WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Lead Change Without the Hero Story

A leadership practice that connects example, direction, questioning, and individual support.

25 minutes | Transformational leadership · Four lenses

Use it in three moves

1. Choose a real change and examine what your actions model, what direction you offer, what can be questioned, and what support fits.

2. Ask someone affected where your intention and their experience differ. Keep room for them to challenge the direction itself.

3. Choose one visible behavior and one condition to change. Return to the effect on people's ability to act, question, and learn.

Idealized influence · What do your actions model?

Check consistency, ethics, and the effect of your authority. Avoid asking for loyalty to you personally.

Inspirational motivation · What shared direction is meaningful?

Explain the purpose without requiring enthusiasm or hiding costs.

Intellectual stimulation · What can be questioned?

Invite alternatives and challenge your own assumptions. State genuine decision boundaries.

Lead Change Without the Hero Story

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

Individualized consideration · What support fits?

Ask about different experience, capacity, aspirations, and access. Do not infer needs from a label.

Choose one visible behavior

Name what you will do and what organizational condition you will change.

Ask about the effect

Who can tell you whether the approach helped or created pressure?

A question for me

Would the useful part of this change survive if I were not in the room?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

Idealized influence · What do your actions model?

I will use the same priority rules I ask the team to follow and explain exceptions openly.

Inspirational motivation · What shared direction is meaningful?

We want fewer customers to repeat their story. The new handoff adds a check, and we will test whether that effort helps.

Intellectual stimulation · What can be questioned?

Ask the team to propose a simpler route and identify what the current proposal misses.

Individualized consideration · What support fits?

Offer practice and a backup contact to the new coordinator; give the experienced colleague room to test a different approach.

Choose one visible behavior

At the next review, invite alternatives before presenting my preference and protect time to test the strongest one.

Ask about the effect

Ask privately whether people felt able to disagree and whether the promised practice time happened.

The thinking behind it

People should not need an exceptional leader to have workable conditions. Build the support and permissions into ordinary practice.

Transformational leadership, developed through the work of James MacGregor Burns and Bernard Bass, is often explained through four I's: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This original practice uses those lenses without a personality assessment or a leader-as-savior claim.

Bass and Avolio · Transformational leadership context

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne