

Introduction

Welcome to your skills report. It is divided into sections that can open and close. There is a section for each of the skills plus a section for exploring careers and pathways. Bear in mind that the skill graphs are simply a guide to help you determine which ones you want to work on and which are important for your career goals. They should not be used to compare yourself to other people.

Skills and Skill Facets

A skill is a complex ability that is made up of several skill facets. You will see the skill facets when you open any skill section. Note that some skill facets are part of more than one skill.

Developing Skills

You are likely to find that you have some stronger skills and some less strong. The report can help you develop *all* of your skills. Within the *Developing Your Skills* section you can open a skill facet to see basic and advanced recommendations for developing it. You will also see an example of the recommendation in action.

Careers and Pathways

The Careers and Pathways section contains a list of careers that best fit your current skills. However, a career that matches your skills may not always be a career that you *want*. Use the additional filters (such as career clusters) to make the list more specific to your career ambitions.

It is a good idea to retake the assessment after you have spent significant time developing your skills. Remember that as your skills change, your career list will change as well.



Inspiring others, managing people and projects, and building and maintaining a network of contacts are all aspects of this skill. It also includes decisiveness — and accepting any consequences that may result — along with a capacity to tolerate stress.

Sociability



Friendly, outgoing and easy to get along with, those with sociability enjoy meeting others and seek out opportunities to interact with lots of different people.

Confidence



Assertive and self-assured, those with confidence tend to have a positive attitude and express their thoughts well through public speaking.

Influence



Charismatic and decisive, those with influence persuade, guide and motivate others to adopt certain ideas and behaviors.

Resilience



Optimistic, tough and determined, those with resilience adapt to difficulties and bounce back from stressful situations.

Achievement



Competitive in nature, those who are achievement-oriented set high standards, enjoy tough challenges, and strive for constant improvement.

Please rate the overall accuracy of your results. Don't worry too much about each individual rating. Instead, focus on how your skill facets are grouped into high, moderate and lower.

Rate your profile:

How well does it match you?





Conscientiousness



Focus and organization, and completing tasks in a timely, thorough manner, are the hallmarks of this skill. It also involves self-regulation, allowing one to create and follow plans and accomplish specific goals. Guided by a sense of practicality, the conscientious individual makes efficient use of resources and exhibits modesty in valuing others' contributions.

Discipline



Committed, focused, comfortable with rules and routine, those with discipline set goals, make plans, and have the will to follow them through.

Thoroughness



Careful and conscientious, those with thoroughness pay attention to detail and take pains to ensure things are done properly and completely.

Practicality



Sensible, prudent and realistic, those with practicality dislike unnecessary waste and expense, preferring instead to focus on economy and expediency.

Modesty



Those with high modesty tend to avoid the spotlight and see themselves as equals rather than deserving of special recognition or reward. They recognize that their achievements are a result of many factors including effort, fortune, and the help of others.

Organization



Systematic and orderly, those who are organization-oriented are good at managing time, tasks and resources in a structured way.

Please rate the overall accuracy of your results. Don't worry too much about each individual rating. Instead, focus on how your skill facets are grouped into high, moderate and lower.

Rate your profile:

How well does it match you?





This skill is founded on the ability to work with others in a positive and productive manner. That includes connecting with people in a genuine and sincere way, being considerate of their needs and tolerant of differences. It also requires self-awareness, to understand how one's actions affect other people.

Sociability



Friendly, outgoing and easy to get along with, those with sociability enjoy meeting others and seek out opportunities to interact with lots of different people.

Sincerity



Genuine and truthful, those with sincerity present themselves as is — without exaggeration or trying to impress others. They willingly admit to their faults and when they have been wrong.

Resilience



Optimistic, tough and determined, those with resilience adapt to difficulties and bounce back from stressful situations.

Self-Awareness



Reflective and conscious of their thoughts and behavior, those who are self-aware are mindful of how they affect others and think before acting.

Consideration



Supportive and caring, those with consideration are mindful of others' feelings and attentive to their needs.

Please rate the overall accuracy of your results. Don't worry too much about each individual rating. Instead, focus on how your skill facets are grouped into high, moderate and lower.

Rate your profile:

How well does it match you?





A knack for gathering, evaluating and understanding information is core to this skill, which is key to making rational decisions and creating solutions. Critical thinkers also require self-awareness, to recognize their biases and to be aware of their influence on people and situations.

Practicality



Sensible, prudent and realistic, those with practicality dislike unnecessary waste and expense, preferring instead to focus on economy and expediency.

Achievement



Competitive in nature, those who are achievement-oriented set high standards, enjoy tough challenges, and strive for constant improvement.

Modesty



Those with high modesty tend to avoid the spotlight and see themselves as equals rather than deserving of special recognition or reward. They recognize that their achievements are a result of many factors including effort, fortune, and the help of others.

Self-Awareness



Reflective and conscious of their thoughts and behavior, those who are self-aware are mindful of how they affect others and think before acting.

Curiosity



Inquisitive and endlessly interested in a wide variety of topics. Those with curiosity are eager to learn, solve puzzles, and have new experiences.

Please rate the overall accuracy of your results. Don't worry too much about each individual rating. Instead, focus on how your skill facets are grouped into high, moderate and lower.

Rate your profile:

How well does it match you?





Driven by a desire to explore different ideas and experiences, people with this skill seek new and original ways to express themselves. They tend to be more resilient and sincere as they present their unique ideas despite judgement or social expectations.

Sincerity



Genuine and truthful, those with sincerity present themselves as is — without exaggeration or trying to impress others. They willingly admit to their faults and when they have been wrong.

Resilience



Optimistic, tough and determined, those with resilience adapt to difficulties and bounce back from stressful situations.

Achievement



Competitive in nature, those who are achievement-oriented set high standards, enjoy tough challenges, and strive for constant improvement.

Curiosity



Inquisitive and endlessly interested in a wide variety of topics. Those with curiosity are eager to learn, solve puzzles, and have new experiences.

Innovation



Unconventional, experimental — not afraid to be disruptive — those who are innovation-oriented excel at brainstorming and developing novel ideas.

Please rate the overall accuracy of your results. Don't worry too much about each individual rating. Instead, focus on how your skill facets are grouped into high, moderate and lower.

Rate your profile:

How well does it match you?





The careers listed below are all linked to your assessment results, with the careers at the top being the best match for your profile.

