

SLII®

Learn the SLII Model

SLII®

SLII is a model for developing individuals to their highest level of performance on a specific goal or task. SLII is based on the relationship between an individual's development level (competence and commitment) on a specific goal or task and the leadership style (direction and support) the leader provides. Effective leadership lies in matching the appropriate leadership style to the individual's development level. When leaders are situational leaders, they partner with their people, working side by side to align on goals, development levels, and leadership styles. This "match," using the common language of SLII, contributes to higher trust, positive intentions, and significant results.



SLII® is not something you do *to* people; it is something you do *with* people.

Benefits to Partnering with SLII

When leaders partner with their team members to use SLII, the model will help them to

1. Focus on what's most important—SMART goals
2. Diagnose competence and commitment
3. Give or get the leadership style needed to increase competence and commitment

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Three Skills of SLII

To be an effective situational leader, you have to master the three skills of SLII. If there is effective partnering, the outcomes of SLII are achieved.

1 Goal Setting

Aligning on what needs to be done, when

2 Diagnosing

Collaboratively assessing an individual's competence and commitment on a specific goal or task

3 Matching

Using a variety of leadership styles, comfortably, to provide individuals with what they need

Alignment

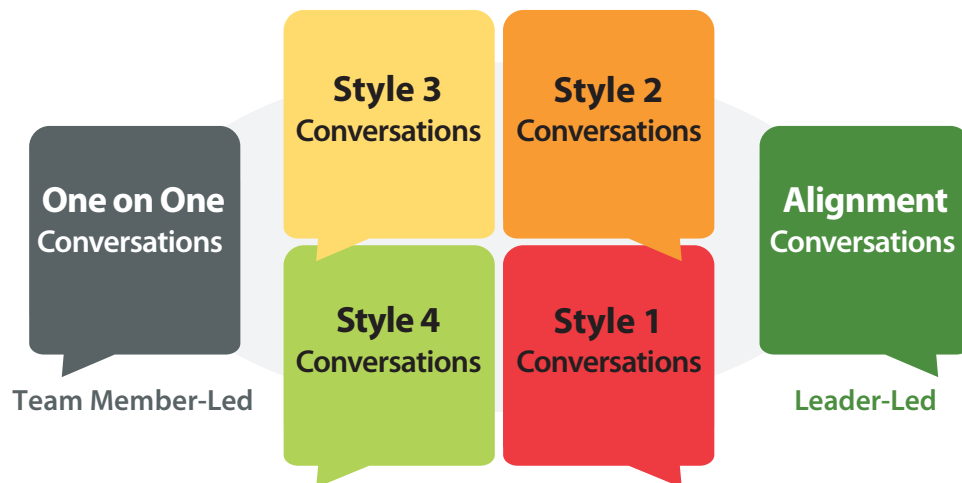
Six SLII Conversations

Leader-Led **Alignment Conversations** are used to set SMART goals and tasks and to discuss the leadership style match for development level.

The four **Style Conversations** are used to develop competence and commitment.

Team Member-Led **One on One Conversations** help the leader provide team members with the leadership style they want.

In these six conversations, situational leaders use the three skills of SLII to align on goals, development levels, and leadership styles.



1 Setting SMART Goals

The first step in creating clarity and alignment is setting SMART goals. It's impossible to assess someone's competence and commitment unless you know exactly what they are expected to do. SMART goals are set during an Alignment Conversation.

SMART goals answer these questions:

S = Specific

- What exactly is the goal or task?
- What does a good job look like?
- By when does the goal or task need to be accomplished?

M = Motivating

- Is the goal or task meaningful for the individual?
- Will working on this goal build competence and commitment?
- Will working on this goal add or drain energy?

A = Attainable

- Is the goal realistic, reasonable, and achievable?
- Is the goal within the individual's control?

R = Relevant

- Is the goal or task meaningful work for the organization?
- Is the goal or task aligned with organization and work team goals?
- Is the goal or task a high priority in relation to other goals?

