EVERYTHING DiSC AGILE EQ™

Agile EQ

Sabina Spencer

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Introduction

WHAT IS AGILE EQ?

Sabina, our workplaces ask us to navigate all sorts of complex interactions, and there's no one-size-fits-all way to respond to them. One moment requires you to stand firm with your opinions. The next asks you to stay open to a colleague's ideas. One situation benefits from an objective focus on facts. The next calls for care with a coworker's emotions.

Most of us, however, get stuck in patterns of behavior that make it hard to choose the most effective response every time. We rely on familiar responses not because they're the best choices, but because they're what we know.

By developing your emotional intelligence, *Everything DiSC® Agile EQ™* helps you reach for new responses that can take you places your instinctive ones won't let you go. The more comfortable you grow with these responses, the more agile you'll become, flexing and adapting to meet the needs of any situation.

Using your DiSC® assessment results, this report will teach you to navigate outside your comfort zone so you can choose the most effective response every time. With the flexibility and freedom this agility brings, you can adapt to your circumstances, rise to meet new challenges, and get the most out of every interaction.

CORNERSTONE PRINCIPLES

- Agile emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to read the emotional and interpersonal needs of a situation and respond accordingly.
- Your EQ is not fixed. Developing your EQ can improve your interactions, productivity, and outcomes.
- There are different ways to be emotionally intelligent. Some of these ways will come naturally to you. Others are more of a stretch.
- DiSC helps you understand the EQ mindsets that come naturally to you and how to stretch to those beyond your comfort zone.
- Learning to stretch to different mindsets gives you the agility to adapt your responses to whatever situation you're facing.

OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT

The first section of this report provides insight into your DiSC style and the EQ mindsets and needs that shape your interactions with others.

The second section introduces you to other EQ mindsets and helps you recognize the value in each of them.

The third section includes steps you can take to start adopting these other EQ mindsets so you can reach for the most effective responses.

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1 Discover

Everything DiSC®

WHAT IS EVERYTHING DiSC®?

How is it that you can see the best in people where others might judge? Where does your easygoing nature come from? Why are you so interested in collaborating rather than going it alone?

Everything DiSC® is a personal development tool that measures your preferences and tendencies according to the DiSC® model. It helps you better understand yourself and improve your workplace performance and relationships in a variety of contexts.

This Agile EQ report uses your DiSC assessment results to support your understanding of your EQ strengths and challenges and how they shape your responses to various situations. Strategies based on your DiSC style can increase your comfort navigating among responses outside your comfort zone, so you can effectively meet the demands of any interaction or challenge.

Below you will see an overview of the four basic styles of the DiSC model that describe how people approach their work and relationships. **Keep in mind that all DiSC styles are equally valuable. No DiSC style is better than any other style at being emotionally intelligent.**

You'll learn about your own style on the next page.

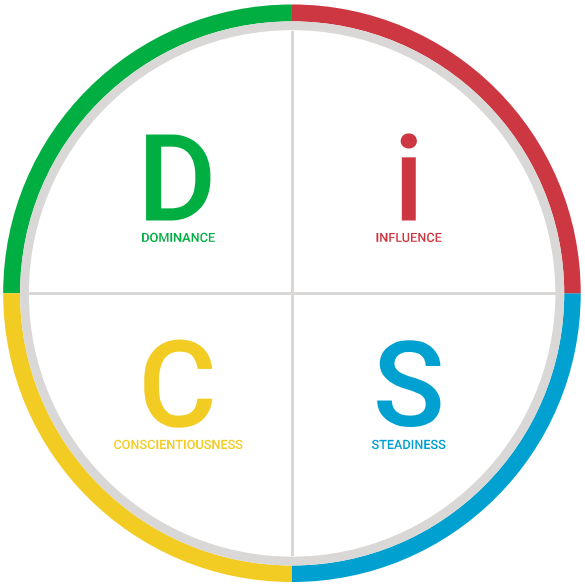
OVERVIEW OF THE DiSC® MODEL

Dominance

- Direct
- Firm
- Strong-willed
- Forceful
- Results-oriented

Conscientiousness

- Analytical
- Reserved
- Precise
- Private
- Systematic



influence

- Outgoing
- Enthusiastic
- Optimistic
- High-spirited
- Lively

Steadiness

- Even-tempered
- Accommodating
- Patient
- Humble
- Tactful

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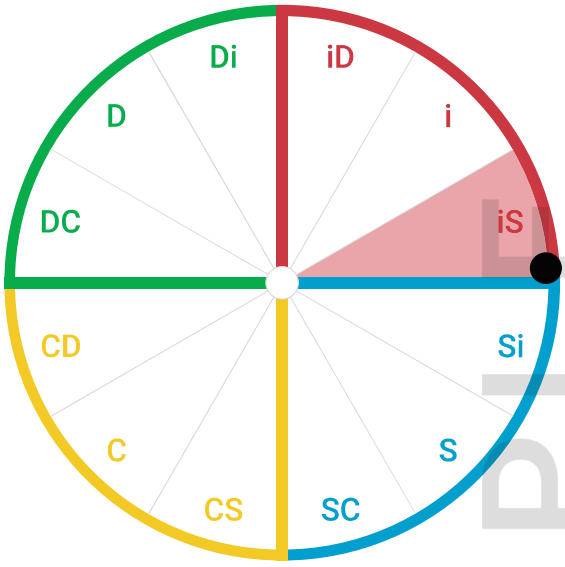
1 Discover

Your DiSC® Style

YOUR DOT

This report is personalized to you, Sabina. In order to get the most out of your *Everything DiSC® Agile EQ™* profile, you'll need to understand your personalized DiSC® map, pictured to the right.

As you saw on the previous page, the DiSC model is made up of four basic styles: D, i, S, and C. Each style is divided into three regions. The map illustrates the 12 different regions where a person's dot might be located.



Your DiSC® Style: iS

Your dot location shows your DiSC style. **Because your dot is located in the iS region, you have the iS style.**

Keep in mind that everyone is a blend of all four styles, but most people tend strongly toward one or two styles. Whether your dot is in the center of one style or in a region that borders two, no dot location is better than another. All DiSC styles are equal and valuable in their own ways.

CLOSE TO THE EDGE OR CLOSE TO THE CENTER?

A dot's distance from the edge of the circle shows how naturally inclined a person is to encompass the characteristics of their DiSC style. A dot positioned toward the edge of the circle indicates a strong inclination toward the characteristics of the style. A dot located between the edge and the center of the circle indicates a moderate inclination. And a dot positioned close to the center of the circle indicates a slight inclination. A dot in the center of the circle is no better than one on the edge, and vice versa. **Your dot location is near the edge of the circle, so you are strongly inclined and probably relate well to the characteristics associated with the iS style.**

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that you know more about the personalization of your Everything DiSC map, you'll read about the Agile EQ mindsets that are associated with the different DiSC styles. Then you'll learn more about the mindsets that may come most easily to you based on your DiSC style and how they might shape your interactions. You'll then read about those mindsets that are outside your comfort zone, and will learn steps you can take to stretch to them.