CAREER CLUSTERS ▾

EDUCATION ▾

OUTLOOK ▾

MINIMUM SALARY

RATING ▾

SEARCH



SKILLS RESULTS

COMBINED CAREERS

ALL CAREERS

CAREER TITLE	CAREER CLUSTER	EDUCATION	OUTLOOK	RATING
Purchasing Managers	Business Management and Administration			
Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	Transportation, Distribution and Logistics			
Career/Technical Education Teachers, Postsecondary	Education and Training			
Gambling Managers	Hospitality and Tourism			
Loss Prevention Managers	Business Management and Administration			
Purchasing Agents, Except Wholesale, Retail, and Farm Products	Manufacturing			
Construction Managers	Architecture and Construction			
Optometrists	Health Science			
Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	Transportation, Distribution and Logistics			
First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers	Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security			
Food Service Managers	Hospitality and Tourism			
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	Manufacturing			
Administrative Services Managers	Business Management and Administration			
Forest Fire Inspectors and Prevention Specialists	Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security			

CAREER TITLE	CAREER CLUSTER	EDUCATION	OUTLOOK	RATING
First-Line Supervisors of Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	Transportation, Distribution and Logistics			
Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	Marketing			
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	Transportation, Distribution and Logistics			
Dentists, General	Health Science			
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	Marketing			
Industrial Production Managers	Business Management and Administration			
Medical and Health Services Managers	Health Science			
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	Manufacturing			
Podiatrists	Health Science			
Pharmacists	Health Science			
First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers	Marketing			

Items per page:

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This is a list of all the skill facets measured in the assessment. These facets combine in different ways to form the skills you see in the other sections of this report. Some skill facets are part of more than one skill.

You are likely to find that you have some stronger skills and some less strong. Open a skill facet to see basic and advanced recommendations for developing it -- select the ones you want to focus on. You will also see examples of recommendations in action. Bear in mind that the skill graphs are simply a guide to help you determine which ones you want to work on and which are important for your career goals. They should not be used to compare yourself to other people.

 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Don't make important decisions impulsively. Decide what you'd like to achieve and do the initial research. If you're the kind of person who likes to dive in and get to work without a well-defined objective and a firm plan in place, you might find this difficult at first.

EXAMPLE

**Work:**

You're going into the ice cream business. Everyone loves ice cream! But you can't just hang out a shingle. You need to do market research and write a business plan first. What other preparations will you need to consider? Are you hiring ice cream baristas? Need to arrange financing? Thought of a business name? How about a website? Think it all through and write down the key items you'll need to cover in your plan. Then you can start offering those tasty treats to customers.

- Avoid procrastination and delay. Don't allow indecision to prevent you from accomplishing your goals. If you get stuck, try weighing the pros and cons. There's usually more than one way to do things and some ways will be better than others. By thinking through the benefits and disadvantages of each, you can remain focused on your goal and keep things moving forward.

EXAMPLE

**Academic:**

You've picked a topic for your research project and want to get started but can't decide on the best approach. How can you choose? For starters, think about the resources you have available. If the research for Option 1 requires traveling to locations across the country, you may not have the time and funds for that. Perhaps Option 2, which relies on phone interviews, is the better bet. But then there's Option 3, which consists of doing online research. Write out the pros and cons of each of these research methods. What other factors do you need to consider?

Advanced

- Be systematic. Once you've set a goal, define the steps you'll need to follow and the order in which they should be completed. Break larger steps into smaller ones so they aren't so daunting. Include a timeline or completion date for each step to help you stay on track.

EXAMPLE

**Personal:**

You're planning to live a healthier lifestyle and are starting a fitness program. What steps should you take to reach your goal of running a marathon? You'll probably want to begin by assessing your current level of fitness. That step could include things like determining your pulse rate during exercise, the length of time it takes you to run a mile, and your body mass index. Write out the rest of the steps you'll need to take, and the sequence you'll need to follow, in order to reach the finish line 12 weeks from today.

- Always have a back-up plan (or two or three). Committing to reaching a goal sometimes requires a change of strategy along the way. So count on making a few mistakes and allow room in your plan for problems and delays in case things don't go smoothly.



Academic:

After a ton of work, thought and planning, you've decided to go after a degree in engineering. You apply to your top schools but are rejected by all of them. You turn to your back-up plan: the appeals process. But none of the schools are open to that. Time for Plan C: look for schools with late or rolling admission. If that doesn't pan out, you may have to come up with something else. What other options can you think of that will help you move toward your goal of an engineering degree? Try to come up with another three ideas.



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Get in the habit of checking and re-checking *everything*. For example, if you're writing something, use a spell checker and a dictionary to ensure your text is accurate and typo-free. If you've used any words you're not certain about, look them up to ensure you understand their meaning and how to use them correctly. Make sure your formatting is consistent. Confirm that your final product looks neat and professional and not rushed and sloppy.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

How do you use a dictionary? Think about all the ways you *could* use it. In addition to definitions, a good dictionary will show you the parts of speech a word belongs to (noun, verb or preposition, for example), its multiple meanings, synonyms and antonyms, how to use it in a sentence and even how to pronounce it. What an awesome invention! Look up 10 random words. Speak each word out loud, then spell it out aloud, then write it down. Read the definition and try using the word in a sentence. The next day, review the previous day's list of words and remind yourself of how to say, spell and define them. Continue to add at least one new word every day.

- Give really important tasks your full attention. It's easy to get distracted or try to multitask, especially if you're stretched for time. But mistakes can happen if you allow your focus to wander. Work on completing the most critical, highest priority items first. Then go back and work on lower priority items. And get rid of distractions. Turn off your phone and notifications for chats, email and everything else. Take a quick break, if you need to. Then get back to the task at hand.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

It's crunch time. You have a term paper due tomorrow, laundry piling up, and you need to study for finals. Plus, you're planning to watch the big game with your friends, then go out for pizza. Panic! How are you going to get everything done? Describe how you're going to handle this. What are your top priorities? What deadlines do you have to consider? How are you going to maintain your concentration?

Advanced

- Manage all of your important details in one place. While using multiple methods (calendar, to-do list, day planner, project tracker and so on) may seem more thorough, tracking things this way is cumbersome and time consuming, and you risk missing or losing information. By having your reminders, goals, schedules and ideas in a single location, you can more easily track tasks, review progress and priorities, look up important deadlines, and see related notes. There are apps and other resources available that can help you do this.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Experiment with the bullet journal method of organizing your calendar, to-dos, concepts and appointments. This format allows you to quickly take down notes and details, and to manage and view your information in a simple, compact form. Grab a notebook or pick an app, create an index and start jotting down your plans and events. You can stick to the basics or go crazy with drawings, stickers, colored inks and flags. To get started, search online for "how to bullet journal".

- Evaluate your efforts. After you've completed a large task or project, take time to review how things went. Consider what worked well and what needs improvement. Pay special attention to steps or details that were inadvertently omitted. Make any necessary adjustments to your procedures, deadlines, priorities and tracking methods, so that you can improve on these in future.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Imagine you're going to be producing custom tie-dye T-shirts for sale. Create a basic action plan describing your objective, the sequence of steps and the tasks, people and deadlines you'll need to track. What are some specific areas you anticipate could be troublesome? Highlight the ones you'll want to track more closely for evaluation later. For example, will you need to capture issues relating to change requests, vendors or production requirements? In the post-project analysis, this information will help you avoid repeating the same problems and do a more thorough job next time.