T = Trackable

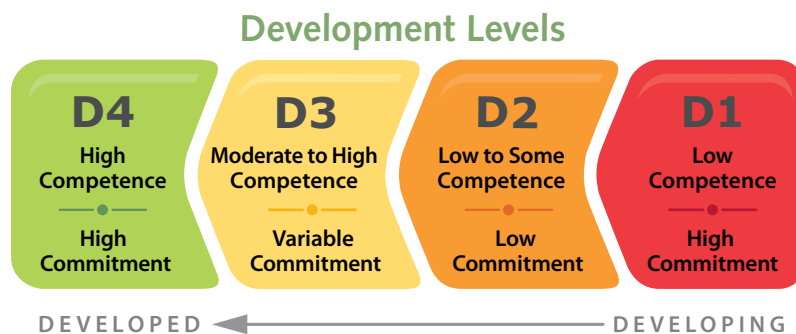
- How will progress and results be measured and tracked?

SMART goals motivate. They get leaders and the people they lead on the same page.

**All good performance starts with
clear goals.**

2 Diagnosing Development Level

Once SMART goals are set, it's possible to diagnose development level. Development level is a combination of two factors: **Competence**—the individual's demonstrated task-specific and transferable knowledge and skills on a goal or task; and **Commitment**—the individual's motivation and confidence on a goal or task. Development level is goal or task specific. It is not an overall rating of an individual's skills or attitude. There are four development levels.



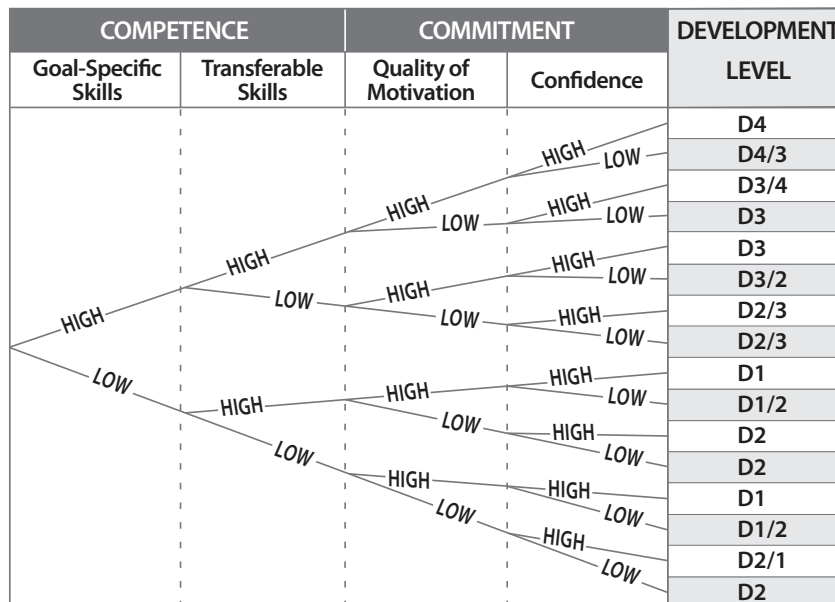
Development Level Descriptors

D4	Self-Reliant Achiever	D3	Capable, but Cautious, Contributor	D2	Disillusioned Learner	D1	Enthusiastic Beginner
Competence - Accomplished - Consistently competent - Recognized by others as an expert		Competence - Demonstrated competence; experienced - Makes productive contributions - Generally skillful and adept		Competence - Has some knowledge and skills; learning; not competent yet - Doesn't know how to move forward - Inconsistent performance and progress		Competence - New to the goal or task - Inexperienced - Don't know what they don't know	
Commitment - Self-reliant; autonomous - Justifiably confident; self-assured - Inspired; inspires others		Commitment - Sometimes hesitant, unsure, tentative - Not always confident; self-critical - May be bored or apathetic		Commitment - Discouraged and frustrated; may be ready to quit - Overwhelmed; demotivated - Confused and concerned; afraid of making mistakes		Commitment - Eager to learn; curious; willing to take direction - Enthusiastic; excited - Confident about transferable skills and confident learning won't be difficult	

Development level is goal or task specific!

Diagnosis Chart

Use this chart to identify development level on a specific goal or task.



3 Matching Leadership Style

Leadership style is a pattern of behaviors leaders use, over time, as perceived by others. There are two basic leadership style behaviors: **Directive Behavior**—telling and showing people what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and providing frequent feedback on results; and **Supportive Behavior**—listening, facilitating self-reliant problem solving, encouraging, praising, and involving others in decision making. There are four leadership styles consisting of different combinations of Directive and Supportive Behaviors.



