

# SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP® II

## Learn the SLII® Model

## Situational Leadership® II

Situational Leadership® II (SLII) is a model for developing individuals to their highest level of performance on a specific goal or task. SLII 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. When leaders are Situational Leaders, they 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.



**Situational Leadership® II is not something you do **to** people; it is something you do **with** people.**

### Benefits to Partnering with SLII

When leaders partner with their team members to use Situational Leadership® II, the model will help them to

1. Focus on what's most important—SMART goals
2. Diagnose competence and commitment
3. Give or get the leadership style needed to increase competence and commitment

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## Three Skills of a Situational Leader

To be an effective Situational Leader, you have to master the three skills. If there is effective partnering, the outcomes of SLII are achieved.

### 1 Goal Setting

Aligning on what needs to be done, when

### 2 Diagnosing

Collaboratively assessing an individual's competence and commitment on a specific goal or task

### 3 Matching

Using a variety of leadership styles, comfortably, to provide individuals with what they need

Alignment

## Six SLII Conversations

Leader-Led **Alignment Conversations** are used to set SMART goals and tasks and to discuss the leadership style match for development level.

The four **Style Conversations** are used to develop competence and commitment.

Team Member-Led **One on One Conversations** help the leader provide team members with the leadership style they want.

In these six conversations, Situational Leaders use the three skills of a Situational Leader to align on goals, development levels, and leadership styles.



# 1 Setting SMART Goals

The first step in creating clarity and alignment is setting SMART goals. It's impossible to assess someone's competence and commitment unless you know exactly what he or she is expected to do. SMART goals are set during an Alignment Conversation.

SMART goals answer these questions:

## **S** = Specific

- What exactly is the goal or task?
- What does a good job look like?
- When does the goal or task need to be accomplished?

## **M** = Motivating

- Is the goal or task meaningful for the individual?
- Will working on this goal build competence and commitment?
- Will working on this goal add or drain energy?

## **A** = Attainable

- Is the goal realistic, reasonable, and achievable?
- Is the goal within the individual's control?

## **R** = Relevant

- Is the goal or task meaningful work for the organization?
- Is the goal or task aligned with organization and work team goals?
- Is the goal or task a high priority in relation to other goals?

## **T** = Trackable

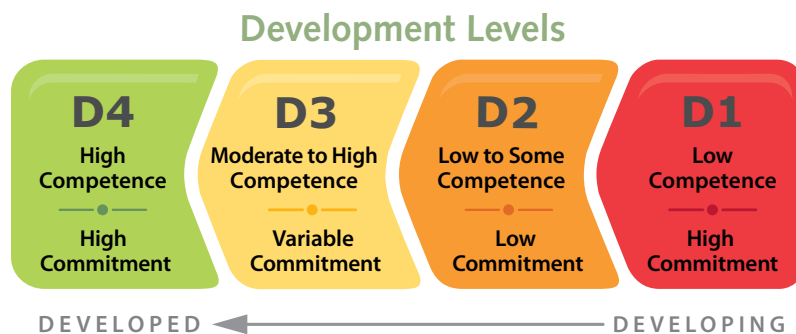
- How will progress and results be measured and tracked?

SMART goals motivate. They get leaders and the people they lead on the same page.

**All good performance starts with  
clear goals.**

## 2 Diagnosing Development Level

Once SMART goals are set, it's possible to diagnose development level. Development level is a combination of two factors: **Competence**—the individual's demonstrated task-specific and transferable knowledge and skills on a goal or task; and **Commitment**—the individual's motivation and confidence on a goal or task. Development level is goal or task specific. It is not an overall rating of an individual's skills or attitude. There are four development levels.



