Leadership Lesson Planner

Bring an Expert to Your Next Team Meeting

Plan a 15-minute leadership lesson for your next team meeting around a book chapter, a talk or a short video.

1 How the Planner Works

A chapter from a good book or a ten-minute talk from someone who's spent a career on the subject can carry a leadership lesson for you. Your part is choosing it for a reason and turning it into a conversation your team can use in real time.

a) Write the message you want to convey in one sentence before you pick the resource.

b) Write down why this lesson fits the team now, and name the result or situation that prompted it.

c) Pick the resource and watch or read all of it yourself. Note how long it runs, and for a longer video, the start and stop times you'll use.

d) Give the team one thing to listen for before you press play or start your summary.

e) Ask two or three questions, then have each person write down one thing they'll try before the next meeting.

f) Open the next meeting by asking what they tried.

> **When someone on your team wants to grow**
>
> You'll lead most lessons yourself. When a team member wants to build their own leadership skills, ask if they would like to lead one. Ask them to fill in the planner, go over it with them before the meeting, and give them feedback in private afterward. Teaching a lesson to peers provides aspiring leaders with a great opportunity for leadership growth.

2 A 15-Minute Lesson

Most leadership lessons can fit in 15 to 20 minutes of your regular meeting agenda. More time may be necessary depending on the topic or issue being addressed.

Minutes	Step	What happens
0 to 2	**Set it up**	Say the message in one sentence and give the team the one thing to listen for.
2 to 9	**Watch or read**	Play the clip, or sum up the chapter if everyone read it ahead of time.
9 to 13	**Discuss**	Ask your two or three questions and let the team do the talking.
13 to 15	**Commit**	Each person writes down one thing they'll try before the next meeting.

3 Lesson Plan

LESSON LEADER	
MEETING DATE	
THE MESSAGE	
WHY THIS, WHY NOW	
THE RESOURCE	
LENGTH, START AND STOP	
WHAT TO LISTEN FOR	
QUESTION 1	
QUESTION 2	
QUESTION 3	
COMMITMENT	
FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	

Note: Watch any video all the way through before you show it. Some talks include strong language, religious references or a pitch for the speaker's book at the end, and you'll know where to stop.

4 Lesson Calendar

Plan a few lessons ahead of time so you're always ready to lead your team with important insights.

Date	Topic	Resource	Led by

5 Example: Monica's Supervisor Meetings

Monica Alvarez runs production at a commercial bakery with four shift supervisors. Every other week she sets aside the last 15 minutes of their supervisor meeting for a leadership lesson, and she leads most of them herself.

LESSON LEADER	Monica Alvarez, production manager
MEETING DATE	March 12, during the weekly supervisor meeting
THE MESSAGE	A team's results rarely rise above the leadership of the person running it, so the quickest way to raise our numbers is for each of us to grow as a leader.
WHY THIS, WHY NOW	The night shift has filled 88% of wholesale orders on time for three months in a row, while the day shift is at 96%. The crews on both shifts work hard, so Monica believes the difference starts with how each shift is led, and that includes her own leadership.
THE RESOURCE	Chapter 1 of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* by John C. Maxwell, The Law of the Lid.
LENGTH, START AND STOP	Each supervisor reads the chapter the week before the meeting, and Monica sums up its main story in five minutes at the start of the lesson.
WHAT TO LISTEN FOR	Which of our results depend more on how we lead the shift than on how hard the crew works?
QUESTION 1	On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your leadership on the shift you run, and what one skill would move it up a point?
QUESTION 2	Where do you see a lid on our results right now?
QUESTION 3	What could a supervisor change this week that the crew would notice?
COMMITMENT	Each supervisor wrote one action on an index card and kept it. Darnell Price, the night-shift supervisor, committed to a five-minute huddle at the start of every shift for two weeks to walk through the order board.
FOLLOW-UP QUESTION	What did you try, and what changed on your shift?

Two weeks later, Monica opened the meeting by asking what each supervisor had tried. The night shift's on-time rate had climbed from 88% to 92%, and Darnell asked if he could lead a future lesson.

Monica's Lesson Calendar

Date	Topic	Resource	Led by
March 12	Raising your own leadership	*The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* by John C. Maxwell, Chapter 1, The Law of the Lid	Monica
March 26	Being on time	*Pushing to the Front* by Orison Swett Marden, Chapter XIV, On Time, or the Triumph of Promptness	Monica
April 9	Taking initiative	*A Message to Garcia* by Elbert Hubbard	Darnell
April 23	Finding opportunity close to home	*Acres of Diamonds* by Russell H. Conwell	Monica

Each lesson covers a different topic from a different source. The last three come from the Classic Leadership Library on Leadership-Tools.com, where the full texts are free to read.

6 Finding a Resource

Start with the issue you'd like to address. Look for a lesson topic that fits the issue, then a good resource that will help you make the point. Identify resource materials that back up the message. Then check how much time you have on the agenda, and use the table below to match it.

Time you have	Where to look
5 minutes	A short video clip on YouTube, or a quote from the Leadership Quotes pages on Leadership-Tools.com, works well to open a meeting.
15 to 20 minutes	A TED talk or part of a recorded interview fits here, and so does one short chapter from a classic in the Classic Leadership Library on Leadership-Tools.com.
Several meetings	A book can carry a series of lessons when you take it one chapter at a time, and an ebook or audiobook makes it easy for everyone to keep up.

An AI assistant such as ChatGPT, Claude, Grok or Gemini can do much of the searching and planning with you. Copy one of these AI prompts, fill in the brackets, and adjust the answer until it fits the objective for your team.

FIND A RESOURCE

I manage [describe your team]. We're dealing with [the situation]. Suggest three short videos, talks or book chapters that teach a leadership lesson about this. For each one, give me the title, the speaker or author, how long it takes and its main point. Only suggest sources that exist, and include a link so I can check each one.

PUT A CLASSIC LESSON INTO TODAY'S WORDS

Here's a passage from [book] by [author], written in [year]. [paste the passage here] Restate its main lesson in plain, present-day language for a team of [who they are], and give me one example of how it applies in a workplace like ours.

WRITE THE QUESTIONS

I'm leading a 15-minute lesson on [topic] using [resource]. Write three discussion questions that get my team talking about our own work, and one follow-up question to open next week's meeting.

Note: AI tools sometimes suggest results that are wrong or imagined. Open every link, and watch or read the resource yourself before you use it to ensure it's a valid resource.

7 Keep a Library of Your Own

Good lessons turn up everywhere once you start looking for them. A line in a book you're reading, a point a speaker makes in a podcast or a scene in a TV show can each become a lesson. Write down where you found it, the idea in a sentence and the lesson it could teach, and you'll have a list to draw from the next time you plan a meeting.