

Overcome Your Obstacles

Carita Nyberg



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Carita Nyberg

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Preface

The author, Carita Nyberg, MSc. Economics, has further developed the Keys2Balance® method to assist workplaces in improving communication and leadership, in order to enhance the working climate.

The method is based on José Steven's, PhD., PersonEssence – Understanding People concept that has been utilized for more than 30 years in the US, both in one-to-one and group training sessions. After completing a course on this subject during the summer of 2002 in New Mexico, Carita Nyberg has continued to develop this method further, providing a variety of training and coaching for differing workplaces and individuals.



Photo: Marja Kasanen

Keys2Balance® is a versatile program that offers inspiring insights into self leadership, management, team building and successful collaboration. The program contains nine keys that cover communication, motivation and wellbeing. Each key can be put into effect separately or combined with others. They are applicable to all individuals, giving recommendations on a wide range of working situations in a practical format. These suggestions can be put into immediate use both at work and elsewhere.

My special thanks to the editor Charli Clark and illustrator Sini Ruuskanen.

The Keys2Balance® keys are for anyone looking for a challenge and interested in advancing their skills. From leadership to team building, the keys can assist, helping to develop the individual for better sales results, customer service and team work.

For more information about the Keys2Balance® method go to: www.keys2balance.com

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1 Introduction

During our lifetime, most of us will come across a number of obstacles blocking our paths, and these stumbling blocks can stop us from succeeding. This book focuses on fear patterns, discussing the obstacles that guide our subconscious, especially when we are under stress. Although many of us are influenced by these fear patterns in daily life, those around us only tend to notice the negative effects in stressful situations. This book can help you to gain an understanding of how these obstacles work, how to recognise them and above all, how to diminish the impacts of these obstacles in your day-to-day life. With this information you will be able to revolutionise your everyday, so take on the challenge, put the exercises into practice and allow the change to happen.

It should be quite easy to recognise some of the obstacles present in your workplace as fear patterns lower the level of accomplishment, weaken collaborations, and at worst, jeopardise a company's success.

This book covers the many different obstacles you may face, focusing on how to recognise them, what they do, how to communicate better when they take control and how to remove these fear patterns from your life. The topic 'Obstacles' is one of the nine keys in the Keys2Balance®-program, a versatile and practical toolbox for both developing individual strengths and controlling stress behaviour.

This book is made up of seven chapters. The first chapter gives you a basic overview of the different fear patterns, the second goes into more detail as to how to recognise these obstacles, of which there are seven, and the third chapter describes fear patterns at work and how they impact the workplace. The fourth chapter explains the many possible obstacle combinations and the fifth offers you the chance to take a test to help you discover your own fear patterns. Finally, the sixth and seventh chapters give you an understanding as to how to erase these fear patterns from your everyday life. As you make your way through the chapters, you will find many examples, hints and tips to help you take in and harness this body of knowledge for your own purposes.

This book can help you to overcome your obstacles and change the controlling influences in your life. Through putting the information provided in each chapter to use you can help yourself to a brighter future, however, you have to choose to do the work for yourself. Good luck and do not give up.

For more information about Keys2Balance®, go to: www.keys2balance.com

2 Obstacles

It usually happens that, as soon as everything seems to be going just fine, something happens to change it all. What happens and why? You may have felt the need to do something drastic and surprised yourself with the words you have just spoken. You could have distanced yourself from others in an unpleasant manner, insulted them, been very selfish in a situation or hurt the people you care about by bragging and showing off. You may feel your defensive side kick in or try and stay totally inflexible, even when you know it is neither the time nor the place to behave in this way. What has happened to bring out this side of your personality and how can you stop it from taking charge in inappropriate situations, at work or elsewhere? You can find the answer through understanding your defense mechanism, a behaviour that had paid off in the past, but is now getting in the way of your progress. It is an obstacle that is blocking your path and stopping you from getting to where you want to be and what you want to accomplish.

There are seven obstacles or fear patterns that become visible when you are afraid of something and they tend to take control when you are stressed. They can become apparent when an important deadline for a project is closing in, when you need to represent your team in a meeting where important issues are decided or when you get a rare chance to promote your company's products to a journalist for example. In these situations the fear patterns come to the foreground and feed off your fears. They are like viruses, they suck your energy and vitality, and cause you harm in stressful situations.

Fear patterns cause you to act from your negative personality traits, they are responsible for all the suffering you bring to yourself. Obstacles hinder you from expressing yourself positively, stop you from reaching your goals, and will prevent you from being happy as long as you allow them to control your life. If you cannot erase the fear patterns, or at least gain control temporarily, then you are at their mercy. Instead of facing a challenge constructively, you will turn against yourself. It is comforting to know that these obstacles can be overcome, but it takes both diligent work and self-discipline.

In the workplace these fear patterns cause many problems, including burn-outs, sickleave, wasting of resources and time, bad attitudes, sabotage and poor quality performance. Without these fear patterns productivity, sales, positive work ethics, creativity and productive decision making can increase substantially. Once you have gained control of your obstacles – no matter what role you have in the workplace – you can put to use your inner talents, communicate better and choose to be more successful.

2.1 Life is a Game of Expectations

1. You tend to do to others what was done to you as a child – if you were punished/loved, you tend to punish/love.
2. You tend to do to yourself what was done to you as a child – you punish or love yourself the same way.
3. You tend to expect from the world, what was done to you as a child – you expect to be punished or loved.
4. You tend to act as you expect others to act towards you – you strike back or you love in return.
5. If you are hurt, you tend to behave in a way that causes what you fear most to happen – you expect/allow others to hurt you.
6. The world becomes a mirror of your beliefs – the world is, for example, a painful or wonderful place.
7. You teach this to others.

2.2 Understanding Obstacles

- Fear patterns are common and affect people regardless of race, culture or gender. Most people suffer from all of the obstacles at some point, however, it is usually one or two of them that cause the major problems. It is good to be aware that no one is immune from them.
- Obstacles are transparent. You are often blind to your own fear patterns, however others can normally spot them with ease.
- Obstacles have a negatively affect on all your personality traits, they keep you from using your strengths and force you to act negatively instead.
- Fear patterns can vary from mild to strong, and your circumstances will affect the intensity of them. They are often at their worst when you are under stress and seemingly disappear when you are happy. At their extreme they may lead to you losing it all, and even when they appear mild they can still get in your way.
- There are seven obstacles in total, making up three set pairs and one that can pair with many. Obstacles 1–6 pair up and share a theme, but the seventh, stubbornness, is unpaired and enjoys pairing with any of the other obstacles. Even though it may seem that the paired obstacles are opposites, they do share many things. At times, they can also shift to make other pairs.

Hint:

Look at the table on the next page and have a think about which obstacles may take control of you in times of stress. It could be that you are totally blind to the obstacles that affect you directly so pay attention to all of them. You may just find that the obstacle annoying you the most could be the one that you need to work with the closest.

2.3 The Different Obstacles

Each of the seven obstacles have a + and – pole and these poles help with describing and understanding how the different obstacles manifest themselves. Milder outcomes of the presence of an obstacle manifest themselves as the + pole and stronger outcomes take form through the – pole. Neither of the poles produce positive results for the individual, however the + pole tends to inflict less damage than the – pole.

Expression

Theme: control and losing control

+ sacrifice

+ appetite

- self-destruction

- hoarding

Inspiration

Theme: self-esteem and shame

+ humility

+ pride

- unworthiness

- vanity

Action

Theme: trap and escapism

+selflessness

+ daring

- victimisation

- intolerance

Integration

Theme: independence and authority

+ determination

- obstinacy

Table 1: Obstacles and their poles

2.4 Sabotage – I Could Not Care Less

Sabotage is a fairly dramatic obstacle. Individuals with this fear pattern can cause harm to themselves either physically or emotionally. This obstacle focuses on the fear of losing control, and in extreme cases, a saboteur can end up feeling that life is not worth living.

A saboteur has unclear boundaries on what is right and what is not, and as a consequence of this, they play by different rules than others and will continue to do so until someone intervenes.

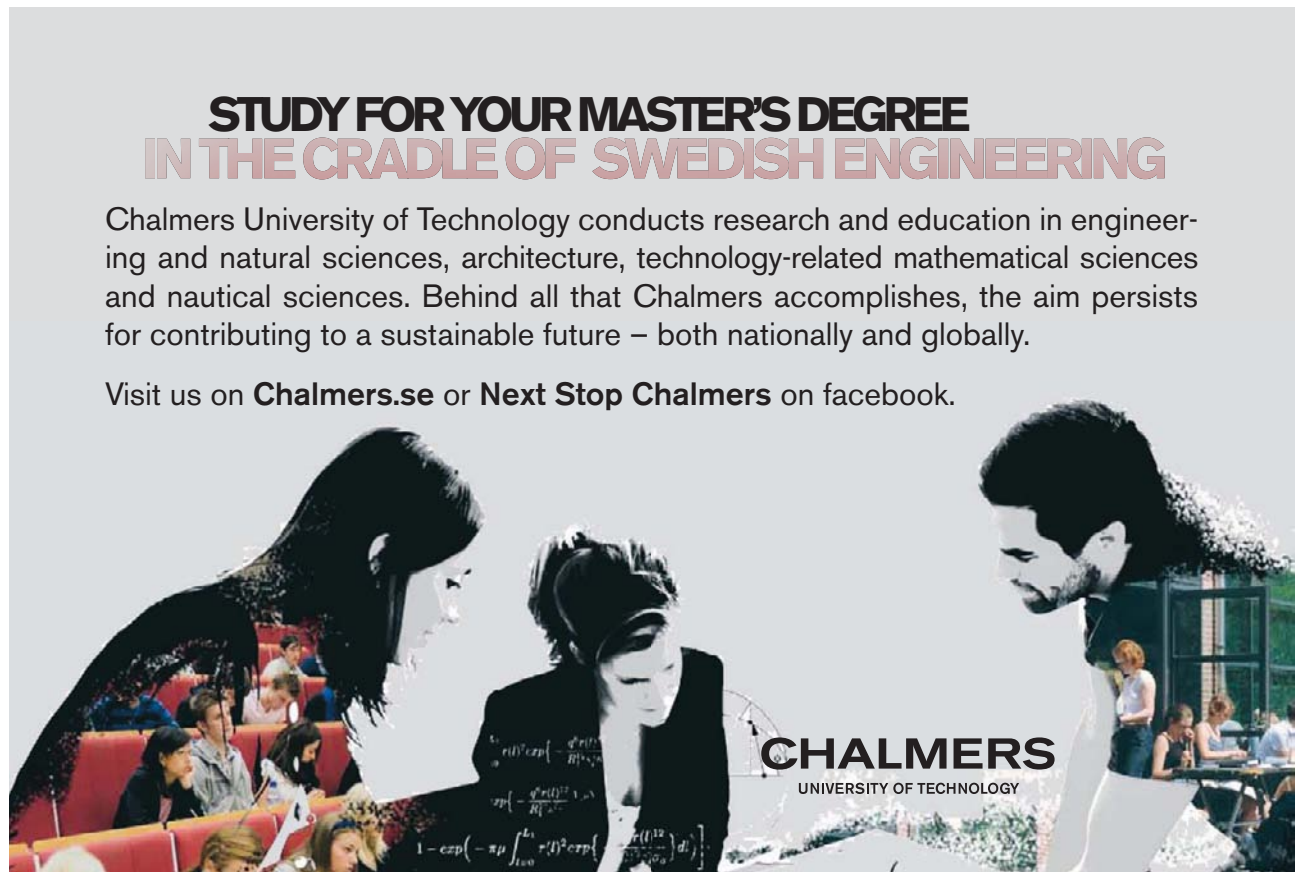
Key points:

- Saboteurs are afraid of loosing control to such an extent, that they spend their time testing boundaries and sometimes test them to the extreme.
- At work, their behaviour may be expressed through misconduct, malicious acts, lack of attention, time wasting, poor or rash decision making and an increase of accidents.
- Saboteurs hardly ever work as a team as this does not come naturally to them.
- The positive pole shows up as the unselfish trait of sacrifice. For example, one may risk ones life to save another.
- The negative pole takes its form through different addictions (drugs, alcohol, tobacco, medicine), dangerous or illegal action, troublemaking and self-suicidal attempts.