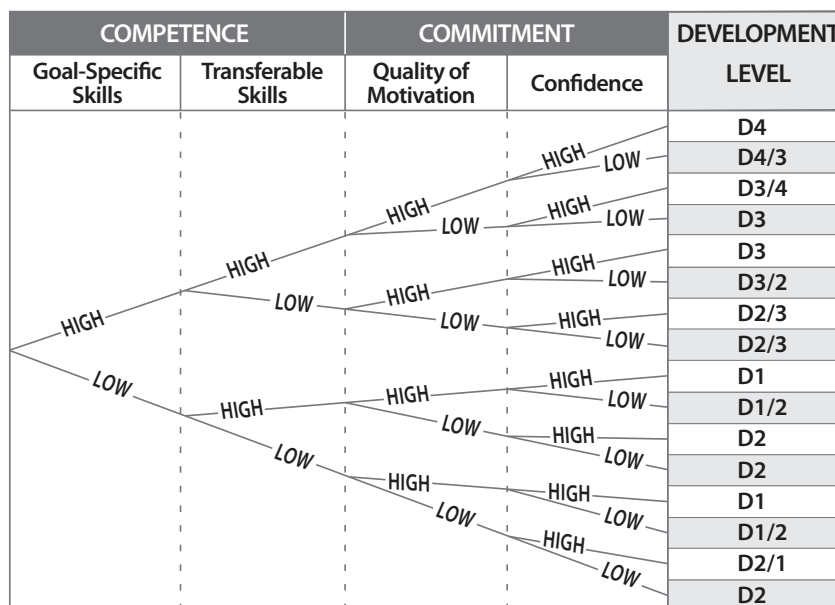
### Development Level Descriptors

D4	D3	D2	D1
Self-Reliant Achiever	Capable, but Cautious, Contributor	Disillusioned Learner	Enthusiastic Beginner
<b>Competence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accomplished</li> <li>Consistently competent</li> <li>Recognized by others as an expert</li> </ul>	<b>Competence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrated competence; experienced</li> <li>Makes productive contributions</li> <li>Generally skillful and adept</li> </ul>	<b>Competence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has some knowledge and skills; learning; not competent yet</li> <li>Doesn't know how to move forward</li> <li>Inconsistent performance and progress</li> </ul>	<b>Competence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New to the goal or task</li> <li>Inexperienced</li> <li>Don't know what they don't know</li> </ul>
<b>Commitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-reliant; autonomous</li> <li>Justifiably confident; self-assured</li> <li>Inspired; inspires others</li> </ul>	<b>Commitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes hesitant, unsure, tentative</li> <li>Not always confident; self-critical</li> <li>May be bored or apathetic</li> </ul>	<b>Commitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discouraged and frustrated; may be ready to quit</li> <li>Overwhelmed; demotivated</li> <li>Confused and concerned; afraid of making mistakes</li> </ul>	<b>Commitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eager to learn; curious; willing to take direction</li> <li>Enthusiastic; excited</li> <li>Confident about transferable skills and confident learning won't be difficult</li> </ul>

**Development level is goal or task specific!**

## Diagnosis Chart

Use this chart to identify development level on a specific goal or task.



### Example 1

On a specific goal or task, an individual has

GOAL-SPECIFIC SKILLS —High

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS —Low

MOTIVATION —High

CONFIDENCE —Low

This individual's development level is D3/2.

### Example 2

On a specific goal or task, an individual has

GOAL-SPECIFIC SKILLS —Low

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS —Low

MOTIVATION —High

CONFIDENCE —High

This individual's development level is D1.

### 3 Matching 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**—telling and showing people what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and providing frequent feedback on results; and **Supportive Behavior**—listening, facilitating self-reliant problem solving, encouraging, praising, and involving others in decision making. There are four leadership styles consisting of four different combinations of Directive and Supportive Behaviors.



#### Style 1—Directing—High Directive Behavior and Low Supportive Behavior

The leader provides specific direction about goals, shows and tells how, and closely tracks the individual's performance in order to provide frequent feedback on results.

#### Style 2—Coaching—High Directive Behavior and High Supportive Behavior

The leader explains why, solicits suggestions, encourages, and continues to direct goal or task accomplishment.

