

Jumpstart Growth with Behavioral Science

How The People Development
Cycle works to drive real
behavior change that accelerates
organizational success

Torch

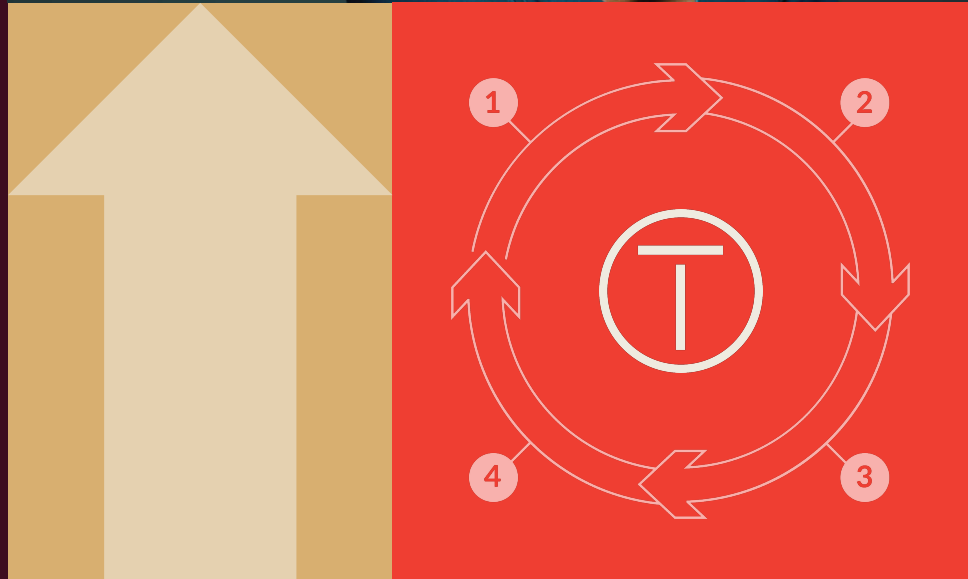


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There's a common myth
about behavior
change —that it all
comes down to
individual willpower

This means if you're able to grow, it's entirely
because of your own inner strength. If you can't,
it's a sign of weakness.

Modern behavioral science
research demonstrates
this isn't true

Instead, it tells us that behavior is a function of a person
(their personality, mindset, history, experiences), and their
environmental context (the circumstances and situation in
which they find themselves). In other words, your ability
to change your behavior, learn, and grow is as much about
who you are as it is about where you are.

THE TORCH PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

This insight is what helped us to develop the **Torch People Development Cycle**. It's designed to help individuals grow into the people they want to be by helping them uncover their own personalized learning and behavior change equation.

Our model was informed and inspired by key psychological and learning theories*—such as Experiential Learning Theory and Self-Determination Theory. It is also rooted in the robust research on workplace relationships and their association with positive developmental benefits.

All together, this research helps to explain how concrete experiences and relationships foster growth and change. The cycle is designed to help individuals combine self-discovery with a supportive environmental context. In order to grow and reach their goals.

*Experiential Learning Theory is based on the idea that the most effective way to learn is to start with real-world experience. Self-Determination Theory suggests that people are most motivated to learn and grow under three conditions—when they're given autonomy over what they do, when they feel connected to others, and when they feel a sense of mastery over their work.



What's in it for me and my organization?

Research suggests that you can expect lots of benefits from a coaching or mentoring relationship, including better work performance, improved well-being, better attitudes about work, enhanced problem-solving, reduced stress, greater sense of confidence. Beyond those benefits, one of the best parts of Torch's People Development Cycle is that it won't just be you that experiences a change. Coaching contributes to your organization's bottom line by improving retention and increasing promotion rates. It's also associated with improvements in broader team performance and engagement.

What powers the People Development Cycle?

