

# Section 6

## LEADERSHIP ANALYSIS

### Key Points

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- 1 Why Analyze Great Leaders?
- 2 Lincoln and Trait Theory
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- 4 Lincoln and Transformational Leadership
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It is not merely for today, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives. . . . It is in order that each of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations. It is for this the struggle should be maintained. . . . The nation is worth fighting for. . . .

Abraham Lincoln, address to the 166th Ohio Regiment

## Introduction

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Because leadership is an ever-changing process, analyzing your leadership skills can help you perfect your own leadership style. You are preparing to become an Army leader. You will have opportunities to lead in the Cadet battalion and elsewhere on campus. Your instructors and peers will evaluate your leadership, both on campus during the semester and at the Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC). In addition to their assessments, you should also continuously analyze your leadership style and its pros and cons.

This section will show you how to assess yourself by analyzing a famous leader's capabilities, style, and strengths. It will use Gary Yukl's leadership model and the leadership theories you have studied in previous chapters to examine President Abraham Lincoln's leadership.

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### Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, 4 March 1865

Fellow Countrymen:

At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained.

Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

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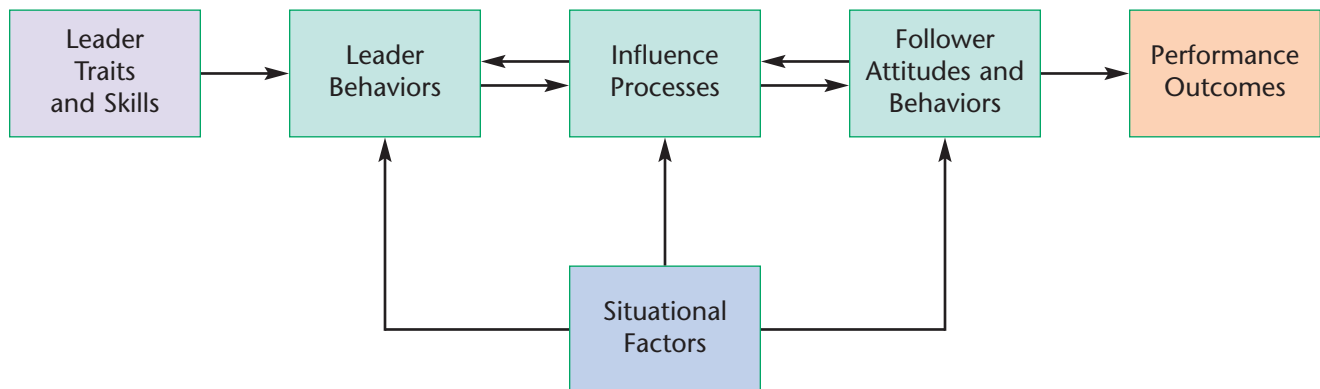
## Why Analyze Great Leaders?

Through your study of leadership, you have learned that no one theory encompasses all that effective leadership is. Rather, leadership is complex and dynamic. It has multiple facets and must be viewed through different lenses.

One way to understand more fully how these theories relate to and sometimes complement one another is to consider a case study of a well-known effective leader. By doing so, you'll be better able to analyze your own leadership strengths and weaknesses—an exercise you should undertake often.

### Lincoln's Background

Lincoln's background was quite undistinguished. He was born in 1809 in a one-room log cabin in Kentucky and grew up rather poor. He had only one year of school throughout his adolescence and taught himself how to read and write. He married Mary Todd after his first love died and his second turned down his marriage proposal. Together Abraham and Mary Lincoln had four children, all boys.



**Figure 6.1** Relationship Among Leadership Variables

Lincoln became a lawyer and entered politics. He served one term as a Whig Party congressman, during which he opposed the Mexican War. He later joined the new Republican Party and lost an 1858 election for the Senate in Illinois after he toured the state with his rival, Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, engaging in a now-famous series of debates over slavery. The debates brought Lincoln national attention, and in 1860 he won election as 16th president of the United States in the nation's most regionally divisive election.

