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How to Be a Leader in an AI World

Self-Assessment: The HUMAN Model

This self-assessment is built around the HUMAN model – the five domains where leadership draws on capacities that remain distinctively human even as AI grows more capable. The statements are informed by established research constructs and instruments (listed at the end), written for brevity and practical fit. There are no right answers.

Think about the situations in your current role over the past six months in which each statement was genuinely tested and rate how characteristic the statement is of how you *actually* behaved – drawing on concrete episodes, not aspirations. If a situation has not arisen for you in that period, mark NA rather than guess. The value is in the honest baseline.

The self-assessment takes about ten minutes to complete.

The role or leadership context I have in mind as I answer (e.g., my current role and team, a client relationship, a board):

_____

The rating scale

1 = very uncharacteristic **2** = uncharacteristic **3** = somewhat uncharacteristic **4** = somewhat characteristic **5** = characteristic **6** = very characteristic **NA** = not tested in the period

(The scale has no midpoint on purpose – lean one way or the other. NA is for a situation that has genuinely not arisen for you in the period; use it rather than guess, but not to sidestep an uncomfortable answer.)

Part 1 – Rate yourself on the five domains

H – Humanizing

Empathy, concern, and relational trust – building the psychological safety in which teams actually perform.

Scale: 1 = very uncharacteristic ... 6 = very characteristic; NA = not tested in the period

Statement	Rate 1–6 or NA
In the moments that matter to someone, I give them my undivided attention rather than treating the exchange as one more item to get through.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
When someone on my team is struggling, I make time to understand their particular situation and respond in a way that is useful to them.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA

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Statement	Rate 1–6 or NA
When people raise problems, mistakes, or disagreement, I respond in ways that make it easier – not harder – for them to speak candidly next time.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
I follow through on concern for people even when it costs me real time, attention, or convenience.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA

Domain reflection average (ratings ÷ items rated, ignoring NA): _____

U – Unscripted

Presence and embodied authority – leading in the high-stakes, no-playbook moments where human judgment, not data, is what is required.

Scale: 1 = very uncharacteristic ... 6 = very characteristic; NA = not tested in the period

Statement	Rate 1–6 or NA
When a difficult moment cannot be handed to a process, a policy, or prepared material, I step into it personally rather than finding a reason to be elsewhere.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
In difficult conversations, I stay present with the tension rather than rushing to resolve it or retreating into process.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
Under genuine uncertainty, I make timely calls after seeking the best available input – and I am clear about what remains unknown.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
When plans and scripts break down, I help the group stay focused and move forward without leaning on my title or prepared material.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA

Domain reflection average (ratings ÷ items rated, ignoring NA): _____

M – Moral

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Ethical judgment and integrity – making principled decisions under genuine complexity and being willing to bear the personal cost of them.

Scale: 1 = very uncharacteristic ... 6 = very characteristic; NA = not tested in the period

Statement	Rate 1–6 or NA
I surface the stakeholders, values, and potential harms that are easy to overlook in decisions framed as purely practical or technical.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
When legitimate values conflict, I make the trade-offs explicit rather than pretending there is a purely technical answer.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
I act consistently with my stated values even when doing so carries a real personal or political cost.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
When I make a hard ethical call, I own the decision and its consequences as mine, rather than attributing it to the analysis, the policy, or the advice I received.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA

Domain reflection average (ratings ÷ items rated, ignoring NA): _____

A – Adaptive

Continuous learning and unlearning – letting go of the mental models that once worked and building cultures that can do the same.

Scale: 1 = very uncharacteristic ... 6 = very characteristic; NA = not tested in the period

Statement	Rate 1–6 or NA
Before I commit publicly to an important decision, I deliberately seek out credible people and evidence that could show my current view is wrong.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
When new evidence undermines an approach that once worked for me, I change course rather than defend my past choice.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
After mistakes or surprises, I examine what my assumptions missed and change how I act.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
I create the conditions for my team to question assumptions, experiment, and unlearn – not merely to execute.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA

Domain reflection average (ratings ÷ items rated, ignoring NA): _____

N – Narrative

Vision, hope, and meaning-making – constructing a compelling account of why the work matters and inspiring others toward it.