Style 1—Directing—High Directive Behavior and Low Supportive Behavior

The leader provides specific direction about goals, shows and tells how, and closely tracks the individual's performance in order to provide frequent feedback on results.

Style 2—Coaching—High Directive Behavior and High Supportive Behavior

The leader explains why, solicits suggestions, encourages, and continues to direct goal or task accomplishment.

Style 3—Supporting—Low Directive Behavior and High Supportive Behavior

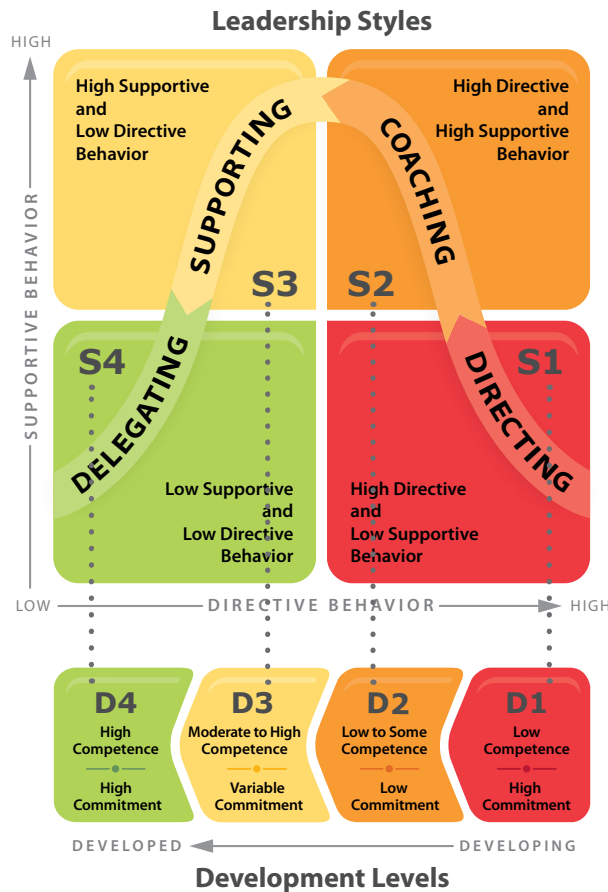
The leader and the individual make decisions together. The role of the leader is to facilitate, listen, draw out, encourage, and support.

Style 4—Delegating—Low Directive Behavior and Low Supportive Behavior

The individual makes most of the decisions about what, how, and when. The role of the leader is to value the individual's contributions and support their growth.

SLII® Model

Matching Leadership Style to Development Level



In all four styles, the leader

1. Sets goals
2. Stays connected
3. Gives feedback

The goal is a MATCH

- S1 → D1
- S2 → D2
- S3 → D3
- S4 → D4

Over time, with a match, individuals learn to provide their own direction and support.

Two types of MISMATCH

Oversupervision

S1/S2 with D3/D4

Undersupervision

S3/S4 with D1/D2

There is no best leadership style;
it depends on the situation.

S3

Supporting

S3 Intention

Build confidence in competence

How

1. Ask D3 for input about what and how
2. Listen and encourage
3. Facilitate problem solving by asking open-ended questions

S2

Coaching

S2 Intention

Re-energize and reteach

How

1. Explore concerns and encourage
2. Explain why
3. Redirect and reteach
4. Involve in problem solving

S4

Delegating

S4 Intention

Value contribution

How

1. Acknowledge expertise
2. Support autonomy
3. Invite innovation and ongoing learning

S1

Directing

S1 Intention

Help others build competence

How

1. Acknowledge transferable skills and/or commitment
2. Give direction about what, how, and when
3. Check in frequently

Partnering Tools

A situational leader works with the people they lead to align on goals, development level, and the matching leadership style. They partner, collaborate, and work side by side to ensure goals are achieved and competence and commitment develop. There are four tools you need to know about if you are going to engage in quality conversations as partners.