Even before Lincoln took office, several Southern states seceded from the Union, presenting him with the greatest political challenge any president has ever faced. Lincoln proved himself an apt military strategist, but his greatest frustration was in motivating his generals. Today he is best known for abolishing slavery, preserving the Union, and transforming the Army.

## Lincoln and Trait Theory

Remember that trait theory holds that people born with the “right” traits are naturally good leaders. Clearly, Lincoln had innate traits worth noting. In his dealings as a lawyer, businessman, and politician, he became known as “Honest Abe” —a nickname he earned when he promised to pay off all the debt from his failed business.

Lincoln continued to demonstrate his sense of integrity during his presidency. While trying to prosecute the war to reunite the nation, Lincoln appointed and replaced several Army commanders. But he always defended each one and the general's decisions against public attack while the general commanded the Army.

Lincoln was known for his humility, empathy toward others, and identification with the common man—possibly all influenced by growing up poor. Throughout his presidency, he remained close to the Union troops. Rather than remaining in the White House and just letting things happen, he regularly inspected the federal units that moved through Washington, D.C., and he frequently visited the Soldiers and worked directly with their leaders. He would often ride alongside these troops, talking to them and listening.

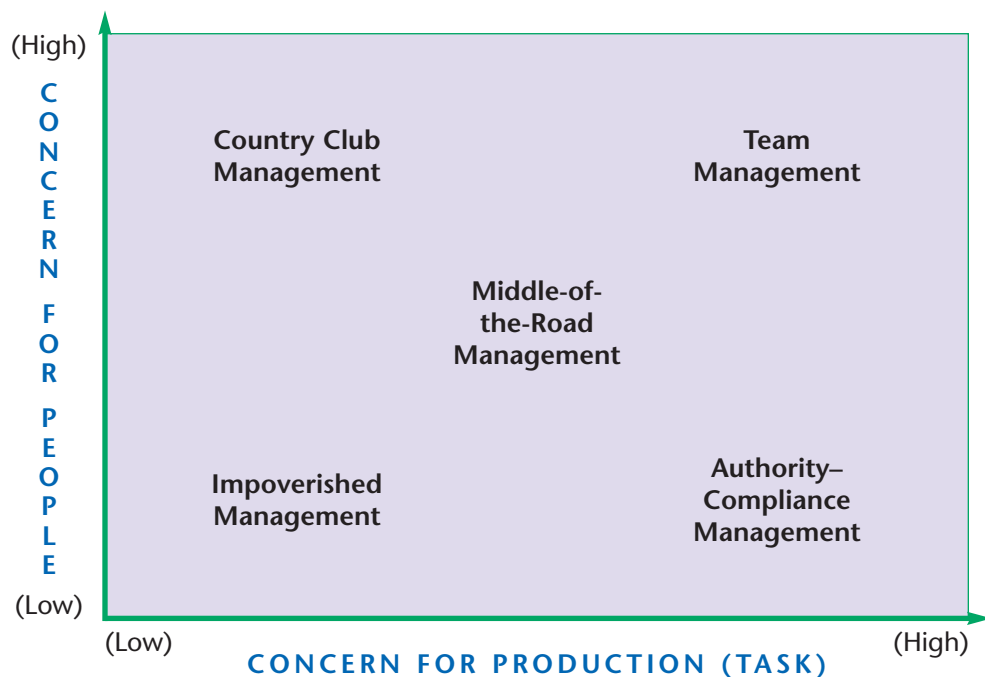
Famous for his open door, Lincoln rarely turned away anyone who wanted to speak with him. His bravery, persistence, and audacity in defending the Union and abolishing slavery spoke to his devotion to the Constitution and individual rights. He was well read, keenly intelligent, and an inspiring speaker. His unrelenting energy and drive distinguished him from other leaders. It's clear from the reaction of those around him that these traits came naturally to Lincoln—and that he was able to use them to further his political career. Lincoln knew that his strengths were what the country needed. People responded to Lincoln as a natural leader.

