

WILSON AND ASSOCIATES
COACHING AND CONSULTING



BUILD THE LEADERSHIP SKILLS THAT SHAPE GREAT CULTURE

The 12 essential elements every people manager needs to build high-performing teams and lead through change and uncertainty



Why Leadership Feels Harder Right Now

Leadership feels harder than it used to, not because leaders are failing, but because the **conditions have changed.**

Leaders today are navigating constant **pressure:** uncertainty, organizational change, rising tension, burnout, and deeply human questions about trust, fairness, and belonging, often all at the same time.

Many were trained to manage performance and execute strategy, but not to regulate pressure, repair harm, develop people, or guide teams through ambiguity with care.

At the same time, employees are asking more of leadership. Research shows that people want leaders who inspire hope, communicate honestly, and create environments where they can grow, be treated fairly, and feel psychologically safe.

This gap between what leaders were prepared for and what leadership now requires is where so much strain and frustration live.



Workplace
Culture

Leadership Connects To Culture

At Wilson and Associates, we often say: culture is not what you say, it's what people experience. Our [Periodic Table of Great Culture Elements](#)® names the elements that, when consistently present, make workplaces healthy, high-performing, and people-first.

This companion framework, **The 12 Elements of Great Leadership**®, names the leadership capacities required to bring great culture to life, especially in times of pressure and change.

When leaders cultivate these leadership competencies, team culture strengthens. When they're missing or misaligned, even well-intentioned cultures begin to fray.



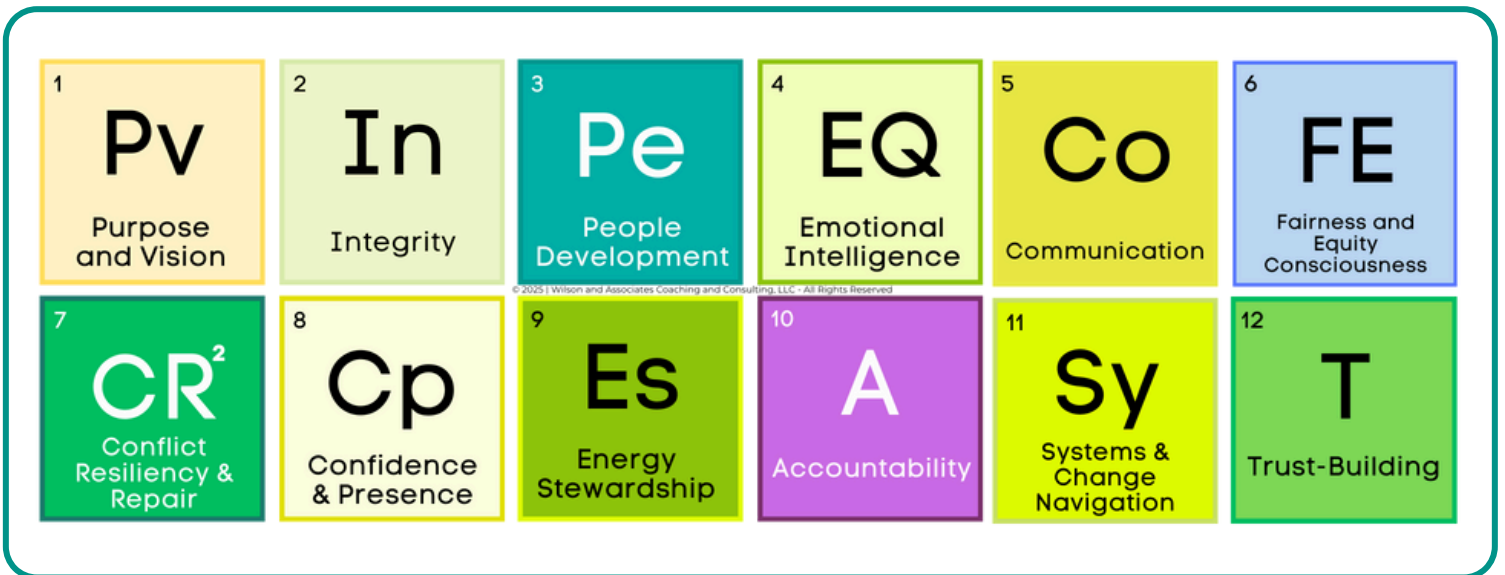
How to use this guide:

This guide is designed to be practical, reflective, and pressure-free.

1. Read the elements once without judgment
2. Complete the self-check honestly
3. Choose one element to focus on this quarter
4. Revisit in 60–90 days



12 Elements of Great Leadership





1. Purpose & Vision

The ability to clarify why the work matters and where the organization is going, especially in moments of uncertainty. You help people stay oriented, grounded, and hopeful, even when the path forward is not fully clear.

2. Integrity

The ability to consistently demonstrate alignment between values, words, decisions, and actions, so people know what to expect from leadership. You do what you say you'll do, even when no one is looking, and people can count on you.

3. People Development

The ability to actively support the learning, growth, and professional development of others. You coach, give feedback, and create opportunities that help people build skills and confidence over time.

