by...	
	Set priorities	The priority of this goal/task/project is...	
	Clarify roles	What you need to do is... And here's what I will do to help you...	
	Define boundaries	You can go this far, but then need to check in...	
TEACH	Develop a plan to learn	To learn how to do this first you need to...then...	
	Teach/show; provide direction and examples	Let's me show you how first... Here's an example... Be careful not to...	
	Provide info/ resources/solutions	Here's some information that will be helpful... (also share advice or share a resource)	
	Direct problem solving	Here's what I'd like you to do for this issue...	
	Provide opportunities to practice new skills	Try this a few times before we reconnect...	
	Provide feedback on how	Here's what I observed/heard...	
RECONNECT	Check for understanding and alignment	Let's recap; tell me what you've heard so I can make sure I've given you the direction you need.	
	Follow through	Let's setup our next check-in...	

	STYLE 2 LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS	WHAT TO SAY	MY NOTES
CONNECT	Clarify purpose of meeting	What I'd like to talk to you about is...	
	Listen to concerns	How are things? What concerns do you have? How are you feeling?	
ALIGN	Clarify SMART Goals	Let's reconfirm your goals and how I can help you achieve them...	
	Get Style 2 agreement (development level and leadership style)	Since you're still learning, and maybe feeling (what you observed), would it be helpful if I continue to provide you with some direction, or do you have some ideas?	
	Provide some perspective	We'll track your progress by...	
	Explore "why" about "what and how"	The priority of this goal/task/project is...	
	Involve the individual in problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are you stuck? • What have you tried? • What else could you do? • Here are some ideas/next steps that we may want to consider.... • What are the pros and cons to each alternative we've discussed? • So, we've agreed the next steps are... 	
TEACH	Redirect and reteach	Let me show you how.... Here's how you might want to look at this.... Here are some more resources/examples....	
	Provide feedback and coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here's what I've observed.... Is that your experience? • Here are some ideas/next steps.... What do you think? • You may want to spend some time with... 	
	Provide encouragement and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know you can do this. • I'm confident you'll be successful at.... • I know this is harder than you thought it was going to be. Hang in there. • I'm here to help by (clarify role)... 	
	Check for understanding and alignment	So, before we wrap up, let's review what we've decided. What's your understanding?	
RECONNECT	Follow through	Let's meet again (set date). I'll touch base with you about....	

	STYLE 3 LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS	WHAT TO SAY	MY NOTES
CONNECT	Clarify purpose of meeting	What would you like to focus on today? What challenges or concerns do you have?	
	Listen to concerns	Here's what I heard you say...	
ALIGN	Confirm SMART Goals	So, how are things going on your goal (state goal)? Given your contribution, I'd say we are aligned on your goal to (reconfirm goal)	
	Get Style 3 agreement (development level and leadership style)	Would listening be more helpful than advice or direction? What is the best way for me to support you?	
	Facilitate self-reliant problem solving by asking questions; let D3 determine how	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, what's working? What's not? • How is this impacting your confidence or motivation? • What alternatives do you have? What are the pros or cons to each alternative? Which alternative is best? • If you went with that recommendation, what steps would you need to take? 	
	Listen more	Do you have anything else you want to talk to me about? Any other concerns? Can you tell me more about...? What did you mean when you said...?	
	Express confidence and encourage	I'm confident you can or will be able to.... Look how much you've accomplished already...	
SUPPORT	Provide help and ideas, if asked; remove obstacles to success	Since you've asked, here's an idea.... What do you think? What's getting in your way? Can I help?	
	Reflect on past successes	Just like last time, you (remind of past successes). Do you remember when you...? What positive feedback have you gotten from others?	
	Acknowledge competence and contributions	I appreciate.... Here's how your work has helped the team.... What do you think you've accomplished or learned?	
	Support ways to make goal more interesting & challenging	What would it take for you to be re-excited about this? How could we restructure this so that it is more fun? More challenging? So that you continue to grow and develop?	
RECONNECT	Follow through	I'm here to listen.... Be sure to call me when you need me. I look forward to hearing what you're able to accomplish.	

	STYLE 4 LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS	WHAT TO SAY	MY NOTES
CONNECT	Clarify purpose of meeting	What would you like to talk about Tell me what you are most excited about. So, how do you think you're doing on (state goal)...?	
ALIGN	Revisit SMART Goals	Can you update me on your goals? What would a stretch goal look like?	
	Get Style 4 agreement (development level and leadership style)	I know you're taking the lead, but I'm here, when or if you need me.	
	Draw out and create visibility for success	What success have you had with...? What feedback have you been getting? Who else should know about your success/ contributions?	
SUPPORT	Encourage creativity and innovation	What is still exciting for you? What are you doing to keep your work fresh? What new ideas have you had about your work? What new projects interest you?	
	Support autonomy	Where do you want more influence? What would you change?	
	Support growth	How can I support you? What do you want to do next?	
	Provide opportunities to teach or mentor others	How could you share what you do so successfully? Who would you like to coach or mentor? Where else can the organization leverage your expertise?	
	Provide additional resources, if requested.	Is there anything I can do to help? Do you need anything from me to make your work easier?	
	Acknowledge competence, commitment & contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We've always benefited from (describe contributions). I so appreciate (describe contributions). You have made a major contribution by How would you like to be acknowledged for the work you've done? 	
RECONNECT	Take action on their ideas	I trust your judgment on... Here's what I'll do with what you've suggested...	
	Follow through	How do we stay in touch? How do I stay informed?	

Leadership Styles



DEVELOPED ← ————— → DEVELOPING

Development Levels