#### Style 3—Supporting—Low Directive Behavior and High Supportive Behavior

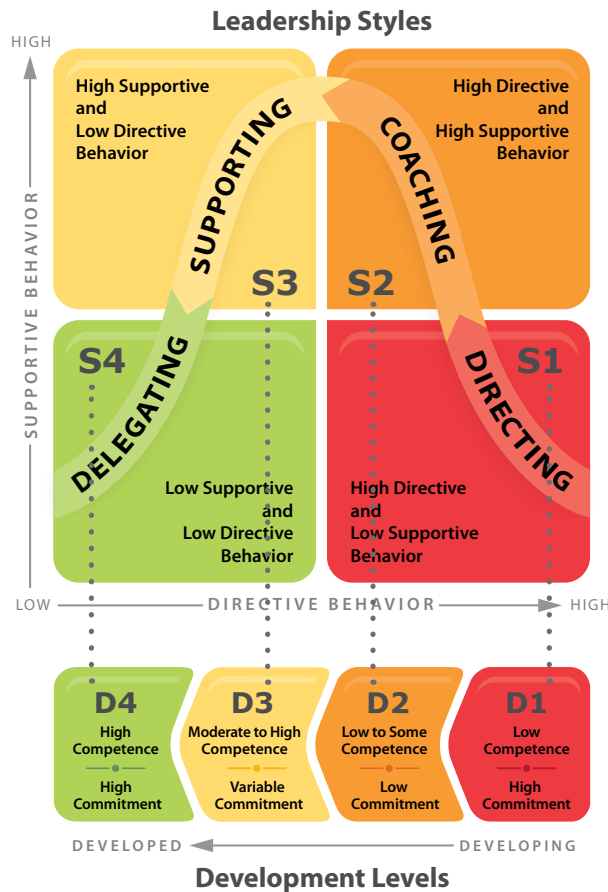
The leader and the individual make decisions together. The role of the leader is to facilitate, listen, draw out, encourage, and support.

#### Style 4—Delegating—Low Directive Behavior and Low Supportive Behavior

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 his or her growth.

# Situational Leadership® II Model

Matching Leadership Style to Development Level



In all four styles, the leader

1. Sets goals
2. Stays connected
3. Gives feedback

## The goal is a MATCH

- S1 → D1
- S2 → D2
- S3 → D3
- S4 → D4

Over time, with a match, individuals learn to provide their own direction and support.

