

ACTION-PLANNING TOOL

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Learner

- ☐ Refine how you learn. For example, you might learn best by teaching; if so, seek out opportunities to present to others. You might learn best through quiet reflection; if so, find this quiet time.
- ☐ Develop ways to track the progress of your learning. If there are distinct levels or stages of learning within a discipline or skill, take a moment to celebrate your progression from one level to the next. If no such levels exist, create them for yourself (e.g., reading five books on the subject or making three presentations on the subject).
- ☐ Be a catalyst for change. Others might be intimidated by new rules, new skills, or new circumstances. Your willingness to soak up this newness can calm their fears and spur them to action. Take this responsibility seriously.
- ☐ Seek roles that require some form of technical competence. You will enjoy the process of acquiring and maintaining this expertise.
- ☐ As far as possible, shift your career toward a field with constantly changing technologies or regulations. You will be energized by the challenge of keeping up.
- ☐ Because you are not threatened by unfamiliar information, you might excel in a consulting role (either internal or external) in which you are paid to go into new situations and pick up new competencies or languages quickly.
- ☐ Research supports the link between learning and performance. When people have the opportunity to learn and grow, they are more productive and loyal. Look for ways to measure the degree to which you and others feel that your learning needs are being met, to create individualized learning milestones, and to reward achievements in learning.
- ☐ At work, take advantage of programs that subsidize your learning. Your organization may be willing to pay for part or all of your instructional coursework or for certifications. Ask your manager for information about scholarships and other educational opportunities.
- ☐ Honor your desire to learn. Take advantage of adult educational opportunities in your community. Discipline yourself to sign up for at least one new academic or adult learning course each year.
- ☐ Time disappears and your attention intensifies when you are immersed in studying or

learning. Allow yourself to “follow the trail” by scheduling learning sessions during periods of time that will not be interrupted by pressing engagements.

Individualization

- ☐ Select a vocation in which your Individualization talents can be both used and appreciated, such as counseling, supervising, teaching, writing human interest articles, or selling. Your ability to see people as unique individuals is a special talent.
- ☐ Become an expert in describing your own strengths and style. For example, answer questions such as: What is the best praise you ever received? How often do you like to check in with your manager? What is your best method for building relationships? How do you learn best? Then ask your colleagues and friends these same questions. Help them plan their future by starting with their strengths, then designing a future based on what they do best.
- ☐ Help others understand that true diversity can be found in the subtle differences between each individual — regardless of race, sex, or nationality.
- ☐ Explain that it is appropriate, just, and effective to treat each person differently. Those without strong Individualization talents might not see the differences among individuals and might insist that individualization is unequal and therefore unfair. You will need to describe your perspective in detail to be persuasive.
- ☐ Figure out what every person on your team does best. Then help them capitalize on their talents, skills, and knowledge. You may need to explain your rationale and your philosophy so people understand that you have their best interests in mind.
- ☐ You have an awareness and appreciation of others’ likes and dislikes and an ability to personalize. This puts you in a unique position. Use your Individualization talents to help identify areas where one size does not fit all.
- ☐ Make your colleagues and friends aware of each person’s unique needs. Soon people will look to you to explain other people’s motivations and actions.
- ☐ Your presentations and speaking opportunities will be most engaging when you relate your topic to the experiences of individuals in the audience. Use your Individualization talents to gather and share real-life stories that will make your points much better than would generic information or theories.
- ☐ You move comfortably among a broad range of styles and cultures, and you intuitively personalize your interactions. Consciously and proactively make full use of these talents by leading diversity and community efforts.

- ☐ Your Individualization talents can help you take a different approach to interpreting data. While others are looking for similarities, make a point of identifying distinctiveness. Your interpretations will add a valuable perspective.

