

Trained Mind to Free Mind.

Break the Mold

Great leaders don't just manage, they empower. Yet, many operate from a Trained Mind, relying on control, structure, and predictable outcomes. While effective in some cases, this approach can limit innovation, growth, and true leadership potential.

Shifting to a Free Mind means embracing adaptability, trust, and the ability to navigate complexity with confidence. It's about moving beyond rigid frameworks to inspire autonomy, creativity, and high-impact decision-making.

Step 1: Self-Assessment – Where Are You Now?

Ask yourself: *How do I approach leadership today?*

Read each statement below and rate yourself from 1 (Rarely) to 5 (Always):

Statement	Your Rating (1-5)
My team looks to me for decisions before acting.	
I find myself giving answers instead of asking questions.	
I feel more comfortable when I have control over outcomes.	
I expect my team to follow instructions rather than challenge ideas.	
My team rarely brings new ideas without my prompting.	

Reflection:

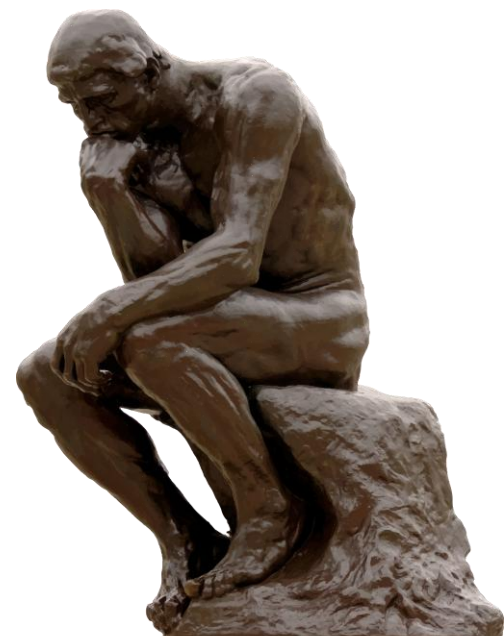
- *If most of your answers are 4 or 5, you may be operating with a Trained Mind leadership style (focused on execution over independent thinking).*
- *If most of your answers are 1 or 2, you likely empower bold thinkers and operate with a Free Mind approach.*

Step 2: Team Check-In – Are You Leading Thinkers or Workers?

Ask your team (or reflect on their behaviors):

- *When was the last time someone on my team challenged me or proposed a completely new idea?*
- *Do my team members feel safe speaking up when they disagree?*
- *If I were unavailable for a month, could my team function without constantly seeking direction?*

Insight: If your team doesn't regularly challenge, innovate, or think independently, they may be trained to execute instead of think. True collaboration isn't about agreement—it's about creating a space where diverse thinking thrives.



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Step 3: Leadership Shift – 3 Week Challenge

Week 1: Ask, Don't Tell.

The next time a team member asks for guidance, respond with a question instead of an answer.

- Example: "What do you think we should do?"
- Goal: Teach them to develop their own solutions rather than rely on you.

Week 2: Encourage Challenge.

In your next meeting, ask your team to challenge an existing process or assumption.

- Example: "What's one way we could improve this approach?"
- Goal: Show your team that their ideas matter and that challenging the norm is encouraged.

Week 3: Step Back & Observe.

Give someone else the room to own a decision or process.

- Example: Assign an initiative to a team member and resist the urge to micromanage.
- Goal: See how your team operates when given full ownership.



Step 4: Final Reflection

Ask yourself:

- *What surprised you the most about this process?*
- *How did your team respond when you stepped back and encouraged independent thinking?*
- *What shifts do you need to make in your leadership to foster more bold thinkers?*