



Uncovering, Understanding, Unleashing, Overcoming: Exploring Drivers and Blockers in Leadership Development Practice

*People need to know that they have all the tools within themselves.
Self-awareness, which means awareness of their body, awareness of their
mental space, awareness of their relationships—not only with each other,
but with life and the ecosystem.
Deepak Chopra*

8.1 THE “DRIVERS AND BLOCKERS EXPLORATION TOOL”

As a contribution to leadership development practice, we created the “Drivers and Blockers Exploration Tool” (2018 Version), with four detailed examples as mini case studies from our field research (see Sects. 10.7 and 10.8), to uncover an individual’s drivers and blockers—connected to a defined leadership aspiration, specific development objective(s) and context. Using the tool within our programs and coaching work has provided a robust platform to observe and test potential benefits of exploring both drivers and blockers, especially where these are set against specific personal leadership development objectives, and within an integrated and complementary set of other development activities and interventions.

Similar research in a global executive program, where deeper exploration of hidden assumptions was conducted, found that participants were generally able to identify some kind of change blockers (Dominé, 2012). About two-thirds of the development objectives were so-called relational-based objectives, which “target an improvement in how the participants

interact with others in the most general sense, whether this involves getting along better with co-workers, being more forceful with them or understanding them better” (Dominé, 2012, p. 47).

Although exploring drivers and blockers is primarily an individual exercise, we note that it can also be carried out in group situations that provide a psychologically safe environment for the kind of intensive awareness exploration in which executives can engage in courageous conversations with each other; and help each other challenge some of their assumptions. In addition, there is the potential for groups or teams to collectively explore their drivers and blockers. Future research might report on such explorations and the adaptations required to our methodology to effectively undertake such an exploration across a group or team level.

In our earlier leadership development workshops with senior executives, we had used adapted versions of Kegan & Lahey’s (2009) “four-column exercise”. In these, leaders and executives examined their “competing commitments” and “immunity to change”, allowing blockers to emerge as they examined the big assumptions underlying why they were not accomplishing their change objectives. This approach focused on aiding participants to become much more aware of the negative emotional influences (which are really “change blockers”), such as fears, that stop them from achieving their leadership development objectives. Surfacing these is very important, because it opens up the possibility for participants to develop ways of overcoming them. Our experience with the four-column exercise created a fundamental and foundational basis for the tool we developed for exploring both drivers and blockers, and we acknowledge that our work acts as an extension of Kegan and Lahey’s groundbreaking processes and research.

The tool, now trialed with more than 2000 executive participants, explores change drivers that might motivate them, in addition to exploring blockers, through 4 progressive phases and 14 progressive steps (see Fig. 8.1 below). The psychodynamic reflection and surfacing methods in the tool and method also allow for integration with other leadership development work, such as coaching, feedback and sustaining a personal development agenda.

So, at a deeply personal level, using an integrated exploration, the tool helps surface profound insights—that connect both drivers and blockers. After identifying blockers in relation to their specific leadership development objective(s), the tool can then help leaders uncover and surface different perspectives (positive projections for the future as well as underlying

Drivers and Blockers Exploration Tool – Overview (2018 Version)

The tool and surfacing method are structured in 4 Phases and 14 Steps, as follows:

Phase 1: Leadership Aspiration and Specific Development Objective

Steps 1 and 2 outline the leadership aspiration or vision, and then define the specific development objective and its rationale for change.

Phase 2: Exploring Your Blockers

Steps 3 to 6 progressively examine behaviors, negative emotions, fears, reasons, assumptions, personal characteristics (including values, beliefs, attitudes, personality and other traits) and life experiences that can create blockers, and then surface these in relation to the development change objective set.

Phase 3: Exploring Your Drivers

Steps 7 to 10 progressively examine behaviors, positive emotions, positive benefits, reasons, assumptions, personal characteristics (including values, beliefs, attitudes, personality and other traits) and life experiences that can create drivers, and then surface these in relation to the development change objective set.

Phase 4: Insights, Commitments and Actions

Steps 11 and 12 encourage deep reflection, drawing together insights and understandings as a result of uncovering the drivers and blockers and then allow a restatement of the leadership aspiration and development objective, together with proposed commitments and actions to “unleash the drivers” and “overcome the blockers”. Steps 13 and 14 allow further reflection to consider the insights in the wider setting of the person’s broader leadership. Here consideration is given to whether drivers might become blockers in other circumstances; and to whether any of the blockers might shift to being drivers as strengths in different circumstances or situations.

