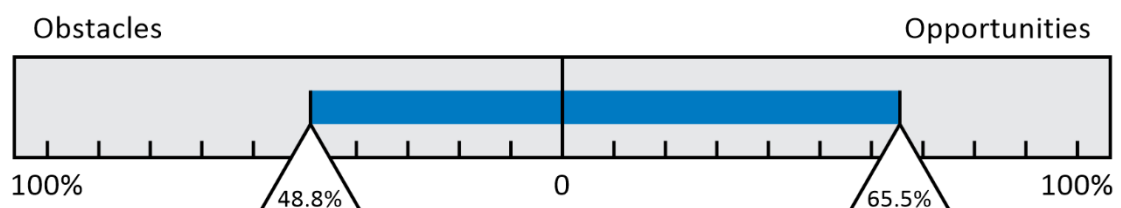


Opportunities-Obstacles QO₂ Profile

Tianna Priest





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THE OPPORTUNITIES-OBSTACLES QUOTIENT

Your answers to the QO₂ items measure your approach to risk. Your scores are mapped onto the Opportunities-Obstacles scale, indicating the balance you have between seeing opportunities and seeing obstacles. If you always focus on opportunities, it may prevent you from seeing potential obstacles; if you focus too much on seeing obstacles, it may cause you to miss opportunities.

On a scale ranging from 100% opportunities to 100% obstacles you scored 65.5% on the Opportunities side and 48.8% on the Obstacles side.

The ratio of your 'Seeing Opportunities' score to your 'Seeing Obstacles' score defines your QO₂ – your Opportunities / Obstacles Quotient.

Your QO₂ is 1.3. This means that you are 1.3 times more likely to focus your energy on 'seeing opportunities' rather than 'seeing obstacles'.

In relation to others who have completed the instrument, you have scored more strongly on the Obstacles side of the QO₂ scale. This is a strength that is particularly valuable in organisations where a strong sense of reality is necessary in the way work is approached. You are particularly valuable in situations where making a wrong decision could end in disaster. Your focus on the potential problems and pitfalls in any projects you are working on may sometimes cause you to miss opportunities that come your way. In general you will not like to be in situations that are too risky and will want to be convinced that the potential pitfalls that might occur have been well thought through and factored into decision-making. As a result you are likely to be risk-averse. Looking for obstacles is important in decision-making, but so too is identifying and seizing the opportunities that are presented to you.

The QO₂ scale is a composite of five sub-scales: Moving Towards Goals Energy, Multi-Pathways, Optimism, Fault-Finding and Time Focus. These sub-scales define the McCann Risk-Orientation Model. Around the model are your scores on each sub-scale, shown as a percentage of the maximum possible. Detailed information on each sub-scale is given on the following pages.





MOVING TOWARDS GOALS (MTG) ENERGY



Moving Towards Goals (MTG) Energy is a form of psychic energy - the energy that gives us the determination, enthusiasm, and resilience to formulate and achieve our goals in life.

You scored moderately in the range of 'Moving Towards Goals' Energy. While you may set a number of goals for yourself, you will probably have had mixed success in what you have achieved. When things go well, you will probably pursue your goals energetically, but when problems arise, you may stop and wonder what to do. If the barriers seem too great, you may well turn your attention to other things. Often, it is easier to save your energy for another day.

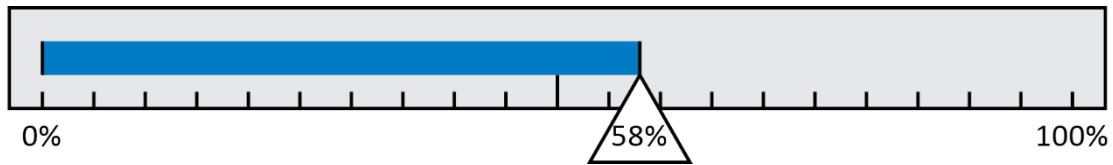
You probably think that you have been moderately successful over the years, and there will be many achievements that you should be proud of. In many of your activities you will display a great deal of confidence, but in some situations you will lose confidence and this may cause you to be cautious. If you have encountered a lot of barriers in your life, your determination to succeed may be lower than it used to be. Sometimes when obstacles appear in your path, you may wonder if it is worth finding that extra energy to push through the barriers to achieve what you want.

