



POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE

Why Only 20% of
Teams and Individuals
Achieve Their True Potential
AND HOW YOU CAN ACHIEVE YOURS

SHIRZAD CHAMINE

Praise for *POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE*

“Positive Intelligence has had a lasting and transformative impact on me and others in my organization. It is a powerful framework for bringing out the best in everyone and quieting the worst. When you increase someone’s PQ, they will not only perform much better but also feel a whole lot more personal fulfillment, and less stress, along the way.

Positive Intelligence ranks in the top three most influential business books I have ever read. If I could give only one book to the thousands of team members in my organization to enhance their performance, it would be this book.”

—Lisa Stevens, Region President, Wells Fargo Bank

“Positive Intelligence can change your life and transform your business. A real game-changer.”

—James D. White, Chairman, President, and CEO,
Jamba Juice

“I’ve worked closely with Shirzad and experienced him walking the PQ walk. What gives this book its power is his authentic sharing of how PQ principles transformed him as a leader and a human being.

Experienced leaders know that most change initiatives fizzle because of our mental Saboteurs. Shirzad gives us the tools to conquer these Saboteurs and create positive change that lasts. This is a must-read for any individual or team serious about unleashing peak performance.”

—Dean Morton, former COO, Hewlett-Packard (HP)

“Developing a personal leadership model is one of the most practical, energy-saving, and stress-reducing things that anyone can do for themselves. *Positive Intelligence* makes that job easier by focusing on mastering the two most critical voices in everyone’s heads: Saboteur and Sage. The best news is that leaders at every level can use its approach to get, and stay, on a more ‘winning’ trajectory. This is such a usable, lively, and compelling book.”

—Douglas R. Conant, former CEO, Campbell Soup Company, and New York Times bestselling author

“This is a very innovative and important application of original psychological thinking to the business field. The PQ model provides a solid basis for bringing meaning and significant change to one’s life. The strategies for identifying and dealing with Saboteur and Sage while harnessing untapped powers of the mind have proved highly effective in the business setting, and might well be applied elsewhere. If you want to create major positive change in yourself, your team, or loved ones, read this book.”

—Crittenden E. Brookes, MD, PhD, Stanford University, and Distinguished Life Fellow, American Psychiatric Association

“I have worked with Shirzad personally and seen him work with many other Presidents and CEOs. His impact is often game-changing for a team and life-changing for the individuals. When a coach raises a team’s PQ, it can quickly shift every player from good to extraordinary. The player’s skills are the same, but he has learned to command those voices in his head to his advantage. That makes all the difference in performance. *Positive Intelligence* is a must-have for anyone who leads or coaches a team.”

—Jed York, President and CEO, San Francisco 49ers

“Shirzad delivers a simple, doable, groundbreaking set of exercises that can help you develop your ‘performance’ muscles, increase your PQ score, and gain access to previously untapped mental resources. Working out was never so rewarding or so much fun! So if you’re ready to get even better, get this book—today.”

—Marshall Goldsmith, New York Times bestselling author, *Mojo* and *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There*

“*Positive Intelligence* is an insightful book that identifies

those internal voices (Saboteurs) that undermine self-confidence and prevent us from achieving our potential. In a clear and practical way, Chamine describes the actions that quiet those voices to allow us to listen to our internal Sage. This is an excellent book for anybody who seeks to increase their personal satisfaction, interpersonal effectiveness, and performance.”

—David L. Bradford, PhD, Senior Lecturer Emeritus,
Graduate School of Business, Stanford University.
Co-author of the bestselling books *Power up* and
Influence Without Authority

“Working with Shirzad has had a profound impact on me. The tools and techniques to raise PQ are simple, concrete and pragmatic, yet incredibly effective. They help me remain focused on what truly matters and grounded amidst the swirl of daily life.

The PQ model is a brilliant breakthrough as it defines, measures, and improves your awareness of your own performance and happiness. It also helps solve the mystery of why so many smart people still fail to be successful. This book is a gift. Make sure you share it.”

—Jim Lanzone, President, CBS Interactive (CBS
Corporation)

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While the examples and case studies in this book are drawn from real client engagements, the names and identifying details of persons mentioned have been changed or omitted to protect their privacy.

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To my daughter Teesa
To my son Kian

You have taught me more
than I could ever teach you.

On your worthy quest
for the great river's elusive source,
may you find a lake so pure,
with waters so still,
that you can see, truly see,
this magnificent being, you.

On your winding way,
when life throws you down,
may you, with great delight,
search inside the painted dust
for clues, unfolding
the grand mystery of you.

And when you get lost,
in the stormy moonless night,
may you trust, deeply trust,
as sage, ageless guide,
the true
beautiful
you.

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INTRODUCTION

I was twelve when I read an illustrated book about Sisyphus, the king who was being punished after falling from grace. For weeks I couldn't get the image out of my mind. This poor former king painstakingly pushing a huge boulder up a steep hill over and over again, only to see his efforts unravel right before making it to the top. What torture, I thought! I felt burdened and depressed just thinking about it.

It took me years of observing myself and others to realize that in many aspects of our lives we don't fare much better than Sisyphus. Many of our efforts at improving our success or happiness unravel just as surely as the giant boulder rolling back to the bottom of the hill.

Think about it. Why are most New Year's resolutions abandoned year after year? Why do most dieters succumb to yo-yo dieting? Why does that nagging and anxious voice in our head keep returning to torture us when we are trying to sleep? Why is our increased happiness so fleeting after we achieve what we thought would bring lasting happiness? Why do new leadership skills acquired in workshops soon give way to old habits? Why do expensive team-building retreats only result in temporary blips in team cohesion and performance?

We are indeed being tortured and punished, just as Sisyphus was. But here's the catch! The torture is self-inflicted. The reason so many of our attempts at improving our success or happiness fizzle is that we sabotage ourselves. More precisely, our own minds sabotage us.

Your mind is your best friend. But it is also your worst enemy. Undetected "Saboteurs" in your mind cause most of your setbacks without your full awareness. The consequences are huge. Only 20 percent of individuals and teams achieve their true potential. The rest of us waste a lot of our time and vital energy playing Sisyphus.

With Positive Intelligence you can both measure and significantly improve the percentage of time that your mind is serving you rather than

sabotaging you. This will permanently shift the balance of power inside your mind so you can achieve more of your vastly untapped potential—and help others do the same.

Positive Intelligence is ultimately about action and results. Its tools and techniques are a synthesis of the best practices in neuroscience, organizational science, positive psychology, and Co-Active® coaching. I have honed these tools over many years, first through my own experience as CEO of two companies, and then through coaching hundreds of other CEOs, their senior executive teams, and, sometimes, their families. These tools had to pack a strong punch in a short time in order to fit busy and demanding lives—with some taking as little as 10 seconds to produce results.

I encourage you to have high expectations for what you can get out of this book. All of the stories in this book, while simplified for greater brevity and clarity, are based on actual experiences of my clients. If the experiences of those who have gone before you are any indication, the material in this book can change your life and be a game-changer for your team or organization. Please don't settle for anything less.

PART I
WHAT IS POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ?

CHAPTER 1

POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ

Frank, the CEO of a publicly traded company, entered the greatest despair of his illustrious professional career when his company's stock lost two-thirds of its value during the recession of 2008. He was so devastated by his own failure that he broke down crying when his ten-year-old daughter asked why he looked so sad. He could not stop blaming himself for the company's downward spiral, and he often woke up in the middle of the night with his mind racing for a way to get the company back on track.

Frank's senior management team was also experiencing high stress levels, feeling guilt, and pointing fingers over what had gone wrong. They worried about the impact on themselves, on the thousands of others working for them, and on their families. They had been working impossibly long hours to turn things around, without much success. That's when Frank reached out to me for help.

When I met Frank, I suggested that his best bet for a sustainable turnaround of his company was to raise the Positive Intelligence levels of himself and his team. Using the principles of Positive Intelligence, we devised a core question to reframe and redirect the team's perspective and redirect its efforts: "What do we need to do so that within three years we can say this current crisis was the best thing that could have happened to our company?"

Frank's senior leadership team was skeptical when he posed the question during one of their weekly team meetings. But their skepticism subsided and their enthusiasm grew gradually as Frank opened each subsequent weekly team meeting with that same question. By contemplating the question and utilizing many tools of Positive Intelligence, they were able to shift their entire mind-set from anxiety, disappointment, guilt, and blame to curiosity, creativity, excitement, and

resolute action. I predicted that within a year they would discover how they could turn their collective failure into a great opportunity. It took them less than six months.

Over the next year and a half, the company consolidated and streamlined its product offerings. It doubled down on its bet on the original value proposition of the company, which had been lost over years of chasing tempting but unrelated growth opportunities. During this time, the company's stock slowly recovered its value. Each month Frank and his team became more convinced that their "new" company would be far more dominant and successful than it had been in its prime.

When I checked in with Frank recently, he reported that he valued his increased sense of peace and happiness even more highly than his impressive professional and financial gains. This is a typical reaction, as increased Positive Intelligence impacts both. What Frank found most fascinating was that he began having more success once he finally stopped believing that his happiness depended on his success.

WHAT ARE POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ?

As I've already suggested, your mind is your best friend, but it is also your worst enemy. Positive Intelligence measures the relative strength of these two modes of your mind. High Positive Intelligence means your mind acts as your friend far more than as your enemy. Low Positive Intelligence is the reverse. Positive Intelligence is therefore an indication of the control you have over your own mind and how well your mind acts in your best interest. It should be relatively easy to see how your level of Positive Intelligence determines how much of your true potential you actually achieve.

To illustrate, when your mind tells you that you should do your very best to prepare for tomorrow's important meeting, it is acting as your friend. When it wakes you up at 3:00 a.m. anxious about the meeting and racing in a loop for the hundredth time about the many consequences of failing, it is acting as your enemy; it is simply generating anxiety and suffering without any redeeming value. No friend would do that.

PQ stands for Positive Intelligence Quotient. Your PQ is your Positive Intelligence score, expressed as a percentage, ranging from 0 to 100. In effect, your PQ is the percentage of time your mind is acting as your friend rather than as your enemy; or, in other words, it is the percentage of time your mind is serving you versus sabotaging you. For example, a PQ of 75 means that your mind is serving you about 75 percent of the time and is sabotaging you about 25 percent of the time. We don't count the periods of time when your mind is in neutral territory.

In [chapter 8](#), I will show you how PQ is measured for both individuals and teams. I will also share compelling research indicating that the PQ score of 75 is a critical tipping point. Above it, you are generally being uplifted by the internal dynamics of the mind, and below it you are constantly being dragged down by those dynamics. Eighty percent of individuals and teams score below this critical PQ tipping point. And that is why 80 percent of individuals and teams fall far short of achieving

their true potential for success and happiness. You can measure your own PQ, or your team's, by visiting www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE

Current breakthrough research in neuroscience, organizational science, and positive psychology validates the principles of Positive Intelligence and the relationship between PQ and both performance and happiness. As mentioned, PQ measures the percentage of time that your brain is working positively (serving you) versus negatively (sabotaging you). Though different researchers have used different methods to track positivity and calculate positive-to-negative ratios, the results have been remarkably consistent. For consistency and simplicity, I have translated various researchers' findings into their PQ-equivalent interpretations:

- An analysis of more than two hundred different scientific studies, which collectively tested more than 275,000 people, concluded that higher PQ leads to higher salary and greater success in the arenas of work, marriage, health, sociability, friendship, and creativity.^{[1](#)}
- Salespeople with higher PQ sell 37 percent more than their lower-PQ counterparts.^{[2](#)}
- Negotiators with higher PQ are more likely to gain concessions, close deals, and forge important future business relationships as part of the contracts they negotiate.^{[3](#)}
- Higher-PQ workers take fewer sick days and are less likely to become burned out or quit.^{[4](#)}
- Doctors who have shifted to a higher PQ make accurate diagnoses 19 percent faster.^{[5](#)}
- Students who have shifted to a higher PQ perform significantly better on math tests.^{[6](#)}
- Higher-PQ CEOs are more likely to lead happy teams who report their work climate to be conducive to high performance.^{[7](#)}
- Project teams with higher-PQ managers perform 31 percent better

- on average when other factors are held equal.^{[8](#)}
- Managers with higher PQ are more accurate and careful in making decisions, and they reduce the effort needed to get their work done.^{[9](#)}
 - A comparison of sixty teams showed that a team's PQ was the greatest predictor of its achievement.^{[10](#)}
 - In the U.S. Navy, the squadrons led by higher-PQ commanders received far more annual prizes for efficiency and preparedness. Squadrons led by low-PQ commanders ranked lowest in performance.^{[11](#)}

Groundbreaking research in psychology and neuroscience upends the common assumption that we need to work hard so we can succeed so we can then be happy. In reality, increasing your PQ results in greater happiness and performance, leading to greater success. Success without happiness is possible with low PQ. But the only path to greater success with lasting happiness is through high PQ.

Besides impacting both performance and happiness, higher PQ can also literally impact your health and longevity:

- Research has shown that higher PQ results in enhanced immune system functioning, lower levels of stress-related hormones, lower blood pressure, less pain, fewer colds, better sleep, and a smaller likelihood of having hypertension, diabetes, or strokes.^{[12](#)}
- Catholic nuns whose personal journals in their early twenties showed higher PQ lived nearly ten years longer than the other nuns in their group. Higher PQ can literally help you live longer.^{[13](#)}

We could spend an entire book splicing and dicing research data on this topic. As a matter of fact, many excellent books already do. Several books by pioneering scientists Barbara Fredrickson, Martin Seligman, Shawn Achor, and Tal Ben-Shahar provide insightful analysis of the rigorous academic research in this field in recent years.^{[14](#)} In this book,

I'll focus on giving you specific tools to actually sharpen your Positive Intelligence and raise your PQ score in the midst of your busy work and life.

HOW POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ WERE BORN

They say “necessity is the mother of all invention,” and that was definitely true in the birth of the Positive Intelligence framework. I originally developed this framework in an attempt to achieve both greater success and greater peace and happiness in my own life. All of the tools and techniques of Positive Intelligence were things that I tried out on myself first, long before realizing that countless others could benefit from them as well.

I had a tough childhood. I grew up in poverty—a sensitive kid in an abusive environment. Shortly after I was born, my father’s fledging grocery store went belly up and my father went into hiding to avoid his loan-shark creditors, who were hounding us every day. My family was so superstitious that they decided I had brought bad luck to my father’s business. Since it was too late to get rid of me, they decided to at least change my name. My family never again called me by my real name: Shirzad. That event proved to be an apt omen for most of my childhood experiences. Not having many of my physical or emotional needs met, I developed a protective cocoon of depression. Bitter resentment and anger, at myself and at the world, followed me well into my adult years.

I had high ambitions, and as I got older I realized that I needed to figure out a way to stop feeling miserable, angry, and anxious all the time so that I could focus on making something of myself. Initially, my search took me to a study of the inner workings of the mind. A summa cum laude degree in psychology and a year of PhD studies in neurobiology proved equally disappointing in providing answers. I stopped asking deeper questions at that point. I decided instead to find happiness in professional achievements, like so many others seemed to be doing.

I spent the next four years getting a master’s degree in electrical engineering at an Ivy League school and working as a systems engineer

at a preeminent telecommunications research laboratory. I studied and worked hard and earned top honors, which I thought would bring happiness. It didn't, so I decided an MBA would accelerate my progress.

The life-changing turning point that led to my eventual development of the Positive Intelligence framework came when I was sitting in a circle with eleven fellow students in a Stanford MBA class called Interpersonal Dynamics.¹⁵ Our guideline for this group interaction was to be fully authentic and reveal everything we were really feeling and thinking in the moment. At some point, one of my classmates turned to me with some trepidation and said that he had often felt judged by me and was bothered by that. I listened and thanked him politely for his helpful feedback, but in the back of my mind I was thinking, *Well, of course you feel judged by me, you idiot! You are the biggest loser in this group. How else could I be thinking of you?*

The group was about to move its attention away from me when another person turned to me and said something very similar. Again, I nodded and thanked her politely, while thinking that she was of course the second-biggest loser in the group. Then came a third and a fourth person, repeating the same thing. By now, I was beginning to feel uncomfortable and a little angry. But I was still discounting the feedback. After all, it was coming from a bunch of losers, I thought.

Then the person sitting immediately to my left, whom I admired greatly, got up in disgust and moved to the opposite side of the circle. It turns out that he had seen through my insincerity in acknowledging the feedback. He said he was so frustrated by my unwillingness to truly accept the feedback about my judgments that he couldn't even bear to sit next to me anymore. He said that he too had felt judged by me, albeit positively. He was upset because he felt I placed him on a pedestal and could never see him for who he really was.

That passionate and honest expression of feelings finally broke through the protective shell of my inner "Judge." In an instant I recognized that all my life I had seen everything through the lens of this Judge, categorized everything as good or bad, and placed everything in one box

or the other. I instantly realized that this was a protective mechanism I began using during my childhood to make life seem more predictable and controllable. That day, sitting in a circle with eleven classmates, I discovered the hugely destructive power of this Judge “Saboteur” that had been hiding in my head—and that I had never even known existed.

That discovery changed everything. It revived my search for the mechanisms of the mind that lead to happiness or unhappiness, success or failure. What I eventually focused on were two related dynamics:

1. Our minds are our own worst enemies; the mind harbors characters that actively sabotage our happiness and success. These Saboteurs can easily be identified and weakened.
2. The “muscles” of the brain that give us access to our greatest wisdom and insights have remained weak from years of not being exercised. These brain muscles can easily be built up to give us much greater access to our deeper wisdom and untapped mental powers.

Exercises that focus on one or both of these dynamics can dramatically improve one’s PQ in a relatively short period of time. The result is dramatic improvement in performance and happiness, in both work and personal life.

PQ IN ACTION

I have been the chairman and CEO of the Coaches Training Institute (CTI). We are the largest coach-training organization in the world. We have trained thousands of coaches around the globe, leaders and managers in most of the Fortune 500 companies, and faculty at both Stanford and Yale business schools. I have personally coached hundreds of CEOs, often their executive teams, and sometimes their partners or families.

Many of the CEOs and senior executives whom I have coached over the years have been type-A personalities uninterested and/or uncomfortable with deep psychological exploration. Taking this into consideration, the Positive Intelligence tools and techniques were designed to generate results without needing to first develop in-depth psychological awareness. These techniques take a direct approach that literally builds new neural pathways in your brain, pathways that increase your Positive Intelligence. Greater insight automatically accompanies the building of these pathways, which equate to building new brain “muscles.”

This book is organized into six parts. [Part I](#), which you are halfway through, provides a general overview of the PQ framework that continues in the next chapter. There are three different strategies for increasing PQ, discussed in turn in [parts II](#), [III](#), and [IV](#). In [part V](#), you will learn how PQ is measured for both individuals and teams so that you can keep track of your progress. [Part VI](#) discusses applications of PQ to many work and life challenges, including three in-depth case studies. At the end of each chapter, an Inquiry will prompt you to connect the dots between what you are reading and your own work and life.

Your potential is determined by many factors, including your cognitive intelligence (IQ), your emotional intelligence (EQ), and your skills, knowledge, experience, and social network. But it is your Positive Intelligence (PQ) that determines what percentage of your vast potential

you actually achieve.

By raising my PQ, I have been able to convert the considerable difficulties and challenges of my own life into gifts and opportunities for greater success, happiness, and peace of mind. I wrote this book with the belief that you can absolutely learn to do the same.

Inquiry

If you could significantly improve one important thing, personally or professionally, as a result of reading this book, what would it be? Keep that goal in mind as you read this book.

CHAPTER 2

THE THREE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE PQ

When I lecture at Stanford University on the subject of creating sustainable change, I invite the participating executives to make a bet. I tell them about my hypothetical neighbor who has been undertaking a series of initiatives to improve both success and happiness, for himself and others. He made a New Years' resolution to lose some weight and keep it off. He took his team on an expensive team-building retreat to help them become more cohesive and effective. He went to a two-day workshop to improve his own emotional intelligence and leadership competencies. He did all of this a year ago, I tell the participants. Now they need to bet all of their money on whether they believe the changes that my neighbor made were mostly sustained or fizzled away.

How would you bet your money? Remarkably, about 90 percent of the Stanford participants bet that the changes primarily fizzled. I tell the others that they would have lost their shirts on their optimistic bet: the odds that significant improvements in either performance or happiness are sustained are only 1 in 5.^{[16](#)}

Research on happiness confirms that people generally fall back to what social scientists call their “baseline happiness” levels shortly after events or accomplishments that significantly raise their happiness. This includes winners of large lotteries.^{[17](#)}

Many executives complain about the same phenomenon regarding their attempts to improve individual or team performance through coaching, tough performance-evaluation feedback, conflict resolution and intervention, skill-building workshops, and team-building retreats. People prove resistant to change, even when they seem to think they want it.

Think about your own life. How lasting have your own increases in happiness been once you attained the things that you were certain would

make you happier? Think about the many books you have read and the many trainings you have attended in hopes of increasing your own work performance or happiness. What percentage of those improvements lasted? Chances are, your own experience confirms that initial improvements typically fizzle or at least erode significantly. The question is, why?

The key to the answer, as I previously suggested, is one word: *sabotage*. Unless you tackle and weaken your own internal enemies—we'll call them the Saboteurs—they will do their best to rob you of any improvements you make. Ignoring your Saboteurs is analogous to planting a beautiful new garden while leaving voracious snails free to roam. This is where Positive Intelligence can help.

Positive Intelligence takes you to the frontlines of the unceasing battle raging in your mind. On one side of this battlefield are the invisible Saboteurs, who wreck any attempt at increasing either your happiness or your performance. On the other side is your Sage, who has access to your wisdom, insights, and often untapped mental powers. Your Saboteurs and your Sage are literally fueled by different regions of your physical brain and are strengthened when you activate those regions. Thus your internal war between your Saboteurs and your Sage is tied to a war for domination between the different parts of your brain. The strength of your Saboteurs compared to the strength of your Sage in turn determines your PQ level and how much of your true potential you actually achieve.

MEETING THE SABOTEURS

The Saboteurs are the internal enemies. They are a set of automatic and habitual mind patterns, each with its own voice, beliefs, and assumptions that work against your best interest.

Saboteurs are a universal phenomenon. The question is not whether you have them, but which ones you have, and how strong they are. They are universal—spanning cultures, genders, and age groups—because they are connected to the functions of the brain that are focused on survival. We each develop Saboteurs early in childhood in order to survive the perceived threats of life, both physical and emotional. By the time we are adults, these Saboteurs are no longer needed, but they have become invisible inhabitants of our minds. We often don't even know that they exist.

Any World War II history buff knows that the most powerful and devastating saboteurs were those who had ingratiated themselves and been accepted into the inner circle of the opposing side as friends and allies. The same holds true for your internal Saboteurs. The worst damage is caused by those who have convinced you through their lies that they are working for you rather than against you. They have been accepted and trusted into your inner circle and you no longer see them as intruders.

Here is a brief description of the ten Saboteurs, intended to give you a sense of how each one works. For now, don't worry about trying to remember all of them or assessing which ones are your top Saboteurs. You'll learn how to identify your top Saboteurs in later chapters.

Judge

The Judge is the master Saboteur, the one everyone suffers from. It compels you to constantly find faults with yourself, others, and your

conditions and circumstances. It generates much of your anxiety, stress, anger, disappointment, shame, and guilt. Its self-justifying lie is that without it, you or others would turn into lazy and unambitious beings who would not achieve much. Its voice is therefore often mistaken as a tough-love voice of reason rather than the destructive Saboteur it actually is.

Stickler

The Stickler is the need for perfection, order, and organization taken too far. It makes you and others around you anxious and uptight. It saps your own or others' energy on extra measures of perfection that are not necessary. It also causes you to live in constant frustration with yourself and others over things not being perfect enough. Its lie is that perfectionism is always good and that you don't pay a huge price for it.

Pleaser

The Pleaser compels you to try to gain acceptance and affection by helping, pleasing, rescuing, or flattering others constantly. It causes you to lose sight of your own needs and become resentful of others as a result. It also encourages others to become overly dependent on you. Its lie is that you are pleasing others because it is a good thing to do, denying that you are really trying to win affection and acceptance indirectly.

Hyper-Achiever

The Hyper-Achiever makes you dependent on constant performance and achievement for self-respect and self-validation. It keeps you focused mainly on external success rather than on internal criteria for happiness.

It often leads to unsustainable workaholic tendencies and causes you to fall out of touch with deeper emotional and relationship needs. Its lie is that your self-acceptance should be conditional on performance and external validation.

Victim

The Victim wants you to feel emotional and temperamental as a way of gaining attention and affection. It results in an extreme focus on internal feelings, particularly painful ones, and can often result in a martyr streak. The consequences are that you waste your mental and emotional energy, and others feel frustrated, helpless, or guilty that they can never make you happy for long. The Victim's lie is that assuming the victim or martyr persona is the best way to attract caring and attention for yourself.

Hyper-Rational

The Hyper-Rational involves an intense and exclusive focus on the rational processing of everything, including relationships. It causes you to be impatient with people's emotions and regard emotions as unworthy of much time or consideration. When under the influence of the Hyper-Rational, you can be perceived as cold, distant, or intellectually arrogant. It limits your depth and flexibility in relationships at work or in your personal life and intimidates less analytically minded people. Its lie is that the rational mind is the most important and helpful form of intelligence that you possess.

Hyper-Vigilant

The Hyper-Vigilant makes you feel intense and continuous anxiety about all the dangers surrounding you and what could go wrong. It is constantly vigilant and can never rest. It results in a great deal of ongoing stress that wears you and others down. Its lie is that the dangers around you are bigger than they actually are and that nonstop vigilance is the best way to tackle them.

Restless

The Restless is constantly in search of greater excitement in the next activity or through perpetual busyness. It doesn't allow you to feel much peace or contentment with your current activity. It gives you a never-ending stream of distractions that make you lose your focus on the things and relationships that truly matter. Other people have a difficult time keeping up with the person ruled by The Restless and often feel distanced from him or her. Its lie is that by being so busy you are living life fully, but it ignores the fact that in pursuit of a full life you miss out on your life as it is happening.

Controller

The Controller runs on an anxiety-based need to take charge, control situations, and bend people's actions to one's own will. It generates high anxiety and impatience when that is not possible. In the Controller's worldview, you are either in control or out of control. While the Controller allows you to get short-term results, in the long run it generates resentment in others and prevents them from exercising and developing their own fullest capabilities. Its lie is that you need the Controller to generate the best results from the people around you.

Avoider

The Avoider focuses on the positive and the pleasant in an extreme way. It avoids difficult and unpleasant tasks and conflicts. It leads you to the habits of procrastination and conflict avoidance. It results in damaging eruptions in festering conflicts that have been sidestepped and causes delays in getting things done. Its lie is that you are being positive, not avoiding your problems.

THE SAGE

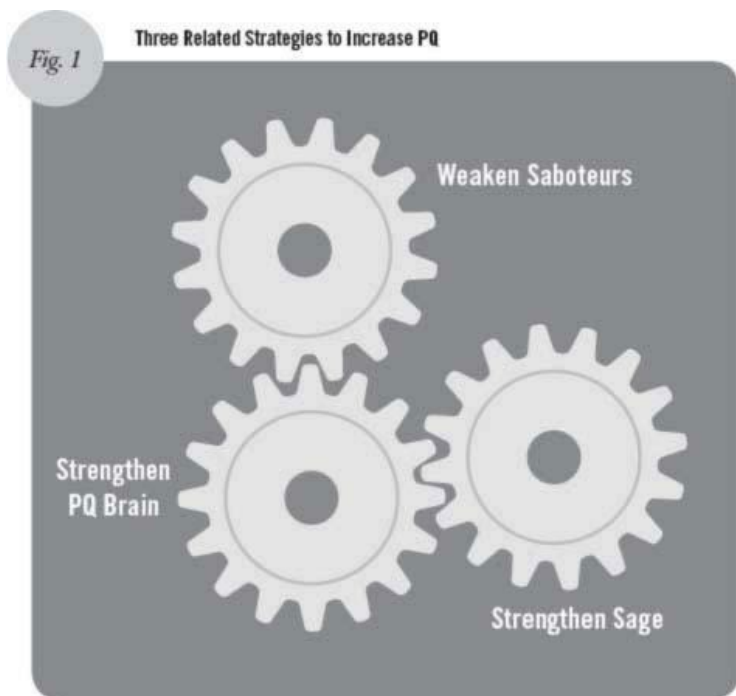
If your Saboteurs represent your internal enemies, your Sage represents the deeper and wiser part of you. It is the part that can rise above the fray and resist getting carried away by the drama and tension of the moment or falling victim to the lies of the Saboteurs. Its perspective on any challenge you are facing is that it is either already a gift and opportunity or could be actively turned into one. It has access to five great powers of your mind and taps into those powers to meet any challenge. These powers lie in regions of your brain that are different from the regions that fuel your Saboteurs.

Your Sage's five great powers are (1) to Explore with great curiosity and an open mind; (2) to Empathize with yourself and others and bring compassion and understanding to any situation; (3) to Innovate and create new perspectives and outside-the-box solutions; (4) to Navigate and choose a path that best aligns with your deeper underlying values and mission; and (5) to Activate and take decisive action without the distress, interference, or distractions of the Saboteurs.

In subsequent chapters I will show that you have a great reservoir of these powers within you, which often goes untapped. I will also show you how absolutely every challenge in work and life can be met with the Sage, its perspective, and its five powers. If you use your Sage to overcome these challenges, you will experience Sage feelings of curiosity, compassion, creativity, joy, peace, and grounded decisiveness even in the midst of great crises. You will see for yourself that your Saboteurs are never necessary to meet any challenge, despite the lies they have been telling you to justify their own existence.

THREE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR PQ

As I mentioned before, there is a direct connection between the different regions and functions of the brain and whether you are in Saboteur or Sage mode. The Saboteurs are primarily fueled by regions of your brain that were initially focused on your physical or emotional survival. We will call these regions your Survivor Brain. The Sage is based on entirely different regions of the brain, which we'll call your PQ Brain. This Saboteur-Sage brain link results in three separate but related strategies to increase your PQ: (1) weaken your Saboteurs; (2) strengthen your Sage; and (3) strengthen your PQ Brain muscles.



Strategy 1: Weaken Your Saboteurs

Weakening your Saboteurs involves identifying which thought and emotion patterns come from your Saboteurs and seeing clearly that they don't serve you. Typically, these Saboteurs justify themselves and pretend they are your friends—even worse they pretend they are you. In [chapters 3](#) and [4](#), we will blow their covers and expose their tricks to reduce their credibility and power over you. To weaken your Saboteurs, all you need to do is to observe and label Saboteur thoughts or feelings when they show up. For example, you might say to yourself, “Oh, the Judge is back again, saying I'm going to fail” or “There's the Controller feeling anxious again.”

Strategy 2: Strengthen Your Sage

Strengthening your Sage involves shifting to the Sage perspective and accessing the five powers it uses to meet every challenge. You will see for yourself that you do have this Sage inside of you, and that it always offers you far superior ways to handle your challenges than the options the Saboteurs offer. In [chapters 5](#) and [6](#), you will learn the Sage perspective and fun “power games” that will help you access and boost the Sage's five powers whenever you need them.

Strategy 3: Strengthen Your PQ Brain Muscles

Strengthening your PQ Brain muscles involves understanding the difference between your PQ Brain and your Survivor Brain. You will see how your PQ Brain muscles have remained underdeveloped over the

years while your Survivor Brain muscles have been on steroids. In [chapter 7](#), you will learn very simple, fun techniques that will quickly build up the strength of your PQ Brain muscles.

Each of these three strategies can be pursued independently of one another and result in increasing your PQ. Even better, they actually reinforce and build on one another. For example, you will learn to strengthen your PQ Brain muscles through many simple activities, including odd ones such as wiggling your toes attentively or rubbing your fingers together attentively for ten seconds. At first glance, these exercises might appear unrelated to your Sage and Saboteurs. However, I'll show you that they help activate your PQ Brain, which in turn gives you greater access to your Sage perspective and powers.

In addition, stimulating your PQ Brain weakens your Survivor Brain, which fuels your Saboteurs. And every time you choose the Sage perspective, or observe and label your Saboteur thoughts or feelings, you automatically activate and strengthen your PQ Brain.

Each of these three strategies—weakening your Saboteurs, strengthening your Sage, and strengthening your PQ Brain muscles—can be carried out by using techniques that take ten seconds or less. They are designed to fit your busy work schedule and personal life. Different people gravitate to different strategies, and you will discover for yourself which one you find most gratifying and compelling. Once you've implemented your primary strategy, the other two will automatically follow.

DAVID'S STORY

David is one of those rare entrepreneurs who can begin a company and hold onto the helm well after it reaches the \$1 billion mark. Soon after his company went public, David found himself under unprecedented stress. After years of consistently explosive and profitable growth, his team seemed to be on its way to its first year of loss. The result would be devastating on his company's fledgling stock. David needed to turn the tide around, and he needed to do it fast. He asked me to work with his team.

After a quick PQ assessment, I told David that the fastest and most efficient way to dramatically improve performance was to improve his own PQ and that of his team. His PQ had come out as 48, and his team's PQ was 52. This meant they were either wasting much of their mental and emotional energy or using it to sabotage themselves. They could probably increase their performance incrementally by fine-tuning their strategy and tactics and upgrading their skills. But removing their own self-sabotage and tapping into their Sage powers would have much more dramatic and lasting effects.

David was at first puzzled by my suggestions. He and his team prided themselves on their use of positive thinking techniques and assumed that this practice meant they already had high PQs. After all, the company's performance before going public had been good. The question was, why were they suddenly floundering? I suggested that the positive thinking techniques couldn't match the power of the underlying Saboteurs that were running interference. It seemed that the Saboteurs had been supercharged since the company had gone public, which makes sense: stress feeds and fuels Saboteurs. In addition, running a public company was different from running a private company. The team members' Saboteurs were making it more difficult for them to change some of the outmoded ways they were used to running the business.

Our first job was to focus on David, since the leader's PQ impacts the

team's PQ significantly. I suggested that we start to increase his PQ by exposing and weakening his master Saboteur, the Judge.

David's first reaction was that he didn't have a strong Judge, as he was not a very judgmental person. I explained that the Judge is often well disguised, and that we often don't realize when we are judging. Most feelings of stress, anxiety, frustration, disappointment, regret, and guilt are the direct results of judging yourself, others, situations, or outcomes. The great stress and unease David was experiencing told me that he must have a strong Judge in his head that was pretending to be his friend.

To show the power of his Judge, we examined the thoughts that had caused David to toss and turn sleeplessly at 3:00 a.m. the morning before. He wrote down twenty thoughts. I asked him to categorize each as neutral, useful, or harmful. David decided that three of the thoughts were useful: remember to set up a meeting with a vendor, talk to HR about an employee's compensation package, and ask his assistant to book a trip to a conference. I agreed with David that these were useful thoughts. Still, I asked him what would have happened had these reminder thoughts not occurred to him at 3:00 a.m., interrupting his rest. He agreed that they would have probably occurred to him later that day and that nothing would have been lost.

David rated five thoughts as neutral. They included remembering his high school graduation day, his first trip to Africa, and his first winter in New York. We agreed to categorize those as neutral and random, even though a psychoanalyst would've had a field day with them.

Next we examined what David had accurately but hesitantly categorized as harmful thoughts, such as the possibility that the board would fire him if the company's performance didn't pick up. This had led to a cascade of thoughts about what would then happen to his reputation, whether he could keep his big house and expensive luxury cars, etc. Other anxiety-provoking thoughts included concern over potentially losing a big client that appeared unhappy and worrying that an upcoming presentation to investors would not go well. A few thoughts were about regrets. Why hadn't he reacted more quickly to a change in market dynamics? Why had he hired the wrong business development

guy and wasted nine months before letting him go?

David said the reason he was hesitant to firmly categorize these thoughts as harmful was that they kept him on his toes, pressuring him to work hard to turn things around. I asked him whether this was the first time he was having these thoughts. He admitted that they were actually recurrent thoughts and that he'd had them tens or hundreds of times.

I told David it was okay if his mind reminded him of the importance of an upcoming meeting once. He could use the reminder to prepare for the meeting. But there was no redeeming value in his Judge repeatedly insisting on making him anxious at 3:00 a.m., when there was nothing he could do but toss and turn. I then explained that this was also true of his pondering past mistakes. Going over a mistake once as an attempt to learn from it and not repeat it was helpful. But to be badgered multiple times was not useful. The results were lack of energy, little rest, and constant anxiety, stress, disappointment, guilt, and regret. It was sabotage, pure and simple.

It slowly began to dawn on David that his Judge was not the friend it pretended to be. Given the Judge's role as the master Saboteur, we agreed to focus on David's Judge initially and not distract ourselves with any other Saboteur.

Ordinarily, this strategy of focusing on weakening the Judge would have been enough work for the upcoming week. But David wanted to progress as fast as he could, so we discussed adding the second strategy of building his PQ Brain muscles. We created a simple plan to connect these two strategies and turn his persistent Judge into his own PQ Brain fitness trainer. Every time the Judge showed up, David would use it as a reminder to activate his PQ Brain muscles and make them stronger. This would only take ten seconds and could be done while he was in a meeting, driving, or exercising. The beauty of this plan was that the Judge would now be working toward its own destruction; as the PQ Brain strengthens, the Saboteurs weaken.

For example, if David had the thought, *What's wrong with you, David? Why did you screw that up?* he would say to himself, *Oh, there*

goes the Judge again, and then activate his PQ Brain for ten seconds. We also discussed a variety of ways for him to activate his PQ Brain. His favorite methods were to take his next three breaths a little more deeply, wiggle his toes attentively and notice each of them, and feel each of his fingertips by rubbing them against one another.

David was skeptical that such simple exercises could have the dramatic effects I claimed they would. I explained that the saying “no pain, no gain” was one of the many self-fulfilling lies of his Judge and that something doesn’t have to be difficult to be effective. In addition to their significant positive impact, the exercises were also fun, relaxing, and energizing.

When I talked to David a week later, he was amazed by how prevalent his Judge’s voice had been. Once David had started noticing his Judge, he discovered its nasty fingerprints everywhere. It was as if his Judge were running a constant editorial commentary, whispering or shouting in his ears at all times.

