



The Soft-Skill Growth Framework

A practical tool to identify, prioritize, and develop the leadership skills that will make the biggest difference this year

How to Use This Tool:

Soft skills are often the most important—and the least clearly defined—areas of growth. This framework is designed to help you:

- Identify the top 3 leadership skills that matter most right now
- Create clarity around where you currently stand
- Define what “better” actually looks like
- Build a simple weekly and monthly plan to close the gap

Use this for personal development, or as a coaching and development conversation with a team member.

STEP 1: Anchor to What You’re Trying to Achieve
Instead of starting with skills, start with outcomes.

This year, I most want to improve:

- Team engagement and morale
- Communication and alignment
- Execution and follow-through
- Trust and accountability
- Leadership confidence or presence
- Navigating change, growth, or uncertainty
- Reducing friction, burnout, or rework
- Other: _____

STEP 2: Identify Where Things Feel Hard

Which situations have been most challenging or draining recently?
(Check all that apply.)

- Repeating myself without seeing change
- Avoiding or delaying difficult conversations
- Misalignment between my intentions and my impact
- Team members not taking ownership
- Emotional reactions (mine or others’) affecting outcomes



FOR COACHING & LEADERSHIP TRAINING

- Lack of trust, openness, or engagement
- Feeling reactive, stretched, or unclear

STEP 3: Identify Your Top 3 Growth Skills

The challenges above are often connected to a small number of core leadership skills. Based on your answers, select the THREE skills that would most improve your effectiveness right now:

- Self-awareness
- Communication clarity
- Emotional regulation
- Accountability & follow-through
- Influence without authority
- Feedback & coaching
- Trust-building
- Adaptability through change
- Leadership presence

My Top 3 Skills to Focus On:

STEP 4: Where I Stand Now (Baseline)

For each skill, rate where you believe you are today.

Scale:

1 = Rarely consistent

3 = Inconsistent but aware

5 = Consistent and intentional

Skill Current Level (1–5)

Skill #1 1 2 3 4 5

Skill #2 1 2 3 4 5

Skill #3 1 2 3 4 5

STEP 5: Define the Ideal (What “Good” Looks Like)

For each skill, describe what would be different if this area were strong and consistent.

Skill #1: _____

If this skill were strong:





FOR COACHING & LEADERSHIP TRAINING

What would others notice?

What would feel easier or smoother?

What outcomes would improve?

Skill #2: _____

If this skill were strong:

What would others notice?

What would feel easier or smoother?

What outcomes would improve?

Skill #3: _____

If this skill were strong:

What would others notice?

What would feel easier or smoother?

What outcomes would improve?

STEP 6: Close the Gap (Weekly & Monthly Plan)

Growth happens through small, intentional actions, not overwhelm.

Weekly Focus (Micro-Actions)

For each skill, identify one behavior to practice this week.

This week, I will intentionally practice:

Skill #1 behavior: _____

Skill #2 behavior: _____

Skill #3 behavior: _____

Weekly reflection question:

“What felt different because I showed up more intentionally?”

Monthly Focus (Application & Reflection)





FOR COACHING & LEADERSHIP TRAINING

This month, I will intentionally apply these skills in:

End-of-month reflection:

What improved?

What still needs attention?

What is the next small adjustment?

Final Thought

Soft skills don't improve through awareness alone.

They improve through clarity, reflection, and intentional practice.

This framework is designed to help you grow on purpose—not by accident.



FOR COACHING & LEADERSHIP TRAINING

PART 2: Leader–Direct Report Development Conversation Guide Using the Soft-Skill Growth Framework to Coach, Align, and Support Growth

How to Use This Section:

This version is designed for leaders and managers to use with a direct report.

The goal is not evaluation.

The goal is alignment, clarity, and intentional development.

Use this conversation:

- After performance reviews
- At the beginning of the year or quarter
- During growth or transition periods
- When potential is high but progress feels inconsistent

STEP 1: Align on Outcomes (Leader + Team Focus)

Leader:

“Before we talk about skills, let’s align on what matters most this year.”

What outcomes matter most for your role right now?

- Strong execution and follow-through
- Clear communication and alignment
- Increased ownership and accountability
- Stronger collaboration and trust
- Leadership growth and readiness
- Navigating change or new responsibilities
- Other: _____

Leader Notes:

STEP 2: Explore Challenges Together (Shared Awareness)

Leader:

“Where do you feel things get hardest or most frustrating?”

Which situations feel most challenging right now?

(Check all that apply.)

- Expectations feel unclear
- Feedback feels difficult to give or receive





FOR COACHING & LEADERSHIP TRAINING

- Emotions impact conversations or decisions
- Ownership or follow-through breaks down
- Communication gets misunderstood
- Confidence or presence feels inconsistent
- Change feels overwhelming or draining

Direct Report Perspective:

Leader Perspective:

STEP 3: Identify Top 3 Growth Skills (Joint Decision)

Leader:

“If we focused on just a few skills this year, which ones would make the biggest difference?”

Select the TOP 3 skills to prioritize together:

- Self-awareness
- Communication clarity
- Emotional regulation
- Accountability & follow-through
- Influence without authority
- Feedback & coaching
- Trust-building
- Adaptability through change
- Leadership presence

Agreed Top 3 Skills:

STEP 4: Where We Stand Now (Shared Baseline)

Rate current consistency for each skill.

Scale:

- 1 = Rarely consistent
- 3 = Inconsistent but aware
- 5 = Consistent and intentional



FOR COACHING & LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Skill Direct Report (1–5) Leader (1–5)

Skill #1 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Skill #2 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Skill #3 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Note: Differences in scoring are conversation starters—not problems.

STEP 5: Define the Ideal (What Success Looks Like in This Role)

For each skill, clarify what strong performance looks like in this role.

Skill #1: _____

When this skill is strong, we would see:

Situations where this skill matters most:

Skill #2: _____

When this skill is strong, we would see:

Situations where this skill matters most:

Skill #3: _____

When this skill is strong, we would see:

Situations where this skill matters most:

STEP 6: Create the Development Plan (Weekly + Monthly)

Weekly Focus (Leader-Supported Practice)

This week, the direct report will intentionally practice:

Skill #1 behavior: _____

Skill #2 behavior: _____

Skill #3 behavior: _____

Leader support this week:

Observation



FOR COACHING & LEADERSHIP TRAINING

- Feedback
- Coaching question
- Removing barriers
- Encouragement/check-in

Weekly coaching question:

“What felt different this week when you focused on this skill?”

Monthly Focus (Reflection & Adjustment)

This month, these skills will be applied in:

Monthly reflection (Leader + Direct Report):

What progress did we notice?

What still feels challenging?

What adjustment should we make next month?

Leader Reminder

Growth conversations work best when:

- Expectations are clear
- Feedback is specific
- Progress is revisited consistently
- Development is treated as a partnership

This framework is designed to support growth without micromanagement and accountability without pressure.

This tool is part of Full Potential Development’s leadership systems, designed to help leaders develop people with clarity, confidence, and intention.