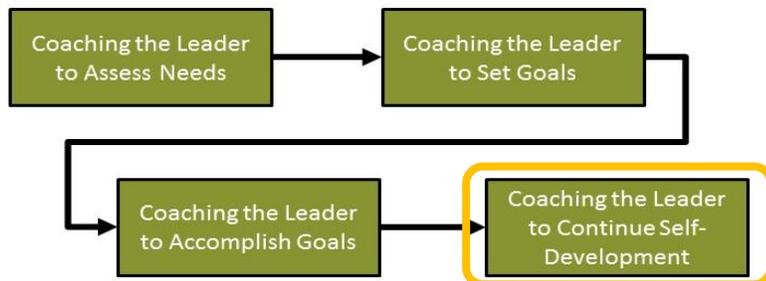




### Process to Effectively Support Leaders

This is the final newsletter in a series of four newsletters that presents a process coaches can use to provide support during coaching sessions with leaders. An overview of this process is provided in the diagram below, with the focus of this newsletter identified by the highlighted box.



As the fourth step of this coaching process, it is important to help the leader understand continuous self-development and how this emphasis on self-development should remain after the coaching engagement is completed. This newsletter will help you as a coach to understand ways that leaders can stay focused on their development and identify resources that can be used to aid in improvement.

### What is a Coach?

Coaching is partnering with an individual in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires that person to maximize his/her personal and professional potential (International Coaching Federation, [www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org)). To help leaders continue their development between coaching sessions or once a coaching engagement is complete, coaches should be able to describe what continuous self-development involves, and model ways in which the leader can accomplish this. Leaders need to understand that the onus of self improvement rests on taking personal initiative to ensure desired results are realized. The table below shows the role of a coach in helping leaders to understand the importance of self-development.

**Coaching Leaders To Own Their Self Development**

Coach Responsibilities/ Actions	Rationale
Encourage the leader to seek out coaching and developmental opportunities	Leaders need to take responsibility for their own development as this will make the development more meaningful and relevant to them, thus increasing the probability of success.
Ask the leader how he/she monitors his/her own development	To ensure a leader is able to make progress toward goals, the leader must understand how to monitor personal progress. Without knowing what goal progress and achievement look like, development can get stifled.
Help the leader determine ways to ensure personal accountability	One accountability approach involves identifying an accountability partner. This is a person with whom the leader can be honest about goal progress.

### In this Issue

#### Overview of a process coaches can use to support leaders

- This newsletter covers the fourth step, Coaching the Leader to Continue Self-Development

#### Role of the coach in helping leaders own their self development

#### A continuous self-development process to help leaders understand their development

#### Strategies to practice self-development

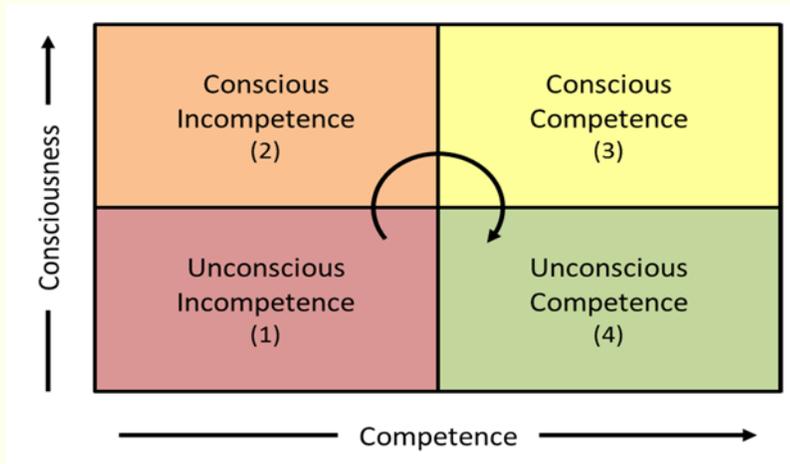
#### Resources to aid in self-development

#### The role of self-awareness in continuous self-development



# A Continuous Self-Development Process

As a coach, it is important to make sure that the leaders you coach understand the development process and how their knowledge and understanding of work-related information will change throughout their own development. There are four stages in the self-development process. This process can apply to any type of development that leaders need including the development of specific skills or competencies needed for their role as a leader. The self-development process is depicted and each stage described below.