Fig. 8.1 Drivers and blockers exploration tool overview (2018). (Published with kind permission of the authors © I.C. Woodward, S. Shaffakat and V.H. Dominé (2018). All Rights Reserved. Section 10.7 provides the full tool, its steps and its questions)

negative assumptions), spinning their perception of their situation in a positive light (i.e. what could happen if they overcome the blockers). From this, they recognize the drivers that can motivate them to overcome their blockers. In other words, it helps individuals uncover their biggest drivers while confronting their blockers—and imagining how these might become drivers.

Importantly, the fourth phase of the exploration process restates the person's leadership aspiration and development objective, together with their commitments and actions, based on the insights generated relating to both drivers and blockers. Leaders can also consider how to leverage the drivers to their advantage, and turn blockers into potential strengths across other leadership situations and contexts.

During the exploration exercise, people converse with themselves, documenting and articulating the issues faced in achieving their developmental objectives. This personal reflection is a tangible reality, helping the individual pinpoint the role of drivers and blockers in different aspects of their life, work, leadership/management approach, relationships, as well as the interplay between them. We see broader personalization benefits arising for executives articulating their drivers and blockers, and then seeing the implications for other aspects of their leadership beyond the specific development objective. The writing down of answers also concretely helps bring unconscious matters to light.

Exploring “drivers and blockers” is ideally done with the assistance of development professionals or as part of a well-designed development program, course or coaching process. Our tool helps undertake this process, but it can also be modified or adapted as needed by leadership development professionals. The profound insights generated in this surfacing process should significantly influence the personal leadership agenda action plan and commitments made. By systematically exploring drivers and blockers, a leader can unleash the power, force and impetus of drivers to support and propel their desired change; and to overcome the blockers that screen out, obstruct or stand in the way of their desired change. Generating the profound insights from this reflection and articulation gives an extraordinarily deep understanding for working on the very personal aspects of an individual's leadership—as can be seen in the four mini cases of Sect. 10.8).

We do not use the phrase “competing commitments” in our tool because we found that many executives in cross-cultural settings strongly

resisted using the term, as they regarded the notion of “commitment” as an integral part of their leadership development agenda—a positive affirmation. However, we acutely know the value of the term as it applies to the work of Keegan and Lahey and the “competing” elements they highlight. We are certain that their groundbreaking work will continue to be used extensively in coaching and leadership development work into the future.

Nevertheless, the words drivers and blockers resonated extremely easily with contemporary global business executives in our fieldwork—and were relatively straightforward to comprehend and use—especially as we are combining both concepts in the tool.

Consistent with our literature review, we argue that exploring drivers and blockers can help people progressively move to higher “orders of mind”, and growth. We acknowledge the vast array of effective leadership development approaches available today. We suggest that the explicit incorporation of exploring drivers and blockers (and the potential use of the tool and surfacing method) should be highly complementary to a wide range of important leadership development methods in current usage in executive development. Indeed, this exploration is inherent or implicit in many cases (such as immersive self-awareness with coaching and feedback).

To demonstrate how widely the concept we advocate might be applied, we include Sect. 10.9, which connects exploring drivers and blockers with a selection of major leadership and development theories and approaches, including adaptive leadership (Heifetz, Linsky, & Grashow, 2009), authentic leadership (Avolio, Luthans, & Walumba, 2004), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996), charismatic leadership (Gardner & Avolio, 1998), immunity to change (Keegan & Lahey, 2001a), personalization (Petriglieri et al., 2011) and positive leadership (Diener, 2000; Peterson, 2000; Seligman, 1998a, 1998b; Snyder, 2000). Our purpose is not to advocate a particular approach, but show the potential importance, relevance and broad usability of exploring drivers and blockers in a wide range of future leadership development activities.

After exploring “drivers and blockers”, coaching, feedback and support from others are extremely valuable. In other words, creating a support system that includes people who provide an individual with an active encouragement and advice, together with managing the “triggers” to desired or “non-desired” behaviors is indispensable.