David said he was simultaneously encouraged and discouraged by the work. He was discouraged that his internal enemy was so prevalent, powerful, and persistent. But he said there was an immediate change when he switched from saying “I don’t think we can make it” to “my Judge says he doesn’t think we can make it.” Once David exposed the Judge as an enemy and began noticing and labeling his destructive thoughts, the Judge lost some of its credibility and power over David.

After a couple of weeks focusing on the Judge and strengthening the PQ Brain muscles, we turned our attention to David’s accomplice Saboteur, the Controller.

The Saboteurs get stronger and more active with increased stress. David’s increased stress in recent months, fueled in good part by his Judge, had further energized his Controller Saboteur. The more things did not go his way, the more ironfisted his Controller became. This produced short-term results that temporarily reduced his anxiety but kept him and his team from seeing and seizing opportunities that would build a more sustained shift in their fortunes. In response to his Controller, David’s team did as he wished but brought less of themselves to their

work since they didn't have much room to maneuver.

When I spoke to David about this, he acknowledged that perhaps his Controller did not allow his team members to step into their own power and creativity. This was one reason he felt the full burden of the company on his shoulders. But David was also afraid to let go of the Controller, who kept saying things like, "I'm the one who has generated all the results for you. If I don't show up forcefully like I do, nothing gets done. There will be chaos. People need me to tell them what to do. They'll be lost without it. People may not like me, but they know I produce results."

It was true that the Judge and Controller got things done for David and brought short-term accomplishment, so we couldn't just let go of these Saboteurs without replacing them with the Sage. The good news was that when David activated his PQ Brain, he automatically strengthened the Sage's voice and accessed its great powers. David didn't need the harassment of his Judge and Controller to be a highly action-oriented, decisive, and effective individual.

David began to see the Judge and Controller all over the place. He said it was like buying a new red sports car and suddenly seeing the same car everywhere. The good news was that he was finding it fun to shift his attention to activating his PQ Brain for ten seconds when he saw his Judge or Controller show up. As he strengthened his PQ Brain, his Sage's wisdom broke through the Saboteur noises more and more frequently. He kept discovering that there was a better, easier, more creative, and more joyful way to deal with his challenges.

David learned to relax more, have more trust in himself and his team, and ease up on control to enable his team's collective wisdom and power to emerge. Since his team members were working on raising their own PQs, the wisdom and creative solutions that emerged from their collective Sages far exceeded what any of them would have thought of alone in the past.

When David reported that he looked forward to his weekly team meetings and felt energized by them, I knew that the team's PQ must have improved dramatically. An assessment showed that it had gone

from 52 to 78. David's own PQ had increased from 48 to 75. There was one exception to this progress, however. One of his team members seemed unwilling to shift the level of his positivity, leaving a deepening chasm between him and the rest of the team. He eventually resigned.

It took David and his team a couple of quarters to stop the downward spiral and begin the turnaround. The company's stock took a beating in the meantime, but it gradually recovered. I recently ran into David at JFK Airport, jetlagged but beaming, returning from a European family vacation. On the long flight back, he had started telling his eleven-year-old son about the Judge. His son had listened thoughtfully and said, "I will call mine PoopMaker, Daddy. He is always making a mess of everything in my head." We both agreed that this was an apt description of the Judge.

Inquiry

What do you find energizing, hopeful, or exciting about Positive Intelligence? What are you skeptical about? How would you know if your skepticism were generated by a Saboteur trying to stay in power?

PART II

FIRST STRATEGY: WEAKEN YOUR SABOTEURS

In [part II](#), you will learn the first of three strategies for increasing PQ: weakening your Saboteurs.

In [chapter 3](#), you will learn more about the master Saboteur, the Judge, and the nine accomplice Saboteurs. You will perform a self-assessment to determine which of the nine accomplice Saboteurs is strongest in you and learn techniques to weaken that Saboteur.

In [chapter 4](#), you will focus on understanding the Judge in greater detail so you can expose and weaken it.

CHAPTER 3

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE TEN SABOTEURS

I have a picture of myself from when I was about two years old. It shows me with a bowed head and stooped shoulders, in despair, peering through sad eyes that wondered what I was doing in this world and how much longer I could bear it. I know now that I had already started isolating myself from my fears and pains. This process, which eventually resulted in very strong Judge and Hyper-Rational Saboteurs, allowed me to survive my childhood. That is the initial role of all Saboteurs: helping us survive.



Since these Saboteurs formed the lens through which I saw and interacted with the world, it took me almost thirty years to discover that they even existed. Once I did, I also realized that even though I no longer needed them for survival as an adult, they continued to exert a great deal of negative influence in my mind.

Forty years after that picture was taken, I helped bring a little boy into this world, who is precious in every way. My wife and I pour everything we know into being great parents to Kian. Healthy, with a loving extended family, getting a solid education, and growing up in beautiful

San Francisco, he is a lucky boy. Nevertheless, by the time he was ten, I saw the familiar formation of the Judge and, in his case, the Avoider Saboteur. Saboteur formation is a normal process, and the first stage in our mental development, when we develop survival strategies. The best parenting and upbringing cannot save us from this mental drama.

The formation of the Saboteurs begins to make clear sense once you realize that the primary objective of the first fifteen to twenty years of life is to survive long enough to pass on your genes. In that sense, we aren't much different from sea turtle hatchlings shuffling their way toward the safety of the ocean as soon as they break out of their shells. For the human child, however, survival has a component beyond physical survival. We also need to survive emotionally. The human brain is wired to pay close attention to our environment in our early years and adjust accordingly so we can bear the emotional strains we all encounter and make it into reproductive adulthood.

Even if you didn't have a difficult childhood, life still presented many challenges that your Saboteurs were initially developed to handle. You might have had loving parents, but there was still the scare of your mother getting sick and you not knowing whether she would ever come back from the hospital. Or maybe you had a sibling whom your parents seemed to favor over you. And of course there were kids at school who were taller, smarter, faster, or funnier than you, and the ones who didn't seem to like you. There was the time you failed publically, or got rejected, or betrayed. There was the time you felt terrified with the idea of death, or starvation, or one of the countless other dangers in this chaotic world. There was the time you promised yourself—which you likely don't consciously remember—that you would protect yourself better so bad things wouldn't happen to you as often.

Your Saboteurs were the buddies who helped you keep that promise. Childhood is an emotional minefield, regardless of how well you were parented. Saboteurs are a universal phenomenon. The fact that you might not be consciously aware of them doesn't mean they don't exist. If you don't think you have them, you're especially at risk: your Saboteurs are hiding well.

THE PROBLEM WITH SABOTEURS

We use many temporary mechanisms for physically surviving our childhood. These include using an umbilical cord, drinking only milk before our digestive system matures, and growing baby teeth until there is enough room for larger, more permanent ones. As we mature physically, we replace these mechanisms with ones that better fit our adult years. Ideally, our mental survival strategies would work similarly—we would abandon our childhood Saboteur strategies in favor of more mature ones better suited to the less vulnerable adult years. The challenge is that once formed, the Saboteurs do not voluntarily drop out and let go. They hang on in our heads and get entrenched.

Imagine what it would be like if as an adult you were still connected to your mother by an umbilical cord, or still could only drink milk, or still had your baby teeth. Imagine if you put a cast on your broken leg when you were five years old to protect it from further hurt—and then never took it off. As bizarre as that might sound, it is not too far from what actually happens to us mentally and emotionally with our Saboteurs. The Saboteurs were the initial casts that protected us, but not removing them in adulthood limits our mental and emotional freedom.

JUDGE, THE MASTER SABOTEUR

The Judge is the universal Saboteur, the one we all have: a predisposition to exaggerating the negative and assuming the worst is actually good for survival. If you're in the jungle and see the leaves in a nearby tree begin to shake, you would be better off assuming you are in grave danger, even though this assumption would be based on very little information. *This must be a tiger on its way to eat me alive, and I'd better run or hide*, you'd likely say to yourself. It is true that ninety-nine out of a hundred times, the Judge's exaggerated negative bias would have proven wrong for one of our distant ancestors, but the one time it was right would have saved his or her life. Those without the negative-leaning Judge, those who waited to gather more complete and unbiased information before taking action, didn't survive long enough to pass on their genes.

Each person's Judge develops its own particular characteristics in response to that individual's specific needs for survival. We have a powerful psychological need for a mental construct that makes sense of our experience of life, and the Judge helps us fit all the pieces together. The Judge's interpretation is always full of flaws and negative biases, but in early life it is still helpful in sorting out the world around us to create a coherent mental construct of our experience.

In my case, as a child I felt I was not getting much caring and attention. My mind could make sense of this in one of two ways. I could have interpreted the situation accurately and admitted that I was being raised by flawed parents who didn't know how to give me the attention I needed and deserved. But this would have forced a terrifying realization and made my emotional survival more difficult. I depended on my parents for my life. Seeing them as flawed would have been as terrifying as a diver deep undersea realizing that his air supply mechanism was flawed and about to fail. Instead, the Judge came to the rescue. The Judge's solution was that I was deeply flawed and unworthy of my

perfect parents' time: Why should they show any more affection for someone so undeserving?

In addition to forming my sense of low self-worth, my Judge also had to help me survive by beginning to judge others around me as deeply flawed—it would have felt terrifying to be a defective being in a world where everyone else was so great. Thus these two survival mechanisms of the Judge—judging myself and judging others—were firmly established at a very early age.

I was of course not consciously aware of much of this. Saboteurs are rarely consciously formed. It wasn't until my powerful experience at the Stanford MBA class many years later that I realized this invisible mechanism was deeply entrenched in the way I interpreted and reacted to everything in my life.

[Figure 2](#) summarizes the characteristics of the Judge. At the bottom of the table, rate the strength of this Saboteur in yourself. If you rate it very low, please keep in mind that it might be because yours is hiding particularly well, as mine had done.

Fig. 2

| | JUDGE |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Description | Finds faults with self, others, and circumstances. Causes much of our disappointment, anger, regret, guilt, shame, and anxiety. Activates accomplice Saboteurs. |
| Characteristics | Self: Badgers self for past mistakes or current shortcomings. Others: Focuses on what is wrong with others rather than appreciating the good things about them. Gets into inferior/superior comparisons. Circumstances: Insists a circumstance or outcome is "bad" rather than seeing it as a gift and opportunity. |
| Thoughts | What is wrong with me? What is wrong with you? What is wrong with my circumstance or this outcome? |
| Feelings | All guilt, regret, shame, and disappointment are from the Judge. Much of anger and anxiety is instigated by the Judge. |
| Justification Lies | Without me pushing you, you will get lazy and complacent. Without me punishing you for mistakes, you will not learn from them, and you'll then repeat them. Without me scaring you about bad future outcomes, you will not work hard to prevent them. Without me judging others, you will lose your objectivity and not protect your self-interest. Without me making you feel bad about negative outcomes, you won't do anything to change them. |
| Impact on Self and Others | The Judge is the master Saboteur and the original cause of much of our anxiety, distress, and suffering. It also is the cause of many relationship conflicts. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

THE NINE ACCOMPLICE SABOTEURS

The Judge uses at least one accomplice Saboteur to ensure your early physical and emotional survival. In my case, my Judge's accomplice was the Hyper-Rational Saboteur. I'm a sensitive person, and I started life feeling deeply. But most of what I was feeling deeply was either painful or scary. So, it made perfect sense for me to begin to shut out all feelings. I escaped, instead, to a purely rational and analytical world where I could play with and have a sense of control over ideas and logic. Even more importantly, this rational focus began to provide my greatest source of attention and acknowledgment, from teachers heaping praise on their prize student. Unknowingly, I was developing my Hyper-Rational Saboteur, which allowed me to get some caring and respect. Again, it took me about thirty years to discover that I had actively numbed my own feelings and in the process deprived myself of any ability to develop deep relationships or enjoy the true emotional joys of life.

While the Judge is the master Saboteur in everyone, the accomplice Saboteur it teams up with is different from individual to individual. For example, among my four siblings I developed the Hyper-Rational Saboteur, one brother developed the Victim, one developed the Controller, one developed the Avoider, and one developed the Stickler. We'd all experienced similar difficulties throughout childhood, but our survival strategies ended up differing widely.

Nature and nurture both play a part in determining which accomplice Saboteur we develop. Any parent with more than one child was probably amazed to discover how different the kids' dispositions were, right out of the womb. As a father of a strong introvert son and a boldly extrovert daughter, I can attest to the differences being obvious in the first few months of life, even though my wife and I made great efforts to raise both children in the same way.

Our unique personalities end up influencing which accomplice Saboteurs we develop. Two dimensions of our personality in particular

play a part—our motivations and our personal styles of handling challenges. We will now explore these two dimensions to see how they impact which Saboteur is developed.

Motivation

There are three primary motivations that underpin our emotional survival needs. Each person leans toward one of these three motivations:

1. Independence: A need for boundaries with others and maintaining independence from them.
2. Acceptance: A need to maintain a positive image in the eyes of others, to be accepted by them and gain their affection.
3. Security: A need to control life's anxieties and push away or minimize them.

All of us are driven by each of these motivations to some extent. The question is, which one is your primary motivation? Since much of Saboteur-formation is subconscious, you can't necessarily rely on your rational mind to answer that question. Don't worry about figuring out the answer right now.

Style

You exhibit one of three different styles in order to satisfy your primary need for independence, acceptance, or security:

1. Assert: This is the most active and commanding of the three styles. You take action that demands the fulfillment of your primary need for independence, acceptance, or security.
2. Earn: You work hard to earn the fulfillment of your need for independence, acceptance, or security. This contrasts with the

more “demanding” nature of the Assert style.

3. Avoid: You withdraw yourself or your attention from activities, thoughts, feelings, or other people in order to fulfill your need for independence, acceptance, or security.

Again, don't worry at this point about figuring out which of these three styles is your dominant one.

IDENTIFYING YOUR TOP ACCOMPLICE SABOTEUR

The intersection between your primary motivation and your primary style determines your most likely accomplice Saboteur. However, nurture and outside circumstance also play a role. Trauma or extreme distress, especially during our early years, can change the Saboteur-development process, as can the Saboteurs our parents exhibit. Some children mimic their parents and grow similar Saboteurs, and some develop Saboteurs that are complementary to their parents'. For example, the child of a parent with a Controller Saboteur might develop the Pleaser to maintain peace.

The following table shows how the nine accomplice Saboteurs relate to motivation and style. An in-depth exploration of how each Saboteur exhibits its corresponding motivation and style is beyond the scope of this book and can be found on www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

Fig. 3 **The Nine Accomplice Saboteurs**

| STYLE | MOTIVATION | | |
|--------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Independence | Acceptance | Security |
| Assert | Controller | Hyper-Achiever | Restless |
| Earn | Stickler | Pleaser | Hyper-Vigilant |
| Avoid | Avoider | Victim | Hyper-Rational |

Our initial aim in exploring our Saboteurs is not to develop a deep psychological understanding of their roots. Our focus is more on the

current manifestation of their thoughts and feelings in ourselves, and how they sabotage us today. We rely on what we can consciously observe in ourselves. This will automatically result in discoveries about our Saboteurs' deeper and even subconscious roots in due course. (For a discussion of the subconscious connection, see Appendix A.)

A description of each of the nine Saboteurs' typical thoughts, feelings, characteristics, justification lies, and impact on one's self and others follows. The descriptions are by no means exhaustive; they are intended to provide you with the overall flavor of each Saboteur. You will find that your own experience conforms to some but not all the characteristics of any given Saboteur. As you read, focus on getting an overall impression of each Saboteur's tendencies and personality rather than getting bogged down in the specific details. Once you have a feel for each one, determine which is most likely your Judge's top accomplice.

You are likely to occasionally exhibit the characteristics of several of these nine Saboteurs. Don't let that discourage or confuse you. All you need to do is focus on your Judge and the top accomplice Saboteur. This focus will significantly activate and build up your PQ Brain muscles, depleting the oxygen supplies of *all* Saboteurs. In addition, since your Judge is your master Saboteur and tends to trigger the others, its weakening impacts all of them. Once you reduce the power of the Judge and key accomplice Saboteur in your head, the others will come crumbling down automatically.

As you review the following profiles, it might be helpful to bring to mind people you know who seem to have very strong versions of certain Saboteurs; this will help you remember the Saboteurs better. You might also take some preliminary guesses about which Saboteurs seem to be at play in your boss, your colleagues, your spouse, or your children.

The best way to do this Saboteur assessment is fast. Your first impression is likely more accurate than what you come to after too much analysis. See if you can spend ten minutes, meaning about one minute per Saboteur, to review and rate the strength of each Saboteur in yourself. Once you do a preliminary pass on all nine, come back to your top few and compare them in order to determine your top accomplice

Saboteur. Some people report that their top accomplice Saboteur is different at work and at home. If that holds true for you, it's fine to make that distinction and identify a different Saboteur for each environment.

Alternatively, you can assess your Saboteurs online at www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

Fig. 4

| | STICKLER |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Description | Perfectionism and a need for order and organization taken too far. |
| Characteristics | <p>Punctual, methodical, perfectionistic.</p> <p>Can be irritable, tense, opinionated, sarcastic.</p> <p>Highly critical of self and others.</p> <p>Strong need for self-control and self-restraint.</p> <p>Works overtime to make up for others' sloppiness and laziness.</p> <p>Is highly sensitive to criticism.</p> |
| Thoughts | <p>Right is right and wrong is wrong. I know the right way.</p> <p>If you can't do it perfectly, don't do it at all.</p> <p>Others too often have lax standards.</p> <p>I need to be more organized and methodical than others so things get done.</p> <p>I hate mistakes.</p> |
| Feelings | <p>Constant frustration and disappointment with self and others for not living up to high standards.</p> <p>Anxious that others will mess up the order and balance it has created.</p> <p>Sarcastic or self-righteous overtones.</p> <p>Suppressed anger and frustration.</p> |
| Justification Lies | <p>This is a personal obligation. It is up to me to fix whatever mess I encounter.</p> <p>Perfectionism is good, plus it makes me feel better about myself.</p> <p>There is usually a clear right way and a clear wrong way to do things.</p> <p>I know how things should be done and must do the right thing.</p> |
| Impact on Self and Others | <p>Causes rigidity and reduces flexibility in dealing with change and the differing styles of others.</p> <p>Is a source of ongoing anxiety and frustration.</p> <p>Causes resentment, anxiety, self-doubt, and resignation in others, who feel continually criticized and resign themselves to the fact that no matter how hard they work, they will never please the Stickler.</p> |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Fig. 5

| | PLEASER |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Description | Indirect attempt to gain acceptance and affection by helping, pleasing, rescuing, or flattering others. Loses sight of own needs and becomes resentful as a result. |
| Characteristics | Has a strong need to be liked and attempts to earn it by helping, pleasing, rescuing, or flattering other people. Needs frequent reassurance of the acceptance and affection of others. Can't express own needs openly and directly. Does so indirectly by making people feel obligated to reciprocate. |
| Thoughts | To be a good person I should put the needs of others ahead of my own. It bothers me when people don't notice or care about what I have done for them. They can be so selfish and ungrateful. I give away too much and don't think of myself enough. I can make anyone like me. If I don't rescue people, who will? |
| Feelings | Expressing own needs directly feels selfish. Worried that insisting on own needs may drive others away. Resents being taken for granted but has difficulty expressing it. |
| Justification Lies | I don't do this for myself. I help others selflessly and don't expect anything in return. The world would be a better place if everyone did the same. |
| Impact on Self and Others | Can jeopardize taking care of one's own needs, whether emotional, physical, or financial. Can lead to resentment and burnout. Others can develop dependence rather than learn to take care of themselves, and feel obligated, guilty, or manipulated. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Fig. 6

| | HYPER-ACHIEVER |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Description | Dependent on constant performance and achievement for self-respect and self-validation. Highly focused on external success, leading to unsustainable workaholic tendencies and loss of touch with deeper emotional and relationship needs. |
| Characteristics | Competitive, image- and status-conscious Good at covering up insecurities and showing positive image. Adapts personality to fit what would be most impressive to others. Goal-oriented and workaholic streak. More into perfecting public image than introspection. Can be self-promoting. Keeps people at safe distance. |
| Thoughts | I must be best at what I do. If I can't be outstanding, I won't bother. I must be efficient and effective. Emotions get in the way of performance. Focus on thinking and action. I can be anything I want to be. I am worthy as long as I am successful and others think well of me. |
| Feelings | Doesn't like dwelling in feelings for too long—they distract from achieving goals. Sometimes feels empty and depressed inside, but doesn't linger there. Needs to feel successful. That's what it is all about. Feels worthy mainly through accomplishment. May fear intimacy and vulnerability. Closeness with others might allow them to see imperfections. |
| Justification Lies | Life is about achieving and producing results. Portraying a good image helps me achieve results. Feelings are just a distraction and don't help anything. |
| Impact on Self and Others | Peace and happiness are fleeting and short-lived in brief celebrations of achievement. Self-acceptance is continuously dependent on the next success. Loses touch with deeper feelings, deeper self, and ability to connect intimately with others. Others might be pulled into the performance vortex of the Hyper-Achiever and become similarly lopsided in their focus on external achievement. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Fig. 7

| | VICTIM |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Description | Emotional and temperamental style to gain attention and affection. An extreme focus on internal feelings, particularly painful ones. Martyr streak. |
| Characteristics | If criticized or misunderstood, tends to withdraw, pout, and sulk. Fairly dramatic and temperamental. When things get tough, wants to crumble and give up. Represses rage, resulting in depression, apathy, and constant fatigue. Unconsciously attached to having difficulties. Gets attention by having emotional problems, or being temperamental and sullen. |
| Thoughts | No one understands me. Poor me. Terrible things always happen to me. I might be uniquely disadvantaged or flawed. I am what I feel. I wish someone would rescue me from this dreary mess. |
| Feelings | Tends to brood over negative feelings for a long time. Feels alone and lonely, even when around family or close friends. Experiences feelings of melancholy and abandonment. Dwells on envy and negative comparisons. |
| Justification Lies | By acting this way, I at least get some of the love and attention I deserve. Sadness is a noble and sophisticated thing that shows exceptional depth, insight, and sensitivity. |
| Impact on Self and Others | Vitality wasted through focus on internal processing and brooding. Backfires by pushing people away. Others feel frustrated, helpless, or guilty that they can't put more than a temporary Band-Aid on the Victim's pain. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Fig. 8

| | HYPER-RATIONAL |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Description | Intense and exclusive focus on the rational processing of everything, including relationships. Can be perceived as cold, distant, and intellectually arrogant. |
| Characteristics | <p>Possesses an intense and active mind, sometimes comes across as intellectually arrogant or secretive.</p> <p>Private, and doesn't let many people into deeper feelings. Mostly shows feelings through passion in ideas.</p> <p>Prefers to just watch the surrounding craziness and analyze from a distance.</p> <p>Can lose track of time due to intense concentration.</p> <p>Strong penchant for skepticism and debate.</p> |
| Thoughts | <p>The rational mind is where it's at. Feelings are distracting and irrelevant.</p> <p>Many people are so irrational and sloppy in their thinking.</p> <p>Needs and emotions of others distract me from my projects. I need to shut out intrusions.</p> <p>What I value most is knowledge, understanding, and insight.</p> <p>My self-worth is attached to mastering knowledge and competence.</p> |
| Feelings | <p>Frustrated with others being emotional and irrational.</p> <p>Anxious about preserving personal time, energy, and resources against intrusions.</p> <p>Feels different, alone, and misunderstood.</p> <p>Is often skeptical or cynical.</p> |
| Justification Lies | The rational mind is the most important thing. It should be protected from the wasteful intrusion of people's messy emotions and needs so it can get its work done. |
| Impact on Self and Others | Limits the depth and flexibility of relationships in work and life by analyzing rather than experiencing feelings. Intimidates less analytically minded people. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Fig. 9

| | HYPER-VIGILANT |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Description | Continuous intense anxiety about all the dangers in life and a strong focus on what could go wrong. Vigilance that can never rest. |
| Characteristics | Always anxious, with chronic doubts about self and others. Extraordinary sensitivity to danger signals. Constant expectation of mishap or danger. Suspicious of what others are up to. Expectation that people will mess up. May seek reassurance and guidance in procedures, rules, authorities, institutions. |
| Thoughts | When is the other shoe going to drop? If I make a mistake, I fear everyone is going to jump down my throat. I want to trust people, but I find myself suspicious of their motives. I need to know what the rules are, although I might not always follow them. |
| Feelings | Skeptical, even cynical. Often anxious and highly vigilant. |
| Justification Lies | Life is full of dangers. If I don't look out for them, who will? |
| Impact on Self and Others | This is a hard way to live. Constant anxiety burns a great deal of vital energy that could otherwise be put to great use. Loses credibility due to the "boy who cried wolf" phenomenon. Others begin to avoid the Hyper-Vigilant as the intensity of the nervous energy drains them. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Fig. 10

| | RESTLESS |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Description | Restless; constantly in search of greater excitement in the next activity or in constant busyness. Rarely at peace or content with the current activity. |
| Characteristics | Easily distracted and can get too scattered. Stays busy, juggling many different tasks and plans. Seeks excitement and variety, not comfort or safety. Bounces (escapes) from unpleasant feelings very quickly. Seeks constant new stimulation. |
| Thoughts | This isn't fulfilling. The next thing has got to be more exciting. These negative feelings suck. I must shift my attention to something engaging. Why can't anyone keep up with me? |
| Feelings | Impatient with what is happening in the present. Wonders what is next. Fears missing out on other more worthwhile experiences. Feels restless and wants more and more options. Worries that focus on any unpleasant feeling will grow and become overwhelming. |
| Justification Lies | Life is too short. It must be lived fully. I don't want to miss out. |
| Impact on Self and Others | Underneath the surface of fun and excitement of the Restless is an anxiety-based escape from being present and experiencing each moment fully, which might include dealing with unpleasant things. The Restless avoids a real and lasting focus on the issues and relationships that truly matter. Others have a difficult time keeping up with the frenzy and chaos brought by the Restless and are unable to build anything sustainable around it. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Fig. 11

| | CONTROLLER |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Description | Anxiety-based need to take charge and control situations, bending people's actions to one's own will. Results in high anxiety and impatience when that is not possible. |
| Characteristics | <p>Strong need to control and take charge.</p> <p>Connects with others through competition, challenge, physicality, or conflict rather than through softer emotions.</p> <p>Willful, confrontational, and a straight-talker. Pushes people beyond their comfort zones.</p> <p>Comes alive when doing the impossible and beating the odds.</p> <p>Stimulated by conflict and connects through conflict. Surprised that others get hurt.</p> <p>Intimidates others. In-your-face communication is interpreted by others as anger or criticism.</p> |
| Thoughts | <p>I am either in control or out of control.</p> <p>If I work hard enough I can and should control the situation so it goes my way.</p> <p>Others want and need me to take control. I'm doing them a favor.</p> <p>No one tells me what to do.</p> |
| Feelings | <p>Feels high anxiety when things are not going his or her way.</p> <p>Becomes angry and intimidating when others don't follow.</p> <p>Impatient with other's feelings and different styles.</p> <p>Does feel hurt and rejected, although rarely admits to it.</p> |
| Justification Lies | <p>Without me, you can't get much done. You need to push people.</p> <p>If I don't control, I will be controlled, and I can't live with that.</p> <p>I am trying to get the job done for all our sakes.</p> |
| Impact on Self and Others | The Controller does get temporary results, but at the cost of others feeling controlled, resentful, and unable to tap into their own greater capacities. The Controller also generates a great deal of anxiety, since many things in work and life are ultimately not controllable. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Fig. 12

| | AVOIDER |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Description | A focus on the positive and pleasant in an extreme way. An avoidance of difficult and unpleasant tasks and conflicts. |
| Characteristics | Avoids conflict and says yes to things that aren't actually desired. Downplays importance of some real problems and tries to deflect others. Has difficulty saying no. Resists others through passive-aggressive means rather than directly. Loses self in comforting routines and habits; procrastinates on unpleasant tasks. |
| Thoughts | This is just too unpleasant. Maybe if I let it go it will take care of itself. If I deal with this now, I will hurt someone's feelings. I'd rather not. If I get into conflict with others, I might lose my connection with them. I've found balance. I don't want to mess with it. I'd rather give someone else his or her way than create a scene. |
| Feelings | Tries to remain even-keeled. Feels anxiety about what has been avoided or procrastinated on. Fears hard-won peace of mind being interrupted. Suppresses anger and resentment. |
| Justification Lies | You are a good person to spare others' feelings. No good comes out of conflict. It is good to be flexible Someone needs to be the peacemaker. |
| Impact on Self and Others | Denying the conflicts and negativities that do exist prevents the Avoider from actually working with them and turning them into gifts. Feeling numb to pain is different than knowing how to harvest the wisdom and power of pain. What is avoided doesn't go away and festers. Relationships are kept superficial through conflict avoidance. Others' trust level is reduced because they are not sure when negative information is being withheld. |
| Strength | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

EXPOSING THE LIE

The most common skeptical remark I hear from high-achieving executives is, “I have achieved so much of my success through listening to my Judge or being a Controller, a Stickler, etc. That’s what it takes to generate results. Why would I give that up?”

A Saboteur does its greatest damage if it convinces you that it’s your friend and you accept it into your trusted inner circle. Each Saboteur has some very reasonable-sounding justifications for its actions—it tells you how it is your friend and why it is good for you—but these justifications are nothing but well-masked lies. For example, the Judge, Controller, Hyper-Achiever, and Stickler would convince you that without them you would turn into a lazy, unambitious, or complacent couch potato. It is not a lie that they have indeed pushed you and others to succeed and accomplish. The lie is that your greatest success would come through them. Let’s expose that lie.

Say you have just made a costly mistake on something important. Your Judge beats you up over it and causes you to feel guilty, angry, or remorseful. Its distressing messages keep hounding you and keep you up at night, worried about what happened and the consequences. It scares you into working really hard to make sure the mistake doesn’t happen again. Next time around, you will have real anxiety about not screwing up. You might do better, but you will have paid a high emotional toll along the way. Moreover, your high distress actually makes you more likely to make other mistakes while anxiously focusing on not repeating your original error.

The Sage offers a very different approach. First, it will empathize with you and reassure you that, even though you made a mistake, you are still a wonderful person. It tells you to have compassion for yourself—we are all fallible human beings. It tells you that everything, even your mistakes, can be turned into gifts and opportunities by the way you react to them. Now, because you are feeling better and not beaten up, you are

less defensive and more likely to take a good look at your mistake and explore what really happened and where you went wrong. The Sage might then have you come up with creative solutions for how you could do better next time and prevent even bigger mistakes. With the Sage perspective, you are more likely to be creative because your PQ Brain regions are activated. These regions are far more creative than the Survivor Brain, where the Judge lives. At the end of this process of empathizing with yourself, exploring what happened, and coming up with creative solutions, you will be more energized to take decisive action and do better the next time. You won't have wasted an ounce of vitality and energy beating yourself up and suffering through the negative drama.

Both your Saboteurs and your Sage may lead you to success, but they do so by taking very different paths. The Saboteurs push you into action and success through anger, regret, fear, guilt, anxiety, shame, obligation, etc. But the Sage pulls you into action through compassion, curiosity, creativity, the joy of self-expression, a desire to contribute and create meaning, and the excitement of action. Would you rather be pushed or pulled? Only the Sage lets you achieve success without sacrificing happiness and peace of mind.

I can't emphasize the importance of this point enough: you can't confront an enemy that you aren't sure is your enemy. If a voice in your head is still saying that you need your Judge, Controller, Stickler, Hyper-Achiever, or any other Saboteur to succeed or be happy in life, you are still buying into their lies. The Sage is far more discerning, aware, agile, vigilant, creative, decisive, and action-oriented than any Saboteur. As you continue reading this book, put this to a test. Take any work or life challenge and see that it can be met most effectively by your Sage's great powers. Don't fall for the Saboteurs' seductive lies; they aren't your friends and you don't need them. The Sage always offers a better way.

WEAKENING YOUR SABOTEURS

The key point about weakening your Saboteurs is that you shouldn't fight them, at least not in the typical way we think of fighting. If you were to get upset and angry when you saw your Victim, Pleaser, or Restless, guess what you would be doing? You would be "judging" your Saboteur, and in doing so you would be activating and strengthening the ringleader of them all, the Judge.

The most effective strategy for weakening your Saboteurs is to simply observe and label your Saboteur thoughts or feelings every time you notice them. The author Eckhart Tolle uses an apt metaphor to describe this phenomenon. He says the "egoic mind," which is his collective term for all the Saboteurs, is like a giant snowman that melts away under the light of conscious awareness.¹⁸ The bulk of the work in weakening your Saboteurs involves exposing them to the hot light of awareness by simply observing and labeling them when they show up.

To better observe and label your Saboteurs, it might be helpful to create more personalized descriptions and names for them. For example, my name for my Judge is "the Executioner" and my name for my Hyper-Rational is "Robot." Others have called their Judge "Darth Vader," their Stickler "Anal Joe," their Controller "Drill Sergeant," their Hyper-Achiever "Workaholic," and their Victim "Martyr." You get the picture.

Let's say you determine that your key accomplice Saboteur is the Controller and you give it the name "Drill Sergeant." Now if you are in the middle of a meeting and you get a visit from your old friend the Controller, you observe and label your Saboteur thoughts by saying, "The Drill Sergeant is insisting it will only work her way." Or you can observe and label the resulting emotions: "The Drill Sergeant is feeling anxious and angry that this meeting isn't going her way." You do all this in the back of your mind. It takes hardly any time or effort. It's very quick, like stamping a passport.

You might wonder how this simple act of observing and labeling could

possibly have a big impact on you. It does, and here's why: By their very nature, Saboteurs do far greater damage when they do their work while hiding under the radar, pretending they are your friend or that they are you. Observing and labeling them blows their cover and discredits their voice. Notice the difference between saying "I don't think I am capable" and "the Judge doesn't think I am capable." The snowman will melt under the light of your awareness.

In [chapter 7](#), you will learn the additional technique of using each sighting of your Saboteurs as a reminder to activate your PQ Brain for ten seconds. This will accelerate the demise of your Saboteurs by quieting the part of the brain that gives rise to them.

Inquiry

A Saboteur initially served a purpose—to protect you physically or help you survive emotionally. How did your Judge and your top accomplice Saboteur help you in your youth?

CHAPTER 4

JUDGE, THE MASTER SABOTEUR

In all my years of coaching, I have never worked with anyone who was not substantially sabotaged by a persistent Judge character, even though many were initially unaware of that fact. Your Judge Saboteur is your private enemy number one. It impacts your well-being, success, and happiness far more than any public enemy ever could.

The Judge accomplishes its staggering destructive sabotage by having us feel negative and unhappy through constant faultfinding with (1) ourselves, (2) others, and (3) our circumstances. It does so under pretense of being rational and reasonable and trying to be helpful. The Judge knows how to hide well and might in fact have become so invisible that we're unaware of its existence. This is why discovering my brutal Judge for the first time that day in my MBA group was such a powerful revelation; he was obvious to others but completely hidden from me.

This chapter is about enabling you to become aware of the enormous damage inflicted by your Judge and the insidious and often well-disguised techniques it uses to sabotage you. You will learn to become more aware of what your Judge looks and feels like—to develop its mug shot, so to speak. Knowing when your Judge is surfacing will enable you to identify and label it in its act of sabotage. Doing so is key to reducing its power and increasing your PQ.

1. JUDGING SELF

The first way the Judge sabotages us is by making us judge ourselves. As with most people's Judges, mine had started taking hold in my mind in early childhood. By the time I was an adult it was so much a part of my thinking that I never questioned its voice as anything but my own. I took what it said about me seriously. And what it said about me was not pretty. Despite years of having ranked at the top of most of my classes, having attained multiple degrees from prestigious universities, and having held significant positions at world-class organizations, I still lived with a voice in my head that constantly found me falling short of an imaginary ideal. This judgment ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous, from faulting and shaming myself for not having changed the world, to wondering how I could ever get another date given my receding hairline. Everywhere I turned, this voice was there to tell me I wasn't quite what I needed to be.

While my powerful encounter in my MBA class had woken me up to my judgments toward others, my Judge was still well hidden in the damage it was doing to myself. My first real glimpses into how universal and destructive the Judge is to the self came in my first year in business school. Having been first in my class almost all my life, I was suddenly surrounded by 320 others who had similar achievements. The euphoria of having been accepted to a top-ranked business school quickly gave way to believing I was the sole mistake of the admissions office. Everywhere I looked I was much more impressed with the achievements and abilities of others than with my own. I was keenly aware of my many shortcomings. This of course led me to put extra energy into constructing a façade of togetherness and confidence.

Over the months, I slowly began to detect signs of similar insecurities in many of my classmates. By the beginning of my second year, these observations had allowed me to relax my self-judgments a little. I began to wonder about the big price I had paid in unnecessary pain and

suffering in my first year. As I looked at the panic and insecurity so widespread in the faces of the incoming first-year class, it became clear to me that this phenomenon was repeating itself all over again. I decided to take a chance and share some of my own feelings of self-judgment and insecurity, with the hope of shedding some perspective on how widespread this phenomenon is. I wrote a five-page, single-spaced letter about how to achieve a better perspective, made 320 copies of it, and put one in the inbox of every first-year student over an October weekend.

I spent a restless Sunday night wondering what the reaction was going to be the next morning. Since I had put my name on the letter, if my premise was wrong, I would have just outed myself as the single most insecure person in the whole business school and lost much credibility in this tight-knit community that was so important to my future. As it turned out, the reaction far exceeded even my most optimistic hopes. The letter struck a chord with so many people that my inbox was inundated with thank-you letters from people relieved that their suffering and self-judgments were unjustified, and not unique to them.

What's more, a year later the new second-year class replicated what I had done and put copies of my letter in the mailboxes of all the incoming first-year students. When I attended my twenty-year reunion, I was told by a faculty member that in the prior twenty years my letter had become a tradition, gifted from each second-year class to the incoming first-year class caught in the grips of self-doubt and self-judgment. This was my first real glimpse into the fact that the Judge's destructive power over us is a relatively universal phenomenon, and that most people suffer it alone.