SLII Worksheet

The purpose of an Alignment Conversation is to focus the leader and the individual contributor on what is most important. What are the SMART goals the individual needs to achieve? What is the individual's competence and commitment to achieve those goals independently, without direction or support? What leadership style will help the individual achieve each goal and develop competence and commitment? Alignment Conversations, using the SLII Worksheet, get both the leader and the individual contributor on the same page.

SLII® Worksheet

1 Goal Setting 2 Diagnosing 3 Matching

Name _____ Date _____

Identify Goal or Task	Diagnose Competence and Commitment		Confirm Development Level	Match Leadership Style	Choose Leadership Behaviors
Goal or Task	Competence	Commitment	Development Level	Leadership Style	Directive Behaviors
Goal Specific Knowledge/Skills	Low Some High	Low Variable High	D	S	☐ Set SMART goals ☐ Show and tell how ☐ Establish timelines ☐ Identify priorities ☐ Clarify roles ☐ Develop action plans ☐ Monitor performance
Transferable Skills	☐	☐	if right diagnosis, what's the performance trend? ☐ ↑ ☐ ↓ ☐ ↔	Current: S ☐ Oversteering? ☐ Understeering?	☐ Listen to concerns ☐ Facilitate problem solving ☐ Ask for input ☐ Explain "why" ☐ Acknowledge and encourage ☐ Share information about organization ☐ Share information about self
Goal or Task	Competence	Commitment	Development Level	Leadership Style	Directive Behaviors
Goal Specific Knowledge/Skills	Low Some High	Low Variable High	D	S	☐ Set SMART goals ☐ Show and tell how ☐ Establish timelines ☐ Identify priorities ☐ Clarify roles ☐ Develop action plans ☐ Monitor performance
Transferable Skills	☐	☐	if right diagnosis, what's the performance trend? ☐ ↑ ☐ ↓ ☐ ↔	Current: S ☐ Oversteering? ☐ Understeering?	☐ Listen to concerns ☐ Facilitate problem solving ☐ Ask for input ☐ Explain "why" ☐ Acknowledge and encourage ☐ Share information about organization ☐ Share information about self
Goal or Task	Competence	Commitment	Development Level	Leadership Style	Directive Behaviors
Goal Specific Knowledge/Skills	Low Some High	Low Variable High	D	S	☐ Set SMART goals ☐ Show and tell how ☐ Establish timelines ☐ Identify priorities ☐ Clarify roles ☐ Develop action plans ☐ Monitor performance
Transferable Skills	☐	☐	if right diagnosis, what's the performance trend? ☐ ↑ ☐ ↓ ☐ ↔	Current: S ☐ Oversteering? ☐ Understeering?	☐ Listen to concerns ☐ Facilitate problem solving ☐ Ask for input ☐ Explain "why" ☐ Acknowledge and encourage ☐ Share information about organization ☐ Share information about self
SMART goals are:	Goal Specific Knowledge/Skills	Transferable Skills	Quality of Motivation	Confidence	DEVELOPMENT LEVEL
Specific	D4	D3	D2	D1	D0
Motivating	S3	S2	S1	S0	S-1
Attainable	S4	S3	S2	S1	S0
Relevant	S3	S2	S1	S0	S-1
Trackable	S4	S3	S2	S1	S0
Get agreement	Get agreement	Get agreement	Get agreement	Get agreement	Get agreement

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One on One Worksheet

The purpose of a One on One Conversation is for a team member to manage up. The team member decides what to talk about—goals, challenges, questions, concerns—and what response they need from their leader/colleague. Once the topics are determined, the team member can choose which leadership style would be a match for their development level on each topic, goal, or task. Essentially, it sounds like this ...

One on One Worksheet

Name _____ Meeting With _____ Meeting Date _____

Directions

1. Make a list of topics you need to discuss. You can talk about whatever is on your mind.
2. Diagnose your development level for topics that are goals or tasks.
3. Decide which response you need from your leader or colleague—S1, S2, S3, or S4—for each topic.
4. Email this completed worksheet to your leader or colleague 24 hours before the meeting.

