

Manager and team member: Meet each other halfway

Adaptive module

~20 min

The manager role is losing its appeal: according to Gallup, barely more than one in five managers say they are engaged, as so much of the load rests on one person. This module's premise is that managers and team members build a good relationship by meeting each other halfway. It gives both sides practical tools and even brings in AI as a third teammate to steer together.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 Understand why the manager–team member partnership rests on shared responsibility, each taking a step toward the other.
- 02 Clarify together who decides what with a four-level role agreement that also covers where AI fits.
- 03 Discover the other person's explicit and implicit needs through mirrored questions on what, to them, makes a good manager and a good team member.
- 04 Express your needs without waiting for the other to guess, and maintain the partnership with a regular meeting on equal footing.

WHO IT'S FOR

Managers and team members, when starting a new role or to rebuild a partnership that works for both sides.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Win-win partnership between manager and team member / shared responsibility – Afthonios method ("win-win" inspired by Stephen Covey)
- "Who decides what" role agreement with 4 decision levels – Afthonios method, close to Jurgen Appelo's delegation levels
- Adult-to-adult relationship – inspired by transactional analysis (Eric Berne)
- Shared vulnerability – inspired by Brené Brown

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Gallup – "State of the Global Workplace" 2026: manager engagement at 22%, down 8 points from 2023 (30%)
- Gallup – "State of the American Manager": managers account for 70% of the variance in team engagement
- Gabarro & Kotter – "Managing Your Boss," Harvard Business Review, 1980
- Eric Berne – transactional analysis