



## Leadership Compass: Appreciating Diverse Work Styles

### Overview:

This material in this workshop is taken from the Bonner Curriculum from the Bonner Foundation in Princeton New Jersey. Please utilize this facilitator's guide to assist the participants through the various exercises.

The purpose of the workshop is to enable participants to articulate at a higher level why they work the way they do, as well as identify skills and strengths they would like to enhance. This workshop also is a tool to bolster team accountability by pushing people to consider the way in which their styles plays out on a team and how each person might become better at changing work styles to balance a team or fit a given work situation.

**Category:** Diversity; leadership development; problem-solving; team and personal management

### Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- In sum, Leadership Compass is about:
- Developing a deeper sense of self-awareness about one's leadership style and approach
- Developing a more balanced approach to work style; seeking out areas of growth or change
- Developing an understanding of how one's work style affects team functioning
- Deliberately building skills in all four directions to enhance personal and team performance

### Materials Needed:

- Ensure all participants come with pen and paper
- Large print paper for all 4 groups (1-2 pages per group)
- Markers for each group (2-4 markers per group)
- Handouts on the four directions and Leadership Compass
- Flip charts must include:
  - 1-2 posters for each of the four directions listing "approach," "overuse," for each direction (essentially, copy the handouts onto large poster paper, preferably 2 for each direction – one with approach and one with overuse)

In addition, other helpful charts are:

- Goals
- three questions to ask yourself when determining primary direction
- each set of questions asked to the small groups
- large visual compass with directions

### How to Prepare:

Walk through workshop and revise to fit participants, if necessary. Prepare all materials, including directional flip charts. Prepare any case studies or scenarios to fit the group and its work. Prepare your own relevant introduction, including history, applications, and context. Set up space.

### How to Do/Brief Outline:

1. Introduction and Framing	suggested time	5 minutes
2. Goals and Expectations	suggested time	5 minutes
3. Review Four Directions	suggested time	10 minutes
4. Primary Direction Discussion	suggested time	10 minutes
5. Group Activity and Report Backs	suggested time	15 minutes
6. Going To Extremes Discussion	suggested time	5 minutes
7. Rotate Through 3 Directions	suggested time	5 minutes
8. Case Scenario & Processing	suggested time	25 minutes
9. Team Sharing & Large Group Discussion	suggested time	5 minutes
10. Group Debriefing and Closing	suggested time	5 minutes

### Step 1: Introduction and framing of the exercise (Suggested time: 5 minutes)

(You may want to start with a simple, physical warm up to get everyone's attention.)  
Introduce the basic concept and its history.

### History

The Leadership Compass draws from a Native American Indian-based practice called the Medicine Wheel or the Four-Fold Way. In the Four-Fold Way, the four directions are described as warrior (north), healer (south), teacher (west), and visionary (east). All directions have profound strengths and potential weaknesses, and every person is seen as capable of growing in each direction. Each direction has a primary "human resource," including power (north), love (south), wisdom (west), and vision (east), as well as primary struggles, associated with loss or difficulty. Each person can access the gifts associated with each direction; through work, ritual, a variety of practices; in order to become more whole.

This workshop builds on the Leadership Compass framework to allow individual participants to dig deeper in their perceptions of self and team. Non-profit organizations modified the original framework and language to be more suited to the professionally-oriented cultures of organizations. This workshop pushes the notion of the "learnable" qualities of each direction, when a person adopts a willingness to learn and change.

Ask participants to make a "leap" and allow themselves to go with the categorizations of the exercise. Some important introductory comments are:

- This is a diversity exercise that introduces a framework of four "directions" ~ representing qualities of work styles. When appropriately incorporated, the diversity of our work styles can be a great source of productivity and creativity; when inappropriately understood or incorporated, this diversity can bring about a lot of misunderstanding, tension, and confusion.
- For our purposes today we will be concentrating on the directions in which we personally use at work, particularly at work in community service efforts. Please answer and evaluate your responses in terms of how you currently approach your work.