## Lincoln and Behavior Theory

In behavior theory, the leader's actions, rather than personality traits, are what count. Recall the major findings of behavior theory that leaders tend to exhibit two key behaviors: orientation toward people or orientation toward task. R. R. Blake and J. S. Mouton developed their Leadership Grid from this research. How did Lincoln rate as a leader in this model? Was he oriented toward task or toward people? Was he a *country club*, *middle-of-the-road*, *authority-compliance*, *impoverished*, or *team manager*? Do you think any of these labels fits Lincoln's management style?

Looking at his political and military career, one aspect of Lincoln's leadership becomes apparent: He was consistent in his values and behaviors. He believed that building alliances and empowering his Army leaders was the most effective approach. He worked hard to build positive relationships with his subordinates. For example, Lincoln overcame negative feelings toward him from one of his subordinates, Secretary of State William H. Seward. A hardened abolitionist, Seward initially thought that Lincoln was incompetent and unqualified for the job of president.

Seward had run against Lincoln for the Republican presidential nomination, so perhaps his feelings are understandable. Lincoln recognized Seward's leadership qualities, however, and appointed him to his Cabinet. He worked hard to build trust in Seward, who had his own agenda, frequently trying to influence Lincoln on many important decisions. Lincoln always listened, but stood firm in his decisions. Even though he disagreed with his subordinate, he took time to visit him in his office and at his home frequently. He invited him to visit the troops with him and over time, they got to know each other. Seward gradually began to see Lincoln's strengths and to realize they shared similar ideas. As this relationship developed, Lincoln delegated much authority to Seward in presidential business. Seward, in turn, gave Lincoln honest counsel, including how to conduct the war.



**Figure 6.2** The Leadership Grid

**Major-General McClellan:**

I have just read your despatch about sore-tongued and fatigued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigues anything?

A. Lincoln, 24/25 October 1862

In his time as commander in chief, Lincoln appointed and replaced many Army commanders: among them George McClellan, Ambrose Burnside, and Joseph Hooker. One of his primary complaints about many of these men was their inability to attack decisively. But he was not a micromanager. He often wrote to encourage his generals to take the offensive, but he rarely ordered it. When time after time they did not act, and he saw a threat to the Union, Lincoln replaced them.

Finally, in 1864 the President appointed Ulysses S. Grant, the one commander who seemed to understand how to use the powers Lincoln gave him. Grant acted within Lincoln's intent, without asking for explicit permission for each movement or operation. He understood that the Union's war aim was the destruction of GEN Robert E. Lee's army, not the capture of Richmond. Lincoln chose Grant after the general's success against the Confederacy along the Mississippi River in the West. Lincoln had earlier shown his appreciation of Grant's abilities: After the bloody battle at Shiloh in 1862, when several people demanded Grant's removal, Lincoln replied, "I can't spare this man—he fights."

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**Grant's First Meeting With Lincoln**

In my first interview with Mr. Lincoln alone he stated to me that he had never professed to be a military man or to know how campaigns should be conducted, and never wanted to interfere in them: but that procrastination on the part of commanders, and the pressure from the people at the North and Congress, *which was always with him*, forced him into issuing his series of "Military Orders"—one, two, three, etc. He did not know but they were all wrong, and did know that some of them were. All he wanted or had ever wanted was some one who would take the responsibility and act, and call on him for all the assistance needed, pledging himself to use all the power of the government in rendering such assistance. Assuring him that I would do the best I could with the means at hand, and avoid as far as possible annoying him or the War Department, our first interview ended.

President Ulysses S. Grant

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## Lincoln and Transformational Leadership

In transformational leadership, the leader motivates others by communicating a compelling vision, appealing to the “greater good” and to others’ values. A transactional leader, on the other hand, uses the “carrot and stick” method of influencing behavior. Transactional leadership theory’s basic assumption is that people are motivated by rewards and punishment.

Which was Lincoln’s approach? How did he motivate others to act?

### Lincoln’s Focus on Vision and Consistent Message

Lincoln firmly believed that you “catch more flies with honey” and he used his vast powers of persuasion to share his vision with others. Recall that one of his core values was his empathy for people. He paid particular attention to honing his speeches so they were clear, concise, and directed toward the common people. Some of Lincoln’s most famous speeches, like the Second Inaugural Address at the beginning of this section, explain his vision.