Related Links

- [How to Create an Action Plan in 5 Steps](#)



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Cultivate an interest in people outside of your usual circle of friends and acquaintances. While it may feel uncomfortable at first, aim to initiate a conversation with a new person every week. Make an effort to get to know them on more than just a surface level.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

In your next class, pick one or two people you don't know and talk to them. Keep it simple — smile, make eye contact and say hello. If they seem receptive, throw in a simple question or observation, like "That's an awesome T-shirt!" (Compliments are a great way to get a response). Once the ice is broken, let the conversation flow naturally. When you're comfortable with it, try starting one of these informal convos in less-familiar surroundings.

Related Links

- [Kio Stark: Why You Should Talk to Strangers](#)
- [Malavika Varadan: 7 Ways to Make a Conversation With Anyone](#)

- Cultivate an interest in people outside of your usual circle of friends and acquaintances. While it may feel uncomfortable at first, aim to initiate a conversation with a new person every week. Make an effort to get to know them on more than just a surface level.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

The next time you're waiting in line—let's say you're at the grocery store—practice chatting with the people around you. Smile and make eye contact, and keep the conversation simple. Say something witty or observational ("I could have bought a T-bone steak for what this head of cauliflower is costing me!").

Related Links

- [Kio Stark: Why You Should Talk to Strangers](#)
- [Malavika Varadan: 7 Ways to Make a Conversation With Anyone](#)

- Use every opportunity to practice your social skills. Think about what prevents you from socializing more often. Is it a lack of confidence? Concerns about your appearance? Little in common with others? Perhaps you just prefer solitary pursuits. While there's nothing wrong with that, there are times in life when an ability to socialize can be very useful. With practice, you might even find you enjoy it!

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Practice making conversation at least once a day. You can talk to your friends, family or colleagues, volunteer, join a club, go to an event or have a chat with cashiers or servers. Each time you interact with someone, pay attention to the conversation. If something works well, plan to use it again. With each new conversation, try to extend it a little further.

- Work at having a positive outlook, both inside and out. Smile more often. People tend to be drawn to individuals who seem approachable and confident. Instead of focusing on what you perceive as your flaws, concentrate on what makes you special—your talents, accomplishments and most flattering qualities. This can help you get past any negative self-talk and add to your outward appeal as someone worth getting to know.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Make a mental checklist of these three things: something you're really good at, an achievement you're proud of, and one of your most positive traits. Let's say you're a whiz at biology, you're stoked about having won a scholarship and you're a genuinely kind person. When you're in a social situation, put a smile on your face, be friendly and run through this list in your head. The idea is not to tell these things to others but to yourself. Think about it: if you meet someone who acts distant and doesn't appreciate their own self-worth, would you want to get to know them better?

Advanced

- Pay attention to your conversational style. When you're the listener, be respectful, give the other person your full attention and show genuine interest. When you're speaking, relax, be yourself and don't hog the conversation. If you feel passionate about something, it's OK to make your point with conviction, but don't get carried away or you could seem argumentative. Aim to spend about half the time talking and the other half listening.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Practice talking to people at professional events. Try to attend at least one a month. If you're worried about choking on your words, plan out short responses for typical questions. For example, have your elevator speech ready when someone asks, "And what do you do?" If you're talking to a bigshot, there's no need to be nervous. Smile, be polite and make sure you listen as well as talk, but treat them the same as you would anyone else in the room.

Related Links

- [The Elevator Speech](#)

- Make the first move. Instead of waiting for people to come to you, get out there and socialize! Look for opportunities to meet and mingle. When meeting new people, be ready with a fun or interesting way to introduce yourself and be prepared to make small talk. Nurture your existing relationships. Contact friends regularly and arrange to meet up. And accept invitations that come your way. Even if you're not interested, look at them as a chance to practice your social skills.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Plan a networking event. You could start with a casual gathering of people from your workplace and gradually work up to larger groups with specific interests. In addition to people you want to meet, invite people you already know but would like a stronger connection with. Be sure to read every name tag, introduce yourself to every attendee and save every business card you collect.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Consider how you're perceived by other people. This begins with self-reflection. Do you tell stories to hide your faults? Exaggerate your accomplishments? Think it's more important to impress people than let them see the "real" you? Ask your closest confidants for an honest appraisal. Then think about your interactions with others and how they respond to you. Don't try to portray yourself as something better or different.

EXAMPLE



Work:

You've noticed a change in a colleague's attitude. You used to have a friendly relationship, but now it's all business. What could have caused this change? Let's say you've sucked up a little. Who doesn't? And you've embellished the truth a few times, but that just makes you a more interesting person, right? So, what gives? It could be that your flattery has gone too far and your co-worker realizes you're a phony. That kind of behavior can make you seem like a less trustworthy person. List some other reasons why a person's attitude toward you could suddenly go sour.

- Tell the truth. Practice being open and genuine in your interactions with others. Be candid when asked about your thoughts, opinions and experiences.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Your friend asks for an honest opinion of her final project. She needs a good mark to graduate, so it's important. Unfortunately, it's a pretty poor effort. You think she needs to scrap the whole thing and start again. You want to be truthful, but you don't want to risk losing her as a friend. Explain what you'll say to her. You can try to be kind and empathetic, but keep it honest.

Advanced

- Be an active listener. When another person is speaking, make eye contact and focus carefully on what they're saying. An occasional nod or gesture and maintaining an engaged but relaxed posture will show that you're following. Try to truly understand their perspective. When they finish speaking, follow up with your thoughts and questions. If you've listened closely and taken a genuine interest, your sincerity will be obvious.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

In your conversations with others, being an active listener demonstrates your sincerity. Practice this every time you interact with someone. Wait until the other person finishes speaking, then ask one or more open-ended questions. Those are the kind that can't be answered with a simple Yes or No. This is going to require that you actually listen to what's being said. If you're not really following, it'll be obvious from your questions and you may come across as insincere or phony.

Related Links

- [Tips for Active Listening](#)

- Be accountable for your actions. If you've made a mistake or spoken too bluntly and offended someone, offer a sincere apology. Don't make excuses or try to deflect the blame. Admit it was your fault and accept full responsibility. If there's anything you can do to correct the situation or make it up in some way, make sure you offer.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

You goofed around in the lab and now you've screwed up your team's experiment. The work will have to be redone. Your lab partner is furious. He's got a hot date tonight! Describe how you're going to handle this situation. What are you going to do, what will you say and how can you make it up to your lab partner?



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Take stock of how you do things currently. Write a list or use an app to track your resource use and expenditures. Whenever you spend money or time on something, or use resources like energy and materials, make a note of it. As you gather this information, begin to look for patterns in your spending and consumption habits.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Set up a private account on a photo sharing network. Every time you buy something, take a picture of it and post it to your account. If the price isn't shown in the photo, note it in the comments. After tracking purchases for a month, see if you notice any trends in your spending habits. What are you buying most frequently? What are you spending the most on? Which expenses would you consider a necessity? Are there ways you can cut back or spend less?