This understanding deepened over years of leading retreats and coaching others. I once led a two-day leadership development retreat for about one hundred CEOs and presidents. At one point in the retreat I gave everyone a three-by-five card and asked them to write down, anonymously, an important thing about themselves that they had never shared with others in fear of losing credibility, acceptance, or respect. After shuffling the cards, I started reading them out loud. They were replete with confessions of feeling inadequate, undeserving, and guilty over letting others down as a leader, parent, or spouse; fear of being

lucky rather than competent; fear of being fundamentally flawed; and fear of everything coming tumbling down one day. After I read all the cards, there was a stunned silence. Many said they felt a huge weight off their shoulders because for the first time in their lives they had realized that their inner torment was commonly shared.

Most successful, high-achieving people are privately tortured by their own Judges. This is rarely obvious to those around them. Externally, we all show our happy and fully confident fronts.

This realization had a profound effect on me. For the first time in my life, I felt fully “normal”—I realized that the Judge and the insecurities it generates are universal, an ailment common to everyone. When I interact with people now, I no longer wonder *if* they have a nasty internal Judge, but instead, *how* it is hiding and doing its damage in that individual.

Our ways of dealing with our Judge-induced insecurities are different, as I have found in my coaching practice. This is because different people’s Judges trigger different accomplice Saboteurs. Larry, the head of a manufacturing facility in the Midwest, buried himself in work so he could run away from hearing and being tormented by these voices. He ran, terrified of not being busy. Mary, the head of a marketing services organization, turned her insecurities inside out and showed up with arrogance, an aura of superiority, and a pretense of invulnerability, which is ultimately all about hiding insecurity. Peter, the head of a highly successful telecom company, had a habit of dwelling in self-judgments and torturing himself privately while showing a confident public face. This double-life resulted in a great deal of stress that included insomnia and increasingly frequent physical breakdowns. Catherine, the VP of operations of a global software company, tried to bury her self-doubts deep in a locked compartment, terrified she would one day be exposed to herself and others as the flawed being that she was; she met any hint of criticism with a violent reaction. Our methods of dealing with the Judge are different and may not be as clear-cut as these examples. The Judge is still there, however, doing its devastating damage.

Why Do I Love Thee?

The Judge's most damaging lie is that we are not worthy of love or respect by just being who we are. Instead, it forces us to constantly perform for them; this forms the construct of "conditional love." Most of us grow up experiencing love that is conditional on being good or performing, and we get into the habit of placing the same conditions on self-love. But conditional love is not real love. It's more like receiving a carrot for good behavior.

Given the ubiquity of the Judge's conditional love game, I have embarked on a very different kind of game with my son to prevent a strong version of his Judge from taking hold. I start tickling him and tell him that I will only stop if he keeps giving me the right answers, which he has learned to give over the years. Here's how the game goes, as I tickle him and stop only to hear his answers through his laughter:

Me: Kian, do you know why I love you so much?

Kian: No, Daddy, I don't know.

Me: Is it because you are so handsome? (Trust me, he is *very* handsome!)

Kian: No, Daddy, it isn't because I'm handsome.

Me: Is it because you are so smart?

Kian: No, Daddy, it isn't because I am smart.

Me: Is it because you do so well on your homework and get good grades?

Kian: No, Daddy, it isn't ...

I keep going down the list that includes his kindness and generosity, his talent in sports, his sensitivity and thoughtfulness, and so on. At some point, I feign great frustration:

Me: So why is it, Kian? Why *do* I love you so much?

By now Kian has learned to say (and he says it with firmness and certainty): "Daddy, it's because I am *me*."

Occasionally I ask Kian to remind me what this answer means. He says it means that my love for him is not conditional on anything he

does. It is for his essence, for the being looking back at me when I first held him the day he was born. He knows that in his essence he is worthy of love, always. He is to never worry that he might lose it, regardless of his successes or failures and the ups and downs of life.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

The Judge, of course, has an aneurism hearing all this. It will give you dire warnings like, “This is a recipe for your child becoming lazy or irresponsible; if his actions have no consequence on how you feel about him, why should he try to achieve anything?” Does that sound familiar? Is your love for yourself unconditional? At the end of a bad day, in which you’ve made terrible mistakes with negative consequences, how much self-love do you feel?

Does your Judge warn you that you would turn into a lazy, unambitious, unaccountable, complacent, or selfish being without it kicking your butt constantly? This is a key rationale the Judge uses to stay in power. This view is a fundamentally cynical one asserting that you, and human beings in general, will only do the right thing under pressure, or out of fear of guilt, shame, or negative consequences. This cynical view ignores the enormous untapped Sage powers within you and the fundamental nature of your essence.

This is another case of the push versus pull difference between the Sage and Saboteurs. While the Judge might push you into action through threats, fear, shame, or guilt, the Sage pulls you into action through anticipation of the joy of exploration and discovery; through the compelling and deeply seated human urge to find meaning in life and to matter; through the joy of creativity and possibility; through the longing of the human heart to connect, care, and be cared for; through appreciation of the mystery of life; and through a desire for clearheaded action toward desired outcomes.

Both the Judge’s view and the Sage’s view are self-fulfilling

prophecies. Each of us is a mixed bag, both divine and wretched. Whether you are in Sage or Saboteur mode determines which version of you gets manifested. Which version would you choose for yourself? For people in your company and team? For your spouse and children? Unless you develop mastery over your Judge, the ringleader of your Saboteurs, it gets to choose for you.

2. JUDGING OTHERS

The second way the Judge sabotages us is by judging others. The Judge plays a central role in team, professional, and personal conflicts.

This phenomenon is easiest to illustrate using a personal relationship example, which can then be applied to work settings. I will use the case of John, an executive I coached, and his wife, Melody. In the early stages of their relationship, the romance phase, they had danced in the euphoric energies of their Sages while the Saboteurs were forced onto the sidelines. Many of the Sage qualities were evident. They were deeply curious about each other, open to experimenting with new ways of being, caring about what the other was feeling and experiencing, and trusting of the mystery and wisdom of the circumstances that had brought them together. It was a glorious situation of the Sage in John seeing the Sage in Melody, and vice versa. As is common, the Sage energy in one had reinforced and encouraged the Sage energy in the other. In a virtuous reinforcing cycle, they were each bringing the best out of the other by bringing the best out of themselves. Everything was great. What was there not to love?

But as we know, Saboteurs don't like staying on the sidelines for too long. At some point, John began judging and being irritated by Melody's fear-based controlling behavior (her Controller). He reacted at first with mild and then increasingly stronger irritation. This helped to trigger his other big Saboteur (the Victim) in the form of frequent bouts of self-pity for what he had to live with. Reacting to John's Victim, Melody's Judge emerged full-force, wondering whether she could respect the new John. This led to her favorite strategy to avoid difficult feelings: indulging in food and restless busyness (the Restless Saboteur).

By this point, the Judges on both sides were firmly established as the ringleaders, reacting to the Saboteurs in the other and denying their own culpability in triggering those Saboteurs. The exhausting, self-reinforcing negative cycle of the Saboteurs had begun. Each party was bringing the

worst out in the other. They each began to wonder what had attracted them to the other in the first place. It was impossible to love the other's Saboteurs, and each wondered if the other had changed.

The fact is that the other person hadn't necessarily changed. John was always a mixed bag (of Saboteurs and Sage), and he will always remain a mixed bag, even as he learns to better restrain his Saboteurs over time. The same was true of Melody. The same is true of me, you, and every human being alive. The Judge causes trouble when it has you focus narrowly on the Saboteurs of the other. This focus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as your Judge triggers and reinforces the other person's Saboteurs, which in turn become evidence for your Judge that it was right to begin with. Your Judge of course will never take any responsibility for its own role in triggering and reinforcing your counterpart's Saboteurs. In reality, we are co-responsible for which version of the other person comes out in interactions with us.

Of course, relationships go through ups and downs, good times and bad times. As a rule of thumb, if you find yourself in an exhausting, knock-down, drag-out fight with your colleague, partner, spouse, or child, chances are very high that the Judge in you is busy judging the other, and vice versa. And yes, that is especially true in cases where you are 100 percent sure you are right and the whole thing is the other person's fault.

While the harmful role of the Judge is glaringly obvious within our personal relationships, it is equally central to tensions and conflicts in work-related settings. I rarely coach a team that is not constantly sabotaged by judgments team members make about one another. In some teams this is done in a blatantly open and confrontational way. In others, it is done in a more subversive and indirect way. In either case, unless the team members explicitly learn greater mastery over their own Judges, the collection of Judges in the room can cause significant and ongoing friction that costs a great deal in lower trust, wasted energy, heightened stress, and reduced productivity. What is the price you would put on the damage that judging another person is causing for you, within your personal relationships or at work?

3. JUDGING CIRCUMSTANCES

The third and final way the Judge sabotages us is by judging the circumstances and events in our lives and finding them lacking. This leads to one of the Judge's biggest and most destructive lies: "You will be happy when ..."

Many of the CEOs I coach who are in their mid-forties or early fifties show signs of a midlife crisis of some sort. Ironically, the deepest crises are experienced by those who have attained many of the goals they had set out to achieve. These goals often have to do with financial achievements and reaching the pinnacle of one's profession. The crisis comes from finally achieving these long-sought-after goals and realizing that the promised happiness that was supposed to accompany them is nowhere to be found. At the heart of the midlife crisis is the question, *Can anything really bring me that elusive peace and happiness I've been chasing all these years?* The chase has, of course, been orchestrated by the Judge and its big lie: "You will be happy when ..."

When you examine this lie more closely, you will see that there are actually two lies embedded within it. The first lie is that you can't be happy with your current circumstances. Much of our unhappiness stems from this lie alone. This lie places a "when" condition on your eventual happiness; it could be when you make your first million, when you get promoted, when you get to run your own company, when you raise the kids and see them off to college, when you achieve retirement security, etc.

The second lie is that the "when" is a moving target rather than a promise to be kept. When you do make the first million, the Judge will allow you a two-minute or two-day celebration before it has convinced you that you can't be really happy until you also have a second vacation home like your best buddy from college. After all, you're just as smart as she was, and it's only fair that you have one too, right? The "when" gets renegotiated the moment it is about to be reached. Millions of people die

every year still waiting to reach the last “when.” This ever-moving target is a mirage and a key technique the Judge uses to ensure your everlasting unhappiness.

The fascinating thing is that each “when” is selected based not on objective criteria but on relative comparisons that are completely arbitrary. I was a firsthand witness to the absurdity of this phenomenon while living in San Francisco in the late nineties, at the epicenter of the dot-com craze. I watched highly educated and very successful people lose perspective completely and allow their Judges to renegotiate their “when” targets to absurd levels.

Peter, an entrepreneur who had long ago declared \$10 million to be the target for his happy retirement, rejected a \$125 million offer for his company. His rationale? His college buddy had sold his for \$330 million and was now traveling with his own personal jet. After running some numbers, Peter had decided that the lifestyle he could now envision—including a personal jet and vacation homes on multiple continents—required a target higher than \$125 million, and he couldn’t be happy with that offer. As it turned out, within a year he witnessed the complete collapse of his company’s valuation and eventual bankruptcy. His “when” was then renegotiated by his Judge. He could now be happy when he came out of debt, got to \$10 million in net worth, and regained some respectability in his field. I ran into Peter recently at a conference and found out that he was still chasing his renegotiated \$10 million “when.” So many years later, the sighs and regrets of the Judge still seeped into his words as he spoke about his life. He was completely oblivious to the fact that even now he was earning an amount of money and living a lifestyle that placed him among the top one percent of people in the world. Peter’s Judge was still in charge, chasing the new “when.”

I encountered many such examples: Jackson, a forty-five-year-old man who had previously been fine with a target retirement age of sixty, but who felt like a failure because he still had to work while his neighbor, who’d hit it big during the dot-com boom, had retired at forty-two; Allison, a marketing VP who had previously been fine with a steady rise on the corporate ladder in a company that treated her well, but who

suddenly felt like a failure for not having jumped ship like one of her junior associates who struck it rich in a start-up; Tim, the CEO of one of the most reputable publically run brick-and-mortar companies, who had gone overnight from feeling on top of the world to feeling like a worthless dinosaur. It is stunning the tricks the Judge plays in renegotiating the “when.”

As we will discuss in [chapter 5](#), the “when” for peace and happiness is actually now, regardless of the circumstances of your work or personal life. Any other “when” is the lie of the Judge. The Sage helps you feel peace and joy regardless of what’s going on in any area of your life, while the Saboteurs make you feel unfulfilled regardless of the circumstances. The Sage is right: It’s not about the circumstances. It’s not about the “when.” It’s about who is whispering or screaming in your ear while interpreting the circumstances for you.

Think about each “when” you’ve declared for yourself in the past and actually reached. How long did your happiness last before you (your Judge) renegotiated a new one? What “when” are you chasing right now as a condition of your own happiness and peace? Would you be willing to reconsider and give up that “when,” believing instead that you can have great peace and happiness in your work and life right *now*?

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JUDGING AND DISCERNING

I often hear people say that without their Judge they wouldn't be able to defend themselves from mistakes, wouldn't give people tough corrective feedback, wouldn't fire people who need to be fired, wouldn't say no when they need to, wouldn't take corrective action in time, and so on. Such claims confuse discernment with judging.

If someone has turned in his projects late five times in a row, the voice of discernment in you should simply state that fact and say that it is therefore likely, unless something shifts, that the person will be late turning in his next project. This is discernment; you're paying attention to the state of things as they are. Once you've made an observation like this, you can activate your Sage to figure out what to do with that discernment. You could sit down with that person to explore the underlying causes of his behavior and see if you can help. You could work on contingency plans so that the lateness won't impact you adversely. You could choose to fire the employee if all previous attempts at changing this pattern have failed and he's showing no openness to change. The Sage can help you do any of this without feeling angry, blameful, scornful, disappointed, or betrayed.

The presence of those negative feelings indicates that the Judge has taken over and that you are judging rather than discerning. Pay attention to the emotions involved. If you are calmly noticing what isn't working or what has gone wrong in order to figure out how to move forward, you are discerning. If you are feeling upset, disappointed, anxious, or resentful, you are judging. Indeed, that is how the Judge causes much of your distress in any situation. Your distress is not caused by what happened; it's caused by your Judge's reaction to it.

WEAKENING YOUR JUDGE

So what is one to do with an internal enemy who is so devious, pervasive, and damaging, and who shrewdly camouflages these characteristics? As with any other Saboteur, your key job is to observe and label your Judge's thoughts and feelings every time you observe them.

Given that the Judge's damage is done on three entirely different fronts—judging yourself, the people around you, and your external circumstances—you might want to remind yourself of its typical patterns in each of these areas. You might also want to come up with your own personal name for your Judge based on its personality. As I mentioned earlier, I call mine “the Executioner” given his brutal take-no-prisoners stance. Others have called theirs “Destroyer,” “Insatiable,” “Brutal,” “SOB,” “Know-It-All,” “Sourpuss.” The name you give it should reflect its true nature. If you can't come up with any name that works better for you, go ahead and stick with “Judge.”

The act of observing and labeling your Judge alone will have a significant impact in your life. Notice the difference between saying “I can't make it” and “My Judge says I can't make it.” Or “You made me look bad intentionally” and “My Judge says you made me look bad intentionally.” Or “This is a terrible situation” and “My Judge says this is terrible situation.” Do you notice the big difference between the impact of these two kinds of statements? The Judge loses much of its credibility and power over you as you isolate it as an unwelcome intruder. In the past it was treated as royalty, as a moral compass, as the center of intelligence, discernment, ambition, or drive—but not anymore. Observe the Judge and simply call it on what it does.

This is the beginning of the end of your biggest impediment to greater success and happiness. You will be amazed by what you find out once you begin watching the Judge.

Inquiry

What would change, at work or in your personal life, if your Judge's voice were significantly weakened?

PART III

SECOND STRATEGY: STRENGTHEN YOUR SAGE

In [part III](#), you will learn the second of three strategies for increasing PQ: strengthening your Sage.

In [chapter 5](#), you will learn the power and wisdom of the Sage perspective and contrast it with the far more common Judge perspective.

In [chapter 6](#), you will learn about the five powers of the Sage and how they can meet any challenge in your life. For each power, you will learn a “power game” that boosts that power and gives you greater access to it when needed.

CHAPTER 5

THE SAGE PERSPECTIVE

I am a relatively predictable and consistent coach. When someone comes to me in mental or emotional distress, I hear the person out and show compassion for his or her suffering. But before we get too far into the discussion, I state the following key principle of Positive Intelligence: *All* your distress is self-generated. To be more precise, *all* your distress in the forms of anxiety, disappointment, stress, anger, shame, guilt—*all* the unpleasant stuff that makes up your suffering—is generated by your own Saboteurs.

I emphasize *all* because I have found that under the influence of their Saboteurs, people want to bargain and negotiate. They claim that while they might agree that most of their distress is self-generated, their current distress is different and justified based on the severity of the situation. How could I possibly not be upset over the loss of my biggest client? How could I possibly not be upset at myself for screwing up on this project? How could I not feel constant disappointment and frustration over the incompetence of my teammate? How could I not feel stressed over the possibility of losing my job and my house in this terrible economy? How could I not be furious at my teenager's obstinate behavior? The answer, always, is the same. Activate your Sage to deal with the situation and you will feel quite different.

Your Sage has access to your five great powers: empathy, exploration, innovation, navigation, and decisive action. With these powers, your Sage can meet all the challenges that you face in a way that will not only generate the best results but also lead to the highest level of personal satisfaction, peace of mind, and happiness along the way.

We'll explore each of the Sage's five powers in more detail in the next chapter. In this chapter, we'll focus on the Sage perspective, which helps to amplify its five powers. We will see how the Sage perspective,

unlike the Judge perspective that causes you so much distress, leads to peace of mind and focused action even in the middle of the greatest crises.

There are two small caveats to saying all distress is Saboteur-generated. The first is in the instance of grieving as a way of honoring the loss of something or someone, which is a healthy process. Second, as I will discuss in [chapter 8](#), a few brief seconds of feeling anger, disappointment, guilt, or shame are fine as immediate reactions to events. This is similar to feeling pain when you touch a hot stove. A moment of physical pain should alert you to remove your hand to avoid further damage. A few seconds of psychological pain should similarly alert you to shift your mind to the Sage mode so you can deal with the situation without further distress and damage from your Saboteurs. If you don't shift your mind, it is like keeping your hand on the hot stove and continuing to feel the pain that was only initially useful.

SAGE PERSPECTIVE VS. JUDGE PERSPECTIVE

The Sage perspective is about accepting what is, rather than denying, rejecting, or resenting what is. The Sage perspective accepts *every* outcome and circumstance as a gift and opportunity. (I emphasize *every* to take away a loophole through which the Saboteurs could sneak in.) This may sound like a radical perspective. It is the exact opposite of many of the assumptions of the Judge, which most of us have believed wholeheartedly for years or decades. The Judge's perspective is that many outcomes and circumstances are *bad*—certainly not gifts—and are therefore legitimate reasons to feel distress.

A Chinese parable illustrates a key difference between the Judge and the Sage perspectives:

The Stallion Story

And old farmer lives on his farm with his teenage son. He also has a beautiful stallion that he lovingly cares for.

The farmer enters his stallion into the annual country fair competition. His stallion wins first prize. The farmer's neighbors gather to congratulate him on this great win. He calmly says, "Who knows what is good and what is bad?" Puzzled by this reaction, the neighbors go away.

The next week, some thieves who heard about the stallion's increased value steal the horse. When the neighbors come to commiserate with the farmer, they find him again very calm and gathered. He says, "Who knows what is good and what is bad?"

Several days later, the spirited stallion escapes from the thieves and finds his way back to the farm, bringing with him a few wild mares he has befriended along the way. To his neighbors' excited rounds of congratulations, the old farmer once again says, "Who knows what is good and what is bad?"

A few weeks later, the farmer's son is thrown off one of these new mares as he is trying to break it in, and his leg is fractured. As the neighbors gather to commiserate with the old farmer, he once again reminds them, "Who knows what is good and what is bad?"

The following week, the imperial army marches through the village, conscripting all eligible young men for the war that has just broken out. The old farmer's son is spared due to his fractured leg. The neighbors no longer bother to come to the old farmer to congratulate him. By now they know what his response will be: "Who knows what is good and what is bad?"

When our Judge says something is bad, we need to take that statement with a grain of salt—if not outright dismissal. Our Judge convinces us that we know what is good and bad at any given moment, but the truth is that we actually don't.

Our Judge's perspective is narrowly focused—it has severe tunnel vision. It reacts to the immediate effect of something, ignoring the many longer-term possibilities of its impact that could easily be the opposite. Life of course doesn't stop at the immediate effect. Even our stallion story doesn't end where we left it. Who knows what happened next in that story? It might be that the son, saved from military draft due to his fortuitous injury, caught the plague epidemic sweeping through the village a month later and died. Or, he might have stayed behind, met the woman of his dreams and married, producing a child. His child might have turned out to be a great scientist curing many ills. Or his child might have turned out to be mentally troubled and burned down the village. When the farmer refused to lose any sleep over his prized stallion being stolen, he was seeing life through the perspective of his Sage rather than through the tunnel vision of his Judge.

IS THE SAGE ACTIVE OR PASSIVE?

The stallion story presents an incomplete view of the Sage perspective and can be misleading if taken literally. The farmer just believes and waits *passively* for a bad thing to turn into a good thing. That can be viewed as fatalistic and impractical, like sitting on the couch and watching TV and believing everything will magically work out on its own. The Sage, however, is anything but passive. Its perspective is that *everything* is a gift and opportunity, but it doesn't believe that as a matter of passive and blind faith. The Sage uses its five great powers to turn that perspective into reality and actively create a gift out of a bad situation. If action is required, the Sage is quite decisive and takes the necessary steps. It moves into action, however, without any of the distress, interference, or distractions of the Judge or the other Saboteurs.

Many spiritual traditions advocate for something similar to the Sage perspective as a matter of spiritual faith; these traditions teach that everything in life happens for a reason and is part of the greater mystery of life. However, as someone who has coached many agnostics and atheists, I would not expect you to buy into the Sage perspective as a matter of spiritual faith. The Sage perspective is the most pragmatic strategy to pursue, regardless of faith. This is because the Sage perspective and the Judge perspective are both self-fulfilling prophecies.

Anxiety, disappointment, frustration, shame, blame, and guilt, the Judge's favorite feelings, are never your best fuel for action. Those fuels might propel you forward, but with a huge amount of pollution and wasteful friction along the way. The moment you allow yourself to feel the distress of the Judge, you have validated his perspective; you are wasting precious moments of your life in distress. In addition, as we will discuss in [chapter 7](#), when your brain shifts to distress mode, tunnel vision sets in. Your distressed brain focuses on problems rather than opportunities. The Judge and the Saboteurs that the distressed brain activates spiral in on themselves and snowball once they get started, thus

making sure the “bad” situation will indeed be a bad situation.

Your Sage has the same snowballing, self-fulfilling effect, but in reverse. Your Sage moves you into action not out of feeling bad, but out of empathy, inspiration, the joy of exploration, a longing to create, a desire to contribute, and an urge to find meaning in the midst of even the greatest crises. From the Sage perspective, there is no such thing as a bad circumstance or outcome. Every outcome simply points to the first step toward the next positive outcome. The Sage moves you one positive step at a time, regardless of what life throws at you.

HOW I DISCOVERED MY SAGE

In my early thirties, still relatively fresh out of business school, I came up with the idea for some career development and performance management software. Using my still relatively fresh software-engineering skills, I coded an interactive prototype and then went boldly calling on CEOs of established Fortune 500 companies to enlist them as investors and board members. To my great delight, I secured significant personal investments from CEOs of several Fortune 500 companies. Hewlett-Packard later became the first company to purchase the software for all its employees. Others followed.

As the stress of delivering on the huge expectations built up, my Saboteurs got increasingly energized and started running the show. My colleagues at my company—the very people who had been inspired by my vision to join me—were now shocked to see an increasingly untrusting CEO who was in Judge mode much of the time and would not delegate. I was violating and destroying the very vision that had attracted them to the company, but they couldn't get through to me after repeated attempts.

On the most painful day of my professional life, I returned from lunch to a shocking scene that instantly made my heart sink. The chairman of the board, the most trusted and supportive senior director, the president, and the most senior VP of my company were all sitting around the boardroom table, waiting for me. Unable to get through to me, the president and VP had gone over my head to the chairman of the board and senior director. It was like a professional intervention, if there is such a thing.

I was confronted with irrefutable evidence of my failings as a leader. I had attracted everyone to the company with a vision of enlightened leadership, yet I had become a micromanager, distrusting and controlling everyone who reported to me. I had turned into a tyrant, a character I didn't even know I was capable of being. I was endangering the

company's very survival.

I found the experience so painful, so humiliating, and such a betrayal (in the eyes of my Saboteurs) that I was literally in a daze for almost a week. My Judge was front and center in the beginning: *How could the people I had trusted do this to me? Didn't they see that I was working my heart out and doing all of this for the good of the company? Surely they must have done it for self-serving reasons. I must have been wrong when I had trusted them as people of integrity.* And on and on.

Ordinarily, I would have either lashed out or walked away, actions that would have been orchestrated by my Judge. This time, neither was an option. Many of the investors and clients had come in because of me. I owed it to them to stay and see this thing through. I was stuck and had to work with the people I felt had betrayed me.

This painful situation turned out to be the most valuable gift of my professional life. The pain and stress became so unbearable that at some point I was forced to shift to the Sage perspective, even though at the time I knew nothing of the Sage versus Saboteur construct. I simply had to turn this painful situation into something I could begin to feel good about. I had to turn it into a gift. There were two ways I could think of doing this: First, I could rebuild the frayed relationships to a place where they would be even stronger than before the intervention. Second, I could turn the situation into a great growth opportunity for myself as a leader.

I began to actively look at what was good, not bad, about the people I had so fiercely judged. I began to listen more deeply to what they were trying to tell me all along. I got to witness them over and over again fighting with impeccable integrity for what was right—for our collective vision, not just for themselves. I came to fully trust that what they had done in that boardroom was an act of great courage and caring, not only for our collective vision but also for me. I eventually rebuilt mutual trust, caring, and respect with all the parties involved. If anything, these relationships became stronger than they had ever been. To this day, I remain close friends with the chairman, director, president, and VP who confronted me on that fateful afternoon in the boardroom, and I'm

grateful to them all.

To turn the situation into a growth opportunity, I had to confront many of the false assumptions I'd made about myself and others. I had to come face-to-face again with my nasty Judge and began to discover its accomplice: an intellectually aloof and arrogant Hyper-Rational. At the time, I still didn't have names for these characters in my head, but I came to see their devastating damage clearly. I was also beginning to discover the power of the Sage in myself.

I cannot even begin to count the many huge gifts that came out of my most humiliating professional experience. I wouldn't trade those lessons for all my formal education in psychology or business. Neither my subsequent successes as a CEO and coach nor this book would have been possible without that experience.

THE THREE-GIFTS TECHNIQUE

I developed the Three-Gifts technique to help people shift to the Sage perspective. The most challenging thing I do when I coach people who are in the middle of intense work or personal challenges is to shake them out of the certainty of their Judge perspective so they can at least consider the Sage.

If you had been sitting across the table from me on that fateful afternoon in the boardroom and told me to trust the Sage perspective and accept the confrontation as a gift and opportunity, I would have thrown you right out. To be more precise, my Judge would have thrown you right out. On that day, my Sage was nowhere to be seen, and this is true of most of us as we encounter a crisis. The question is, how can you access the wisdom of your Sage's perspective when the stress and difficulty of your situation has supercharged your Saboteurs?

To get the ball rolling toward the answer to that question, I employ the Three-Gifts technique: I ask people to come up with at least three scenarios where their supposedly bad situation could turn into a gift and opportunity. The time frame doesn't matter. It could be within days, months, or years. People are often skeptical of my request—they are usually certain that the situation is completely bad. However, I refuse to continue with our dialog until they have come up with at least three scenarios.

I once asked the head of sales of a company to come up with three scenarios for how the recent loss of the company's biggest customer could turn out to be a great gift. After some initial hesitation and skepticism, she suggested the following: (1) This could sober up the whole company to the fact that we are losing our edge and trigger more urgent action on new product development, which could in the long run get us many more clients; (2) This could make my sales team more open to upgrading its skills; (3) This could free up our service staff to serve our existing customers better and result in even more referral sales than

what we lost with the recent customer. If she needed to, she could have come up with ten more possibilities.

For the highly skeptical or resistant, I sometimes have to repeat an important reassurance: accepting a bad outcome as a gift does *not* mean inviting more of it or doing nothing about it. For example, you will do you best to not drop a glass. But once it slips from your hand and is broken, any amount of time and energy spent on anger, blame, regret, or worry is completely wasted. If you decide to actively turn the broken glass into a gift, you might closely examine how and why it slipped from your hand so that you can prevent an even more expensive glass from being broken in the future. Or the gift might be that the accident gives you a chance to practice becoming more assertive and resourceful as you figure out a creative way to convince the vendor to replace it for free. Or, you could learn how to make glass objects as a new hobby, eventually not only replacing the glass but also developing a lifelong source of amusement. You get the picture.

You don't always have to actively turn a bad situation into a gift. Your other option is to just let it go and put it behind you without any residue of unhappiness, regret, or distress. It is easier to do this once you really come to believe the Sage perspective that, if you wanted to, you could invest the time and energy to turn the situation into a gift. Once you trust that you have the choice, it is easier to choose to just let it go.

Ironically, deciding to just let a negative situation go rather than actively turn it into a gift is a gift in itself: you're strengthening the Sage muscle that allows you to let go of regret, guilt, or shame. This in turn weakens your Judge and strengthens your Sage for the challenges you'll face down the road. This might sound like a circular argument, and it is. You choose to initiate either the snowballing, self-reinforcing, and self-fulfilling perspective of the Sage, or the snowballing, self-reinforcing, and self-fulfilling perspective of the Judge and the other Saboteurs. Which do you want to guide you through life?

WHAT ABOUT REALLY BIG PROBLEMS?

When I present the Sage perspective in my leadership seminars, someone often asks, “How could *everything* that happens be a gift and opportunity? How could that possibly be the case with a major illness or with the death of a loved one?”

I point out research that shows that, on average, able-bodied adults who become quadriplegic through an accident return to their pre-accident “baseline happiness” levels within a relatively short period of time.¹⁹ But this is an average. What this average hides is that some people allow tragic events to victimize them for life. They live and die bitter and resentful. On the opposite side, those who choose the Sage perspective turn tragedies into life-affirming events that bring great meaning and purpose to their lives. Christopher Reeve and Michael J. Fox are two prominent examples of people who chose to turn their afflictions (spinal cord injury and Parkinson’s disease, respectively) into a life purpose of helping millions of others suffering from the same afflictions.

Any parent’s greatest dread, and perhaps life’s most devastating tragedy, is the loss of a child. In 1980, Candy Lightner encountered this great tragedy. On a sunny Saturday morning in California, her thirteen-year-old daughter, Cari, posed for her softball team photos in her orange-and-white uniform. She then started walking with a friend to a church carnival she’d been looking forward to attending. The carnival was within Cari’s sight when she was hit and killed by a drunk driver who had been previously convicted three times of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Many—perhaps most—in Candy Lightner’s shoes would have lived the rest of their lives victimized by this loss. She activated her Sage perspective instead. Four days after her daughter’s death, Candy said, “I promised myself on the day of Cari’s death that I would fight to make this needless homicide count for something positive in the years ahead.”

She then founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). By so doing, she turned the tragedy of her daughter's short life into a program that would eventually save countless lives.^{[20](#)}

Of course, it takes an incredibly strong Sage to do what Candy Lightner did. I would like to think that my Sage is strong enough to rise to such an occasion, but I cannot be sure. And I hope I will never have to find out. If I found my Sage muscle inadequate for such a challenge and found myself hijacked by my Saboteurs for an extended period, I would remind myself that the only sane way to deal with the tragedy is to keep building up the Sage muscle. With increased strength, the Sage muscle can eventually regain control and work toward turning the tragedy into a positive force in the world.

Some people's Saboteurs trick them into getting fixated on extreme cases of tragic loss in order to discredit the Sage approach. If you find yourself unconvinced that even extreme tragedies can be turned into positive opportunities, put that issue aside as an exception and instead concern yourself with the 99 percent of life's challenges that indisputably benefit from the Sage's perspective.

We can't control or choose much of what happens in work and in life. We can, however, determine the impact that these events have on us by choosing how we respond. Let your Sage do the choosing.

Inquiry

Pick one thing in your life, whether at work or at home, that's causing you particularly high distress right now. Try the Three-Gifts technique on it: think of at least three ways the problem could turn into a gift and opportunity at some point in the future.

CHAPTER 6

THE FIVE SAGE POWERS

The Sage and its five powers can meet every challenge, no matter how momentous or daunting. It meets challenges in a way that results in the best outcome while at the same time generating positive emotions and minimizing negativity and stress.

We all have the five powers of the Sage. We've all demonstrated the ability to Empathize with ourselves and others; Explore with deep curiosity; Innovate creative options; Navigate among our options and choose the paths that best align with our deepest-held values and purpose; and, finally, Activate our intention in order to generate results.

But the problem is that our typical use of these powers is often "polluted" by a great deal of Saboteur interference, and they often lose much of their impact. In this chapter, I will show you how to use these powers in a "pure" form. I will also show you fun "power games" to boost and gain deeper access to these powers.

Not every challenge will require all five powers, or require them in any particular order. If the house is on fire, you will probably want to just Activate your intention to run. If the solution is obvious, you don't need to Innovate. If your options don't have long-lasting importance or consequence, you don't need to consult your Sage's power to Navigate. Once you activate your Sage, you will know which power to use and when.

1. EMPATHIZE

Empathizing is about feeling and showing appreciation, compassion, and forgiveness. Empathy has two targets: yourself and others. Both are important. Deeper empathy for yourself typically makes it possible to have deeper empathy for others. For most people, having true empathy for oneself is the hardest thing to do. Why? You guessed it—the Judge’s pervasive interference.

When Empathy Is Needed

Think about the Sage’s power to empathize as the antidote to the Judge’s badgering. After years of judging myself and others, I came to believe that most of us are doing our darnedest to be the best human being we know how to be. We are imperfect, all of us. We fall short of our ideals almost all the time. As a result, we are badgered by our own and others’ Judges almost constantly. Let’s cut ourselves and one another some slack.

Empathy recharges our batteries and renews the vitality that is drained by the Judge’s violence toward ourselves. It bandages the wounds of the warrior before sending him out for another fight. It is most useful when the recipient of the empathy—whether you or someone else—is feeling some emotional pain and difficulty. Think of empathy as the power you should use when the emotional reserve is running low, when the person needs some recharging before moving on with problem-solving action.

Given that you probably don’t go a day without falling short of some ideal and being beaten up by your own or others’ Judges for it, you probably don’t want to go a day without bringing some empathy to yourself.

What Gets in the Way

Many of us grow up with our Judge telling us that empathizing with ourselves is counterproductive. *You need to be tough on yourself*, says the Judge. But denying yourself empathy is not a sign of strength, as the Judge would have you believe. It's setting yourself up for constant beating.

The Judge warns you that if you empathize with yourself or others' avoidable hardships, you are encouraging more of the behavior that caused the hardship. *You'd better punish rather than empathize*, it says. A key fallacy of this argument is the belief that empathizing with pain means condoning the action that brought the pain about. If your child plays in the part of the playground that you warned him not to play in and breaks his leg, you would first get a cast on his leg and empathize with his pain. After the pain subsided, you would have a conversation about lessons learned and how to avoid the same mistake in the future. The Judge, of course, would strongly disagree with this approach and demand chastisement from the start.

Power Game: Visualize the Child

Once you switch to your Sage perspective, you will automatically have access to all its five powers, including Empathy. To boost this power even further, consider playing our first power game, "Visualize the Child," for just one minute in the back of your mind.

If you go to a playground and watch five-year-olds play, you will probably feel instant empathy and caring for these total strangers. This is in part due to the fact that at this age a child still mainly radiates with his or her Sage essence energy. The off-putting Saboteurs that make us less likable as adults are not yet as visible.

You can use this fact to shift your brain to feel empathy and caring for yourself or others. Visualize yourself as a child in a setting where your

essence is shining through. Perhaps you are holding a puppy, building a sandcastle, chasing a bunny, or snuggling with a loved one. Pick a vivid and detailed image that instantly triggers feelings of caring and empathy. You might even want to find an actual picture of yourself as a child in which your original personality is shining through. Put that picture on your desk or on your phone or computer so that you see it frequently. This image will be a reminder that your true essence is worthy of unconditional caring and empathy when you are feeling beaten down by your own Judge, or others', or the troubles of life.

The same holds true for generating empathy for others. If you are feeling upset at someone due to their Saboteurs, you have been hijacked by your own. To recover back your Sage, you could activate any of your five Sage powers. If you choose to activate the Sage's power to Empathize, visualize the other person as a child in her true essence before she started getting weighted down by Saboteurs. Visualize her eyes and facial expression, her manner of carrying herself, and what used to light her up as a child. Visualize her hold her puppy, snuggle with her mom, or chase a butterfly. Trust that the same essence is still inside her, underneath her Saboteurs. You can do this in the back of your mind even while you are interacting with her in a meeting. It will instantly impact how much empathy you feel.

2. EXPLORE

As children, we all knew how to explore in a pure way, experiencing great curiosity and fascination in discovery. The Sage way of exploring has a similar purity, like a child walking along a shoreline and turning over rocks to see what's underneath. The pure energy and emotion that the Sage's Explore mode generates is based in curiosity, openness, wonder, and fascination with what is being explored. A strong Sage can activate this exploration mind-set even in the midst of a great crisis.

When Exploration Is Needed

Exploring is helpful when understanding a problem or situation more deeply could put you on a better path forward. The Sage's question is, what more can I discover? Most of us draw conclusions, devise solutions, or take actions before we've adequately understood the situation through exploring it fully.

What Gets in the Way

How often do you experience pure Explore mode? How often do you find yourself in a place of deep curiosity, openness, and wonder in the middle of a challenging situation or crisis? Chances are, not very often, because of interference from Saboteurs.

You have probably felt frustrated when someone you are arguing with listens selectively and hears only what fits his or her own argument. We all do this under Saboteur influence. We think we are openly exploring and being curious, but our field of exploration is significantly narrowed by our Saboteurs.