You are likely to set yourself goals that lie within your capabilities, as this gives you the confidence to succeed. Remember though, if goals are too easy to reach then your potential may not be maximised. You may consider that goals beyond your capability are too risky but try to balance this with setting yourself challenging *stretch goals*. Success at achieving goals that lie just beyond your current abilities will help increase your confidence and self esteem.

The opposite of 'Moving Towards' Energy is 'Moving Away' Energy. Unconsciously, you may put effort into finding reasons why you can't achieve the goals you set for yourself, or those that are set by other people. The positive side of this is that you may be a good devil's advocate, noticing the pitfalls and problems that are likely to occur in any of your activities.



MULTI-PATHWAYS



The Multi-Pathways sub-scale measures the tendency people have to generate pathways around obstacles. Some people will look for just a few ways around obstacles, whereas others will generate lots of possible pathways, giving them more options.

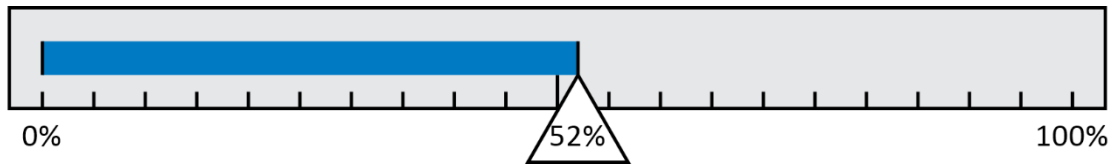
You scored in the moderate range on the Multi-Pathways sub-scale. This means that you are more likely to concentrate on just a few ways of obtaining what you want. You may believe that there is only one way to do things well, and you will often persist with one line of action until you get what you want, or you decide to direct your efforts elsewhere. This will be more so if you also scored strongly on the MTG Energy sub-scale.

You could be a person who likes to work to rules and procedures, as you consider that these have been designed to deliver results. You may also prefer to work on projects similar to ones that you are currently involved in, where you can be sure that your abilities are being used to the best advantage. However, you are not against a different approach, providing it has been well thought through and is based on reality. You may need to be careful that you don't reject what others are saying, just because they are proposing an unusual solution to a problem.

Your lower to moderate scores on the Multi-Pathways sub-scale may make you risk-averse when it comes to looking for ways around obstacles. In part, this may be due to a lack of confidence in being able to identify new pathways. If this is the case, you will benefit from studying the Multi-Pathway Generation Model, described in the accompanying *Personal Discovery Workbook*. Here there are four generic approaches to use: Introverted Left-Brain (ILB) Thinking, Introverted Right-Brain (IRB) Thinking, Extroverted Right-Brain (ERB) Thinking, and Extroverted Left-Brain (ELB) Thinking. More than likely you will be comfortable with one of these techniques but big improvements can be made by developing skills in the others as well.



OPTIMISM



You are a person with a cautious outlook on life, and there are times when you may be pessimistic about outcomes at work. Experiences in your life may have caused you to assume the worst, and while this can be a strength in helping you to avoid mistakes, it can also prevent you from seeing opportunities as they arise. You may have a reputation for being quite cynical, which at times may prevent you from taking action.

When things go wrong, you may initially blame yourself rather than other people or external events. While this is an admirable characteristic, you need to consider just how much of the problem was due to you and how much it was due to circumstances which could not be predicted. Taking the blame for everything that goes wrong can have adverse affects on your life and health.

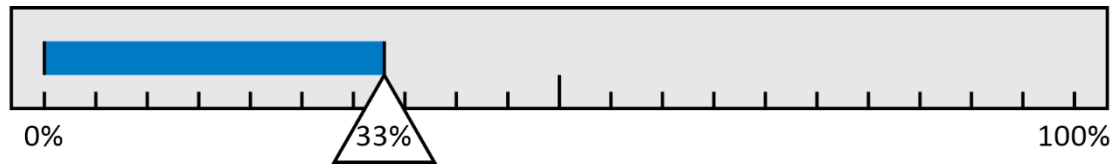
When setbacks occur, you are more likely to consider them to be long lasting rather than temporary. This may occasionally make you depressed, which may make you reluctant to try again. Remember that persistence brings results in the end. The proverb 'If at first you don't succeed, then try, try again', is one that you could apply to your life.