- Learn to make smarter choices. Question every expenditure of money, time and resources. Do you really need more, the latest and greatest, the biggest or most expensive? Will a "no name" variety do the same job as a big-name one? Ask yourself if smaller or older will suffice, or if you can get by without spending anything at all. By making wiser decisions, you will spend more prudently and be less wasteful.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Your workplace is buying you a new laptop and you have to make a recommendation. So, what do you want? Superfast processor? Check. Fingerprint reader? Cool. Curved display? Yesss! Integrated eye tracker? Hold it a minute. What do you *need*? List the features that will help you most in your work. Then scope out some brands, model numbers and price tags. Narrow the selection to two or three top choices. Now write a paragraph about your decision and how you'll justify it when you discuss the options with your boss.

- Learn to make smarter choices. Question every expenditure of money, time and resources. Do you really need more, the latest and greatest, the biggest or most expensive? Will a "no name" variety do the same job as a big-name one? Ask yourself if smaller or older will suffice, or if you can get by without spending anything at all. By making wiser decisions, you will spend more prudently and be less wasteful.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Grab a sticky note and write down your most urgent financial issue. For example, "tuition fees" or "rent money". Put the note in your wallet or stick it to the front of your credit or debit card. Every time you go to buy something, you'll be reminded of your top priority. Don't torture yourself if a purchase is essential. Just take a moment to think about whether it's really necessary. Consider the last three purchases you've made. In a sentence or two, explain why you think they were — or were not — essential.

Advanced

- Draw up a budget and follow it. Whether it's food, fuel, raw materials or cold, hard cash, everything has a value—including your time. Think about how you can make do with less and do more with less. Use a spreadsheet or budgeting app, if it helps. There are many free resources available online.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

List the money you have coming in and going out every month. Incoming would include financial aid (like your student loan, scholarships and grants), your take-home pay if you're working, and contributions from the Bank of Mom and Dad. Outgoing would be stuff like rent, utilities, food, clothes, phone, transportation, entertainment, books and supplies. Don't forget tuition, if it's not covered by financial aid. Make sure your expenses are equal to or less than your income. If you're in the red, you need to re-evaluate your spending. What items are essential and where can you reduce costs?

Related Links

- [Federal Student Aid: Budgeting](#)
- [College Budget Template: Keep Track of Your School Expenses](#)

- Get proactive about cutting waste. This could mean using resources more frugally, such as turning off appliances when you're not using them, or finding more efficient alternatives. Challenge yourself and those around you to find ways to be less wasteful.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Start a recycling program at your workplace. Begin by finding out which recyclables typically end up in the garbage. Paper products and beverage containers are two of the biggest offenders. Set up collection bins in strategic locations and spread the word. Make sure everyone knows where the bins are, and use posters or labels to show what items can be recycled. Find out if your local recycling organization will pick up the materials. If not, you or another volunteer will have to drop them off.

Related Links

- [Recycling at Work](#)

- Get proactive about cutting waste. This could mean using resources more frugally, such as turning off appliances when you're not using them, or finding more efficient alternatives. Challenge yourself and those around you to find ways to be less wasteful.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Suggest that your college issue a challenge to rival schools in an energy reduction competition. Shutting off lights and unplugging electronic devices when not in use are easy ways to reduce waste on campus. Talk to your local energy supplier for tips on tracking consumption. Then put together a team to plan and promote the cause.

Related Links

- [Campus Conservation Nationals](#)
- [U.S. Department of Energy Campus Energy Efficiency Challenges](#)



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Practice replacing negativity with positivity. When you find yourself worrying or feeling cynical, give yourself a pep talk. Instead of allowing your inner voice to say, "I could never do that," tell yourself, "I'm going to give that a try." Picture yourself as a competent, positive person and focus on that image whenever you feel uncertainty creeping in.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Imagine you've lined up a job interview and it's the perfect gig. But you're your own worst critic, constantly talking yourself down. Think of some positive self-talk you could use to build confidence and blow off those nagging doubts. Write three to five sentences, or key words or phrases, that describe the strengths and accomplishments you would use in the job. Then ask a trusted friend to play the interviewer and ask you questions. In your answers, concentrate on your talents and how you would use them.

- To build and maintain a confident attitude, surround yourself with positive influences. Identify people and situations that drag you down and reduce the amount of time you're exposed to them. Look for ways to spend more time in supportive environments that help you feel good about yourself.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

To control the level of negativity around you, don't feed the conversation. If your friends are being cynical, stop participating and tune them out. Silence or a non-committal murmur in response to their griping will get the message across. When the talk turns positive, signal your approval by taking an active interest.

Advanced

- Practice expressing your ideas in public. Before you begin, think about what you plan to say and write it down. This can help you organize your thoughts more clearly. When you're ready, try it out first in a situation where you feel comfortable — for example, sharing an opinion with a friend or family member. As you gain experience, you'll find it easier and more enjoyable to speak up in a variety of situations with different people.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Make a habit of speaking up and asking questions in class. While studying or working on assignments, note down any questions you have or interesting points you've come across. Before class, review your notes, think about what you'd like to say and write out your comments. When the instructor asks for questions or comments on class material, put your hand up! Use your written notes to keep your comments relevant and succinct. As you gain confidence, you'll find it easier to do.

- Portray yourself as a confident person when you're speaking or presenting. Think about your voice and image, and visualize how others perceive you. Pay attention to your posture, body language, manner of speaking, personal grooming and clothing. Practice speaking in a calm, deliberate manner. Before you start, take a deep breath and focus on what you want to say.



Work:

Pretend you're in a meeting and your boss has asked for cost-cutting suggestions. You're keen to share your ideas, but when it's your turn to speak your normal voice has been replaced with a rapid-fire squeak. You're talking way too fast. And you're nervous: the tension is tightening your throat muscles and causing that shrill tone. Write down what you want to say and read it aloud to yourself. Then, without looking at your notes, practice saying your message a few times in a natural, conversational tone. The words don't have to be exactly the same, as long as the gist of your message gets across.



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Your body language tells others a lot about you. To convey charisma, stand (or sit) up straight and try to look relaxed. When you walk, stride forward confidently. With a self-assured posture, you'll radiate poise and competence — characteristics that will boost your personal appeal and ability to influence others.

EXAMPLE



Work:

To learn how you come across to others, enlist a couple of trusted friends to role play a situation. Pretend you're sitting in a high-pressure meeting, presenting to a group. Ask your friends for an honest appraisal of your performance. Are you hunched over and looking down or are you sitting up straight and making eye contact as you speak? Are your arms and legs crossed, protectively, or stretched out in a relaxed way? Note what needs to change and practice again. There's a theory that "power posing" can help you be more influential.