Topics	Development Level (if relevant)	Leadership Style Response You Need	Next Steps
1 _____ _____ _____ _____	D _____	☐ S1 Direction • Solutions • Information ☐ S2 Coaching • Advice • Feedback ☐ S3 Good Questions • Listening • Encouragement ☐ S4 Acknowledgment • Autonomy • Influence	_____ _____ _____ _____
2 _____ _____ _____ _____	D _____	☐ S1 Direction • Solutions • Information ☐ S2 Coaching • Advice • Feedback ☐ S3 Good Questions • Listening • Encouragement ☐ S4 Acknowledgment • Autonomy • Influence	_____ _____ _____ _____
3 _____ _____ _____ _____	D _____	☐ S1 Direction • Solutions • Information ☐ S2 Coaching • Advice • Feedback ☐ S3 Good Questions • Listening • Encouragement ☐ S4 Acknowledgment • Autonomy • Influence	_____ _____ _____ _____
Next Meeting Date _____			

D1/S1—I’m excited and would benefit from knowing more about this (topic). [Or] I’ve never done this before and need some help. I need direction.

D2/S2—Since I’m still learning and am a little discouraged (confused, overwhelmed, frustrated), I’d like to share my thoughts and get some direction. I need advice.

D3/S3—I need you to be a sounding board so I can feel more confident or re-engaged. I need you to listen.

D4/S4—I’ve got this handled; let me keep you informed.

One on One Conversation Starters

Sometimes it's hard to ask for the direction and support you need. The purpose of One on One Conversation Starters is to help a team member to speak up.

D1 One on One Conversation Starters

Match Me with **S1**

D1 Needs	What to Say to Get an S1 Match	My Notes
Purpose of the meeting clarified	What I'd like to talk to you about is ... (list topics)	
Transferable skills acknowledged	I'll be able to use my skills of ... (list skills) to accomplish this goal ...	
Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged	I'm really excited to get started on ...	
SMART goals	I would benefit from knowing exactly what my goal is. What does a good job look like? What is a reasonable time frame for completing this goal?	
Style 1 agreement (development level and leadership style)	I want to remind you that I have never done this exact goal before and will need direction in order to be successful. Do you agree?	
Knowledge of how performance will be tracked	How will we stay in touch on this goal or task? Will you or will someone else review my performance? When would you like an update?	
Priorities	What is the priority of this goal or task?	
Role clarity	Can we take a minute to get really clear on each of our roles? What am I specifically responsible for?	
Boundaries	Which decisions can I make on my own? When should I check in with you?	
Learning plan	Who can teach me how to do this? What should I study, read, or review? Can you tell me what I should do first and what the next steps are?	
Direction on how examples	What direction or advice do you have for me? Do you have examples? What should I be careful of?	
Access to information/ resources	What information do you have that will be helpful to me? Who might be a good role model, mentor, or teacher?	
Solutions to problems	What are my next steps?	
Opportunities to practice	What should I try to do before we get together again?	
Feedback	How am I doing? What should I be doing differently?	
Check for understanding and alignment	Let me recap the direction you've given me so I know we're aligned.	
Follow through	When will we meet again?	

D2 One on One Conversation Starters

Match Me with **S2**

D2 Needs	What to Say to Get an S2 Match	My Notes
Purpose of the meeting clarified	What I'd like to talk about is ...	
Transferable skills acknowledged	I am concerned about my lack of progress on this goal. Things are not going as expected. I have some concerns about ... and would like to talk to you about them.	
Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged	I'm a bit discouraged and would like to work with you on ...	
SMART goals	Since I'm still learning how to do this goal or task, I'd like to share my ideas, but I also need some direction from you.	
Style 2 agreement (development level and leadership style)	I need perspective. I need to know how you feel about the progress I'm making. I need to understand why this goal is important to the organization ...	
Knowledge of how performance will be tracked	Can you help me understand why this is the best approach? Do you think I should do more?	
Priorities	I'm stuck. What do you think I should do next?	
Role clarity	How else could I look at this? What options do I have?	
Boundaries	Can you share me with ...? What information or resources do you have that would be helpful to me?	
Learning plan	Do you have any examples? What feedback do you have?	
Direction on how examples	What feedback do you have? What have you observed or heard?	
Access to information/ resources	Am I doing anything right? Is it always this difficult?	
Solutions to problems	So, let me recap what we've decided to be sure I have everything right.	
Opportunities to practice	I want to be sure of my next steps, which are ...	
Feedback	How will we stay in touch on this goal? When would you like an update? When will we meet again?	
Check for understanding and alignment		
Follow through		