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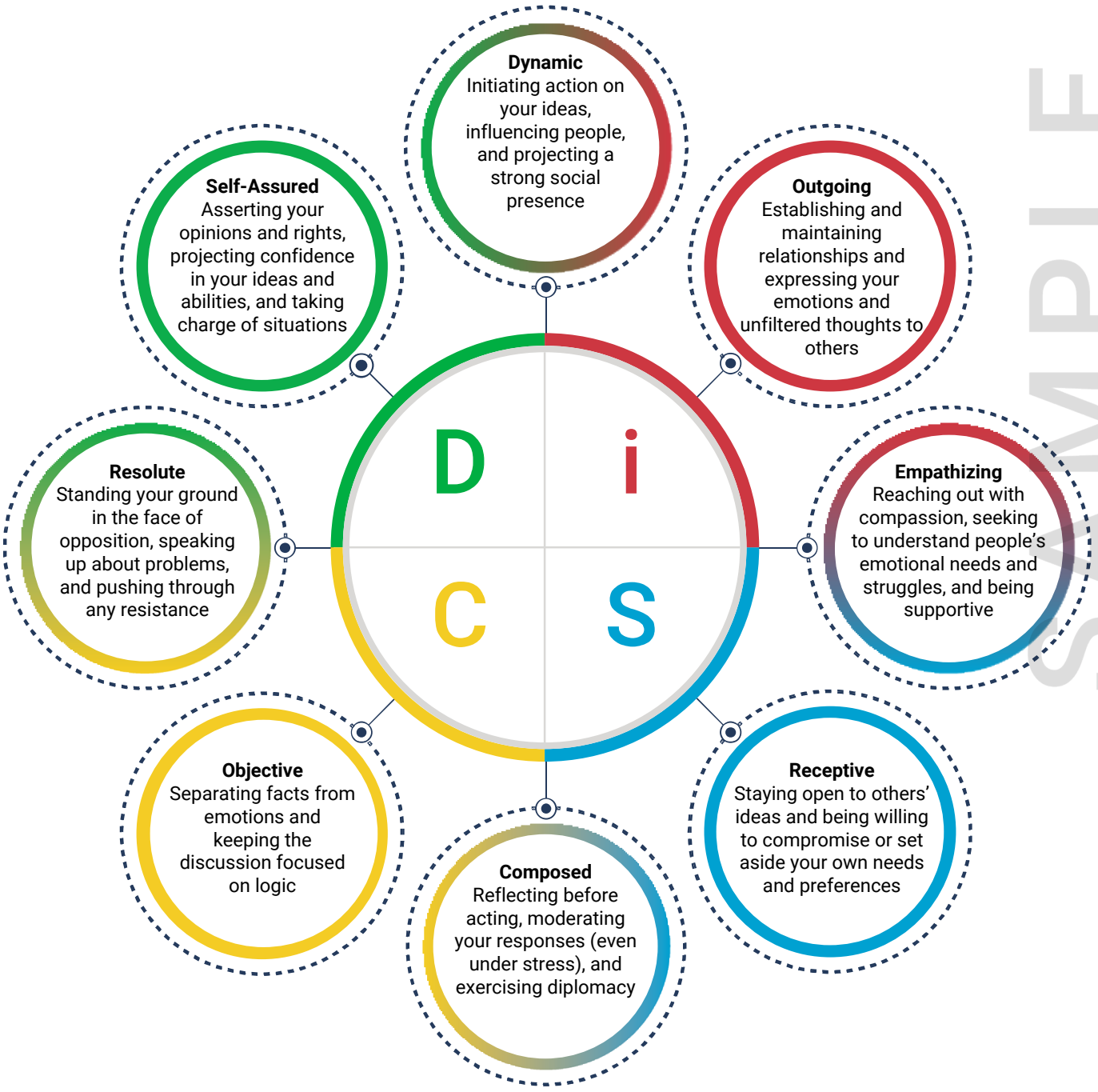
1 Discover

DiSC® & Agile EQ

There are eight Agile EQ mindsets you can call on to guide your interactions. No one mindset is more valuable than the next; rather, the needs of a particular situation will dictate which is appropriate. Learning when and how to adopt each mindset will let you take an agile approach to your interactions.



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1 Discover

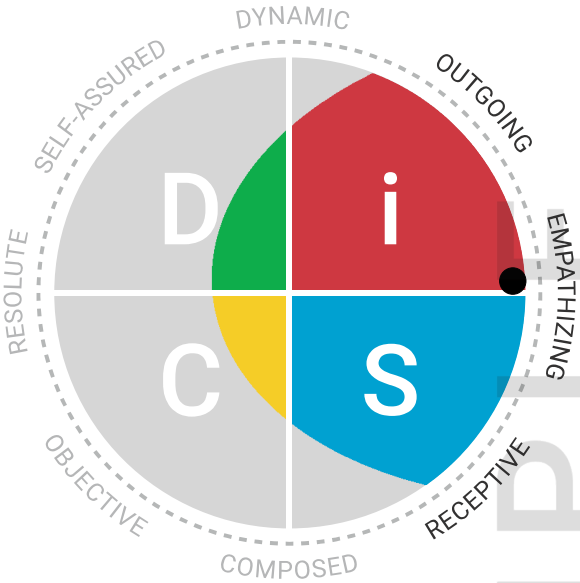
Your EQ Mindsets

WHAT MINDSETS MAY COME NATURALLY TO YOU?

Sabina, we all gravitate toward certain mindsets in our interactions. The shading at right shows those mindsets you may adopt most frequently. Because you have an iS style, you may be inclined to assume the Empathizing, Outgoing, and Receptive mindsets.

Think of these three mindsets as your comfort zone. They're the lenses through which you view various situations and interactions. And they influence the responses you automatically reach for, without conscious thought.

The text below will help you understand more about these mindsets as well as the emotional and social needs that may drive you to them. You'll also learn how these mindsets shape your tendencies and preferences, how they benefit you, and where they may hold you back.



EMPATHIZING MINDSET

Like others with the iS style, you probably care deeply about the needs and emotions of others. You may be naturally attentive to what people are going through. And when you see someone struggling, you may reach out with support and a readiness to treat their needs with compassion. A strong desire for connection likely fuels your empathy. You're focused on building relationships, so you may maintain an openness toward others that enables you to quickly notice when someone is in trouble. You may even draw people out with your warmth and ready acceptance. Your own need to be accepted may play a role in your empathy: making people feel cared for helps cement your value. A desire for harmony is also key. You're likely distressed when those around you are unhappy, so you may prioritize people's emotional needs in order to set things right and create a caring, friendly environment.

