

"Dr. Lombard. You remember him, the director of our public health program at the university. He always seemed to have useful advice when we were students. Let's call him and see what he says."

"Good idea," agreed Henry. "Do you have his number?"

"I think so. Let me look," mumbled Josepha, looking into her briefcase.

While Josepha searches for the telephone number, what advice would you offer to Henry?

## INTRODUCTION

Most employees in health organizations intrinsically understand the value of self-development. Many of them have already pursued higher education in a specialized field, such as nursing, nutrition, community health, or medicine, and take pride in keeping up with the latest technical knowledge. In a similar vein, managers require opportunities for continuing their education about the

latest evidence-based management practices. But managers also need to engage in continuous learning of a different type—understanding their own strengths and weaknesses as supervisors and organizational leaders, improving their weak areas, and learning how to develop their employees.

## UNDERSTANDING SELF

A first step in the development process, particularly as development pertains to interpersonal skills, is self-understanding. Self-improvement is difficult, as is understanding and coaching others, without accurate insight into personal motives, strengths, weaknesses, and competencies.

### *Physiology*

At a core physiological level, scientists are beginning to learn more about how chemical and neural responses both reflect and influence behavior. For example, using brain scans, researchers have observed that compared to poor listeners, the neural activity in good listeners more closely mirrors the neural activity of



Q&A



← → ↻ 🏠 <https://www.chegg.com/reader/9781449614737/198/> 🔍 A ⭐ 📄

Search keywords 🔍

strengths, weaknesses, and competencies.

### Physiology

At a core physiological level, scientists are beginning to learn more about how chemical and neural responses both reflect and influence behavior. For example, using brain scans, researchers have observed that compared to poor listeners, the neural activity in good listeners more closely mirrors the neural activity of the speakers to whom they are listening. The stronger the resemblance in brain activity, the better is a listener's comprehension of a speaker's message (Stephens, Silbert, and Hasson 2010). Being hungry and feeling physical pain can activate neural responses that are similar to feelings of being ostracized. Rock (2009) argues that the brain is a social organ. A threat response in the brain is actuated by feelings such as uncertainty, reduced autonomy, distrust, and inequity. Many experts feel that in the coming years, there will be an explosion of discoveries about how human physiology and workplace behavior interact.

Labeling and reappraising these natural responses is one way to control their effects. Managers who are proficient at reading these physiological responses in themselves and others are better able to resist their own personal tendencies toward reactive behavior and convey feelings of psychological safety to others.

179 of 393

argues that the brain is a social organ. A threat response in the brain is actuated by feelings such as uncertainty, reduced autonomy, distrust, and inequity. Many experts feel that in the coming years, there will be an explosion of discoveries about how human physiology and workplace behavior interact.

Labeling and reappraising these natural responses is one way to control their effects. Managers who are proficient at reading these physiological responses in themselves and others are better able to resist their own personal tendencies toward reactive behavior and convey feelings of psychological safety to others.

### *Personality*

It also is important to understand typical human patterns of emotion, thought, and behavior in the workplace. A framework for thinking about key human characteristics that influence cognition, emotions, and behavior is presented in Figure 10-1. At the core of human beings are personality traits that guide their individual reactions to everyday events. The concept of personality is nebulous;



- sertive versus being retiring, somber, and reserved
3. **Openness:** the tendency to be imaginative, independent, and interested in variety versus being practical, conforming, and interested in routine
  4. **Agreeableness:** the tendency to be altruistic, kind, and, trusting versus being ruthless, suspicious, and uncooperative
  5. **Conscientiousness:** the tendency to be thoughtful, organized, and mindful of details versus being disorganized, careless, and impulsive

The Big Five personality dimensions often are useful in personal development through self-reflection and private counseling. They may be less useful in public or workplace contexts because they label people in ways that may not be socially acceptable.