- □ One style isn't better than any other. In fact, this workshop will allow us to look more deeply at the primary and other styles we use at work. All of the styles offer different strengths and challenges.
- You may find yourself critical of the categorizations or of having to reveal things about your own work styles. We request that you hold from making judgments about the usefulness of the exercise as you go through it. "Try on" this exercise. Go with it for awhile. We are confident you will find it useful.
- You may also want to introduce some of the history of this activity (see above).

### Step 2) Lay out goals and expectations (Suggested time: 5 minutes)

The goals of this are:

- To develop a more balanced approach to personal work style development
- To build an understanding how one's work style may affect team functioning
- To deliberately build skills in all four directions to enhance personal and team/group performance

Make sure to introduce some Ground Rules for the activity:

Introduce "hands up" as a tool to keep the activity moving and participants focused.

- Ask people if they want to suggest any Ground Rules for the group or session.
- □ Again, ask people to go with the exercise. Acknowledge that a person may be tempted to tell all of us that he/she isn't *always* "south." It's normal for people to feel that they have qualities of all of the sides, so it's not necessary for people to explain themselves at every step. Stick with the exercise which allows people to later explore and discuss their many sides.
- Observe basic group facilitation/setting guidelines.

### Step 3) Start introducing the four directions (Suggested time: 10 minutes)

You should have the boards with each of the directions "approaches to work/work style" listed (do not have the "overuses" or other elements visible at this point) Explain that you're going to read off some of the approaches of each direction. Before you begin, present the following questions:

- **What's your first inclination when you get a new project?**
- **What's your tendency when you're under pressure?**
- **What feedback have you been given about yourself?**
- **What seems most comfortable?**

Ask people to listen carefully and consider...

- What is their 'PRIMARY DIRECTION'? That is the direction they most identify as their own style.
- WHEN ACTING AS A PROJECT DIRECTOR OR TASK LEADER, keeping in mind that many of us work in some of all of the directions at different times. Have participants identify the direction that best fits them by standing next to that direction.
- Again, remind people that later in the workshop, people will explore skills from all of their directions.

#### **Step 4) Have people go to primary direction (Suggested time: 10 minutes)**

After everyone is finished writing, (re)introduce hands up, and have people move physically to one of four areas that represents that primary direction. Explain that in those directions, people will have the opportunity to discuss their styles in more detail. Give people designated time (suggest 8 minutes) to discuss the following:

- **What's really great about being your direction?**
- **What's really hard about being your direction?**
- **What's difficult about working with the other directions?**

In those discussions, people can recognize that although they are at the same "primary" direction, they have different responses to these questions. Make sure to inform groups that someone should keep notes and be prepared to summarize what the group discusses. After the discussion, you can also provide an opportunity for anyone who thinks that they're in the wrong place to move to a new direction now.

#### **Step 5) Group Activity (Suggested time: 15 minutes)**

Each group sitting in their primary direction will address this question:

- **Plan a two week vacation**

Ask each group to report out their solution to the above question. After all groups have given their complete report allow for *some* direct questions and conversation between the groups. You can ask, "Does anybody want to ask anything of anyone from one of the other directions?" You can also ask the group for their observations or note some of your own. You probably want to keep a tone and pace that don't encourage the group to degenerate into "name calling" or criticizing of other directions. Try to bring out interesting questions and points of agreement and difference.

#### **Step 6) Discussion of Going to Extremes (Suggested time: 15 minutes)**

The purpose for this portion is to have people focus on how their style might be misunderstood, conflict with others, or be taken too far in a group dynamic. This should raise awareness of people for the "balancing" possibility of different styles.

Give the groups **five minutes** to focus on the following question:

- **When you take your direction to an extreme or are inflexible with your style, what do you think the other directions are saying about working with you?**

Ask groups to brainstorm their responses. Have each group report out (**10 minutes of report backs and discussion**) what they say. Then, go around the room and flip the cards to reveal the "OVERUSE" portions of the charts for each direction. You can introduce them by saying: "Take a look at these charts. Some of the items you may recognize came up in your group. Some may be new." The discussion of OVERUSE of styles is a good lead in to the next part, which is a focus on how one can balance one styles.