In our field research, using the tool over time, a number of important insights emerged, that may assist leadership development practitioners with its use:

- Sufficient “time” space, with appropriate “head” and “physical” space, is highly desirable to maximize the reflection and insight generation benefits from undertaking the exploration of the drivers and blockers activity itself. (In our experience, it takes a number of hours to work through the explanations, questions and documentation of answers in each Phase in the exploration—with deliberate breaks after Phases 2 and 3. Phase 1 is sometimes done as pre-work).
- Creating an environment of psychological safety is absolutely essential to promote deep introspection, and because the exploration process can surface difficult and sometimes repressed memories.
- Being clear, precise and specific on the development objective to pursue is essential to garner maximum insights on the relevant drivers and blockers (e.g. increased active listening in employee discussions rather than a generic improvement in emotional intelligence).
- Answering the various stage questions with complete phrases, statements or sentences (rather than one-word answers) tends to enrich the understanding, clarity and nuances of the issues as these emerge.
- Participants should be discouraged from racing ahead to answer all the questions and should be given adequate reflection and documentation time step by step.
- The order and flow of the question stages has been trialed in multiple permutations, and the current version appears to uncover the most profound levels of insights based on our research to date.
- There is considerable value in undertaking the exploration exercise for the first time, after some degree of intensive reflection and feedback has occurred, and the leader or executive has been thinking about possible change seriously—and within a well-designed and integrated leadership development process.
- Many participants re-ran their exploration questions some days or some weeks later, gaining additional insights.

- Documenting the answers in a meaningful and thorough way substantially assisted the ability to update, amend and commit to leadership action plans.
- In answering the specific questions for each phase, there is sometimes overlap or duplication in some of the answers (especially between Steps 5 and 6, and Steps 9 and 10). This overlap becomes an important source of critical insights for the leader; and participants should not be concerned about having duplication.
- Undertaking Phases 1–3, where the main driver and blocker exploration work can be done, is generally well accomplished in one intensive session. However, we have seen that Phase 4 on “Insights, Commitments and Actions” likely needs much more time. We have seen great value in having the leader or executive take some time to think about this, and set another defined writing reflection and discussion period later on. This is very often successful after sharing initial observations and insights with others and getting some preliminary feedback before documenting their answers in Phase 4.
- Sharing driver and blocker insights with trusted members of the leader’s support system (mentors, coaches and the like) is invaluable—and the resultant conversations usually give rise to additional insights and feelings of support in making the desired changes. Seeking explicit feedback on progress and setting up practice experiments to try new behaviors are equally crucial.

8.2 DRIVERS AND BLOCKERS EXPLORATION IN ACTION: THE CASE OF JENNIFER

Jennifer is the Chief Financial Officer of a specialist financial services firm. The thematic issue explored using the drivers and blockers tool and process in a major leadership development program was a lack of active listening combined with impatience in her interactions with others. Below in Table 8.1 is a mini case study which replicates her exploration, answers and insights working through all 14 questions and 4 phases of using the “Drivers and Blockers Exploration Tool” and its process. We present this as illustrative to readers of the kinds of insights and contribution to leadership development that we see emerging in these kinds of exercises. In Sect. 10.8, three more mini case studies are presented for reference and information.

Table 8.1 Leadership development application example of the drivers and blockers exploration process
 Mini case example—Jennifer—female—chief financial officer, Specialist Financial Services Firm
 Development objective explored: lack of active listening with impatience in interactions with others

<i>Tool question</i>		<i>Jennifer's responses in going through the drivers and blockers surfacing methodology</i>
First phase	Leadership aspiration and specific development objective	
Step 1	Briefly state your overall leadership aspiration (or vision) for yourself as a leader into the future to be the “best leader you could be”	As a leader in the future, I am seeking to be a motivating leader of people, highly recognized for my experience, results and knowledge. I am also seeking to be seen as a business executive capable of leading the entire organization, not just my finance management area. A leader who can balance fairness with actions.
Step 2	State one specific development objective for change in yourself. Also state your rationale for making this change in your leadership behaviors. Then, briefly explain how succeeding in this objective will help you achieve your leadership aspiration. Be explicit and focused in stating this development objective or goal rather than being too general. (e.g. “deep active listening” rather than “more emotionally intelligent” or “becoming a better leader”)	Specific development objective: I need to become a deep and active listener who can successfully involve and interact with people—across different backgrounds and perspectives. The 360-degree feedback I read highlighted a lack of focused, and active listening with my team as a major problem—with lots of comments on this. There were many comments about demonstrating impatience and not taking the team with me on initiatives. There were also comments about cutting people off and seeming to be distracted. I also saw in my leadership approaches and communication preference styles diagnostics that I am heavily oriented towards directive and monitoring leadership with an extremely high level of rational/direct communication style. My team and my peers come from very different cultural backgrounds covering many countries. I am the only person of a particular (<i>culture disguised</i>) in this group, and my culture is much more direct than all the others.