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Recognising Sabotage

Saboteurs appear in many shapes and forms. There is no single trait that defines them as self-destructive, but think of drug users or drunks, antisocial or uncontrollable behaviour.

They typically have these traits in common:

- Panicked, desperate, blank or lost look.
- Burnt-out or dishevelled appearance.
- Scars, excessive piercing or outrageous tattoos
- Threatening demeanor
- Signs of violence or troublemaking
- Sexual obsession or reprehensible behaviour
- Cursing and mumbling
- Asocial and unable to adjust to social norms
- An absolute denial of negative past events, for example, a denial of childhood abuse.

Sabotage and Boundaries

A saboteur has a dual approach when it comes to boundaries. It is difficult to approach them as they typically reject a close up approach. On the other hand it is common for these people to show a lack of respect to others, forgetting their boundaries and invading their territory regardless of their feelings.

Exercise:

Do you ever feel the need to withdraw yourself when you really should take on something important? Decide to face something you have postponed doing too many times and you will start to notice how much energy you can gain by doing this.

Hint:

Pay attention to situations when you do not pursue the things you need to do as this usually happens when the sabotage obstacle takes over.

2.5 Greed – Nothing is Enough for Me

When greed is the obstacle, the grass always seems greener on the other side. The feeling of being deprived is strong and therefore this fear pattern causes people to crave for more of whatever they perceive is missing. The fear behind this behaviour is that there is not enough of whatever the suffer desires, and this can lead to them believing they have been left without.

- Greed often focuses on a theme or two, like food, power, material things, sex or information.
- Anorexia and bulimia are both signs of greed, as well as any type of excessive cravings, as they do not buy you happiness.
- Beneath the surface these people feel they live in scarcity. There is always something missing and therefore they are unhappy.
- At work, greed leads to loss of customers, poor reputation, poor collaboration, growth drying up and at worst the neglecting of loan payments for example, or business partnership failures.
- The positive pole of greed is expressed through an appetite for life – those who are still grateful for all that life offers and like to share those things with others.
- The negative pole may seem voracious and that there are no limits as to what is enough. It can also present itself through stinginess or very selfish choices.

Recognising Greed

People affected by greed seem to be able to control themselves better than saboteurs. They may be well-dressed and act as though they are in control. However, there are some common traits that run between them, like the tendency to express themselves through excessive behaviour. Here are some examples of traits that may reveal a person with greed as an obstacle:

- hungry and desperate look
- shopping, eating or drinking excessively
- refusing to acknowledge their own excessive behaviour
- manipulative, they will not take no for an answer
- stingy at work, e.g. when giving a raise or offering praise
- too much of their focus is on money or how they look
- “the grass is always greener” attitude
- selfish behaviour, talking excessively about themselves

Greed and Boundaries

Greed is well known for stepping into another's territory and not respecting their boundaries, whilst at the same time rejecting any acceptance other people offer, setting very tough self boundaries to protect themselves against others. The main downside of allowing greed to gain control is that it leads to the person depriving themselves of good things.

Exercise:

Decide to give to someone without needing to see the favour returned. You may offer to buy lunch for a colleague or buy a gift to your friend for no special reason. Pay attention how this makes you feel, you might end up enjoying it.

Hint:

Are you jealous of someone? Think through why and consider whether this actually makes sense to you, do you have any factual justification for this jealousy or are you exaggerating the situation in your mind?

2.6 Self-Deprecation – But I Can’t...

Self-deprecation is another obstacle that gets in the way of success. This fear pattern causes the individual to put themselves down, self-criticise and leads to feelings of worthlessness. A feeling of inferiority forms the basis of this fear pattern and that is why these people are quick to blame or judge themselves.

Behaviour may include:

- Apologising excessively, showcasing their weaknesses before others have a chance to notice them.
- Frightened to try anything new as the idea of failure takes over.
- They enjoy the idea of appraisals, but in reality regard them as shallow and end up avoiding them.

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- Self-deprecation leads to both fear of failure and fear of succeeding and thus they feel trapped.
- At work, they can become very defensive when a project fails. This is because they are certain that they are responsible for the failure.
- The positive pole is expressed through humility, the ability to be modest about one's own achievements – true humility is not about degrading oneself by believing that you lack the ability to achieve.
- The negative pole manifests itself as inferiority, leading to humiliation as the individual stops paying attention to their looks and starts neglecting themselves which, in extreme cases, can even cause them to become ill.

Recognising Self-Deprecation

Self-deprecation is one of the most common obstacles. Most people will exhibit some of these features from time to time, however, there are some people that live their lives controlled by this fear pattern. Here are some examples of typical behaviour:

- bad posture, downcast eyes, lacking energy
- hesitation when making decisions
- apologetic in nature
- mutters or finishes a sentence with their voice fading
- extremely shy
- lack of self-confidence and fear of leadership
- lack of vitality, passive
- often blaming or criticising themselves
- avoiding promotions as they lack confidence.

Self-Deprecation and Boundaries

A person with self-deprecation as an obstacle normally keeps to their own boundaries. They often doubt their own worthiness and right to exist, and let others treat them as they please. They have a fragile and primitive defense mechanism that easily falls apart.

Exercise:

Create a list of achievements, things you have done well this week. Reward yourself for your efforts by doing something that makes you happy.

Hint:

Think about your strengths, try to write down at least five of them. If this task seems troublesome, ask some good friends what they think and make a note of the strengths they see in you. Thank them for their feedback, and more importantly, try not to question their opinions, rather take in their words as honest comments about your character.

2.7 Arrogance – I Do Know What is Best

Arrogance is a common obstacle that does not go unnoticed as this fear pattern causes people to act unpleasantly by criticising and belittling others. Behind this behaviour lies a fear of being judged and not getting enough attention, alongside the idea of not living up to the expectations set by themselves or others. Typical behaviour includes:

- Shyness, perplexity, aloofness, tendency to criticise, false modesty, desire to be special, loneliness, uncertainty of what good self-esteem means.
- A desperate need to be noticed, and simultaneously a strong fear that this will happen.
- "I don't have a problem, therefore I don't need any help" attitude.
- Arrogant people act as though they know it all and end up causing exactly what they fear the most, people criticising them.
- The positive pole can appear as pride and self-respect – however, be aware that those with a healthy self-esteem never secretly doubt their own worth.
- The negative pole comes across as vanity and pretentiousness, and with it a need to create and maintain great appearances no matter what it takes.

Recognising Arrogance

Many of the traits associated with self-deprecation also apply to arrogance, but they are usually less visible. Remember that an arrogant person desires to be seen in the best possible light and will often try to hide the less desirable traits of their obstacle. Here are some typical traits:

- chin forward, nose up
- aloof, reserved, dislikes showing emotions
- acting ignorant
- expensive clothes and groomed appearance
- criticising and judging others
- paying too much attention to their looks and themselves
- underlining their achievements and making themselves known
- boasting about who they know and name-drop
- avoids intimacy and situations where they can be ridiculed
- shy when they do not know people.

Arrogance and Boundaries

Arrogant people have a tendency to create very distinct boundaries, often isolating themselves to protect against insults and criticism. If they are shy and their self-esteem is put to the test, they will become withdrawn. They can be very pushy when they are craving attention and will break down the boundaries of others when they feel challenged. When this happens, they become especially critical and start behaving like they are superior.

Exercise:

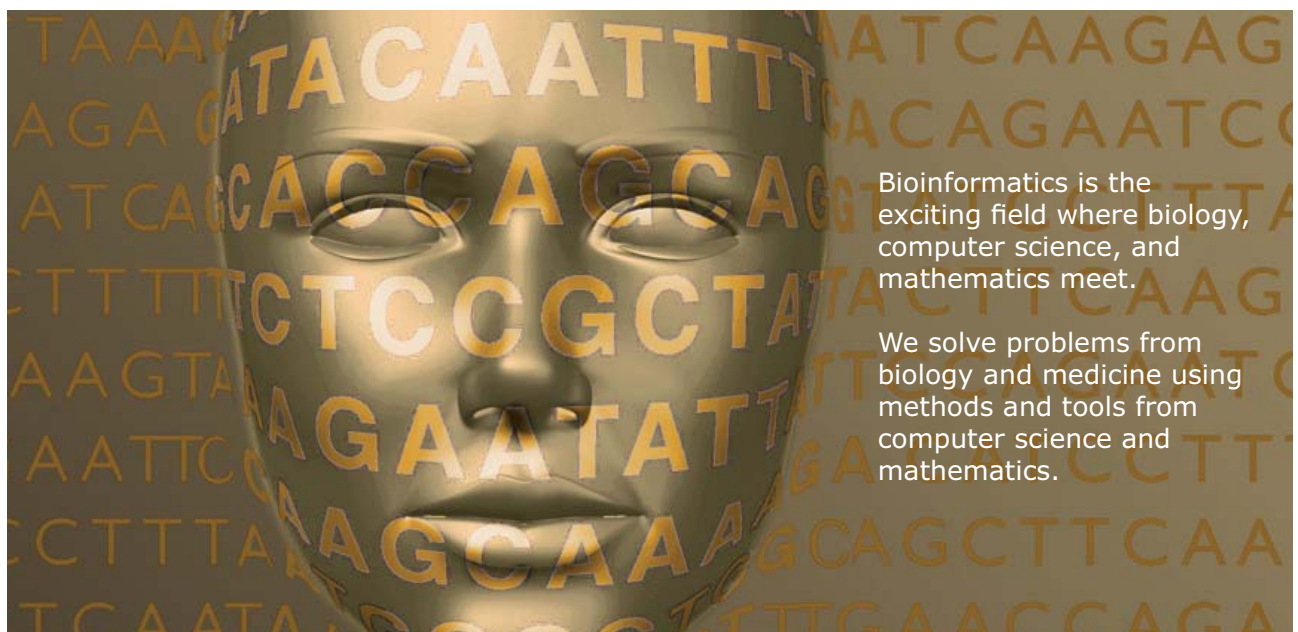
At work or another place you visit often, greet a person that you have not made an effort to notice before. During your lunch break find someone you do not know so well and have a discussion with them.

Hint:

Pay attention to the conversations you are taking part in, become aware of your critical comments. When and where do they come out, and how relevant or necessary were they to the conversation? Could you have left something unsaid?



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2.8 Martyrdom – But Life is So Hard

Martyrdom is an obstacle for many conscientious performers. When this fear pattern takes over, joy and fun are nowhere to be found and life becomes an endless struggle and performance. A martyr is afraid of being a victim, and someone or something has caused the trap they suffer from leading to a lack of freedom.