In an August 1864 letter to the 148th Ohio Regiment, Lincoln reaffirms the goal of saving the Union:

It is worthy of your every effort. Nowhere in the world is presented a government of so much liberty and equality. To the humblest and poorest amongst us are held out the highest privileges and positions. The present moment finds me at the White House, yet there is as good a chance for your children as there was for my father’s.

Again, I admonish you not to be turned from your stern purpose of defending your beloved country and its free institutions by any arguments urged by ambitious and designing men, but stand fast to the Union and the old flag. Soldiers, I bid you God-speed to your homes.

Most famously, Lincoln sets forth his vision of American unity in his 1863 Gettysburg Address.

### Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Again and again, Lincoln’s message is consistent and clear: devotion to individual rights and to the Constitution handed down from the nation’s founders. He emphasizes his core values in every communication and with every decision. Lincoln’s reputation as a great leader grew from this type of message, which often stirred Union Soldiers emotionally and motivated them—if not always their generals—fully.

Through all of his political and military frustrations and challenges, Lincoln was able to stay “on message,” to use a modern phrase, with the result that people perceived in him a strength of character and command beyond what other leaders could muster.

## Critical Thinking

What does Lincoln’s rhetorical style suggest about how leaders should communicate with their subordinates?

## Lincoln and Contingency/Situational Theory

Abraham Lincoln realized that leadership was more than issuing orders or managing details. He knew that circumstances and people’s attitudes change and that such changes call for a leader to respond in different ways. Situational theory focuses on adapting the leadership style to the situation and willingness of followers. Lincoln clearly understood that effective leadership is about the outcomes, that results do matter and are the measure of an effective leader.

Lincoln faced a situation that no other president had ever faced—a total civil war. To ensure the success of the federal forces and the effort to reunify the country, he was decisive and exerted more authority than any president before him. For example, because of the popular unrest, particularly in areas close to Washington, Lincoln declared martial law and suspended the constitutional writ of *habeas corpus*, which allowed the military to make arrests without specific charges. During his administration, he directed the spending of money, ordered the purchase of Navy ships, and allocated funding to “encourage immigration.” He issued formal Presidential War Orders and, most notably, in 1862 he issued the Emancipation Proclamation. This document decreed that all slaves living in any state not in the Union by 1 January 1863 would be “henceforward and forever free.” Lincoln’s purpose was tactical as well as strategic: He felt he could justify this act aimed at the states in secession because it supported the military use of freed slaves in the armed forces. It also prevented France and Great Britain from recognizing the Confederacy by transforming the war from a conflict between two regions of the country into a war to end slavery. Later, Lincoln approved and signed the final resolution submitting the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery, to the states for ratification on 1 February 1865.



The key point is that circumstances compelled Lincoln to act and lead differently from other presidents before or after him because the situation was different. The country was in crisis and urgently needed a decisive leader. Lincoln pushed the limits of the very Constitution he so cherished. He acted, however, with the honorable intent of saving that Constitution, which he accomplished.

### Critical Thinking

Reflect on what might have happened had Lincoln acted differently during the Civil War. What decisions might have altered the outcome for the Union politically? Militarily?

## Lincoln and the Army Leadership Requirements Model

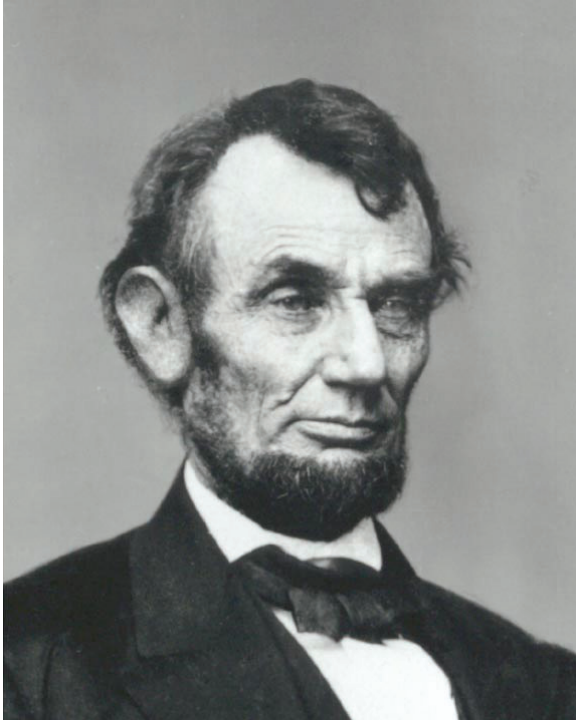
Because modern thinking on Army leadership has evolved from the contemporary studies in leadership and research on the psychology of leadership, you might think that it's unfair or presumptive to apply modern ideas to the leadership of a president who has been dead for more than 140 years. But history teaches us valuable lessons about leadership, too, and you can glean essential wisdom from studying the patterns and approaches of history's great leaders. A comparison of Lincoln to the Army Leadership Requirements Model shows that his attributes and core leader competencies align well with the ideal Army leader.