Empathetic, trusted relationships, often with coaches or mentors

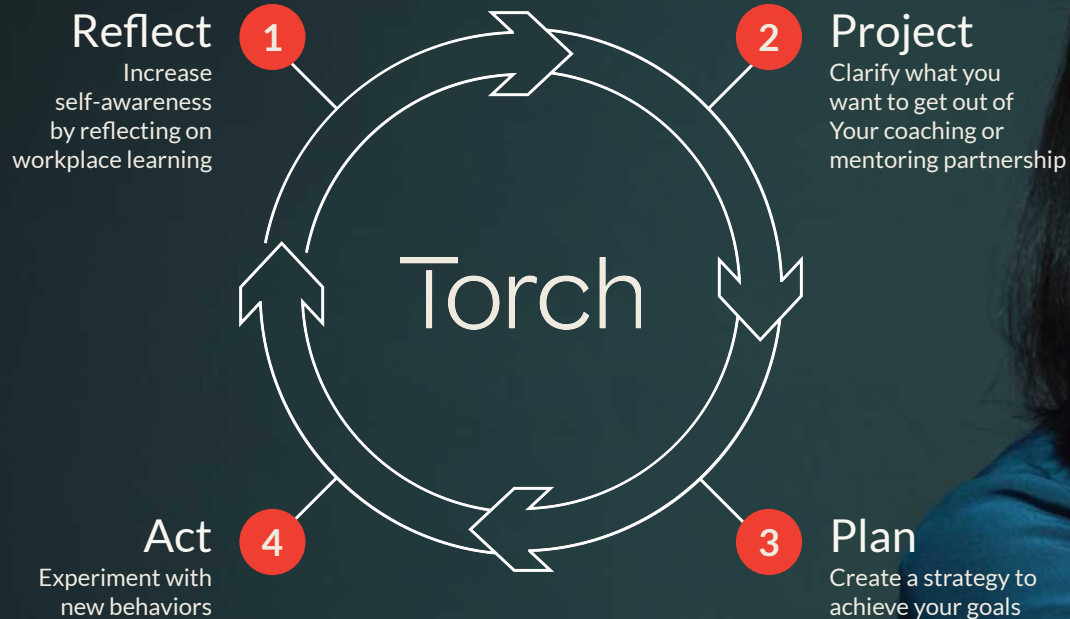


Trusted relationships create a relationship alliance with great power to catalyze growth and behavior change. There are three commonly cited reasons for the transformative environment of these relationships: psychological safety, structure, and accountability. Psychological safety allows you to feel comfortable being vulnerable—telling someone else what you're really struggling with—which means you'll get to the heart of what you want to change.

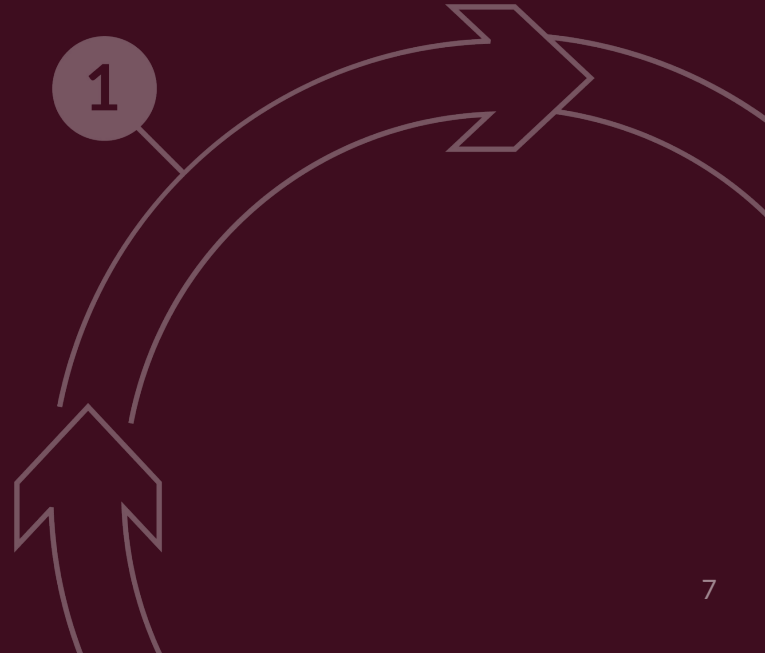
Instead of vaguely telling yourself you'll do things differently, structure means knowing the when, where, and how you need to change. And accountability means that this person, who you've built a relationship with, is counting on you to follow through on your promises. All of these factors powerfully influence whether or not we shift our behaviors.