One thing that brings in the Saboteurs is that we don't allow the

Explore mode to happen purely as a stand-alone step. We are often too busy trying to anticipate the next step, or maneuvering to win an argument, to let our Sage explore. The Judge has us look only for what proves the other wrong. The Controller only picks up on evidence to insist on its own way. The Hyper-Vigilant only picks up on signs of danger and ignores all indications of the contrary. The Avoider tries to ignore all signals that something difficult must be confronted. You get the picture.

This comes at enormous cost to us. We torpedo our ability to truly discover all the important and relevant information before we move on to a solution or action. We miss out on discovering the most transformational and important stuff, things we didn't know we didn't know.

While the Explore mode is important for looking at new challenges, it is also critical for learning from our past failures and mistakes. We often avoid exploring our mistakes and failures fully because the Judge's presence makes the act too painful or too contentious. The Sage, of course, would be able to turn those mistakes into gifts and opportunities, in part through the powerful discoveries that are made in Explore mode.

Power Game: Fascinated Anthropologist

When you play the role of Fascinated Anthropologist, you become a keen observer and discoverer of what simply is, without trying to judge, change, or control the situation. Try being a Fascinated Anthropologist in a difficult situation. A Fascinated Anthropologist does not selectively filter information that fits his or her preexisting judgments or desired outcome. The only goal is to discover things exactly as they are. For example, if you are in conflict with someone, could you even for three minutes let go of your own grievances and demands, becoming fascinated instead with discovering why the other person is feeling exactly how he or she feels?

3. INNOVATE

While the Explore power is about discovering what is, the Innovate power concerns inventing what isn't. True innovation is about breaking out of the boxes, the assumptions, and the habits that hold us back. "What's a whole new way to do this?" is the operating question for Innovate.

When Innovation Is Needed

The power to innovate is needed when the old way of approaching a situation, or the more obvious ways of dealing with it, does not suffice. A new outside-the-box approach is required.

What Gets in the Way

We are all stuck in all sorts of boxes all the time. The set of beliefs and assumptions that we operate under form the walls of our boxes. Many of these limiting beliefs and assumptions, all produced by our Saboteurs, are unexamined or even unknown. When we try to have a purely left-brained and rational approach to innovation, we will only come up with various configurations of solutions that still operate within those limits. Without the Sage's power of innovation, we stay in our box, merely changing our location within it.

You need your PQ Brain and the Sage to escape from those limitations and engage in true outside-the-box innovation. To protect your Sage's power to innovate from Saboteur interference, you need to give your mind one simple instruction: Come up with as many ideas as possible. Period. No evaluation of the ideas as you come up with them. Evaluation during innovation is the back door through which the Saboteurs enter.

It is easier to illustrate this concept in a team environment and then apply it to the dynamics inside your own head. Imagine you are at a meeting in which you and your colleagues are to come up with innovative new ideas about a product. If Joan throws out an idea and John shows his disapproval by raising his eyebrows, the Judge has crept in. Everyone will begin to be more careful about what they throw out next, worried about being judged and looking foolish. The Sage's energy will begin to give way to the Judge's energy, which is interested in self-preservation and not looking foolish. Innovation suffers greatly. The same would happen if any of the accomplice Saboteurs disapproved of ideas counter to their vested interests. The point is that no evaluation whatsoever should be allowed during the Innovate mode.

The same holds true inside your own head. If your Judge or another Saboteur calls your own initial ideas foolish or impractical, you will begin to shut down internally and will fail to innovate. Your own internal mental promise should be to generate as many ideas as possible, in rapid-fire succession, without any evaluation whatsoever. The aim of the Innovate mode is volume of ideas, not quality. This will lead to higher quality ideas automatically as it energizes your PQ Brain, the engine of your greatest ideas.

The good news is that all you need at the end of this process is *one* idea that passes the test. Evaluation of your options may or may not need the Sage. This evaluation could be based on simple objective criteria such as cost, effectiveness, impact, degree of difficulty, etc. But if the options you are evaluating have any significant bearing on your values, purpose, or meaning, then you would tap into your Sage's power to Navigate to help you decide.

Power Game: “Yes ... and ...”

To play “Yes ... and ...” follow every new idea you have by saying “*Yes*, what I love about that idea is ... *and* ...” With this approach, every idea

is appreciated rather than judged before the next one is generated in reaction to it. Keep going as fast as you can, in rapid succession. This game can be played both inside your head and in a team setting.

For example, let's say you are brainstorming how to improve the guest experience in your hotel chain. Bob starts by saying, "Maybe we can play soothing music in the lobby." Janet continues: "Yes, what I love about that idea is that it relaxes the guests. And we could look into aromatherapy research to see if any aromas are proven to be relaxing." Kathy jumps in: "Yes, what I love about that idea is that we would be consulting scientific research. And maybe we could also look into positive psychology research to improve the training of our greeting staff."

4. NAVIGATE

The Sage's power to Navigate is about choosing between various paths and alternatives based on a consistent internal compass. The coordinates on this compass are your deeply-held values or what gives your life a sense of meaning and purpose. If you keep navigating with this compass, your cumulative choices will generate the fulfillment that comes from living life in alignment with your ideals and principles.

When Navigation Is Needed

You should use your Sage's power to Navigate only when multiple paths are available, some of which may be more aligned than others with your sense of values, purpose, or meaning.

I often find people feeling stuck since they can't chart a complete path from where they are to where they want to be in the long run. I tell them their situation is analogous to finding themselves at the edge of some unknown territory without a map. To make it even more challenging, the whole area is covered in dense fog. If your goal were to emerge at the north end of this territory, there would be no way for you to chart a step-by-step path to get yourself there. You would need to rely on a compass. If you hit an impossible hill or obstacle in the middle, then you would take the most north-leaning path around it. In due time, if you kept checking the compass and making sure you took each step with north in mind, you would emerge close to where you wanted to be.

Similarly, many people think that the answer to the meaning of life will one day emerge with fanfare and fireworks. They feel stuck because they don't have full clarity about their purpose in life or what would make their life happiest or most meaningful. I tell them to consult their Sage's Navigation compass for their little steps, knowing that these steps will eventually get them to a very meaningful place. Without the

compass, we could take many steps that on their own might appear successful but in the end could have us running in circles. A midlife crisis is a good example of this phenomenon.

This is as true of individuals as it is of teams and organizations. The coordinates on a team's compass are the group's commonly shared values or whatever brings a deeper sense of meaning or purpose to that group.

What Gets in the Way

Our most deeply held values and the things that bring meaning and purpose to our lives do not lie in the rational mind, they live in our "hearts." In my experience, the vast majority of individuals, teams, and organizations that proudly exhibit their documented statement of values or purpose only have a superficial conceptual relationship with those words, which only live in their heads. Consequently, they mean little in action.

For the Sage's Navigation power to have a meaningful impact, there needs to be a deeper, more visceral connection with the coordinates of the compass. They need to arouse emotion and inspire.

The Sage's Navigation function is also susceptible to pollution from Saboteurs, all of whom bring in their own biases. For example, the Judge uses guilt and obligation as coordinates on the compass. The Hyper-Vigilant tries to navigate us to the path that feels least risky. And the Avoider encourages us to navigate a path that sidesteps conflict at all cost. These criteria for navigation, while pleasing to the Saboteurs, do not result in the best course of action.

Power Game: Flash Forward

When faced with the fork in the road, imagine yourself at the end of your

life looking back at the choices you are now facing. From that vantage point, what do you wish you had chosen at this juncture? The reason this exercise works is that at the end of our lives, many of the trivial Saboteur-related concerns fall away and are revealed as false. The things that stand out are those that are real, those that bring value, meaning, and purpose to our lives.

The team version of Flash Forward is to imagine how you wish you had conducted yourselves as a group at this juncture at a point in the future when the team or organization no longer exists.

5. ACTIVATE

Some worry that the Sage's attitude of accepting everything as a gift and opportunity will lead to passiveness, laziness, and lack of ambition and action. The reality is exactly the opposite. The Sage's Activate power moves you into pure action, where all your mental and emotional energies are laser-focused on action and not distracted by the Saboteurs.

When Activation Is Needed

You need the Sage's power to Activate when it is clear what course of action you want to take. This power allows you to move into pure action, without the procrastination, distraction, or interference that Saboteurs cause.

For example, if someone has done you wrong, you might go through the Sage's Empathize mode and decide to forgive him or her, freeing yourself from resentment and bitterness. At that point, you might choose to let the whole thing go. Or, you might choose to forgive but still seek compensation. If you decided to proceed with the action of seeking compensation, you would shift into your Sage's Activate mode. Your action would be pure and unencumbered with anger, the need for revenge, disdain for the other person, bitterness, anxiety over outcome, or any of the other dramatic tendencies of your Saboteurs. You would simply and cleanly think about the best strategy for getting your compensation and proceed with the action necessary to make it happen. You would be more likely to succeed, as all your mental and emotional energy would be focused on getting the action right.

When you watch a martial arts master in battle, such as one of the Jedi in *Star Wars*, you get a sense of the pure action of the Sage. When a warrior with a strong Sage is attacked from all sides, he knows that the only way he can survive is by completely quieting and centering his

mind. This means pushing aside all the mind-chatter coming from Saboteurs. Doing so allows the Sage to concentrate all his mental power on the urgent task at hand. If for one split second he allows himself to get angry at the enemy attacking him from the left, that momentary lapse of focus could mean getting killed by the enemy attacking from the right.

The paradox here is that the most urgent action can be taken by the quietest of minds, those that are free of the Saboteur interference and can concentrate on pure action. This is the opposite of the frantic energy that most people bring to urgent situations.

You now have a different explanation for why athletes choke in the moments that matter the most and what would be possible for them if they could learn to strengthen their Sage powers.

What Gets in the Way

Every single Saboteur gets in the way of taking pure action. The Judge wastes your energy by causing fear, stress, anger, disappointment, guilt, or shame even while you are taking action. The Avoider and the Restless both have you avoid dealing with a painful situation, albeit by using different tactics. The Controller and Stickler cause your action to be rigid, limiting the helpful contribution of others. The Hyper-Achiever wants you to take action that is solely focused on some achievement-oriented objective that ignores more important priorities, such as relationships. The Hyper-Rational has you miss critical emotional signals from yourself and others as you take action. The Victim convinces you to remain inactive to ensure that you will become a victim and prove it right. The Pleaser has you focus your action only on activities that please others and win you acceptance. The Hyper-Vigilant wastes enormous amounts of your energy worrying about contingencies, creating anxiety that is not warranted by the actual risks.

Power Game: Preempt the Saboteurs

In this game, you put yourself in the shoes of your top Saboteurs and try to anticipate how they might try to sabotage your action. You anticipate the thoughts they would whisper or scream in your ears in the middle of the action and what lies they would use to justify those thoughts. Once you anticipate their sabotage, you will be able to intercept and let go of those thoughts easily when they arise in the middle of your action. A key component of defeating any enemy is to predict and prepare for its move. You have in effect preempted the Saboteurs by discrediting their attack proactively while in a centered Sage mode.

[Figure 13](#) summarizes the Sage's five powers, when each is needed, and a power game that boosts your access to that power. You can find more power games at www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

Fig. 13

The Five Sage Powers

| SAGE POWER | WHEN NEEDED | POWER GAME |
|------------|---|------------------------------|
| Empathize | Strong feelings involved. Emotional reserves running low. | Visualize the Child |
| Explore | Need to discover more about what is going on before deciding or acting. | Fascinated Anthropologist |
| Innovate | The obvious or existing ideas don't suffice. Need to think outside the box. | "Yes . . . and . . ." |
| Navigate | Need to find alignment with deeper values, purpose, or meaning. | Flash Forward |
| Activate | Need to take action without Saboteur interference. | Preempt the Saboteurs |

THE CASE OF MARY

Mary was the VP of product development for a midsize sporting goods company. She had been a fast-rising star, due mainly to her analytical and strategic brilliance. While considered brilliant by everyone, she was not particularly well liked by her troops and didn't tend to inspire them. The new CEO of the company was much less tolerant of leaders who were strategically or technically brilliant but not strong in leadership skills. Mary had been told that her days were numbered unless she improved her relationships with her team members and others in the company.

When I first spoke with Mary, her Saboteurs were clearly in control. She was visibly upset about the new CEO who was suddenly putting so much more emphasis on this “touchy-feely nonsense,” as she called it. “Leadership is not a popularity contest,” she protested.

When I suggested the Sage perspective, that she should accept the whole situation as a gift rather than a problem, she was clearly not impressed. To soften her Judge's grip on her, I insisted she come up with at least three scenarios in which this ultimatum could be turned into a gift and opportunity. She shot back, sarcastically, that perhaps this would accelerate her departure and that she'd hopefully be going somewhere where she'd be appreciated. I insisted on more possibilities and she eventually came up with a few. This weakened her Judge a little, but not much. The Sage was still in the shadows.

After some more work on at least allowing room for the Sage's perspective, Mary agreed to give her five Sage powers a try in order to turn that perspective into a self-fulfilling reality.

1: Empathize

Mary found the invitation to empathize with herself to be at best an irrelevant distraction and at worst counterproductive. She said she was proud that she had successfully dragged herself out of her difficult family circumstances in large part because she had been tough on herself

and not allowed herself to wallow in self-pity. It took a while for her to agree that self-pity was very different from self-compassion. As a competitive athlete, she likened self-compassion to bandaging an injury before heading back onto the field.

Mary agreed to be kinder to herself in the following week and play the Visualize the Child power game to boost her Sage's power to Empathize. She agreed to look at a picture of herself at a younger age every day to access greater empathy and appreciation for herself. This would be particularly helpful when she found herself feeling emotionally beaten up by herself or others, which was often. She also agreed to observe and label her Judge thoughts as often as she could.

Mary was in a sober mood the next week, saying she was stunned by the voracity, viciousness, and persistence of her Judge. She had found a name for her judge: "the Destroyer." She discovered why she needed the constant antidote of her Sage's Empathy for herself.

Accessing empathy for herself led Mary to also feel a little more empathetic and less judgmental of those who might have complained about her leadership, although her reaction was still mixed.

2: Explore

To fully access her Sage's power to Explore, Mary agreed to play the Fascinated Anthropologist game during the upcoming week. She agreed to observe and rate the shifts of energy and emotions during interactions between members of senior management.

Mary's report the next week was impressive. True to her perseverance and drive, she had actually logged sixteen interactions. She had noticed that in roughly a third of her interactions the energy and emotions of the other person had shifted toward deflated or negative. The other two thirds appeared to have been neutral. She contrasted this against her colleague Tom, whose interactions seemed to be roughly half neutral and half resulting in higher energy or more positive feelings in the

other people. She said she was both fascinated by her discoveries and embarrassed by them. She had barely finished that sentence when she observed that her Judge, the Destroyer, was probably the one who had caused the embarrassment.

3: Innovate

With all that she had discovered, Mary was ready to come up with some solutions to the problem. I suggested the Sage's Innovation process, of course. To create a Saboteur-free environment for Mary's Sage to Innovate, Mary agreed to play the "Yes ... and ..." power game for a period of twenty minutes. I acted as a scribe but didn't contribute any ideas.

It was slow going at first, as she was clearly still judging ideas before allowing any to come out of her mouth. But by the last ten minutes, her Sage was clearly in charge, evident in the rapid speed with which she was generating ideas without filtering and in how some of them were completely outside the box. She generated seventy-five ideas, of which many were impractical, but some had real promise.

4: Navigate

Mary dismissed all but five of the ideas due to impracticality or difficulty. I suggested her Sage's Navigation compass to help decide between the remaining options. She agreed to play the Flash Forward power game to access her own internal compass. By looking back at her situation from the perspective of the end of her life, she narrowed her options down to two.

One option was to replace all her "No ... but ..." with "Yes ... and ...". This idea had come from her observations as a Fascinated Anthropologist; she'd noticed how much more frequently than her

colleague Tom she used the words “no” and “but” in her interactions with others.

Mary’s other choice was the gutsiest idea she had generated. To make a clear and dramatic shift in her public image and signal a clear intention to change, she was going to dress as Butt-Head, of *Beavis and Butt-Head*, during the upcoming Halloween office party. She would then tell people about her conscious choice to stop being “*But-Head*” moving forward. She said that before consulting her Sage’s compass, she was leaning away from that option, considering it too risky. But after consulting the compass in the Flash Forward game, she was clear that at the end of her life she would absolutely have wanted herself to take the boldest path.

5: Activate

The next question for Mary was what would stand in her way of taking pure action on her two choices, unencumbered by any Saboteur interference. To answer that, Mary played the Preempt the Saboteurs power game. She came up with three ways that her Saboteurs would try to get in the way of her action: (1) the Judge would call her weak or a loser for having to do this; (2) the Judge would get upset at others for not cutting her more slack as a leader; (3) the Hyper-Achiever would want to keep a good public face rather than admit to failures. Since Mary was in Sage mode, she could clearly see the harm these Saboteur thoughts would do. This made it easier for her to intercept, label, and discredit those thoughts as they happened once she took action.

As it turns out, the Halloween costume was a perfect launch for the “new” Mary, since it was so uncharacteristic of her to make fun of her own shortcomings. It gave everyone an idea of how serious she was about working on her issue, and of her humility in exploring and acknowledging her imperfections. This helped others be patient with her over the next six months as she kept practicing and improving her new

Sage powers. As is sometimes the case with such work, progress took the form of two steps forward and one step back at times of high stress, during which the Saboteurs regained strength. The new CEO took notice of Mary's progress and highlighted her work as a model for courageous leadership and lifelong learning, which were values he wanted to promote. The "Yes ... and ..." way became Mary's trademark style and was adapted by others in the organization.

Mary called me the day after the Halloween party the next year. Her entire team had surprised her by all coming in dressed as Butt-Heads. Somehow, she said, this was the most satisfying validation of her success in developing her leadership skills.

Inquiry

What is one area of your work or life where you could use some fresh and creative new perspective? Play the "Yes ... and ..." game by writing idea after idea nonstop for ten minutes without any evaluation along the way.

PART IV

THIRD STRATEGY: BUILD YOUR PQ BRAIN MUSCLES

In [part IV](#), you will learn the third of three strategies for increasing PQ: building your PQ Brain muscles. You will learn the difference between your Survivor Brain and your PQ Brain in greater depth. You will also learn fun, simple, and concrete techniques for building up your PQ Brain muscles.

CHAPTER 7

PQ BRAIN FITNESS TECHNIQUES

Remember from our earlier discussion that your Saboteurs and Sage are controlled by two different areas of your brain. The Saboteurs are fueled by the parts of your brain that were initially focused on your physical and emotional survival, what we call your Survivor Brain. The Sage, on the other hand, is fueled by the areas of the brain we call your PQ Brain.

Activating your PQ Brain increases the volume of the Sage's voice in your head and decreases the volume of the Saboteurs. That is why strengthening the muscles of your PQ Brain is the important third strategy for increasing PQ. The techniques you will learn in this chapter were specifically designed to fit your busy and demanding lifestyle.

THE SURVIVOR BRAIN

To understand the PQ Brain, it is helpful to first understand its counterpart, the Survivor Brain. The Survivor Brain consists of the most primitive parts of the brain, the brain stem and the limbic system, both of which are involved in initiating our response to danger. The left brain is the primary hemisphere involved in the survival functions.

The hallmark of the Survivor Brain is the fight-or-flight response. A brilliant design of nature, this response instantly shifts the brain and body's priorities to survive immediate danger. Our eyes reduce peripheral vision, focusing on the object of danger or path of escape. All nonessential brain and body functions are diminished as blood is directed to the larger muscles of the heart and limbs, enabling a quick escape.

In addition to narrowing the body's focus, the fight-or-flight response also narrows the *mind's* focus to anticipating and escaping danger, to the detriment of other functions. In particular, it activates the mind's survivor agents, the Saboteurs. Activating the Saboteurs diminishes access to Sage powers, which are more about thriving than surviving. When the brain is in survival mode, it is so focused on seeing signs of danger and finding something or someone to blame that it misses signs of opportunity and fails to appreciate what is right.

The Judge rules the Survivor Brain. Its very existence is due to the Survivor Brain: the Judge's extreme negative bias was helpful to the physical survival of our ancestors in a dangerous and unpredictable world of predators, enemies, and natural disasters. As we have seen, the Judge triggers and is in return further triggered by the accomplice Saboteurs. Thus the Survivor Brain fuels all the Saboteurs, and in return those Saboteurs keep fueling the Survivor Brain. This is a vicious cycle that feeds on itself until you learn to quiet your Survivor Brain and activate its antidote, the PQ Brain.

To illustrate, let's say you lose an important client. Your Judge declares this as a definitively "bad" thing, and therefore a cause for

distress. That in turn triggers his accomplice, which was originally formed to help you survive and cope with the distress initiated by the Judge. So you might become rigid and overly perfectionistic in your next client presentation (Stickler), or procrastinate on securing another client presentation (Avoider), or get melancholy and feel sorry for yourself to get some attention (Victim), or distract yourself with something fun to take your mind off of dealing with the situation (Restless), and so on with each of the Saboteurs. These Saboteurs will eventually perpetuate the problem and therefore feed the Judge distress energy, which started the whole thing.

The Sage approach, of course, would have been to embrace the whole event as a gift and opportunity, starting a very different cycle, a virtuous one involving your PQ Brain rather than the Survivor Brain.

Most people today live in relatively constant distress and anxiety. This is related to a low-grade but perpetual fight-or-flight response masterminded by the Judge in reaction to the challenges of life, both personal and professional. Though the fight-or-flight response originally evolved to get us out of acute, short-term danger, most of us run the Survivor Brain continuously. The consequence of this perpetual stress and anxiety is heightened blood pressure, increased cardiovascular disease, reduced immune system function, reduced longevity, and reduced happiness and performance.

THE PQ BRAIN

The PQ Brain is the part of the brain that gives the Sage its perspective and its five powers. It consists of three components: the middle prefrontal cortex (MPFC), the Empathy Circuitry, and the right brain.

The MPFC is a relatively small region of the brain that plays several critical PQ functions. These include observing yourself, pausing before action, soothing fear, staying centered in the middle of challenging situations, and gut wisdom. As you can see, the MPFC counteracts many of the effects of the Survivor Brain and energizes the Sage.

“Empathy Circuitry” is my term for a few different areas of the brain that are together responsible for experiencing empathy for yourself and others. It also helps your brain tune in to the emotions and energy of others. (For more detail, see Appendix A.)

The right brain deals with the big picture, imagery, nonverbal language, and the detection of invisible things such as energy and mood. It helps with our awareness of our physical sensations and emotions. This contrasts with the left-brain focus on language, linear and logical thinking, and details. The left brain is clearly important in handling the details of our day-to-day lives, whereas the right brain enables us to thrive in a life rich with relationships, curiosity, discovery, joy, and meaning.

As children, the strengths of our Survivor Brain and our PQ Brain are far more balanced than they are when we get older. As we grow up, our Survivor Brain is continually exercised, rewarded, and strengthened, while the PQ Brain atrophies. In the vast majority of adults, the Survivor Brain muscles are far stronger than those of the PQ Brain.

The great news is that the PQ Brain muscles respond very quickly to being exercised and can develop great strength in a relatively short time.

A Life-Changing Realization

In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton writes, “The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”²¹ This illustrates one of the most critical principles of PQ: The positive and uplifting Sage feelings of peace, joy, and true happiness are simply impossible to feel when your Survivor Brain is in charge, and this would be true even if you were in heaven. On the other hand, you will automatically experience the Sage’s uplifting feelings and perspective when your PQ Brain is fully energized, even if you are in hell (figuratively speaking, of course). In other words, how you feel depends on which region of your brain is active, rather than on your situation or circumstance. Happiness is an inside game, literally and neurochemically.²²

Dr. Jill Taylor, a Harvard-trained neuroanatomist and prominent brain researcher experienced this truth personally in the most dramatic of ways. She suffered a severe stroke in 1996, which shut down much of her Survivor Brain regions and left her PQ Brain regions mostly in charge. No longer impacted by her previously dominant Survivor Brain, she experienced a complete cessation of her anxious mind-chatter and found her mind stunningly quiet. With her PQ Brain now in charge, she experienced a euphoric sense of peace, joy, and compassion. This was despite the fact that she was witnessing her body become paralyzed and her stellar career heading to ruin.

The life-changing insight she gained was that life looked and felt fundamentally different depending on what region of her brain was dominant. She eventually fully recovered all of her brain functions, but she was now very clear on which part of her brain should dominate. Her moving account is described in her book, *My Stroke of Insight*.²³

The point here is not to try to get rid of half of your brain. As Jill Taylor found out, you need many of the functions of your Survivor Brain to handle the day-to-day routines of life. The goal, rather, is to move your Survivor Brain from the captain’s seat to the copilot’s seat, to have it demoted from running you to being run by you. The new captain, your PQ Brain, which fuels your Sage, knows when and how to command its copilot. To accomplish this, of course, you want to strengthen your PQ

Brain muscles, enabling your Sage to take charge more often.

BUILDING PQ BRAIN MUSCLES

To develop your biceps, you could lift a dumbbell repeatedly. The PQ Brain equivalent of lifting a dumbbell is very simple: shift as much of your attention as you can to your body and any of your five senses for at least ten seconds. This is a PQ rep, just like the reps you do at the gym.

These simple reps require and therefore activate and energize your PQ Brain muscles. For example, commanding yourself to stop being lost in thought and instead become aware of your physical sensations requires the MPFC and right-brain parts of the PQ Brain. Numerous studies have definitively linked focused attention on present physical sensations with activation of PQ Brain regions.²⁴ These studies have also shown that such exercise permanently rewires the brain by forming new neural pathways that remain active even when the person is no longer focusing on the exercise. This is similar to how your muscles remain strong long after you leave the gym. (For more detail, see Appendix A.)

Many experts recommend taking at least ten thousand steps every day in order to remain physically healthy. (This equates to walking approximately five miles.) The PQ Brain equivalent is doing one hundred PQ reps every day. In other words, shift as much of your attention as you can onto your body and any of your five senses for at least ten seconds one hundred times a day. You don't need to worry about keeping exact time—ten seconds is the equivalent of about three breaths.

Every day is filled with opportunities to get in PQ reps. For example, chances are you have been lost in your head for the majority of the time you've been reading this book, not really aware of your body. So right now, as you continue to read, begin to feel the weight of your body on your seat for about ten seconds (or three breaths). Or begin to feel the temperature, texture, and weight of the book you are holding in your hand. Or begin to be aware of your next few breaths and how your chest and stomach rise and fall. Or try to hear all the sounds around you while you continue reading. You just got a few PQ reps in toward your daily

goal of one hundred.

As you can see, it is not difficult to build the PQ Brain muscles. It just takes a little practice. Just as you can't develop your biceps by reading about bodybuilding, you can't strengthen your PQ Brain through thinking, reading, or discussing concepts. You need to do the reps. Here are other examples of how you can turn your common activities into opportunities to do PQ reps:

Daily routines: You can turn many of your current daily routines into PQ muscle-builders. Next time you brush your teeth, see if you can become laser-focused on one physical sensation of brushing for a minimum of ten seconds. For example, really feel the vibrations of the brush's bristles against your teeth and gums, smell the toothpaste, or feel the bubbles of toothpaste foam bursting in your mouth. Focus on one of these sensations at a time and keep letting go of thoughts as they come to you. It's easy to get a few reps in every time you brush your teeth.

When you take a shower, give yourself permission to stop your busy mind-chatter for one short minute, focusing instead on one physical sensation. For example, pay close attention to the sensation of the drops of water hitting your skin, or the sound of the water hitting the bottom of the shower, or the nuanced feeling of lather against your skin. Focus on one sensation at a time. Closing your eyes often helps, as it reduces visual distraction, unless it is your visual sense you want to focus on.

Physical exercise: You can also turn your current physical exercise routine into an opportunity to do many PQ reps. When you exercise, zone in rather than zone out. Take a few minutes during your routine to pay close attention to one of your five senses. For example, if you are on a gym machine, close your eyes for a few minutes and listen closely to the machine, your breathing, and any other sounds around you. Or really feel the various sensations in each muscle that the exercise engages. If a muscle aches, put all of your attention on the nuanced sensations of that ache rather than trying to escape the ache. If you run, focus for a few minutes on the visual details of your surroundings as you run, paying close attention to the colors and textures. Then shift your focus for a

few minutes to listening and hear the songs of the birds, the sound of your feet hitting the ground, your own breathing, and the sound of wind in your ears.

Eating: The pleasure of eating can be significantly enhanced while also exercising your PQ brain. Next time you sit down for a meal, take at least one minute to become fully present and mindful of eating. Take a bite and then close your eyes, if possible, and pay careful attention to the texture and flavor of the food as you chew. You will notice that the pleasure of eating is enhanced when you are also getting a few PQ reps in.

If done consistently, doing PQ reps while eating will be more powerful than any diet plan. You won't eat as quickly and you will get a lot more pleasure and satisfaction from far less food. Most weight problems are associated with eating absentmindedly as a way of satisfying a psychological rather than a true physical hunger. Activating the PQ Brain and in turn quieting your Saboteurs significantly diminishes that psychological hunger.

Listening to music: Next time you are listening to a piece of music, zone in rather than zone out. See if you can spend at least a couple of minutes in full mindfulness of the music. For example, pick one instrument and pay close attention to the sounds it makes. Be fully present to every nuance of every note rather than drifting away as we often do when we listen to music. This will both enhance your listening pleasure and develop your PQ Brain.

Playing sports: Next time you play a sport, make a point of paying close attention to the sensations of your weight on your feet, the breeze on your face, your grip on the club or racket, or your foot against the ball. Pay close attention to both watching the ball's spin and feeling its impact. Actively let go of thoughts as they arise and sink into a deeper and deeper body wisdom that is only possible with PQ Brain activation. This is what happens when athletes report getting into "the zone," where their physical exertion becomes effortless and flows.

Why do athletes sometimes choke in difficult situations? Why does a

basketball player miss the easy two-pointer that would have won the game in the last second? The only difference between this moment and the hundreds of times he made the shot in practices is the Judge's distracting voice. What would happen to his performance if that voice were quieted through PQ Brain activation, allowing him to focus entirely on the basket and the ball? Try this and you'll discover a significant impact on your performance in the sports you play.

Being with loved ones: Next time you hug someone you love, can you be fully present for ten seconds? Can you be so present that you actually feel their breathing or heartbeat? Can you feel yourself in your body, feel your feet on the ground, and feel your breathing rather than being lost in the chatter of your mind? When you speak to them, can you see the pupils, colors, and sparkle of their eyes?

One minute of being fully present with a loved one has a deeper and more lasting impact on your relationship than spending a whole day together while you have a scattered mind.

HOW TO REMEMBER TO REMEMBER

As you can see, getting one PQ rep toward the hundred is very easy. The hard part is remembering to do it often enough to make it to a hundred. There are two easy structures you can use to help yourself remember: (1) do it every time you go to the bathroom; (2) do it every time you observe and label your Saboteurs.

1. Bathroom as Reminder

Since you are trying to establish a new routine, it's helpful to connect this routine to an existing one. Why not use the bathroom as a reminder? After all, it's a routine you do on workdays and weekends, at home and while away.

Regardless of how busy you are, promise yourself that you will give your busy mind a rest for one minute every time you go to the bathroom. Hopefully, you can see how absurd it would be for your Saboteurs to argue that you are simply too busy to give your mind a rest for one minute every hour or so. If you make yourself this simple promise, you will easily be able to establish a routine to get one hundred PQ reps a day.

To do your reps during that minute, you could feel the weight of your body on your feet as you stand up from your chair to go to the bathroom. Feel the carpet or floor under your feet as you walk toward the bathroom. Feel the texture and temperature of the bathroom door as you push against it. Feel the temperature and texture of the sink faucet. Hear the water in the sink and feel the water and lather on your skin. All the while, keep letting go of the many thoughts that try to distract you during this minute.

If you were to remain fully aware of your physical sensations throughout this entire minute, you would earn six counts toward the hundred. However, you would most likely find yourself drifting in and

out of focus, in which case you would give yourself fewer counts.

2. Saboteurs as Reminders

As your Sage knows, you can turn everything into a gift and opportunity, including your Saboteurs. Since they insist on showing up frequently, you can turn them into your PQ fitness trainers. Promise yourself that every time you catch and label a Saboteur, you will get a PQ rep in for ten seconds. This will serve two purposes. You will turn a Saboteur visit into an opportunity to build your PQ Brain muscle. And you will take some oxygen away from this Saboteur by shifting from Survivor to PQ Brain. It's a double win for you. What poetic justice it is to channel your Saboteur's energy into its own eventual demise!

The combination of these two reminder systems can easily get you to your hundred reps a day. For example, perhaps in the hour between two bathroom visits, while you were sitting in your team meeting, you caught yourself getting upset and anxious and labeled these feelings as your Judge or Controller. You then used each opportunity to bring your attention to feeling your breathing, or feeling the weight of your body on your seat for a few breaths, and got a rep. Let's say you counted three PQ reps during that hour. And you gave yourself a count of four during your one-minute bathroom visit. You have now added seven counts toward the hundred in the course of an hour. The bathroom structure allows you to keep a running tally throughout the day and monitor your progress.

Please make sure you don't allow any of the Saboteurs to make the job of counting toward a hundred a chore that causes you additional anxiety and stress. Your count doesn't have to be precise; doing ninety-seven dumbbell reps instead of a hundred and three won't make a big difference. If you forget the count, just take a guess. If you go through a day and forget to do any reps, don't allow the Judge to come in and beat you up over it. Start fresh the next day.

Your Judge might also try to convince you that you are failing at this because you can't cease your mind-chatter on command. Indeed, your mind-chatter will *not* cease just because you command it to do so, but don't get discouraged. You will find yourself drifting in and out of focusing on your physical sensations as you attempt your reps. This is perfectly normal. Over time, your-mind chatter will lose much of its intensity and volume, but it will never fully go away.

This practice should be fun, interesting, and joyful. When it doesn't feel that way, you'll know your Saboteurs are trying to convince you to stop.

THE PQ GYM

Doing PQ reps throughout the day is analogous to lifting heavy objects throughout the day; both practices utilize and gradually strengthen your muscles. However, as any athlete knows, you can greatly accelerate the development of your muscles by going to the gym every day and lifting increasingly heavy weights for a concentrated period of time.

The PQ equivalent of gym workouts is finding five to fifteen minutes a day to sit quietly and do the PQ reps intensively. After years of working with high-strung type-A personalities, I have developed guided, closed-eye processes that result in deep activation of the PQ Brain for even the most restless and distracted. In addition to giving you a good PQ workout, these guided sessions are deeply relaxing and charge up your physical and emotional batteries. There are a few different versions of these guided processes with different lengths to accommodate your needs, and you can download the audio files from www.PositiveIntelligence.com. In a typical fifteen-minute session, during which you might drift away in your mind-chatter for about half the time, you could reach a count of forty-five successful reps (900 seconds, divided by 10 seconds per rep, divided by 2). So if you find yourself falling short of your goal of a hundred toward the end of a day, this PQ gym is a fast way to make up the shortfall.

Dr. Maxwell Maltz, a plastic surgeon, noticed that it took twenty-one days for patients to cease feeling phantom sensations in amputated limbs. With further research, he concluded it takes twenty-one days to create a new habit and postulated that it takes that long for new neural pathways to be built and old ones to atrophy.²⁵ This process is, of course, what we have been calling muscle-building for the brain.

What this means for you is that you must promise yourself that you'll get a hundred PQ reps per day for twenty-one consecutive days. By the time you get to the twenty-first day, this will have become a joyful new habit, and you will wonder how you ever lived without it.

[Figure 14](#) on the following page is a sample chart created by Nancy, a director of operations for a Silicon Valley company, for one day of her practice. Few people are so methodical in keeping track of their PQ reps, and you are not expected to create a similar written record of your practice. I share this chart to give you a sense of what a typical day's PQ rep practice might look like.

Your practice might look quite different from Nancy's. You might choose to take count in writing like Nancy, or you might choose to keep track in your head and approximate. You might get many more of your counts by observing and labeling your Saboteurs and doing a rep after every instance. Or you might choose to get half of your counts in by committing to a fifteen-minute PQ gym workout. Or you might get many of your counts in by doing your physical exercise routine on the treadmill more attentively, or spending fifteen minutes eating attentively. Many of these activities will bring great relaxation and even joy while also building up your PQ Brain muscles.

Fig. 14

Nancy's PQ Rep Chart

| Hour | Activity | # of Reps |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 6–7 a.m. | Lying in bed. Attention to weight of head on pillow. Feel of comforter. | 2 |
| | Caught and labeled Judge against myself. Shifted attention to three deeper breaths. | 1 |
| | Brushing teeth with eyes closed to notice all the sounds involved in brushing. Fascinating! | 1 |
| 7–8 a.m. | Treadmill machine. Closed eyes for five minutes and heard all the sounds. | 2 |
| | Shifted all attention to burning sensation of pain in calf muscles. The sensation changed and pain went away after a couple minutes. Cool! | 2 |
| 8–9 a.m. | Smell of coffee. Warmth of cup in hand. | 2 |
| | Driving to work. Feel of butt on seat. | 1 |
| | Caught Stickler. Shifted to feeling coffee cup in hand. | 1 |
| 9–10 a.m. | Forgot. Carried away with email. | 0 |
| 10–11 a.m. | Labeled feeling anxiety. Shifted to noticing sensation of anxiety as tightness in shoulders. | 3 |
| 11–12 a.m. | Bathroom. Warmth of water on hand. Sound of water. | 1 |
| | Caught Judge against Jack. Shifted to feeling feet on the floor. | 1 |
| 12–1 p.m. | Couple of minutes of eating attentively. Food tasted so much better. | 5 |
| 1–2 p.m. | Did five-minute PQ gym. Drifted away almost half the time. | 15 |
| 2–3 p.m. | Forgot. Carried away and angry at Tom in meeting. | 0 |
| 3–4 p.m. | Bathroom reminded me again to do reps. | 3 |
| | Caught continuing Judge thoughts against Tom. Shifted to noticing weight of feet on floor. | 2 |
| 4–5 p.m. | Caught continuing Judge against Tom and noticed anger. Shifted attention to noticing sensation of anger as tightness in forehead and shoulders. | 3 |
| 5–6 p.m. | Forgot. Carried away in miscellaneous activities. | 0 |
| 6–7 p.m. | Caught Judge angry at traffic. Shifted to deeper breaths. | 1 |
| | Caught Judge again. Shifted to listening attentively to the drumbeats in the song on radio. | 3 |
| 7–8 p.m. | Hugged Joey attentively. Felt his breathing and heartbeat. | 1 |
| | Caught Stickler upset at kitchen slightly out of perfect order. Shifted to feeling sensation of my clenched teeth and tight shoulders. | 1 |
| 8–9 p.m. | Ate a few bites with eyes closed. Fascinated by sounds and muscles of mouth in chewing. Tasted much better, too. | 3 |
| | Caught Stickler wanting to tell Frank the "right way" to do it. Shifted to feeling butt on the seat. | 1 |
| 9–10 p.m. | Took Spot for a longer walk to make the count to 100. Felt breeze on face and heard all the sounds while walking. Felt feet and leg muscles half the time. In and out of focus. | 40 |
| 10–11 p.m. | Bathroom and brushing attentively. | 7 |
| | Total Reps | 102 |

SIZE OF MUSCLE VS. SIZE OF CHALLENGE

As your PQ Brain muscle gets stronger, you will be able to handle bigger problems in life without getting hijacked by your Saboteurs. How big does a problem need to be to have you get hijacked by your Judge and/or accomplice Saboteur? Do you sweat the small stuff, or only the big stuff? The answer depends on the strength of your PQ Brain muscles, which also correlates with the strength of your Sage.