Related Links

- [More Confidence in 2 Minutes](#)
- [Power Posing Is Back](#)

- Win friends and influence people by making them feel valued. When you're speaking with someone, look them in the eye and give them your full attention. Smile, nod and use appropriate gestures to show you're interested in what they have to say. Use memory tricks to help you remember their names and other details.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

People are more likely to respond well to you and your ideas if you're attentive and observant. Challenge yourself to remember as many names and details as you can. When you meet someone on campus, focus on their face and use mnemonics to link it to their name. If the image you come up with is funny, you're more likely to remember it. Visualize Joe spilling coffee ("joe") all over himself. Make up a rhyme, rap or jingle to help you remember information that's shared with you.

Advanced

- Use humor to connect with people and bring them around to your point of view. Don't try too hard or you could end up being offensive and annoying. Make sure you understand people's boundaries and ensure your comments are suitable. If you're totally unfunny, work on being interesting. Try something new or different, embark on an adventure — then talk to people about your exciting life.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Learn how to be funny and interesting without making a fool of yourself. Run a search for "humor" on the TED Talks site. Watch some of the talks rated "Funny", "Informative" or "Inspiring" and note how the speakers present their topics — their mannerisms, phrasing and timing, the words they choose and how they craft their stories. Think about how you can employ their methods to enlighten and motivate others. Try it out with people you know well at first, then gradually branch out.

Related Links

- [TED Talks: Humor](#)

- Teach yourself some "magic" tricks. Mentalists are experts in observation. Through careful listening and closely reading body language, they pick up on unspoken signals that most people would never notice. To complete the trick, the mentalist subtly plants ideas in the other person's mind by dropping hints — making their subject think it was their own idea. With practice, you can develop a similar ability to read people and gently influence them to take action. This should only ever be used in an ethical way. The object is to suggest, not to manipulate or deceive people.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

When doing group work, observe and listen closely to your teammates. Notice not only what they're doing and saying, but the unspoken messages they're projecting. Carefully consider their tone of voice, posture, gestures, facial expressions and reactions. This can help you pick up on their frame of mind and provide clues as to what they might be thinking. As subtly as you can, insert specific words or phrases into the conversation that relate in some way to your point of view. These subliminal references can be as obscure as mentioning "bananas" to cause someone to think of the color yellow. With practice, you can plant an idea and cause people to warm to your idea.

Related Links

- [6 Mentalism Tricks that Will Leave You Thinking](#)



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Keep problems in perspective. By viewing every one as a disaster, you'll stress about it and become more anxious—and that won't resolve the issue. Tell yourself the situation is temporary and not really as huge and terrible as it feels right now. Then make a plan to get through it. As you work through your plan, the worries will ease and you'll be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Your student loan money is nearly all gone and you're freaking out. The next instalment is weeks away. How are you going to get through this? Describe some things you could do to shrink this problem down to size. For example, you could draw up a budget to figure out where you're spending the money. That'll help you identify expenses to reduce, delay or cut out altogether and make your funds last longer. What are some other ideas? Write a list.

- View every problem as a learning experience. Think about how you've overcome setbacks in the past, and remind yourself that you've coped before and can do it again. Don't allow yourself to feel gloomy and defeated. Push the emotion aside and take an objective look at the situation. See what you can take away from the experience to use in future.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Think of a setback you've experienced at work. For example, perhaps a project you were working on was delayed or canceled. Write down what happened. Under that, describe the reasons *why* it happened. Don't write about your anger or disappointment or frustration. Stick to the facts. Did something change? Was there a decision that affected the outcome? Read what you've written and focus on what you learned from that situation.

Advanced

- Learn to thrive on adversity. Getting through a really challenging situation can energize you. You'll gain strength and confidence, and that'll help you get through subsequent pressure situations. Savor and celebrate your success every time you overcome an obstacle.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Picture this: You're having a bad day. Your car broke down on the way to work. You were already running late and had an important meeting scheduled. You walk in and realize your wallet is missing. Yeah, it's a *really* bad day. So how are you going to deal with this? Crying or complaining won't help. You need to focus and handle it quickly, so you can get on with your work. Describe the steps you'll take to recover your car, locate your wallet and reschedule your meeting.

Related Links

- [Amy Morin: The Secret of Becoming Mentally Strong](#)

- Develop an attitude for gratitude. Are you overly pessimistic or do you generally look on the bright side of things? If you tend to be negative, work on becoming a more positive thinker. Instead of dwelling on what's wrong in your world, focus on what's good about it. If the sun is shining and you're having a fun day, be grateful! Regularly practicing gratitude can help you develop a more optimistic outlook and build resilience.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Try keeping a gratitude journal. About once a week, record a few things you've experienced that you're thankful for. Rather than a long list of trivial events, pick one or two significant ones and write about them in more detail. Along with experiences, think about the people and relationships you're grateful for. About once a month, call, write or meet with them in person to express your thanks for their positive influence on your life.

- Train yourself to be mindful. Focus on your thoughts and emotions in a given moment. Don't try to analyze them. Simply concentrate on being aware and accepting what it is you're feeling. You'll learn to appreciate the good emotions and tolerate the bad ones, and will grow better at adapting to changing situations. This will help you become more resilient and better able to cope when life throws you a curve ball.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Use mindfulness to change a negative attitude about stress. When things are tense at work, focus on your body's response. Notice that your heart pounds faster and your breathing speeds up. Practice *appreciating* these signs, because they mean your body is helping you deal with that crisis. Look at it this way: More oxygen is pumping through your system. Your senses are sharpening and you feel energized. Recognize that this is a useful, healthy response.

Related Links

- [Kelly McGonigal: How to Make Stress Your Friend](#)



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Resolve to make things happen. When you've set a tough new goal for yourself, there are going to be times when your motivation lapses. Rather than dwelling on how hard it is, challenge yourself to spend three minutes on your goal. That's right, just three minutes. You can handle that! Once you get started, you'll find it's not so difficult to keep going.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Even if you love your job, there are days you'd rather stay in bed and binge watch your favorite show. So find an inspirational quote to give yourself a kick-start. Maybe something like this one from Walt Disney: "The way to get started is to quit talking and start doing." Write your quote on sticky notes and place them in prominent spots like your desk, whiteboard or fridge as a constant reminder. Take three minutes, minimum, to work on your goal. Read the quote for a quick boost whenever your enthusiasm wanes.

- Don't shy away from a challenge just because it involves something new. Be willing to take a risk and try it. After that, it will no longer be unfamiliar and you'll be more comfortable with it the next time.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

College is a great time for taking risks (but not the kind that'll get you suspended!). Taking a chance now can pay off big time in future, in ways you might never have imagined. List three new experiences relating to your academic program or prospective career that you could pursue but are out of your comfort zone. Select one and set a goal to achieve it within the current school year. For example, you could apply for an internship that'll stretch the limits of your ability. It might be difficult at first, but you'll learn a lot and it will provide you with new skills and versatility to add to your resume. What have you got to lose?