Your coach or mentor is there to guide you through the learning and growth process. While the specifics may look different for each person, there are four key phases of the People Development Cycle. Let's take a look.

① Phases of the People Development Cycle



Reflect



Reflect (month 0-1)

Think about the last time you learned something—a lesson that really stuck with you. A lesson powerful enough to change your behavior, and maybe even change the way you see yourself.

Chances are, you learned this lesson from a real-world experience. John Dewey, the educational reformer and philosopher, described the most powerful learning experiences as ones in which we either feel “stuck” with a challenge, or “struck” by something that seems unusual.

Powerful learning may emerge from both processes



Formal

- performance reviews
- 360 assessments
- online learning



Informal

- one-on-one meetings
- real-time feedback
- personal observations

Let's explore these two types of opportunities to reflect

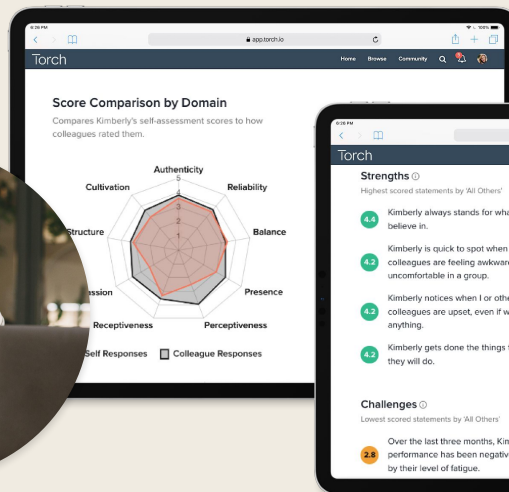
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Formal

(performance reviews and 360 assessments)

Formal experiences are more structured but much less frequent than informal ones. As part of the Torch People Development Cycle, we focus on the value of a 360-degree assessment, or "360" for short. While performance reviews can provide valuable feedback, they are a less reliable measure because the process is often tied to key outcomes for the employee and the manager (compensation, ratings, promotions). A 360 is generally separated from the performance reviews and provides a more holistic and growth-oriented approach. During the assessment process, Torch users assess themselves across nine different behavioral leadership skills, including authenticity, balance, receptiveness, and compassion. Some combination of their manager, peers, and direct reports also assess them on those same domains in order to get a clearer picture for self-reflection.

The 360 assessment is rooted in behavioral science, which points towards the specific behaviors leaders can cultivate to improve. To develop our assessment, we analyzed hundreds of evidence-based leadership traits and theories, conducting factor analyses (a statistical technique) to identify how those traits can be grouped in meaningful ways to describe the challenge of leadership.



The 360 helps you better understand how your self-assessment matches up with how others perceive you. It elicits insights that are helpful to the user as well as to their coach or mentor. These insights also fall within behavioral skill areas that we've found can be improved through the experience of coaching and mentoring.

Importantly, we created Torch's 360 assessment to serve as a **development tool** (rather than a tool to rate performance). The goal is to take the pressure off of evaluators, who don't have to worry that their feedback will determine whether someone gets a raise or a promotion.



Growth

Challenges

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Informal

(1:1s, real-time feedback, personal observations)

Informal feedback and personal observations are more continuous in nature—they often come in the flow of work. They're generally not documented or measured the way formal feedback might be.

Imagine the feedback you might receive in a 1:1 meeting with your manager, or following a project you completed, or a presentation you gave. Often, it can be difficult to hear when the feedback isn't all positive. But, we can reflect on that feedback and channel the feeling of being "stuck" or "struck" into learning, change, and growth.

Once you've gone through the 360 process, you'll get your results



The experience of getting and reviewing your 360 results is different for everyone—you might be surprised, intrigued, excited or inspired by what you discover. No matter how you're feeling, you can feel pride that you took this first, big step to developing more self-awareness about where you can learn, grow, and change as a leader.