This mindset's benefits include being able to

- relate better to others and develop stronger working relationships
- stay open to and respectful of the concerns and perspectives of others
- contribute to a supportive environment where people feel safe speaking up about their concerns

If you get stuck in this mindset, you might

- become so focused on feelings that you excuse poor behavior or performance, perhaps even allowing your judgment to be compromised
- rush in to soothe someone when a different response might be more helpful or appropriate to the situation
- regularly minimize your own needs to attend to those of others

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Your EQ Mindsets (continued)

OUTGOING MINDSET

You tend to be cheerful and sociable, readily reaching out to others with easygoing kindness. Given your strong need for connection, you likely put a lot of energy into creating and nurturing relationships. So you may approach people with a readiness to like them and to be liked and accepted in turn. And since you're genuinely focused on getting to know people, you're probably comfortable letting down your guard and sharing your honest thoughts and feelings. You may have a knack, in turn, of putting others at ease because it's clear you have a sincere interest in them. Your outgoingness may also, in part, be fed by your need for harmony: you may create a sense of community and goodwill by drawing people out and bringing them together.

This mindset's benefits include being able to

- create stronger, more rewarding relationships and reinforce existing bonds
- foster a sense of camaraderie and inclusion
- build trust by encouraging open and honest interactions

If you get stuck in this mindset, you might

- be overly trusting when more caution is called for, or simply overshare in ways you later come to regret
- allow a focus on your relationships to overshadow other important considerations or responsibilities
- press people to open up before they are ready

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RECEPTIVE MINDSET

The openness that you bring to your interactions probably helps you stay receptive to other people's ideas. Because you're looking to connect with others, you may genuinely listen to what they have to say with the intent of understanding their perspective. In fact, you probably really *want* to support their ideas, and you may even encourage people to share them. In addition, you may easily compromise or even set aside your own preferences to make space for the needs and ideas of others. You might gravitate toward this mindset because it encourages the harmony you value: an environment where people patiently hear each other out, make space for multiple perspectives, and emphasize cooperation and collaboration. Receptivity also gains you acceptance: supporting people's ideas and showing flexibility can earn the approval of your colleagues.

This mindset's benefits include being able to

- tap into the insight, knowledge, and experiences of your colleagues
- arrive at stronger solutions that draw on the benefit of multiple perspectives
- contribute to an environment of collaboration, cooperation, and goodwill

If you get stuck in this mindset, you might

- support mediocre ideas or watered-down compromises to avoid tension or hurt feelings
- give up too readily on your own ideas
- sacrifice your own needs, leading to resentment or frustration on your part

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iS Style

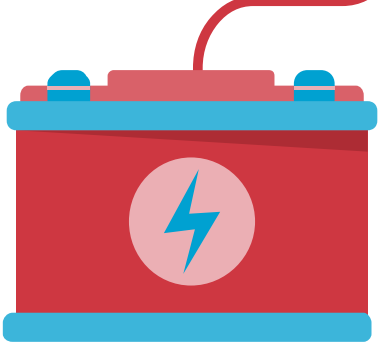
My EQ Snapshot

MY EQ STRENGTHS

I'm outgoing
I'm upbeat and welcoming
I make people feel included

I empathize
I notice how others are feeling
I provide emotional support

I'm receptive
I make people feel heard
I'm open to new ideas



MY NEEDS POWER MY EQ

I need...

- to connect with others
- a friendly, upbeat environment
- to be helpful and supportive
- to be accepted

MY EFFECT ON OTHERS

Other people...

- feel encouraged
- open up about themselves
- feed off my optimism and team spirit
- may find me too trusting
- can think I'm too lenient

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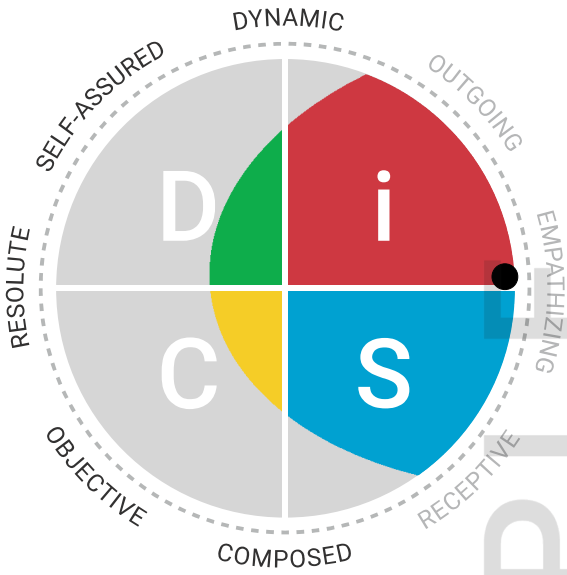
2 Recognize

Agile Opportunities

WHAT MINDSETS MIGHT TAKE MORE EFFORT FOR YOU?

Now that you know a little bit more about the mindsets in your comfort zone, you're ready to start learning about the other mindsets shown here around the DiSC® circle.



For you, Sabina, the mindsets that might take more effort are

- Composed
- Objective
- Resolute
- Self-Assured
- Dynamic

Let's start by considering why you even need to stretch to these other mindsets. You probably derive satisfaction out of being empathizing, outgoing, and receptive. But you can likely think of occasions where these qualities didn't work all that well for you. Maybe you got so caught up in helping someone that you overextended yourself. Or maybe you were so intent on creating a friendly atmosphere that you lost focus on your work.

Like everyone else, when you over-rely on the mindsets that are comfortable for you, it can distort the way you look at the world. You might start to see other people's wishes as more important than your own, for example, or you may become so focused on protecting feelings that you overlook problems. And you may end up choosing ineffective or unhealthy responses—and not getting the results you want.

Learning to stretch to other mindsets, on the other hand, expands your range, giving you the agility to reach for a healthy, effective response whatever the circumstance. The pages that follow will help you understand more about the mindsets and how they can help you navigate your various interactions.

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2 Recognize

Composed Mindset

TRY THIS ON

A coworker is coolly confronting you about a problem with your work that's creating rework for some of your teammates. You're instantly dismayed, both because you've let people down and because your coworker's matter-of-fact delivery feels like it's intended to point that out. Don't they get how awful you already feel about it? You'd never give critical feedback in such an uncaring way, particularly not to someone you work so closely with.

You're immediately tempted to just shut down, answer in monosyllables, maybe find some subtle way to let them know they've hurt you. Alternatively, you can take a moment to consider the situation, think about what you want the long-term outcome to be, and choose a thoughtful response.