- Whining, moaning and blaming others is typical.
- A martyr wants revenge and will manipulate others if they feel justified to do so. They cannot forgive neither real nor delusional wrongdoings.
- Martyrs are killjoys who loath their situation and impose their negative energy on to others alongside themselves.
- At work, a martyr feels mainly a victim of circumstances. It is almost impossible for them to say 'no', even when that would be the right thing for them to do.
- The positive pole takes its form as selflessness – true selflessness does not try to manipulate others or desire revenge, but gives the individual a feeling of value as to who they are.
- The negative pole is about feeling completely worthless. A martyr has the tendency to believe that they are being poorly treated and abused by others.

Recognising Martyrdom

A person under the influence of martyrdom cannot eliminate the injustice they detect in an appropriate and efficient manner. Instead, they end up expressing their anguish through hopelessness and depression. The most important features of a martyr are:

- suffering, sadness, anxiety or a long-suffering expression
- shoulders or upper back bent over as though they are weighed down, burdened, with head leaning forward
- depressed, looking beaten and in pain
- whiny voice, used to let others know that nothing is fine
- blames others often, "nobody understands me"
- a walking catastrophe, involved in a never-ending crisis
- too dutiful with a need to please
- presents threats about leaving everything, but never follows through
- cannot take any criticism, shutting down and reacting coldly when challenged
- holds grudges and cannot forgive others easily.

Martyrdom and Boundaries

Martyrs can be calculating, and are careful with when and how they allow anyone to cross their boundaries. It can seem to outsiders like they have no boundaries, but in fact they are just good at keeping a close guard over them. Martyrs are guaranteed to openly expose themselves, explaining to others that they have given in and allowed people to cross their boundaries when they should not have.

Exercise:

Dare to say 'no' to an assignment that you simply do not want to do. This can be very challenging at first, so start by doing it in situations that do not play a big role in your job or everyday life, once you have had practice you can start taking control over bigger decisions and situations.

Hint:

Learn not to complain all the time. The next time you feel a need to criticise someone or something, try to consider leaving it unsaid and see how that makes you feel, at first in the moment, but also later on in the day, week or month. You might realise that you feel better for it in the long run.

2.9 Impatience – Hurry, Hurry

Impatience manifests itself as nervousness, constant panic and haste. This obstacle causes feelings of chaos within an individual. Their relationship with time is distorted and they often fear that there is never enough time to do anything. Impatience creates slaves and victims of time.

- As a result of acting hastily and hurrying about, they often cause accidents and make mistakes that actually lead to a loss of time.
- They are always late and restless. They are always afraid that they will not manage to finish their projects on time.
- They live in the future, rather than the here and now.
- Impatient people demand that everything needs to happen straight away as they believe that the tasks they are given today should have been completed yesterday.
- The positive pole of impatience appears bold and determined, with a sense of 'go for it' in the actions they carry out – but true courage is not just about being adventurous.
- The negative pole causes impatient people to become intolerant, dismissive and rude.

Recognising Impatience

Impatient people may have many of the same traits as martyrs, but they also have the following features:

- scanning restlessly
- drumming their fingers, waving their legs and other fidgety behaviour
- inattentive, absent minded, lack of eye contact, often disturbed concentration

- always interrupting, trying to finish the sentences of others
- chaotic, tense which affects their restlessness
- frustrated with themselves and others, they do not tolerate slowness, grumpiness and rushed behaviour in others
- they often ignore the comments of others
- constantly glancing at their watch, restless movements, always busy, unfocused action
- many minor mistakes are a result of the behavioural traits of this obstacle.

Impatience and Boundaries

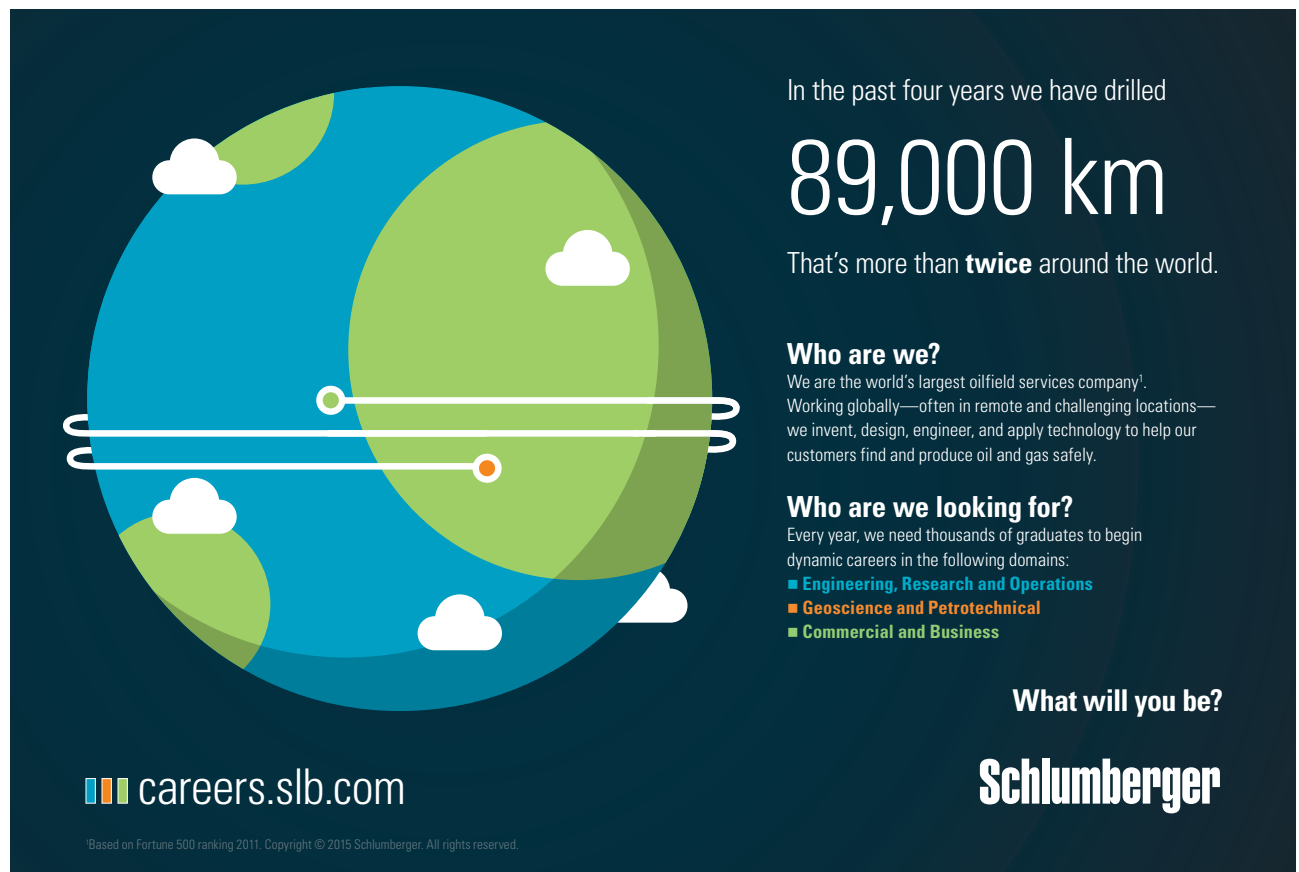
Impatience causes people to act intrusively and ignore the boundaries of others, often rushing in and telling them to move on. Impatient people tend to have a poor understanding or awareness of their own situation. Their boundaries may seem to be imaginary, even though they do have boundaries.

Exercise:

Slow down whenever you feel overwhelmed. Take a deep breath and take time to decide what to do next with a focused mindset.

Hint:

Talk calmly, let people speak, interrupt less and let ideas and projects unfold. This will be a true challenge.



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2.10 Stubbornness – That Will Never Happen

Stubbornness is a fear pattern that gets in the way of changes and development, as individuals with this obstacle typically reject the ideas of others or attempt to argue against whatever is suggested. Stubborn people are afraid of change as they fear being pushed into situations in which they are not prepared. It is also common for them to be opposed to any type of authority.

- Stubborn people have very strong and defined points of view and will oppose another's viewpoint, ignoring them to avoid being told what to do.
- They will try to buy time when making decisions by initially saying 'no', but can sometimes be swayed to a 'yes'.
- Stubborn people postpone things they do not like doing.
- They do not give in or change their mind once their opinion has become fixed, even though the evidence is against them and it is clear they have made a poor decision.
- The positive pole appears as determination – but true determination is not afraid of flexibility and does not think that giving in after a tough debate is a sign of weakness.
- The negative pole causes obstinacy through both physical and mental inflexibility.

Recognising stubbornness

Typical signs of stubbornness have mostly to do with an attitude set to oppose:

- arms tightly crossed
- shoulders, neck, back and chin will be stiff and tight
- looks away, avoids eye contact when they oppose what the person says
- stops listening, may unpolitely start doing something totally different before the other person has finished what they are saying
- excessive use of the word 'no'
- legs crossed away from the person they are interacting with, with the whole body leant away
- ignores authority, acting like nothing has happened, even when they have been asked to stop what they are doing; they refuse to give in or to accept the decisions of others
- often grind their teeth and mumble
- like to work alone and avoid reporting to others

Stubbornness and Boundaries

Stubborn people try to keep complete control over their boundaries which are very strict and inflexible. They draw a line in sand on subjective matters and refuse to negotiate as they fear an imaginary pressure to conform. If someone manages to successfully challenge and break down their boundaries, then this can push them towards depression or feelings of despair. Those with stubbornness as their obstacle do not tend to test or step over the boundaries of others as they are too busy defending their own.

Exercise:

Try changing your daily routine. For example, you may try eating at a different time or with different company or take a different route to and from your workplace.

Hint:

Observe and become aware of your urge to answer 'no way' when you are asked to do something. Try to adopt a neutral position in these situations and take time to consider if 'no' is the only possibility.



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3 Obstacles at Work

3.1 What Happens When Obstacles Take Control?

It can be stressful in many workplaces due to unclear goals being set, short term decision making or a lack of resources. Obstacles can easily take hold of people in this situation. What are they all about? Obstacles are fear patterns that normally emerge when individuals are placed under stress.

Although dealing with an obstacle is a personal challenge for individual to overcome, it is important to remember that they can cause a ripple effect. Their obstacle can often affect the others working alongside them, spreading through the workplace like a virus. You could compare the situation to a flu epidemic, for example, where a number of different kinds of illnesses are present and start merging together to create a super virus. Each obstacle causes a different symptom to be expressed, and that symptom exacerbates another and so on. One employee may be sighing and whining (the martyr), whilst another is running around (the impatient). Or, one could be critsising loudly (the arrogant), alongside another, who is opposing anything and everything they can (the stubborn).

Whenever the fear patterns take control over people, the results are reduced happiness levels, poor team spirit and low productivity.

In the next chapter you will find some examples to help you overcome your obstacles. Firstly, you can increase the awareness of these obstacles in your workplace and amongst your fellow employees, and then start to learn how these obstacles can be overcome.

3.2 Increasing Awareness and Overcoming Obstacles at Work

In a good workplace, the people are valued and there is plenty of time and space allotted for learning. However, when a workplace is controlled by fear patterns, things can get ugly and out of control. You can now see from the examples the effect that these obstacles can have on a workplace.

3.2.1 Sabotage

Business policies that promote sabotage

- Blatant disregard for the safety and well-being of employees
- Corporate culture that promotes addictive and destructive behaviour, organised lunches with excessive drinking or encouraging doping in sport, for example.
- Corporate practices that endanger employees and the public, such as dangerous industrial practices, illegal toxic waste dumping, unprotected use of pesticides.