D3 One on One Conversation Starters

Match Me with **S3**

D3 Needs	What to Say to Get an S3 Match	My Notes
Purpose of the meeting clarified	What I'd like to talk to you about my goal ... I'd like to run some ideas past you ...	
Transferable skills acknowledged	Here's what I'm thinking ... Here's what I'm feeling ...	
Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged	Here's what I've accomplished ... Am we aligned? Am I on target?	
SMART goals	I need you to be a sounding board so I can feel more about my commitment or more motivated ...	
Style 3 agreement (development level and leadership style)	Here's what is working and what's not working ... The problem/challenge seems to be ... The alternatives are ... The pros and cons of each are ... My recommendation is ... What do you think?	
Knowledge of how performance will be tracked	What do you think I have done well? Let me share feedback on ...	
Priorities	There are some things getting in my way ... Could I get some help with ...? What other information or resources would help me faster or better?	
Role clarity	Can you remind me of why I should feel more confident about this goal?	
Boundaries	Are there any specific examples of where or when I could get a good job?	
Learning plan	How is what I'm doing making a difference?	
Direction on how examples	Do you have any suggestions for increasing my motivation? Why is it important?	
Access to information/ resources	Is there any other way I could think about this goal?	
Solutions to problems	What you know when I'd like to meet again.	
Opportunities to practice		
Feedback		
Check for understanding and alignment		
Follow through		

D4 One on One Conversation Starters

Match Me with **S4**

D4 Needs	What to Say to Get an S4 Match	My Notes
Purpose of the meeting clarified	During this meeting, I'd like to share with you what I've been working on ... I'm excited about ...	
Transferable skills acknowledged	Here's what I've accomplished on my goal ... For me, what a stretch goal would look like ...	
Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged	You taking the lead on this, but how do you want to stay informed?	
SMART goals	Up to now, I have ... Here's the feedback I've gotten ... I have always wanted to ...	
Style 4 agreement (development level and leadership style)	As I was working on this goal, I had another idea ... What would challenge me is ...	
Knowledge of how performance will be tracked	I'd like more autonomy to ...	
Priorities	What I'd like to do is ... Something I'd like to learn is ...	
Role clarity	Are there any opportunities for me to teach or mentor others? Who needs help?	
Boundaries	I could do even more if I had the following resources ...	
Learning plan	I'm interested in how you think I contribute more to the organization.	
Direction on how examples	Here's how I'd like to stay in touch on this goal.	
Access to information/ resources	When will I hear back from you on the commitments you've made to me?	
Solutions to problems		
Opportunities to practice		
Feedback		
Check for understanding and alignment		
Follow through		

SLII® Conversation Starters

Leaders using SLII also have a tool—called SLII® Conversation Starters—that will help them to more flexibly use Leadership Styles 1, 2, 3, and 4.

S1 SLII® Conversation Starters

Leadership Behaviors	What to Say	My Notes
Clearly purpose of meeting	What I'd like to talk to you about is ... (list topics)	
Transferable skills acknowledged	I'll be able to use my skills of ... (list skills) to accomplish this goal ...	
Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged	I'm really excited to get started on ...	
SMART goals	I would benefit from knowing exactly what my goal is. What does a good job look like? What is a reasonable time frame for completing this goal?	
Style 1 agreement (development level and leadership style)	I want to remind you that I have never done this exact goal before and will need direction in order to be successful. Do you agree?	
Knowledge of how performance will be tracked	How will we stay in touch on this goal or task? Will you or will someone else review my performance? When would you like an update?	
Priorities	What is the priority of this goal or task?	
Role clarity	Can we take a minute to get really clear on each of our roles? What am I specifically responsible for?	
Boundaries	Which decisions can I make on my own? When should I check in with you?	
Learning plan	Who can teach me how to do this? What should I study, read, or review? Can you tell me what I should do first and what the next steps are?	
Direction on how examples	What direction or advice do you have for me? Do you have examples? What should I be careful of?	
Access to information/ resources	What information do you have that will be helpful to me? Who might be a good role model, mentor, or teacher?	
Solutions to problems	What are my next steps?	
Opportunities to practice	What should I try to do before we get together again?	
Feedback	How am I doing? What should I be doing differently?	
Check for understanding and alignment	Let me recap the direction you've given me so I know we're aligned.	
Follow through	When will we meet again?	