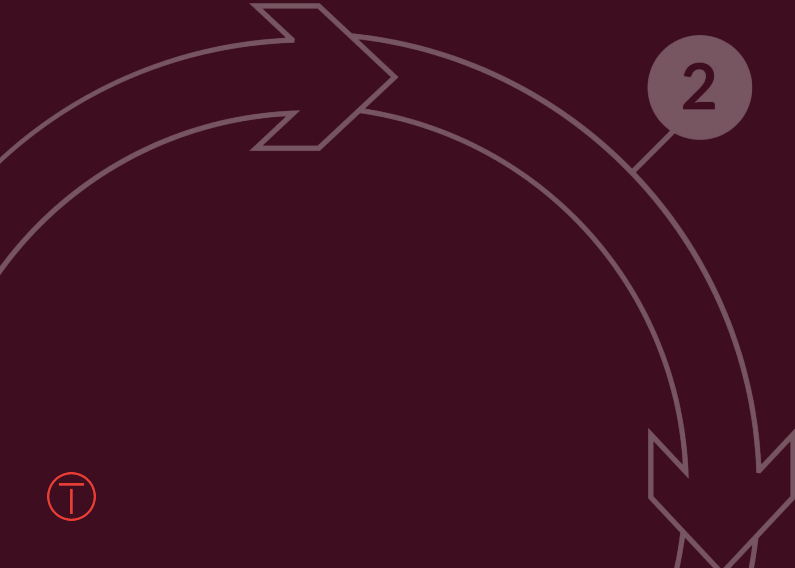
Why is self-awareness so important? [Research suggests](#) that it's crucial to effective leadership, personal growth, and overall well being. As author and leadership studies scholar [Warren Bennis wrote](#), it's "the most difficult task any of us faces. But until you know yourself, strengths, and weaknesses, know what you want to do and why you want to do it, you cannot succeed in any but the most superficial sense of the word."

How do you start to reflect on these experiences in order to learn from them?

That's where your coach or mentor comes in to guide you.



Project



Project (month 1-2)

Following the Reflect phase, greater self-awareness should give you a better sense of where you are. The next step is to think about where you want to go. That means projecting into the future—thinking about how you want to change and what you want to get out of an partnership with a coach or mentor.



To help guide your thinking, your coach or mentor may encourage you to consider the following questions:

- What kind of leader, manager, or person do you want to become?
- Why do you want this learning experience—and why now?
- What do you want to learn or achieve as part of coaching or mentorship?



Coach

Staying connected to these answers can help to keep you motivated along this learning cycle. In fact, research suggests that it's a key part of developing [intrinsic motivation](#). This describes our tendency to seek out opportunities to learn, grow, and be challenged—not because we're expecting an external reward (extrinsic motivation)—but because we see the process of learning as inherently rewarding. If we can tap into sources of intrinsic motivation, we will be more likely to continue on the path to growth than if we connect only to extrinsic motivators.

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Beyond responding to the questions on the previous page, research suggests your mindset and beliefs can be keys to success, especially with the guidance of a coach or mentor. Indeed, coaches and mentors can also play a role in helping to identify and nurture these mindsets.

Growth mindset

The belief that neither talent nor weakness is innate, and that you can harness your potential to grow and improve. Individuals with a growth mindset believe that it's intentional effort and practice that matter in the path to growth.