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

<i>Jennifer's responses in going through the drivers and blockers surfacing methodology</i>	
<i>Tool question</i>	
<p>Second phase Step 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Exploring your blockers</p> <p>List down the current specific behaviors that you are doing that are preventing you from achieving your personal leadership development objective stated in Step 2. This list might include behaviors or actions that you are not doing, that are contributing to your problem or issue</p> <p>Next, for each current specific item in your list, put the completely opposite behavior for this in brackets next to each item</p>
	<p>I always go straight to the point and to the business matter in any discussion with someone at work and rarely talk about personal matters or ask how people are. (Absolute Opposite: I would always begin with person to person chit-chat, ask questions and show interest in the person).</p> <p>I rarely ask questions in any discussion with my team members unless it is to find out about their progress on some matter. (Absolute Opposite: I would always ask questions as the opening of discussions including follow up questions).</p> <p>Any questions I tend to use are like this: "Don't you think the following is the case?" (Absolute Opposite: I would ask open questions rather than using pre-decided statements in a question format).</p> <p>I demonstrate my impatience by getting slightly louder and more direct or sharper in my voice and tapping my foot or hand continuously. (Absolute Opposite: I would never raise my voice and remain calm all the time in my body).</p> <p>I also tend to cut people off mid-sentence or talk over them. (Absolute Opposite: I would never cut people off, allow them to finish, and not interrupt others).</p> <p>I am constantly looking at my mobile phone while I talk with people, and very frequently respond to text messages whilst talking or listening. (Absolute Opposite: I would never use my device when talking and listening to other people).</p>

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Table 8.1 (continued)

<i>Jennifer's responses in going through the drivers and blockers surfacing methodology</i>	
<i>Tool question</i>	
Step 4	<p>Look at the list of completely opposite behaviors you described in Step 3. Imagine that you are now behaving in this completely opposite way</p> <p>Do you have any concerns, fears, worries, anxieties or any other negative emotions, feelings or thoughts, if you imagine yourself behaving in these completely opposite ways? If so, what are these concerns and fears?</p>
Step 5	<p>What reasons do you have, or what assumptions are you making for yourself, that could explain your negative concerns, feelings or fears identified in Step 4?</p> <p>I am very worried that changing things will waste a lot of time or miss opportunities or not pick up problems quickly. Our business is in a very competitive space and markets move extremely quickly.</p> <p>If problems happen and I miss them, I will be blamed or described as slow.</p> <p>I am extremely concerned that I might be negatively viewed as “too girly” or “too emotional”, if I don’t act with the “testosterone” we have in our business culture.</p> <p>If I don’t succeed in this job, I can never hope to get the top job, and I have a lot of future financial wealth riding on success.</p> <p>I fear that to be less direct just isn’t me and may not be worth the effort it would take.</p> <p>I would be very uncomfortable not having my device and instant information.</p> <p>You have to be fast and work hard to be ahead of the pack.</p> <p>I work very long hours already, I can’t really see how to get the time for all this people stuff and question asking.</p> <p>Finance sector is usually very male, and there are more risks for me in getting to the top. My family and I can be very well off in the future if I succeed now.</p> <p>I just don’t like being blamed for things or not being seen as a real success. I am pretty insecure.</p> <p>I’m used to working with people who just get it and get on with it. I also prefer people who get straight to the point.</p>