## Two types of MISMATCH

### Oversupervision

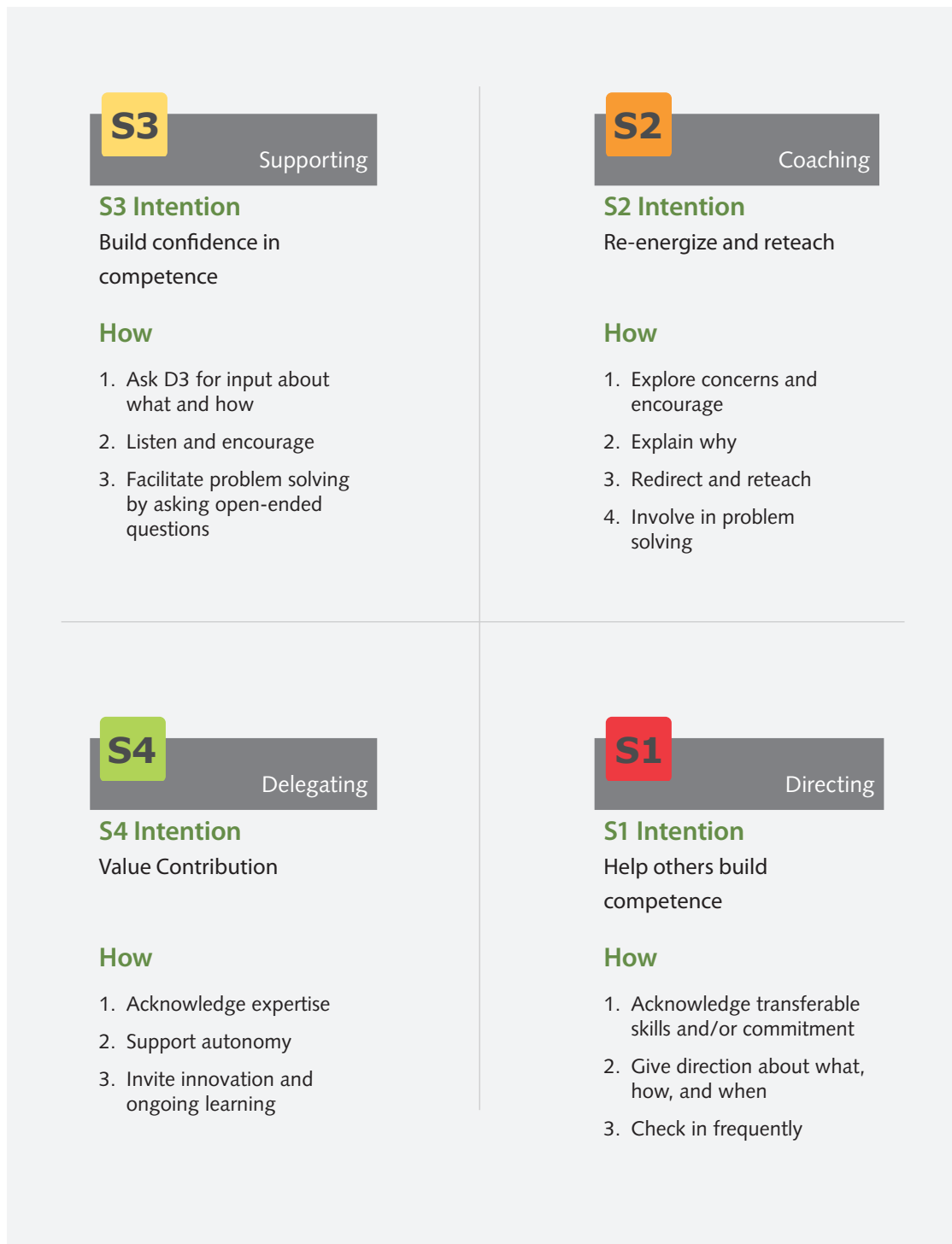
S1/S2 with D3/D4

### Undersupervision

S3/S4 with D1/D2

**There is no best leadership style;  
it depends on the situation.**





## Partnering Tools

Situational Leaders work with the people they lead to align on goals, development level, and the matching leadership style. They partner, collaborate, and work side by side to ensure goals are achieved and competence and commitment develop. There are four tools you need to know about if you are going to engage in quality conversations as partners.

### SLII Worksheet

The purpose of an Alignment Conversation is to focus the leader and the individual contributor on what is most important. What are the SMART goals the individual needs to achieve? What is the individual's competence and commitment to achieve those goals independently, without direction or support? What leadership style will help the individual achieve each goal and develop competence and commitment? Alignment Conversations, using the SLII Worksheet, get both the leader and the individual contributor on the same page.