When difficulties occur in one part of your life, you may allow them to affect other unrelated parts of your life. You may need to learn how to localise unpleasant situations and prevent them from intruding upon other aspects of your life.

Your more cautious approach to life and work can be an advantage, as it will minimise the risk of failure in any projects or ventures that you undertake. You could have a tendency to worry over some aspects of your work, usually because you demand a lot from yourself. You probably regard this as a positive aspect as you will want to ensure that unnecessary risks are avoided. However you may need to be aware of the dangers of 'ruminating', where excessive worrying could cause you to procrastinate and ultimately lead to unnecessary stress.



FAULT-FINDING



The Fault-Finding sub-scale measures to what extent people put effort into examining what could possibly go wrong. People who look only to the opportunities often forget to examine the potential obstacles that could impede progress. Those who put most of their effort into potential obstacles analysis, may have little interest in looking for opportunities.

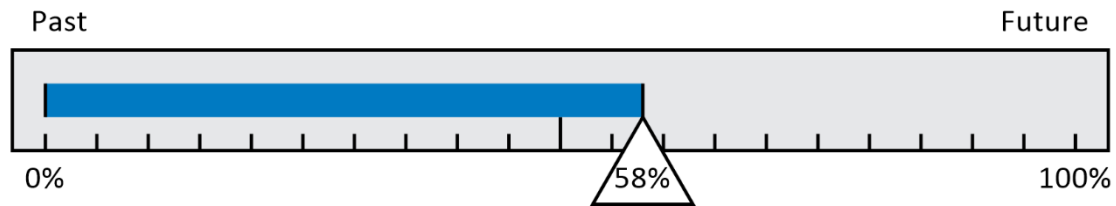
On the Fault-Finding sub-scale you have scored in the moderate to high range. At work, you may therefore be considered as a person who is quick to point out problems, and who is good at examining projects and new situations for potential difficulties. When working on a new project, you are likely to spend considerable time looking for faults and planning to avoid failure. This is a great strength, as you will be able to imagine all the problems that might occur. When new ideas are presented to you, you are likely to first look at the reasons why they might fail, before considering how they might be made to work. Once someone disappoints you, you may become more cautious in dealing with them in future. However, you will usually look for the best in people, even if you are sometimes critical of those who don't share your high standards.

Your focus on seeing potential obstacles is balanced with a focus on identifying opportunities. This is rather like the ancient Chinese view of seeking a 'yin' and 'yang' balance in everything that you do. Your careful approach to work ensures that you will usually think about the things that might go wrong and have plan 'B' ready.

You will balance your focus on caution with an assessment of more risky options. You can be very proactive when you believe in something or when an assessment of the facts indicates that you cannot lose. In summary, you are likely to accept measured risks, as the effort you put into ensuring that all the obstacles have been considered will give you confidence that the risk of things going wrong has been minimised.



TIME FOCUS



The Time Focus sub-scale is a measure of psychological time - how we subjectively process time. For some people time moves quickly, for others it moves slowly. Some people live in the future; others long for the past; many live for the 'here and now'. Your scores indicate that you have a Balanced time line. A time line is a continuum running from the past to the present to the future. Most people will have an F-time line, a P-time line (Past) or a Balanced time line.

While you are likely to enjoy the security of the present, you are reasonably comfortable with the uncertainty of the future. In general, you are happy focusing on the way things are and you will enjoy living each day as it comes. However a Balanced time line also means that you are likely to enjoy the security of the past. You will recognise that many lessons can be learnt from past situations and will value learning from experience. Those with F-time lines particularly need to learn the lessons of the past. It is here that you can help these people to learn from their mistakes.

