

The Life Themes of an Outstanding Leader

*In theme-based selection, we describe a **Life Theme** as the dominant pattern of a person's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors consistently lived out personally and professionally. The following descriptors help focus upon essential elements that make top performers stand out in a crowd. The descriptors are grouped by major **themes** with specific **attributes** listed under each one. People living out these dominant themes and attributes bring out the best in others as part of a unified team.*

POSITIVELY RELATING

This person genuinely values people and **CONNECTS** with them as unique individuals leading to positive, trusting, and productive interaction.

- **Rapport:** This leader radiates a commitment to build and maintain positive connections with others resulting in trust and mutual understanding. Relationship building with others emphasizes one-to-one open sharing that is mutually beneficial. When working through difficult situations with people, this person recognizes opportunities to listen and develop a more meaningful appreciation for the individuals involved.
- **Communication:** This leader uses multiple forms of communication to ensure clarity within a high functioning team and the department. This person is committed to seeking regular feedback with individuals and groups for personal growth, while prizing one-on-one interaction through listening, asking questions, and ensuring everyone feels heard. Differences in viewpoint are seen as opportunities to seek more effective approaches for two-way understanding and collaborative action.
- **Empathy:** This leader is quick to listen and validate the range of emotions in others, helping them navigate feelings as a normal part of life. This person shows appreciation for the thoughts and feelings of others, so they feel heard while helping them move toward productive action. This person actively supports individual team members, enabling them to become increasingly resourceful as part of the team.

MISSION FOCUSING

This person **ALIGNS** their thoughts and actions with a people-centered purpose that is a consistent driving force through good as well as challenging times.

- **Positive Mindset:** This leader views life experiences with a positive frame of mind resulting in a high level of energy. This person's resilience is a driving force, helping others view problems within the department as an opportunity to create unity toward shared goals. Through this life commitment, this person mobilizes others to accomplish goals previously considered unattainable.
- **Service to Others:** This leader expresses gratitude and humility about developing the leadership capacity of adults in their teams. This person balances their impact on team progress with actions that reinforce a culture of learning and growth for all. This person recognizes the challenging nature of leadership and invests in mobilizing professionals to achieve a shared vision and mission.
- **Mission Advocacy:** This leader is emphatic that all key decisions must be based upon what will ultimately achieve the mission of the organization. This person helps employees constantly adapt their behaviors to achieve greater outcomes for key stakeholders. This person is committed to ensuring that all team members, regardless of limitations, are entitled to develop their unique strengths and talents.

MOBILIZING OTHERS

This person ENGAGES with others to develop an intentional, people-centered process that helps them reach their potential.

- **Motivating:** This leader uses the intrinsic motivations of others to achieve higher levels of effectiveness with individuals and teams. While maintaining a positive direction, this person celebrates progress while constantly seeking and confirming what inspires others to excel. As a result, individuals in the organization develop high levels of personal commitment to participate in positive, collaborative action.
- **Delegating:** This leader remains keenly aware of the core strengths and interests of individual employees they directly supervise. This person works with individual employees to assess their interests and develop new skills to apply within their specified area of expertise. This person provides opportunities for individuals and teams to apply their talents in achieving shared goals.
- **Mentoring:** This manager is highly effective in observing, critiquing and supporting employees in their continued learning and growth. This person helps team members use objective information to collaboratively diagnose issues and define solutions together. This person empowers employees with skilled questions that help them reflect, reason and take personal action on achieving a larger mission.

RESULTS FOCUSING

This person designs and MEASURES progress in a collaborative, systematic way to ensure desired results.

- **Planning:** This leader involves employees and key stakeholders in developing and implementing short and long-term goals consistent with the core mission. People responsible for implementing the plans are engaged as an integral part of the planning process. This person prioritizes activities that support the needs of their team in accomplishing short and long-term goals.
- **Decision Making:** This manager is highly committed to making objective decisions with input and insights from people affected. This person uses data and collaborative dialog to arrive at quality, responsible decisions in line with larger goals. After decisions are made, this person remains open to adjustments in the implementation process that ensures high success for the future.
- **Accountability:** This leader is skilled at holding themselves and others accountable for the specific, measurable progress within their area of responsibility. This person is effective in using data while working with employees to improve their effectiveness ultimately leading toward high goal attainment. When goals are not met, this person helps team members take action through collaborative problem-solving in ways that improve long-term performance.

MULTIPLYING IMPACT

This person EXTENDS their influence by facilitating partnerships and shared solutions across the organization.

- **Knowledge Building:** This leader views each person as a vital and integral part of enhancing the collective knowledge and experience of the team. This person enables all team members to share their insights with others in specific, meaningful, and appropriate ways. This person understands high levels of cooperation between multiple sources helps achieve mutually beneficial goals.
- **Intercultural Connections:** This leader recognizes and promotes the benefits of an inclusive and diverse environment. This person builds collaborative partnerships between professionals and teams to ensure all employees are progressing toward high levels of achievement. This person seeks opportunities to listen and strengthen relationships that help professionals take positive action to ensure equitable treatment for all.
- **Resource Allocation:** This leader collaborates with team members to ensure a budget process that responds to the needs of all stakeholders. This person is highly aware of financial resources and facilitates their use in ways that enhance team effectiveness. This person works closely with team members to ensure the best use of resources consistent with the core mission and strategic direction.