A commonly used instrument for both self-understanding and understanding others is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI<sup>®</sup>), which summarizes an individual's preferences for taking in information and then making decisions. Individuals are classified into 1 of 16 personality types based on scores related to the

four dimensions. The dimensions are anchored by opposite preferences. People use all of the preferences at different times in their lives. Although the preferences are equally valuable and useful, most people find one preference in each pair to be more interesting or comfortable. The four dimensions are:

1. Introversion ↔ Extraversion: This dimension assesses where people focus their attention—on the outer world of people or things or on the inner world of ideas and impressions.
2. Sensing ↔ Intuition: This dimension assesses the way people take in information—from their five senses (smell, sight, touch, taste, and hearing) or from their imagination.
3. Thinking ↔ Feeling: This dimension assesses the way people make decisions—based on objective analysis and logic or based on values and people-centered concerns.
4. Judging ↔ Perceiving: This dimension assesses how people interact with the outer world—using a planned and orderly approach or being spontaneous and flexible.

Knowing personal tendencies on these key dimensions helps both managers and

181 of 393

Knowing personal tendencies on these key dimensions helps both managers and workers understand and better modulate their reactions to workplace activities. The MBTI<sup>®</sup> has been widely used for team development as well. This application helps team members to understand the contributions and behaviors of people who are different (as measured by their MBTI<sup>®</sup> categories).

Compared to the Big Five personality dimensions, there is less social pressure to be at a particular end of the continuum for the four MBTI<sup>®</sup> dimensions, although the introversion–extraversion dimension frequently provides an exception to this rule. In jobs that require interpersonal interaction, a social preference for extraversion often exists.

### *Emotional and Social Intelligence*

Assessments of emotional and social intelligence also are useful to many managers seeking a better understanding of their behavior in the workplace. Emotional intelligence refers to how people behave in private and public situations. According to Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence is composed of *personal competence* for self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation and *social competence* for empathy and social skills. Self-aware individuals know their internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions. They accurately see themselves. They have a strong sense

181 of 393

relationships, a socially competent individual is aware of others' feelings, needs, and concerns, and values diverse perspectives. The social skills of influencing others, communicating, managing conflict, leading, managing change, nurturing relationships, cooperating, and working well in teams are hallmarks of people who have high social intelligence. Several instruments exist to measure emotional and social intelligence, although many have not been empirically evaluated.

Another popular approach to self-assessment is based on the notion that a strengths-based development program is more likely to be successful than one that focuses on weaknesses. A variety of self-assessment instruments are available for identifying strengths, including the Gallup organization's StrengthsFinder® (Rath 2007). Using 34 distinct themes, this instrument identifies areas where an individual has the greatest potential for building strengths. Themes are comprised of categories of talents, which are defined as recurring and consistent patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior. Examples of the themes include: Learner (having a great desire to learn and wanting to continuously improve), Positivity (having an enthusiasm that is contagious), Achiever (having a great deal of stamina and working hard; taking great satisfaction from being busy and productive),

182 of 393

The screenshot shows a web browser window with two tabs: 'Chegg eReader' and 'SweetStudy'. The address bar displays the URL <https://www.chegg.com/reader/9781449614737/201/>. Below the address bar is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Search keywords'. The main content area displays a document page with the following text:

### Competency

Many self-assessments used in the workplace are based on competencies. A competency is an “effective application of available knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in complex situations” (Calhoun et al. 2002, 18). It is common for organizations to define the competencies required to complete specific types of jobs and to set developmental goals for employees based on those competencies. Many formal educational programs, including those leading to a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree and Master of Healthcare Administration (MHA) degree, are moving toward competency-based curricula (Association of Schools of Public Health 2010; Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education 2011; Healthcare Leadership Alliance 2010).

Competency for collaboration is an area of self-assessment that is important in health organization work. For example, the Collaborative Leadership Program, sponsored by Turning Point and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, offers six self-assessment instruments (along with training materials) that focus on the collaboration competencies of assessing a workplace environment, visioning and mobilizing, building trust, sharing power and influence, developing people, and self-reflection (Leadership Development National Excel-

At the bottom of the page, a progress bar indicates the current page is 182 of 393. The Windows taskbar is visible at the very bottom of the image.