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

<i>Tool question</i>	<i>Jennifer's responses in going through the drivers and blockers surfacing methodology</i>
<p>Step 6 Carefully consider your answers to Step 5. Think about your personal characteristics (such as personality, values, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations) as well as your professional and personal life experiences. Which of these characteristics and/or experiences would explain or underpin your reasons and assumptions answered in Step 5? (Do not be concerned that there may be duplication of answers here compared to those above).</p>	<p>Rational and results focus communicator preference style. Directing and monitoring leadership approach. Values of Hard Work, Achievement, Recognition and Self-Direction. Lots of professional experience across banking and investment—knows how to act in these environments. Very strong extrovert. In the program coaching, I learnt about being very “alpha” and possibly an “insecure overachiever”.</p> <p><i>Note: There were some confidential personal/private life issues that emerged in this person's reflection here including their growing up with a lot of money problems and being ridiculed at school. There were also some damaging private relationship issues. Details for these are not included in the list above for privacy reasons.</i></p>
<p>Third phase Step 7 Exploring your drivers</p> <p>Imagine you absolutely achieved your development objective stated in Step 2. Describe the new or changed behaviors you would be exhibiting. (These would be similar to those opposite behaviors you described to yourself in Step 3—but are now a much more realistic list of behaviors, rather than completely opposite behaviors)</p>	<p>Add some personal chit-chat when meeting team members and increase level of question asking. Begin discussions with questions as the opening including follow up questions. Spend some moments preparing these before important discussions. Would be asking a lot more open questions rather than using statements in the question format. Would be controlling my voice when I start to feel frustrated and try to keep my body calmer with both feet on the floor. Also use some deep breaths—or practice “time-outs”. Would not be cutting people off and allowing them to finish. Should be monitoring my interruption levels. Attempting to make sure I have enough personal energy before going into important conversations where listening is needed—and this may drain me. At meetings or in discussions, make a conscious choice as to whether to keep the phone on or switch it off and put it away at the beginning.</p>

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

<i>Tool question</i>	<i>Jennifer's responses in going through the drivers and blockers surfacing methodology</i>
<p>Step 8 Reflect upon the new or changed behaviors you described in Step 7. What are the positive emotions, feelings or thoughts you are likely to have, or the benefits you might derive or see, if you achieve this change or behave in these new ways</p>	<p>I think that I would be seen as responding to the feedback I've gotten and show I'm making some positive changes. I think that I might be able to connect to a wider network of different people that could help my career. I think that more people might like me as well as respect me. I think the turnover in my team might reduce and the work stress in our team could go down.</p>
<p>Step 9 What reasons do you have, or what assumptions are you making that could explain your positive feelings or the potential benefits identified in Step 8?</p>	<p>I think I could sleep better if I was calmer and have some better personal relationship time. <i>Note: Other personal, private matters arose in these answers that are not reported above.</i> I would very much like to be seen as responsive and delivering. If there are additional skills that can help the career goals, this would be positive. The viewpoints and options by others about me are important to me. I would show that I'm capable of doing things well in more than one way. It would be a relief not have to stay in a stressful mode all the time. I would really like a personal life that was not so confrontational. Perhaps I could be a different kind of female role example in my sector—yet successful. Also, it is possible that a more sustaining approach to leading could be good for ensuring financial security longer term. <i>Note: Other personal, private matters arose in these answers that are not reported above.</i></p>

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

<i>Jennifer's responses in going through the drivers and blockers surfacing methodology</i>	
<p>Step 10</p> <p>Carefully consider your answers to Step 9. Think about your personal characteristics (such as personality, values, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations) as well as your professional and personal life experiences. Also think about your own strengths and talents. Which of these characteristics and/or experiences and/or strengths would explain or underpin your reasons and assumptions answered in Step 9? (Do not be concerned that there may be duplication of answers here compared to those above)</p>	<p>Values of Recognition, Financial Security, Being Wanted and Needed. The extrovert in me should energize me to try different ways of doing things. I have a low to moderate expressive and interpersonal communication preference style—this could be more emphasized to make the change happen. My parents would be proud to see that I could be successful and still be seen as a good person with healthy relationships. Do I really need to feel stressed and proving myself all the time? Some changes might make this feeling change for the better. I have a strength in helping people in bettering their knowledge but don't use this very often—the change would make that more of a continuing reality and I might be seen as a mentor. Could make the “culture” to “culture” connection amongst people more productive and lower conflict and frustrations and misunderstanding.</p> <p><i>Note: Other personal private matters arose in these answers that are not reported above.</i></p>
<p>Fourth phase</p> <p>Step 11</p> <p>Reflection and insights:</p> <p>What deep insights emerged for you about your assumptions, influences, drivers and blockers across your answers in Steps 3–10? Summarize your insights here. How do these insights compare and contrast with any feedback you may have received?</p>	<p>A better balance of urgency and engaging people is likely to be better for the longer term. I can be results driven and a bit more feminine without appearing weak. It is possible to be self-confident, and still get value from other people's views. It does not have to be “either ... or”. I might be surprised with the ideas I get from others by asking more questions. There may be a way to have success in this sector without the stress of a burnout. I can always control how much attention I give. More thought about this is not that hard—just needs practice—and some feedback. I have to stop punishing myself and see some happiness. I'm carrying too many demons, and these are unhealthy—especially in my personal life.</p> <p><i>Note: Further personal private matters arose in these answers that are not reported above.</i></p>

