



5 Reasons Leaders Fail to Develop

Review these 5 reasons that leaders fail to develop and ask yourself if any of them apply to you!

1. They don't take responsibility for their own growth and development.

Leaders who wait for their manager to sign them up for an in-house workshop, or who depend on the company to invite them to a development program are not taking responsibility for their own growth and development. If you have been waiting for someone else to make it happen for you, it's time to take the initiative to improve your own leadership capabilities!

2. They are not open to new experiences.

Leaders who avoid new, different experiences or are reluctant to try new things stunt their own growth. New experiences provide new stimuli and input that creates change and helps you make new connections. If you are not open to new experiences, and you want to shake things up a bit, it could help to imagine that you have a switch in your mind that you can turn on and off, and you can choose to turn that switch to "Open." Becoming and staying open to new experiences starts with a choice to be open, and it continues with a willingness to be mindfully aware of your experience.

3. They don't approach new assignments and opportunities with a positive intention to learn.

Accidental learning can be great: when you least expect it, you experience a sudden insight. Intentional learning is the engine of great growth and development. If you intentionally look for something to learn, even when an experience is difficult, challenging, or not to your liking, you will discover learning in all aspects of your life.

4. They don't develop a clear understanding of their strengths and development needs.

One of the most powerful developmental experiences I have ever completed was very simple: I created a "T-Chart" on a piece of paper (drew two lines that formed a lower case "t"), and on one side listed the "Top 5" strengths that I thought had been primarily responsible for my success to date, and on the other listed the "Top 5" development needs that I thought I needed to address in order to continue growing and developing as a leader. It was the first time I had done that, and it was very eye-opening and laid the foundation for thinking about development. Remember that you have biases and probably don't see yourself very clearly, so when you have done this, make sure you read and take action on the fifth reason leaders fail to develop!

5. They fail to seek and use feedback.

When was the last time you asked colleagues, friends, family members, bosses, customers, suppliers, or anyone else for candid feedback about something important to you and your professional career, such as your performance, behavior, presentations, relationship skills, etc.? You can do this well, and you can do it badly. Don't ask for feedback if you don't plan to apply it to change or improve. Don't ask your friends and allies only. Don't ask just to get pats on the back. Do ask for feedback if you honestly want it, and plan to use it to change, grow, or develop further. Thank those who give it to you. Follow up with them after you have made changes to see if they notice the improvement. And build it into your work MO.