As described in GTI (2005). GTI (2011). *Learning a New Skill is Easier Said than Done.*  
[www.gordontraining.com](http://www.gordontraining.com)

- **(1) Unconscious Incompetence:** This is the stage where a leader is not even aware he/she is lacking in a needed knowledge or competency. Unconscious incompetence may be classified as ignorance; in this stage leaders do not know what they do not know.
- **(2) Conscious Incompetence:** In this stage, leaders are aware that there is something they need to learn or an area in which they need to develop because they lack the competence to fully and accurately fulfill their duties. With conscious incompetence, leaders are aware of their limitations.
- **(3) Conscious competence:** This stage is reached when a leader can achieve a particular task or has the necessary knowledge, but must be very conscious in applying knowledge or skills. Conscious competence involves the leader having growing confidence in his/her skills, however in this stage performing effectively requires effort.
- **(4) Unconscious competence:** In this stage, needed skills or competencies are mastered and become a natural, automatic process. With unconscious competence, the leader does not need to deliberately think about skills to be able to perform them.

By helping leaders understand the stages of development that they will go through, the leaders can be prepared to work toward continuous self-development and understanding of the goal of their development. This goal is unconscious competence which means that needed skills or competencies are internalized and can be used without exerting extra effort.

## Using the Continuous Self-Development Process in Coaching Leaders

While the coaching process is designed to help support leaders and encourage their development, it is also important to make sure that leaders are able to continue developing, including outside of coaching sessions and after their coaching engagement is completed. As a coach, you can help the leader by making sure the leader understands the steps taken to assess his/her needs and set goals, so that the leader can effectively continue self-development through the four stage process listed above. This continuous self-development model fits with the coaching process to support leaders as follows:

- The first newsletter in this series discussed helping the leader to assess his or her developmental needs. Leaders should understand how they can use feedback from others or questioning to recognize their developmental needs, which will help them move from unconscious incompetence to conscious incompetence.
- Based on the needs that were identified and consequent goals that were set (see guidance on goal setting in the second newsletter in this series), the leader should have an understanding of self-development that needs to occur and areas in which progress would be beneficial. Setting goals will help the leader plan for development and move to having conscious competence.
- Finally, leaders need to understand how they can accomplish their goals (see the third newsletter in this series), thus mastering needed skills and moving to an unconscious competence (as described in this fourth newsletter). Working through this development process with leaders during coaching will show them how they can continue to develop on their own in the future.

## Strategies to Continually Develop Oneself

As a coach, you should work toward continuous self-development so that you are able to share stories, strategies, successes, and personal challenges in self-development with the leaders you coach. This will show leaders it is possible to develop oneself and that you are a credible source of information for self-development. This section provides strategies that you can use and also share with the leaders that you coach to encourage them to own their self-development. Using these skills can also help you to improve as a coach and develop in needed areas.

Self-Development Strategies	
Strategy	Description and Benefits
<b>Engage in Journaling</b>	Journaling allows the leader to engage in self-reflection and can serve as a record of behaviors, outcomes, and progress toward goals. Journals can be used as a learning tool where a list of personal growth experiences can be recorded. The journal can then assist in synthesis of information for deeper understanding as well as personal reflection. Keeping a journal allows the leader to look back on issues such as accomplishments, decisions, challenges encountered, and specific steps that were taken to engage in development toward goals.
<b>Practice Development Everyday</b>	Working on self-development everyday will yield better results than trying to accomplish goals all at once. To do this, leaders could find a time each day that will work for them to use for their development. This could be a specified time, for example after lunch, where they focus on developing needed skills. Alternatively, daily development towards goals could tie into something that they are already doing, such as attending briefings or meetings. To do this, encourage leaders to think about how they can use existing commitments to work on skill development. Practicing skills that need development everyday will help to ensure continual progress is made toward goals and self-development is accomplished.
<b>Form Habits</b>	Habits are a major contributor to behaviors that are displayed or actions taken by an individual. By understanding areas in which he/she needs to make improvements, a leader can work to practice skills or activities daily to develop effective habits. Much like moving toward unconscious competence, forming habits helps to master skills and turn actually using those skills into second nature, thus creating a path to skill mastery.
<b>Seek Feedback Regularly</b>	Feedback from others can come from a variety of sources and does not need to be formalized to be helpful in self-development. In the early stages of development of a specific skill or competency, it can be beneficial to seek broad feedback to help shape growth. Alternatively, when a leader is more advanced in the skill he/she is working to develop, seeking more specific feedback will aid in the development process. Tell the leader to encourage feedback providers to be honest, as this will be the most beneficial for guiding successful self-development.