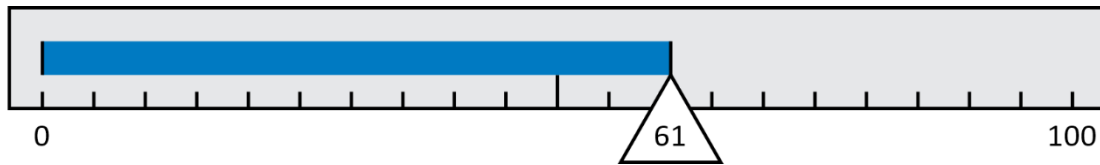
Because you enjoy the security of the present and past, you may sometimes be nostalgic, remembering the time when things were better than they are now. However, you will also dream about what you might achieve in your life, but how often have you put your dreams into action?

While you may live in the present, remember that others are very future-oriented. This is often the case for those strongly advocating change. Try to listen to these people and consider what they are saying. Otherwise, they may see you as being too conservative. More than likely, you will embrace the future; it is just that you want to be sure that things will work out before you act.

Your balanced score on the Time Focus sub-scale makes a neutral contribution to your approach to risk. You are wary of the future but will accept the inherent risk of moving into the unknown once you are convinced that the chosen way is the right way. The other four sub-scales are likely to make a larger contribution to whether you are risk-accepting or risk-averse.



RESILIENCE INDEX



Resilience describes the ability to withstand, recover from, and adapt to adversity and stress. A measure of your resilience is derived from your scores on the subscales of the QO₂.

Resilience is strongly correlated with persistence and determination and the ability to look for ways around any obstacles that may arise. Personal and social competence also play a role along with the ability to bounce back from negative situations.

Our resilience scale is derived from a combination of your scores on MTG Energy and Multi-pathway generation as well as some of the Optimism and Time Focus items. It's important to have both the *will* and the *way* to achieve our goals. One of the differences between optimists and resilient people is that the optimist may have a generalised expectation that things will work out whereas those with high resilience will also look for alternative pathways when blocked from a goal. If we only have the will, then we are vulnerable when obstacles arise. We are unable to generate alternative routes to our goal and therefore need extra energy to 'pound away' in the only way we know. Resilience is also related to the ability to put the past behind us and rebound easily from adversity. Resilient people approach goals with a positive emotional state, a sense of challenge, and a focus on success.

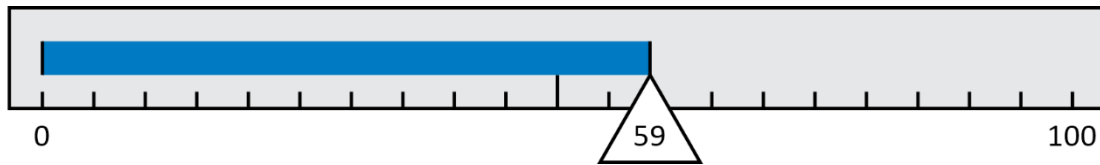
Those with low resilience have lower energy available to push towards their goals and will often follow a single pathway. They may well approach goals with a negative emotional state, a sense of ambivalence, and a conservative approach to risk.

Your Resilience Index on a scale ranging from 0 to 100, has been calculated as 61.

This value is in the low to mid-range of the scale, which means that you may have experienced many situations where things did not work out as planned. This may have caused you to have a lower MTG Energy level, and a tendency to resign yourself to life's difficulties. You may need to put more effort into adjusting your goals when unexpected circumstances arise. Developing a higher level of resilience will bring you through the various crises that you will undoubtedly experience during your life.



HANDLING CHANGE



The four sub-scales of Multi-Pathways, Optimism, Fault-Finding and Time Focus can be combined to give some indication of how you handle change. The calculation shows that you will understand the need for change but will usually need to be convinced that it is absolutely necessary and not simply a sudden notion of someone elsewhere in the organisation. In general, you are against change for the sake of change.

You could be uncomfortable with some new initiatives, particularly those that are introduced too quickly. Usually, this is because you prefer to work with proven approaches rather than ambiguous situations. You will want to see how any changes affect current operations, and are more comfortable with gradual change, rather than something that is too radical.

You may need to understand why, on occasions, you might resist change. It could be that your perception of the obstacles associated with the changes seems insurmountable in relation to the benefits likely to accrue. In the language of this Profile you could have a significantly lower QO₂ than those proposing the changes. For you, it is important that all the reasons why the change initiatives might fail have been well thought through, but often those with a higher QO₂ may not have even considered what the obstacles are! If this is the case you can help them by explaining carefully what objections you might have. If this is done from a logical perspective it is likely to be well received. They will appreciate the different viewpoint that you may be able to give.