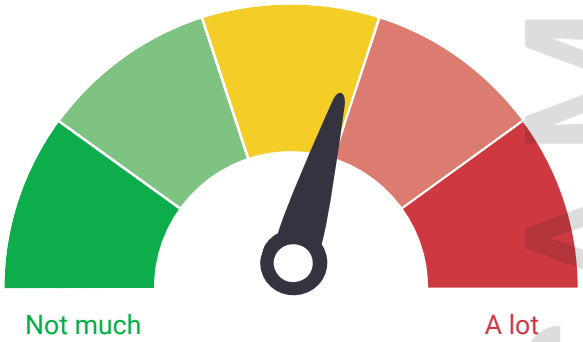
The Composed mindset

- allows you to insert some space between your instinctive response and your actions, even when you're upset
- keeps you from charging forward with a knee-jerk reaction
- helps you think through what you want to say and exercise diplomacy

WHAT IS IT?

Reflecting before acting, moderating your responses (even under stress), and exercising diplomacy

How much effort does this take for you?



WHY DO IT?

When strong emotions start crowding out other thoughts, they can be hard to resist. But giving way to them may not serve your best interests or those of others. You may respond in ways you wouldn't choose in a calmer state of mind: shutting down, becoming defensive, or issuing sharp words you later come to regret. Taking a moment to reflect helps you stay focused on the big picture, so you can choose intentional, thoughtful responses. This helps you safeguard your relationships and maintain harmony in your interactions.

You might need to be Composed when

- avoiding rash choices in the heat of the moment
- allowing yourself or others space for careful thought and consideration
- de-escalating tension
- discussing a sensitive topic
- keeping those around you calm

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2 Recognize

Objective Mindset

TRY THIS ON

A coworker is passionately pitching an idea in a brainstorming session, and they seem pretty excited about it. You don't think it's a *terrible* idea—just not a very good one. If you were being completely honest about it, you'd reject it flat out. But you know they'll be crushed. So you're searching your mind for a way to make this idea work.

You can support the idea—making your teammate happy but also enabling a poor outcome that may create problems for everyone down the road. Or you can set aside your desire to protect their feelings, tactfully explain your real opinion, and encourage a more fruitful direction.

The Objective mindset

- encourages a focus on facts and logic over emotions or intuition
- helps lift some of the emotional fog that can keep you from seeing things clearly
- helps you recognize when emotions, bias, or personal affiliations might be impacting your and others' judgment

WHAT IS IT?

Separating facts from emotion and keeping the discussion focused on logic

How much effort does this take for you?

WHY DO IT?

It may sometimes be a struggle to prioritize logic over others' feelings, a fear of disappointing people, or a strong desire for things to work out. But if you let emotions color your judgment, you may end up overlooking key facts or the long-term impact on goals. And you may find that decisions made to accommodate these feelings aren't always in your or others' overall interest. Objectivity helps you develop a more balanced view of a situation and ensures that you don't lose sight of the big picture.

You might need to be Objective when

- stepping back from your emotions or those of others
- distancing yourself from your own biases
- gaining insight into a subject that creates strong emotions in others
- convincing someone who tends to be objective
- identifying the critical facts in a complicated or confusing situation

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2 Recognize

Resolute Mindset

TRY THIS ON

You've been working on an assignment, and you've just presented it to the team for feedback. You feel pretty good about it, but a teammate suggests a change, and then someone else seconds the idea. At first you push back gently, because you've put a lot of thought into this and you genuinely think your approach is better. But they seem pretty excited about this different direction, and the rest of the group is warming up to the idea. You don't want to make waves, and it feels selfish to keep pushing back when it's clear this is what the group wants.

So, you can swallow your disappointment and agree to the change. Or you can keep pushing for people to see why your way is the better choice for the team.

The Resolute mindset

- is about standing by your ideas and needs in the face of opposition
- helps you speak up about problems, even if it causes some interpersonal discomfort
- involves maintaining confidence in your perspective and opinions, even when others are casting doubt on them

WHAT IS IT?

Standing your ground in the face of opposition, speaking up about problems, and pushing through any resistance

How much effort does this take for you?

Not much A lot

WHY DO IT?

Standing firm protects your needs and beliefs and can head off long-term problems or headaches down the road for you and others. It also makes it clear to people that you care about your ideas and that your rights and views matter as much as anyone else's. Keep in mind, too, that yielding when you know you're right can create unhealthy team dynamics and resentment on your part—both of which can cast a pall over your relationships.

You might need to be Resolute when

- defending your ideas
- standing up to strong personalities
- resisting the influence of others
- initiating critical feedback
- protecting your time

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2 Recognize

Self-Assured Mindset

TRY THIS ON

Lately it feels like a colleague has been undermining you during team meetings. It's never anything big. Just subtle, underhanded comments that call your work into question. At first you thought you were reading things wrong and just laughed it off. But it's happened often enough that you're starting to wonder. Still, you don't want to rock the boat. So, you're tempted to just keep smiling through it until the project is over.

Alternatively, you could confront the coworker, make it clear their behavior is unacceptable, and press them to find more productive ways to share their concerns.

The Self-Assured mindset

- conveys to others your conviction about your opinions and ideas
- ensures that others take what you say seriously and treat your rights with respect
- can inspire confidence in your ideas and abilities

WHAT IS IT?

Asserting your opinions and rights, projecting confidence in your ideas and abilities, and taking charge of situations

How much effort does this take for you?

WHY DO IT?

You may avoid asserting your rights or opinions in order to keep the peace, support the group, or avoid coming across as overbearing. But you risk signaling a lack of interest or conviction, and your rights and ideas may ultimately get overlooked. This can lead to frustration on your part, not to mention a power imbalance where some voices dominate the group. Being clear, direct, and firm about your opinions and needs gives them a fighting chance. It ensures that people stop and listen to what you're saying and take your words seriously.

You might need to be Self-Assured when

- making a case for a course of action
- making your needs known
- signaling your conviction in an idea or belief
- leading a team or project
- inspiring a sense of confidence in your abilities

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2 Recognize

Dynamic Mindset

TRY THIS ON

You've been working with your team for ages, and you've become a tightknit group. You work well together, but sometimes you feel like your team's processes are cumbersome. In chatting with a coworker from another department, it occurs to you that it might be worth trying out some of their methods. But it would mean shaking things up a bit. Plus, it feels a little presumptuous to tell everyone you've got a better way to do things.

You could float the idea and see if anyone thinks it's worth pursuing. Or you could take the initiative to advocate for this change, paint a vivid picture of how it can help you all work better together, and take steps to make it happen.

