THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING & EVALUATING OTHERS

The ability to see individuality in others and understand a person's unique point of view and attitudes.

LEADERS LEAD OTHERS

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY UNDERSTANDING & EVALUATING OTHERS MATTERS

Understanding & Evaluating Others 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 UNDERSTANDING & EVALUATING OTHERS LOOKS LIKE

- You read each person individually, so you place, delegate, and motivate to real strengths
- You build an environment of trust and understanding
- You assess people accurately instead of by category, and your reads hold up over time

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Understanding & Evaluating Others matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF UNDERSTANDING & EVALUATING OTHERS

THE DEFINITION

The ability to see individuality in others and understand a person's unique point of view and attitudes.

Like any skill worth mastering, Understanding & Evaluating Others rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Discerning individuality**

Seeing each person as unique rather than as a member of a category. Appreciating and adapting to different people is what makes interpersonal relationships effective.

2 **Perspective plus reasoning**

Combining observation, memory, knowledge, and reasoning to yield insight into what others think and feel, while staying grounded in your own perspective.

3 **Acting on what you learn**

Being conscious of how your actions impact others, using equitable criteria for assignments, and leading people according to their motivational needs.

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 reject stereotyping others based on ethnicity, functional responsibility, beliefs, age, gender, or personality, and see each person as unique.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I consistently lead and support others by focusing on their talents and how to leverage them for professional and organizational success.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I seek to understand multiple perspectives around important issues.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I know the names and interests of my associates' spouses, close friends, and children.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I gather enough information about a person before forming a judgment about their capabilities.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I act on what I learn about people, adjusting how I assign work, delegate, and communicate.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

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

SECTION 04

UNDERSTANDING & EVALUATING OTHERS 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 15 min

Investigating Another's Perspective

Open-ended questions and genuine curiosity are the fastest route into someone else's frame of reference. Use it in one conversation a day this week.

TRY IT

1. Use at least one open-ended question in every conversation tomorrow.
2. The next time someone disagrees, ask "What information guided you to this opinion?" and listen without formulating your reply.
3. When someone complains about a policy, ask what challenges and solutions they see, and write them down.

ACTIVITY 02 40 min

Focusing on Other People

Recognition lands better when it's shaped around the other person's preferences, not yours.

TRY IT

1. List people who handled a difficult situation well or put in extra effort on an objective.

2. For each, consider what expression of thanks they would actually prefer.
3. Recognize them in that way, centering attention on their effort, not yours.

ACTIVITY 03 30 min

Respond to Concerns

People who bring you concerns are telling you what they need; the follow-through is what builds trust.

TRY IT

1. List people who came to you with professional or personal concerns in recent weeks.
2. For each, decide the most appropriate way to assist: help with a task, listen, or point to resources.
3. Follow through, and let them know you care how they feel.

ACTIVITY 04 30 min

Get Out From Behind the Desk

Small shifts in physical and conversational posture change what people share with you.

TRY IT

1. Invite someone you'd like to understand better for a casual lunch or coffee, and ask open-ended questions.
2. In meetings, move out from behind your desk so you view material from the same perspective.
3. Take time for brief informal chats, listening with genuine interest to what people share.

ACTIVITY 05 10 min

Count Your Interruptions

You can't understand someone you keep cutting off, and you probably don't know how often you do it. Count them across a week of conversations.

TRY IT

1. Ask someone you trust to count how many times you interrupt in various conversations.
2. Double the number of times you paraphrase what a speaker told you.
3. Count how many times a week you let someone disagree without defending yourself or giving in.

ACTIVITY 06 20 min

Shift the Silent Criticism

When you catch yourself judging someone internally, that's the moment to build appreciation deliberately.

TRY IT

1. The next time you silently criticize someone, take a mental step back.
2. Make a written list of positive things you can identify in that person.
3. Observe their non-verbal cues, and if they don't match their words, ask what they're thinking or feeling.

SECTION 05

COMMON UNDERSTANDING & EVALUATING OTHERS TRAPS

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

01 **Stereotyping by category**

Reading people through ethnicity, role, age, or personality type predetermines your reaction before you have evidence. See each person as unique.

02 **Listening while composing your reply**

Silently formulating a response means you're hearing words, not perspective. Listen first, then think about what to say.

03 **Judging performance on inequitable criteria**

Not everyone does the same level or type of work, but everyone has a right to increasingly challenging projects as they demonstrate readiness. Examine how you assign work.

04 **Needing to win the disagreement**

Allowing someone to disagree doesn't require changing your position. Seeking to understand their reasoning is what builds respect.

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 Understanding & Evaluating Others 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 Understanding & Evaluating Others with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK	**The Complete Leader, Ch. 3.2: Understanding & Evaluating Others**	The full framework and examples behind understanding others.
PODCAST	**The Complete Leader Podcast**	Episodes 30, 35, 37, 46, 67, 116 & 119 explore understanding others.
ONLINE	**Understanding & Evaluating Others 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 Understanding & Evaluating Others?

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Understanding & Evaluating Others 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.