**SLII® Worksheet**

1 Goal Setting 2 Diagnosing 3 Matching

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Goal or Task	Competence	Commitment	Development Level	Leadership Style	Directive Behaviors	Supportive Behaviors
Goal or Task	Low Some High	Low Variable High	D If split diagnosis, what's the performance trend? ↑ ↓ or ↔	S Current S Oversteering? <input type="checkbox"/> Understeering? <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Set SMART goals <input type="checkbox"/> Show and tell how <input type="checkbox"/> Establish priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify roles <input type="checkbox"/> Develop action plans <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for input <input type="checkbox"/> Explain "why" <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge and encourage <input type="checkbox"/> Share information about organization <input type="checkbox"/> Share information about self
Goal or Task	Low Some High	Low Variable High	D If split diagnosis, what's the performance trend? ↑ ↓ or ↔	S Current S Oversteering? <input type="checkbox"/> Understeering? <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Set SMART goals <input type="checkbox"/> Show and tell how <input type="checkbox"/> Establish priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify roles <input type="checkbox"/> Develop action plans <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for input <input type="checkbox"/> Explain "why" <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge and encourage <input type="checkbox"/> Share information about organization <input type="checkbox"/> Share information about self
Goal or Task	Low Some High	Low Variable High	D If split diagnosis, what's the performance trend? ↑ ↓ or ↔	S Current S Oversteering? <input type="checkbox"/> Understeering? <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Set SMART goals <input type="checkbox"/> Show and tell how <input type="checkbox"/> Establish priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify roles <input type="checkbox"/> Develop action plans <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for input <input type="checkbox"/> Explain "why" <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge and encourage <input type="checkbox"/> Share information about organization <input type="checkbox"/> Share information about self

SMART goals are:  
 Specific  
 Measurable  
 Attainable  
 Relevant  
 Trackable

Get agreement

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### One on One Worksheet

The purpose of a One on One Conversation is for a team member to manage up. The team member decides what to talk about—goals, challenges, questions, concerns—and what response he or she needs from his or her leader/colleague. Once the topics are determined, the team member can choose which leadership style would be a match for his or her development level on each topic, goal, or task. Essentially, it sounds like this ...

**One on One Worksheet**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting With \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions**

1. Make a list of topics you need to discuss. You can talk about whatever is on your mind.
2. Diagnose your development level for topics that are goals or tasks.
3. Decide what response you need from your leader or colleague—S1, S2, S3, or S4—for each topic.
4. Email this completed worksheet to your leader or colleague 24 hours before the meeting.

Topics	Development Level (if relevant)	Leadership Style Response You Need	Next Steps
1 _____ _____ _____ _____	D _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>S1</b> Direction • Solutions • Information <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S2</b> Coaching • Advice • Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S3</b> Good Questions • Listening • Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S4</b> Acknowledgment • Autonomy • Influence	_____ _____ _____ _____
2 _____ _____ _____ _____	D _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>S1</b> Direction • Solutions • Information <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S2</b> Coaching • Advice • Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S3</b> Good Questions • Listening • Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S4</b> Acknowledgment • Autonomy • Influence	_____ _____ _____ _____
3 _____ _____ _____ _____	D _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>S1</b> Direction • Solutions • Information <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S2</b> Coaching • Advice • Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S3</b> Good Questions • Listening • Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/> <b>S4</b> Acknowledgment • Autonomy • Influence	_____ _____ _____ _____

Use the SLII® Worksheet to diagnose your development level, if relevant.

Use the One on One Conversation Starters to ask for the leadership style you need.

Next Meeting Date \_\_\_\_\_

**D1/S1**—I'm excited and would benefit from knowing more about this (topic). [Or] I've never done this before and need some help. I need direction.

**D2/S2**—Since I'm still learning and am a little discouraged (confused, overwhelmed, frustrated), I'd like to share my thoughts and get some direction. I need advice.

**D3/S3**—I need you to be a sounding board so I can feel more confident or re-engaged. I need you to listen.

**D4/S4**—I've got this handled; let me keep you informed.

## One on One Conversation Starters

Sometimes it's hard to ask for the direction and support you need. The purpose of One on One Conversation Starters is to help a team member to speak up.