4. Emotional Intelligence

The ability to understand your own emotions, patterns, triggers, and impact on others, while responding with empathy to the emotions and needs of those around you. You stay regulated under pressure, listen with curiosity, and lead in ways that help people feel seen, understood, and respected.

5. Communication

The ability to communicate clearly, honestly, and directly in ways that reduce confusion and build understanding. You say what needs to be said, listen well, and don't rely on silence or avoidance to manage tension.

6. Fairness & Equity Consciousness

The ability to lead with awareness of power, identity, and access, and to take responsibility for reducing harm and inequitable outcomes. You pay attention to who benefits, who is burdened, and whose voices are included or missing.



7. Conflict Resiliency & Repair

The ability to stay present, grounded, and relational during tension or disagreement, and to repair trust when harm occurs. You don't avoid conflict, and you don't leave ruptures unaddressed.

8. Confidence & Presence

The ability to show up steady, grounded, and credible without dominating, withdrawing, or performing certainty you don't have. You lead with calm authority and create space for others to contribute.

9. Energy Stewardship

The ability to manage your own energy and the collective energy of your team in ways that prevent burnout and support resilience over time. You notice when pace, pressure, or expectations are unsustainable and make intentional adjustments so people can stay engaged, healthy, and effective.

10. Accountability

The ability to establish shared agreements, own outcomes, and hold others responsible with clarity and care. You address issues directly, follow through on commitments, and avoid blame, fear, or avoidance as leadership tools.

11. Systems & Change Navigation

The ability to understand how the organizational ecosystem works and to guide people through change thoughtfully and sustainably. You anticipate ripple effects, pace change appropriately, and help people make sense of what's happening.

12. Trust-Building

The ability to create psychological safety, relationships, and a sense of belonging through consistency, care, respect, and follow-through. People feel safe being honest with you because your behavior matches your intentions.

Cultivating Culture-Building Leadership

Great leadership is not about getting everything right or embodying every element perfectly.

It's about **awareness, intention, and practice.**

Leadership today asks more of us, not because expectations are unreasonable, but because the work is more human than many leaders were prepared for. The good news is that leadership is learnable. These elements are not personality traits. They are **skills, capacities, and practices** that can be strengthened over time.

This framework makes visible the leadership capacities required to create those conditions day after day, especially when things feel uncertain, tense, or complex.

You don't need to work on all twelve at once.

Start where the pressure is highest.

Start where the impact will be felt most.

Start where your leadership can create relief, clarity, or hope

Where can you begin, today?

LEADER SELF ASSESSMENT & REFLECTION GUIDE

Use this tool as a quick self-check, not a performance evaluation. There is no “right” score here. The goal is awareness, not perfection.

STEP 1: Leadership Elements Self-Check

For each element, ask yourself “How consistently is this showing up in my leadership right now?” Place a checkmark in the column that best reflects how each element shows up in your leadership right now.

Use this simple scale:

● Strong and consistent ● Present but inconsistent ● Under pressure, stretched or missing

ELEMENTS OF GREAT LEADERSHIP	SELF ASSESSMENT SCALE		
	●	●	●
Purpose & Vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional Intelligence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy Stewardship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidence & Presence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust-Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conflict Resiliency & Repair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accountability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Systems & Change Navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairness & Equity Consciousness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

LEADER SELF ASSESSMENT & REFLECTION GUIDE

STEP 2: Self Reflection

Take five quiet minutes and respond honestly.

1. Which two elements feel strongest in my leadership right now?

What behaviors or practices make this true?

2. Which one or two elements feel most strained or inconsistent?

What pressures, conditions, or blind spots might be affecting them?

3. Where are people on my team feeling the most tension, confusion, or fatigue?

Which leadership element might help address that?

4. What is one small, concrete shift I could make in the next 30 days?

(Be specific. Think behaviors, not intentions.)

LEADER SELF ASSESSMENT & REFLECTION GUIDE

STEP 3: 90-Day Commitment

Choose one element to focus on this quarter.

Element I'm focusing on:

Why this matters right now:

To develop this element, one practice I will commit to is:

How I'll know my work is making a difference:

Great Leadership = Great Team Culture

Leadership is not proven in calm moments.

It is revealed in how we show up when things are unclear, uncomfortable, or imperfect.

Practicing even one of these elements more intentionally can change how people experience you, and how culture takes shape around you.



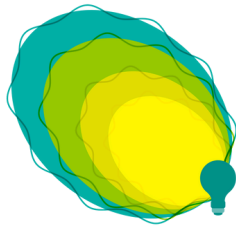
Ready To Get Started!

Many leaders use this framework as a starting point for deeper reflection or conversation with a coach, facilitator, or trusted partner.

If you want help identifying where to focus, how to build these skills, or how to translate them into healthier culture, that's the work we do every day.

You don't have to lead alone.

If you'd like to explore how we support leaders and teams in developing these elements, you can book an Alignment Call [here](#) to speak with one of our coaches.



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