Related Links

- [Learning to Risk. Risking to Learn](#)

Advanced

- Setting lots of goals won't help you achieve anything if you never finish them. To accomplish more, use the SMART approach to define your goals and keep yourself on track. Make them Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Think of three financial objectives you want to achieve and write them out as SMART goals. How will you know if your goal is a SMART one? It's in the acronym. A poor example would be: "I want to be super rich and live on a yacht in the Bahamas." A good example would be: "I will put five percent of everything I earn into a high-interest savings account for a year." That won't make you rich overnight, but it will make you SMART.

Related Links

- [SMART Goals 101](#)

- Setting lots of goals won't help you achieve anything if you never finish them. To accomplish more, use the SMART approach to define your goals and keep yourself on track. Make them Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Create three SMART goals for the current academic year. For example, say you want to improve your grades. Deciding to party less and work harder would be smart, but not SMART. This is better: "I will raise my grade from a D to a C by the end of the semester. I will accomplish this by setting aside two hours a day to read and study, getting weekly help from a tutor, meeting regularly with my instructor and reviewing my notes every weekend."

Related Links

- [SMART Goal Information Sheet](#)

- Look for ways to continually improve. Seek out more efficient methods, find new ways to do things and make each goal successively more difficult. In this way, you will continue to challenge yourself, achieve more and experience constant improvement.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Consider the concept of "kaizen" and how you can apply it to your work. Let's say one of your daily tasks is straightening 10 paperclips. It's super boring and seems pointless. As part of the kaizen process, you question why this task is necessary. You discover the clips are used to free paper jams in the shredder. After discussion with your manager, the problematic shredder is replaced and the task eliminated. You now have more time to work on other things. It's a small change for the better: kaizen. Think of an example in your own situation and write about how you would address it using the kaizen approach.

Related Links

- [Kaizen](#)
- [How to Practice Kaizen](#)

- Broaden your horizons. Be willing to set aside the predictability of life in your comfort zone. You don't have to make extreme changes. Just shake up your regular routine by trying something different to challenge yourself.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Sign up for a class or activity you've never tried before and don't know much about. You might even think you won't be any good at it. Not into athletics? Try a dance class, yoga, karate or a beginner's running club. Don't have an artistic bone in your body? Go for sculpting, photography or painting. You'll learn something new, meet people outside of your usual network and gain fresh perspectives.



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Be open to feedback. It may rankle when someone offers advice, especially if you believe you're right and the other person is wrong. But part of being modest is accepting that there's always room for self-improvement. Instead of ignoring or disagreeing with the person, listen carefully. Ask others who know you well if there's any truth in what you've been told. You might be surprised to learn they've noticed the same thing.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Imagine you've just been given constructive criticism from someone whose opinion you don't respect. What can you say? Write a paragraph describing how you'll respond. Here's a suggestion: Take it on the chin. Try not to react, especially negatively. Remind yourself that feedback can help you improve your skills and do a better job. And even though you don't hold this person in high regard, their comments could be valid.

- Share the credit. When you're singled out for recognition, don't pretend you did it all on your own. Think about how lucky you've been and consider how others have helped you along the way. Remember that happenstance, opportunity and other people—together with your own hard work—have all played a role in your success.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Congratulations, you've just won an Academy Award! Now that you've reached this pinnacle of success, it's time to show your appreciation. Write an acceptance speech thanking those who have been most influential in your life and describing the lucky breaks that have come your way. But don't make it too long, the producers have set a 45-second time limit.

Advanced

- Learn how to take compliments and talk about your accomplishments without appearing egotistical. When someone praises you, be gracious but don't let it go to your head. Likewise, you don't have to avoid talking about yourself, as long as you're not bragging. For your proudest moments, try to limit yourself to sharing with people who'll actually be happy for you.

EXAMPLE



Work:

You've finally wrapped up a huge project and are justifiably proud. How can you talk about it without sounding like a conceited jerk? Describe how you'll announce this great achievement to your boss and colleagues. But remember, no humblebragging. (Like, a celebrity who tweets "omg I HATE watching tv when im on it!") People will see that for what it really is, a phony attempt at humility. What do you plan to say? Will the conversations differ, depending on who you're talking to?

- Learn how to take compliments and talk about your accomplishments without appearing egotistical. When someone praises you, be gracious but don't let it go to your head. Likewise, you don't have to avoid talking about yourself, as long as you're not bragging. For your proudest moments, try to limit yourself to sharing with people who'll actually be happy for you.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

You've just received a glowing comment and a great mark from your instructor for a crucial assignment. How can you talk about it without sounding smug? You want to share the happy news with your family and your classmates. Describe how the conversations will go. What do you plan to say? Will the conversations differ, depending on who you're talking to? In what ways?

- Try to have a balanced view of yourself. Sure, it's hard to be humble when everything about you is so perfect! But be realistic. Think about your most positive aspects as a person. This might include characteristics such as capable, generous or thoughtful, for example. Then consider your less appealing qualities — irresponsible, arrogant or materialistic, perhaps. With a healthy, balanced opinion of yourself, you'll not only recognize your talents and best features but will also, equally, acknowledge your faults.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

List what you consider to be your three most likeable and three most unlikeable personal traits. Then ask your family and close friends for an honest appraisal to help you understand how others see you. Compare their suggestions with your own and refine your list. Write a short sentence for each characteristic explaining how these qualities describe you. For example, "I am always very generous with my time when people need my help." "I am pretty materialistic and like to show off my expensive taste in clothes." Work towards having a healthy self-opinion, one that encompasses both your gifts *and* your flaws.



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Always use a to-do list. Instead of trying to track everything in your head, create a list for tasks, schedules, appointments and reminders. Make sure you keep it up to date and cross things out as they're completed. Rearrange the entries every so often to better suit specific goals and your daily schedule.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Pick out a journal, app or other method to store your to-do list, but make sure you use only one. If you keep your to-dos in multiple places, you'll lose track of things and descend into chaos. Having everything in one place, where you can easily look things up, add and update items and track your progress, is crucial to staying organized.

Related Links

- [Top 24 To-Do List Apps to Help You Keep Your Life on Track](#)

- Set aside a regular time once a week to straighten up your desk or workspace. Schedule it as a task on your to-do list until the routine becomes a habit. Even if you don't enjoy tidying up, you'll feel good about it afterwards. Your work area will be neat and well-organized and you'll know where to find everything when you need it.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Organize things in your office in order of importance. The most important items—those you use all the time—should go in the files, desk drawers and storage spaces nearest to you, so that they remain within easy reach. Store stuff you don't use very often in the storage areas further away.