### D1 One on One Conversation Starters

Match Me with **S1**

D1 Needs	What to Say to Get an S1 Match	My Notes
<b>Purpose of the meeting clarified</b>	What I'd like to talk to you about is (add topic).	
<b>Transferable skills acknowledged</b>	I'll be able to use my skills of ... (list skills) to accomplish this goal ...	
<b>Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged</b>	I'm really excited to get started on ...	
<b>SMART goals</b>	I would benefit from knowing exactly what my goal is. What does a good job look like? What is a reasonable time frame for completing this goal?	
<b>Style 1 agreement (development level and leadership style)</b>	I want to remind you that I have never done this exact goal before and will need direction in order to be successful. Do you agree?	
<b>Knowledge of how performance will be tracked</b>	How will we stay in touch on this goal or task? Will you or will someone else review my performance? When would you like an update?	
<b>Priorities</b>	What is the priority of this goal or task?	
<b>Role clarity</b>	Can we take a minute to go over my role on each of our roles? What am I specifically responsible for?	
<b>Boundaries</b>	Which decisions can I make on my own? When should I check in with you?	
<b>Learning plan</b>	Who can teach me how to do this? What should I study, read, or review? Can you tell me what I should do first and what the next steps are?	
<b>Direction on how, examples</b>	What direction or advice do you have for me? Do you have examples? What should I be careful of?	
<b>Access to information/ resources</b>	What information do you have that will be helpful to me? Who might be a good role model, mentor, or teacher?	
<b>Solutions to problems</b>	What should I work on now? What should I try to do before we get together again?	
<b>Feedback</b>	How am I doing? What should I be doing differently?	
<b>Check for understanding and alignment</b>	Let me recap the direction you've given me so I know we're aligned.	
<b>Follow through</b>	When will we meet again?	

### D2 One on One Conversation Starters

Match Me with **S2**

D2 Needs	What to Say to Get an S2 Match	My Notes
<b>Purpose of the meeting clarified</b>	What I'd like to talk about is ...	
<b>Opportunities to share concerns</b>	I am concerned about my lack of progress on this goal. Things are not going as I expected. (I have some concerns about ... and would like to talk to you about them.)	
<b>SMART goals reclarified</b>	Let's reconfirm my goal. What do you need me to accomplish? Let's talk about your expectations for me and when I need your help.	
<b>Style 2 agreement (development level and leadership style)</b>	Since I'm still learning how to do this goal or task, I'd like to show my ideas, but also need some direction from you.	
<b>Perspective</b>	I need perspective. I need to know how you feel about the progress I am making. I need to understand why this goal is important to the organization. Can you help me understand why this is the best approach?	
<b>Involvement in problem solving</b>	I have some ideas, but what would your advice be? What options do I have? How else could I look at this? What else should I be considering and why?	
<b>Coaching</b>	Can you show me how? What information or resources do you have that would be helpful to me? Do you have any examples? Who might be a good role model, coach, or teacher?	
<b>Feedback</b>	What feedback do you have? What have you observed or heard?	
<b>Resource and support</b>	Am I doing everything right? Is it always this difficult? So, let me recap what we've decided to be sure I have everything right.	
<b>Follow through</b>	How will we stay in touch on this goal? When would you like an update? When will we meet again?	

### D3 One on One Conversation Starters

Match Me with **S3**

D3 Needs	What to Say to Get an S3 Match	My Notes
<b>Purpose of the meeting clarified</b>	I'd like to talk with you about my goal ... I'd like to run some ideas past you ...	
<b>Opportunities to express feelings and share</b>	Here's what I'm thinking ... Here's what I'm feeling ...	
<b>Style 3 agreement (development level and leadership style)</b>	Here's what I've accomplished ... Am we aligned? I need you to be a sounding board so I can feel more confident my approach or more motivated about ...	
<b>Problem-solving</b>	The problem/challenge seems to be ... The alternatives are (provide alternatives). The pros and cons of each are ... My recommendation is ... What do you think? What else should I be thinking about ...	
<b>Follow through</b>	There are some things getting in my way ... Could we talk about ... What other information or resources would help me ... Can you remind me of why I should feel more confident about my approach? How are we doing making a difference?	
<b>Additional resources if requested</b>	Do you have any suggestions for increasing my resources? Why is it important? How can I think about this goal my own way to do it?	
<b>Follow through</b>	How will we stay in touch on this goal? When would you like to meet again?	