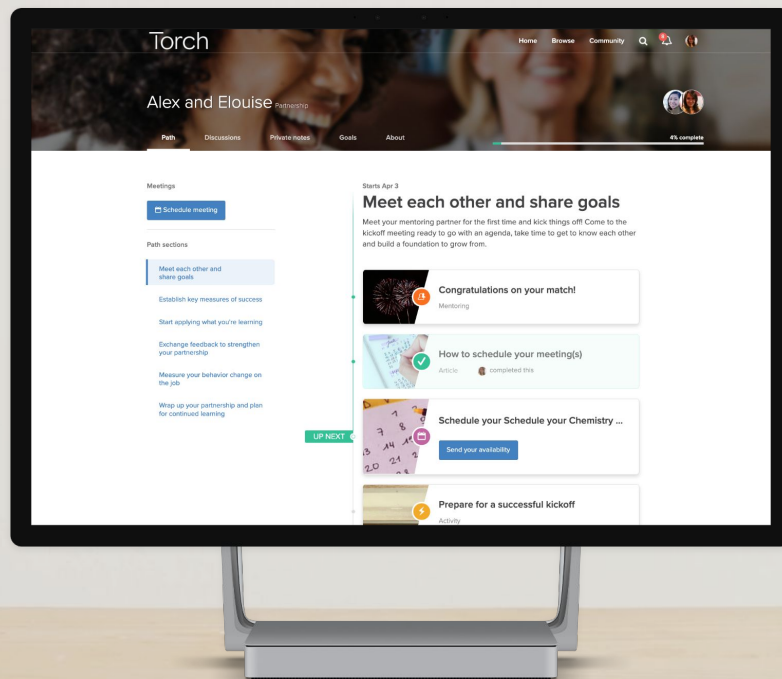
Self-efficacy

A belief that your behavior can have an impact on your growth and success.

Internal locus of control

Believing that the outcomes of your actions are the result of your own abilities. Those outcomes are not just a product of your environment.

As you develop your self-awareness (“who am I?”), clarify your future projection (“who do I want to be”), and combine it with that powerful (and true!) sense that you can have an impact on your own learning and growth, **you're ready to move on to the next step**: Setting specific, personalized goals, and creating a strategy to achieve them.



Plan



A circular diagram with two arrows forming a loop. The word 'Plan' is written in the center. A small circle with the number '3' is located on the right side of the loop.

Plan (months 3-4)

As you begin to articulate your goals, refer to the work you did during phase 2: **what kind of person, leader, or manager you want to become?**

Why is that question so important? Having a clearer sense of who you want to become can make it easier to set learning goals, along with a plan for how to achieve them.

To understand how these things are connected, it's helpful to know something powerful about our behaviors and identities: **changing what you do can change who you are.** This is the foundation of self-perception theory: our behaviors have a strong influence on our beliefs and attitudes—they shape our identity.

**"We cannot know
who we are until
we see what we do."**

[write the leadership scholars](#)

*Darja Miscenko, Hannes Guenter,
and David Day*

When you and your coach or mentor come up with new behaviors, and then you take action on those behaviors, you're using your actions to choose a different identity, and to become a different person.

How does all of this work in practice? Let's say for instance, that you want to become the kind of leader that makes whoever you're talking to feel like they're the only person that matters. Isn't that an amazing experience?

Perhaps that means you'd like to be more present—consistently giving your full attention to the person or topic at hand. If that is your goal, behavioral science research suggests that having a plan, and developing something called an [implementation intention](#) can be key to achieving it. This means being specific about when, where, and how you'll practice this new behavior. For instance, you might commit to not checking emails during meetings (the behavior that aligns with your goal) by articulating the "when" (during team meetings), the "where" (on video conference), and the "how" (by closing your email app).

This process
may also include
**identifying
barriers** to
your success



What could get in the way of you following through on this plan, or unexpectedly trip you up on your path to growth ?

How do you anticipate and plan for these potential barriers (*for example: putting a sticky note reminder on your laptop, or muting email alerts before the meeting to support this new behavior*)?

Behavioral science research suggests that in order for your plan to work, it must be tailored to the behavior you want to change (*your goals*), AND to the distinct barriers you think might get in your way.

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Plan to Achieve your Goal—fill in the blanks below:



I would like to:

For example: I'd like to consistently give my full attention to the person or people I'm speaking to.

When and where will I work towards my goal?

For example: During 1:1s and team meetings, on Zoom calls at home when I tend to multitask by checking email.

How will I do it?

For example: By closing out all of my tabs and setting a goal of asking team members follow-up questions after they share updates.

How will I know I'm successful?

For example: Soliciting feedback from teammates.

What might get in my way?