Advanced

- Structure your day for maximum productivity. Experiment with different schedules, tasks and routines to determine your ideal working times and conditions. For example, if you're a morning person, you'll feel most alert in the early hours. Try tackling your toughest or most creative tasks at the start of your day. Schedule repetitive or less critical tasks for later, when your attention span and energy levels are lower.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Organize your day into blocks of 90 minutes each. Select a block and use it to focus on one of your most challenging tasks. Don't allow yourself to be distracted by other things and don't permit any interruptions. For 90 minutes, focus exclusively on the task you've selected. According to research, people are able to concentrate better and work most productively in 90-minute cycles, with breaks in between. Note which blocks of time work best for certain kinds of tasks — afternoons for creative work, for instance — to pinpoint your optimal conditions.

- Learn to prioritize. Disorganization often stems from feeling overwhelmed by everything you need to do and not knowing where to begin.



Academic:

Prioritizing can make your life at college go a lot more smoothly. Start by identifying your top three priorities for the school year (for example, "explore my career options"). List the key tasks related to achieving each priority and a timeline for completing each task (such as, "visit my campus career center before the third week of the semester"). Next, list your top three priorities for the month and again outline the tasks and timelines. Then decide what you need to accomplish in the coming week. Use your everyday to-do list to track and update tasks, goals and deadlines in support of your weekly, monthly and annual priorities.



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Make time for quiet self-reflection. While doing this activity, there must be minimal outside stimulation: no devices or people talking. Focus on your actions and feelings, past, present and future. Avoid thinking about how others affect you: this is not a time for blame or for being thankful. Schedule at least 15 minutes a day for this, and you will increase your self-awareness greatly.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

There are many ways to reflect, from journaling to going for a walk to taking a long bath. During this reflection, ask yourself questions like, "Do my actions match my beliefs and goals?", "What have I done that has allowed success?", and "How can I change my thoughts and actions to improve my situation?"

Related Links

- [Mindfulness Apps](#)

- Record and review your goals. It's easy to talk about your goals, but writing them down and reviewing them on a regular basis makes things more real. Knowing you will review your goals means you will be accountable for what you actually accomplish. Regular reviews will also make you aware of your progress or lack of it.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Within the next week, carve out 30 minutes to write down any goals related to your education and career. Make sure you break your goals into steps that can be completed in a reasonable timeframe—a year or less, for example. Then create a goal review schedule: 15 minutes once a week or once a month, for example. Use calendar reminders. Use the goal review time to record any progress toward achieving your goals, to adjust goals when needed, and to create new goals. And yes, there is an app for that! Many apps, in fact. Because of scheduling and reminders, this is well-suited to using an app.

Related Links

- [Goal Tracking Apps](#)

Advanced

- Record facts and feelings. Our memories are imperfect and our feelings can distort facts even in the moment. Writing down unaltered facts is difficult, but practice can help. Detectives, lawyers and journalists do this all the time. It is also important to record our feelings and reactions. When you review events from the past, you may notice that you can view things more objectively and see how your feelings may have affected your judgment.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Keep a journal, on paper or a screen—there are some great journaling apps available. A good time to journal is right after you've done some self-reflection. Take five minutes to capture key moments of the day or past week. Keep the facts simple and unbiased—what, where, who and when, but not why. Answering why often brings assumptions. Record your feelings and reactions to the facts separately, but label each. The advantage is that when you later review what you wrote, feelings are less likely to distort the issues. Seeing a separate record of your reactions improves your self-awareness and allows you to change how you react in the future.

Related Links

- [Journaling Apps](#)

- Get outside perspective. It is impossible to see yourself without bias. Contestants in talent competitions should not be their own judges. Outside input can be biased as well, but getting input from multiple sources helps balance out bias. Talking to others and taking psychological assessments can help. Gather all the feedback and assemble it into a more complete picture of yourself.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Pick three to five people who know you well but come from different areas of your life. For example, you could speak to a friend, family member, co-worker, teacher, coach or partner. Prepare yourself for honest input: not all of it will be sunshine and rainbows, and some of it may differ from your self-perception. Remember that feedback can be used for improvement or ignored if not useful. Getting upset or arguing with feedback does not help anyone. Once you are ready, ask each person questions such as, "What are my strengths and challenges?" or "Where can I improve my abilities?" Instead of disagreeing with their feedback, ask for specific examples of when a trait or behavior was observed. You may be pleasantly surprised by some of the positives you hear. Above all, listen with an open mind.

Related Links

- [4 Steps for Getting Truly Honest Feedback](#)
- [Five Steps to Get Honest Feedback](#)



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- When you have a chance to talk to someone whose viewpoint differs from yours, start up a conversation. You might be amazed by what you learn about their life and perspectives. You may even find you have more in common than you expected. Be respectful: don't press or pry for information. The object is to build bridges and learn about, not distress, the other person.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

On a whim, you're attending a huge Lego event in your town and meeting attendees from every corner of the globe. Cool! You're not even into Lego, you're a diehard Mega Bloks fan, but what a great opportunity to exercise your curiosity! Imagine the discussion. Describe how you could start up a conversation to discuss the merits of both *without* trying to convince the other person that Mega Bloks rocks and Lego is lame. What would you say? What questions would you ask?

- Identify your interests. Start a list of people, places, items and activities you're curious about but have never explored further. It might surprise you to realize how many different areas of interest you actually have. Every item on your list provides a great lead for expanding your curiosity.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Head to your school's library and pick out a book that looks interesting. Read the front and back covers and the first page. Then leaf to somewhere near the middle and read a page or two. What have you learned so far about the book and its author? What questions do you have? Make a note of anything you'd like to know more about. Add these items to your list of interests. Later, pull a random book from the shelves and try this again.

- Expand on your interests to explore and try something new. Your love of eating sushi could lead to taking cooking classes, learning how to fish, studying Japanese or traveling to Japan! Be open to trying activities you wouldn't normally participate in. With each experience, you'll discover new questions and further interests, providing even more fodder for your growing curiosity.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Check out activities at your school and join up for something that looks intriguing. Discovered an interest in politics? Take a run at student government. You'll learn how to organize a campaign, broaden your people skills and represent your classmates. And it'll look great on your resume, even if you decide a future in politics is not for you. If you don't have much time to devote to clubs or activities, take part in short-term events on weekends, like adventure trips, film nights or recreational sports.

Advanced

- Practice mindfulness. Slow down and focus on the present moment. Use all of your senses to observe and be aware of your surroundings. Ask questions that help you process the information you're taking in. Reflect on what you've learned. This exercise can deepen your understanding of not only what's going on around you, but of your innermost thoughts and feelings. It can reveal different paths, new interests and more intense curiosity.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Think of a task you do all the time, like checking email, operating a machine or arranging a meeting. Pretend you've never done it before and are just learning how. Examine the tools or technology you'll need to use. How can you get started? What will you need to learn? How can you test out different ways of completing the task? What questions do you have?