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

<i>Tool question</i>	<i>Jennifer's responses in going through the drivers and blockers surfacing methodology</i>
<p>Step 12 Restated aspiration, development objective and commitments: Take some time now to reflect on these insights and consider the implications for your own leadership development, as well as the actions you will need to take to achieve your development objective Re-state your leadership aspiration and your development objective to include these insights, and propose your concrete actions for change (including experimentation) that unleash your drivers and overcome your blockers Deeply reflect on your answers and make any further adjustments to ensure you have a clear, concrete and prioritized commitment for your future leadership development and growth</p>	<p>I will have to make deep and active listening a priority if I want to effectively involve and interact with people—across different backgrounds and perspectives. This will demonstrate that I respond to feedback and can reduce stress levels and improve career prospects. So, my updated leadership vision and development objective with proposed action steps and support is: I will be the motivating leader of people want to be, and be highly recognized for my experience, results and knowledge. I will be seen as a business executive capable of leading the entire organization, not just my finance management area. A leader who can balance fairness with actions. A leader who can listen, engage and direct as needed. A leader who is seen as calm and controlled. Action steps and support commitments: Begin discussions with questions as the opening including follow up questions. Spend some moments preparing these before important discussions. Include practicing some personal chat-chat when meeting team members and increase level of question asking. Will ask a lot more open questions rather than using statements in the question format. Will not be cutting people off and allowing them to finish and try to reduce interruptions and I should be monitoring my interruption levels. Attempting to make sure I have enough personal energy before going into important conversations where listening is needed—and this may drain me. Will seek direct feedback from peers and direct reports on these behaviors. Will control my voice when I start to feel frustrated and try to keep my body calmer with both feet on the floor. Also use some deep breaths—or practice “time-outs”. I will need to add some of the mindfulness techniques we’ve been looking at in the program including meditation. Will try to add some defined personal recovery time in my diary. At meetings or in discussions, make a conscious choice as to whether to keep the phone on or switch it off and put it away at the beginning. Will keep a checklist to monitor this—and share this with my coach. Will do some team development work where I can try out new behaviors. I think I need to find a female mentor who has managed this all better in the finance business. I will make some changes in my personal life. <i>(These private matters are not reported here.)</i></p>

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

<i>Jennifer's responses in going through the drivers and blockers surfacing methodology</i>	
<p>Step 13</p> <p>Broader leadership context: You could now turn to think about your broader leadership work, activities and behaviors beyond the specific development objective you were exploring. Think about all your answers to Steps 7–10 where you uncovered potential drivers in yourself. In what other leadership situations or contexts could you make these a very positive contributor? Are there any potential leadership situations where these drivers might become negative blockers?</p>	<p>Being extrovert as a driver could energize me to get more socially involved with people. By converting the knowledge and experience I have to some mentoring, I can try to take on some training of key talent. Could also consider reaching out to my old university and seeing if there a few talents for the future I might work with—particularly future female finance and accounting graduates. Possible Blocks: Will need to be careful about this mentoring because I don't want to be seen as undermining the people below me by stepping over them to their juniors and jumping in to direct. Also, as I'm working to improve my listening skills, I need these to be much better to be a good mentor. May need to get others in our team involved in a project like this when I think I'm ready and delay this possible project with good planning.</p>
<p>Step 14</p> <p>Another reflection: Think about all your answers to Steps 3–6 where you uncovered potential blockers in yourself. In what different leadership situations or contexts could you make these blockers become a very positive contributor? In effect, to turn these weaknesses into strengths?</p>	<p>A change to include the mentoring project could mean I help others avoid the blockers I thought about coming from my own professional experience in finance. I could try to find some people in my next recruitments who are good at balancing the results with their people skills and have them help me and my team. Could also have our team agree on some “rules” for mobile phones that we can all stick to—Or try to. <i>Note: One personal and private matter arose here that is not reported.</i></p>