### Character

Through Lincoln's writings, actions, reputation, and legacy, he clearly demonstrated what we call today the seven Army Values. In particular, people respected his consistent honesty, integrity, respect for others, and devotion to the Constitution and the individual rights of others (duty and loyalty). He took on the thankless task of preserving the Union and defending the Constitution against secessionists in the South and defeatists in the North (selfless service). Lincoln internalized these values and lived them out. He expressed bottomless empathy for the common man and for the families of the Soldiers lost in the Civil War. He modeled his ideals for those who followed him—and even for those who opposed him, both politically and militarily.

### Intellectual Capacity and Presence

Although Abe Lincoln only attended formal school for one year, he taught himself much. His mental capacity was outstanding. He bore the collective burden of the nation at a time when many people doubted the Union could survive. He traveled with his troops and even once came under fire himself. He rarely sat in the White House merely to watch events unfold. He preferred to be in the “field” with those who were making things happen. Although he did have a few extended bouts of depression before his presidency, Lincoln was emotionally strong. Even through the deaths of three of his four children and his wife's emotional breakdown, Lincoln held fast to his convictions and to his commitment to winning the nation back. His attributes kept him focused.



*Abraham Lincoln*

### **Core Leader Competencies**

Lincoln's interpersonal skills made him an extremely effective leader. He purposely chose not to direct others, but often used storytelling or analogies to help them see his point. He stayed close to his subordinates, visiting them in their homes often to get to know them and building the relationships that were paramount in his success. Lincoln wisely left the tactical details to his commanders, stepping in only when their inaction veered toward catastrophe. He was results-oriented and was often frustrated by his own commanders' lack of vision and drive. Still, he found the grace to defend them as Soldiers and the mercy to forgive their faults as men.

Communication was one of Lincoln's clear strengths. His years as a lawyer helped him improve his skills in the art of persuasion. He knew what needed to be done and used his personal, moral, and legal authority to make quick, effective decisions. Lincoln reminded his subordinates of their purpose by reminding them of their origins and creating a vision of the future to ensure their rights were forever preserved. Lincoln was able to communicate his vision at every step—in his conversations, personal letters, speeches, and actions. Lincoln was involved in most details of the war. He assigned special people to report all the details to him. He often went directly to the sources and waited for their reports so he could quickly make the next decision. He built a plan to bring the secessionist states back into the Union without retaliation, helping those communities to heal more quickly from the war.

What makes Lincoln a great leader worthy of study? As he so eloquently said in his Second Inaugural Address, in his vision the government would act: “With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds. . . .” Such magnanimity, fortitude, foresight, and strength of purpose are clearly the marks of a great leader.



# CONCLUSION

Leadership is a complex and dynamic calling. It is an awesome and challenging responsibility, and the Army greatly values your willingness to embrace it professionally.

Ultimately, effective leadership is all about the outcomes. Results matter—they are the measure of an effective leader. This analysis of President Lincoln, in light of the leadership theories you have studied this year, gives you an example you can use to analyze your own leadership skills. Ongoing self-analysis, based on reflection and understanding of theory and historical precedent, should be one of your most valuable leadership assets.

## Learning Assessment

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1. Describe how you would use various leadership theories to analyze a leader's capabilities, style, strengths, and development areas.

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