- The use of pain killers or other drugs due to unrealistic timetables, overloaded schedules, endless workloads and a pressure to succeed at any cost.
- Lack of employee supervision.
- No professional training when using dangerous machinery or materials.
- Ignorant attitude to health issues.
- Casual approach to schedules and time keeping: late for meetings, no work-time surveillance.

Business policies that can help to overcome sabotage

- Clear warnings are given and safety instructions provided so that everyone can see, learn and understand them.
- Clear instructions and training is provided as to how to operate machinery and these rules are monitored. Safety policies are created for working in risky environments and employees are supervised accordingly.
- Rewards are offered to employees who actively help to enhance safety and reduce risk.
- A corporate culture that encourages healthy living practices, exercise, healthy food and rewards those with great attendance is fostered.
- Shifts and weekly work hours are realistic, allowing recovery and rest for employees.
- Employment of a zero tolerance policy on the use of drugs and alcohol in the workplace.
- The promotion of a smoke free environment and a consciousness of workspace air quality. The aim being to reduce pollution and enable good air quality to be achieved for all employees.
- The business pays attention to recycling useful materials, discourages waste and demands proper and legal disposal of waste and toxic products.

Case: A team leader

A team leader in a customer service company suffered from the sabotage obstacle. The office rules and work schedules did not seem to bother this person as he applied his own rules to the job. It was a challenge to get him involved with team work and at times his behaviour escalated and became completely inappropriate. He had a tendency to 'take a day off' without notice, which was usually a Monday as he often partied the whole weekend. The rest of the team started to show symptoms as his poor example rubbed off and the work morale worsened. It was only when the seriousness of the situation was noticed by one of the management team that corrective measures were taken. Unfortunately for the team leader, the situation had escalated to a point that could not be recovered with him staying in his role. Thus, he had to transition to a new role in order to be able to tackle his obstacle and get back on track.

3.2.2 Greed

Business policies that promote greed

- A workplace that promotes a high level of competition between sales staff, forcing them to feel the need to steal customers from one another ruthlessly.
- Employees are rewarded for results no matter how they are achieved, including fraud and deception.
- Management and company owners that state that they are only interested in the bottom line.
- Employees are deprived of decent working conditions and a proper salary causing them to turn on each other.
- There is a huge discrepancy between the salary of top management and that of the average workers.
- Lower salaries than the standard going rate for the job, tempting employees to steal in order to compensate.
- Employees are encouraged to use any means necessary to destroy the completion, including sabotage and unfair practices.



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Business policies that may overcome greed

- Promotion of cooperation among sales staff that discourages unhealthy internal competition.
- Malpractice, ethical breaches, fraud and deceptive advertising is not allowed. Instead, high ethical business standards, proper staff training, truthful advertising and honesty is promoted.
- Management and owners place a high importance on the well being of their staff, good but manageable profit goals that enable staff to work at a reasonable pace in a healthy environment are provided, therefore allowing an overall enjoyable work experience.
- Staff feel supported and respected and are encouraged to get along well with one another, with emphasis placed on team building, staff development and coaching.
- Staff are given access to training to advance their skills through professional and personal development for all levels.
- Respectable salaries are provided that reflect the work role.
- Products are priced competitively and monitored for high quality control.
- Reasonable incentives are offered that motivate staff to improve their performance.

Case: A voracious expert

In an expert organisation, a relatively new consultant wanted to gain more and more projects, and thus power. This person was quite good at completing her tasks, but felt constantly unsatisfied. She had asked for a raise several times and finally it came through. However, it was not only a raise for her, but for the whole team. When the manager offered the news expecting thanks, the new consultant was completely outraged, exclaiming that the raise was nothing at all! The manager was overwhelmed and confused by the reaction until they understood that their employee was acting from her obstacle and that no raise would have been sufficient in her eyes.

3.2.3 Self-Deprecation**Business policies that promote self-deprecation**

- Management engages in public criticism of their employees.
- Managers shout at their employees disrespectfully.
- Poor working conditions, low pay, long hours and bad treatment of employees.
- Hierarchical working conditions, with high paid employees having better working hours.
- Sexual or racial discrimination is allowed.
- Management ignore abuse of employees by other members of staff.
- Bonuses are suspended due to a bad mood or a sudden change in company policy.
- Pay raises are virtually impossible to earn and promotions are non-existent.

Business policies that can help to overcome self-deprecation

- The workplace provides educational possibilities without sexual and racial discrimination.
- Any abuse of an employee is taken seriously and responded to immediately. Help and support is provided for all parties involved.
- There is a clear set of policies for earning bonuses. They are tied to performance, as opposed to being handed out on a whim.
- Clear rules are followed for pay rises and promotions. Employees understand the steps and requirements needed to achieve them.
- Management trusts employees' expertise and training, letting them carry out projects without micromanagement.
- Working conditions promote achievements and wellbeing for all parties involved.
- Management shows respect when communicating with staff. Yelling is not tolerated.
- Corporate culture encourages all levels of staff to take pride in their work and understand how their contribution affects the business at a personal level, as well as seeing the overall benefit of their input at a business level.
- Outstanding work performance is recognised and rewarded.

Case: A struggling entrepreneur

An entrepreneur decided to trade in her well-paid full time job and start her own wellbeing company. She gave her customers excellent service, going above and beyond what was financially viable and worked from the heart, doing everything possible to service their needs. However, she did not feel comfortable with herself or her abilities and did not charge enough for her services. She also did not market herself properly which led to missed opportunities. Her low profile and lack of confidence had a negative effect on her work and it seemed that the company would become bankrupt relatively quickly. Thankfully, the entrepreneur sought help and guidance and started to see a change for the better. She began to work on improving her self-esteem, which was achieved through her determination and long term effort. One step at a time she was able to replace the stories of despair with those of success and this helped lessen the impact of the self-deprecation obstacle that had previously prevented her from reaching her goals.

3.2.4 Arrogance**Business policies that promote arrogance**

- Employees are discouraged from developing friendships and socialising with work colleagues.
- Officials and management are in their own rooms and separated from the rest of the staff.
- Managers are encouraged to take all the credit instead of showing appreciation to the whole team for the hard work they have put in to achieve success in the workplace.
- A very stressful and competitive environment is encouraged by the owners or managers.
- The only way to get the manager's attention is to offer stories of success.
- The management believes that they do not need to advertise or meet high quality standards.
- The management is too proud to adapt to changing trends.

Business policies that may overcome arrogance

- Management demonstrates respect when communicating with other members of staff across all levels. Yelling at others and other disrespectful behaviour is not tolerated.
- Officials and management are accessible to all and, whenever possible, managers are positioned in and around the work force to help increase their interaction with rest of the employees.
- Employees are given possibilities to contribute to various projects and assist in creating more efficient methods and ways of working to improve their productivity and day-to-day experience.
- Owners and management focus on reducing unnecessary stress in the workplace and work towards fostering an environment that encourages creativity and productivity.
- Top management understand the importance of continuous monitoring in regards to product and service quality control, and ensure that the marketing strategy is up to speed.
- Staff are encouraged to be realistic in terms of what can and cannot be done within the time and budget set for each project. Staff are discouraged from engaging with unreasonable plans.

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Case: The division manager

A very experienced manager had trust issues with his employees. He was critical and often put people down. He was bad at delegating as he perceived himself as better qualified and assumed he would be the fastest when completing most of the company's projects. His employees needed to ask for his permission for every little detail and he kept them waiting for answers. If an employee came up with a suggestion or idea then they were not supported. Little by little, the initiative of the workforce drained away and the employees were merely 'at work'. Development and innovation stopped, leaving the old methods and stale ideas to persist. The manager did not think it was important to follow the markets, nor keep up with the competitors, preferring to believe that his own products and services were superior. It was only after the manager left the company that the employees were encouraged to question the old habits. This led to positive changes that re-energised the workforce and enabled the company to get back onto the road to success.

3.2.5 Martyrdom**Business policies that promote martyrdom**

- Management allows some employees to be taken advantage of and worked to death.
- Employees are given more work than they can possibly do and punished for not delivering.
- Management tolerates whining and complaining and gives 'victims' too much attention.
- The policy at work is to punish employees rather than encourage them with rewards.
- Business owners and management tell employees that they are victims of government policies and competition.
- Owners and management whine to staff that they are unable to be successful enough to provide raises and better working conditions.

Business policies that can overcome martyrdom

- Management monitors employees in terms of work hours and efficiency. Employees are encouraged to pace themselves and take earned vacation more often.
- Management has reasonable expectations in terms of results and schedules. Unreasonable and superhuman efforts are not encouraged.
- Reasonable complaints are noted and attended to. There is a clear and fair procedure for airing complaints. Spreading false rumours or complaining to the wrong people is not tolerated.
- Corporate policy includes many reward systems for good performance and increased productivity.
- Management and owners create a positive can-do climate and act role models for prosperity consciousness. Managers perceive all obstacles as opportunities and are willing to be open to various outcomes.
- Owners and management are aware and disciplined in discouraging unrealistic situations and demands. They are trained to create conditions that promote growth and opportunity for all employees. Coaching is promoted.

Case: Challenges in a nursery

In the health care industry there are many conscientious employees who, sooner or later, become exhausted from their heavy workload. What starts as a vocation may turn into performing without enjoyment. In this scenario martyrdom can easily take control and stop those involved from being able to see any alternatives in the way they do things.

In a nursery, the managers had been experiencing a poor working climate for a long time as martyrdom had taken control of most of the workforce. It was only once they became aware of the situation that they could start looking actively for ways to overcome the obstacle. Negative gossiping was discouraged, and instead problem solving was encouraged. The workload was examined and divided more equally as martyrs tend to take on too much and become weighed down by the load. The managers also demanded that the employees asked for help when they need it and in return promised to stay fair and appropriate when handing out roles and work tasks.

3.2.6 Impatience**Business policies that promote impatience**

- The business culture regards rushing as normal.
- Being behind schedule is considered typical due to unrealistic scheduling and idealistic expectations.
- The working climate awards the rushed and stressed employees, suspecting laziness whenever someone looks relaxed.
- No attention is given to reduce stressful environments.
- Employees are not encouraged to exercise, eat well, and take time off when necessary.
- Employees are entitled to vacations, but can never schedule them due to being too busy.
- During meetings and approaching deadlines employees cannot find time to take a lunch break.