Many people find that diversity management skills are useful to assess and develop because of the importance of sensitively and sensibly working with individuals from a variety of cultures and socioeconomic strata in the health workplace. An assortment of instruments, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI<sup>®</sup>), are available for self-assessment of diversity competencies (IDI 2010). The IDI<sup>®</sup> measures the capability of accurately understanding and adapting behavior to cultural differences and commonality. It also classifies respondents along an intercultural development continuum.

### ***Soliciting Feedback***

Understanding one's self requires soliciting feedback about strengths and weaknesses as a manager. Identifying weaknesses requires commitment, energy, and focus. Admitting to weaknesses can evoke feelings of inadequacy and failure. Identifying weaknesses requires soliciting feedback about personal behavior and performance. A first place to start is collecting personal feedback, privately, by keeping track of plans, targets, and performance. Addressing the following questions may be helpful: "In what areas do I seem to perform effectively?" "What tasks do I look forward to tackling?" "What types of work or projects do I avoid,

keeping track of plans, targets, and performance. Addressing the following questions may be helpful: "In what areas do I seem to perform effectively?" "What tasks do I look forward to tackling?" "What types of work or projects do I avoid, put off, or complete less than adequately?" "How do I relate to my employees and colleagues?"

The concept of 360-degree feedback is useful in developing self-understanding. Feedback from 360 degrees means gathering information from the full circle of work relationships—below (subordinates), beside (colleagues), and above (supervisors). It also includes soliciting feedback from customers or clients about work habits and outcomes. Personal development requires proactively soliciting feedback and honestly listening to it. After each presentation given to classes, professional associations, or people in other forums, one colleague of the authors asks, "How did that go? Is there anything you recommend I change?" This colleague has made a habit of developing himself by listening to others' feedback. He pays attention, asks follow-up questions, and expresses his appreciation for the feedback. Of course, the source of any feedback must be considered. Filtering is sometimes necessary because not all feedback is representative, well informed, or constructive. The habit of filtering reinforces the habit of soliciting feedback.

work relationships—below (subordinates), beside (colleagues), and above (supervisors). It also includes soliciting feedback from customers or clients about work habits and outcomes. Personal development requires proactively soliciting feedback and honestly listening to it. After each presentation given to classes, professional associations, or people in other forums, one colleague of the authors asks, “How did that go? Is there anything you recommend I change?” This colleague has made a habit of developing himself by listening to others’ feedback. He pays attention, asks follow-up questions, and expresses his appreciation for the feedback. Of course, the source of any feedback must be considered. Filtering is sometimes necessary because not all feedback is representative, well informed, or constructive. The habit of filtering reinforces the habit of soliciting feedback.

## DEVELOPING SELF

---

After acquiring an understanding of self and personal competencies, addressing gaps in performance of key managerial competencies is the next required step in the process of personal development. Peter Drucker (1999, 69) advised, “Do not



Search keywords

try to change yourself—you are unlikely to succeed. But work to improve the way you perform.” His advice speaks to the relative permanence of many of the human characteristics noted in Figure 10–1 and the depth of energy and time that is required to transform those characteristics.

In many organizations, resources are available for improving competencies. In others, employees must be proactive about identifying resources. In the absence of such assistance, people must use their own time and resources to continue to learn and grow.

Developing and promoting one’s *strengths* are highly recommended as well. Some experts argue that, in general, developing strengths is more feasible and pays off more than addressing weaknesses. As already discussed, the Strengths-Finder® methodology is an example of the strength-based approach. It moves from identification of talents to investment in those talents through practicing, developing skills, and building knowledge. The resulting product is a strength, which is defined as the ability to provide near-perfect performance on a consistent basis (Rath 2007).