^aAn example from our research (see Sect. 10.1, Example 40)

8.3 INTEGRATING DRIVERS AND BLOCKERS EXPLORATION WITH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

As we noted in the opening Chap. 1, exploring drivers and blockers in and of itself does not constitute integrated leadership development—it is aimed at increasing profound self-awareness. To be meaningful, and actionable, such exploration should be part of a well-designed leadership development approach that includes feedback, reflection, practice and a support system—all assisting to help an individual progressively develop themselves and achieve transformational change.

By way of giving an example of this, we take one of the many integrated and holistic leadership development approaches, to see the way exploring drivers and blockers can enrich self-awareness and enliven, as well as enlighten, the development journey for an executive. This is the “Insightfully Aware Leadership Development Framework (IALD)”.¹ Field research using the “Drivers and Blockers Exploration Tool” presented in this book also contributed to enhancements and continuing development of that framework itself.

In the IALD framework, leadership development is grounded on generating insights by examining self, in relation to others and context—with an intensive focus on understanding hidden “assumptions and influences, drivers and blockers”. In this development journey, leaders will progressively gather and use profound insights about themselves, others and context to help guide and support leadership decisions, behaviors and development (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016). The IALD incorporates persistent and dynamic insight generation, feedback, reflection, practice and action underpinning support throughout the different building blocks. The visual below (see Fig. 8.2) draws this together. Although the building blocks appear in sequence, the reality is that the steps and activities are interactive and interweaving—with a leader working simultaneously on their development in more than one block at any point in time and working to create their ecosystem of support.

The “Intensive Awareness: Exploring Drivers and Blockers” building block is a crucial and interlinked feature of this framework. The underlying rationale for the exercise that explores drivers and blockers as a discrete, yet intertwined, component is deepening continuous self-awareness

¹Insightfully Aware Leadership Development Framework V3.1—Ian C Woodward—September 2017.

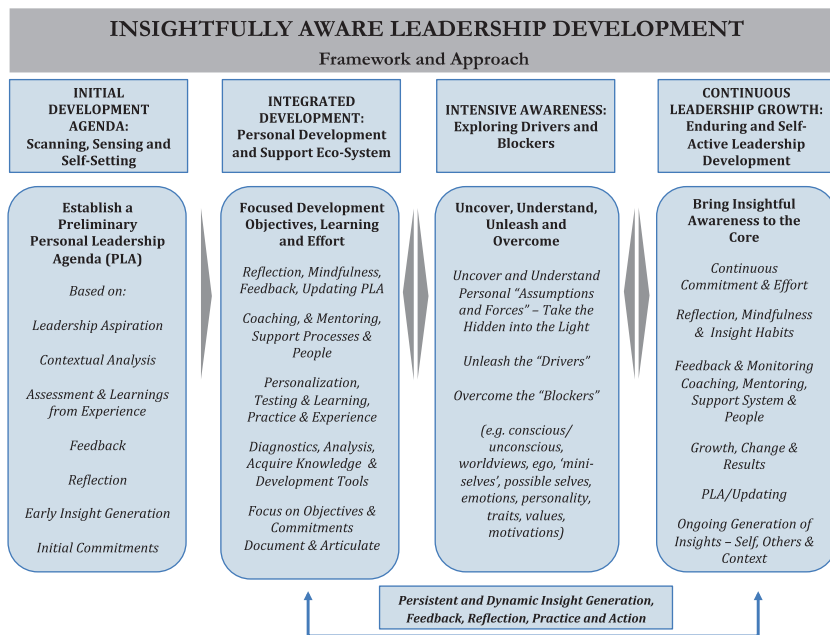


Fig. 8.2 Insightfully aware leadership development framework (2017). (Published with kind permission of the author © I.C. Woodward (2017). All Rights Reserved)

as a dynamic part of integrated leadership development. An individual explores these directly related to his or her specific development objectives and context, to see what drivers he or she can use to support change; and what blockers might be standing in the way.

As we have argued throughout this book, we believe that insights from using an exploration process for uncovering drivers and blockers can act as an invaluable lens in increasing the depth of self-awareness. As such, it is a construct that should have wide applicability in leadership development programs, interventions and coaching.