Business policies that may overcome impatience

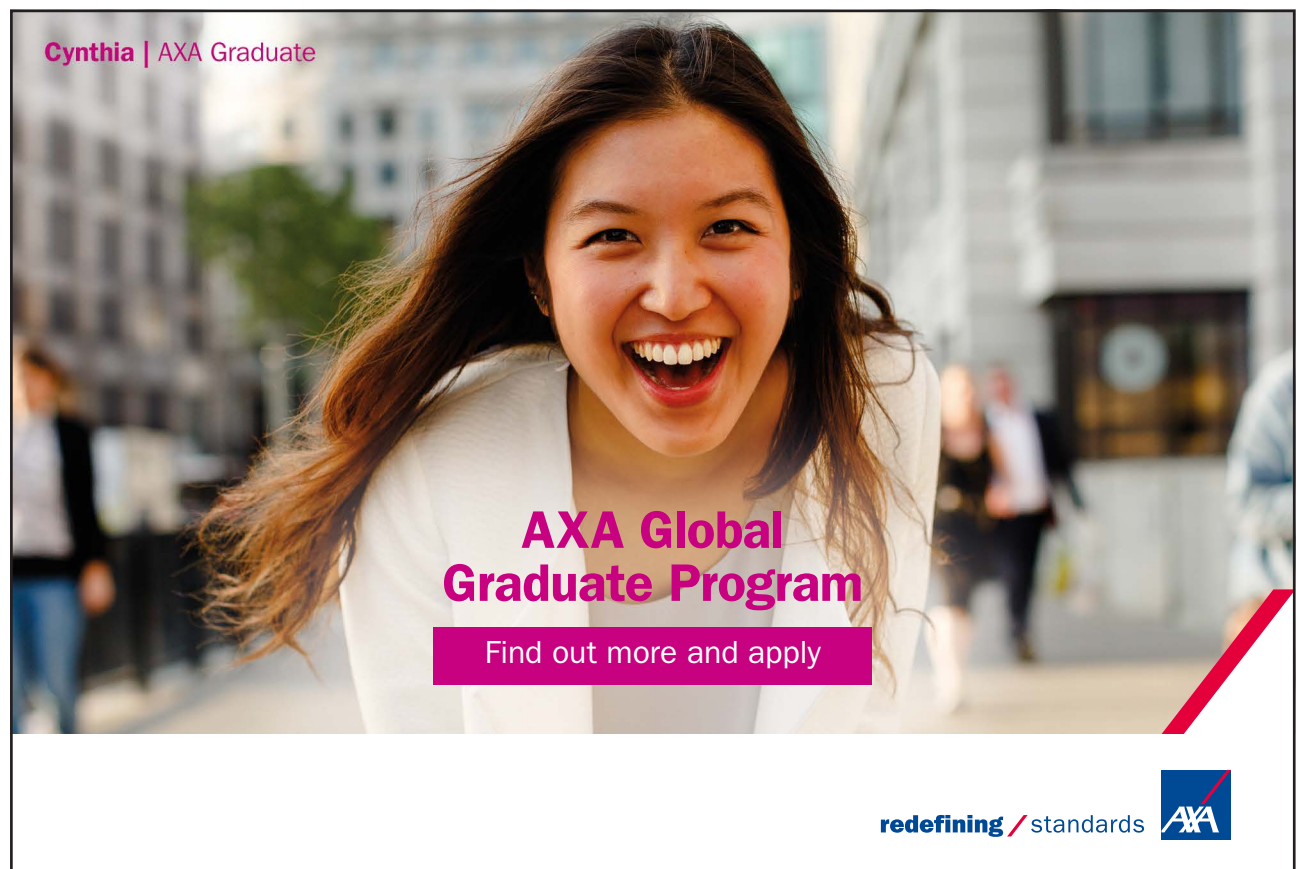
- Corporate culture promotes reasonable schedules and deadlines for projects. Rushing a project is discouraged to avoid poor quality results or other problems.
- The working climate encourages being on schedule, planning is emphasised.
- Management makes time to play an active role in evaluating the results of the work of their employees rather than being busy with other tasks.
- Attention is given to reduce stress factors at work. Managers are trained to support rather than spy on employees. Interrupting staff and therefore interrupting their focus is kept to a minimum wherever possible.
- Employees are encouraged to schedule and take vacation as planned.
- Lunch breaks are for lunch and work time is for working.

Case: The working climate in a multinational company

It was clear that impatience was everywhere in this workplace. Rushing was idealised, schedules were unrealistic and changes ongoing. Decisions were taken without checking facts, the quality dropped and the pile of complaints only grew bigger. When the management learnt about the different obstacles they understood that it was in the best interests of the company, as well as the individuals employed there, to overcome them as quickly as possible. However, the change took time which was a good lesson for the impatient people working there. Quality was not compromised but rewarded, and as a result the working climate was enhanced, the complaints decreased and the results became positive.

3.2.7 Stubbornness**Business policies that promote stubbornness**

- The company has an authoritarian hierarchy and top down culture.
- Employees are given no options.
- Owners and management do not listen to staff.
- Staff are not encouraged to listen to each other.
- Old, traditional rules are ironclad and not to be questioned.
- Ownership and management do not want, nor accept, consultation or advice.
- Employee suggestions are never acted upon.



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Business policies that may overcome stubbornness

- The workplace encourages horizontal leadership. Personal responsibility and the giving of suggestions for changes is encouraged.
- Employees may give opinions about planned changes and when possible, vote for them rather than being told the results of unilateral top down decisions.
- Internal communication is good and surprises are reduced.
- When appropriate, outside consultation and advice is taken to support ongoing changes and development.
- The company embraces changes for increased productivity and improved products and services.

Case: Production plant pilot

In a multinational consumer goods company, the production department was facing drastic changes to both the individual job roles and the overall ways of working. To pilot this renewal they selected an experienced team. However, most of the employees in this team suffered from stubbornness and loudly objected the upcoming changes, trying to delay them wherever possible. As the management came to understand why this team was so defiant, they decided to ask another team for their opinion instead. There were no problems in this team, as the stubbornness obstacle was not present. This team gave good feedback about the plan which proved instrumental to encouraging the other teams to embrace the changes.

When new plans are being tried, tested and executed, it is good to start by figuring out who may be the most open to them and could therefore be the best spokesperson for the change. Whenever stubbornness is present, it can jeopardise the development of a plan, no matter how good, well thought out or progressive the plan is, due to the stubborn and instinctive reaction to say 'no'.

Exercise:

What is more common in your workplace, a policy of promoting obstacles or overcoming them? Which of the obstacles are most common at your work?

Hint:

Is there something at work that needs attention? Decide to tackle it, doing your best to change it for the better, you may choose from the lists above or pick the one you have noticed yourself you have notice for yourself.

3.3 Fear Patterns and Leadership

Good and balanced leadership requires that fear patterns are not in command. Every manager should learn which obstacles they are susceptible to when stressed. It is important to remember that these fear patterns are like viruses, in the sense that they spread easily once they are present in a workplace.



Picture 1. Sabotage at work.

If a manager suffers from the sabotage obstacle, it will be visible through their erratic and often overt way of leading. It is likely that they will find working in a team a challenge and will not follow the rules, preferring to make their own changes to suit their own interests.

If a team member is being controlled by sabotage, it is important for the manager to notice and step in, tackling any misbehaviour quickly without delay, giving clear boundaries to make sure that the team member does not start working with a different set of rules in relation to the rest of the workforce.



Picture 2. Greed at work.

When greed is the obstacle of a manager, they become very self-centered and only pursue their personal interests. They do not work to foster a team effort and instead function through shameless 'me first' actions that affect their abilities and the overall success of the team.

If greed is affecting a team member, then they will feel they are never getting enough, whether it be customers, new projects or fringe benefits. When this is the case, strict boundaries need to be drawn.



Picture 3. Self-Deprecation at work.

A manager with self-deprecation can not succeed as being too humble gets in the way of their development. They have a hard time defending their opinion and prefer to evade confrontation by ignoring the problems in their team.

Whenever this obstacle becomes present in a team, those individuals affected by self-deprecation are left behind, unable to develop their skills or improve by using the opportunities that are available. This is due to their self-doubt and avoidant behaviour.



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Picture 4. Arrogance at work.

An arrogant manager can be very critical and will be openly unhappy with the work of others. They have a tendency to be mean whenever something does not please them and, at worst, this can damage the self-esteem of those that they target.

When a team member is taken over by arrogance, their main focus becomes that of trying to impress. They become a show off and start to think that they are far superior compared to the rest of their team. It is not helpful to inflate their ego when this is the case.



Picture 5. Martyrdom at work.

A manager affected by martyrdom is typically a workaholic. They complain about their excessive workload and do not delegate properly.

Martyrs seem to enjoy whining and when they have others they can compete with, their complaining tends to get more intense. In a team setting, complaining and competing about how life is hard increases as more and more staff members develop the obstacle. A martyr will work too hard for too long, which often leads to them taking long periods of sickleave.



Picture 6. Impatience at work.

A manager with impatience can be highly disruptive for the whole team. They will insist that work is done immediately and wear their employees down with useless tasks and unreasonable time scales. This creates a pressurised environment where employees are always on edge and projects are always completed after proposed deadlines, which in turn, increases the overall stress levels in the workplace.

In a team impatience spreads quickly and before long it affects everyone. As an increasing number of employees begin to act fast and become disorganised, priorities are lost and performance quality declines.



Picture 7. Stubbornness at work.

A stubborn manager cannot appreciate any ideas or changes that come from others. They will oppose and undermine these changes at all costs.

In a team this sort of person will go against the tide and will fight with those above them. However, the mindset of 'hopefully everything stays the same as before' is an attitude that hardly ever serves the company, or other employees in the long term.

3.4 Obstacles and Communication

Great communication is clear, goal-oriented and respectful. As the different obstacles take over, they also change the way the individuals involve communicate. These obstacles often lead to reduced interaction, which in turn leads to negative behaviour. However, which obstacle is in control and how strongly it has taken hold of a person or a workforce will affect how the obstacle develops and just how severe the impact.

Sabotage can be expressed through very aggressive communication, terrible behaviour and unexpected actions. It is good to remember the following tips when dealing with sabotage:

- Remember that the problem is not solved by pretending there is not a problem
- Following-up, maintaining strict limits and consistency is key to improving communication
- Noticing the obstacle and getting help can be a way to help others out.

Greed will express itself through exaggeration and constant cravings. When communicating with someone showing greedy tendencies, remember:

- Do not give them too much attention, do not make them a favourite
- Do not let them decide things without having the proper authority
- Boundaries are important, justify why they cannot take part in every the projects they want.
- Try to help them to see how lucky they are and enjoy what they already possess.

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Self-deprecation is not a visible obstacle, but nevertheless, it still inflicts harm to those who would like to improve, achieve promotions and have a successful career. Here are some hints as to how to help those suffering from this obstacle through your communication with them:

- Avoid giving them too much attention in public as they prefer to stay under the radar
- Applaud them for their strengths, encourage them and help them to try new things
- Do not let them belittle themselves
- Give them tasks they can manage as it will boost their self-confidence

Arrogance makes a person very self-conscious. It is very difficult to give them feedback as they think they are above all criticism. When interacting with them, it is important to keep in mind:

- Do not ever humiliate them in front of others, they will not forget and will seek revenge
- Let them have your attention, but also guide them to notice others
- Be friendly to them even though they do not seem to care, they will appreciate the gesture
- Arrogant people need recognition, but it is important to be sincere when giving appraisals.

Martyrs fear being victims. They want positive attention for being diligent and conscientious, even though they may not always like their own work. When confronting a martyr keep in mind:

- Do not take advantage of their high moral standards at work
- Be kind and friendly to them
- Help them to see the bigger picture, help them see that there can be many options and outcomes in any situation
- Demand that they address their complaints to the right person instead of the whole workforce.

Impatience reveals itself as efficiency and busyness, but often lacks the focus or observation to get the job done properly. When addressing them, remember this:

- Do not give them your attention or do them any special favours
- Do not let them interrupt or take over a conversation, stay calm
- Be patient and remind them that there is plenty of time if you see them losing focus
- Help them plan and schedule realistically.

Stubbornness causes objections and delays as the suggestions of others seem impossible to meet or take on board. In communication it is good to keep in mind:

- Present a new idea in a calm, relaxed manner as too much enthusiasm will cause the stubbornness to take over and the individual to shut down.
- Do not push them to an immediate answer, but do tell them when you will get back to them
- Give them different options and allow them time to reflect
- Ask them for their input and suggestions.