### D4 One on One Conversation Starters

Match Me with **S4**

D4 Needs	What to Say to Get an S4 Match	My Notes
<b>Purpose of the meeting clarified</b>	During this meeting I'd like to share with you what I've been working on ... I've decided about ...	
<b>SMART goals update</b>	Here's what I've accomplished on my goal ... For me, what a stretch goal would look like is ... I'm taking the lead on this, but how do you want to stay informed?	
<b>Style 4 agreement (development level and leadership style)</b>	Up to now, I have (share accomplishments). Here's the feedback I've gotten ... Here's why I think this is important ...	
<b>Opportunities to be creative and innovative</b>	As I was working on this goal, I had another idea ... I have always wanted to ... What would challenge me is ...	
<b>Autonomy</b>	I'd like more autonomy to ... The way I'd change this is ...	
<b>Growth</b>	What I'd like to do is ... Something I'd like to learn ...	
<b>Opportunities to teach or mentor others</b>	Are there any opportunities for me to teach or mentor others? Who needs help?	
<b>Additional resources if requested</b>	I could do even more if I had the following resources ...	
<b>Acknowledgment of competence, commitment, and contribution</b>	I'm interested in how you think I contribute most to the organization ...	
<b>An opportunity to be recognized</b>	Here's how I'd like to be recognized for my work ...	
<b>Follow through</b>	When will I hear back from you on the commitments you've made to me?	

## SLII® Conversation Starters

Situational Leaders also have a tool—called SLII® Conversation Starters—that will help them to more flexibly use Leadership Styles 1, 2, 3, and 4.

### S1 SLII® Conversation Starter

Leadership Behaviors	What to Say
<b>Clearly present the meeting</b>	What I'd like to talk to you about is ...
<b>Acknowledge transferable skills</b>	I'll be able to use my skills of ... (list skills) to accomplish this goal ...
<b>Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged</b>	I'm really excited to get started on ...
<b>SMART goals</b>	I would benefit from knowing exactly what my goal is. What does a good job look like? What is a reasonable time frame for completing this goal?
<b>Style 1 agreement (development level and leadership style)</b>	I want to remind you that I have never done this exact goal before and will need direction in order to be successful. Do you agree?
<b>Knowledge of how performance will be tracked</b>	How will we stay in touch on this goal or task? Will you or will someone else review my performance? When would you like an update?
<b>Priorities</b>	What is the priority of this goal or task?
<b>Role clarity</b>	Can we take a minute to go over my role on each of our roles? What am I specifically responsible for?
<b>Boundaries</b>	Which decisions can I make on my own? When should I check in with you?
<b>Learning plan</b>	Who can teach me how to do this? What should I study, read, or review? Can you tell me what I should do first and what the next steps are?
<b>Direction on how, examples</b>	What direction or advice do you have for me? Do you have examples? What should I be careful of?
<b>Access to information/ resources</b>	What information do you have that will be helpful to me? Who might be a good role model, mentor, or teacher?
<b>Solutions to problems</b>	What should I work on now? What should I try to do before we get together again?
<b>Feedback</b>	How am I doing? What should I be doing differently?
<b>Check for understanding and alignment</b>	Let me recap the direction you've given me so I know we're aligned.
<b>Follow through</b>	When will we meet again?

