

A quick morning reflection could make you a better leader—even if you're not the boss

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Study participants were more likely to report helping co-workers and providing strategic vision on days they did a morning leadership reflection. They also felt

more leaderlike on those days, perceiving more power and influence in the office. Credit: Allie Schutt/University of Florida

Starting your day by thinking about what kind of leader you want to be can make you more effective at work, a new study finds.

"It's as simple as taking a few moments in the morning while you're drinking your coffee to reflect on who you want to be as a leader," said Remy Jennings, a doctoral student in the University of Florida's Warrington College of Business, who authored the study in the journal *Personnel Psychology* with UF management professor Klodiana Lanaj.

When study participants took that step, they were more likely to report helping co-workers and providing strategic vision than on days they didn't do the morning reflection. They also felt more leaderlike on those days, perceiving more power and influence in the office.

The effects also extended to aspiring leaders.

"Leadership is really challenging, so a lot of people are hesitant to tackle [leadership roles](#) or assignments," Lanaj said. "Reflecting a few minutes in the morning really makes a difference."

And unlike being given extra responsibility or leading a team project, a morning reflection is under the employee's control.

"They're not dependent on their organization to provide formal opportunities. They don't have to wait until they have that title that says they're a leader to take on [leadership](#) in their work," Jennings said.

Want to try a [morning](#) leadership boost? Here are some prompts

recommended by the researchers.

- What are some of your proudest leadership moments?
- What qualities do you have that make you a good leader, or will in the future?
- Think about who you aspire to be as a leader, then imagine everything has gone as well as it possibly could in this leader role. What does that look like?
- What effect do you want to have on your employees? Do you want to motivate them? Inspire them? Identify and develop their talents? What skills or traits do you have that can help with those goals?

Whether you're the boss or on your way up the ladder, "this is a tool to be more effective at work." Lanaj said. "Just a few minutes can entirely change your focus for the rest of your day."

More information: Remy E. Jennings et al, Reflecting on one's best possible self as a leader: Implications for professional employees at work, *Personnel Psychology* (2021). [DOI: 10.1111/peps.12447](https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12447)

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