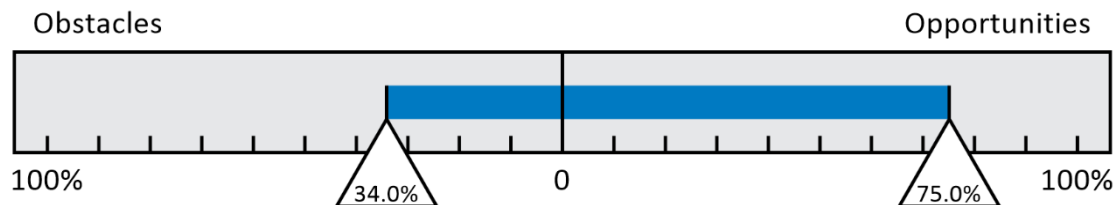
You may not see the benefits of change as quickly as others, so don't expect them to agree with you when you first offer your views. To you the obstacles may seem obvious but you will need to be patient and realise that others may need more time to accept what you are saying. It is also a good idea to have done a Potential Obstacles Analysis on the issues of the change so that you can present your assessment clearly. It may also help to indicate that you can see the opportunities that the changes will bring, but only after any potential problems have been factored in. When promoting change yourself, you are likely to take a conservative approach and make sure that the opportunities significantly outweigh the obstacles before you become an advocate. Consequently, your ideas may be accepted because of your track record with well-thought-through proposals.



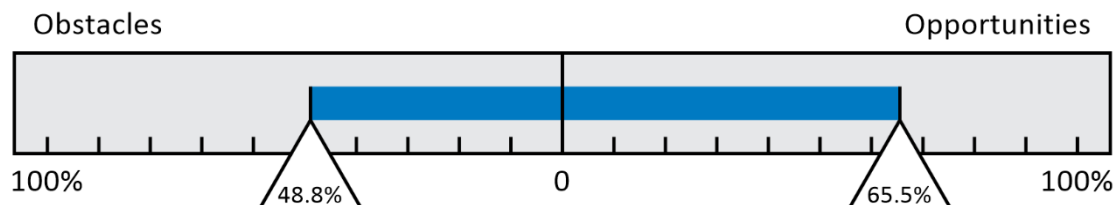
COMPARISON WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S SCORES

The median for the QO₂ is 2.2 compared to your score of 1.3.

Median Scores



Your Scores



You may be interested in how your scores compare with others who have answered the QO₂ Profile Questionnaire. The median scores of a development sample of 1000 respondents are shown by the top bar above. This data shows the importance of having a balance across the Opportunities-Obstacles dimension.

Of further interest is the norm data on the five sub-scales, which allows you to interpret your scores relative to other people. The lower quartile, median and upper quartile data are summarised below:

Sub-scales	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
MTG Energy	68%	77%	87%
Multi-Pathways	68%	77%	86%
Optimism	60%	70%	79%
Fault-Finding	21%	30%	40%
Time Focus	53%	63%	73%

Looking at the MTG Energy norms as an example, 25% of respondents had a score less than 68%, 50% of respondents had a score greater than 77%, and 25% of respondents had a score greater than 87%. A similar interpretation applies to the other sub-scales.



HOW TO BALANCE YOUR QO₂

GOALS

You are a person who may need more energy and persistence to pursue your goals. Because a high MTG Energy is aligned with seeing *and* seizing opportunities, it is important to develop it to a high level. You may well see the opportunities that come your way, but you may not always *seize* them. You probably need a significant increase in confidence to give you the determination to succeed in anything you try.

You may need to check whether the goals that you set for yourself offer the right degree of challenge. If goals are easy to achieve, then you may never reach your true potential. You may have an easy and enjoyable time as you work towards your goals, but sooner or later you will realise that more could have been done with your life. On the other hand it might be that you are setting goals that lie well beyond your capabilities. If this is the case, then no amount of rewards, or cajoling can help realise these goals. In this situation you may well find a reason to give up as soon as you can. If this occurs then your MTG Energy will be in decline. You should reflect on which of the two above possibilities may apply to you.