In addition to building on strengths, Drucker (1999) noted one other tactic for self-development: understanding the requirements of one’s workplace and

184 of 393

gg eReader SweetStudy  
https://www.chegg.com/reader/9781449614737/203/

ch keywords

unit. To the extent that the primary goals and strategies of one's organization are understood, it becomes easier to focus on developing the skills that will be rewarded in that organization. This tactic is particularly useful in organizations that are interested in continuous quality improvement and customer service. Managers can be proactive in identifying opportunities to improve their organization and positioning themselves and their units to make those improvements.

Personal development also includes keeping up with the growth in the knowledge base of one's discipline. There is a new and growing interest in *evidence-based management*, or the "the systematic application of the best available evidence for the evaluation of managerial strategies" for improving performance (Kovner and Rundall 2006, 6). In the future, managers are more likely to be required to defend their practices based on scientific evidence, rather than relying on the rationale, "That's the way we've always done it here."

Keeping up with technical developments in health management is facilitated by joining and participating in professional organizations such as the American Public Health Association or the American College of Healthcare Executives, reading current literature, and attending related presentations. It can also mean enrolling in formal continuing education or degree coursework. University-based or commercial education and training programs in such areas as quality

184 of 393

to search

8:12 5/24

Some experts argue that, in general, developing strengths is more feasible and pays off more than addressing weaknesses. As already discussed, the Strengths-Finder® methodology is an example of the strength-based approach. It moves from identification of talents to investment in those talents through practicing, developing skills, and building knowledge. The resulting product is a strength, which is defined as the ability to provide near-perfect performance on a consistent basis (Rath 2007).

In addition to building on strengths, Drucker (1999) noted one other tactic for self-development: understanding the requirements of one's workplace and unit. To the extent that the primary goals and strategies of one's organization are understood, it becomes easier to focus on developing the skills that will be rewarded in that organization. This tactic is particularly useful in organizations that are interested in continuous quality improvement and customer service. Managers can be proactive in identifying opportunities to improve their organization and positioning themselves and their units to make those improvements.

Personal development also includes keeping up with the growth in the knowledge base of one's discipline. There is a new and growing interest in *evidence-based management*, or the "the systematic application of the best available evidence for the evaluation of managerial strategies" for improving performance (Kovner

Managers can be proactive in identifying opportunities to improve their organization and positioning themselves and their units to make those improvements.

Personal development also includes keeping up with the growth in the knowledge base of one's discipline. There is a new and growing interest in *evidence-based management*, or the "the systematic application of the best available evidence for the evaluation of managerial strategies" for improving performance (Kovner and Rundall 2006, 6). In the future, managers are more likely to be required to defend their practices based on scientific evidence, rather than relying on the rationale, "That's the way we've always done it here."

