THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Demonstrating self-control and managing time and priorities to work independently toward business objectives.



LEADERS LEAD THEMSELVES

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY SELF-MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Self-Management is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG SELF-MANAGEMENT LOOKS LIKE

- You feel energized about your work and still have time and energy for your personal life
- You meet deadlines and commitments without feeling overwhelmed
- You are seen as someone who takes initiative, even without clear direction

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Self-Management matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

THE DEFINITION

Demonstrating self-control and managing time and priorities to work independently toward business objectives.

Like any skill worth mastering, Self-Management rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Planning rather than reacting**

Self-managers don't just react to events around them: they plan for their own needs and schedule their participation. It isn't about calendaring every thought; it's about feeling in control of your responses.

2 **Owning the outcome**

Noticing when you place blame elsewhere: "he didn't send it in time," "nobody here is organized." Even when accurate, you usually have more power than you think to solve it another way.

3 **Managing time and priorities**

Thinking clearly about your unique role in a complex project, and realistically about where you need outside help. This is what reduces stress and sharpens your expectations of others.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I maintain a good balance between taking care of myself physically and emotionally and getting my work completed on time.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I am always conscious of managing how I react to people and situations.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I have a clear understanding of priorities and what matters most in my work.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I can work independently without direct supervision to accomplish goals.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I plan my week around my priorities rather than reacting to whatever arrives first.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I set boundaries on interruptions, including email and messages, so I can finish focused work.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?*

SECTION 04

SELF-MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 30 min

The Time Audit

Compare how you actually spend your time against what your role is supposed to deliver. Track your time for one week before this review.

TRY IT

1. Write down the major tasks or task groups from your position description.
2. For one week, log every task you perform and how much time it takes.
3. Compare the log to your job description, and realign where they've drifted apart.

ACTIVITY 02 20 min

Look Ahead

Review your calendar every few days so upcoming projects never arrive as surprises.

TRY IT

1. For each upcoming project, break your portion into specific tasks.
2. Make a firm, realistic deadline commitment for each, and prioritize them.
3. Share your commitment with your manager, team, or customers as appropriate.

ACTIVITY 03 15 min

The Promise Log

Track every promise you make so you can see whether you're making realistic ones. Keep the log running for a week.

TRY IT

1. Carry a notepad or planner and write down every promise you make, and when you promised it.
2. At week's end, ask whether your promises were realistic and what you've done to follow through.
3. Either complete the promised work, or start making more realistic commitments.

ACTIVITY 04 15 min

Managing Stress Talk

The phrases you use about yourself shape how much pressure you carry. Watch your language for a week.

TRY IT

1. For one week, write down every time you say "I should have" or "I ought to have."
2. Review the list and convert each into a less judgmental assessment.
3. Note what you did well, and allow yourself to be less than perfect.

ACTIVITY 05 30 min

Contain the Interruptions

Protecting blocks of time is how major goals actually get finished.

TRY IT

1. Schedule set times of day for email, voicemail, and messages, and handle them only then.
2. Establish office hours when your door is open, and monitor your daily interruptions.

3. Delegate the tasks that others can reasonably manage.

ACTIVITY 06 30 min

Beat Procrastination

Tasks usually get harder and more stressful the longer you wait. Apply it daily to the task you least want to start.

TRY IT

1. Prioritize your task list by importance and due date, and do the most critical task first.
2. Break any large task into smaller ones and complete them one at a time.
3. Spend at least 30 minutes each day on each important task you've committed to.

SECTION 05

COMMON SELF-MANAGEMENT TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Blaming the system**

"Nothing here is organized" may be accurate and still leaves you stuck. Look for the alternate channel, the second source, the workaround you control.

02 **Waiting for direction**

Ambiguity is uncomfortable, but it's also an opening. If better direction isn't available, determine what needs doing and start.

03 **Calendaring everything**

Self-management isn't itemizing every thought and action. That's impossible. It's feeling in control of your behaviors and responses.

04 **Neglecting the physical**

Skipping exercise and recovery to get more done backfires. A fit, relaxed body handles the rush of stress hormones far better.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Self-Management over the next 90 days?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1 _____

Q2 _____

Q3 _____

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

_____

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

_____

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Self-Management with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK

The Complete Leader, Ch. 2.1: Self-Management

The full framework and examples behind self-management.

PODCAST

The Complete Leader Podcast

Episodes 34, 46, 60, 61, 130 & 131 explore self-management.

ONLINE

Self-Management competency library

Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS

As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Self-Management?

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Self-Management is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.