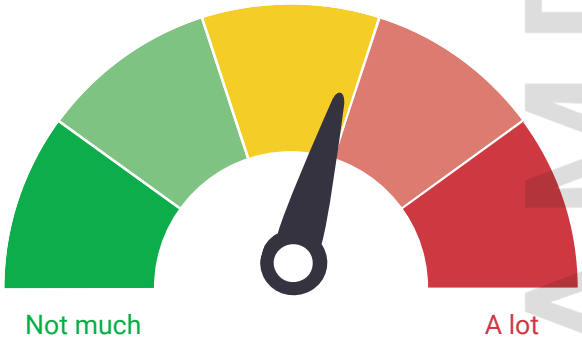
The Dynamic mindset

- is about taking action to transform your ideas into reality
- creates interest and momentum to help move your ideas forward
- paves the way for you to take advantage of opportunities that might otherwise go untapped

WHAT IS IT?

Initiating action on your ideas, influencing people, and projecting a strong social presence

How much effort does this take for you?



WHY DO IT?

You value harmony and connection, so tending to your relationships might be a higher priority for you than pushing your ideas forward. But if you only make a half-hearted effort to execute on your ideas, they may be getting buried. And you may be missing out on opportunities to make a contribution. No one else will ever be as invested in your vision as you are, so it's up to you to bring it about. This might mean taking the lead on an initiative, sharing your passion with your colleagues, and investing time and energy in driving your ideas forward.

You might need to be Dynamic when

- persuading others
- promoting your ideas
- advocating for a change in your department or organization
- making an impression
- moving from an idea into execution

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3 Act

Becoming Agile

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO STRETCH TO THE OTHER MINDSETS?

Now that you've read about the different mindsets available to you, you can start learning how to stretch to them. The pages that follow include concrete steps you can take to increase your comfort with these other mindsets.

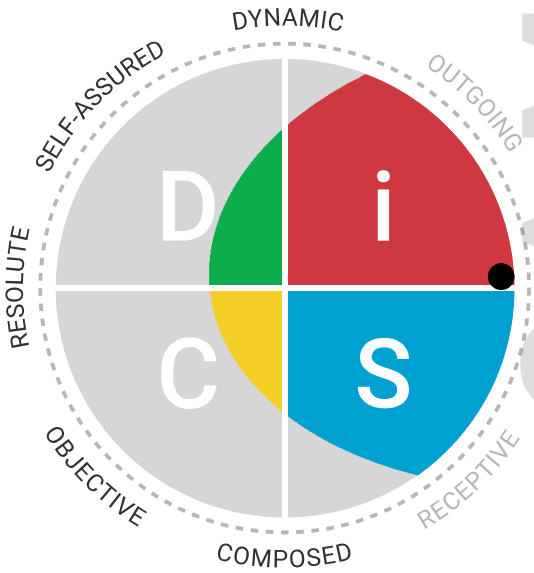
We all have the ability to stretch when the situation calls for it. But that doesn't mean it's easy. Even when you know what the healthy emotional response is, it might be a struggle to actually use it, in part because it's hard to change habits that have become ingrained over a lifetime.

For example, you're naturally inclined to cooperate and keep things friendly. Standing firm against the group can be challenging when every instinct in your body is telling you to just go with the flow. And in the beginning, you're going to have to work against your instincts and suppress the voices in your head urging you to stick to your familiar patterns.

Developing Agile EQ is a process that takes time, effort, and practice. You need to keep an open mind and try things that may feel a little uncomfortable. Progress will come in small steps rather than leaps and bounds, until you start to gradually increase your comfort adopting different mindsets. With that increased comfort level, you'll more easily move from one mindset to the next, effectively responding to whatever situation you're facing.

Sabina, learn how you can stretch to the other mindsets on the following pages:

- **Composed**
  pp. 16–17
- **Objective**
  pp. 18–19
- **Resolute**
  pp. 20–21
- **Self-Assured**
  pp. 22–23
- **Dynamic**
  pp. 24–25



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WHAT'S NEXT?

You can start with the mindset of your choosing. Turn to the pages indicated above for the mindset and determine whether you should start with the Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced step. Then read the strategies for that step. The action plan on page 26 can help you think through your approach.

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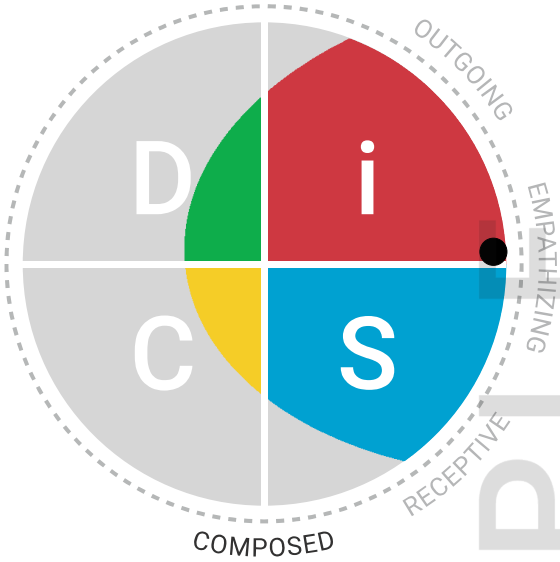
3 Act

Composed Mindset

GETTING INTO THE MINDSET



You generally try to stay positive and avoid conflict, but you also tend to be expressive. So, occasionally, when your emotions are strong enough, you may feel like you can't keep them bottled up—which can lead you to say things you regret. More often, a lack of composure might be an internal struggle, in which you ruminate or assume the worst when confronted with criticism or aggression. You might take negative feedback as a personal attack, for example, or wonder how an overly blunt coworker could have so little regard for your relationship. To others, this might come across as defensiveness. Or you might instead withdraw or shut down rather than engage further, since your need for harmony may steer you away from confrontation. But underneath the surface, you may be struggling with a world of tension.

To stay composed, you may need to fight thoughts like:

- They have to understand what they're doing to me.
- This wasn't my fault!
- I can't believe they care so little about my feelings.
- I just want this to be over.

These are normal thoughts, and you should expect it to take some work to overcome them. The steps on the next page can help you get started.

WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

Start from the top of the list below. Is this something you already do? If so, go to the next item. Keep going down the list until you get stuck. Don't feel comfortable doing that one? Is it in the Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced category? Go to that area on the next page for strategies to help you improve.

Beginner

- I understand the things that tend to set me off.
- I do what I can to be prepared for situations that are likely to upset me.

Intermediate

- I notice early on when my attitude or composure is starting to deteriorate.
- I typically catch myself when I'm in a bad mood before it gets to the point where I shut down.

Advanced

- I stay calm—even on the inside—when faced with something that bothers me.
- I know how to lift myself up and remain unshaken in most situations.

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Take Action to Be Composed

BEGINNER STEP

Identify your triggers. The first step in learning to stay calm under stress is understanding the kinds of situations that are most likely to upset you. For example, as someone with the iS style, you might feel particularly tense if you think someone is angry with you or if you feel unfairly criticized. On a separate sheet of paper, complete the following exercise:

- Make a list of recent situations where you had difficulty maintaining your composure.
- Look for common themes across the incidents. Are there certain personalities, circumstances, or environments around which you find it particularly difficult to remain calm?
- Consider whether any of these triggers are optional or avoidable. Are there any changes you could make to your schedule or habits that would address the triggers you identified?