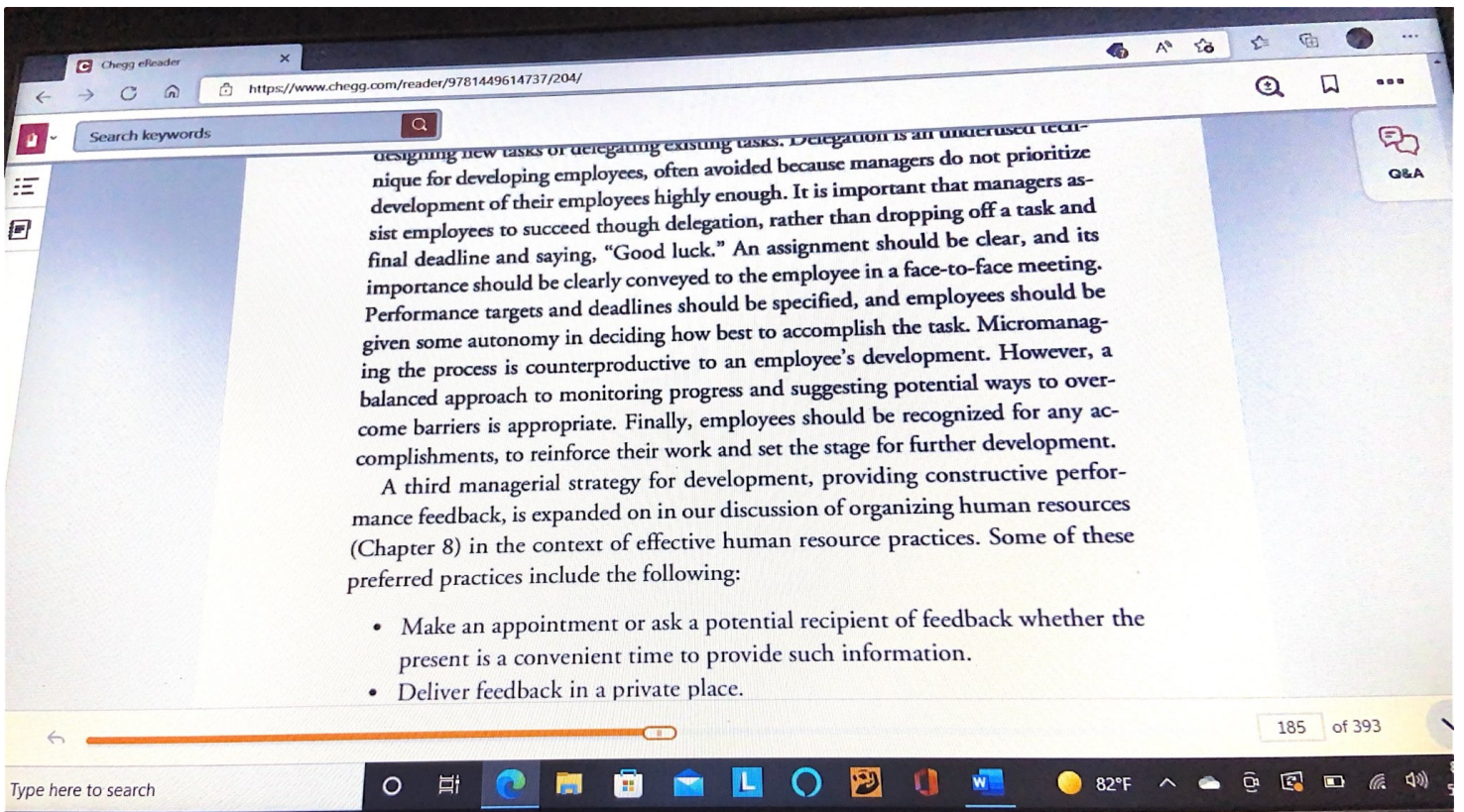
Keeping up with technical developments in health management is facilitated by joining and participating in professional organizations such as the American Public Health Association or the American College of Healthcare Executives, reading current literature, and attending related presentations. It can also mean enrolling in formal continuing education or degree coursework. University-based or commercial education and training programs in such areas as quality improvement are available in increasing numbers. Internal organization training

## DEVELOPING OTHERS

---

Managers are responsible for helping employees understand and develop themselves. One way to do this is to sponsor, role model, and encourage sharing of self-assessments in discussion group forums. This is particularly useful for employees who work together closely in interdependent teams, because it facilitates cross-training and understanding. Sharing results of the MBTI® or another validated personality tool is one useful way of promoting more collaborative teams. However, some employees may consider such information to be too private to share, and their wishes should be respected. Instruments that focus on team-specific behavior are more palatable to many employees for group discussion than are individual personality inventories.