Exercise:

Think about someone that you find challenging? Can you work out their obstacle? Try communicating with them neutrally, making a conscious effort to ensure that you do not start displaying their obstacle behaviour whilst communicating with them.

Hint:

Keep in mind that changes take time. Think about something you could do differently and make an effort to change.

3.5 Obstacles and Feedback Skills

Giving and receiving feedback is a skill you can develop and practice any time. Good feedback takes the other party into account and creates a solid ground for personal development. Both positive and corrective feedback takes practice, the right mindset, and a proper understanding and appreciation for the other person.

It is good to keep in mind the following list when giving feedback:

- A saboteur tends to react with an 'I couldn't care less' attitude when receiving feedback. In fact, they might completely ignore it, which can cause the giver of the feedback to feel underappreciated and as though they could not get their message through.
- Nothing is enough for someone affected by greed. The giver of the feedback may be surprised at the neediness of the receiver, demanding more and more, even though they have received plenty of positive feedback already.
- Self-deprecation makes people belittle themselves so it is unlikely that they will believe that they had any role in the successes that their team or company achieve. They have a hard time receiving positive feedback as they do not feel they are worthy of it.
- Arrogance leads to over critical judgements especially when giving corrective feedback. They cannot stand receiving corrective comments even though they are happy to hand them out frequently. An arrogant person finds it almost impossible to admit they have done anything wrong, and therefore, they try to nullify any feedback with counter arguments or try to point the finger at someone else.

- Martyrs find receiving positive feedback a difficult experience as they automatically assume that the giver has some ulterior motive. Martyrs think that positive feedback inevitably means more work as they do not believe that the praises are truly sincere.
- Impatient people are restless and cannot stay still, even when receiving feedback. They find it hard to focus and tend to interrupt, talk over people or just sneak away from situations. Feedback moments may feel awkward for both parties.
- Stubbornness causes individuals to object to the ideas of others, even if only in principle and regardless of whether they are being given positive or corrective feedback. They will often counter argue a case and bring their own, uncompromising point of view to the table. A stubborn person finds it hard to get excited about anything, especially when it involves changes or new ideas.

Exercise:

Decide to give feedback more often. Recognise situations when obstacles get in the way of giving feedback.

Hint:

Observe your own behaviour in feedback situations. How could you develop both as a giver and a receiver of feedback?

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4 Combinations

When we are under stress we become influenced by one or more of the obstacles. Some of them are strong and others are mild. In this section we will learn about how the different combinations of two specific obstacles work together. You can do the test on page 36 and then read about the definitions. I strongly recommend that you have an open mind in regards to your test result. Remember to pay attention to your stress behaviour as this will give you more of an insight into which obstacles control your life. You may also read through the different combinations and mark those with which you can relate. Sometimes we can be blind to our own fear patterns, but you can learn how to tell how you behave in different stressful situations.

Some of these characterisations may ring a bell, as you may have noticed these behaviours in people you know well or colleagues at work. The behaviour explained here is typically revealed when the obstacles take charge under stress.

Below are short descriptions that show how these combinations differ from one another.

4.1 Sabotage-Combinations

Sabotage is quite a dramatic obstacle, the underlying fear is a loss of control. Uncontrolled behaviour is typical for sabotage, the boundaries are stretched and often crossed over.

Sabotage-Greed

- In this combination control is the leading theme. These people try to control themselves and their doings without succeeding. They feel left without attention and think little of their achievements, annoying others instead of celebrating themselves. It is typical for them to follow their own path and blatant self-seeking interests.

Sabotage-Self-Deprecation

- Feeling unworthy is usual, with the expectation that things will go wrong anyway. This combination causes the most harm to those acting from these fears. They do not defend themselves as they'd rather make sure they will not succeed as they do not think it is what they deserve.

Sabotage-Greed

- These people place themselves above all others and are obvious critics. They could not care less about the feelings of others and their boundaries, and keep hurting others with their opinionated comments. They do not allow others to get close to them and are incapable of team work.

Sabotage-Martyrdom

- This combination creates a feeling that life sucks and things can only get worst. Taking on responsibility seems impossible for a self-destructive martyr because they believe that there is always someone else to blame. They feel their life is out of their control and that nothing is their fault. They complain loudly and often take things to the extreme.

Sabotage-Impatience

- Panicking risktaker. Mistakes and bad things happen when they rush around as they are prone to accidents. Their behaviour can be very bad, they will often ignore the interests of others and interrupt them without thinking.

Sabotage-Stubbornness

- Hard-headed daredevil. They do not listen to anyone, preferring to continue doing things in their own way, however dysfunctional that may be. They are typically inflexible and totally uncooperative.

4.2 Greed-Combinations

Greed gives the feeling that nothing is enough. Abandonment is behind this fear pattern and it manifests itself by compensating the void with money, knowledge, food or other benefits. This behaviour leads to an unpleasant and selfish pursuit of one's own goals without any consideration for others.

Greed-Sabotage

- Boundaries are often crossed as they strive to try and create results that benefit themselves, without any consideration for the needs and wants of others involved. When nothing seems to be enough, the consequences can be dramatic and severe.

Greed-Self-Deprecation

- This combination is a little odd as greed wants to boost the ego and self-deprecation stops the individual from giving themselves any credit. This can create a yo-yo effect, which can see them going for their own interests and also withdrawing.

Greed-Arrogance

- The combination of greed and arrogance will definitely lead to negativity, with them likely to put others down. Their constant cravings for more alongside their feeling of superiority can easily back fire. They can be very unpopular as they annoy others with their arrogant behaviour and selfish interests.

Greed-Martyrdom

- These people will always manage to find something to whine about in any situation and nothing ever seems good enough. However, they often put themselves in impossible situations as they do not want to miss out (greed) and, at the same time, find it very difficult to say no (martyrdom).

Greed-Impatience

- Give everything to me – and right away. This combination is very noticable, but not in any good way. Impatience causes sudden action, ensuring that they get whatever they want or need to have, which can lead to very ungraceful behaviour.

Greed-Stubbornness

- This combination results in the sufferer's own interests becoming dominate in all situations, with them unable to give in or step down, unless it suits their wants and desires. They will keep going making the same demands and requests a number of times, even after have already been rejected.

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4.3 Self-Deprecation-Combinations

Self-deprecation can make one feel unworthy and insufficient. Chances are thrown away and many possibilities stay out of reach as these people do not think they deserve them.

Self-Deprecation-Sabotage

- Unworthiness combined with sabotage leads to a downward spiral. These people may leave projects halfway through, as they believe they cannot manage the task. This behaviour can lead to an 'I don't care' attitude, with them leaving others to pick up the pieces. These people are good at punishing themselves, providing proof through twisted means that they are right in doing so.

Self-Deprecation-Greed

- People who belittle themselves do not feel they can do things, yet greed pushes them to crave more. At worst, they are their own worst enemy as they set up projects they cannot handle, finding new situations difficult.

Self-Deprecation-Arrogance

- This combination makes the person very insecure and solitary. They are at times very arrogant and pushy, and at other times withdrawn and depressed. Their self-esteem is poor and they cannot act in a balanced manner as they are always jumping from one extreme to another.

Self-Deprecation-Martyrdom

- These people are very hard on themselves as they push themselves to the limit. A feeling of total unworthiness combined with a workaholic lifestyle can lead to them achieving empathy from others. However, this combination makes sure they will never see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Self-Deprecation-Impatience

- Being always hurried with a poor self-esteem makes these people hasty and volatile. They make a lot mistakes and that only increases their sense of unworthiness. Their perception that they do not have enough time holds them back as these people cannot see any positive possibilities in the future.

Self-Deprecation-Stubbornness

- Very principled, but with a low self-image. These people cling to their belief that they are losers. Why dare try anything new when they already believe they are doomed from the beginning. They also find it hard to trust any authority.

4.4 Arrogance-combinations

Arrogance causes criticism and a judging of others. Their behaviour can be very annoying as they regard themselves as perfect and above the judgment of others.

Arrogance-Sabotage

- This creates a solitary, loud critic, who thinks too much of themselves. They do not care when things get exaggerated as they believe they know it all. Unfortunately, they make the same mistakes time and time again because they do not listen. At worst, they sabotage many things as they find it hard to admit when they cannot do something or have made an error.

Arrogance-Greed

- Selfish pursuits and naughty behaviour is a combination that does not go unnoticed. They ignore others and are very opinionated, causing arguments and conflicts with ease. Nothing is enough for them and they spend their time either showing off what they already have or craving more power.

Arrogance-Self-Deprecation

- Shyness is typical for these people and they often hide behind the barriers they have put up. When the pendulum swings towards arrogance they criticise and blame others, however, when it swings towards self-deprecation they start criticising themselves.

Arrogance-Martyrdom

- Mistakes are impossible to admit when arrogance gets involved as they find it easier to blame others. This combination can lead to workaholic behaviour as they feel the need to be the best and also indispensable.

Arrogance-Impatience

- This combined effect creates a rushing critic who cannot let others finish their sentences, also interrupting them as they are in a hurry or running late. They may seem efficient, but their words and actions do not reflect each other in practice.

Arrogance-Stubbornness

- These people are very opinionated and will never admit to being wrong. They like to say ‘what did I say’ whenever they can. This combination opposes all changes and does not care what others say or think.

4.5 Martyrdom-combinations

Complaining and feeling trapped is typical for martyrs. When things are bad it is always someone's else's fault. They cannot ask for help or reduce their role in a task as that would make them feel that they are not valuable.

Martyrdom-Sabotage

- This combination creates a feeling that life is always against them, viewing their problems as a pothole that just keeps getting bigger and deeper all the time. They lack responsibility for their life as they believe that there is always someone else to blame for any of their troubles. They complain loudly and this can sometimes be expressed through extreme forms.

Martyrdom-Greed

- These people are drama queens, nothing ever seems to work out for them. They often create impossible scenarios for themselves as they do not dare miss out on anything.

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Martyrdom-Self-Deprecation

- These people are very harsh on themselves. The feeling of unworthiness coupled with that of a hardworking complainer may awaken the compassion of others, but this combination makes sure there is no foreseeable happy ending.

Martyrdom-Arrogance

- Mistakes are impossible to admit to as arrogance takes over. On the other hand, it is easy for them to point the finger at others. This combination causes many workaholics, as they want to be the irreplaceable number one employee.

Martyrdom-Impatience

- This pair feels trapped in two ways, the martyr as the victim and the impatient in the trap of time. This combination leads to the individual feeling out of control of their own life; they will always find a reason to be unhappy. They blame both a lack of time and poor circumstances as reasons for feeling down.

Martyrdom-Stubbornness

- The martyr feels stuck, and seemingly has no options. Stubbornness clings on to old patterns and that makes finding a solution highly unlikely. The inner conflict comes from the martyr's inability to say no and the stubborn's dislike of saying 'yes'.

4.6 Impatience-Combinations

Impatience is a fear pattern that makes you restless and causes many problems. Poor concentration and faked efficiency creates costly mistakes as things are always rushed.

Impatience-Sabotage

- Panicking risktakers. Mistakes happen when everything is rushed, and this combination makes the individual prone to accidents. They will also have bad manners and constantly interrupt others as they are rather self-absorbed and pay no attention to those around them.

Impatience-Greed

- Give me it all, now. This combination has a striking affect on the sufferer and it is not a positive one. Impatience causes sudden action and a feeling that something is lacking and this leads them to try anything at any cost. This makes their behaviour rather rude.