**Step 7) Quickly move to secondary, third, and fourth styles (Suggested time: 5 minutes)**

Now you want to really get the group moving. Ask the group to physically get up and move to their SECONDARY direction - the side s/he feels is second most likely to use in the project administrator role. Give them 30 seconds to move. Ask everyone to look around. Take a few comments or ask a few questions -- e.g. to point out who moved "across" (west - east, north - south) and who moved "around" (west - south, west - north, north - west, north - east, and so on).

Now ask the group to move to their THIRD style. Give them 30 seconds to move. Ask everyone to look around. Take a few comments or ask a few questions.

FINALLY ask the group to move to their FOURTH style (what they perceive as their weakest). Give them 30 seconds to move. Ask everyone to look around. Take a few comments or ask a few questions. **TELL PEOPLE TO TAKE SEATS IN THIS DIRECTION.**

Close this brief round of movement by explaining that this exercise prefaces the next part of the workshop, which is to focus on developing strengths in all of the sides.

**Step 8. From their 4th directions, introduce a scenario: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)**

Choose a scenario that represents some typical work of the team. It's good to have elements in the scenario that will allow people to grapple with the relevancy of different approaches and styles. Explain that you are going to present a scenario, and you would like people to tackle it FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR FOURTH (WEAKEST) STYLE (the one they are in now).

➤ POSSIBLE SCENARIO:

Your committee is part of the historical society of a local community. The historic drive-in movie theatre may be put up for sale and an outside land developer wants to purchase the property and demolish the drive-in to build an office complex. Even though the owner has let the property get completely run down and it has now become a haven for illegal drug activity, this drive-in is one of the first drive ins that were created in the country and your committee has been assigned the task find a way to save this historic landmark and get the community to invest in restoring it back to its original structure. The historical society has given you a budget of \$2000 for seed money to help you get an action plan started.

Read the scenario and have it on paper as well. Give people 1-3 specific questions to address in relation to the scenario, like:

- "How to you handle this situation?"
- "Generate a proposal and proposed strategic or PR plan, within the timeline and budgetary limits, to take on this challenge."

Give people a designated time for discussion (5 minutes), flip chart paper, and markers. Then, take report backs (10 minutes) from each direction.

**Step 9) Lead the group in processing the scenario/case study (Suggested time: 5 minutes)**

As facilitator, lead another round of report backs to draw out the following information:

- 1. How did your group approach this?**
- 2. What did you identify as the issues?**
- 3. What did you decide/recommend?**
- 4. What did you notice about how your group handled this situation?**
- 5. How was it to work in your "weakest" direction?**
- 6. Was anything a surprise about this?**

Allow for some direct conversation after each group has given their complete report: "Does anybody have any comments or observations to share? Did the various styles seem to influence how the group approached the situation?" This is where you can start to bring in questions about the team's ordinary work together:

- **Was it challenging to have to play out your weakest direction?**
- **What did you learn?**
- **Does this resemble or counter dynamics of our team? How? When?**
- **Does this make you think that you may have more of that direction than you thought?**

This leads in to the opportunity for each person to explain more about their work styles.

**Step 10) Group Debrief and Closing (Suggested time: 5 minutes)**

You can lead the group in a simple debrief by asking:

- *What have you learned?*
- *What struck or surprised you?*
- *How are you going to use this information? How might you use it with your own staffs and corps?*
- *At the beginning we said that this is a diversity exercise, now that we have completed the exercise - How is this diversity exercise?*
- *What concrete things might you do to develop more balance as a person or team? How has this been a step in skill building for you?*

You want to close the workshop with your own summary comments, take feedback, do evaluations, and lay out next steps. (You will probably want to figure out some specific, concrete next steps for using this information as a group and give specific individuals follow up roles in doing so). Hand out and Review Balancing for Success worksheet.