Achiever

- ☐ Select jobs that allow you to have the leeway to work as hard as you want and in which you are encouraged to measure your own productivity. You will feel challenged and alive in these environments.
- ☐ As an achiever, you relish the feeling of being busy, yet you also need to know when you are “done.” Attach timelines and measurement to goals so that effort leads to defined progress and tangible outcomes.
- ☐ Remember to build celebration and recognition into your life. Achievers tend to move on to the next challenge without acknowledging their successes. Counter this impulse by creating regular opportunities to enjoy your progress and accomplishments.
- ☐ Your drive for action might cause you to find meetings a bit boring. If that’s the case, appeal to your Achiever talents by learning the objectives of each meeting ahead of time and by taking notes about progress toward those objectives during the meeting. You can help ensure that meetings are productive and efficient.
- ☐ Continue your education by attaining certifications in your area or specialty in addition to attending conferences and other programs. This will give you even more goals to achieve and will push your existing boundaries of accomplishment.
- ☐ You do not require much motivation from others. Take advantage of your self-motivation by setting challenging goals. Set a more demanding goal every time you finish a project.
- ☐ Partner with other hard workers. Share your goals with them so they can help you to get more done.
- ☐ Count personal achievements in your scoring “system.” This will help you direct your Achiever talents toward family and friends as well as toward work.
- ☐ More work excites you. The prospect of what lies ahead is infinitely more motivating than what has been completed. Launch initiatives and new projects. Your seemingly endless reserve of energy will create enthusiasm and momentum.
- ☐ Make sure that in your eagerness to do more at work, you do not skimp on quality. Create measurable outcome standards to guarantee that increased productivity is matched by enhanced quality.

Analytical

- ☐ Choose work in which you are paid to analyze data, find patterns, or organize ideas. For example, you might excel in marketing, financial, or medical research or in database management, editing, or risk management.
- ☐ Whatever your role, identify credible sources on which you can rely. You are at your best when you have well-researched sources of information and numbers to support your logic. For example, determine the most helpful books, websites, or publications that can serve as references.
- ☐ Your mind is constantly working and producing insightful analysis. Are others aware of that? Find the best way of expressing your thoughts: writing, one-on-one conversations, group discussions, perhaps lectures or presentations. Put value to your thoughts by communicating them.
- ☐ Make sure that your accumulation and analysis of information always leads to its application and implementation. If you don't do this naturally, find a partner who pushes you from theory to practice, from thinking to doing. This person will help ensure that your analysis doesn't turn into paralysis.
- ☐ Take an academic course that will expand your Analytical talents. Specifically, study people whose logic you admire.
- ☐ Volunteer your Analytical talents. You can be particularly helpful to those who are struggling to organize large quantities of data or having a hard time bringing structure to their ideas.
- ☐ Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. This person's impatience will move you more quickly through the analytical phase into the action phase.
- ☐ You may remain skeptical until you see solid proof. Your skepticism ensures validity, but others may take it personally. Help others realize that your skepticism is primarily about data, not people.
- ☐ Look for patterns in data. See if you can discern a motif, precedent, or relationship in scores or numbers. By connecting the dots in the data and inferring a causal link, you may be able to help others see these patterns.
- ☐ Help others understand that your analytical approach will often require data and other information to logically back up new ideas that they might suggest.

Context

- ☐ Before planning begins on a project, encourage the people involved to study past projects. Help them appreciate the statement: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
- ☐ If you are in a role that requires teaching others, build your lessons around case studies. You will enjoy the search for the appropriate case, and your students will learn from these precedents. Use your understanding of the past to help others map the future.
- ☐ At work, help your organization strengthen its culture via folklore. For example, collect symbols and stories that represent the best of the past, or suggest naming an award after a person who embodied the historical traditions of your organization.
- ☐ Partner with someone with strong Futuristic or Strategic talents. This person’s fascination with what “could be” will stop you from becoming mired in the past, while your deep understanding of context will stop him or her from ignoring the lessons of the past. Together you are more likely to create something that lasts.
- ☐ Accept change. Remember that your Context talents do not require you to “live in the past.” Instead, you can actually become known as an active agent for positive change. Your natural sense of context should allow you to identify more clearly than most the aspects of the past that can be discarded and those that must be retained to build a sustainable future.
- ☐ Use fact-based comparisons to prior successes to paint a vivid picture for others of “what can be” in the future. The real-life illustrations you create can build confidence and emotional engagement.
- ☐ You recognize that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. Probe your friends and coworkers about actions that might have contributed to their current successes so you can help them make better choices in the future. This will help them put their decisions into an overall context.
- ☐ Read historical novels, non-fiction, or biographies. You will discover many insights that will help you understand the present. You will think more clearly.
- ☐ Compare historical antecedents and situations to your current challenge. Identifying commonalities may lead you to a new perspective or an answer to your problems.
- ☐ Seek out mentors who have a sense of history. Listening to their memories is likely to spark your thought process.