## Learn More: Resources on Personal Development

### Want to know more about the Virtual Improvement Center?

The Virtual Improvement Center (VIC) is available as a resource for leader development on the MSAF website. The VIC offers numerous developmental activities including readings, exercises, and simulations organized by the Core Leader Competencies to make it easy to search by developmental need. The VIC can be viewed here:

<https://msaf.army.mil/My360/VIC/Default.aspx>

### Want to know more about how to engage in continuous self-development?

- Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell (2013). *A Manager's Guide to Self-Development. McGraw-Hill Professional, Sixth Edition*  
⇒ Includes over 50 activities that can be used to help leaders develop specific qualities and skills, improve performance, and advance their career and personal potential.
- London (2002). *Leadership Development: Paths to Self-Insight and Professional Growth. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.*  
⇒ Helps leaders learn how to gain an accurate view of their strengths and weaknesses, focusing on self-insight. Includes a chapter on continuous self-development.
- Hiemstra (2001). *Uses and Benefits of Journal Writing. In Promoting Journal Writing in Adult Education. Jossey-Bass.*  
⇒ Provides an overview of different types of journaling as well as journaling benefits.

## Self-Awareness: A Key Element of Continuous Self-Development

One key element that will help leaders to continue self-development is having self-awareness. As a coach, you are in an important position to help leaders grow in their self-awareness and develop an honest understanding of their knowledge and capabilities. This development of self-awareness is important for bringing about behavioral changes, including skill development and other changes important for Army leaders.

Self-awareness encourages leaders to buy-in to the notion that development is necessary. Self-awareness is related to better performance as well as improved attitudes (e.g., satisfaction) of both the leader and subordinates because the leader learns to address critical aspects of being an effective leader. The challenge with self-awareness is the leader must learn to view him/herself within the context of the leader role and the impact his/her behaviors have on others.

Leaders lacking in self-awareness frequently will not realize they lack self awareness until they receive feedback from multiple others. Thus, as a first step in encouraging self-awareness, ask the leader if he/she has sought formal performance feedback from colleagues, subordinates, and supervisors. Other techniques for promoting self-awareness to leaders include:

- Encourage the leader to create a list of 5-10 strengths and 5-10 limitations.
- Ask the leader to consider past experiences and describe what was learned about his/her leadership style from those experiences.
- Have the leader describe recent challenges or difficult conversations he/she has had with others. Ask the leader to think through what role he/she may have played in those situations and list alternative ways he/she could have responded (Note: Your role as coach is not to criticize or evaluate the way the leader responded but rather guide the leader to evaluate his/her own response).
- Ask the leader to share his/her own feelings about professional situations that are intimidating and what professional skills (e.g., communication) or type of development could be valuable to help address the situations.

By developing self-awareness, leaders will understand the types of development that would be most beneficial to them and this will enable leaders to better relate to others and lead their subordinates effectively.

## Case Study: Encouraging Leaders to Work on Self-Development

Mr. Morris, a coach for MAJ Scott, is meeting with MAJ Scott for a coaching session. The two have met previously, but it has been several months since they worked together to identify areas for improvement and set goals for MAJ Scott to work toward. At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Morris asks MAJ Scott about her progress toward her goal of improving communications with subordinates. MAJ Scott responds that she knows she has made improvements, but does not have specific examples of her goal accomplishments or progress toward the goal. Mr. Morris explains to MAJ Scott the importance of being accountable to her goals and monitoring her own development and asks how she could better do this. MAJ Scott says that she could keep a list of the goals and small milestones she meets in working towards each goal. Following from this comment, Mr. Morris describes journaling and the positive aspects of using this method to keep track of accomplishments.

Mr. Morris then asks if others have noticed improvements in MAJ Scott's communication skills and she indicates that she does not know. Mr. Morris describes to MAJ Scott the value of seeking honest feedback from others to better understand her professional development needs and progress. He suggests that she be open to feedback from others, even if it is difficult to hear, so that she can better understand her personal limitations and progress toward her developmental goals.

The coach asks MAJ Scott how she can monitor her own development so that she can continue improvements between coaching sessions. He also suggests activities to aid in monitoring progress so MAJ Scott can better understand her personal growth and challenges she has encountered in working toward her goals.

By encouraging MAJ Scott to seek feedback and understand other's perspectives of her progress toward goal achievement, the coach is helping MAJ Scott to increase her self-awareness and allow for future professional development to more easily occur.

Participation in Army MSAF is required by AR 350-1, Appendix K for all Army leaders and units. Leaders who participate in MSAF benefit from new insights into their strengths and capabilities, and their developmental needs. Use of resources associated with the MSAF program, such as coaching and the Virtual Improvement Center (described on page 3), allow leaders to build upon strengths and improve areas of need.



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