Goal setting is very important for personal development. Goals should be set that challenge and stretch the individual rather than those that are easy to reach or too far away. In sport the concept of the personal best sets the right goals. This can easily be extended to cover all parts of personal development. You need to determine your PB (personal best) in relation to your current workload and responsibilities and then set yourself challenges that will break your PB, even if by only a small amount. Initially, you should set goals that you know you can achieve. These can be short-term goals for a period of, say, one to three months. The achievement of these goals may then help to give you the confidence to set more ambitious and longer-term goals.

You could also improve your level of persistence. When obstacles occur, try not to give up too easily, but make yourself put in extra effort to solve the problems facing you. Just a small increase in your determination will pay big dividends.



HOW TO BALANCE YOUR QO₂ PATHWAYS

You will like to try new ideas at work, but may be cautious in case they fail. Occasionally, you might take a risky option, but only if all the alternatives have been thoroughly considered. Your scores on the Multi-Pathways sub-scale show that in general you will probably prefer a more traditional approach, focusing on tried and tested approaches rather than those that have no track record and therefore may be too risky.

You can be of great help to others in your organisation who might want to change the way of doing things without having thought through the risks. However, to improve results at work, try looking at different ways of carrying out your current projects. This will help you to feel more comfortable with generating alternative ways to achieve end results.

It is worth learning how to use the techniques for pathway generation, defined by the Multi-Pathway Generation Model. The four thinking modes of this model are described in the *Personal Discovery Workbook* accompanying this Profile and are summarised below.

ILB (Introverted Left Brain) thinking is a logical, sequential process that helps you determine the root cause of any obstacles. Once the root cause of the obstacle is found then a pathway can be built around it.

IRB (Introverted Right Brain) thinking is a technique to use when you have a mental block. It uses techniques like visual mapping and processes such as meditation or creative visualisation, often accompanied by appropriate music to help you break through pathway blockages.

ERB (Extroverted Right Brain) thinking uses the power of the group to generate many possible pathways that you might not have thought about yourself.

ELB (Extroverted Left Brain) thinking uses the group again but this time in an objective, critical, analytical way to determine which of many pathways actually have the best chance of working.



HOW TO BALANCE YOUR QO₂

TIME FOCUS

In relation to others, you have a Balanced time line, with a focus a bit more to the present and past, than the future. You may well put considerable effort into analysing your current situation before moving forward, but when things go wrong, you may have difficulties in putting the past behind you. There is no point in thinking too deeply about situations that have not met your expectations. When setbacks occur, you may need to develop resilience so that you can rebound from any adversity. Rather than thinking too deeply about failures, it is better to deal with them by talking to other people, who can help you to analyse what went wrong. Remember the saying, 'From every problem stems an opportunity'.

If something is worrying you, try putting your troubles behind you by using the time line swivelling technique. Imagine the problem you are facing right in front of you. Close your eyes and picture the problem. See it in all its detail, with sounds and colour. Then imagine wrapping it up and tying it tight with cord. Reach out with your imaginary hands and grab hold of the problem. With all your might hurl it back over your head far into the past so it can never return. Now imagine the future, as you would like it to be, in all its splendour. Try this imaging technique several times when you feel depressed and can't escape the feeling that your problems are permanent. Putting difficulties behind you using this imaging technique can help your problems to disappear. You have temporarily reversed your time line, with the future now in front of you and the past behind you.

With a Balanced time line, you may have some difficulties in imagining the future. Because you may not see what might be, as readily as others, you could have a fear of the unknown. If this is the case you may benefit from exercises that help you to 'imagine', to fantasise, to conjure up future possibilities in visual images. Techniques such as creative visualisation, free mental image stimulation, and those associated with Introverted Right Brain (IRB) thinking might help you. Having a Balanced time line, you can be of great help to those who spend their life living too much in the future. You can give them a grounding in reality. They, in turn, could help you become more comfortable with what 'might be' rather than 'what is'.



HOW TO BALANCE YOUR QO₂

OBSTACLES

When situations go wrong, we can attribute the cause to ourselves or to external events.