To illustrate, let's say you have medium-strength PQ muscles. Let's say this means your PQ muscles are strong enough to lift "weights" that are thirty pounds or lighter, metaphorically speaking. In other words, you remain centered, peaceful, and in Sage mode as long as the challenges thrown at you are thirty pounds or lighter. Let's say challenges such as hitting traffic congestion, getting messages from an angry and difficult customer, or being rejected by a small prospective client all weight thirty pounds or less. This means you would be able to quickly recover from an initial Saboteur hijacking in response to these challenges, re-center yourself, and approach them with your Sage perspective. You would recover from feeling upset very quickly by just doing a few PQ reps to activate your PQ Brain.

Perhaps discovering that your expensive new car was destroyed by a hit-and-run driver is heavier than thirty pounds. Perhaps being rejected by a very large and game-changing potential customer after working on their account for six months is weightier. Perhaps being criticized publicly by your boss on a costly mistake is weightier than thirty pounds, too. Only you know what challenge is too heavy for your current PQ muscles to handle.

You will know when a challenge is too heavy for your PQ muscles when you find yourself having a hard time recovering from a Saboteur hijacking. During this time you'll notice yourself feeling upset or anxious or angry or disappointed or guilty or any of the other varieties of Saboteur feelings we have discussed. Even a few PQ reps may not give

you relief. You might temporarily focus on feeling the physical sensation of your back against the chair, or your feet on the floor, or your breathing, only to fall right back to your angry or anxious feelings.

If the weight thrown at you is far greater than the strength of your PQ muscles, you may be so dominated by your Saboteurs that you aren't even able to observe yourself in the middle of the challenge at all. You may simply get swept up in the drama roller coaster, stuck in full reactive mode. You won't even remember to label your Saboteurs or do any PQ reps.

Life will always throw weighty challenges at us. Lasting peace is ultimately about developing the PQ Brain muscles to a point where they are strong enough to handle any situation. Once this level is reached, we can stay in Sage mode as we confront any challenge; we can feel peace, curiosity, joy, compassion, or any of the other Sage feelings rather than distress, disappointment, regret, anxiety, or anger. With the Sage's perspective and powers, we are confident that we can choose to either actively turn any situation into a gift or simply accept it and let it be.

THE PQ REPS AT WORK

Let's consider another example of the PQ reps at work. Say you are driving to work and you suddenly think, *I think I will screw up this meeting and then I'll be in real trouble*. Since you have studied the characteristics of your Judge, you instantly recognize that as a Judge thought. You label it, thinking to yourself, *There goes the Judge*. Catching your Judge reminds you to get a few reps in. So you now shift your attention to feeling your physical sensations for the next few breaths. You feel the weight of your body on your seat for several breaths. That's two reps. Then you feel the texture and temperature of the leather on the steering wheel for a few breaths. That's another rep. You then choose to listen to the air whistling through the window of your car and the sound of the car's engine and tires on the road. You get a couple more reps in. For about ten seconds, you feel the slight up-and-down movement of the car as it adjusts to the surface of the road. Another rep. Then you get distracted again and drift away in thought, no longer getting any reps.

You arrive at work and the meeting indeed goes very badly. Throughout the meeting you are carried away with the drama and fail even once to observe yourself and get any reps in. You get little access to your Sage. You exit the meeting and are lost in the thoughts and feelings generated by the meeting. You are mostly upset.

You get back to your office, feeling resentful of your boss and thinking he stuck it to you again. You are feeling sorry for yourself. Suddenly you remember that all your upset feelings are self-generated through your Saboteurs. You remember that feeling resentful and pitying yourself are parts of your Victim pattern. You label this and say to yourself, *Oh, here is my Victim again*. This helps you to let go of those feelings temporarily and get some work done. You forget to use your Saboteur sighting as a reminder to do any reps.

Then you feel the need to go to the bathroom, and you remember that

you promised yourself you'd do a few reps during each bathroom visit. You notice the feel of the carpet under your feet as you walk to the washroom. You notice the warmth of the water on your hands as you wash. You notice the sound of the water. You notice the texture of the paper towel as you dry your hands. You remain aware of your physical sensations for almost half a minute before you drift away to your racing thoughts. So you decide to give yourself half the counts possible in a minute—three reps.

This shift of focus calms you down to some degree because it has activated your PQ Brain a little. But this challenge is weightier than the strength of your PQ Brain muscles and your Sage, so your calm is temporary and wears off quickly. You get hijacked again. By the time you go back to your desk, you notice that you are feeling resentment and self-pity again. You label this as your Victim. Catching your Saboteur reminds you to do a rep. For three breaths you feel your butt on your seat and the weight of your hands on the desk. You give yourself another count toward one hundred.

Then you forget about the whole thing and get carried away by a phone call. Half an hour later, you catch the Victim thoughts and feelings again, and you repeat the process. Since the Victim insists on returning again and again, you use each return as a signal to redirect your attention to your physical sensations and get a few counts in. You get quite a workout that day as you turn your persistent Victim Saboteur into your personal PQ Brain fitness trainer.

After a few months of this practice, you find yourself anticipating the upcoming client presentation. You hear the Judge's voice saying that you'll screw it up. You notice that with no conscious effort on your part the voice is a lot less powerful than it used to be; it doesn't even faze you. Its volume has dropped from a blaring 100 to a much more manageable 25.

At the meeting, your presentation goes okay, but the client throws a bad-news bombshell about a big acquisition that might result in the loss of the client. As you hear and respond to the news, you chuckle to yourself and think, *Wow, look at you. You're taking the bad news in such*

stride. A few months ago you would have lost it! You chuckle again.

You begin noticing in other occasions that you automatically handle situations with a part of you (the Sage) that stays above the fray and keeps everything centered. This automatically happens when your PQ muscles reach a certain level of strength. All it takes is a little practice.

MY OWN PRACTICE

I have come a long way since gazing into that camera in sadness and resignation as a child. By my mid-thirties, I had discovered the powerful Judge and Hyper-Rational Saboteurs, my old invisible survival buddies, and recognized them as my biggest obstacles to greater success and happiness. By following the practices I have outlined, I was able to turn both my Saboteurs into personal PQ fitness trainers. Every time I noticed them surfacing, I was motivated to do a few reps to build up the muscles to counter them. Today I still hear both their voices in my head. Their messages are still the same, but I can barely hear them. Their whispers can no longer drown out the voice of my Sage.

Simultaneously, my Sage's voice has increased substantially in volume and strength. Depending on the intensity of the "bad" stuff happening in my work or personal life, I still occasionally get hijacked by my Saboteurs. However, very few things get me down for more than a few minutes before I recover and return to my Sage mode. I still exercise my PQ Brain muscles, since I am as committed to keeping them strong as I am to remaining physically fit. These workouts are intensely enjoyable now and something I look forward to. I would not dream of letting my PQ Brain muscles go flabby ever again.

Whatever you do, please don't allow your Saboteurs to convince you that you are too busy to exercise your PQ Brain muscles. You can get in your entire hundred reps just by being more attentive to what you are already doing throughout the day. Be suspicious of your Saboteurs telling you it's too much work and that a faster way to increased happiness and success is focusing on external factors, circumstances, and achievements. Those will fizzle over time. There is no substitute for switching power from your Saboteurs to your Sage and building your PQ muscle power. Without that change, you're building many of your intricate castles on shifting sand.

I have never worked with anyone who has done a hundred PQ reps

consistently for twenty-one consecutive days and not experienced substantial and often life-changing improvements in their life. For your sake, and the sake of your colleagues, your team, and your loved ones, I hope you will choose to do the same.

Inquiry

Are you willing to promise yourself that you'll do a hundred PQ reps every day? If so, what might your Saboteurs try to tell you in the coming days to talk you out of it?

PART V

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

In [part V](#), you will learn how individual and team PQ scores are calculated to measure Positive Intelligence. This will enable you to measure your progress as you use the three strategies for increasing Positive Intelligence in yourself or your team.

CHAPTER 8

PQ SCORE AND PQ VORTEX

In this chapter, we will explore how PQ scores for both individuals and teams are calculated and discuss what the PQ score means in practical applications. We will also explore the PQ tipping-point score. Being above or below this PQ tipping point determines whether you or your team are constantly feeling dragged down or uplifted by an invisible energetic vortex.

Metrics are an important part of creating and maintaining positive change. If you are exercising, you get encouraged by seeing progress in miles run, calories burnt, or the weight of dumbbells lifted. When dieting, you track your weight on the scale. During PQ practice, you track progress toward your hundred PQ reps, and you measure your PQ score.

As described in [chapter 1](#), your Positive Intelligence Quotient (PQ) is your Positive Intelligence score expressed as a percentage, ranging from 0 to 100. In effect, your PQ is the percentage of time your mind is serving you rather than sabotaging you (acting as your friend versus your enemy).

For example, a PQ of 75 means that your mind is acting as your friend 75 percent of the time and as your enemy about 25 percent of the time. We don't count the time that your mind is in neutral territory. The question is, how do you measure whether your mind is being your best friend or your worst enemy?

As previously discussed, a key premise of Positive Intelligence is that *all* your negative, destructive, or wasteful feelings are generated by your Saboteurs, regardless of the circumstances. Every ounce of your energy wasted on anxiety, stress, anger, frustration, self-doubt, impatience, despair, regret, resentment, restlessness, guilt, or shame is a choice that was made by the Saboteurs in your mind. But every challenge can be met by the Sage, its perspective, and its five powers. The Sage's perspective

and powers generate only positive feelings.

It follows that the fastest way to detect whether your mind is acting as your friend (Sage) or enemy (Saboteurs) is by noting the feelings you are experiencing. PQ is measured by calculating the percentage of Sage-generated feelings versus Saboteur-generated feelings in the course of a typical day. You can take the confidential two-minute PQ test by visiting www.PositiveIntelligence.com. With the understanding that you have good days and bad days, your PQ score is calculated over a “typical” period of time in your work and life. For example, your score during your Hawaiian vacation by itself might not be an accurate read of your PQ. You might repeat the PQ test to get an accurate score that is not biased by the variations caused by your atypical days.

You can determine a team’s PQ with a similar method, except that the team members report the feelings that they typically experience when interacting with other members of the team. The same goes for PQ scores of entire organizations, relationships, and even marriages. The PQ score is a key predictor of how much of the true potential of an individual, team, partnership, or marriage is actually achieved.

IMPACT OF PQ ON HAPPINESS

If we define happiness by the percentage of time we experience life's positive and desirable feelings, your PQ score becomes your happiness score. By positive and desirable feelings, we mean all the feelings generated in the Sage mode. In the Sage's Empathize mode, these feelings would include compassion, empathy, and forgiveness. In Explore mode, they would include curiosity, awe, and wonder. In Innovate mode, you would feel the great joys of creativity. In Navigate mode, you would feel grounded and centered in your deeper sense of values, meaning, and purpose. And in Activate mode, you would feel the quiet power, resolve, and satisfaction of taking pure action without Saboteur drama and interference.

You only need to know someone's PQ score to know how happy they are. You could instantly say a billionaire in full health with a PQ score of 50 is far less happy than a middle-class paraplegic person with a PQ score of 80. You wouldn't need to know anything else about their life circumstances to make this comparison.

This explains why researchers have shown that external events, such as winning a big lottery or becoming a paraplegic through an accident, on average have little lasting impact on happiness. Within a relatively short period of time, happiness usually reverts to what researchers call "baseline happiness" levels that existed prior to these events.^{[26](#)} Other researchers, in a slight variation of this theme, have found that external circumstances account for only 10 percent of variations in happiness.^{[27](#)} Happiness is indeed an inside game.

IMPACT OF PQ ON ACHIEVEMENT

The relationship between performance and PQ is also straightforward. PQ determines how much of your actual potential is achieved, as described in the following formula:

$$\text{Achievement} = \text{Potential} \times \text{PQ}$$

Your potential is determined by many factors, including your cognitive intelligence (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), skills, knowledge, experience, network, and so forth.

This commonsense formula is not intended to generate precise scientific calculations and does not incorporate the tipping point dynamic discussed later in this chapter. It is simply meant to illustrate the general relationship between potential, achievement, and PQ. At higher PQ levels, most of your energy gets channeled through the five powers of the Sage and is focused on creating the outcomes you desire. At lower PQ levels, some amount of your energy is used to sabotage your efforts, or at the very least is wasted on all the friction, drama, and distraction associated with the Saboteurs.

This formula confirms what we already know: most people have far more potential than they have tapped. Only 20 percent of individuals and teams have PQ scores compatible with reaching most of their true potential. The fastest and most efficient way to increase achievement and performance is to increase PQ, not potential. This is because part of your potential, such as your IQ, is fixed, and the rest of your potential is built over many years of acquiring skills, knowledge, experiences, and support networks. Your potential is already high and significantly untapped. Investing in even more skills, knowledge, or experience will add to your potential incrementally, but not dramatically in a short period of time. On the other hand, PQ can be increased dramatically in just a few weeks or months.

To illustrate, imagine yourself on a beach. You've entered into a

contest to build as many sand castles as possible in a few hours. Now imagine that every half hour a wave (a Saboteur) comes in and destroys half of what you have built. If you want to improve your performance, you could invest your time in attending a workshop that teaches you how to build sand castles even faster, increasing your castle-building potential incrementally. This would of course result in better performance. Alternatively, you could spend some of your time on building a sand wall to prevent the waves from sabotaging your castles every half hour. (This would be equivalent to building up your PQ “wall” to protect yourself from Saboteurs.) Guess which method would result in more dramatic improvements in your final performance and outcome?

THE PQ TIPPING POINT: 75

In [chapter 1](#), I cited many research studies that showed the link between PQ and the happiness and performance of individuals and teams. Now let's look at the evidence from some of the most prominent researchers in the field that points to the existence of an important tipping point for PQ.

Please note that different researchers used different methods of measuring and tracking positivity and negativity, although their results were highly consistent. In addition, these researchers have typically reported their results as a ratio of positive/negative, such as 3:1. I have taken the liberty of presenting those ratios as percentages in order to stay consistent with the PQ format. For example, I have translated a positive/negative ratio of 3/1 into a PQ equivalent of 75 (3 positive to 1 negative means positivity 75 percent of the time).

In one of the most thorough and impressive research projects in this field, Marcial Losada studied sixty management teams, closely observing the interactions of the various team members. The teams were placed into Low-Performance, Medium-Performance, and High-Performance categories based on objective data that included profitability and customer satisfaction scores. While other dimensions were also measured and compared, the positivity/negativity ratio proved to be the most dramatic differentiator of the three performance categories (See [figure 15](#)).

Fig. 15

PQ Equivalent Scores of Teams

| TEAMS | PQ EQUIVALENT SCORE |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Low Performance | 29 |
| Medium Performance | 66 |
| High Performance | 85 |

What is most remarkable is the mathematical modeling that Losada contributed to this field of research. His modeling showed that these human systems obey a nonlinear dynamic. This means that at some tipping point, the system switches into either expanding or contracting cycles that spiral in on themselves and create disproportionate impacts. At a PQ equivalent score of approximately 75 (74.4 to be exact), the system switches from a built-in, self-reinforcing loop that is biased toward “languishing” into a loop biased toward “flourishing.”²⁸

Equally impressive is the work of Barbara Fredrickson. After earning her PhD from Stanford, she has emerged as a leading researcher in her field, winning the American Psychological Association’s inaugural Templeton Prize in Positive Psychology. In collaboration with Losada, Fredrickson set out to confirm that Losada’s mathematically-derived tipping point, which was originally identified for teams, also held true for individuals. Fredrickson studied individuals who were independently rated as “flourishing” or “languishing.” Flourishing was determined by measuring thirty-three factors.

Fredrickson’s results, when averaged between the two populations she studied, translated to PQ equivalent scores of 77 for flourishing individuals versus 69 for languishing individuals, validating the tipping point of 75.²⁹ Remarkably, Fredrickson’s assessment suggests that about 80 percent of individuals score below this tipping point.

Perhaps the most publicized research on these positive/negative ratios is John Gottman’s on marriage, prominently highlighted in Malcolm Gladwell’s *Blink*.³⁰ He can successfully predict, with over 90 percent accuracy, whether a newlywed couple will be married or divorced four to six years later. He identified an average PQ equivalent score of 82 for “flourishing” marriages and 41 for marriages heading to dissolution. Gottman’s results are consistent with the tipping point.

Robert Schwartz, a clinical psychologist, provided further validation. His own mathematical modeling, successfully confirmed in working with patients, indicated the “optimal” mental state to be slightly above the

tipping point, and “normal” (average) states and “pathological” states to be below.^{[31](#)}

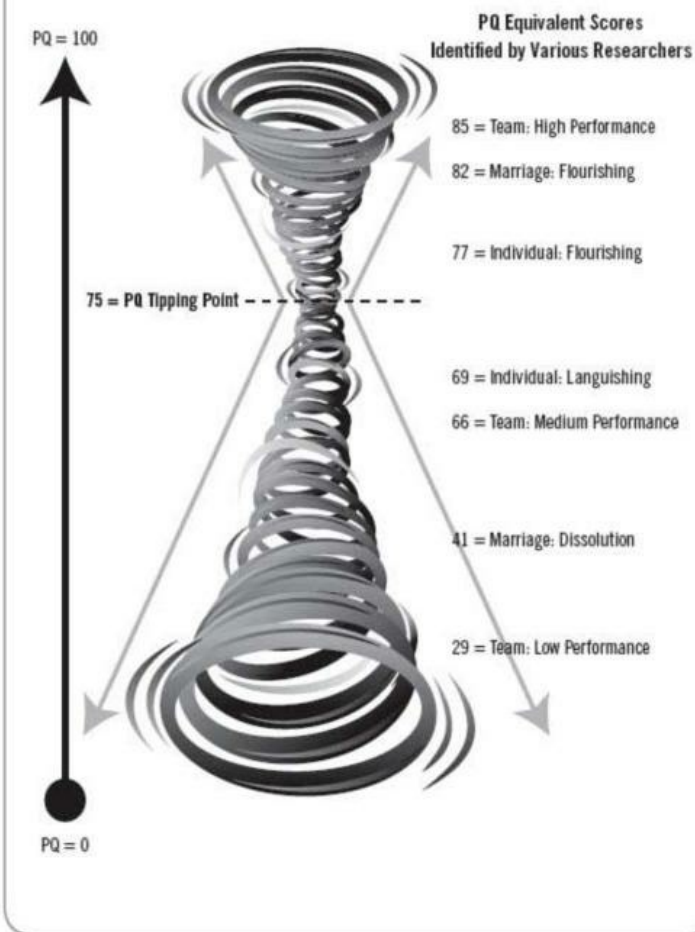
What is striking is that, despite using different ways of measuring the positive-to-negative ratios, these researchers produced consistent findings. Barbara Fredrickson provides an excellent summary of the research validating the tipping point phenomenon in her groundbreaking book *Positivity: Top-Notch Research Reveals the 3-to-1 Ratio That Will Change Your Life*.

THE PQ VORTEX

My own work with both individuals and teams has been consistent with the PQ tipping point of 75. I like the metaphor of a vortex to describe the energetic phenomena on either side of this tipping point. Below a PQ of 75, an individual or team is constantly being dragged down by the invisible forces of a net-negative vortex. Above a PQ of 75, an individual or team is constantly being uplifted by a net-positive vortex. In an individual, these vortices are experienced inside the brain. In the case of a team, the vortex is experienced in the interactions among the team members. [Figure 16](#) is a graphic representation of the vortices.

Fig. 16

The PQ Vortex



Have you known people who have such a vortex of negativity around

them that you have to work hard to resist being dragged down when you're with them? Have you ever belonged to a team whose meetings make you feel dragged-down, anxious, self-conscious, suspicious, or defensive the moment you enter the door? Can you remember any period of time when the negative force of the mind-chatter inside your own head was so powerful that it exhausted you and you didn't know how to stop it?

Conversely, have you ever walked into a room where the energy was so positive and uplifting that you immediately felt better, more hopeful, and more energized? Can you think of anyone who has such a strong vortex of positivity around them that your mood is immediately lifted when you're near them? Have you ever known a leader in whose presence you stand an inch taller and believe in yourself more, regardless of whether he or she is even talking to you? Can you remember when your mind was in such a flow that you embraced every challenge and obstacle as a fun game or opportunity? All of these effects are the result of the invisible PQ vortex that each individual or team exhibits at any given time. This vortex affects your energy level, mood, and perspective, often without you realizing it.

When you are in the net-negative vortex, it will take constant energy investment to keep your head above water and hold things together. In the net-positive vortex, you feel uplifted naturally, without too much effort, as if you're flying with a tailwind. If you're caught up in a net-negative vortex—if you have a headwind—you might still get to your destination, but you'd use much more fuel and take longer. If your personal PQ or your team's PQ score is below 75, you are wasting a lot of your energy just dealing with distress—energy that could otherwise be used to get things done.

Only 20 percent of us score above a PQ of 75, and that's why only 20 percent of individuals and teams achieve their true potential.

WHAT CAUSES THE PQ VORTEX?

Why does the PQ vortex exist? Why does this nonlinear, discontinuous effect show up in so many different researchers' data? The answer differs depending on whether a PQ vortex is happening inside an individual's head or inside a team. Let's look at the difference.

The Individual's PQ Vortex

The reason the PQ vortex occurs in an individual's brain is twofold. First, the way the human brain is wired causes the negative or positive modalities of the brain to spiral in on themselves. Second, as we've seen in previous chapters, both negative and positive brain modalities become self-fulfilling prophecies in the external world. They generate results that reinforce the initial negative or positive brain modality that produced them in the first place. This too reinforces the spiraling vortex.

The human brain is wired to perform two primary functions: survive and thrive. In survive mode, your Survivor Brain takes control, primarily looking for the negative and dangers to your physical and emotional survival. In thrive mode, the PQ Brain looks for opportunities to grow, discover, explore, create, be in awe and appreciation, and reach its own full potential.

When PQ is 75 and above, the PQ brain is mostly in charge and the Survivor Brain is doing its job in the background. Your Sage thought patterns loom large in thrive mode and your Saboteurs take a back seat. When PQ is below 75, the situation is reversed.

Once we switch into either survive or thrive mode, multiple regions of the brain are activated, and they spiral in on one another and snowball, causing the vortex effect. For example, the amygdala is involved in making us feel safe or in danger. Once the amygdala determines that there is credible danger, the brain shifts primarily into survive mode. This

results in a cascade of neurochemical events, including the release of the stress hormone cortisol. Few people realize that when you go into fight-or-flight mode, the mind—not just the body—becomes narrowly focused. It begins to selectively look for the negative signs of danger while ignoring positive signs of opportunity.

When in survive mode, thriving takes a back seat. Although many opportunities might arise for a shift to a positive thriving mode, the brain with this narrowed focus is incapable of registering and capitalizing on them; this is part of what keeps the negative vortex going. Negativity is therefore a self-reinforcing and self-fulfilling mechanism in the brain. Once you get into it, you feel the pull of its vortex wanting to keep you in.

The good news is that positivity is also self-reinforcing and self-fulfilling. Positive emotions bathe our brains in serotonin and dopamine. These chemicals have multiple effects. They make us feel good. They energize the learning centers of our brain, which help us in organizing, storing, and retrieving new information. They facilitate making and keeping more neural synaptic connections, which in turn help us think more quickly, be more adept at complex and big-picture problem solving, and generate more outside-the-box creative possibilities. These are all Sage tendencies. Once in the positive vortex, there is an uplifting pull to stay there.

The Team's PQ Vortex

A team whose PQ is below 75 is also stuck in a net-negative vortex. A key factor in the functioning of this vortex is the brain's mirror neuron system. Our brain's mirror neurons ensure that we act as tuning forks to one another, unconsciously and automatically mimicking the other brains around us. The most visible manifestation of this is that we yawn when another yawns, or cringe when we see another in physical pain. The less visible manifestation is that energy, mood, and even PQ levels can be

contagious. For example, it's more likely that your own Saboteurs will come out swinging if someone approaches you with his or her Judge in charge.

Let's say Jane has a moderate PQ of 70 but John has a low PQ of 30. The question is, who would tune into whom during an interaction between the two? Would they meet in the middle and each exhibit a PQ of 50? Would Jane lift John up to 60, or would John drag Jane way down to very low PQ behavior?

There are two factors that help determine the answer. One is the relative status and power of each individual. If Jane is John's boss, he's more likely to be pulled up by her rather than she is to be dragged down by him. Another factor is what I call the "radius of the vortex." This is analogous to a person's force of personality. Some people's vortex, whether positive or negative, has a small radius and doesn't affect others much. Others have a larger vortex radius. We all know people whose negative vortex can sink the energy of any room they walk into. On the other hand, we also know people whose positive vortex has such a large radius that they light up a city block wherever they go.

In a team composed of people with various PQ scores and PQ vortex radiuses, the team eventually settles at one collective team PQ, like a room full of grandfather clocks that eventually tick in synchrony. Our mirror neurons are responsible for this contagion effect.

A great leader or team player knows how to shift the collective PQ of a team to above 75 so that each individual within the team is uplifted by it. Each individual within such a team is likely to exhibit higher PQ behavior than they would on their own. This is what it means when we say someone "brings out the best" in others. If Peter has a PQ of 60, he might exhibit fewer Saboteur tendencies and a stronger Sage when interacting within a high-PQ team. When he goes home, he'll be back to a PQ of 60 in interactions with his family. I know people who are so uplifted by their team's high-PQ dynamic that they find their work life far more fulfilling than their home life. They feel better about themselves and see a better version of themselves show up within such a team than on their own.

If you are a member of a team, ask yourself this: Do you generally feel uplifted or dragged down when you interact with your team? You can ask the same question about your marriage or your relationship with your kids or parents.

WHY 75, NOT 50?

You might be asking yourself, *Why isn't a PQ above 50 adequate to start a net-positive PQ vortex?* At a PQ of 50, there is one negative for every positive, while at a PQ of 75 there are three positives for every negative. Why do we need three positives to counteract each negative? The reason is that the brain is biased toward survival, and the Survivor Brain is wired to hang on to the negative and amplify it while ignoring or discounting the positive. After all, dangers to our survival are negative things, not positive ones. Unless you counteract each negative inside your own brain, on your team, or in your relationships with three positives, you will be feeling the downward drag of a net-negative vortex.

THE UPPER LIMIT OF PQ

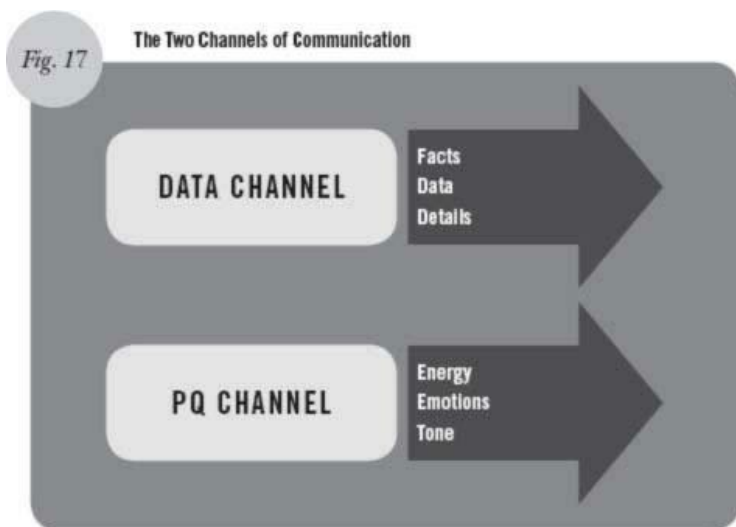
Marcial Losada's mathematical modeling uncovered an upper limit to positivity equivalent to a PQ score of 92. My own interpretation of this finding is that a minimal level of negativity is inevitable, and is actually helpful. I want to emphasize *minimal*, so we don't give the Saboteurs the excuse they need to get back into convincing us they are our friends. If we use the physical body analogy, we would say that while we should aim to avoid pain, it is critical that our body be capable of feeling pain. For example, if you touch a hot stove, you will feel pain temporarily. This pain is a critical signal to you that you need to move your hand. If you didn't feel this pain, your hand might be badly burned before you realized you needed to move it.

It is inevitable that you will feel anxiety, anger, shame, guilt, disappointment, and many other negative feelings at times. These feelings wake you up and tell you that you need to pay attention. The problem with the Saboteurs is that they want you to keep feeling that way. They want you to keep your hand on the stove, to keep feeling the anger, the guilt, the disappointment, the anxiety. Instead, we need to learn to shift to Sage mode soon after the pain gets our attention, shifting our feelings into positive territory. The necessity of this minimal amount of negative feeling is why I believe PQ has an upper limit.

THE PQ CHANNEL

If you are watching channel four on TV, the program being broadcast on channel five is invisible to you, but it's made visible once you tune into that channel. Similarly, the powerful energy and information contained in the PQ vortex can become more visible to you once you learn to tune into the channel through which energy, emotions, and tone are communicated. This is the PQ Channel.

The PQ Channel is very different from the more visible “Data Channel” through which we communicate facts and details. We tend to be tuned into just the Data Channel, but any interaction between two people simultaneously transmits information on both the Data and PQ Channels. As we will see in later chapters, the information on the PQ Channel is often more important to leading, building relationships, motivating, inspiring, and selling. Great leaders, parents, educators, mentors, and salespeople know that.



To illustrate, Bob, your colleague, might be the kind of guy who always says “I’m fine” on the Data Channel anytime you ask him how he is. But through his energy and tone, shown on the PQ Channel, he might be broadcasting a vortex of negativity, a cry for help, a longing for acknowledgement, or a sense of resentment over an unresolved conflict with you. If you are not tuned into that channel, you will be missing what is really happening in your relationship with Bob. The same might be true with your whole team, your clients, your spouse, or your child. What people say is a small part of what they are actually communicating in any interaction.

Learning to tune into the PQ Channel has a powerful impact on your effectiveness in interacting with others. And, of course, it is your PQ Brain that knows how to best tune into the PQ Channel.

Inquiry

Pick an important relationship. If you counted the interactions in which positive or negative energy is exchanged between you and the other person, would the ratio typically be at least three positives to one negative?

PART VI

APPLICATIONS

In [part VI](#), you will see the many applications of the three PQ strategies to enhancing both work and personal life.

[Chapter 9](#) shows the great diversity and range of these applications in brief.

[Chapters 10](#) through 12 each include one detailed case study to give you a clear picture of how to put what you are learning into practice. [Chapter 10](#) follows a leader who turns his company around by learning to first increase his own PQ and then his team's. [Chapter 11](#) follows a couple in the midst of great conflict as they learn to turn that conflict into an opportunity to strengthen their relationship. This case study also includes a discussion of reducing conflict inside teams. [Chapter 12](#) follows a sales team applying PQ principles to selling. It also includes a discussion of the application of PQ to motivating and persuading in general.

CHAPTER 9

WORK AND LIFE APPLICATIONS

Increasing your PQ has many applications. In this chapter, we will briefly look at application of PQ techniques to team building, work-life balance, parenting, improving your game, solving complex problems, finding meaning and purpose, working and living with difficult people, health and dieting, managing stress, and developing other people.

TEAM BUILDING

A team's PQ is not necessarily the average PQ of the individuals on the team. A great leader can build a high-PQ team made up of average PQ members. This means that the members of that team feel more positively while they are in the team than outside the team. Conversely, you can have a low-PQ team made up of higher-PQ individuals who just can't help but be dragged down by the net-negative vortex of a team that brings out their Saboteurs.

Most traditional team-building retreats and activities create short-lived euphoria and positivity within a team that fizzles soon after the event. This is because these activities use artificial constructs designed to force people to act in positive ways and temporarily push aside their Saboteurs. For example, if you are high on the ropes in a ropes course with a team member whom you hold in contempt, you have no choice but to temporarily put aside your contempt and collaborate with him to meet the challenge at hand. This might be an uplifting moment of partnership that feels great. The problem is that your Saboteurs are lurking behind the manufactured environment of the retreat. The Saboteur was not permanently identified or weakened. Nor was your Sage strengthened. You don't lift a heavy dumbbell a few times and think you have a muscular body for life. If your Judge was holding your team member in contempt before the retreat, that contempt will likely come back in a different form soon after the retreat.

In [chapters 1](#) and [8](#) we discussed research showing a strong link between PQ and performance. The sustainable way to build a high-PQ team requires a twofold focus: (1) help the team members increase their individual PQs; (2) train the team to pay attention to the PQ Channel during team interactions.

To help people focus on the PQ Channel during team interactions, I sometimes ask people the following question: "If an alien who didn't understand our language witnessed this interaction between Kathy and

Karl, would he rate it as a positive energy exchange, a negative energy exchange, or neutral?" The alien would have an easier time focusing on the invisible energy of the PQ Channel, because he would not be distracted by processing the facts and details communicated on the Data Channel.

For example, Kathy could have turned to Karl and asked, "Karl, what led to that mistake in the project?" In a high-PQ team, when Kathy is asking this question, she is in PQ Brain and Sage mode. She is Exploring and being deeply curious about what went wrong so she can learn from it, or so the team can develop an innovative solution to avoid it in the future. The alien observer would have picked up on the energy and emotions of curiosity and exploration in the PQ Channel, coming from both Kathy and Karl.

In a low-PQ team, Kathy could have said the exact same words in the Data Channel. "Karl, what led to that mistake in the project?" However, the Judge would have been in Kathy's head saying those words. In the PQ Channel, the visiting alien would have detected contempt or blame coming from Kathy, and perhaps defensiveness coming from Karl. Kathy's Judge would very likely have triggered Karl's Saboteurs automatically. Anyone paying attention to the PQ Channel would have noticed that energy exchange and felt the net-negative vortex of the team.

We can improve only what we observe. The information exchange on the PQ Channel enables people to begin to shift out of the net-negative vortex collectively rather than be constantly victimized by its invisible force.

Observing the PQ Channel is easier if everyone on the team is practicing one or more of the three PQ strategies to increase their own individual PQs. On your next team-building retreat, set aside some time for discussion of the PQ concepts and have each person identify his or her own Saboteurs. Some leaders worry before such retreats about one or two individuals who are particularly difficult, unaware, or reluctant to admit their own flaws. Since no one individual is being singled out for discussion of what is wrong with them, everyone participates in the PQ discussion fully. To this date, I have never encountered a single team

member who claimed that he or she didn't have Saboteurs and refused to identify their own during a team retreat.

Imagine the great impact of team members identifying how they tend to shoot themselves and the team in the foot. Imagine them doing this without shame, guilt, blame, or defensiveness. The power of the PQ conversation is that it moves everyone to a place of curiosity about how they can improve themselves rather than focusing on how someone else should change. This helps a team shift from a collective Survivor Brain to a collective PQ Brain.

To sustain the momentum of the team's increased PQ beyond the retreat, I ask teams to add a short PQ report to their weekly team meetings. Each member includes a few bullet points regarding PQ development successes and failures in the previous week. This could include instances where their Saboteurs got in the way, or when they successfully employed their Sage powers and saved the day. Both success and failure stories add to every member's learning and commitment to stay with the PQ practice. Remember that just as physical fitness is a matter of daily practice, so is PQ fitness. A PQ report built into the team's weekly discussion ensures that the team's increase in PQ is sustained long enough to lift its PQ score into the net-positive vortex. Once that happens, the team's high PQ will be self-sustaining.

As an additional boost to team PQ, many senior teams in industries as diverse as manufacturing, IT, and banking start their longer team meetings with some kind of PQ Brain activation exercise. This helps everyone hit the ground running, with the Sage in the driver seat and Saboteur voices quieted. (Download self-guided audio files from www.PositiveIntelligence.com.)

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is often interpreted in terms of how much time is spent on work versus family or other personal pursuits. While creating a more balanced time allocation is always desirable, you can instantly improve your work-life balance through being in your PQ Brain while participating in whatever you are doing. The PQ approach to work-life balance focuses not just on the quantity of time, but even more importantly, on the quality of time you spend on what is important to you.

When I interview the kids and spouses of the people I coach, they frequently complain that the person's smartphone is the third wheel in their relationship and gets more true attention when they are together than they do. Even though they are spending a lot of time together, the impact of that time on the relationship is not very positive. One hour of time spent with your spouse or child while you are in PQ Brain mode and fully present has a more positive impact on that relationship than an entire weekend of being with them while you're afflicted by your Saboteurs and mind-chatter. Remember that the signals on the PQ Channel are more important to a relationship than the signals on the Data Channel. Many of us are in the habit of saying "I love you" to our loved ones on the Data Channel while what we're communicating on the PQ Channel is as loving and impactful as reading a list of groceries.

Practice being in PQ Brain mode with the people who really matter to you for just five minutes and see the great impact it makes on the relationship. If you hug them, feel their breathing and even heartbeat as you hold them (one PQ rep, three breaths). If you are looking at them, really look at them. Are their pupils constricted or dilated? How does the color shift around their pupils? Do their eyes twinkle as you carry a conversation? If you say "I love you," do you really feel the warmth of that love in your heart as you say the words?

PQ can contribute to work-life balance in other ways. When your Sage is in control, you don't need a two-week vacation to feel recharged.

