

Picking your Path

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Examples refer to Mark Snow's Pathways Companion Guide

It is time to choose your Path! Let's do this!

1. Check the Paths and core competencies in [the Navigator](#) or the Pathways catalogue to get a broad overview.

2. Now you need to choose your Path and given the many options, the overlap between Paths, etc. it may be somewhat overwhelming. Let's break it down into a few steps. Important to know: there is no need to understand everything about Pathways to make a choice, so we will focus on the information that really matters in making this decision and remove everything that is irrelevant for making your choice.

→ **All elective projects can be chosen in all Paths**

In the Pathways companion guide, they are put in yellow and have an 'E'. An X indicates that this project is a required project for this Path. So no matter which path you choose, you can always do any of these projects. This means that **you can ignore these projects** for now as they won't influence your choice.

E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	.
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	.
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	.
E	E	E	X	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	.

→ **Five of the required projects are similar for all paths**

These projects have a completely filled, red row. So in the illustration, you can see that introduction to Toastmasters mentoring is one of them, but understanding your leadership style not.

There are 5 required projects that are similar for all paths:

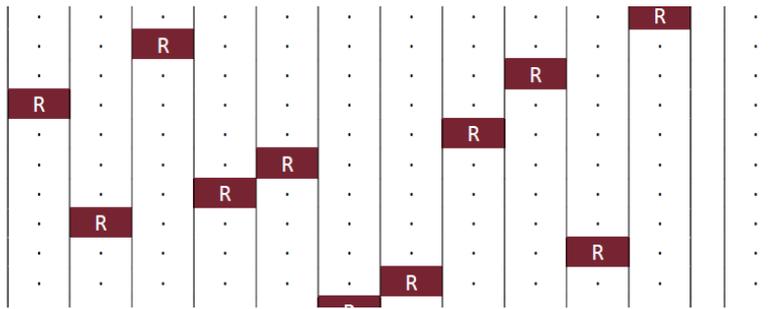
- all 3 projects in level 1
- introduction to Toastmasters mentoring (level 2)
- reflect on your path (level 5)

Please ignore these projects, they won't influence your choice.

Understanding Your Leadership Style	R	R	.	R	R	.	R	.	R	R	R
Introduction to Toastmasters Mentoring	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R

→ **So only 5 projects really make the difference!**

These are the projects with an R that differ between paths, see illustration.



3. Different types of Paths

Now that you know the five projects that make a difference, you could check out all these projects, but that may still be somewhat overwhelming. So let us take a step back and look at the 11 Paths. Although they are largely overlapping, they all have a different accent, which means that some might fit your personal goals better than others.

I have broken down the Paths in four categories. Although there are different theories about this and there are also other typologies, this gives some guidance. No matter which path you will choose, in all cases you will work on building confidence, public speaking and leadership.

Group 1:

Focus on public speaking, and less on leadership and management:

- engaging humour
- presentation mastery

Group 2:

Focus on management:

- effective coaching
- team collaboration

- innovative planning
- leadership development

Where effective coaching and team collaboration focus more on 'people management and process management' and the other two on planning and project management (getting the job done)

Group 3:

Focus on leadership:

Bringing a message across:

- persuasive influence: 'difficult, challenging situations'
- visionary com: communicating a bigger vision

Group 4:

Leadership with an emphasis on leading people:

- dynamic leadership: negotiation, change and leadership
- motivational strategies: very 'people focused'
- strategic relationship: networking and relations

4. Zooming in on projects

Thinking of your personal goals, you may feel a preference for one of the four categories. When you doubt between for instance persuasive influence and visionary communication, you can easily compare these two in the matrix and take a close look at the projects that differ between the paths.

You can find the project descriptions at the end of the document.

5. High Performance Leadership

The paths differ somewhat in terms of workload. The project that is without doubt the most comprehensive one and that will require a substantial time investment is High Performance Leadership. This project definitely is an interesting challenge and brings along opportunities to realise great things. However, it would be good to realise that this is part of the path, because it takes more time and energy than other projects.

High Performance Leadership is required for three paths:

- Effective coaching
- Innovative planning
- Persuasive influence

6. Make your choice

When you have made your choice, log in into Basecamp and obtain your path.

Note that the TM website also provides an assessment, which you can also do. It takes a few minutes and will recommend three paths. I personally find this system still a bit of a black box.

One last comment:

When you look at the level 4 and level 5 projects they may seem somewhat scary and a lot of work. Don't worry, everybody can do these projects, thousands of people already did it. There is no need to be a manager of team leader. The Toastmasters environment provides many opportunities to experiment with leadership roles and everything can be done at your own pace.