## Balancing for Success

The Leadership Compass is a good tool to use to see where our “comfort zone” is in our leadership style. We recognize that we need all the points of the compass to be a leader and even our “comfort zone” is probably between two points.

The Leadership Compass is also a good tool to use when determining the success of any project. For each project you are working on, you can ask yourself the following questions:

### Vision (East)

- What was the vision of what we wanted the project to look like?
- How did we imagine and look at everything that was possible?

### Relationships (South)

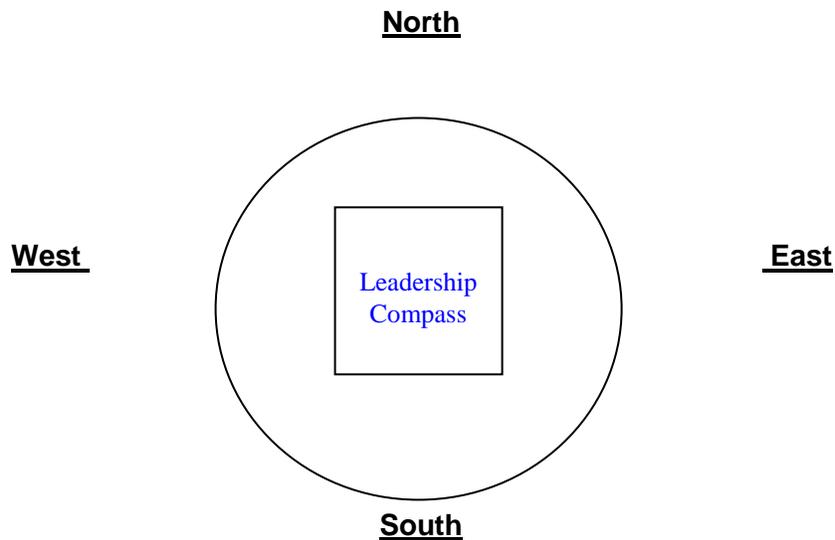
- How did people in the group relate to each other?
- How did individuals identify with the group?
- What did people feel about the project and their participation and contribution?

### Process (West)

- How did we do the project?
- What was our plan and how did we come up with it?
- How was the project supervised and evaluated?

### Results (North)

- How well did we complete the project?
- Which success criteria of the project did we meet?





## Leadership Compass: NORTH (Warrior)

### Approaches to Work/ Work Style:

- Assertive, active, decisive
- Likes to determine course of events and be in control of professional relationship
- Enjoys challenges presented by difficult situations and people
- Thinks in terms of “bottom line”
- Quick to act or decide; expresses urgency for others to take action
- Perseveres, not stopped by hearing “No,” probes and presses to get at hidden resistances
- Likes variety, novelty, new projects
- Comfortable being in front
- Values action-oriented phrases, “Do it now!”, “I’ll do it”, “What’s the bottom line?”

### Overuse: Style Taken to Excess:

- Can easily overlook process and comprehensive strategic planning when driven by need to act and decide
- Can get defensive, argue, try to “out expert” others
- Can lose patience, pushes for decision before its time, avoids discussion
- Can be autocratic, want things their way, has difficulty being a team member
- Sees things in terms of black and white, not much tolerance for ambiguity
- May go beyond limits, get impulsive, disregard practical issues
- Not heedful of others’ feelings, may be perceived as cold
- Has trouble relinquishing control - find it hard to delegate, “If you want something done right, do it yourself!”