Scale: 1 = very uncharacteristic ... 6 = very characteristic; NA = not tested in the period

Statement	Rate 1–6 or NA
I connect day-to-day work to a clear, credible account of why it matters.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
When the situation is genuinely difficult, I give people real reasons to keep going without pretending things are better than they are.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
I translate an intended future into practical steps that people can picture themselves taking.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA
The purpose I communicate reflects convictions I genuinely hold, not language I have borrowed or manufactured.	o1 o2 o3 o4 o5 o6 oNA

Domain reflection average (ratings ÷ items rated, ignoring NA): _____

Part 2 – Your edge and your reliance

Now step back from the numbers – they are prompts for reflection, not performance ratings. The domains differ enough in difficulty and opportunity that a point or two of difference between them means little, and there is no overall HUMAN score to compute.

For each domain, make two quick judgments.

First, before you look back at your averages, does this domain feel like a relative strength (**Edge**) or an area to develop (**Growth**)? If neither fits cleanly, use the two **Unclear** columns: **Depends on context** if the answer genuinely varies with the role or situation (an Edge in one setting, a Growth area in another), or **Genuinely unsure** if you simply haven't formed a view. Answer instinctively first, then compare with your scores; where the two disagree is often the most useful finding.

Second, what is AI's role for you in this domain today? **Not used** (you rarely use AI for this kind of work); **Amplifies** (AI helps you prepare and think, and you perform the core activity yourself); **Mixed** (AI and you each perform meaningful parts of the activity); or **Substitutes** (AI performs substantial parts of the activity, or produces the output you use). These are descriptions of current practice, not verdicts. Circle one in each column. Then, for the domain where your AI answer gives you the most pause, note one concrete example beneath the table – the example is worth more than the category.

First, how often do you use generative AI in your work? (circle one) Daily · Most weeks · Occasionally · Rarely or never

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Domain	Edge or Growth?	Depends on context	Genuinely unsure	AI's role today?
H – Humanizing	Edge / Growth	o	o	Not used / Amplifies / Mixed / Substitutes
U – Unscripted	Edge / Growth	o	o	Not used / Amplifies / Mixed / Substitutes
M – Moral	Edge / Growth	o	o	Not used / Amplifies / Mixed / Substitutes
A – Adaptive	Edge / Growth	o	o	Not used / Amplifies / Mixed / Substitutes
N – Narrative	Edge / Growth	o	o	Not used / Amplifies / Mixed / Substitutes

My example (domain: _____):

_____

_____

Part 3 – Reflection

Briefly describe two moments:

1. A recent moment when I led from my human edge:

_____

_____

2. A moment when I was tempted to hand AI something whose value really came from me:

_____

_____

For reference: the research behind this instrument

The HUMAN model integrates the MIT Sloan EPOCH research (Loaiza & Rigobon, 2024), which maps the human capabilities that complement rather than substitute for AI, with the established leadership literature. Each domain's statements draw on the constructs below but have been newly written for practical use: this is a research-informed reflection primer, not a validated measure, and the statements are not abbreviated versions of the original scales. You do not need this page to complete the exercise – it is here so the grounding is transparent.

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Domain	Underlying constructs and instruments
H	Empathy and concern: Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983); the Empathy Index and the empathy–concern distinction (Jordan, Amir & Bloom, 2016); Single-Item Trait Empathy Scale (Konrath et al., 2018); thin vs. thick empathy (Crockett, 2025). Relational trust: team psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999).
U	Presence and composure under ambiguity: Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003); tolerance of ambiguity (Budner, 1962; McLain, 1993); adaptive performance (Pulakos et al., 2000). Embodied authority: credibility-enhancing displays (Henrich, 2009) and the capability vs. credibility distinction (Jackson et al., 2023).
M	Ethical judgment and cost-bearing: moral attentiveness (Reynolds, 2008); professional moral courage (Sekerka, Bagozzi & Charnigo, 2009); behavioral integrity, i.e., word–action alignment (Simons, 2002); moral foundations as values context (Graham, Haidt et al.).
A	Learning and unlearning: intellectual humility (Leary et al., 2017; Krumrei-Mancuso & Rouse, 2016); learning-goal orientation (VandeWalle, 1997); growth mindset (Dweck, 2006); learning agility (De Meuse). Directly counters the sycophancy and overconfidence effects documented in current AI research.
N	Vision, hope, and meaning: the Hope Scale – agency and pathways (Snyder et al., 1991); inspirational motivation within transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, MLQ); sensegiving and meaning-making in organizations.

Note: the AI-to-IA (intelligence augmentation) lens in Part 2 reflects the EPOCH finding that these capabilities are candidates for augmentation, not automation – and current evidence that augmentation is a design discipline, not a default (over-reliance, sycophancy, and de-skilling are the failure modes to watch for).

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