Unless you have been working in a coal mine smashing up rocks, your exhaustion is not physical; it's purely mental. And mental exhaustion is due to the Saboteurs. The Sage knows nothing about mental exhaustion. You can relieve your mental exhaustion instantly every time you shift to PQ Brain mode. You probably know this already—have you ever gotten a call from a long-missed loved one that instantly shifts you out of exhaustion?

In addition to increasing the quality of the time you spend outside work, increasing PQ results in saving time at work so you can allocate more energy to outside activities. Frenzied multitasking, the great addiction of the twenty-first century, is actually not as productive and efficient as single-tasking, which is aided by the more calm and focused PQ Brain.

A group of Stanford scientists have recently shown that people who regularly multitask with several streams of electronic information do not pay attention, control their memory, or switch from one job to another as well as those who prefer to complete one task at a time.³² “We kept looking for what they’re better at, and we didn’t find it,” said Professor Eyal Ophir, the study’s lead author. “They’re suckers for irrelevancy,” added Professor Clifford Nass, one of the researchers.³³

Professor Nass continues: “Virtually all multitaskers think they are brilliant at multitasking. And one of the big discoveries is: you know what, you’re really lousy at it. It turns out multitaskers are terrible at every aspect of multitasking ... they get distracted constantly. Their memory is very disorganized.... We worry that it may be creating people who are unable to think well and clearly.”³⁴

The strange glamorization of multitasking isn’t the only false Saboteur assumption that results in wasting time at work. For example, if your Judge holds the “no pain, no gain” belief, you might ignore easier solutions or not trust that they will work. Or your Hyper-Achiever may convince you that working more always results in accomplishing more. But that’s not true; beyond a certain level of workload and stress, productivity plummets, meaning that working more actually results in

producing less. This is partially because higher stress fuels your Saboteurs and energizes your Survivor Brain. As we have seen, the Survivor Brain is optimized for imminent danger, not steady productivity.

PARENTING

Most of us work too hard as parents, because we inadvertently micromanage our children. We work tirelessly to get them to study and get good grades so they can get into good schools, excel in their careers, find a good mate, etc. We think these achievements will make them happy. The problem is that the vast majority of people I have coached who have met all of these milestones were not necessarily all that happy and were instead living highly stressed lives while suffering from strong Saboteurs. If happiness and peace of mind are what you ultimately want for your children, your most important and lasting contribution would be to help them build the foundation that will make them happy: their PQ.

As a father, my highest priority is making sure that my two children develop high PQs—far above 75—before they turn eighteen and leave home. With a strong PQ Brain, they will be able to keep tapping into the great wisdom of their own Sages after they leave home. Their paths will certainly meander once they leave. They might find out after a few years that they chose the wrong major in college. Or they might lose their way for a while and get bad grades or even drop out. They might have their heart broken in their first relationship, or they might fail badly in their first job. Life will do its thing and no amount of hyper-vigilant parenting on my part can protect them. With their Sages, however, they will be able to turn all of these negative circumstances and their failings and mistakes into gifts and opportunities. They will be able to keep growing, while also feeling happy and peaceful along the way.

This doesn't mean, of course, that I neglect the other areas parents usually focus on, but I have learned not to sweat them as much. They matter, but not as much as helping my kids master their own minds and gain access to their own deeper wisdom.

How does this approach show up on a day-to-day basis? My wife and I take every opportunity we can to remind our kids to get a few PQ reps toward 100. For example, during dinner we sometimes pause our kids

and ask them to get a few PQ reps in by focusing closely on the next few bites. Sometimes all of us do so as a family, closing our eyes for a few reps for bigger impact. We also go around the dinner table and each share three things about the day we feel grateful for. Gratitude, of course, is a Sage feeling, and this exercise strengthens it.

When we play catch in the park, I occasionally pause and ask my son to close his eyes and get a few reps by feeling all the sensations of the catcher's glove on his hand, such as its texture and temperature and weight. Or I ask him to feel the weight of his body on his feet. Or the breeze on his face. Or the rising and falling of his chest or stomach with the next few breaths. When we resume throwing and catching the ball, I ask him to do a rep by noticing the spin of the ball all the way until it lands in his glove, and then to really feel the impact and sound of its hitting his glove. The first time he did this he was amazed that he saw the small specks of dust that rose from his gloves as the ball hit. He stopped fidgeting as much and moved into a more graceful physical form almost instantly.

Teaching your kids about their own Sage and Saboteurs has lasting impact. You might initially want to limit it to a discussion of one overall Saboteur rather than explaining the Judge and its accomplice Saboteurs. Kids as young as ten years old are fully capable of understanding and using the concept. My client's son who had named his own Judge "PoopMaker" when his dad described the concept to him was only eleven years old.

Once you teach your kid the basic framework of Sage versus Saboteur, you can then turn many of her daily challenges into a coaching opportunity to reinforce the concept. Rather than dictating to her that she should do A instead of B, you could ask her which voice in her head is voting for which choice. Show your kid that there are always different voices and choices, and there are always consequences for each. Allow her to follow the Saboteurs' influences and incur their consequences, so long as you always do a blameless analysis at the end and turn the situation into a learning opportunity. This way, you get out of micromanaging your child and instead help her develop her all-important

PQ.

IMPROVING YOUR GAME

You can enhance your performance significantly in sports by developing your PQ Brain and weakening your Saboteurs. I had a surprising firsthand experience of this. Growing up, I had never touched a tennis racket. While at Stanford, I was inspired by the world-class reputation of the university's tennis program and faculty and decided to take classes. However, after two years of practice I was still at a low-intermediate level in my game and decided to quit. I was frustrated by my own slow progress.

Fifteen years later, on a summer vacation, a friend who was a relatively good tennis player kept urging me to play with him. After multiple warnings that I hadn't touched a racket in fifteen years, was not at his level, and would bore him to tears, I agreed to play. When we started the game, I was amazed at my own performance. I was playing at a level far superior to what I had played fifteen years earlier. My friend said he was impressed by the precision of my form and strokes. It dawned on me that over the last fifteen years I had developed great strength in my PQ Brain and weakened my Saboteurs. This meant that I could focus my full attention on the ball, the net, the racket, and muscle memory of the occasional perfect stroke. There were no Saboteurs to worry me about my performance or distract me with other thoughts or feelings. The resulting improvement in my game was stunning and completely unexpected.

Next time you play your favorite sport, promise yourself to get as many PQ reps in as possible right before and during the game. This might take the form of feeling the temperature, texture, or weight of the club or racket for a few breaths, seeing the spin of the ball as it comes toward you, feeling the breeze on your face, or just simply observing your breath as often as you can during the game. When you hear Saboteur voices making you anxious about your performance, keep labeling them and letting them go.

Athletes who experience being “in the zone” have tapped into their PQ powers. They report suddenly experiencing deep calm and relaxation, a cessation of mind-chatter, and a laser focus on the ball and the basket or whatever the game requires. The focus is so pure that they almost experience the whole thing in slow motion and can even intuitively anticipate what will happen next. These are all PQ Brain experiences. These athletes often don’t know how they got there or how to replicate that experience. By now you do.

SOLVING COMPLEX PROBLEMS

Have you ever had an experience where the fog lifts and the answer to a complex problem suddenly pops into your mind? These are actually moments where your PQ Brain finally breaks through your tangled-up rational mind and the noise of your mind-chatter to show you the way. Most people experience these moments while taking a shower, working out, or hiking in nature. This is because these activities, which are full of physical stimuli, focus your attention on your body's sensations, which activates your PQ Brain and quiets your Saboteurs. Now you know how to pursue moments of clarity at your own command.

Computer scientists work with two kinds of computers: serial computers, which act more like our left brain, and parallel computers, which act more like our right brain (part of the PQ Brain). Serial and parallel methods are each suited to different kinds of problems. Some of the most complex and profound questions can only be answered using the parallel process of our PQ Brain.

With a serial computer, one thing happens at a time and progress is sequential. For example, "A is fast and expensive; B is slow and cheap. Speed doesn't matter to me; money does matter to me. Therefore, I should take B." This is a serial computing problem. It involves several discrete steps of applying logic to data, and the answer is always the same. Most computers we use are serial computers and are similar in function to our left brain.

A parallel computer processes a massively greater amount of data simultaneously in parallel tracks and is capable of finding patterns and drawing conclusions that a serial process couldn't even touch. Massive supercomputers operate in parallel, similar to our PQ Brain.

Many decisions we encounter are too complex to be reduced to the concrete and limited factors that the left brain's serial process can handle. Whom you should marry, whom you should hire, what vision you should set for your team, what your calling is in life, what the next

creative breakthrough could be—these are all complex problems that require your parallel PQ Brain for optimal answers.

Your rational brain might make you *smart*, but your PQ Brain makes you *wise*. While your rational mind is only limited to information that you know and remember, the PQ Brain can access the much vaster library of anything you have ever experienced or learned, including things that you might not even be consciously aware of. When it pops up with an answer, it won't be able to tell you how it arrived at the answer, since it used massive parallel processing and pattern matching. This is where the wisdom of your Sage lives. This is also where “gut feeling” and intuition come from.

If you have ever talked yourself into hiring someone against your own gut feeling because they looked awesome on paper and met all the criteria, only to have that person fail within a short period of time, you know why you should use your PQ Brain to make the final call in these types of decisions.

Many scientists and leaders talk about how their greatest discoveries and inventions were not initially attained through hard rational thinking. Instead, their brilliant insight came to them in a flash of inspiration, and then they did the hard work to gather the rational data and evidence that supported it. Thomas Edison even turned this into a routine. He discovered that his greatest inventions occurred to him in the moments right before falling sleep. So he would sit in a chair while holding a steel ball in his hand until he dozed off. The moment he was about to fall asleep, his grip would relax and the steel ball would fall to the floor, waking him. He would then jot down any worthwhile idea that had popped into his head. This technique was successful because the PQ Brain is the more dominant brain in the short juncture between waking and sleep.

There are of course easier and more practical ways to access your PQ Brain's wisdom and creativity than Edison's method. In my own case, whenever I am trying to resolve a complex issue or come up with an important creative solution, I do a fifteen-minute PQ gym routine to fully activate my PQ Brain. I then gently introduce the question to my mind,

as straining the mind by thinking hard is the Survivor Brain's way of approaching problems. My batting average is one in three, meaning that I typically need to do this at most three times before I have discovered my answers. Try it sometime—it's actually a great deal of fun.

FINDING MEANING AND PURPOSE

We have established that your PQ Brain is wired to answer the more complex and profound types of questions. And what could be more profound than questions of mission, purpose, and meaning? It is your PQ Brain that can answer them.

There are two different approaches to bringing purpose and meaning to your work or personal life. One is to change *how* you do things by making sure you are in your PQ Brain as you do them. The second is to change *what* you do. We will explore both.

The students of a wise old teacher once asked the old man how life had changed since he became enlightened. He contemplated calmly for a moment before speaking: “Before enlightenment, I used to chop wood and carry water.” He paused as the students’ anticipation built. “After enlightenment, I chop wood and carry water.”

The point here is that how you feel about this moment in time has far less to do with what you are doing, and far more to do with how you are doing it. To be even more specific, it has to do with whether you are in PQ Brain or Survivor Brain mode as you carry out any task.

This is further illustrated through a fascinating body of research conducted by psychologist Amy Wrzesniewski and her colleagues. They found that people experience their work in one of three ways: as a job, as a career, or as a calling. More importantly, they found that how people experience work is more a matter of choice and perspective than of the job itself.

In research conducted on hospital cleaners, one group of employees experienced their work as just a job and found it to be boring and meaningless. Another group experienced the same exact work as meaningful and engaging. They approached their work in more creative ways. They interacted more with nurses, patients, and their visitors. They took pride in making patients and hospital staff feel better. They actively imbued their seemingly menial job with meaning.

Similarly, in a study of twenty-four administrative assistants with nearly identical jobs, close to a third saw the work as just a job, another third saw it as a career, and another third as a calling.

What this means is that you can help yourself, and others, imbue the same exact work with far greater meaning, without needing to change the work itself. You can change how you do your work by activating the PQ Brain and the Sage.

The second way to give purpose to your job is to actually change what you do. This doesn't necessarily mean changing jobs or roles—it could mean changing what you do within the scope of your existing job or roles.

The Sage's Navigate power is particularly relevant to helping you answer what you should do differently in your current job or various roles. Play the Flash Forward power game as often as you can to get guidance from your internal compass. For example, if you are a manager, ask yourself, *How would I wish I had performed this role at the end of my career; looking back?* Asking such a question might help you decide that developing your team members is far more important to your long-term sense of fulfillment. This realization might lead you to do less micromanaging, or create a better balance between just fighting the short-term fires and using them to grow your people in more lasting ways.

In some circumstances, you might realize that neither changing *how* you do your current role nor changing *what* you do within that role generates enough alignment with your internal compass. If that's the case, you might want to consider a new job or even a new career. But in my experience, the vast majority of people find satisfactory solutions without having to venture far from where they already are.

If you are wondering which option to pursue, the answer is in your PQ Brain. Do a fifteen-minute PQ gym workout to fully energize your PQ Brain and then gently ask yourself the deeper question. Your Sage will give you your answer within a few attempts.

WORKING AND LIVING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

By now we have a different language to talk about “difficult” people: they are people who have particularly strong Saboteurs. How do you work and live more effectively with people like that?

Positive Intelligence offers four key strategies to do so:

- 1. Stop fueling their Saboteurs.** Remember that Saboteurs in one person tend to trigger Saboteurs in the other. It is therefore very likely that the other person’s Saboteurs have been triggering your own. Your Saboteurs in turn energize theirs even more, leading to a vicious cycle. You need to break this cycle by preventing yourself from being hijacked by your own Saboteurs when you are in the other person’s presence. Intensify your effort to label and let go of your Saboteurs, or do PQ reps, when you notice their Saboteurs coming.
- 2. Fuel their Sages.** Remember also that the Sage in one person tends to energize the Sage in the other. When in the difficult person’s presence, intensify your effort to get centered in your Sage. Adopting the Sage perspective means that you ask yourself how you can turn this person’s difficult personality into a gift and opportunity, rather than get upset by it. You might also suggest a Sage power game to shift the dynamics of your interaction. For example, you might interrupt their naysaying by suggesting the “Yes ... and ...” approach during an idea-generating discussion.
- 3. Help them discover their Saboteurs.** Most people would react defensively if you told them you thought they had the Judge, Victim, Avoider, or other Saboteur. They might, however, react more favorably if you shared the benefits of discovering your own Saboteurs with them and interested them in the power of similar discoveries for themselves. This book, or its companion website, could help them realize that Saboteurs are a universal

phenomenon and that they shouldn't feel embarrassed admitting to them. Even more powerful, you can see and acknowledge their Sage essence hidden underneath their Saboteurs. Let them know the possibilities you see for them if they can tap into their own Sage powers.

When possible, share the PQ framework with people in a group rather than in a one-on-one setting. For example, everyone on a team, in a family, or in a classroom, could assess and discuss their own Saboteurs together. This helps in two ways: first, no one feels singled out, and second, it raises the entire unit's PQ, meaning each person within that unit will have an easier time maintaining a higher PQ. This is due to the invisible energetic power of the PQ vortex.

- 4. Put boundaries around their Saboteurs.** If the previous strategies are not possible, as a last resort you can at least limit the damage of the difficult person's Saboteurs by setting some boundaries around them. Allow their Saboteurs to have their way within a narrowly defined boundary. You are in effect "throwing a bone" to the Saboteur to get its energy occupied and spent in a smaller domain.

For example, you might give the Judge a narrow domain in which to feel superior; give the Controller something small it can fully control within a larger project; allow the Stickler to do a small project to full perfection and in its own exacting way; or negotiate with the Hyper-Achiever for clear boundaries for protected time with the family, outside of which it can be a workaholic to its heart's delight. This is of course a strategy of last resort because it does not diminish the underlying strength of the Saboteur.

With these four strategies, you can work and live more effectively with people who exhibit strong Saboteurs. In addition, see if you can activate your Sage's compassion toward these people. Imagine how hard it must be for them to live with those Saboteurs. They weren't born that

way, and their Sages are trying to get out from under the shadows of these Saboteurs. Those Sages could use your Sage's helping hand.

HEALTH AND DIETING

I cited research in [chapter 1](#) showing that higher PQ tendencies result in lower levels of stress-related hormones, enhanced immune system function, diminished inflammatory responses to stress, lower blood pressure, less pain, fewer colds, better sleep, and reduced likelihood of diabetes and strokes. I also mentioned that the research showed an increase in longevity of about ten years.

A healthy and moderate diet is clearly also associated with increased health. Experts agree that for a vast majority of people, overeating has nothing to do with feeling hungry. The reasons we overeat are mostly psychological, not physical. We are bored or anxious or restless or unhappy, so we reach for the food. Eating temporarily soothes these feelings and brings a slight amount of distraction or pleasure as an antidote.

The PQ Brain counters these dynamics in two ways. First, with your PQ Brain activated, you won't feel bored or anxious or restless or unhappy. There will be no void to fill with food. Second, each bite you eat attentively will bring you a great deal more pleasure than ten such bites in your Survivor Brain mode, meaning that you need far less food to satisfy the same desire for pleasure.

When someone wants to lose weight, I don't coach them to go on any particular diet or eat any particular kind of food. I go to the heart of the matter and ask them to commit to one thing: eating attentively. They commit to getting at least ten PQ reps with every meal.

People's relationship with food is transformed when they begin to eat in this way. They instantly report eating much more slowly and getting a lot more pleasure out of it, all while witnessing and weakening the Saboteurs that cause their eating issues in the first place.

MANAGING STRESS

All stress is Saboteur generated. Under the Sage's influence, you focus on doing what needs to get done, but you don't sweat the outcome. You know that whatever outcome you reach, you will be able to turn it into a gift and opportunity. This includes making a big mistake or failing. Imagine what happens to your stress if you go all out and passionately pursue the outcome you desire, while never getting attached to that outcome. This is a paradox, of course, that gives your Saboteurs an aneurism and that only your Sage understands. Your Sage knows that you are more likely to achieve your outcome if you don't feel that your ultimate happiness and success depend on it.

While the strategies of weakening your Saboteurs and strengthening your Sage independently reduce your stress and anxiety, you can also rely on the third strategy of strengthening your PQ Brain muscles. The PQ Brain is incapable of feeling stress, just as the Survivor Brain is incapable of feeling peace. If you strengthen and activate your PQ Brain, you will feel peace in the middle of the greatest storms of life.

A CEO I once coached, who was into boating, likened his new experience of feeling calm during crises to finding an anchor. He said it was as if he had spent all his life as a captain of a ship without an anchor on rough seas, terrified of every cloud formation. With his PQ Brain strengthening, he said he now had an anchor to throw: he could feel deep peace even in the middle of the greatest storms. "I am no longer constantly anxious about what the next storm might bring" he said, articulating a common sentiment of those who increase their PQ.

DEVELOPING OTHER PEOPLE

Billions of dollars are wasted on training and development each year. Within six months of most expensive trainings, whether meant to strengthen leadership skills, emotional intelligence, selling ability, or customer service, many participants can barely recount what they learned or point to what has changed. Most of these trainings focus on higher-level competencies, while leaving the deeper underlying Saboteurs intact. For example, in conflict-management workshops, people learn active-listening skills and work hard at listening to one another better. The problem is that if the nasty Judge is left intact, it will soon override any benefit derived from active listening. Your new active-listening skills might even become a tool used by the Judge to gather better evidence against the other person. As one leader put it to me, “If you enter this workshop a jerk, you will leave a jerk, except you are more dangerous now because you will know better how to cover it up.”

In [chapter 12](#), we’ll see that a salesperson using positivity techniques while not truly feeling positive (in other words, his Saboteurs are left intact) will be jeopardizing not only the sale but also his own physical health. Positive thinking techniques backfire if they are learned without tackling the underlying negativity of the Saboteurs.

If you want to develop other people in a significant and lasting way, your best bet is to start with PQ training. Otherwise, you might be doing little more than planting a beautiful garden while leaving ravenous snails free to roam.

OTHER APPLICATIONS

As you can imagine, we can take any significant challenge in work and personal life and apply the PQ model to it. I hope you will choose to do so, and I hope you will share what you have learned with others so a larger community can be built using our collective wisdom. Visit www.PositiveIntelligence.com to share your learning and insights, and also to benefit from others' experiences.

Inquiry

What is one area in which you feel most inspired to use the PQ approach? What would success in this area look and feel like?

CHAPTER 10

CASE STUDY: LEADING SELF AND TEAM

“The beatings will continue until morale improves.” This humorous saying, while seemingly far-fetched, is not far from what often happens in practice.

I recently had a meeting with a very bright and sincere CEO who had been trying for months, with mixed success, to shift his team into a higher-PQ mode. When we discussed his approach, a light bulb immediately went off for him. He had kept urging for more positivity primarily through showing great frustration with the ongoing negativity. He was focusing on punishing negativity and spending little time celebrating or modeling positivity. He was inadvertently modeling and reinforcing the very Saboteur energy that he was fighting.

This paradox is often evident not just in leaders but also in parents, educators, and spouses who are desperately trying to shift their child, student, or spouse into more positive behavior. A leader, parent, teacher, or spouse who wants to shift another person into higher-PQ behavior must first go there him- or herself. The Sage in one is more likely to activate the Sage in the other, just as the Saboteurs in one are more likely to activate the Saboteurs in the other.

FRANK'S STORY

In [chapter 1](#), I shared an abbreviated version of Frank's story to introduce you to the benefits of Positive Intelligence. Since you have now learned the PQ framework and tools, I can now give you a behind-the-scenes version of the story. This will help you coach both yourself and others through applications of the model.

Remember that Frank was the CEO of a publically traded company. During the Great Recession of 2008, he called me to ask for an urgent meeting. When we met, I was surprised by how much he seemed to have aged in the year since I had last seen him. After a very brief chitchat, he told me that he had been so devastated by the recent losses in his company's stock that he had broken down in tears in front of his ten-year-old daughter. She had actually comforted him and told him that everything would be okay. He was embarrassed and felt guilty about this role reversal.

Due to his pride and confidence in his company, Frank had not diversified his wealth and had seen his net worth, which was mostly tied up in his company's stock, plummet by about two-thirds within six months. He was unable to sleep well and spent his nights with churning thoughts of fear, regret, shame, and guilt for the company's downward spiral and the impact it would have on both his family and his employees.

After empathizing with Frank and making sure he felt heard, I told him that despite the crisis, all his current distress was a construct of his own mind and was due to his Saboteurs. On the napkin at our coffee shop table, I sketched the perspective and five powers of the Sage for him and suggested that they could help him turn his situation into a gift and opportunity.

To help Frank get over his skepticism, I proceeded to tell him the stallion story ([page 70](#)) to illustrate the perspective of the Sage. I suggested that his situation was analogous to the farmer's stallion having just been stolen and the Judge saying it was bad, bad, bad, which was a

lie. Frank was unconvinced, which is typical when the Judge has been supercharged through a major crisis. He could not see how he could possibly accept this terrible situation as a gift and an opportunity.

I insisted that we not continue our conversation until he had come up with at least three scenarios in which his situation could be turned into a gift (the Three Gifts technique). He struggled and made a halfhearted attempt. He came up with the possibility that he could be forced into early retirement and end up taking better care of himself and spending more time with his wife and children. When I insisted on more possibilities, he said that maybe the necessary layoffs would give him a chance to get rid of “C” players in the company and form a stronger team. For his final example, he said maybe he would eventually become a more relaxed person, since his worst nightmare had already come true. I could see that Frank’s Judge had a strong hold on him and that at best I could only soften the edges around his Judge’s certainty that this situation was bad.

I asked Frank how his executive team was doing, and he said that they were predictably under an equal amount of strain and feeling discouraged by the turn of events. As I had predicted, Frank scored a low PQ of 43, while his team’s PQ came out at 54. Clearly, they had all been living in the grips of their Saboteurs ever since the company’s stock collapsed. They were being dragged down by the powerful forces of individual and collective net-negative vortices.

Frank’s progress toward the hundred PQ reps a day was slow in the beginning. We had agreed that he would email me at the end of every day and report his count. The first day he reported fourteen. The next day it was five. Usually he practiced only during his morning routine, before he was swept up in the net-negative vortex for the rest of the day. After the second day, I didn’t hear from him for a few days, during which time he had forgotten to practice at all.

On the sixth day he sent me a very enthusiastic email. He had decided to get a few counts in while having lunch. He had closed his eyes to focus on a few bites of his turkey sandwich and was amazed by the difference in his eating experience. He felt that for the first time he had

really experienced the texture and sponginess of the bread as he bit down on it, the crunch of the lettuce, the coolness and juiciness of the tomato slice, the tangy sensation of the mustard hitting his tongue, the many sounds of chewing, and the feel of the many muscles in his mouth getting involved. He was amazed that he had always missed this symphony of tastes and sensations by shoving food into his mouth absentmindedly and eating on autopilot. The experience had only taken one minute.

I congratulated him on his discovery and wrote, “If there is so much pleasure, joy, and discovery in a lowly turkey sandwich, imagine how much more is available to you in every other step of your day!”

This little discovery made a believer out of Frank. His rep count quickly moved up into the twenties and thirties, and he soon reached one hundred. I told him that he was now ready to take the Sage framework into his executive team meetings.

When he introduced the Sage perspective of accepting everything as a gift and opportunity to his team, Joe, his no-nonsense CFO, argued that accepting their terrible situation as a gift would lead to denial, inaction, and further decline. He said mockingly, “You can’t run a company by singing ‘Que sera, sera! Whatever will be, will be.’”

Prepared for this skepticism, Frank was ready with a proposal that he and I had agreed to. For at least the next three months, he would start each of their Monday morning senior management meetings with the following question: “What do we need to do so that within three years we can say this current crisis was the best thing that could have happened to our company?” This phrasing suggested an action-oriented self-fulfilling prophecy rather than a fatalistic and passive couch-potato approach. It weakened Joe’s skepticism enough so that they could proceed.

At this point, Kathy, the VP of marketing, chimed in and said that she was already feeling a little more energized and optimistic by simply considering that maybe this whole thing wasn’t just a terrible fiasco and could be a gift in disguise. Others joined in with a mix of enthusiasm and skepticism and agreed to give the Sage perspective a try.

In a subsequent meeting, the team agreed to individual self-assessments of their Saboteurs. Each person described which Saboteurs they had and how they were getting in the way. This, of course, was done a little halfheartedly, because their Judges resisted the whole process. However, the process still had a powerful impact. Frank said everyone was both surprised and relieved when Joe volunteered that his big Saboteur was the Controller, which was fired up due to the increased stress. They had all tried to tell Joe over the years that he was too controlling, and now he had finally owned up to it.

The team agreed to do a hundred reps each day and include reports on their progress, successes, and failures in their weekly meetings. In the meantime, I continued my one-on-one work with Frank to help him raise his own PQ. The more progress Frank made in accessing his own Sage powers, the more he was likely to help his team do the same.

Over time, we engaged each of the Sage's five powers to help turn things around.

EMPATHIZE

Frank's Judge had tortured him ever since his company's stock had plummeted. The criticisms varied, but each came from his Judge: "What's wrong with you? You should have known better." "You're a bad father, a bad husband, and a bad CEO." "You aren't as good as you thought you were; most of your successes were probably due to luck." I suspected that everyone on his team was experiencing similar assaults from their Judges.

When I suggested that Frank needed to activate the Sage's Empathy to counteract the badgering of the Judge, his Judge had the predictable objection. If Frank empathized with himself and others, he would be encouraging mistakes similar to the ones they'd just made. We discussed that this was one of the big lies of the Judge. Empathizing with his current pain did not mean condoning the mistakes that contributed to it.

To access empathy for himself, I asked Frank to play Visualize the Child. His Judge was so persistent that he couldn't access any empathy for himself by just visualizing. So I suggested using an actual photograph. He found a picture of himself under a Christmas tree. He was lit up with joy, kindness, wonder, and curiosity. The picture conveyed Frank's true essence, which was hiding beneath his tough corporate demeanor. I asked him to put a copy of that picture on his smartphone and look at it every day. Frank reported that looking at the picture made it easier for him to feel empathy and appreciation for himself during these tough times.

When Frank raised the importance of empathy with his team, most people understood his rationale, but they didn't find it easy to comfort themselves either. They admitted to being hard on themselves, thinking it was important for their ambition and high standards.

Frank said some of them felt a little awkward at first when he suggested the Visualize the Child power game. But they gradually saw the connection between this seemingly irrelevant exercise and how they

could eventually pull themselves out of their current troubles.

Accessing empathy toward themselves, combined with the daily PQ reps, gradually strengthened their Sages and weakened their Judges; soon, the team wasn't feeling quite so beaten up.

EXPLORE

Frank is a big fan of the book *Good to Great*.³⁵ In this bestseller, author Jim Collins refers to a practice of great companies that he calls “blameless autopsy.” Blameless autopsy is about openly exploring what has taken place with the goal of learning from it. The approach must be “blameless” because otherwise the scope of discovery is severely limited by the Judge’s presence and tendency to look for blame. We often avoid thorough exploration of what happened because the Judge’s presence makes the process too painful or too contentious.

To ensure a truly “blameless autopsy,” they needed to amplify their Sages’ power to Explore, so they agreed to play the Fascinated Anthropologist power game. This helped keep their Judges at bay. What emerged was a realization that as a result of several years of great success, the team had become too sure of itself and had stopped being truly curious. They knew too much, and they had lost their “beginner’s mind,” with is the basis of the Explore power. In particular, they had stopped listening to the subtle signals their customers had been sending to them about the changing times. In their case, success had bred too much confidence.

The team agreed that each of them, including Frank, would call up one customer they had lost and request an in-depth conversation about what had happened. I asked Frank how excited he and the others felt about having these conversations. He admitted that no one was looking forward to it. I pointed out that the Sage’s Explore mode would actually be a very pleasant experience and that any distress involved was being manufactured by the Saboteurs.

INNOVATE

Once the team had explored more of the dynamics underlying their customers' needs, the market, and their own mistakes in their recent past, they were ready to feed all this information and knowledge into their Sage's power to Innovate. Frank's senior team had previously conducted multiple brainstorming sessions to figure out ways to cope with their continually deteriorating condition. After Frank described the mood and process of those meetings, it was clear that Saboteurs had hampered their attempts. For one thing, the mood had been subdued, indicating that everyone was feeling their Judge's weight. It was also clear that the Judge and the Controller were teaming up to sabotage the process. Many team members had verbally and nonverbally shown their disapproval of some of the ideas that had been suggested or tried to control the discussion from going places they didn't want it to go.

Innovation in particular is highly dependent on PQ Brain activation, so Frank started the next meeting with a guided five-minute PQ Brain activation process. He played the audio file I had given him so he could participate in this closed-eye exercise himself. (Download self-guided audio files from www.PositiveIntelligence.com.)

Frank also created a few large "NO JUDGE" signs and posted them around the room before the meeting. To further ensure that no Saboteurs disrupted their innovation, they agreed to follow the "Yes ... and ..." structure for idea generation.

One of the outcomes of a Judge-free innovation process is the generation of a high volume of ideas. Squared in the Sage's Innovate mode, Frank's team generated almost two hundred ideas in less than an hour. He said that he could literally feel the moment when people fully switched to this Sage mode. Without the Judge's filter, the ideas came with ease and speed. It was then time for them to Navigate and choose a direction from all the possibilities.

The most common mistake made in this process is that individuals and

teams try Innovate and Navigate simultaneously, meaning they will keep evaluating each new idea as it comes up. This creates a back door for the Judge to enter through. Fortunately, Frank's team heeded my warning and separated the two stages.

NAVIGATE

To discover the coordinates of his own Navigation compass, I had Frank play the Flash Forward power game prior to his team meetings. I had him ponder the question, “At the end of my life, how will I wish I had conducted myself in this period, regardless of outcome?” The answers came immediately and helped him clarify the points on his compass for this issue. First, he was clear that he would wish to have used this crisis as a way of bonding even more with his wife and kids rather than allowing it to create tension and conflict. Second, he would have wished he had treated his loyal employees with fairness and considered their best interests as well as his own. Third, he would have wanted to have stuck firmly to his integrity rather than bend his principles in order to be expedient.

With Frank’s personal Navigation compass clear, he was ready to do the same with the team’s. Before using the Sage’s Navigation power, it is often useful to apply an objective filter to narrow down the choices to a manageable few. A two-dimensional matrix is often helpful for this stage. To construct the matrix, you would determine the top two most important objective criteria or metrics for making your choice. In Frank’s case, his team decided the criteria should be the cost of implementation and the projected impact. This helped narrow down the number of ideas to five that were high on impact and relatively low in cost of implementation. They consulted their Navigation compass to choose among these finalists.

To discover the coordinates of its Navigation compass, the team asked, “Years from now, how will we wish we had conducted ourselves in this situation, regardless of outcome?” Joe, the formerly reserved and conservative CFO, was the first to share. The Navigation question, he excitedly said, had instantly illuminated the choice for him. Years from now, regardless of outcome, he would wish they had kept steady and doubled down on the original mission of the company rather than veer

from it in a desperate and opportunistic pursuit of returning to profitability at all cost.

Joe's wish clearly pointed to one of the five finalist options. This option involved stripping down the company's branding and product offering to its initial value proposition. Joe said he realized that the other, more opportunistic ideas would mess with the very DNA of the company and that while many things should change, the DNA shouldn't.

Others nodded in agreement: double down on the original promise. It was becoming clear that part of what had gotten them into trouble to begin with was pursuit of growth opportunities that, while individually profitable, were distractions from the original promise. The team had not consulted its Sage in navigating the many forks in the road it had come upon in recent years, and it had lost its way.

Frank told me later that he had never seen his senior team agree so quickly on a critical item with so little effort and conflict. The ease of it almost made him suspicious of the outcome. *Could it be so easy?* he asked himself. I reminded him that the saying "no pain, no gain" was one of the many self-fulfilling lies of the Judge. The Sage often leads to paths that are paradoxically both easier and more productive. The PQ Brain actually feels good while producing great results.

The Navigate step had a calming and grounding effect on the team. Someone compared it to being lost in a stormy sea on a black night and suddenly seeing a lighthouse's powerful beam pointing the way to safety. Being pulled by one's own compass (i.e., by one's deeper values and purpose) often has this calming effect. The same is true for teams.

ACTIVATE

Frank and his team always prided themselves on being highly action-oriented. Through the PQ process they discovered that they had put such a premium on taking action that many of their quick responses had in retrospect been reactive and wasteful—or even counterproductive in the long run.

When they conducted the blameless autopsy on their own actions, they agreed that they had mistakenly reacted to urgency with frenzy in the past, unwittingly opening the door to a ton of Saboteur interference and noise. We discussed that with PQ Brain activation, one feels calm, not frenzied, in the middle of urgent crises and takes “pure” action with minimal Saboteur drama.

Frank’s team liked the analogy of how black-belt martial artists and Samurai warriors center and calm their mind in the middle of the greatest fights so that they can focus all their energy on meeting danger. They called this “Samurai action” and began asking one another whether they were taking Samurai action or frenzied action.

At the end of a two-day retreat during which they had decided on the course of action, Frank asked them to play the Preempt the Saboteurs power game. The team took a few minutes to consider which Saboteurs were going to cause distraction, diversion, or delay as the team took Samurai action.

Frank took the lead in sharing his own response. He thought his Stickler would be the biggest obstacle. His Stickler’s perfectionistic tendencies kicked in even more strongly at times of high stress as a way of bringing him some semblance of security and comfort. The current situation was ripe for that tendency. Joe acknowledged that his Controller would likely be a key obstacle, as their new plan would set into motion many changes that he could not fully control. Tom, head of operations, said that his Avoider would be the greatest challenge: he found some of the required steps to involve potentially “unpleasant”

conversations with people, and his tendency would be to avoid those conversations. At the end of this remarkably open discussion, they all offered suggestions and support to one another to help keep the Saboteurs at bay as the team proceeded with Samurai action.

By now it was clear from their collective energy and positivity that they had shifted to the net-positive vortex. One reason I knew this was because Frank felt energized by his interactions with his team rather than drained, as he had in the past. The next PQ measurements confirmed this. Frank's PQ had shot up to 79. Everyone on the team was above 70, with Kathy scoring an amazing 86. The team's PQ had risen to 81, safely within the net-positive vortex. The team members were definitely bringing out the best in one another and helping sustain each member's increased PQ.

In a little less than six months, Frank and his team had streamlined their business operations back to the core DNA of the company and doubled down on innovations that consolidated their lead in their redefined market space. Within a year, their profit margin had recovered to within 80 percent of pre-crash levels, and their revenue was on a solid path to recovery. The company's stock had fully recovered within eighteen months. The team was confident that the company now had an even more defensible leadership position against its competitors in its redefined market space.

Frank recently told me that his greatest gratitude was actually not for the recovery of his company. He was most grateful for having discovered the self-fulfilling nature of his Sage and for having exposed the hidden powers of his Saboteurs. He said that with his Sage's growing strength, he no longer felt the desperate need for the company to succeed in order for him to be happy. His elevated PQ had allowed him to see that his happiness was not dependent on the external circumstances of his life. He found it paradoxical that his not needing to succeed so desperately was actually ensuring greater success. I assured him that with his growing Sage powers, he would discover many more such paradoxes.

Inquiry

Think of one person whose behavior you have been hoping to change. When you are interacting with him or her, do you experience Sage or Saboteur feelings in yourself? If you are experiencing Saboteurs, how are they sabotaging the change you are hoping to see in the other person?

CHAPTER 11

CASE STUDY: DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH CONFLICT

There are essentially three main choices we have regarding conflict. We can avoid it and deny that it exists, which, of course, will cause it to fester over time and drive a wedge into the relationship. We can also confront it, with our Judge and other Saboteurs leading the fight. We may get our way or negotiate a grudging compromise, but it will probably be at the cost of the relationship. The third way, the Sage's way, is to embrace the conflict as a gift and harness its power to strengthen the relationship. If a couple or team tells me that their relationship is a 10 because they don't have conflict, I tell them they are at best a 6 or 7. You can get to 10 only through harnessing the gift of conflict.

The Sage approach to conflict is identical for both personal and professional relationships and teams. In this chapter, we will first see the Sage approach to conflict through a personal relationship case study—something we can all relate to easily. We will then explore how the same exact techniques apply to harnessing the gift of conflict in professional relationships.