### S2 SLII® Conversation Starter

Leadership Behaviors	What to Say
<b>Clearly present the meeting</b>	What I'd like to talk about is ...
<b>Opportunities to share concerns</b>	I am concerned about my lack of progress on this goal. Things are not going as I expected. (I have some concerns about ... and would like to talk to you about them.)
<b>SMART goals reclarified</b>	Let's reconfirm my goal. What do you need me to accomplish? Let's talk about your expectations for me and when I need your help.
<b>Style 2 agreement (development level and leadership style)</b>	Since I'm still learning how to do this goal or task, I'd like to show my ideas, but also need some direction from you.
<b>Perspective</b>	I need perspective. I need to know how you feel about the progress I am making. I need to understand why this goal is important to the organization. Can you help me understand why this is the best approach?
<b>Involvement in problem solving</b>	I have some ideas, but what would your advice be? What options do I have? How else could I look at this? What else should I be considering and why?
<b>Coaching</b>	Can you show me how? What information or resources do you have that would be helpful to me? Do you have any examples? Who might be a good role model, coach, or teacher?
<b>Feedback</b>	What feedback do you have? What have you observed or heard?
<b>Resource and support</b>	Am I doing everything right? Is it always this difficult? So, let me recap what we've decided to be sure I have everything right.
<b>Follow through</b>	How will we stay in touch on this goal? When would you like an update? When will we meet again?

### S3 SLII® Conversation Starter

Leadership Behaviors	What to Say
<b>Clearly present the meeting</b>	I'd like to talk with you about my goal ... I'd like to run some ideas past you ...
<b>Opportunities to express feelings and share</b>	Here's what I'm thinking ... Here's what I'm feeling ...
<b>Style 3 agreement (development level and leadership style)</b>	Here's what I've accomplished ... Am we aligned? I need you to be a sounding board so I can feel more confident my approach or more motivated about ...
<b>Problem-solving</b>	The problem/challenge seems to be ... The alternatives are (provide alternatives). The pros and cons of each are ... My recommendation is ... What do you think? What else should I be thinking about ...
<b>Follow through</b>	There are some things getting in my way ... Could we talk about ... What other information or resources would help me ... Can you remind me of why I should feel more confident about my approach? How are we doing making a difference?
<b>Additional resources if requested</b>	Do you have any suggestions for increasing my resources? Why is it important? How can I think about this goal my own way to do it?
<b>Follow through</b>	How will we stay in touch on this goal? When would you like to meet again?

### S4 SLII® Conversation Starter

Leadership Behaviors	What to Say
<b>Clearly present the meeting</b>	During this meeting I'd like to share with you what I've been working on ... I've decided about ...
<b>SMART goals update</b>	Here's what I've accomplished on my goal ... For me, what a stretch goal would look like is ... I'm taking the lead on this, but how do you want to stay informed?
<b>Style 4 agreement (development level and leadership style)</b>	Up to now, I have (share accomplishments). Here's the feedback I've gotten ... Here's why I think this is important ...
<b>Opportunities to be creative and innovative</b>	As I was working on this goal, I had another idea ... I have always wanted to ... What would challenge me is ...
<b>Autonomy</b>	I'd like more autonomy to ... The way I'd change this is ...
<b>Growth</b>	What I'd like to do is ... Something I'd like to learn ...
<b>Opportunities to teach or mentor others</b>	Are there any opportunities for me to teach or mentor others? Who needs help?
<b>Additional resources if requested</b>	I could do even more if I had the following resources ...
<b>Acknowledgment of competence, commitment, and contribution</b>	I'm interested in how you think I contribute most to the organization ...
<b>An opportunity to be recognized</b>	Here's how I'd like to be recognized for my work ...
<b>Follow through</b>	When will I hear back from you on the commitments you've made to me?

Ken Blanchard first developed Situational Leadership® with Paul Hersey in the late 1960s. In 1985, Blanchard and the Founding Associates of The Ken Blanchard Companies®—Marjorie Blanchard, Don Carew, Eunice Parisi-Carew, Fred Finch, Laurence Hawkins, Drea Zigarmi, and Patricia Zigarmi—created a new generation of the theory called Situational Leadership® II. The leadership model used in this product is based on the Founding Associates' second-generation thinking and research.

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