

SIMPLE TRUTH # 9

**Effective servant leaders realize they have to use different strokes for different folks.**

SIMPLE TRUTH # 10

**Effective servant leaders don't just use different strokes for *different* folks, they also use different strokes for the *same* folks.**

SIMPLE TRUTH # 18

**Don't work harder; work smarter.**

**THE BASICS OF SLII®**

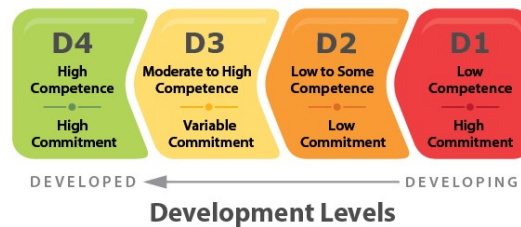
SLII® is a model for developing individuals to their highest level of performance on a specific goal or task. This method is based on the relationship between an individual's development level (competence and commitment) on a specific goal or task and the leadership style (direction and support) the leader provides. Effective leadership lies in matching the appropriate leadership style to the individual's development level. Situational leaders partner with their people, working side by side to align on goals, development levels, and leadership styles. This match, using the common language of SLII®, contributes to higher trust, positive intentions, and significant results. Leadership isn't something you do *to* people; it's something you do *with* people.

**DEVELOPMENT LEVEL**

Development level is a combination of two factors: *competence*, which is the individual's demonstrated task-specific and transferable knowledge and skills on a goal or task, and *commitment*, which is the individual's motivation and confidence on a goal or task. Development level is specific to the goal or task and is not an overall rating of an individual's skills or attitude. There are four development levels (see figure 1) consisting of different combinations of competence and commitment:

- Development level 1 (D1): *Enthusiastic Beginner*—Low competence and high commitment.
- Development level 2 (D2): *Disillusioned Learner*—Low to some competence and low commitment.

- Development level 3 (D3): *Capable, but Cautious, Contributor*—Moderate to high competence and variable commitment.
- Development level 4 (D4): *Self-Reliant Achiever*—High competence and high commitment.



**FIGURE 1.** Development levels

## LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership style is a pattern of behaviors leaders use over time as perceived by others. There are two basic leadership style behaviors: *directive behavior*, which involves telling and showing people what to do, when to do it and how to do it, and providing frequent feedback on results, and *supportive behavior*, which includes listening; facilitating self-reliant problem solving; and encouraging, praising, and involving others in decision-making. There are four leadership styles (see figure 2) consisting of different combinations of directive and supportive behaviors:

- Leadership style 1 (S1): *Directing*—High directive and low supportive behaviors. The leader provides specific direction about goals, shows and tells how to reach them, and closely tracks the individual's performance to provide frequent feedback on results.
- Leadership style 2 (S2): *Coaching*—High directive and high supportive behaviors. The leader offers explanations, solicits suggestions, encourages, and continues to direct goal or task accomplishment.
- Leadership style 3 (S3): *Supporting*—Low directive and high supportive behaviors. The leader and the individual make decisions together. The role of the leader is to facilitate, listen, draw out, encourage, and support.
- Leadership style 4 (S4): *Delegating*—Low directive and low supportive behaviors. The individual makes most of the decisions about what, how, and when. The role of the leader is to value the individual's contributions and support their growth.



**FIGURE 2.** Leadership styles

## MATCHING

When a leader matches their leadership style to a direct report's development level on a specific task or goal, it ensures that the leader will provide the right amount of directive and supportive behavior to help the individual perform the task well. Since individuals at D1 have commitment but lack competence, the leader needs to provide high direction (S1—Directing). Individuals at D2, who lack both competence and commitment, need the leader to provide both high direction and high support (S2—Coaching). Individuals at D3 have competence but variable commitment and, therefore, need high support (S3—Supporting) from the leader. Since individuals at D4 have both competence and commitment, leaders need to provide little direction or support (S4—Delegating).