A second managerial strategy for developing others is to give employees successively challenging growth experiences on the job. This can happen through designing new tasks or delegating existing tasks. Delegation is an underused technique for developing employees, often avoided because managers do not prioritize development of their employees highly enough. It is important that managers assist employees to succeed through delegation, rather than dropping off a task and



- Describe perceptions of the other person's behavior using specific examples that have been personally observed.
- Provide feedback on both positive and negative behaviors.
- Be supportive and encouraging, focusing on desired behaviors.
- After giving feedback, give the recipient time to respond.
- Use the opportunity to develop a joint action plan.
- Identify ways to make positive contributions to improving the employee's behavior.

Although some managers can be too blunt and insensitive in delivering feedback, others can be too sensitive, avoiding confrontation and understating an employee's weaknesses. Both the employee and the organization are better served by clear and open communication. Direct statements are usually appreciated. Do not avoid important issues. If the problems are difficult to discuss, seek support from human resources professionals to plan the meeting and role-play the session in advance. Remember that helping underperforming employees to improve or move on to better-fitting positions is an important organizational responsibility.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

It is relatively easy to identify organizations that put a priority on employee development. In those organizations, employee development is a critically important organizational activity. Managers are trained in employee development strategies and are assessed on the development of their employees. Everyone in the organization has an individualized development plan, there is an abundance of education and training programs that focus on leadership, and coaching and mentoring are widely used.

### *Individualized Development Plans*

Performance review systems that mandate individualized development plans are integral to widespread employee development. Plans typically set goals for 90 days, 6 months, or 1 year. Managers set goals jointly with employees, agreeing on challenging but attainable targets. Monitoring progress at 30-day or other appropriate intervals helps to avoid surprises at the end of the specified period. Monitoring progress also allows for updating of goals along the way, as other priorities may

Some experts advise classifying employees into high-, medium-, and low-performance categories, which allows for easier customization of development plans. The goal for low-performing employees is to raise them to the medium performance level; if that proves impossible, then the goal is to move them to other positions or out of the organization. The goal for medium-performing employees is to retain them and to move them to the high-performing level. The goal for high-performing employees is to retain them and to build their foundation for moving into higher positions in the organization. Although some high-performing individuals may leave the organization for better or more timely opportunities, they are likely to leave even sooner (or decrease their level of performance) if their contributions are not appreciated.

Not all development should be focused on individuals, as teams increasingly are the delivery units for many health services. Team development follows the same process as individual development, with key steps such as identifying performance goals, assessing team performance, and monitoring progress.

### *Management and Leadership Education Programs*

If energized and well-trained employees are essential for organizational success, then

Employee development must be an organizational priority. Many large organizations have internal development institutes that offer a wide range of learning opportunities and courses for employees. Often the coursework is developed based on an organization-wide framework of competencies expected of individuals and teams.

In organizations committed to employee development, budgets for internal training and support of external education of employees are the last to be cut, rather than the first. Top-level executives, including the chief executive officer (CEO), participate in teaching and taking courses.

### ***Coaching and Mentoring***

The past decade has seen a rapid growth in the use of coaches and mentors for building management and leadership talent. Coaching is one-on-one advising from a professional coach, often offered only to high-potential employees. Coaching often combines interpersonal skills advising and development with advising about strategic organizational priorities.

Like coaching, mentoring is also typically a one-on-one advising activity. Mentoring involves a long-term relationship with a more experienced person, who usually serves without pay. Mentors facilitate personal and professional growth by sharing the knowledge and insights that they have learned through

and mentoring. Smaller organizations may link managers to independent coaches or to external mentors.

## CONCLUSION

---

High-performance organizations are driven by high-performing employees. These employees understand themselves well and modulate their workplace behavior, particularly their interaction with others, based on their self-understanding. They exhibit high emotional and social intelligence and master the competencies required in their jobs. In health organization workplaces, they exhibit strong collaboration and diversity management competencies. Managers in high-performing organizations are committed to employee development through providing constructive feedback and learning opportunities, and creating individualized development plans. At the same time, employees must take responsibility for their own self-development, seeking out feedback and growth experiences, and continuously improving their knowledge base and competencies. This win-win synergy satisfies both organizational and individual needs.