INTERMEDIATE STEP

Learn the signs of emotional exhaustion. The surges of emotion that can prevent you from communicating as clearly as you want to often seem like they come out of nowhere, but in reality they tend to be the last straw in a series of events, or the result of emotional exhaustion—when stress, fatigue, and other factors wear away your defenses and make you more vulnerable to losing your composure. Here are some warning signs that you're in an emotionally exhausted state:

- You feel physically tired or ill.
- A type of conversation or meeting that you don't typically mind feels unbearable.
- You doubt the motivations or judgment of someone you normally trust.

When you find yourself feeling this way, consciously acknowledge to yourself, *I am emotionally exhausted.* Recognizing this can help you step back and reconsider the situation before you react or shut down. If needed, postpone a tense discussion or difficult task until you can think more clearly.

ADVANCED STEP

Create space between the stressor and your response. Interrupting your natural response to stressful situations, even by delaying an instinctive reaction by just a few seconds, can be the difference between staying calm and open, and closing yourself off from the conversation or saying something you'll regret. Here's how:

- **Buy time with a diplomatic default response.** Think of a neutral word or phrase, like "Okay," "Interesting," or "Let me think about that," that you can use reflexively in a conversation when you might otherwise be tempted to lose your cool.
- **Remember that your judgment might be clouded in the moment.** When you're in the middle of an intense emotion, it may seem like you'll always feel the way you do right then, but that is rarely true. Knowing this, fight the urge to act on your immediate reactions.

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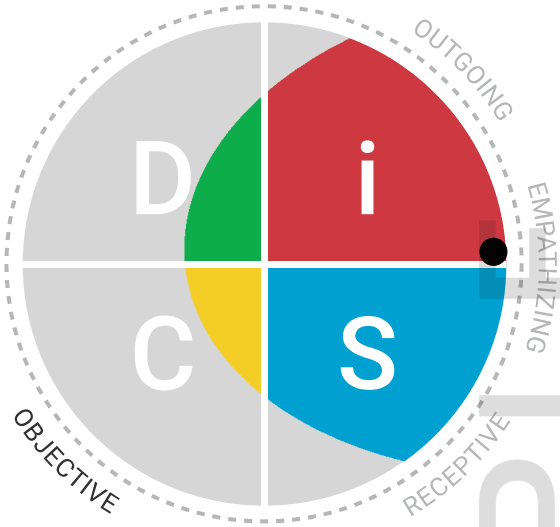
3 Act

Objective Mindset

GETTING INTO THE MINDSET



It may be hard to remain objective when you're swept up in a strong desire for something to work out. And given how much you care about people's emotional well-being, you may also struggle to leave their feelings out of your decision-making. It might seem wrong to make a choice you know will disappoint someone or upset the warm, cheery atmosphere you prefer. Your concern might even cloud your view of the situation, making it hard to weigh the facts properly. This is probably also true when you face criticism: you may take feedback far harder than the situation warrants because it pains you to lose a colleague's approval.

When trying to stay objective, you may need to fight off thoughts like:

- How can I ignore what they're going through?
- I have to make them feel better.
- It's not worth the upset this will cause.
- If I feel this strongly, it has to be right.

These are normal thoughts, and you should expect it to take some work to overcome them. The steps on the next page can help you get started.

WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

Start from the top of the list below. Is this something you already do? If so, go to the next item. Keep going down the list until you get stuck. Don't feel comfortable doing that one? Is it in the Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced category? Go to that area on the next page for strategies to help you improve.

Beginner

- I recognize when I am overly concerned about protecting people's feelings.
- I will make a logical decision, even if it makes some people unhappy.

Intermediate

- I invite critical feedback from others.
- I'm good at separating out the content of feedback from the tone and style in which it's delivered.

Advanced

- I often consider my own biases when making decisions.
- When forming opinions, I take the time to research the relevant facts.

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Take Action to Be Objective

BEGINNER STEP

Recognize that it isn't your job to please everyone. Like others with the iS style, people's feelings and preferences probably count for a lot with you. But this might leave you worried about disappointing others, making it hard for you to evaluate situations objectively at times. The exercise below can help you get a clearer sense of what your priorities should be.

- Make a list of primary priorities—items that fall within your job responsibilities. This might include things like "completing my projects on time," "giving our clients the best possible service," or "treating my coworkers with respect."
- Below that, make a second list of things that you also value, but that fall outside of your core responsibilities. This might include things like, "helping my coworkers get along," or "saving other people hassle or extra work."
- Keep these lists handy as you make decisions and weigh in on discussions going forward. Remember that accomplishing the objectives on the first list should take priority over the second.

INTERMEDIATE STEP

Take critical feedback less personally. You probably value having lots of friendly, positive relationships, and at times, hearing critical feedback—or even an opposing view—from a friend or colleague can feel like a threat to your standing with the other person. In these cases, you might be tempted to shut down or gloss over unwanted information rather than really taking it in.

One way to get better at considering different viewpoints and feedback objectively is to proactively create opportunities to solicit honest opinions from others. To practice, the next few times you're completing a project or making a decision, invite friends or colleagues to critique your work or your thinking. Make notes about what they say, and review them afterward to determine which ideas are valuable and which you can set aside, based on the feedback itself, not how it made you feel or your relationship with the person.

ADVANCED STEP

Learn to balance emotion and logic when making decisions. Feelings and facts both have important roles to play in decision-making, but finding the right balance between them can be difficult. Look for three opportunities in the next month to try out the following strategy when you're making a decision:

- **Set a primary goal or objective.** Write down the one or two main things you're trying to accomplish with your decision.
- **Consider multiple angles.** Set a timer for three minutes and brainstorm all the arguments in favor of one side or alternative. When time runs out, reset another three minutes to do the same for a different side. Repeat as many times as there are alternatives.
- **Separate out emotional arguments.** When you've considered all the different angles, go back and underline or highlight all of the ideas that seem to stem from your emotions, biases, or interests outside of your primary goal. Imagine that, when making your decision, you could only consider the factors that you didn't highlight. Would this change your decision? For better or worse?