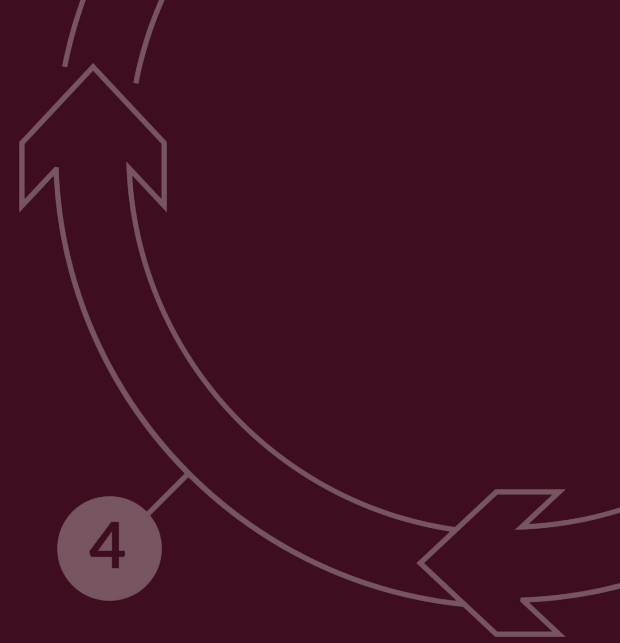
For example: Feeling too busy—like I need to constantly check-in or I'll miss something.

Which personal strengths can I draw on to overcome those obstacles?

For example: I'm detail-oriented and can maintain focus on challenging projects.

With your goals and your strategy for how you'll achieve them set, you're ready to begin the final step of the cycle: putting your strategy into action.