S2 SLII® Conversation Starters

Leadership Behaviors	What to Say	My Notes
Clearly purpose of meeting	What I'd like to talk to you about is ...	
Transferable skills acknowledged	I am concerned about my lack of progress on this goal. Things are not going as expected. I have some concerns about ... and would like to talk to you about them.	
Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged	I'm a bit discouraged and would like to work with you on ...	
SMART goals	Since I'm still learning how to do this goal or task, I'd like to share my ideas, but I also need some direction from you.	
Style 2 agreement (development level and leadership style)	I need perspective. I need to know how you feel about the progress I'm making. I need to understand why this goal is important to the organization ...	
Knowledge of how performance will be tracked	Can you help me understand why this is the best approach? Do you think I should do more?	
Priorities	I'm stuck. What do you think I should do next?	
Role clarity	How else could I look at this? What options do I have?	
Boundaries	Can you share me with ...? What information or resources do you have that would be helpful to me?	
Learning plan	Do you have any examples? What feedback do you have?	
Direction on how examples	What feedback do you have? What have you observed or heard?	
Access to information/ resources	Am I doing anything right? Is it always this difficult?	
Solutions to problems	So, let me recap what we've decided to be sure I have everything right.	
Opportunities to practice	I want to be sure of my next steps, which are ...	
Feedback	How will we stay in touch on this goal? When would you like an update? When will we meet again?	
Check for understanding and alignment		
Follow through		

S3 SLII® Conversation Starters

Leadership Behaviors	What to Say	My Notes
Clearly purpose of meeting	What I'd like to talk to you about my goal ... I'd like to run some ideas past you ...	
Transferable skills acknowledged	Here's what I'm thinking ... Here's what I'm feeling ...	
Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged	Here's what I've accomplished ... Am we aligned? Am I on target?	
SMART goals	I need you to be a sounding board so I can feel more about my commitment or more motivated ...	
Style 3 agreement (development level and leadership style)	Here's what is working and what's not working ... The problem/challenge seems to be ... The alternatives are ... The pros and cons of each are ... My recommendation is ... What do you think?	
Knowledge of how performance will be tracked	What do you think I have done well? Let me share feedback on ...	
Priorities	There are some things getting in my way ... Could I get some help with ...? What other information or resources would help me faster or better?	
Role clarity	Can you remind me of why I should feel more confident about this goal?	
Boundaries	Are there any specific examples of where or when I could get a good job?	
Learning plan	How is what I'm doing making a difference?	
Direction on how examples	Do you have any suggestions for increasing my motivation? Why is it important?	
Access to information/ resources	Is there any other way I could think about this goal?	
Solutions to problems	What you know when I'd like to meet again.	
Opportunities to practice		
Feedback		
Check for understanding and alignment		
Follow through		

S4 SLII® Conversation Starters

Leadership Behaviors	What to Say	My Notes
Clearly purpose of meeting	During this meeting, I'd like to share with you what I've been working on ... I'm excited about ...	
Transferable skills acknowledged	Here's what I've accomplished on my goal ... For me, what a stretch goal would look like ...	
Enthusiasm and initiative acknowledged	You taking the lead on this, but how do you want to stay informed?	
SMART goals	Up to now, I have ... Here's the feedback I've gotten ... I have always wanted to ...	
Style 4 agreement (development level and leadership style)	As I was working on this goal, I had another idea ... What would challenge me is ...	
Knowledge of how performance will be tracked	I'd like more autonomy to ...	
Priorities	What I'd like to do is ... Something I'd like to learn is ...	
Role clarity	Are there any opportunities for me to teach or mentor others? Who needs help?	
Boundaries	I could do even more if I had the following resources ...	
Learning plan	I'm interested in how you think I contribute more to the organization.	
Direction on how examples	Here's how I'd like to stay in touch on this goal.	
Access to information/ resources	When will I hear back from you on the commitments you've made to me?	
Solutions to problems		
Opportunities to practice		
Feedback		
Check for understanding and alignment		
Follow through		