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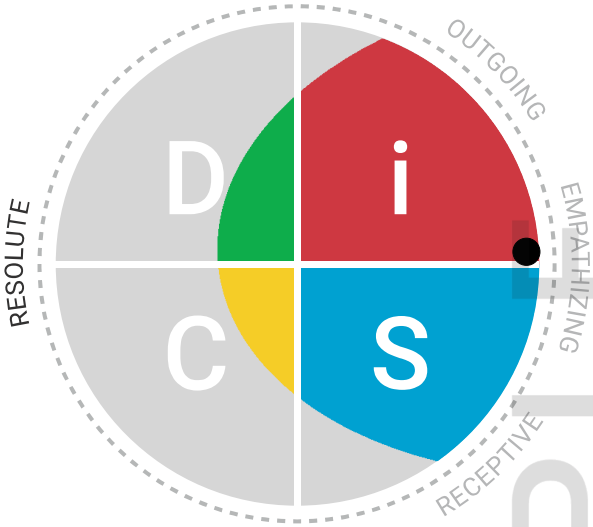
3 Act

Resolute Mindset

GETTING INTO THE MINDSET

You strive to cultivate warm, supportive relationships and keep things positive. So you may struggle to speak up about problems or hold your ground if there's a risk of creating tension or disappointment. And since you want to be cooperative, it may seem right to just go with the flow, particularly if pushing your ideas goes against the will of the group. You're also attentive to others' needs, so it may feel selfish to insist on your preference when it obviously comes at the expense of someone else's wishes. Furthermore, since you crave acceptance and approval, it might be hard to say no when your peers pressure you to change directions.



To show resolve, you may need to overcome thoughts like:

- If I give in, things can go back to normal.
- This isn't as important as protecting our relationship.
- I'm not going to fight this because I want to be a team player.
- It's rude and selfish not to budge.

These are normal thoughts, and you should expect it to take some work to overcome them. The steps on the next page can help you get started.

WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

Start from the top of the list below. Is this something you already do? If so, go to the next item. Keep going down the list until you get stuck. Don't feel comfortable doing that one? Is it in the Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced category? Go to that area on the next page for strategies to help you improve.

Beginner

- I understand when it's important to stick to my viewpoint.
- I usually push back—at least a little—if an idea I believe in gets rejected too quickly.

Intermediate

- In most meetings, I tend to believe I'm as capable as anyone else there.
- I rarely give in to self-doubt about my abilities or ideas.

Advanced

- I stand behind my opinions, even if other people disagree with me.
- When appropriate, I set aside outside opinions and act independently.

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Take Action to Be Resolute

BEGINNER STEP

Understand the consequences of giving in too easily. At times, it might feel like yielding to the pressure to align with someone else's view is the easiest and even the right thing to do. But in many cases, both you and your colleagues would benefit from your willingness to stand firm in your opinion rather than giving in.

Think of a time when you had a different viewpoint than the majority of your peers or teammates and you didn't speak up or push hard enough for your stance, only to find out in the end that you were right. Answer these questions about that experience.

- What made you reluctant to speak up?
- How might advocating more forcefully for your perspective have changed the outcome?
- What could you do differently the next time a similar situation arises?

INTERMEDIATE STEP

Challenge undermining thoughts. At times, you may think more highly of others than you do of yourself, so you might be susceptible to the doubts that creep in when you really should be standing firm. Learn to identify undermining thoughts and start challenging them with these steps:

- Take note of negative self-talk and critical thoughts as they come. These can be things like, "Do I really know what I'm talking about?" "I'm not qualified for this," or "My idea isn't that great."
- Counter those thoughts with affirming statements, like "Yes, I know what I'm talking about," "I'm as qualified as anyone else," or "My idea is valuable." Say them aloud or in writing if needed. Over time, consciously counteracting undermining thoughts with positive ones can reduce their power.

ADVANCED STEP

Stand behind your opinions, even if they are unpopular. Sticking to your decisions and viewpoints can be difficult, especially if a consensus opinion points in a different direction. In situations where other people's opinions are holding you back from making a choice you think is right, ask yourself these questions:

- Do the people who disagree with me genuinely have insight into the situation that I lack?
- Am I truly convinced by the opposing arguments, and not just giving in to avoid unpleasantness?
- Are the consequences of acting alone severe enough to merit giving in for the sake of unity?

Unless the answer to at least two of these questions is "yes," hold firm in your viewpoint.

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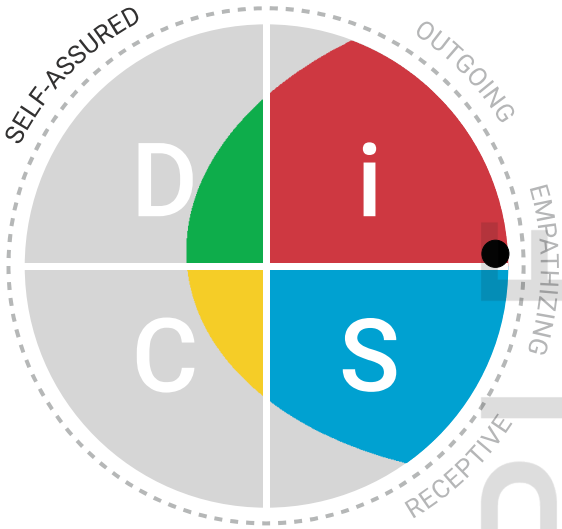
3 Act

Self-Assured Mindset

GETTING INTO THE MINDSET



You tend to be flexible and easygoing in part because you value cooperation and a congenial environment. Asserting your ideas or rights may feel aggressive because it seems to elevate your needs above those of the group. You're so considerate of other people that it may feel wrong to promote your rights or views over theirs. This may be particularly true if you fear injuring a relationship or disrupting group harmony in any way. Your receptivity could also hold you back in these situations: your ability to see the value in others' perspectives may make you less likely to assert your own.

To be self-assured, you may need to push against thoughts like:

- It's not that big of a deal if I don't get what I want here.
- It's just not worth the mess this will create.
- I want to do what's best for the team.
- I can see how their way makes sense.

These are normal thoughts, and you should expect it to take some work to overcome them. The steps on the next page can help you get started.

WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

Start from the top of the list below. Is this something you already do? If so, go to the next item. Keep going down the list until you get stuck. Don't feel comfortable doing that one? Is it in the Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced category? Go to that area on the next page for strategies to help you improve.

Beginner

- In meetings, I generally contribute clear ideas of what I want and how to make it happen.
- I make sure my comments are focused and relevant to the subject at hand.

Intermediate

- I'm comfortable questioning ideas or policies that don't make sense to me.
- I tend to state my opinions firmly and confidently, even if I know they will be unpopular.

Advanced

- I have no problem handing off tasks to colleagues if they aren't my responsibility.
- I push back if I think I'm handling a bigger workload than is fair.

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Take Action to Be Self-Assured

BEGINNER STEP

Develop clear ideas of what you want. In order to state your ideas and opinions firmly and directly to others, you must first have a clear sense of them yourself.

Before going into a meeting to discuss a particular project or initiative, take a few minutes beforehand to outline your hopes and goals for the project, and any resulting opinions you have about how things should be done. Refer back to these ideas once you're in the meeting to keep your comments in line with the overarching objectives you identified. Having your thoughts and priorities organized can also help you decide where your energy is best spent, and which battles are worth fighting.