Impatience-Self-Deprecation

- Being in a constant hurry and with low self-esteem creates an unstable rusher. Mistakes happen throughout their work and that creates more unworthiness. Panic over a lack of time means these people cannot make room for thinking that anything better could possibly be in store for them.

Impatience-Arrogance

- The combination creates a rushing critic, one who never lets other people finish their sentences, but rather finishes them as if they know better or just do not have the time to wait. They may look efficient, but what they say they know and what they actually do does not always match up.

Impatience-Martyrdom

- This pair leaves the sufferer feeling as though they are completely trapped, impatience takes hold as a time trap and martyrdom as a doing trap. This combination gives them the feeling of being an outsider. They will always find a reason to be unsatisfied and will complain that they do not have the time, nor the circumstances, available to them.

Impatience-Stubbornness

- Impatience combined with stubbornness does not give good results. 'NO way' is a common phrase as they restlessly pursue whatever they have chosen to do or believe. Being present or taking on new perspectives is very difficult for them.

4.7 Stubbornness-Combinations

Stubbornness hinders new perspectives and gets in the way of accepting any changes that need to be made due to principles. Good things may also pass by unrealised as stubborn people do not give in. A stubborn person also objects to authority, believing that their way is superior.

Stubbornness-Sabotage

- Principled loner, who is missing out on so many opportunities and experiences. They cling headstrong on to their opinions and actions, most of which keep sabotaging their lives.

Stubbornness-Greed

- This combination creates a person with very argumentative behaviour, one that will not back down, regardless of how badly they have crossed the line. They pursue 'grass is always greener' thinking and will never be able to see how green it is under their feet.

Stubbornness-Self-Deprecation

- Clinging to their beliefs, but still uncertain about themselves. They cannot handle commanding roles and will punish themselves at the earliest opportunity before anyone else has the chance.

Stubbornness-Arrogance

- It is virtually impossible to change the mind of someone with this combination. They argue fiercely that they know exactly how things are, oppose all changes when they feel threatened and will put down others with their comments.

Stubbornness-Martyrdom

- Hardheaded achievers who do not even want to change or free themselves from this combination. They are stuck firmly in their misery and will spread it, allowing it to affect those around them.

Stubbornness-Impatience

- Stubborn people hate change and impatience causes them to run around aimlessly. This combination stops people from facing up to their problems or tasks as they prefer to run. They will be distressed and have poor concentration which does not help them move forward.

Exercise:

Read the different explanations carefully and observe yourself, what happens when you are stressed and how does your behaviour change? Can you notice which obstacle takes control in a stressful situation?

Hint:

You may put a checkmark on the combinations that sound familiar and then observe which of those combinations have the largest impact on your life.

5 Fear patterns – The Test

5.1 Do You Know Your Fear Patterns?

Quickly read through the statements and mark any statement that you feel, most of the time, applies to you when you are stressed. Add up the marked statements for each group. The score may not give an accurate result, but it can help you to start to recognise your fear patterns. People close to us tend to see us more objectively, so if you are not sure you can ask for their opinion.

Instructions

Group 1. _____ marks

- ☐ I like to be in control, but find I often lose control of situations.
- ☐ I feel really desperate a lot of the time.
- ☐ When things go wrong I escape them by drinking or playing too much.
- ☐ I often take big risks like driving fast, trusting people I should not or positioning myself in dangerous places.
- ☐ Sometimes I think others would be better off if I was not around.
- ☐ I have left a trail of damaged relationships and broken agreements behind me.
- ☐ My recklessness with what I say to people often gets me into trouble.

Group 2. _____ marks

- ☐ I often feel that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. People say I want too much and never seem satisfied.
- ☐ When something goes wrong I go shopping or eat to make myself feel better.
- ☐ I often dream of having everything I want.
- ☐ Sometimes when eating or drinking I feel I cannot stop. I try to control my cravings, but it is very hard.
- ☐ At times I am indecisive about which things I actually want and I end up empty handed, which makes me feel miserable.
- ☐ There are situations when I find myself competing hard for something I do not even want.
- ☐ At work I'm seldom satisfied with the acknowledgement or opportunities I am given.

Group 3. _____ marks

- ☐ There are many things I would like to do, but I doubt myself and I am afraid to take risks.
- ☐ If I think I have done something wrong, I apologise intensely.
- ☐ I am very hard on myself. When something goes wrong I often feel I am responsible.
- ☐ I have a poor posture. When I am uncomfortable I look at my feet.
- ☐ I typically think others can do things better than I can. People say I lack self-confidence.
- ☐ I am very sensitive to criticism.
- ☐ I seldom speak up or share my ideas at meetings because I feel others are so much better at it.

Group 4. _____ marks

- ☐ I become quiet and a bit distant with people I do not know. Some people say I am hard to get to know.
- ☐ I usually appear to have everything under control. However, I have to work hard to overcome my shyness.
- ☐ I hate being judged or compared to others. Being embarrassed in public is like dying a thousand deaths.
- ☐ It is very hard for me to admit when I am wrong. Apologising is difficult for me.
- ☐ I am very critical of myself and often secretly critical of others.
- ☐ I worry about how I look. I often try to catch glimpses of myself in mirrors to check that everything is ok.
- ☐ If I do not boast about my accomplishments then no one will notice me.

Group 5. _____ marks

- ☐ I often feel trapped by my circumstances. I do not feel as if there are choices.
- ☐ People say I complain a lot, but they just do not understand my problems.
- ☐ I often feel taken for granted. People just do not know how much I do for them.
- ☐ I find it difficult to say “no” to requests.
- ☐ When I need help I cannot seem to get it. I tend to have a lot of bad luck.
- ☐ It seems I do a lot for others and they repay me by creating even more work, often dumping more tasks on me.
- ☐ I find it difficult to forgive others when they have “done me wrong”.

Group 6. _____ marks

- ☐ I often feel there is too little time to get everything done.
- ☐ I find myself rushing my kids, friends or employees because they move too slowly.
- ☐ I frequently interrupt people or finish their sentences for them.
- ☐ I hate waiting and get nervous easily if I feel something is taking too long.
- ☐ Because I have so much on my plate, I often arrive late for appointments.
- ☐ My lists are long and my time limited. In my haste, I often forget things.
- ☐ I often find myself thinking “I can’t wait for this to be over”. I find it hard to focus and be present because I need to check my watch and be ready for the next task.

Group 7. _____ marks

- ☐ I do not like when someone tries to tell me what to do or how to behave.
- ☐ When I am in doubt I usually say “no” to a suggestion.
- ☐ Rapid changes scare me.
- ☐ Nobody can make me do things I do not want to. Sometimes my resistance gets in my way.
- ☐ I argue until I get my own way.
- ☐ It is hard for me to give in even when I know I am wrong.
- ☐ It really bothers me when I feel someone is deciding something for me without asking my opinion.

5.2 Obstacles – Summary

How many marks did you score in each group? Fill in the table below.

Try to figure out which two groups got the most marks and mark them 1 and 2. Also pay attention to the last group and mark it with a minus (-). You may struggle to understand others with this obstacle.

	Marks	1.-2. and last (-)
Group 1. Sabotage	_____	_____
Group 2. Greed	_____	_____
Group 3. Self-Deprecation	_____	_____
Group 4. Arrogance	_____	_____
Group 5. Martyrdom	_____	_____
Group 6. Impatience	_____	_____
Group 7. Stubbornness	_____	_____

You can read more about each obstacle in chapter 2. If you want to assess which combination is closest to your behaviour, you will find information about the combinations in chapter 4.

6 Erasing Fear Patterns

Many situations in the workplace call for an understanding of the nature of fear patterns. Try to learn as much as possible about these fear patterns as this will diminish the power they have over you and your colleagues.

- Be aware of your own obstacles. The only way to free yourself from them is to tackle them face to face.
- Admit that they stop you from getting what you desire.
- Learn to recognise the fear patterns and notice how they affect your life and your relationships. Learn how they look from another person's perspective.
- Someone's obstacle behaviour may cause a chain reaction and spark the obstacles of others. When you understand this, it is much easier to free yourself from them. Keep in mind the importance of staying neutral when those around you are stressed.
- Obstacles feed off stress and fear. Learn to relax and avoid stressful situations. When your life is balanced, then your obstacles will appear less frequently.
- Try to see the person behind the stress pattern and realise that the obstacle is putting on a show. Do not let the obstacles fool you and remember that people are not normally trying to be cruel.
- It is an ongoing process to erase fear patterns. Each time you learn to stop the behaviour, it will lose its power. Stay determined and it will help you put the fear patterns aside. Do not give in!

6.1 Erasing sabotage

If you have a tendency for sabotage, it will hold you in its grip until you face the facts. First of all, you need a good enough reason to change, be it a decision to care for your physical health, stop drinking for the sake of your family or a need to pull yourself together because you have jeopardised your work.

1. Change begins when you wake up and realise that your life is not under control and you need help.
2. The next step is to think about how your 'mess' can be sorted out.
3. Forgive yourself and create a new set of rules with which to live.

Exercise:

Look at yourself in the mirror and see the person behind the sabotage facade. Promise yourself that you will make a change. Now it is time to start doing things differently.

Hint:

What is extremely important to you? How can you do things differently in order to achieve what you really desire?

6.2 Erasing greed

If greed is your obstacle, it all starts when you recognise this blind spot. Observe what situations bring greed to the forefront and try to look at things more objectively.

1. Do not focus on what is missing, instead list what all you already have.
2. Give other people attention and decide to give away something you are afraid of losing.
3. Be confident that you will not be left out – consider that less can be more.

Exercise:

Set a goal to be unselfish next time there is a possibility to be selfish. Give yourself a chance to feel good when you offer your assistance.

Hint:

In what areas of life does greed want to take over? Make a list of all the things that are fine in those areas to see what you already have.



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6.3 Erasing Self-Deprecation

Decide to stop belittling yourself and apologising too much. Ask your friends for feedback about your strengths as you might be positively surprised as to how they perceive you. Do things that give you a sense of accomplishment as this will help you to believe in yourself, which in turn will boost your self-confidence.

1. Always give yourself credit whenever you have accomplished something. Reward yourself regularly.
2. Try out new styles, experiment with new clothes and speak up when you have an opinion.
3. Trust yourself and ask for feedback from the people around you whenever you need reassurance.

Exercise:

Make it a habit to list your highlights of the week. You may be astonished at how many great things you have done.

Hint:

Do something pleasant just for you; something that you've felt you have not 'deserved' before and therefore avoided doing.

6.4 Erasing Arrogance

In order to get rid of arrogance, you really need to understand that this obstacle has put a spell on you which is making you act repulsively and annoy others. Silence your inner critic and let yourself just be you.

1. Dare to make mistakes, but also admit to them. It is not the end of the world.
2. Take some social risks, like greeting someone at the cash register or speaking to a foreigner.
3. Stop checking yourself constantly, allow more humour and an easy going attitude into your life.

Exercise:

Allow mistakes to happen and learn how to laugh at yourself.

Hint:

When you meet someone new, look for their best qualities instead of their faults.

6.5 Erasing Martyrdom

When martyrdom takes over, it is nearly impossible to enjoy yourself or have fun as it is a path of suffering. Decide to make a change and look for options if you feel trapped. Admit that creating guilt is manipulative.

1. Learn to say no. Stop whining and sighing.
2. Ask for help and also receive it openly when it is given.
3. Let joy, spontaneity and a carefree attitude become part of your daily life. Do things that you really enjoy doing.