### Best Ways to work with a North:

- Present your case quickly, clearly, and with enthusiasm and confidence
- Let them know they will be involved – their pay off and their role
- Focus on the “challenge” of the task
- Provide them with plenty of autonomy
- Establish timelines and stick with them
- Give them positive, public recognition
- Use them to complete tasks that require motivation, persuasion, and initiative



## Leadership Compass: SOUTH (Healer)

### Approaches to Work/ Work Style:

- Understands how people need to receive information in order to act on it
- Integrates others input in determining direction of what's happening
- Value-driven regarding aspects of professional life
- Uses professional relationships to accomplish tasks, interaction is a primary way of getting things done
- Supportive to colleagues and peers
- Willingness to trust others' statements at face value
- Feeling-based, trusts own emotions and intuition, intuition regarded as "truth"
- Receptive to other's ideas, builds on ideas, team player, noncompetitive
- Able to focus on the present
- Values words like "right" and "fair"

### Overuse: Style Taken to Excess:

- Can lose focus on goals when believes relationships or people's needs are being compromised
- Has trouble saying "No" to requests
- Internalizes difficulty and assumes blame
- Prone to disappointment when relationship is seen as secondary to task
- Difficulty confronting or handling anger (own or others'); may be manipulated by emotions
- Can over-compromise in order to avoid conflict
- Immersed in the present or now; loses track of time; may not take action or see long-range view
- Can become too focused on the process, at the expense of accomplishing goals

### Best Ways to Work with a South:

- Remember process, attention to what is happening with the relationship between you
- Justify your decisions around values and ethics
- Appeal your relationship with this person and his or her other relationships
- Listen hard and allow the expression of feelings and intuition in logical arguments
- Be aware that this person may have a hard time saying "NO" and may be easily steamrolled
- Provide plenty of positive reassurance and likeability
- Let the person know you like them and appreciate them



## Leadership Compass: EAST (Visionary)

### Approaches to Work/ Work Style:

- Visionary who sees the big picture
- Generative and creative thinker, able to think outside the box
- Very idea-oriented; focuses on future thought
- Makes decisions by standing in the future (insight/imagination)
- Insight into mission and purpose
- Looks for overarching themes, ideas
- Adept at and enjoys problem solving
- Likes to experiment, explore
- Appreciates a lot of information
- Values words like “option,” “possibility,” “imagine”

### Overuse: Style Taken to Excess:

- Can put too much emphasis on vision at the expense of action or details
- Can lose focus on tasks
- Poor follow through on projects, can develop a reputation for lack of dependability and attention to detail
- Not time-bound, may lose track of time
- Tends to be highly enthusiastic early on, then burn out over the long haul
- May lose interest in projects that do not have a comprehensive vision
- May find self frustrated and overwhelmed when outcomes are not in line with vision

### Best ways to work with an East:

- Show appreciation and enthusiasm for ideas
- Listen and be patient during idea generation
- Avoid criticizing or judging ideas
- Allow and support divergent thinking
- Provide a variety of tasks
- Provide help and supervision to support detail and project follow through



## Leadership Compass: WEST (Teacher)

### Approaches to Work/ Work Style:

- Understands what information is needed to assist in decision making
- Seen as practical, dependable and thorough in task situations
- Provides planning and resources, is helpful to others in these ways and comes through for the team
- Moves carefully and follows procedures and guidelines
- Uses data analysis and logic to make decisions
- Weighs all sides of an issue, balanced
- Introspective, self-analytical, critical thinker
- Skilled at finding fatal flaws in an idea or project
- Maximizes existing resources - gets the most out of what has been done in the past
- Values word like “objective” “analysis”

### Overuse: Style Taken to Excess:

- Can be bogged down by information, doing analysis at the expense of moving forward
- Can become stubborn and entrenched in position
- Can be indecisive, collect unnecessary data, mired in details, “analysis paralysis”
- May appear cold, withdrawn, with respect to others' working styles
- Tendency toward remaining on the sidelines, watchfulness, observation
- Can become distanced
- May be seen as insensitive to others' emotions or resistant to change

### Best Ways to Work with a West:

- Allow plenty of time for decision-making
- Provide data-objective facts and figures that a West can trust
- Don't be put off by critical “NO” statements
- Minimize the expression of emotion and use logic when possible
- Appeal to tradition, a sense of history, and correct procedures.