SABOTEUR INTERFERENCE IN RELATIONSHIPS

Before we get to our case study, let's look at how the Saboteurs interfere in relationships. Without a strong Sage, the Saboteurs are often centrally involved in our approach to conflict. Here are some examples of how Saboteurs can wield their negative forces to fuel conflict.

Judge: Your Judge causes you to make a whole lot of assumptions about the other person's intentions. These assumptions are often false and usually make the other person defensive. A powerful Judge also causes you to listen selectively, looking only for evidence to prove your own point right.

Controller: The Controller tends to intimidate others in a conflict. A Controller can make you confrontational and give you an in-your-face style that makes others uncomfortable. The Controller can also make you shut down others and cause them to feel that you are inflexible and only committed to your own way, even if that's not your true intention.

Stickler: The Stickler's certainty about *the* right way is often not shared by others. If your Stickler is in control, you might come across as self-righteous, rigid, or overly perfectionistic.

Avoider: The Avoider directs your attention away from the conflict. You will either hope the conflict goes away or convince yourself that it isn't important. You might sugarcoat and soften your message to the point where the other person doesn't understand the severity of the problem until it has gotten out of hand.

Hyper-Achiever: The Hyper-Achiever can make you too goal-focused, causing you to miss the relationship-building gift of the conflict. The other person might feel you are treating them only as a means of getting to your goal.³⁶

Pleaser: The Pleaser prevents you from asking for what you really want or need and encourages you to accommodate the other person too much during any conversation about the conflict. This only causes you to feel resentful afterward.

Victim: A strong Victim Saboteur causes you to take things too personally. You might spend too much time venting and dwelling on all the wrong that was done to you. Others might lose their patience with you and opt to focus on what should be done looking forward.

Restless: Similar to the Avoider, the Restless causes you to avoid dealing with the pain and drama of conflict. You might choose to shift your focus to more exciting and pleasant things and be hard to pin down on issues of conflict.

Hyper-Vigilant: Your level of danger-awareness will likely be calibrated too extremely for most when your Hyper-Vigilant is flexing its muscle. Forcing that same level of vigilance on others is unfair and places an onerous burden on them.

Hyper-Rational: Conflict is rarely just about data and logic, which is what the Hyper-Rational would like. The “logical” way is not necessarily always the answer, but the Hyper-Rational’s insistence that it is might cause you to be perceived by others as cold, distant, or intellectually arrogant.

In the case study that follows, you will see the fingerprints of the Saboteurs in a conflict. You will also see how each of the Sage’s five powers can completely shift the dynamic of a typical conflict.

PATRICK AND SUSAN

Patrick, the CEO of a global financial services company, initially sought my help with the rampant conflict on his senior executive team. After I described the Sage approach to conflict, Patrick confessed that he felt an even more urgent need to use the approach in his relationship with Susan, his wife of twenty-one years. After I met with Susan separately, the three of us agreed to spend a retreat day together to work on their relationship.

We got together in a beautiful hotel suite with a terrace overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Despite the lovely setting, you could cut the tension between them with a knife. Negative Saboteur energy permeated the room. This didn't surprise me, as their relationship PQ score had turned out to be a very low 30. They sat on opposite sides of the couch. Susan hugged a pillow as if in self-defense against the attacks that she anticipated. Patrick sat with his arms crossed, looking impassive. They didn't look at each other as they spoke, and they seemed to be communicating only through me.

I asked them to describe the current state of their relationship. Susan spoke first. She felt that Patrick had been mostly absent as a husband to her and as a father to their seventeen-year-old son and fourteen-year-old daughter. He always made work his main priority, so much so that he recently cancelled a family vacation during the kids' spring break at the last minute. At home, Patrick often showed more interest in his smartphone than in his family. Susan felt she was practically a single mother, having to deal with their teenagers' attitudes alone. Her list of complaints was long.

As is often the case with intense conflict, Patrick didn't acknowledge a single concern of Susan's. He simply counterattacked. He thought Susan had it easy and that he carried the full burden of providing for the family. He felt it should therefore be understood that work had to be his priority. He had to cancel the vacation to attend an emergency board

meeting. Over the last few years, every conversation with Susan or the kids quickly became about their complaints and led to a fight. In his opinion, it made perfect sense for him to prefer spending time with his smartphone rather than engaging in another painful dialog after a tough workday. He felt constant pressure from his professional and personal obligations and wondered when he would finally get some recognition for all that he did. His list seemed as long as Susan's, and his anger was just as palpable.

I let their back-and-forth dialog go on for a while. After it was clear that they were in a circular argument, I asked them each what percentage of their concerns they felt had been acknowledged and understood by the other person. They both said almost zero.

Herein is one of the key problems of conflict: We are so busy telling the other person what we want them to hear that we usually listen very little. When we don't feel heard, we are likely to repeat ourselves more loudly and from slightly different angles. Most people in conflict begin to sound like broken records to each other, constantly repeating themselves because they don't feel heard. The chicken-and-egg problem of conflict is that until we feel heard, we are not willing to listen. Thus the vicious cycle continues.

FROM POSITION TO ASPIRATION

To show them why they felt so stuck, I drew a partially submerged iceberg on a piece of paper and explained that it represented the three layers of information in a conflict. (See [figure 18](#).) The visible part of the iceberg, *Position*, represented the demands they made of each other. For example, Susan's position was that she wanted Patrick to skip his meeting and attend the family vacation. Patrick's position was that he wanted Susan to understand the necessity of his attendance at the emergency board meeting.

The problem with these positions is that they almost always create automatic opposition; for every position there is an opposite one. Conflict lives at the position level and is rarely resolved there. At this level, one party or the other needs to give up its own position entirely, or the two need to meet somewhere in between, which would result in each feeling they had compromised. This is not an optimal way to resolve conflict on major issues.

Positions are typically held and defended by Saboteurs, who by their very nature are not interested in resolution. Saboteurs are only interested in being right.

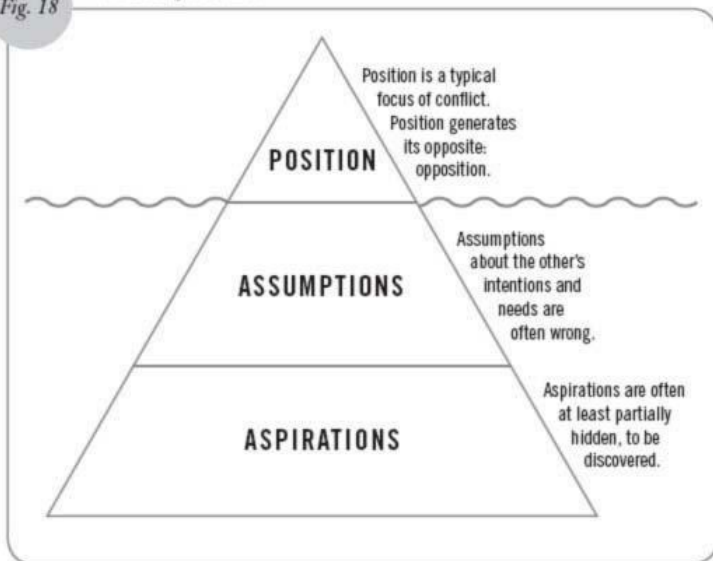
People's positions are often fed by underlying *Assumptions*. These often include many assumptions about the other party's intentions. Even as an expert in this field, I have been humbled by how difficult it is to correctly guess another person's needs and intentions. I have learned that it is critical to check with them rather than assume. Assumptions regarding others' intentions are often incorrect and provide much of the fuel for conflicts. Our Judges are much more certain about the other person's true needs and intentions than our data and experience warrants.

The underlying *Aspirations* that feed our positions hold the key to harvesting the gift of conflict. While it is almost an automatic human response to oppose another's rigid position, we react quite differently to

aspirations, which are very difficult to argue with. Each of us is wired to champion others' deeply felt aspirations. Consider, for example, how frequently you have automatically rooted for total strangers you've read about or watched in a movie who are passionately pursuing an aspiration. There is a whole lot of common ground between human beings at the aspiration level. The aspiration is spoken by the Sage in one person and appreciated by the Sage in the other.

Fig. 18

The Iceberg of Conflict



EXPLORE

To facilitate shifting to the Sage's Explore mode, I proposed a strict structure that was a variation of the Fascinated Anthropologist power game. To keep the Saboteurs at bay, Susan and Patrick would take turns being speaker and listener. Susan, the first speaker, would be free to speak for about three minutes. At the end of the three minutes, Patrick had to state back exactly what Susan had said to ensure he'd heard her correctly. Patrick could only become speaker when Susan acknowledged that she had been heard fully. At that point, the roles were reversed, and Susan had to be listener to Patrick. Thus, the listener had *no choice* but to listen well, without Saboteur interference.

I asked Susan to talk for three minutes again about the vacation issue. After three minutes, I asked Patrick to repeat what he had heard. He repeated back what he thought he had heard. I asked Susan whether Patrick had heard correctly. Susan pointed out, accurately, that Patrick had left out several of the points she'd made. So I asked her to repeat those points until Patrick was able to fully report all of them back.

I then asked Patrick to think for a second and ponder why he had missed almost half of Susan's points in the first go-round. To his credit, he admitted that he had been busy rebutting Susan's early points in his head and structuring his own responses, and as a result he'd lost track of some of her later points. I congratulated Patrick for this bit of honest and accurate introspection. Indeed, in the early stages of this practice, the Saboteurs are still strong, and they interfere with our ability to truly listen to the other person.

It was then Susan's turn to listen. She did a little better than Patrick in reporting back what she had heard. But I caught her throw in a few interpretations and rebuttals. This, too, is a common Saboteur infiltration in the early stages of the process. Susan also admitted the difficulty of purely listening and avoiding turning to rebuttal in her head.

After several rounds of speaking and listening, it was clear that the

Saboteurs' interference had been minimized. I could actually feel the energy of the Sage's Explore power in the room. The energetic temperature in the room went up, and Patrick and Susan's body language relaxed. They were now turned to each other as they spoke and listened.

They were ready for some advanced Exploration, so I raised the bar. I asked Patrick to repeat not only the data he had last heard from Susan but also the feelings that were implied or picked up in between her words, in energy, tone, or body language. In effect, I was asking him to tune into the PQ Channel rather than just the Data Channel. Doing so clearly required the PQ Brain, and by that point I knew that both Patrick's and Susan's PQ Brains were activated enough to handle it.

After a pause, Patrick augmented his report by telling Susan, "You seem to have felt deeply hurt and rejected by what I did."

I allowed this powerful moment to sink in for a minute. Susan looked down and lessened her grip on the pillow she had been clutching. I asked her how she was feeling. She said this was the first time in a long time that she had felt truly heard and acknowledged by Patrick. I could see some air going right out of her angry hot-air balloon. She sank into her seat a little and her shoulders relaxed.

The PQ Rule of Communication

At this point, I drew the Data and PQ Channels to help illustrate the PQ rule of communication:

People do not feel truly heard until their communication on the PQ Channel is felt and acknowledged. Being heard and responded to on the Data Channel is not adequate.

This statement lit an immediate lightbulb for both of them, and they both began nodding knowingly. Patrick said he could finally see the blueprint of so many of their futile, circular arguments. Susan would complain about something for a few minutes and Patrick would do his best to get into listening mode and stay there. He would then immediately respond with a possible solution to the problem Susan articulated. His new realization was that he had only been listening and responding to the Data Channel.

Susan replied, “And that left me feeling furious that he was not really listening to me or validating my feelings. I didn’t want solutions. I even found it insulting that he thought I needed his brilliant mind to solve our problems unilaterally. He treated me like an employee coming to him with a problem. More than anything I needed to feel heard. Until today I can’t remember the last time I really felt heard or seen or acknowledged in our arguments.”

What was remarkable was the way Susan said all of this with calm clarity; there was no trace of the bitter edge of the Judge that had infused some of her earliest statements. Her discerning Sage voice was calling a spade a spade, and the blame-and-shame game of the Judge was nowhere to be seen. I knew that Patrick’s Saboteur defensiveness would therefore not be triggered.

I asked Patrick to consider why he did what he did. He said he felt most comfortable with rational problem solving and least comfortable staying on the level of what I was calling the PQ Channel of emotion, aspirations, and deeper needs. The Data Channel and the rational mind

were the tools he knew best. He thought he was doing both himself and Susan a favor by offering quick solutions that could end a messy and painful conflict.

I asked him if he could now better understand why even his most brilliant of solutions seemed to be falling on deaf ears. He said he guessed that until Susan felt heard, she was not willing to hear what he had to say. Susan said that perhaps that was true, but it was not a decision she had consciously made. There was no quid pro quo. She wasn't withholding listening until she was heard. It seemed to have happened automatically.

I reminded them again of the chicken-and-egg problem of communication: unless we feel heard, we are not willing to listen to the other. I suggested that it would be an act of generosity for someone to break this vicious cycle and be the first to really listen to the other even while believing that they themselves were not being heard. Someone has to take the initiative to push aside the Judge and come from the Sage, extending an inviting hand to help the other's Sage emerge. Conflict is otherwise the Judge in one person screaming at the Controller in the other person, or the Victim complaining to the Avoider, etc. Saboteurs have no interest in resolution.

After several three-minute rounds of being listener and speaker, the Explore mode seemed to have born significant fruits of discovery. As is often the case, Susan and Patrick both discovered that many of their previous assumptions about the other's needs and intentions had been false. They seemed to understand a lot more about each other's true underlying intentions and aspirations. The Explore phase usually runs out of steam at some point, and it becomes clear that each party no longer has anything to add and feels fully heard. It was clear we could move on.

EMPATHIZE

After years of conflict, people tend to be quite unwilling to let go of their Saboteur grievances and empathize with one another. This requires a significant shift to the PQ Brain, even more than we had achieved so far together. I guided Susan and Patrick through fifteen minutes of PQ Brain activation at this point to accelerate their progress. They would now be more capable of tapping into the Sage power of Empathy.

I suggested that showing Empathy for another is a generous act. It is about walking in the shoes of others, not only seeing but also feeling the world through another's vantage point. Empathy is ultimately about feeling, not about thinking or analyzing.

We are often reluctant to empathize with someone else's point of view because we worry that by doing so we are legitimizing and encouraging their position and downplaying our own. I needed to have Susan and Patrick decouple these two. Empathizing with someone who has just stubbed their toe doesn't mean you are rewarding their carelessness or encouraging them to do it again. It simply means you are feeling their pain and letting them know it. Empathy should be decoupled from problem solving or deciding on a solution; it is a critical stand-alone Sage power that makes people more willing to bring other Sage powers into their interactions, such as Innovation, Navigation, and Activation.

This distinction seemed to ease Susan and Patrick's concerns about fully empathizing with each other. Based on the discoveries they made during the Explore mode, I asked them to put themselves in the other's shoes and report what it must feel like from that vantage point. I suggested again that the Sage's Empathy was a great act of generosity toward the other, especially if one was the first to initiate it.

Susan felt inspired by that. She volunteered to go first. She collected her thoughts and then calmly started: "Patrick, sitting in your shoes I can only imagine how tough it must have been for you to make the decision to cancel on the vacation. In these shoes, I become aware of a few

different underlying needs that might have been in conflict. One need is to take care of your family financially. I understand from our conversation today how heavily that always weighs on you. I am guessing another business-related need might be the obligation you feel to your employees and board. And then there are the kids and the vacation they had been talking about and planning for months. In these shoes, I can imagine having felt sad and guilty in breaking the news to your family, especially to Melody, who got so emotional. I can imagine having felt hurt and judged when everyone got angry at you and said you were being selfish.”

It was interesting for me to notice how these words flowed out of Susan seemingly without effort. It was in sharp contrast to her more controlled, cautious, and labored speech when we had started. It was clear to me that a different part of her brain, the PQ Brain, had moved into the driver’s seat. With the PQ Brain, we often experience a more effortless flow of thoughts, words, and actions.

Patrick seemed choked up. He was too proud to let himself go, so he fidgeted a little, bit his lips, cleared his throat, and recomposed himself, looking down the whole time. I knew he was deeply touched and in touch with his feelings, which wasn’t common for him. I didn’t want to ask him a question that would take him right back to his comfort zone of rational analysis, so I allowed a couple of minutes of silence so both of them could remain in their moving experience.

I then asked Patrick how he felt. He said he almost lost it when he heard Susan say that she imagined he must have felt hurt and judged. He had never admitted to these feelings, either to himself or to Susan. He had only expressed anger before. But when Susan described how she thought he had felt, he instantly realized that she was exactly right, and his anger was just his habitual way of showing his feelings of hurt and rejection. He felt touched that in Susan’s willingness to empathize with him, he had been brought in touch with his own deeper feelings.

Patrick was describing the common phenomenon of one person’s Sage activating the Sage in the other. The PQ Brain in one person, including its Empathy Circuitry, amplifies the PQ Brain in the other.

Since Empathy Circuitry works in both directions, Patrick was now more empathic not just toward Susan but also toward himself.

I then asked Patrick to report what it felt like to be in Susan's shoes. Patrick was silent for a long minute. He then started talking as if still deep in thought. He said that what he had just realized as he put himself in Susan's shoes was how difficult it must be for Susan to feel dependent on him for so much. They had both met in a top-rated business school, and Susan's marketing career out of business school had been even more successful than Patrick's. She had risen to group brand manager at a major consumer goods company in record time and for a while was earning a higher salary than Patrick. And then came their two children, over a three-year span. Susan had gone back to work a year after Melody's birth, but she hadn't felt the same fire as before and didn't want to delegate raising her kids to a nanny. She had decided to quit and stay home with the kids.

Susan had never brought up the subject with him, and Patrick sat there wondering how difficult it must be for a woman of her level of intelligence and ambition to feel fully dependent on him financially. He was taken aback by this realization. He elaborated more on it and then went silent, lost in thought.

I didn't need to look at Susan to know that this must have struck a chord with her. I allowed another minute of silence to let her process this generous offering of empathy from Patrick. She expressed both surprise and gratitude that Patrick had stumbled onto this insight out of nowhere (which again is a characteristic of the PQ Brain). She explained that she had been wrestling with questions of her identity and worth in recent months, feeling some guilt about the choices she had made. She had been wondering whether she had copped out from work challenges or really made a positive choice in focusing on parenting. She wondered whether she had the energy and drive for a second career. She called this her smoldering midlife crisis and suggested that she had felt resentful of Patrick, blaming him in part for her situation. This was despite the fact that he had always supported whatever choice Susan made. This, she now realized, was part of what fueled her anger with Patrick when he

seemed to be giving his career higher priority than the family. (This was an assumption she had made about Patrick that had gotten cleared up during the exploration process.)

With this kind of empathic communication, it was now clear that the Sage was fully activated in both of them through the Explore and Empathize steps. We were now ready to move to Innovation.

INNOVATE

When conflict is approached at the position level, the top of the iceberg, there are only two ways out. Either one person loses and the other wins, or both compromise and give up something important to them. Neither of these alternatives is appealing. The Sage approach is not about compromise. It is about going deeper in the pyramid to discover underlying needs and aspirations and then devising creative solutions that address those needs and aspirations in both individuals. It is about expanding the pie before dividing it.

Susan and Patrick had discovered much about each other's aspirations. Patrick aspired to continue to be a responsible CEO, which to him was about his role as provider. He wanted to find a way to better balance that role with his roles as father and husband, so that Susan and the kids did not feel shortchanged or lower in priority. For Susan, it was clear that she aspired to reclaim her self-respect as a bright and effective leader. She didn't know yet whether this would entail returning to a part- or full-time career.

By then the couple had the information they needed to move into creative problem solving using their Sages' power to Innovate. The Sage's energy was firmly established in them, the Judge was nowhere to be found, and the PQ Brain was fully active. They were clearly in the net-positive vortex, and we could all feel the tug of its uplifting energy. I therefore did not feel the need to give them any structure, such as the "Yes ... and ..." power game, to prevent Saboteur interference. I only gave them a reminder that the Innovate phase would be most successful if they completely left out evaluation and simply focused on coming up with as many ideas as possible without worrying about their practicality.

NAVIGATE

After about forty-five minutes, the Innovate phase had run out of steam. Without Saboteur interference, a ton of ideas had been generated, and Susan and Patrick needed to make some choices. To identify the appropriate coordinates to use on their Navigation compass, I suggested the Flash Forward power game and posed the following question: At the end of _____, looking back, how do I wish I had conducted myself, regardless of outcome? They needed to choose the appropriate thing to place in the blank. At the end of the year, at the end of the company's life, at the end of the kids' time living at home, at the end of life?

Given the far-reaching nature of the aspirations they were considering, they both chose "at the end of life" as the way to evaluate their options. This helped them narrow and prioritize their choices to a manageable few.

For Patrick, one action was to carve out blocks of time on his calendar that would be designated as family time. He was going to be proactive in alerting his staff and board of those time commitments and declare his intention to hold boundaries around those times. He was to articulate the reasons why he thought he would actually be a more effective leader as a result. To begin with, he was going to make up for the missed vacation by planning a surprise two-week family vacation during the summer. This was going to be their longest vacation together in years.

One of Susan's actions was going to be reactivating her long-dormant connections with her once-close network of business-school friends, many of whom were in leadership positions. This was to be a key step in trying to answer whether reclaiming her self-respect as a bright and effective leader would involve resuming a part- or full-time career.

ACTIVATE

We now needed to determine what it would take to move into the pure action of the Sage, unpolluted by Saboteur interference and drama. I proposed the Preempt the Saboteurs power game and asked Susan and Patrick to reflect on their Judges and accomplice Saboteurs, anticipating how they would try to sabotage their actions. Prior to the retreat they had completed their Saboteur assessments, and we now reviewed the results for a few minutes before proceeding.

Patrick predicted that his Controller would try to talk him out of his plan for greater balance and make him feel anxious about delegating what he needed to delegate in order to free up time. I asked him to anticipate what that voice would say in his head. He suggested things like “Everything might fall apart in your absence and do irreparable harm,” “What if people get lucky and everything goes well in your absence? How would that reflect on you and the importance of your role?” and “What if everyone else around you starts getting lazy and goofing off?”

Since Patrick’s PQ Brain was now highly activated, I asked him to consider how the Sage would counter these statements. He had a ready answer for each. For example, he said if things fell apart in his absence, he could turn it into a gift in two ways. It would wake up and galvanize some people into stepping up to fill the vacuum created by his absence. It would also reveal the people who weren’t capable or interested in stepping up—employees who were perhaps no longer a good fit. Both would contribute to building a stronger leadership team.

Susan suggested that her Judge and Avoider together would likely try to get in the way of action. She said her Judge made her feel embarrassed to talk to her high-flying former classmates about her choice to take a hiatus from her career. Her Avoider used this embarrassment as an excuse to put off contacting them.

I asked her to anticipate what they would be whispering in her ears. She said they would say things like “Maybe you aren’t as smart as you

thought you were,” “Maybe you were just too lazy and scared to go back to work. The kids were just an excuse,” and “Your classmates will be so bored with you now. You have so little in common now.”

Susan, too, found ready Sage responses to these thoughts. They were now ready to move into pure action.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

I had helped energize Susan and Patrick's PQ Brains during our retreat, which had given them deeper access to their Sages. The question was how to maintain that access beyond the retreat and keep the momentum alive.

They both agreed to get a hundred PQ reps in every day. They also agreed to call a time-out on any major conflict that seemed to be getting out of hand and switch to the Fascinated Anthropologist listening structure we had practiced.

We had a follow-up call three months after our retreat. Susan and Patrick's relationship PQ score had risen to 77, so I knew their relationship was being uplifted by the net-positive vortex. Susan and Patrick were now clear that our retreat had marked a turning point in their relationship. They had learned to embrace rather than avoid the areas of conflict in their relationship as a way of continuously deepening the relationship. They said they had both fallen back into bad old habits at times. On a couple of occasions, they'd had nasty fights where they were too angry for a day to follow the structure we had agreed to. On the whole, however, they had recovered a lot faster from these setbacks and tried to turn even those fights into opportunities for ongoing learning. This indicated that their Sage muscles were growing stronger through practice.

As icing on the cake, they reported that the Sage muscles they had developed to deal with their relationship challenges were now paying off in other areas of their life. This had been evident in Patrick's annual 360° feedback from his company; he received accolades for being a more thoughtful listener and leader. I had firsthand knowledge of this, of course, as we had been working together to help his team learn how to harness the power of their team conflicts using the same techniques.

TEAM CONFLICT

The steps to harness the gift of conflict in professional settings are identical to what we have explored so far, although the following additional considerations are helpful:

- **PQ Brain Activation:** If the energy and atmosphere of a team meeting feels negative and loaded with Saboteur energy, you will have an uphill battle trying to help each person shift individually. This is because the team is collectively caught in the net-negative vortex. In this situation, I recommend a five- to fifteen-minute PQ Brain activation exercise to help quiet the Saboteurs' voices and give everyone greater access to their Sages' wisdom before proceeding. (You can download self-guided audio files of this exercise from www.PositiveIntelligence.com.)
- **The 80-20 Rule of Conflict:** It is a rare conflict in which anyone is 100 percent at fault. As a rule of thumb, I tell people in a conflict to remember that they are at least 20 percent at fault. Encourage people to shift from trying to prove the other person's 80 percent fault to discovering the 20 percent they are contributing. This shifts the focus of the conversation from the Judge's blame to the Sage's exploration and curiosity.

As a way of people exploring their own 20 percent contribution to team conflicts, have everyone on the team assess their own Saboteurs and share how those Saboteurs fuel conflicts.

- **Conflict as a Gift:** Some teams, and many individuals within teams, have great aversion to openly admitting that there is a conflict in the first place. The conflict then becomes a big elephant in the room that everyone tries desperately to sidestep. Everyone should be encouraged to call out the elephants in the room and name them. People will be far more willing to do so if

they see that conflicts can be turned into gifts.

It's impossible for a relationship—whether personal or professional—to reach its full potential without embracing and harnessing the power of the conflicts that inevitably arise. Let the Sage show the way.

Inquiry

What is the relationship you would most want to improve? How would it feel to be in that person's shoes regarding this relationship? Be as thorough and generous as you can be in putting yourself in his or her shoes.

CHAPTER 12

CASE STUDY: SELLING, MOTIVATING, PERSUADING

In one of my leadership seminars, I ask anyone in sales to raise his or her hand. Some hands go up, but most don't. Then I ask again, "How many of you are in sales?" A few more hands go up. I ask a third time and wait. At first there's confusion and hesitation. Eventually everyone catches on and raises their hands. That's when I say emphatically, "We are all in sales."

Selling, persuading, and motivating are essentially the same at their core. If you are not a salesperson by title, think of "selling" your capabilities the next time you're up for a promotion. Or "selling" an idea to your boss on how things could be done differently in your department. Or "motivating" a colleague to work on your project rather than another. Or "persuading" your spouse to let you be yourself rather than constantly trying to change you. Or "persuading" your teenage daughter to be more careful about her own physical safety after a night of partying. Each of these operates on the same principles.

In this chapter we will use the case study of a sales team to illustrate the PQ approach to selling, persuading, and motivating. For simplicity, we will focus on "selling" and "clients," trusting that you can extend the concepts to persuading or motivating. Before presenting the case study, we will explore the three PQ principles of selling.

THE FIRST PQ PRINCIPLE OF SELLING

The first PQ principle of selling is that the PQ Channel is more important to selling than the Data Channel.

Most of us are unaware or unwilling to admit that we buy based on emotion and intuition, not purely on objective data and logic. This is something that successful salespeople and advertisers know well. The PQ Channel leads us as we make buying decisions, while the Data Channel follows to justify the choice and sustain the illusion of rationality and control. As a seller, the information and analysis of the Data Channel needs to be good enough to get you in the door, but the actual sale happens due to the influence of the PQ Channel.

Take, for instance, a highly rational type who falls head over heels for a red Porsche when he takes it on a test-drive. He then embarks on an exhaustive analysis of the car's build, performance, retail resale value, efficiency, and environmental impact until he has gathered enough corroborating data to pretend that his rational mind is deciding he should buy it. He doesn't admit that his decision was made the moment he felt the adrenaline rush of the test-drive.

As a salesperson, leader, team member, parent, or spouse, if your attempts at persuasion are primarily data-driven and analytical, you are missing out on your own greatest power in selling. Persuasion and inspiration are functions of the PQ Brain.

THE SECOND PQ PRINCIPLE OF SELLING

The second PQ principle of selling is that the buyer is much more likely to say yes if her PQ Brain is activated. (The proviso here is that she is responding to something of real value.)

It is helpful to remember that the PQ Brain is wired to thrive, to say yes to opportunities and new ideas, to explore, to empathize and connect, and to expand. The Survivor Brain is wired to say no and preserve the status quo. For a human being, the status quo means continuing to be alive; saying yes to something new and unknown could literally lead to death. The Survivor Brain is wired to prevent that.

Most products, services, and ideas that we want others to buy fall into the category of helping them thrive. It then follows that what we are selling is more likely to be embraced by the PQ Brain.

The situation is reversed when the product, service, or idea is fear-based and centered on surviving physical or emotional danger. If you want to sell unneeded security to a homeowner, it would help you to stimulate the buyer's Survivor mind by playing on his judgment and fear of all the creeps living within a few miles. If you're a politician and want to sell the idea of an expensive and unnecessary war, you'd better ignite the Survivor mind and cast the country you want to attack as an imminent threat. To sell something based on fear, you need the Judge and its accomplice Saboteur to be firmly in control of your buyer's mind. Hitler understood this well and whipped an entire nation into a Judge frenzy. Political campaigns are peppered with similar tactics, albeit on smaller scales.

Hopefully, whatever it is you want to sell your client, team, spouse, or obstinate teenager will help them thrive even more. In that case, you need to energize their PQ Brain to get an enthusiastic yes.

THE THIRD PQ PRINCIPLE OF SELLING

The third PQ principle of selling is that you need to shift yourself to the PQ Brain before you can get the buyer to shift to his or her PQ Brain.

As we discussed earlier, because of the mirror neurons in the brain, human brains mimic whatever they pick up on the PQ Channel from the other person. Since this shift happens automatically and subconsciously, it is hard to fake your own positivity when trying to get others to be positive. The other person's brain tunes into your brain's real frequency rather than the one you are trying to project. If you are in true Sage mode, feeling true acceptance and peace, curiosity, creativity, joy, and empathy, your state of mind will help shift the other person's mind. Pretending to be those things will send positive data on the Data Channel but negative information on the invisible PQ Channel. The mirror neurons in the other person mimic your invisible PQ Channel, not your Data Channel.

In a fascinating study, researchers discovered a compelling difference between the impact of fake positivity (produced by the Survivor Brain) versus genuine positivity (produced by the PQ Brain).³⁷ The researchers distinguished between the fake and genuine positivity by paying attention to the facial muscles involved in a genuine smile and a forced smile. Both kinds of smiles activate the zygomaticus major, the muscles that raise the corners of our lips. Genuine smiles also activate the orbicularis oculi, the muscles circling the eyes. When contracted, these muscles lift our cheeks and create wrinkles around our eyes. In the forced smiles of fake positivity, these muscles around the eyes are not deployed.

In this study, the researchers discovered that insincere positivity poses the same level of risk of coronary disease as the overt negativity of anger. This fact is sobering when you think about it. Fake positivity deployed as a persuasion technique doesn't trigger the buyer's PQ Brain and doesn't improve your chances of getting a yes—it actually exposes you to higher risk of dying from coronary disease! How's that for a job

hazard?

I hope by now you are somewhat more skeptical of both the effectiveness and even physical safety of the techniques taught in some sales and leadership development seminars. Going through the motions of empathizing with the customer, caring for the employee, or empathizing with your spouse is a far cry from activating the PQ Brain in yourself so that these emotions are authentically felt. Authentic selling and leadership take on a new light when you consider this perspective.

CASE STUDY

Jack, the VP of sales at a privately held software company, contacted me shortly after being hired for a new job. As the previous head of sales at a leading enterprise software company, Jack was brought in to produce a couple of years of aggressive revenue growth so the company could go public at high valuation. There was a real sense of urgency to his mission. The company had seen a slowing of its sales in the last two quarters due to new competition. They were worried that they might miss a critical window of opportunity to go public if sales didn't pick up significantly.

Jack knew that his sales team was highly skilled in classical sales methods. Yet he had an intuitive sense that most of his salespeople had far more potential than they knew how to unleash. He was intrigued by a speech he had heard in which I had proposed that skills, knowledge, and experience constitute potential and that PQ determines what percentage of that potential is actually achieved. He wanted to know whether PQ could help.

Given the sales team's tight budget, aggressive timelines, and geographic diversity, we agreed to a weekly webinar for a three-month period with his entire sales force of almost a hundred people.

Before the program started, everyone did an individual PQ assessment. Their scores averaged 59, well below the critical 75 threshold. The fact that a large majority of them were stuck in the net-negative vortex pointed to significant opportunities for improvement. Given the urgency of their task and the high motivation to improve, everyone agreed to work simultaneously on all three strategies for increasing PQ: weakening their Saboteurs, strengthening their Sages, and strengthening their PQ Brain muscles. Everyone did an assessment of their top accomplice Saboteurs and committed to doing a hundred PQ reps per day.

In one of our first calls, I asked everyone to identify what was most draining and discouraging to them. After a brief discussion, we agreed

that it was the number of rejections they received. They had bought into their Judges' perspective that failure and rejection were "bad" things. It was time to move them toward the Sage perspective.

I asked them to identify the gifts and opportunities in rejection. The responses were initially slow, but before long they were coming in very quickly. They included, "You need ninety-nine noes to get to a yes, so one less to go," "There's learning in every rejection if you're willing to look into it," and "Maybe the client you lost frees up your time to get a bigger client."

Once they'd thrown out about ten more possibilities, I added another big one: "Imagine," I said, "that you are on a battlefield on a pitch-black night, fighting an enemy you cannot see. Getting rejected is like setting off a flare. It lets you see your enemy, your Saboteurs, clearly, and you can also see the weapons they've been using against you. You will now be able to fight a better fight against your Saboteurs because you know what you're up against."

I explained that rejection goes to the very heart of the survival drive. As a tribal species, the early humans' physical survival depended on being accepted by the tribe. Outright rejection could literally mean death by losing the shelter and protection of the tribe. Rejection hurts at the most primitive levels of the Survivor Brain. It energizes your Judge and accomplice Saboteur to their core and exposes their patterns for you to see clearly. This enables you to notice and label them, which is your best strategy to weaken them.

In order to further expose their Saboteurs, everyone looked at his or her own way of handling rejection. One sales rep said, "I get mad. I get mad at the person who rejects me and I become very judgmental of them for a while. After a while, I turn the table on myself and beat myself up so I will do better next time. I guess it has gotten me good results, but it's not pleasant. I use my anger to push myself." We agreed that this was the familiar Judge pattern. The Judge's voice was claiming that unless you beat yourself up constantly over your shortcomings, you wouldn't become successful.

Another rep observed that her own reaction to rejection was to distract

herself with fun or pleasant activities to soothe the pain of rejection—a classic Restless pattern.

Another said his pattern was to obsessively refine his preparation to make sure he could avoid future rejection, all the while knowing that he was overdoing it. We agreed that this sounded like the Stickler pattern.

Another described her pattern of procrastination on making the next call, hoping to avoid the next rejection. This sounded like the Avoider pattern.

The assignment for the group for the next two weeks was to turn every rejection and failure into an opportunity to witness and label their own Saboteurs. When possible, they were to use each Saboteur sighting as a signal to do a few PQ reps.

RECOVERY TIME

The point of accepting rejection as a gift was neither to invite more rejection or failure nor to disregard the important consequences of failure. The goal was to shorten the recovery time, to recover quickly from the Saboteurs that are activated by failure, and shift to the Sage so we could generate better results next time.

One key difference between star salespeople and average ones is recovery time. Does it take you seconds, minutes, hours, or days to recover from the pain and negativity of a failure? Just as important, do you put yourself in front of new prospects while still in Saboteur mode from the last rejection?

Our next assignment was for everyone to measure his or her own recovery time from rejection or failure. We defined recovery time as the length of time it took to no longer feel a significant pang of anger, disappointment, or regret when recalling the failure.

People reported a wide range of recovery times. Some admitted having spent days getting over big losses. After some discussion, we agreed that recovery time depended on the severity of the failure, the strength of the Sage and the PQ Brain, and what else happened in the ensuing hours and days. Some said they had found that doing PQ reps after the bad news had significantly cut down their recovery time.

Some people made sobering discoveries during this process. Janet, a sales rep from California, said she hadn't been conscious of how much her interactions with other clients were affected while she was in the recovery period from a previous client loss. She realized that remaining upset over one loss made it much more likely to incur other losses.

EMPATHIZE

Until now we had focused on using the two strategies of weakening the Saboteurs and strengthening the PQ Brain muscles. To accelerate their progress even more, we now incorporated the third strategy: strengthening the Sage. We had already done a little work on adapting the Sage perspective on failure and rejection. It was time to also activate the Sage powers—in particular the power to Empathize.

Empathizing with Ourselves

Sales is one of the toughest jobs in the workplace. While we are all constantly engaged in selling, persuading, and motivating of some kind, the inevitable failures of sales professionals are starkly visible for everyone to see. The Judge and Saboteurs often have a field day beating us down over these failures. The Sage, on the other hand, reminds us that we are worthy of self-acceptance and—dare I sound so clichéd—self-love, even at a time of failure. The Sage’s empathy for oneself is unconditional.

I asked everyone on the team to think about how much self-acceptance and self-love they typically felt at the end of a day in which they had made some avoidable and costly mistakes. Several people said “Zero!” Most said “Very little.” One team member, who was influenced by the Restless Saboteur, said he tried to push away his anger and disappointment by keeping busy. He admitted, however, that the negative thoughts and feelings all came back in the form of frequently interrupted sleep; he would often wake up with a racing mind.

Everyone agreed to play Visualize the Child to activate empathy for themselves as an antidote to their Saboteur energies. Many chose to use actual childhood photographs. Within a few days of this call, many people chose to email their childhood pictures to one another, resulting in

a lot of fun interactions.

They agreed that whenever they felt themselves emotionally beaten up by their own or others' Judges, they would visualize the picture and allow the energy of compassion and caring toward themselves to fill them up. Some had instant success. Others took a few weeks before they were able to access empathy for themselves.