Exercise:

Decide to ask for help once a day and you will notice that other people like to help out.

Hint:

Observe yourself and pay attention to the situations where you would normally complain. Do something that makes you happy instead.

6.6 Erasing Impatience

Impatience makes you feel trapped in time and that creates restlessness. Decide to take charge of time and slow down. Be more relaxed about your to do list and have breaks more often. Do not forget that quality is often more important than quantity.

1. Find a rhythm in whatever you do, avoid being late and do not fill up your calendar.
2. Plan carefully, focus on one task at a time. Try to finish what you are doing whenever possible.
3. Remember that there is time. Prioritise important tasks and let go of unnecessary issues that consume your time.

Exercise:

Focus on one task at a time. Be fully present in a conversation, do not interrupt or finish the other person's sentences.

Hint:

Take deep breaths when you feel you cannot make it. Remember that you can take charge of your time.

6.7 Erasing Stubbornness

Stubbornness shows as inflexibility and fixed principles. Decide to face the challenge head on and become more flexible. Do not withdraw from unpleasant situations, but stay calm and collected and see them through.

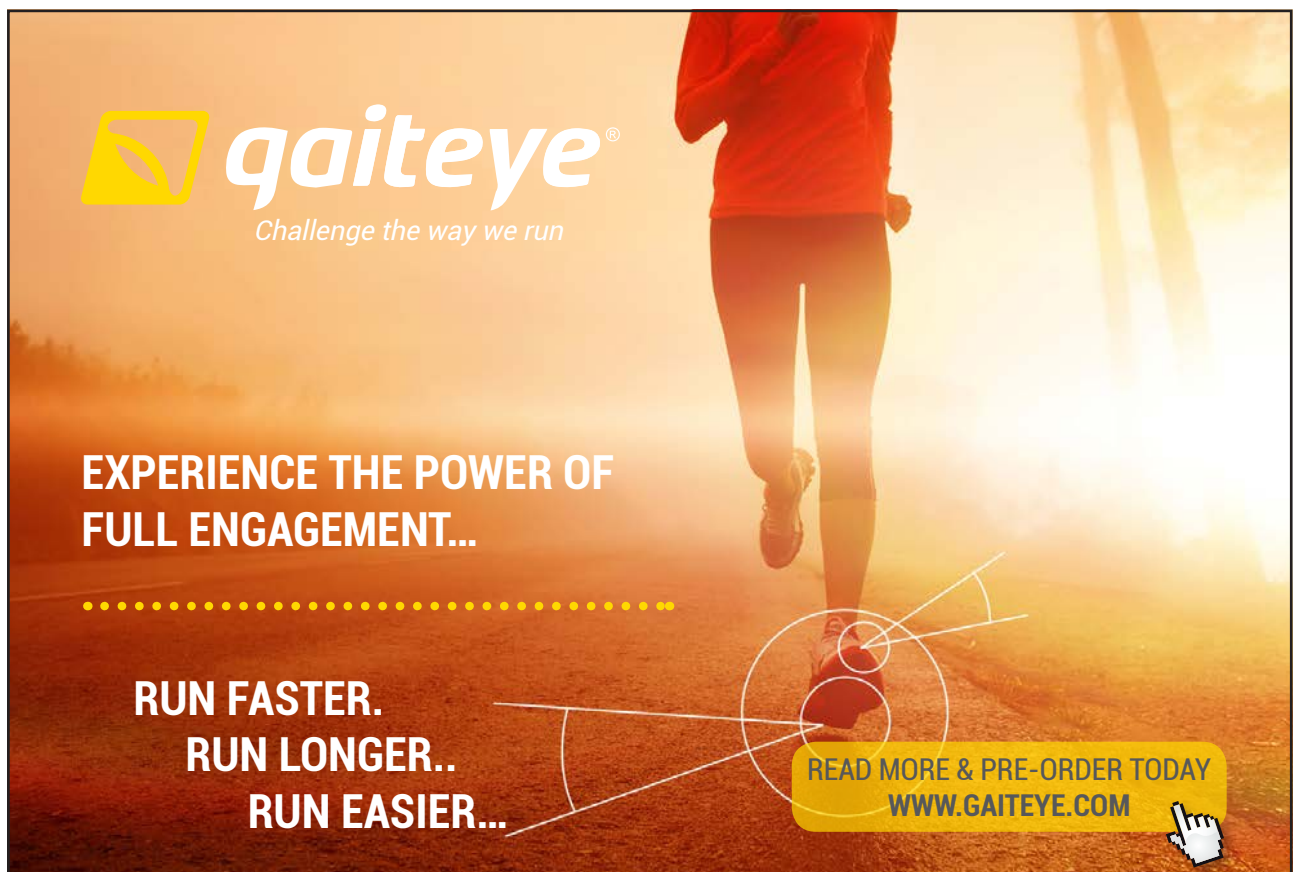
1. Break your routines and do something you have not done before.
2. When you hear a suggestion, be bold and answer yes, even when you want to oppose.
3. Look more neutrally at your authorities, try to find good traits in your leaders for example

Exercise:

Start your day differently. Eat breakfast with your other hand, take a different road or different mode of transport to your workplace. Do something to make your morning unusual.

Hint:

Count to five before you say 'no' to any suggestion. Do not take yourself too seriously.



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7 A Balanced Person

Being balanced may be a distant dream for many of us, but by overcoming your fear patterns you are taking a big step towards inner healing. Each of the statements on the list below are part of a good set of actions for tackling your specific obstacle. You can pick a statement, think it through and choose to address the specific obstacle that is bothering you.

7.1 Develop Your Mindset

Below is a list of 21 statements that can help you to improve as a human being. Choose 1–2 statements that feel timely and challenging. Circle these and read them out loud, changing the pronoun to I. For example, if you pick number 8, say out loud: ‘I demonstrate the courage to accept mistakes as a form of learning.’

A Well-Balanced Person:

1. accepts themselves and others unconditionally.
2. shows kindness and respect towards their own body.
3. has the capacity to be real, genuine and sincere with others.
4. sees what they already have and does not focus on what is missing.
5. has the ability to say “no” when necessary.
6. shows confidence and a willingness to take reasonable risks for the sake of learning.
7. has the ability to make intimate connections with others.
8. demonstrates the courage to accept mistakes as a form of learning.
9. is willing to let go of control, accept spontaneity and some unusual outcomes in life.
10. is ready to wait peacefully.
11. shows the courage to ask for help when needed.
12. demonstrates the power to face emotional pain, experience it and let it go.
13. is generous and considerate.
14. shows belief in themselves and gives themselves permission to succeed.
15. has the capability to say “yes” in order to experience more from life
16. has grace, rhythm and a natural timing.
17. is responsible for their own thoughts and actions without blaming themselves or others.
18. expresses attentiveness to the needs of others without following their own agenda.
19. has the ability to listen intently and be fully present.
20. shows flexibility and adaptability with their mind and behaviour.
21. has the courage to forgive themselves and others.

Exercise:

Figure out which obstacle stands for each statement. Every fear pattern has three alternative statements.

Hint:

Focus on the statement(s) you picked daily. You may write a note and put it on your work desk or stick it on the bathroom mirror to read when you brush your teeth.

7.2 Summary of the Fear Patterns

Below is a table which shows the individual obstacles and the consequences for each obstacle. In the right-hand column you may find hints and tips as to how to recognise them at play.

Fear Patterns...

...take many forms:		Resulting in:	Stopping you from experiencing:	How to recognise:
Losing control	Concerning your own behaviour	Sabotage	positivity	Desperate acts to maintain control. Addictions, with a 'who cares' attitude. Self-destructive behaviour.
	Concerning your achievements	Greed	self expression	Nothing is enough to be satisfied. 'Grass is always greener on the other side' attitude. 'Me first'.
Self-esteem issues	Fear of inadequacy	Self-Deprecation	inspiration	Apologetic. Taking the blame. Afraid to be assertive.
	Fear of judgement and abandonment	Arrogance	power	Want to feel special. 'Know it all'. Critical.
Fear of being trapped	...victim of circumstances	Martyrdom	effective action	Whines and complains, blames others. Manipulates others. They cannot say 'no'.
	...prisoner of time	Impatience		'Not enough time'. Rushing, always late. Intolerant.
Fear of sudden change		Stubbornness	accepting others' ideas	Objects 'authorities'. Buying time. Inflexible. Cannot say 'yes'.

7.3 The Tale of Two Wolves

The Tale of Two Wolves is a Native American Indian story that may already be familiar to you. However, as a final thought and as you continue your journey to improve yourself and overcome your obstacles, take the time to read and reflect on it now. Consider its message with sincerity and with your heart, as it is wise and directly linked to the obstacles that we all need to overcome.

One night an old Cherokee told his grandson about our internal battle.

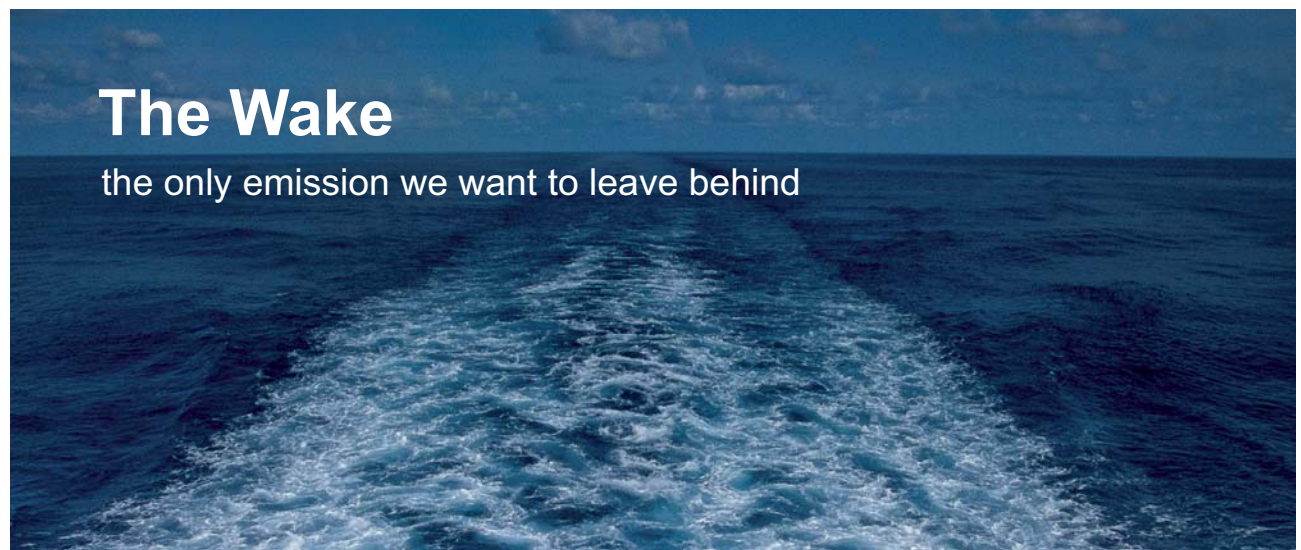
He said: “My son, the battle is between two ‘wolves’ that are inside all of us.

The first is Evil. It is hatred, envy, jealousy, sorrow, greed, arrogance, self pity, guilt, grudges, low self-esteem, lies, and selfishness.

The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, tranquility, modesty, friendliness, compassion, generosity, truthfulness and trust.”

The grandchild thought about this for a moment and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf wins?”

The old Cherokee answered: “The one you feed.”



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