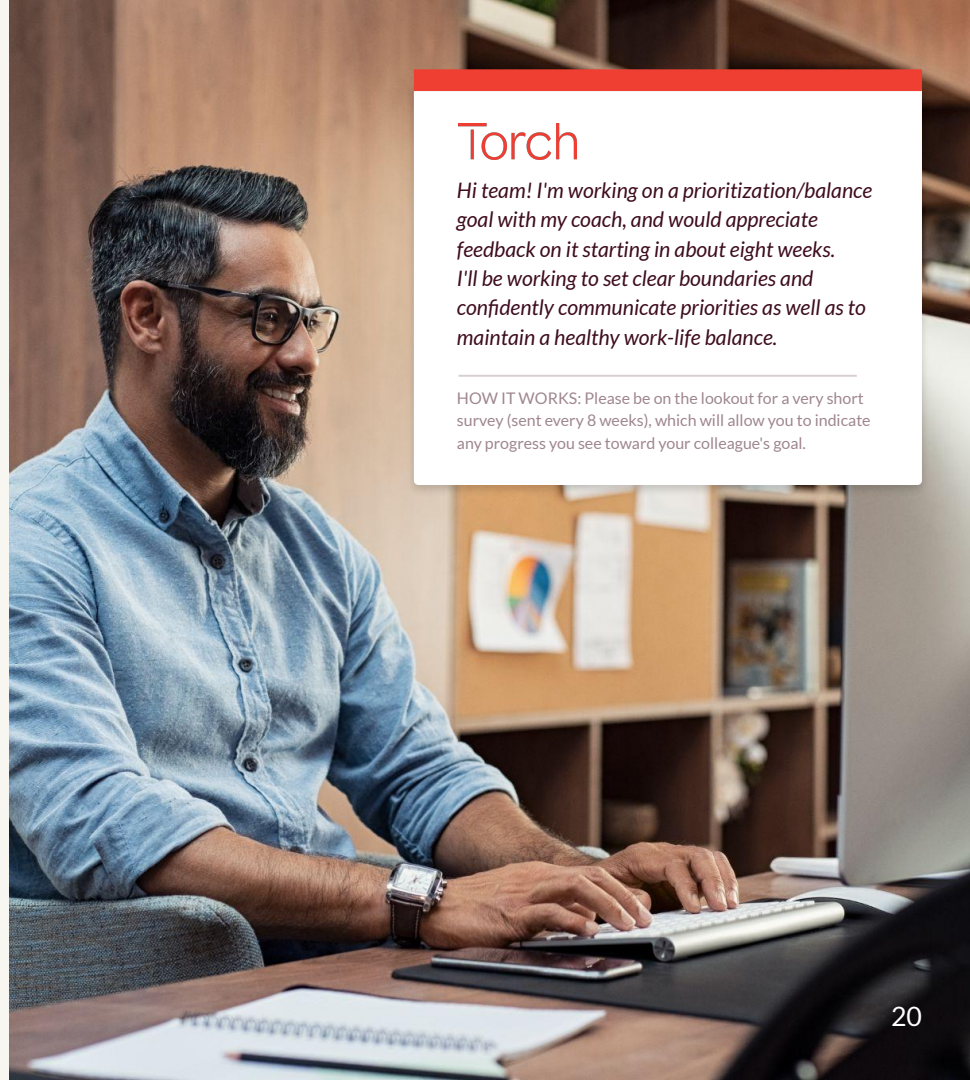
Act



Act *(month 4 and beyond)*

As you set your learning goals and try out new leadership behaviors, let your colleagues and manager know what you're working on so they're able to give you feedback.

The Torch Platform also gives you feedback through pulse surveys that you can share with your coworkers, adding a more quantitative measure of your progress. This process will also help you begin to answer an important question: Is my plan working?



Torch

Hi team! I'm working on a prioritization/balance goal with my coach, and would appreciate feedback on it starting in about eight weeks. I'll be working to set clear boundaries and confidently communicate priorities as well as to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

HOW IT WORKS: Please be on the lookout for a very short survey (sent every 8 weeks), which will allow you to indicate any progress you see toward your colleague's goal.



Feedback is a key tool that helps us calibrate our actions. Decades of behavioral science [research suggests](#) that specific, actionable feedback, delivered at the right place and time, is a key ingredient to achieving sustainable behavior change. That's because feedback helps to raise our awareness and accelerates our learning, allowing us to focus more on specific areas of improvement.

But even though feedback is like learning gold, it can be hard—for all of us—to hear and receive it. Your coach or mentor can help you to interpret this feedback, allowing you to hear it in a way that helps you grow. They'll help you use it to adjust your plan and goals as needed, or continue to stay the course.

Something you might also hear from your coach or mentor: Learning and behavior change takes time. Sometimes it may feel like you're taking one step forward and two steps backwards. But that's part of the cycle, too. Just know that while you may not always feel like you're progressing, that doesn't mean others aren't seeing and appreciating the work you're putting in.

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Though behavior change takes time, **we can see some amount of growth and change in skills happen almost immediately.** Our research shows that after a single month, colleagues rate progress as “Amazing, Major, or Moderate” for 67% of goals set. After ten months, those same colleague ratings apply to 90 % of goals set.

Coaching also contributes to a change in perceptiveness that is equivalent to one decade of “natural” growth—in other words, our research suggests that going through the coaching process compresses the time it would take you to become more perceptive and self-aware. So coaching, especially when combined with a framework like the People Development Cycle, accelerates your ability to change.

Taking action and getting feedback that you’re progressing toward—or achieving—your goal can be exciting. But it’s not the end of the road. For most of us, development is a lifelong process of continuously reflecting, cultivating self-awareness, nurturing powerful relationships, creating goals and plans, soliciting feedback, and trying our best to learn from our experiences. So once you’ve reached the end of your first trip around the cycle, why not take another spin?



Key takeaways

The Torch People Development Cycle, rooted in behavioral science, is **designed to help you learn and grow**

The more times you complete the cycle, the easier it can become, and the more you can **show cumulative change**

Trusted relationships with coaches, mentors, and other feedback providers, are the most important ingredient in your learning and development



Torch is the People Development Platform that fuels growth through the power of trusted relationships

By combining coaching, mentoring, and collaborative learning with scalable technology, Torch helps L&D leaders design, manage, and measure programs that drive employee growth. Leading brands like LinkedIn, American Express, Genentech, Reddit, and Allstate use Torch to develop their people.

[Request a demo](#)

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