Empathizing with the Buyer

In addition to empathizing with oneself, the Sage knows how to empathize with the buyer in an authentic and heartfelt manner. Most of us are deeply moved when someone actually listens to and empathizes with us—it happens so rarely. When a person shows pure and true empathy, he or she is operating from the PQ Brain. This means that we, too, are likely to shift to our PQ Brain, which is why we feel moved by the experience. The Sage's power to empathize is a key way to help shift ourselves and the buyer into PQ Brain mode, which, as discussed, is more conducive to sales.

I invited everyone to honestly assess how much true empathy they felt in their hearts for their prospective clients. In particular, I asked them to examine what they typically paid attention to during client meetings and what kinds of voices they heard in their heads.

With a little self-exploration, most people agreed that much of their attention was still on themselves and their own concerns during a sales call. They asked themselves questions like, "Will I be able to make this sale?" "How am I doing?" "Will I be able to reach my quota if I don't make this sale?" "Does this guy like me?" "When he stops talking will I have the smartest thing to say?"

Sounds familiar?

True empathy for someone else means that you place all of your attention on them. You put yourself in their shoes and see the world through their eyes. It's so much easier to come up with ideas that

address a client's needs if you can experience the problem from his or her vantage point. This constitutes the heart of successful selling.

Many of us attempt this in the form of the sales techniques of active listening, repeating what we hear, showing a concerned expression, inquiring more, and so on. The only trouble is that we usually do all of this from our Survivor Brain, with our own success in mind, rather than from our PQ Brain and the Sage's authentic compassion for what the client experiences. The impact is that both the salesperson and the client continue relying on the Survivor Brain rather than shifting to the PQ Brain.

The PQ Brain is capable of understanding and embracing paradox, and there is indeed a paradox here. In order to get the sale, you need to let go of needing to make the sale. In order to get the result that makes you happy, you have to let go of your concern for your own happiness during the sales process. You need to be completely focused on the other person, not as a sales technique, but truly in your heart.

The team agreed that feeling true empathy for another person was easier when they genuinely liked that person. Some sales reps complained that their prospective clients were not necessarily all that likeable and had strong Saboteur behaviors. To access their deeper Empathy toward the buyers, they agreed to experiment with the power game of Visualize the Child, this time visualizing the child in the buyer, at least a few times in the ensuing week. This would allow them to see and empathize with the more likeable Sage essence of the difficult buyer.

After about six weeks of this practice, the average PQ score of team members rose from 59 to 69. It was still below our threshold of 75, but it was a big improvement. We couldn't see any significant improvement in sales, but that was to be expected given the sales cycles. People reported feeling more energized and less stressed, which I knew would show up in their results sooner or later.

EXPLORE

When I discussed the Sage's power to Explore with the team, we focused on the self first. I asked how many of the sales reps conducted blameless autopsies on their own failures in selling and tried to learn from them. Everyone thought they did. Closer examination, however, revealed another dynamic. In the past, many of them considered failures and rejections too painful to deal with, so most autopsies were done very quickly with relatively superficial learning. We discussed how much more thorough and instructive the autopsies could be if they were approached with the Sage's Explore power of curiosity and fascination rather than with the Judge's negativity. Everyone committed to a thorough Sage exploration of what had worked and what hadn't after every major event. They agreed to watch for the blame-and-shame game of the Judge during this process and label it if it showed up.

After a few rounds of the blameless autopsy on their recent failures, the sales reps discovered that until now they had not done enough in-depth Exploration with their clients. They cited things such as rushing to conclusions, bringing in old assumptions from other clients, listening selectively to the client to prove their own existing hypothesis, and buying into the client's superficial understanding of his or her own needs rather than delving deeper, among other things. These of course were due to Saboteur interference.

We agreed that the sign of pure Exploration was truly not knowing what the next step would look like. We discussed the Exploration power game of Fascinated Anthropologist. If an anthropologist enters a village partially to explore and partially to sell what she has in her backpack, she won't be much of an explorer. Her field of vision will narrow, focusing on who can get her the quick sell.

Again, here was the same paradox: in order to sell, you need to let go of needing to sell and immerse yourself fully in the fascination of discovery. We concluded that if the sales reps weren't experiencing the

joy and wonder of a Fascinated Anthropologist meeting a new tribe, then they wouldn't be able to discover the deeper habits and needs of the prospective clients.

Their assignment for the following week was to play Fascinated Anthropologist with some clients and tap into the joy and delight of the Sage in Explore mode.

INNOVATE

Having fully explored the client's needs and circumstances, the seller would ideally engage in a true Sage's Innovate mode. True innovation is ultimately about breaking out of the box that limits the way we think about a problem and its solution. I pointed out that whatever box the seller is stuck in will likely also trap the buyer, limiting the possibilities on both ends. To avoid this, the seller needs to go into pure Innovate mode, and bring the buyer along too. The seller's PQ Brain then tunes into the buyer's PQ Brain.

I then asked, "What is the enemy of true Innovation? What gets in the way?" People were quick to suggest the Judge's premature evaluation of ideas. Paula, a bright and relatively new sales rep, contributed a powerful insight that caused a long pause on the call. "I worry that if I really go with uncontrolled, creative idea-generation with the prospect, the best solution to their problems might not include the product I'm selling."

This was such an important insight that I asked Paula to repeat it. As she did, I heard sounds of recognition from others. Paula had hit a deep chord, one at the heart of why we don't allow the Sage's pure Innovation to come alive in the sales process.

"What are the consequences of putting up boundaries in idea-generation to make sure the ideas best showcase our product?" I asked.

Someone jumped in: "We're more likely to stay in our boxes both as buyer and seller."

"Which brain would you be coming from?" I asked.

"Survivor Brain," others murmured.

"Which brain would that activate in your buyer?" I asked. The answer was now obvious: the Survivor Brain. The brain trained to say no to new possibilities.

We were looking at another instance of our paradox. You are much more likely to sell an idea or product if you don't feel attached to selling the idea. Of course, not being attached doesn't mean not being

enthusiastic or committed. You could be highly enthusiastic and committed to selling a product. But the moment you get emotionally attached to making the sale, you are no longer in true and pure Empathy, Exploration, or Innovation mode with the client. Your anxiety-based emotional need has shifted you right back to the Survivor Brain.

I told the group that early in my CEO-coaching career I had allowed myself to get attached to retaining some key clients. At the time, I was working with two particularly difficult personalities who were both very intimidating to their own senior teams and even board members. Let's call them Tony and Karen. Their fierce tempers caused people to shy away from confronting them with feedback about their shortcomings. I had allowed myself to be intimidated, too; I feared that if I directly challenged them they might fire me. I rationalized away this self-serving choice by saying I could be more helpful to them as a coach than if I weren't there at all. Then one day I finally threw caution to the wind with Tony and confronted him with some of the ways he was hurting his team and his company. As I feared, he fired me on the spot. This made me even more cautious with Karen, and I continued pushing her only as far as I felt was safe to avoid being fired by her too.

About three months later, Tony called me back and said he had done a lot of thinking and needed me back in his life; I seemed to be the only one who dared tell him the full truth. Interestingly, Karen stopped working with me around this time, having decided she no longer needed help from a coach. My work with Tony continued for several more years and expanded into many layers of his company. Ever since then, I decided I would never take on a new client if I didn't dare risk being fired by them.

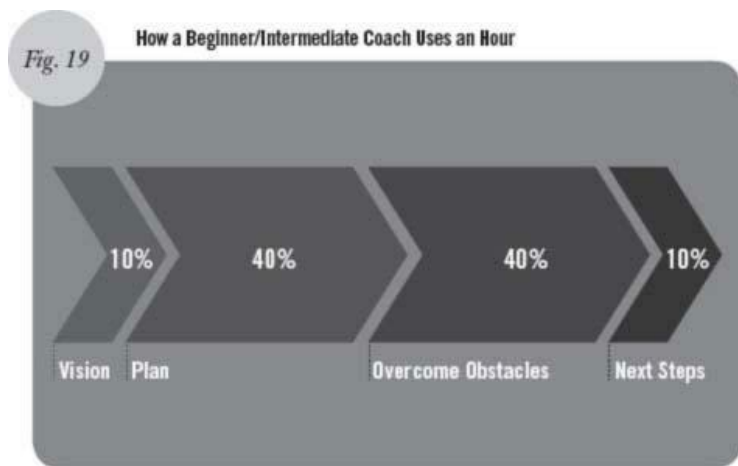
I now asked the group these questions: "Are you willing to get fired or rejected by letting go of all your own needs to make a sale and focusing completely on the best solution for the client? Are you willing to embrace true Innovation with your client even if it risks leading to a solution that might not include your product or service? Are you willing to buy into the paradox that you will sell a lot more if you let go of needing to make a sale?"

Our brave Paula once again gave the honest answer: “I can see the merit of this, but it would be a little scary to practice.” I asked her to get curious about which part of her brain and which voice in her head was bringing up that fear.

NAVIGATE

The Sage's power to Navigate is ultimately about aligning sales with deeper drivers: values, mission, and purpose.

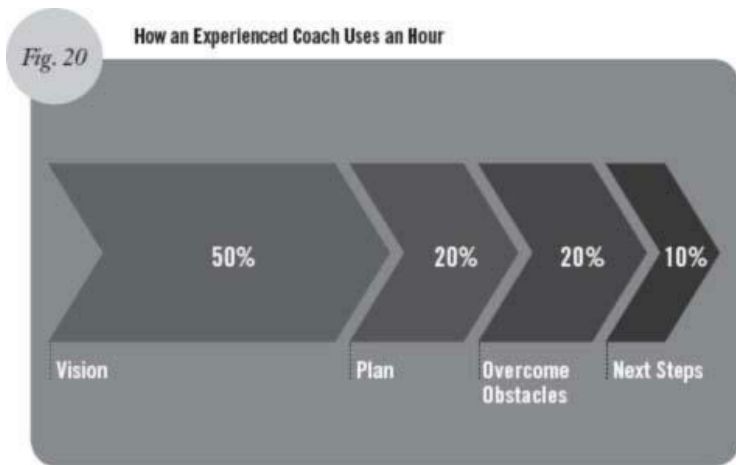
My company has trained, supervised, and certified thousands of coaches around the world. We teach them something that can dramatically improve a coach's effectiveness almost overnight. It has to do with making sure the client's vision has "caught fire" before doing anything else. If you gave beginner or intermediate coaches an hour to coach someone on an issue, they might divide the hour roughly into the following chunks:



When we supervise our coaches in training during the final certification program, we observe their actual work in coaching a client. Supervisors always watch how hard the coach is working. A telltale sign that something is wrong is that the coach is working too hard. The work should flow and feel almost effortless. A coach working too hard often means that the client's vision has not caught fire. The conversation has

moved from vision to planning and obstacles too quickly, without the fuel that an ignited vision would have provided. Lacking that fuel, the coach has to keep pushing for the both of them.

Experienced coaches eventually arrive at a very different balance that is roughly divided as follows:



I asked the group why the second approach might work better, hinting that the answer related to the PQ Brain. Tim, one of the company's star salespeople, answered instantly: "Vision lives in the PQ Brain. If you stay in the vision conversation long enough, you activate the PQ Brain in both yourself and your client. That brain is more creative in figuring out a plan and overcoming obstacles." Another person added, "If you began planning while you were still operating with the Survivor Brain, you would get bogged down because the obstacles would look bigger and more daunting."

They had summarized things perfectly. The big difference, indeed, is that once you and the buyer are both in PQ Brain mode, you are allied with the client's Sage rather than fighting his or her naysaying Saboteurs. You have to work too hard as a salesperson, coach, leader, spouse, or

parent if you haven't helped the vision on the other side catch fire before focusing on plans, tactics, and obstacles.

Many people make the mistake of reading the vision through the Data Channel rather than the PQ Channel. A client or prospect might mention his vision in the first three minutes of the conversation. But he uses words, data, and concepts that live in the Data Channel. They might not live in his heart in that moment, and certainly not in the PQ Brain. It is the job of the coach, salesperson, or leader to breathe life into the vision so that it catches fire and is felt deeply rather than remaining just a thought.

I suggested to the group that the first step toward accomplishing this is activating their own PQ Brains (the third PQ principle of selling). From there, they would need to help the client to feel, touch, smell, and taste the vision being manifested using as much concreteness and involving as many of the senses and emotions as possible.

Visions catch fire most rapidly and powerfully when you help the other person connect the dots between the vision for the project and his or her own most deeply felt values. Values point the way to the place where our reservoir of fuel and fire resides. Align with those values, and you will tap into the deepest source of fire, passion, and energy within.

One technique that works particularly well is to have a person speak about his or her vision in a story format in present tense, with the vision already having been achieved.³⁸ For example: "It is now two years into the future. We are celebrating the one-year anniversary of launching the new system with a big bash attended by the CEO and the entire senior management team. The party is in a beautiful banquet room in a resort in Hawaii, surrounded by lush trees. I attend with my wife and two kids because I am being acknowledged with an award and I want them to share the special moment with me. We show a video of testimonials from our store managers talking about how the new system has changed their lives. A woman in the video chokes up as she talks about how time-saving and automation has made it possible to attend her daughters' ballet recitals, something she couldn't do in the past. My own job has become

more fulfilling because so many other departments in the company are calling me to learn how to implement something similar, and I love to help.”

And so on. Your prospective client might not actually create such a vision story, but you still would want to engage her in the kind of dialog that builds the elements of such a story in her mind, and even more importantly, in her heart. Inquiries that help clients form such narratives include: “Let’s imagine that this vision has already been successfully manifested. What would feel different? What would change in your own life, or someone else’s? How would you feel about yourself, your role, your contribution, or your life? What would be different on a typical day? How would this vision impact how much time you get to spend with your daughter? How would that align with the kind of legacy you want to leave behind in this role? At the end of your life, looking back, what would still stand out as significant?”

These are the kinds of questions that help a vision catch fire. You need to find your own set of open-ended questions that fit your particular situation.

You will know when the vision has caught fire—it will show up on the PQ Channel. When a client gets a taste of the possibility of the vision, her body language will shift. There will be more leaning forward, a sparkle in the eyes, a lifting of mood and energy. If you asked her at this point what the obstacles are, she would list them without any sense of anxiety or heaviness, with the PQ Brain’s attitude that everything is possible, and that even obstacles can be turned into opportunities.

Connecting the Dots to Values and Meaning

At this point in our work, I proposed that the sales reps do the work on themselves before trying it on others. “What about your vision of your own work?” I asked. “Has it caught fire? Have you connected the dots between your work and your own deeper sense of values and mission in

the world?”

After a minute of pregnant silence, our daring Paula jumped in with an honest observation that others often feel but few dare to express publically. “If we sold lifesaving medicine, I could understand this point. But let’s be honest here. We are just selling a piece of software. It’s not necessarily the kind of thing I can connect to my deeper questions of legacy and meaning in life. I do this work to make a living. I wouldn’t do it if I didn’t need to.”

I thanked Paula for her courage in speaking the truth, as I knew the question on many minds was, “Does my work really matter?” I then shared the research on hospital cleaners and administrative assistants and how a third of them saw their work as just a job, another third as a career, and another third as a calling. I suggested that the difference was due to whether the Saboteurs or the Sage was leading the charge. “If hospital cleaners and administrative assistants can actively imbue their jobs with a sense of meaning and calling, you can too,” I said, challenging the group.

I now asked why a sense of meaning should matter. They had no trouble responding: “I would have more fun at my job and feel less stressed.” “I would more likely be in my PQ Brain, get the PQ principles of selling right, and be more successful.” “My greater enthusiasm would be contagious to my prospects and get me better results.” They really were getting it.

I asked them to think about all the elements of their jobs that could be imbued with meaning and aligned with their own deeper sense of purpose in life. As a tool, I suggested Flash Forward, the power game that aids us in Navigation. “At the end of your life, looking back, how do you wish you had played this game of selling? What would stand out as meaningful?”

After a few minutes of contemplation, some of them shared their discoveries. Bob, a middle-aged rep from Arizona, had a particularly poignant response: “Because of my background, I have a lot of passion for helping underprivileged kids. I was wondering how selling a piece of enterprise software could possibly connect to that. I came up with a few

things. First, I will commit to contributing a percentage of my commission over a certain amount to an organization that works with underprivileged kids. So now when I am trying to make a sale, it can be in part for those kids. I was also thinking of having some of those kids shadow me in parts of my work in hopes of inspiring them into pursuing good careers. The third thing is that some of the potential clients I'm talking to probably come from underprivileged backgrounds. They are just adult versions of the people I especially care about, and I can get excited about helping them out with our product.”

It is amazing what happens to people once they connect the dots between their jobs and their deeper sense of what makes life meaningful. I imagined Bob sitting a little taller in his seat and radiating with a new vivacity after having connected the dots. If you haven't connected what you do to what brings meaning to your life, you are not tapping into your greatest reservoir of power and inspiration.

The Flash Forward power game or more subtle variations of it could also help you to connect your buyer with her deeper sense of meaning, values, purpose, and vision. It is a key step in helping her vision catch fire.

ACTIVATE

As the final step in selling, the Sage carries out any necessary action, without interference from the Saboteurs. If the PQ Brain is energized in both the seller and the buyer, the Sage's move to act is automatic. The "close" happens organically and naturally.

We spent one of our final webinar sessions talking about which Saboteurs got in the way of the Sage's action in all areas of their jobs. After all, sales is a very process-intensive job, requiring discipline in a whole array of activities, ranging from prospecting to research to follow-up. We played the Preempt the Saboteurs power game to anticipate which Saboteurs might get in the way of action and how. Each person compiled his or her own list and devised Sage responses in anticipation.

To keep the momentum alive beyond our webinar, they agreed to incorporate a PQ report item on their weekly regional team meeting agenda. This would enable them to learn from one another's successes and failures. It would also be a continual reminder and an inspiration to keep up with the practice beyond the initial phase, during which the developing muscles are still hard to see.

THE GIFT AT THE END

I did a follow-up call with this group a few months after the end of our webinars. I anticipated mostly positive reports, as their average PQ had risen to 79 and they had produced signs of widespread improvement in their sales process. As a result, they had revised their sales projection for the next year, increasing it by 28 percent. They reported having been much more energized and effective in their work individually and as a group. Jack summarized everyone's sentiment by saying they felt "on fire."

Shortly after that follow-up conversation, I got a call from the CEO of the company saying that the board had voted to sell the company to a public company rather than wait to go public themselves. Their sales momentum had contributed to a high acquisition price.

About a year after the acquisition, I received an email from Paula, the most memorable and outspoken member of the group, that made my day. She had taken to heart my suggestion that the PQ selling principles applied to motivating and persuading of any kind. As a single mother of a troubled sixteen-year-old son, her biggest challenge was persuading him to stop some of his increasingly self-destructive behaviors. She hit some bumps in the road but eventually succeeded in persuading him to do an assessment of his own Saboteurs. Every night at the dinner table since that day, they shared their successes and failures in tackling their own Judges, as well as his Restless and her Stickler Saboteurs. She wanted me to know about the profound impact this had had on him and on their relationship. We never know when our improved skills in selling, persuading, and motivating will come in handy.

Think of an important area where you have been overly reliant on a rational and data-driven approach to persuasion. What is the unspoken emotional need in the other person that you have not addressed?

CHAPTER 13

CONCLUSION: THE MAGNIFICENT YOU!

I have attempted in this book to show that increasing your Positive Intelligence is the most efficient and sustainable way to increase both your effectiveness and your happiness, and that the same holds true for any team you might belong to.

The good news is that you have already raised your PQ a little just by reading this book. For one thing, your Saboteurs are probably not as strong and credible in your mind now as they were before. You have weakened them by exposing their self-justifying lies and destructive patterns. They can no longer hide or pretend they are your friends.

Another reason your PQ is already higher is that you are now aware of the power of the Sage. If all you do is remember the stallion story next time you are upset about something, you will have a stronger Sage to combat your Saboteurs.

Practice is the key to how much more your PQ will increase and how deep its impact will be. PQ practice doesn't require spare time. As you observe and label Saboteurs, access your great Sage powers, and do energizing PQ reps, you will meet your challenges in ways that are both more effective and more fulfilling. Committing to the PQ practice doesn't add a burden to your life. It reduces the burden that is already there.

As you embark on this practice, it is wise to take your internal enemies seriously. Those who underestimate the strength of their Saboteurs do so at their own peril. Your Saboteurs are committed to their own survival—remember, they are rooted in survival. They don't like to lose power over you. They will keep trying to convince you that your survival and success depend on them. They will also tell you that to gain greater success and happiness you just need to focus even harder on external achievements. I hope you are no longer susceptible to these self-justifying lies of your Saboteurs.

Your Saboteurs will never fully go away. The fact is that I still hear the voices of my Judge and Hyper-Rational Saboteurs very frequently. What has changed is the volume and power of the voices in comparison to my strengthening Sage voice. Please don't feel discouraged if you keep hearing your Saboteurs in your head. They will lose much of their volume and strength over time.

If you go to a gym and lift dumbbells for a few days, you might have nothing to show for it. But I can guarantee you that if you did so twenty-one days in a row, you would absolutely have something to show for it. You would feel different, and others would notice it in you too. As a matter of fact, I make a bet with my coaching clients that if they do the PQ practice for twenty-one days in a row, someone in their life who doesn't know about their new practice will notice and comment on something being significantly different about them. I win that bet most of the time.

DISCOVERING THE MAGNIFICENT YOU

I recently had a session with an amazing photographer to take the picture for this book's jacket. Cynthia was an inspiration—she was completely tuned into the PQ Channel. I was late to the session and had just gotten off a very “bad” news call and needed a few minutes to shake off the Judge and switch to the Sage perspective. Cynthia was so tuned into me that she could tell instantly when my mind drifted. In those moments, she knew that my essence would not shine through in my face and in the photograph. So on a few occasions when my mind drifted, she instantly asked me to wiggle my toes and rub my fingers attentively against one another. I did, and I was right back into the PQ Brain, with my Sage essence shining though. She was asking me to do a few PQ reps!

Cynthia said that for the duration of every photo session, she always allows herself to fall in love with the essential beauty of the person she is photographing. This allows the subject's essence to shine through and be captured on camera.

It occurred to me that I have always done something very similar as a leader, as CEO of my companies, and as a coach to others. I have allowed myself to fall in love with the magnificence of the human being in front of me long enough to have that person rediscover his or her own magnificence. My Sage draws out the other person's Sage. What's not to love about the Sage and its essence in each of us?

I hope this book will help you fall more deeply in love with yourself—to see the beauty of your own essence, of the being you were the moment you were born. You don't need to prove anything to anyone, or perform for anyone, or get to the top of any mountain. Your essence is always there as your Sage, unchanged and waiting for you to see it, access its enormous powers, and allow it to shine.

I also hope that you will choose to pause more often and fall in love with the amazing people all around you in work and at home. I hope you will be able to see past their off-putting Saboteurs. I hope you will

choose to have your Sage see their Sages long enough for them to rise and shine through. That is what great leaders, great team players, great parents, great educators, and great life partners do. They enable us to rediscover and see our own Sages through their eyes.

From my Sage to yours: I see you!

APPENDIX

PQ BRAIN FUNDAMENTALS

In [chapter 7](#), you read a very brief description of the PQ Brain. Here, you can explore the functions of the PQ Brain and Survivor Brain in a little more detail.

The recent advent of Functional MRI (fMRI), which measures how neural activity changes blood flow, has allowed neuroscientists and psychologists to witness the real-time working of the brain for the very first time. We are now able to pinpoint the parts of the brain involved in producing different thoughts or feelings. This means we are also able to track the parts of the brain involved with the activation of Saboteurs, or the parts needed for activation of the Sage.

As you have learned, the master Saboteur, the Judge, has its roots in the Survivor Brain, the part of the brain tasked with helping us survive. The brain stem, the most primitive part of the brain, is involved in basic motivation for physical survival and issues the fight-or-flight response to danger. Above this primitive part of the brain sits the limbic system, which includes the amygdala, the moderator of our emotional responses, including fear. The hypothalamus and pituitary gland secrete hormones in reaction to the amygdala, including the stress hormone cortisol. Cortisol circulates throughout the body, focusing it on survival. During this survival focus, the left brain, with its concentration on concrete data and detail, is the primary participant.

As we have seen, once the Judge comes alive, it in turn activates the accomplice Saboteurs. Thus the Survivor Brain fuels the Saboteurs, and those Saboteurs in turn fuel the Survivor Brain. The distress and stress most of us feel is a result of a perpetual low-grade version of this vicious cycle. We need the PQ Brain to interrupt this cycle.

The PQ Brain focuses on thriving rather than survival. The PQ Brain gives rise to the Sage perspective and the Sage powers. It consists of

three components: (1) the middle prefrontal cortex (MPFC); (2) the Empathy Circuitry; and (3) the right brain.

1. THE MPFC

The MPFC performs some key functions that are critical to high PQ, including the following:

- **Observe the self:** It allows us to rise above the fray and actually witness our own mind and thinking process.
- **Pause before acting:** It provides a buffer zone of contemplation that makes the difference between acting and reacting.
- **Soothe fear:** It releases GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) to ease the experience of fear produced by the Survivor Brain.
- **Empathize with self and others:** It plays a key part in the Empathy Circuitry, which allows us to have empathy for ourselves and others.
- **Stay centered:** It brings us back to a sense of equanimity and feeling centered in the middle of great difficulty. It calms us down by literally coordinating the nervous system controls over bodily functions such as heart rate, respiration, and digestion.
- **Access gut wisdom:** It accesses and processes information from neural networks that are outside the skull and spread throughout the body, including the heart and the intestines. This is why we call intuition “gut feeling.”

2. THE EMPATHY CIRCUITRY

“Empathy Circuitry” is my term for a few different areas of the brain that combine to enable the key Sage power to Empathize. The Empathy Circuitry includes (a) the mirror neuron system; (b) the ACC; and (c) the insula cortex of the MPFC.

A) Mirror Neuron System

The discovery of the mirror neuron system in the brain was one of the most exciting discoveries of neuroscience in recent years. In a nutshell, our mirror neurons pick up on the physiological and emotional state of others and *automatically* have us experience similar states, including changes in our own heart rate, blood pressure, or respiration in response to others around us. This explains how we get affected by the mood of a meeting we walk into and why we yawn when someone else yawns. It results in an invisible “contagion” effect that plays a key role in leadership, selling and persuading, conflict resolution, parenting, and many other aspects of Positive Intelligence.

Think of the mirror neuron system as the “tuning fork” of the brain. If you are vibrating at the energy frequency of Saboteurs, you are more likely to automatically trigger the Saboteurs of the person you are interacting with. If you are vibrating at the Sage frequency, you are more likely to help shift the other person to Sage mode. This is understood almost intuitively by great salespeople and leaders as a way of impacting others.

This contagion effect brought about by the brain’s mirror neurons has many implications. In a recent study, researchers followed 4,739 individuals, their relationships with one another, and their levels of happiness over twenty years.^{[39](#)} They found that when an individual becomes happy, a friend living within a mile had a 25 percent increased

chance of becoming happy. In the most surprising part of the finding, even a friend of a friend (two degrees of separation) had a 10 percent increased chance of happiness, and even that friend's friend (three degrees of separation) had a 6 percent increased chance. If your positivity can impact someone three degrees of separation away from you, imagine how much you affect those immediately around you, especially if you are in a position of leadership or influence with them.

B) Insular Cortex

Another part of this Empathy Circuitry is the insular cortex, which is basically a highway that connects the signals from the mirror neuron system down to the limbic area and the brain stem, enabling our body to react with empathy for another. It also carries the signal to the upper side of the MPFC, allowing us to become consciously aware of our empathy.

C) The ACC

The ACC sits between the thinking cortex area and the feeling and sensing limbic region. It regulates our focus of attention. Together, the mirror neuron system, the insular cortex, and the ACC constitute our Empathy Circuitry.

As an example of how this works, at some point in my childhood my brain began to dampen the Empathy Circuitry signals. This was because the signals that it was mirroring from around me were not pleasant. Why pick up and soak up even more pain from around myself if I didn't have to? And why tune into my own painful feelings? What good would come out of that?

The challenge is that the very same circuitry that allows us to become aware and empathic to our own body and our own emotions also works in reverse and enables us to be empathic to others. Once the highway is

shut down in one direction, it is also shut down in the other direction. This double-pronged approach of disconnecting both from our right brain and our Empathy Circuitry is extremely prevalent as a survival strategy. The cost is becoming “numb” to ourselves, to others, and to the richness of life’s experiences.

3. THE RIGHT BRAIN

What most people think when looking at pictures of the brain is that the brain is more or less one organ, with different sides. What they don't realize is that actually the left and right hemispheres of the brain are completely separate from each other and connected by a very small corridor of neural fibers called the corpus callosum. These two hemispheres are wired entirely differently and have very different functions. We literally *are* of two minds.

The right brain is much discussed and much misunderstood. It deals with the big picture, imagery, nonverbal language, and detecting invisible things such as energy and mood. It is more directly connected to the information flow from the body to the brain stem to the limbic areas, which constitute an awareness of our physical sensations and emotions. This is where the emotional and social self is centered.

In contrast, the left brain is responsible for linear and logical thinking, spoken and written language, and details. It is the part of the brain that allows us to completely detach from emotions and physical sensations and potentially live in a disconnected world of logic and data. The left brain is a place where things can be more orderly and controllable. It is where the rational mind rules and where one could justify and rationalize fears and pains away.

The right brain is clearly much more suitable for the key functions of the Sage, such as Empathizing, Exploring with a completely open mind, Innovating with a big-picture perspective of possibilities, and Navigating with a deep connection to what really matters to us in life. The left brain's functions are clearly critical in surviving our day-to-day lives, whereas the right brain's functions enable us to thrive with a life that is rich with relationships and meaning.

As children, we are somewhat more right-brained in the first few years of our lives than left-brained, and we also have more balance between the two. Unfortunately, our upbringing in the Western world

systematically encourages and strengthens the left brain and either ignores or punishes the right brain functions. This gradually results in us becoming completely imbalanced and lopsided.

Our education system is almost entirely based on building left brain muscles of language and logic. Placement and achievement tests such as the SAT are predominantly based on left-brain strengths. This phenomenon is so prevalent that I tell participants in my leadership seminars that they are all living life almost half-brained. Few people ever push back on this statement after we look at the research evidence. While it is true that women and people of more creative orientation have slightly better access to their right brains on average, they are still predominantly and lopsidedly left-brained.

What further exaggerates the left brain/right brain imbalance is Saboteur involvement. Using myself as an example again, my right brain was the dominant part of my brain as a child, as it is in all children. At some point, however, I must have decided that if I couldn't exert control over my difficult life circumstances, I could exert control over the more orderly place of my logical mind. After all, there was safety in facts, figures, lists, and details. This, of course, strengthened my left brain muscles. In contrast, I must have decided to begin discounting and numbing my feelings, as those feelings were not pleasant. This caused further atrophy of the right brain, which is more involved with those feeling functions. I was therefore using the strategy of the Hyper-Rational Saboteur to ensure my physical and emotional survival. The result was the increasing atrophy of my right brain and living life almost half-brained, as most people do.

OLD DOGS AND NEW TRICKS

Until now we have discussed only the bad news that most of us have allowed the PQ Brain muscles to atrophy for years. The really good news is that in this domain of building PQ Brain muscles, old dogs do indeed learn new tricks—very quickly.

To see how, it is useful to think for a second about what a brain “muscle” actually consists of. The brain is made up of about 100 billion neurons. On average, each neuron, if you can believe it, has about five thousand synapses that allow it to connect with many other neurons, meaning the electrical signal traveling through a neuron comes to a fork in the road at the end of the neuron with a lot of possible directions to travel. Which direction the signal then travels depends in part on which neuron has become “associated” in the past with the first neuron. Neurons are not “hardwired” with one another. Their connection is instead associational and statistical. The more often two neurons fire together, the more they become associated with one another. In other words, neurons that fire together become virtually wired together over time. This is how the brain learns, remembers, and forms conscious or subconscious habits and assumptions.

There are several mechanisms that the brain uses to establish these new pathways and muscles, which together constitute what is termed neuroplasticity. New synaptic linkages are created when a new behavior different from an old habit is performed. Myelin, the fatty protective sheath around the neurons that are involved, increases in thickness, resulting in a one hundred-fold increase in speed of signal transmission through those neurons, meaning traffic is more likely to be routed through this new “highway.” This results in the old highway gathering dust and gradually disappearing, which is what happens when you quit a habit. Focused attention, such as the PQ reps you learned in [chapter 7](#), release neurotransmitters that aid in strengthening new synaptic connections and laying down new pathways.

The great news about neuroplasticity is that researchers have recently discovered that the brain continues to build new pathways and create new synapses and even entirely new neurons in response to stimulation, even in people who are in their nineties. The amazing recovery of stroke patients whose brains quickly rewire themselves to make up for loss of functions due to lost neurons is testimony to this power. My own experience with myself and my clients is that the brain is indeed highly responsive to the PQ muscle-building practices.

PQ AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

Many of the Saboteurs, including the Judge, the Controller, and the Hyper-Rational tend to lead us to believe we know more than we actually know. They need to be reminded that so much of what is stored in our brain and affects our emotions and decisions is actually not consciously known to us.

We have two kinds of memory. Explicit memory is what we normally think of as memory, something that we can consciously point to and recall. However, the brain also stores implicit memories, memories that we are not consciously aware of. The challenge is that implicit memories impact how we think, interpret things, or react to things. They constitute an important part of the wiring of our Saboteurs.

What makes the difference between whether a piece of experience is stored in our implicit or explicit memory is whether the hippocampus, the explicit memory maker of the brain, was involved with laying it down and filing it away. In many situations, including high-stress situations such as trauma, the hippocampus goes offline. It also is offline very early in our childhood, which is why some of the most powerful and important experiences of our lives that determine how we think and react to things are hidden from us.

Researchers have now shown that our implicit memories result in emotions and impact our decision making without our conscious awareness. We rationalize why we do what we do without being fully aware of the memories, feelings, and assumptions that actually motivated our actions from our implicit storage. Every Saboteur has a series of “justifications” to convince you that it is really your friend, but these justifications are often fed by implicit beliefs that have never been consciously examined. For example, your Judge might hold beliefs such as “no pain, no gain,” or “too much kindness spoils people” based on early experiences and associations that are not consciously remembered and therefore unexamined or unchallenged.

Many schools of psychology and therapy work hard at making the subconscious content conscious so that it loses its power over you. This can be highly effective, especially with more traumatic situations. The challenge, however, is that some of the deepest implicit memories that we have might never be accessible, especially those from very early childhood.

The practice of Positive Intelligence bypasses the need for having to uncover the underlying reasons behind the formation of the Saboteurs or those Saboteurs' implicit and hidden beliefs. All we need is to recognize their current thought and feeling patterns and label them when they show up. You can fight an enemy without having to know what he had for breakfast or what kind of childhood he had. The caveat, again, is in cases of significant trauma where deeper therapeutic work might be needed.

Interestingly, developing the PQ Brain muscles will automatically result in gaining deeper access to the subconscious dynamics of your Saboteurs, even while not trying to do so. When the PQ Brain muscles are activated, you will automatically have greater access to the deeper, insight-producing parts of your brain compared to the more superficial left brain, which is what you would activate if you thought really hard about what is going on with you. You will experience these insights without really knowing how they bubbled up. You probably have already had such experiences, in nature or when exercising, taking a shower, or just waking up, where suddenly the fog lifts and you see things clearly. Those experiences are happening because these sensation-intensive occasions have quieted your left brain and activated your PQ Brain regions. With PQ practice, you learn how to induce such insight-producing experiences at will and more consistently.

The scope of this book does not allow for an in-depth discussion of neuroscience. I have made some generalizations to highlight the essential differences between the Survivor and PQ Brains. At a more micro level, the brain is not as neatly differentiated and there is some overlap between the two brains in almost everything we do. If you are interested in a more detailed understanding of the brain, there has been an explosion of

new research and books in recent years. Two great examples are *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation* by Dr. Dan Siegel (Random House 2010) and *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* by Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Sharon Begley (Harper Perennial 2003).

I hope this book has inspired you to develop at least as much understanding about your brain as you have about your body. After all, it is our brain that orchestrates our entire experience of our lives.

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ENDNOTES

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- 15 This groundbreaking course was created by Professor David L. Bradford (with Jerry Porras), who currently holds the title Eugene O'Kelly II Senior Lecturer Emeritus in Leadership at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. This course has been one of the most popular courses of the Stanford curriculum for the past four decades. Its life-changing impact was not unique to me; it is often cited by the alumni as one of the most enduring and valuable positive experiences of their MBA education. Professor Bradford is the author of several books, including two coauthored with Allan Cohen—*Influence Without Authority* and *Power Up: Transforming Organizations Through Shared Leadership*.
- 16 This is connected to the PQ Vortex dynamics, discussed in [chapter 8](#). Only 20 percent of teams and individuals score above the PQ tipping point whereby positive change is supported rather than resisted.
- 17 Jonathan Haidt explains this phenomenon in some depth in his insightful book *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).
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- 19 Daniel Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness* (New York: Vintage, 2007). Gilbert, a Harvard professor of psychology, has done some fascinating work comparing the happiness of lottery winners with quadriplegic victims of accidents.
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- 21 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004).
- 22 I am certain that I am not the first to coin “happiness is an inside game,” as a Google search reveals. There are at least two books with the title *Happiness Is an Inside Job*, one by Sylvia Boorstein and another by John Powell.
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[25](#) Maxwell Maltz, *The New Psycho-Cybernetics* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2001).

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[28](#) Losada, “The Complex Dynamics of High Performance Teams,” 179–192.

Losada, “The Role of Positivity and Connectivity in the Performance of Business Teams: A Nonlinear Dynamics Model,” 740–765.

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- [31](#) Robert M. Schwartz et al., “Optimal and Normal Affect Balance in Psychotherapy of Major Depression: Evaluation of the Balanced States of Mind Model,” *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy* 30 (2002): 439–450. Schwartz is a clinical psychologist who categorized people into the three groups: pathological, normal, and optimal. His mathematical modeling anticipated their PQ equivalent scores to be 38, 72, and 81 respectively. This was empirically confirmed in his research.
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 - [37](#) Robert Zajonc et al., “Feeling and Facial Efference: Implications of the Vascular Theory of Emotion,” *Psychological Review* 96, no. 3 (July 1989): 395–416.
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