INTERMEDIATE STEP

Use language that projects confidence and expertise. You might naturally bring a lot of positivity when you communicate your ideas to others. But it's also important to focus your energy into shaping the conversation and demonstrating your knowledge of the subject at hand. Use these suggestions to help ensure that your perspective receives the consideration it deserves.

- **Ask more "why" questions.** Asking "why" questions is a way to be more assertive in conversations without feeling like you're overstepping. By doing so, you question the reasoning behind opinions or circumstances rather than accepting them at face value. Look for opportunities to ask follow-up "why" questions regarding plans or decisions you might otherwise have avoided challenging.
- **Limit filler phrases and embrace the power of silence.** State your views clearly without undermining phrases like, "If that make sense," or "you know." Work on ending with a firm statement rather than trailing off, seguing into a question, or trying to fill the silence.

Over the next week, pay attention to how well you currently follow the best practices above. Over the course of the following month, work on eliminating these pitfalls from your typical speech patterns.

ADVANCED STEP

Get better at delegating. Part of learning to take charge is saying no to extra duties that fall outside of your responsibilities, and even handing off tasks that you should no longer be handling yourself. This may be difficult at first, or even feel selfish, but keep in mind that it's to everyone's benefit that tasks be distributed as efficiently and fairly as possible.

Make a list of tasks that you handle that fall outside the scope of your job responsibilities. These might be carryovers from a previous role, duties that no one else wanted to take ownership of, or slack you've picked up to help a coworker. Choose at least one item from your list that can and should be handled by someone else. Then, make a plan to hand it off. This might be a decision you can make more or less independently, or it might involve a conversation with your manager or other colleagues.

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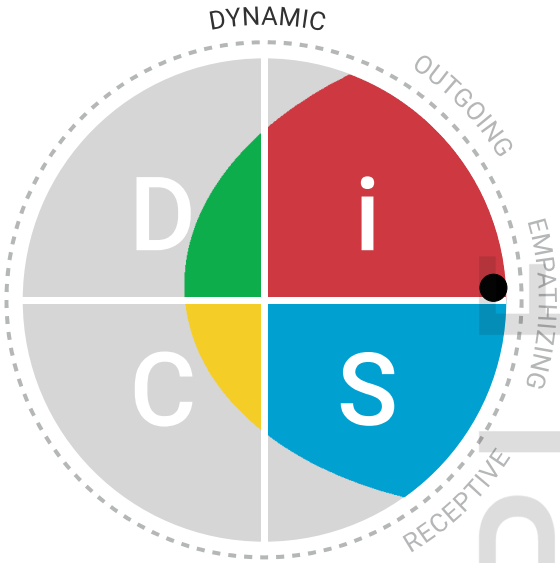
3 Act

Dynamic Mindset

GETTING INTO THE MINDSET



Most likely, you value working closely with your colleagues and like to think of everyone as being in it together. So you may not be comfortable driving your vision forward because it feels high-handed, like you're trying to go it alone. Your instinct instead may be to float an idea with the group to determine whether others see its value as well. And if they don't, your heart may tell you the right thing to do is let it go rather than try to bring people around. In addition, promoting your idea may simply take a back seat to fostering group cohesion or tending to your relationships. Particularly when things are going well in your work relationships, it might be hard to feel a sense of urgency to make your ideas happen.

To be dynamic, you might need to overcome thoughts like:

- If this is worth pursuing, we'll do it together.
- Things are going so well right now, I don't think we need this.
- If I move on this, it will inconvenience a lot of people.
- I don't want to push people into this if they're not interested.

These are normal thoughts, and you should expect it to take some work to overcome them. The steps on the next page can help you get started.

WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

Start from the top of the list below. Is this something you already do? If so, go to the next item. Keep going down the list until you get stuck. Don't feel comfortable doing that one? Is it in the Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced category? Go to that area on the next page for strategies to help you improve.

Beginner

- When I have a good idea, I share it with others to generate excitement.
- I often encourage people to take action on new projects.

Intermediate

- I'm quick to share my ideas, even when they're a little off-the-wall or not fully thought out.
- I'm someone who tends to shape the direction of meetings.

Advanced

- I act decisively when needed.
- I'm comfortable taking action and working out the details later.

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Take Action to Be Dynamic

BEGINNER STEP

Ask questions that create momentum, not uncertainty. In general, you probably dislike telling other people what to do. So when discussing projects, you may default to using open-ended questions that invite others to set the course of action, rather than being the one to shape what happens next. Rephrasing the questions you ask is one way of encouraging action while still allowing other people to push back as needed. For example:

- Instead of, "What do you think is realistic?" ask, "How can we make this happen?"
- Instead of, "When can you get to this?" ask, "Can you get this done by _____?"

Write down two open-ended phrases or questions that you use regularly and think of alternatives that better communicate your wants or point of view.

INTERMEDIATE STEP

Be the first one to speak up with an idea. In many meetings, you may be someone who tends to let others speak first. At times, you may even be reluctant to share an idea or opinion unless you already sense that people will be receptive to what you have to say. But those who speak up quickly often play an outsize role in shaping the overall direction of conversations, decisions, and projects. So, if you want that to be you, it's important to get comfortable with putting your ideas on the table. To practice, challenge yourself to be one of the first two or three people to speak up—if not the very first—in a discussion in each of your meetings for the next two weeks. Then pay attention to the way your ideas get incorporated into the rest of the conversation.

ADVANCED STEP

Make decisions quickly and independently. Part of adopting the Dynamic mindset is learning to reduce time spent evaluating and seeking outside opinions before making decisions so that you can take action more quickly. Give yourself a time limit for each decision, with an actual timer set—preferably one that feels uncomfortably short. If you're feeling stuck and unable to move forward without input from others, ask yourself these questions:

- Is a wrong decision really worse than making a delayed decision or no decision at all?
- What is the one (not two, or three, or seven) biggest objective I'm trying to accomplish?
- What would I advise a friend or colleague to do in this situation?

Tip: If you feel that you absolutely need another perspective in order to make a decision, limit it to *one,* rather than trying to gather a larger collection of opinions.

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Action Planning

By increasing your comfort with adopting different mindsets, you can increase your agility and therefore your ability to navigate countless situations. To get started, fill out this action plan for the mindset you want to work on first. You'll need to refer back to the appropriate "Take Action" page and the rest of this report.

List the mindset you've chosen to work on first:

Why did you choose this mindset? List 1–2 examples, either from past interactions or future opportunities, where this mindset would be valuable.

1

2

Based on the corresponding "Where should you start?" statements, list the step you will start with:

What is your biggest obstacle to completing this step?

How will you overcome this obstacle?

Write down some changes you hope to see as you work on adopting your chosen mindset. What are some signs you will look for to know you're on the right track?

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