

Deutsch Leadership Lens Card

Applying David Deutsch's Principles to Strategic Readiness and Adaptive Leadership

1. Principle of Optimism

Problems are inevitable, but problems are soluble.

Leadership Cue:

- Recast obstacles as questions: *"What knowledge would make this solvable?"*
 - Treat every blocker as raw material for innovation.
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2. Fallibilism

All knowledge is provisional — we can always be wrong.

Leadership Cue:

- State your current best explanation, then ask: *"What would change my mind?"*
 - Act decisively but update without ego when better knowledge appears.
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3. Reach of Explanations

Idea: Good explanations apply across multiple contexts, not just one.

Leadership Cue:

- Ask: *"Where else could this principle work?"*
 - Prioritise strategies that scale, travel, and survive in new conditions.
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4. Open Societies & Criticism

Idea: Progress thrives where criticism is safe and ideas can compete.

Leadership Cue:

- Make challenge a formal step before decisions.
 - Reward people for improving or refuting ideas, not for defending them.
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5. The Beginning of Infinity Mindset

Idea: There's no built-in limit to what we can achieve with the proper knowledge.

Leadership Cue:

- When told “we can’t,” ask: *“Is that a law of nature, or just a limit of our current understanding?”*
 - Keep ambition uncapped; keep searching for better explanations.
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6. Problems as the Raw Material of Progress

Idea: Every solution creates new problems — and that's progress.

Leadership Cue:

- In every debrief, add: *“What new challenges has this created?”*
 - Normalise iteration instead of expecting “final fixes.”
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7. Universal Explanations

Idea: The most powerful ideas explain *everything* in their domain.

Leadership Cue:

- Identify 2–3 universal principles of your market or environment.
 - Test every strategy against them — if it violates one, rethink.
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How to Use This Card

1. Keep it visible in meetings.
 2. When a big decision is on the table, pick *one* lens to interrogate the proposal.
 3. Rotate lenses over time so all seven become second nature.
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