

Action-Planning Guide

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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.

Strategic

- ☐ Take the time to fully reflect or muse about a goal that you want to achieve until the related patterns and issues emerge for you. Remember that this musing time is essential to strategic thinking.
- ☐ You can see repercussions more clearly than others can. Take advantage of this ability by planning your range of responses in detail. There is little point in knowing where events will lead if you are not ready when you get there.
- ☐ Find a group that you think does important work, and contribute your strategic thinking. You can be a leader with your ideas.
- ☐ Your strategic thinking will be necessary to keep a vivid vision from deteriorating into an ordinary pipe dream. Fully consider all possible paths toward making the vision a reality. Wise forethought can remove obstacles before they appear.
- ☐ Make yourself known as a resource for consultation with those who are stumped by a particular problem or hindered by a particular obstacle or barrier. By naturally seeing a way when others are convinced there is no way, you will lead them to success.
- ☐ You are likely to anticipate potential issues more easily than others. Though your awareness of possible danger might be viewed as negativity by some, you must share your insights if you are going to avoid these pitfalls. To prevent misperception of your intent, point out not only the future obstacle, but also a way to prevent or overcome it. Trust your insights, and use them to ensure the success of your efforts.
- ☐ Help others understand that your strategic thinking is not an attempt to belittle their ideas, but is instead a natural propensity to consider all the facets of a plan objectively. Rather than being a naysayer, you are actually trying to examine ways to ensure that the goal is accomplished, come what may. Your talents will allow you to consider others’ perspectives while keeping your end goal in sight.

- ☐ Trust your intuitive insights as often as possible. Even though you might not be able to explain them rationally, your intuitions are created by a brain that instinctively anticipates and projects. Have confidence in these perceptions.
- ☐ Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. With this person's need for action and your need for anticipation, you can forge a powerful partnership.
- ☐ Make sure that you are involved in the front end of new initiatives or enterprises. Your innovative yet procedural approach will be critical to the genesis of a new venture because it will keep its creators from developing deadly tunnel vision.

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.

Adaptability

- ☐ Cultivate your reputation as a calm and reassuring person when others become upset by daily events.
- ☐ Avoid roles that demand structure and predictability. These roles will quickly frustrate you, make you feel inadequate, and stifle your independence.
- ☐ When the pressure is on, help your hesitant friends, colleagues, and clients find ways to collect themselves and take control of the situation. Explain that adaptability is about more than simply rolling with the punches; it is about calmly, intelligently, and readily responding to circumstances.
- ☐ Don't let others abuse your inherent flexibility. Though your Adaptability talents serve you well, don't compromise your long-term success by bending to every whim, desire, and demand of others. Use smart guidelines to help you decide when to flex and when to stand firm.
- ☐ Seek roles in which success depends on responding to constantly changing circumstances. Consider career areas such as journalism, live television production, emergency healthcare, and customer service. In these roles, the best react the fastest and stay levelheaded.
- ☐ Fine-tune your responsiveness. For example, if your job demands unanticipated travel, learn how to pack and leave in 30 minutes. If your work pressure comes in unpredictable spurts, practice the first three moves you will always make when the pressure hits.
- ☐ Look to others for planning. People who have strong Focus, Strategic, or Belief talents can help you shape your long-term goals, leaving you to excel at dealing with the day-to-day variations.

- ☐ Your Adaptability talents give you an even-keel mindset that lets you ride the ups and downs without becoming an emotional volcano. Your “don’t cry over spilled milk” approach will help you quickly recover from setbacks. Recognize this aspect of your nature, and help your friends and colleagues understand that it is productive flexibility rather than an “I don’t care” attitude.
- ☐ Avoid tasks that are too structured and stifle your need for variety. If given a list of tasks to complete, try to indulge your desire for flexibility by making a game of that list. See if you can be creative or make the tasks more fun in some way.
- ☐ Openly use your reassuring demeanor to soothe disgruntled friends or coworkers. Think about the approach you used, and remember to apply it again when the situation presents itself.

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.