Related Links

- [How to Practice Mindfulness](#)

- Involve people in your curiosity quest. As you learn new information, share it with others. Discuss it, debate it, question it. Listen to their thoughts and questions. Ask about their own interests and how those relate to their lives and experiences. Through these interactions, you can learn what drives other people's curiosity and be inspired by it.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Generate more curiosity by finding some "idea mates". Find three people you can talk to who are fanatically devoted to different kinds of great ideas. Discuss how they came across these ideas and why they are such passionate supporters. Consider what you've learned and any new questions it has inspired. In a journal or using a digital app, record your findings.

Related Links

- [Rainn Wilson: Ideas Worth Dating](#)
- [Steven Johnson: Where Good Ideas Come From](#)



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Look for ways to make others feel special. This can be a small gesture such as giving up your seat on the bus, offering an honest but not over-the-top compliment, or holding a door open for someone. Don't focus on what you stand to get out of it. Just think about what people need and what would make them feel good.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Become a "pay it forward" activist. Do something nice for another person without expecting a return for the favor. If they insist, tell them to share the love with someone else. Once this takes off, you'll be surrounded by ever-increasing cascades of niceness. There are lots of easy ways to get started. Search online for inspiration or use the related links.

Related Links

- [23 Easy Ideas to Pay It Forward](#)
- [50 Easy Pay it Forward Day Kindness Ideas](#)

- If someone's actions bother you, try to look at things from *their* point of view. Remember that a person's behavior is influenced by their personal values, abilities and experiences, and they may not be the same as yours.

EXAMPLE



Work:

You've just seen the new intern grab several packets of sugar from the lunchroom and stuff them into a pocket. What's that about? You wouldn't liberate company condiments like that! But that's you. Ditch your preconceptions and think of some reasons why a person might do this. For example, it's their first day and they could be nervous. Maybe clutching those crunchy little sachets is better than squeezing a stress ball. What are some other reasons? Try to list at least three.

Advanced

- Practice constructive criticism. When delivered in a supportive and encouraging way, well-intentioned feedback can be genuinely helpful. It lets others understand themselves better and learn how to improve. Use nonjudgmental language, be sensitive to the other person's feelings and keep the focus on fixing the problem.

EXAMPLE



Work:

One of your co-workers has screwed up, again, and your team has elected you to talk to him. He's prickly and defensive, so choose your words carefully. If he takes it the wrong way, it'll blow your project further off course. You need him to get past this quickly and refocus on the project. What are some things you could say to help him get back on track? Write out how the conversation would go.

- Listen with empathy when another person is expressing their ideas and opinions. Try to focus not only on what they're saying, but on what they're feeling and what they need. Allow them to speak without interrupting. When they've finished, and *before* offering your own viewpoint, repeat back what they've just said. This helps them to see that you've listened and understood their point of view.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Imagine you're working on a group assignment. Your teammate is excited about her idea, but you're not so sure. You think yours is better. You could stubbornly insist on using your idea, but she's bubbling with enthusiasm for hers. Describe how you're going to handle this. Be sure to consider your teammate's needs and feelings in your approach. Write down how the conversation would go.

- Pay attention to your intuition. You might call this feeling a gut instinct or sixth sense, and you might not be used to relying on it. But scientific research indicates that a person's intuitive perception can play an important role in how they see others. Combined with emotional intelligence, your "intuitive intelligence" can be a powerful tool in helping you read a person's emotional state.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

Have you ever had a gut feeling about someone? Perhaps you instinctively felt warm and relaxed, or maybe you were inexplicably worried, your stomach churning. These physical sensations are your body's reaction to your intuition. In your interactions with people, quietly observe your own feelings and reactions. Try to discern your physical response to what you're seeing and hearing. At the same time, note the emotion you're feeling as a result of the interaction—happy, sad, loving, tense or concerned, for example.

Related Links

- [Is It Rational to Trust Your Gut Feelings? A Neuroscientist Explains](#)



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on your results. Consider each and select the ones you think would work best for you.

Basic

- Exercise your brainstorming skills. If something doesn't seem possible, it's only because you haven't figured out how to make it happen. When working on problems, brainstorm solutions, consider all the possibilities, and keep an open mind.

EXAMPLE



Work:

To think outside the box, get out of the box. Head to a gallery or museum. Take in a public meeting, go to a fancon event, attend a Steampunk festival or read up on a bleeding-edge industry (as long as it's not the one you work in). Spending time outside of your usual habitat can provide a fresh take and get your creative juices flowing. The ideas you pick up could lead to innovations in your work.

- Learn by experimenting—and don't be afraid to make mistakes. People who are great innovators don't have some special quality that others lack. They're simply willing to try things, to take risks and fail, when others are not. Instead of viewing an unsuccessful attempt as a failure, take what you can learn from the experience and move on.

EXAMPLE



Personal:

"I taught myself how to play the guitar, so I basically learned by a system of making mistakes." — Richie Sambora

Challenge yourself to learn something new through exploring and experimenting. For example, it could be learning to play an instrument, cooking a new dish or learning a different language. Once a week, take time to reflect on how far you've come. In a journal or using a digital app, write a few notes about the insights you've gained that week. Consider how much you've learned through trial and error. What would it have been like if you hadn't been willing to make mistakes along the way?

Related Links

- [Why Making Mistakes Is The Best Way To Learn A Language](#)

Advanced

- Look at things from different perspectives. Instead of just accepting existing routines, methods and uses, try to view them in a new way. The solution to a problem could be right in front of you. Innovation is all about seeing things differently and connecting the dots in ways no one else has thought of yet.

EXAMPLE



Work:

Did you know that bubble wrap was originally developed as textured plastic wallpaper? When that idea flopped, the inventors pitched it to IBM as packaging material for computers. We all know how that worked out.

Focus on an everyday object in your workplace. Try to think of at least three ways it could be used for a completely different purpose other than the typical one. For example, you can use a pencil to loosen a sticky door lock (not in the way you might think!). Gradually expand your thinking beyond individual items to consider different ways of viewing processes, theories, functions and so on.

- ☐ Stretch your brain. Read up on brain science to understand how your brain actually tries to inhibit innovation. Learn how you can develop your innovative ability by retraining your brain to be more open to new ideas and ways of doing things.

EXAMPLE



Academic:

Practice deliberate daydreaming. Take your focus off whatever's bugging you at the moment—studying, bills, growling stomach—and let your mind wander. Remember what it was like when you were a little kid, when your imagination took you to wild places and you could do anything? Let your brain have some time to play around with that kind of thinking. When ideas pop into your head, write them down.

Related Links

- [Daydreaming: The Bridge Between Imagining and Creating | Aimee Mullins](#)
- [Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick: Interviews with Artists About What Inspires Them](#)
- [The Unlikely Benefits of Distraction](#)