Opportunity-oriented people often attribute problems to external events whereas obstacle-oriented people sometimes blame setbacks on their own inadequacies. If you do tend to blame yourself when things go wrong, it may affect your willingness to take risks and explore opportunities. When this occurs, try to look instead at external events as the cause of the problem. Problems are rarely entirely caused by our own actions. External events constantly occur, over which we have no control. Try to identify these events. It will help you to become more positive.

When you achieve good results, reverse the scenario. Think to yourself, 'Yes, that was largely due to me, what else would I expect?' Many people become very positive in their outlook by applying one success to all other parts of their life.

When things go wrong, opportunity-oriented people attribute the cause to specific situations rather than generalising the problem, whereas obstacle-oriented people may attribute the failure to general causes. For example, if you made a serious mistake in proofreading you may be more likely to attribute the cause to a general fault of carelessness, whereas an opportunity-oriented person may say, "I hate proofreading so, of course, I am likely to make mistakes." Implicit in this statement is that mistake making is confined only to proofreading.

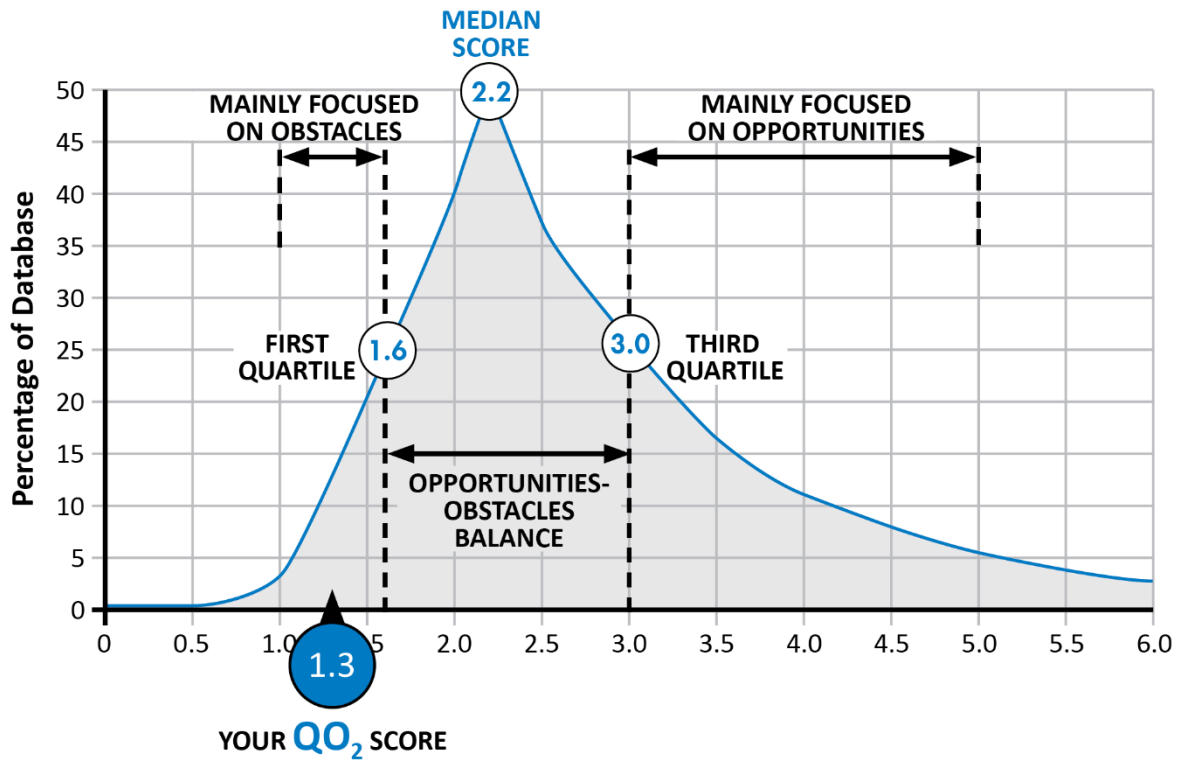
So when things go wrong, ask yourself if you are being general or specific when you try to find out why. If you are attributing the setback to a general fault in yourself, look carefully for the specific causes of the setback.

When major obstacles arise, do you sometimes find yourself thinking in great depth about the problem, reliving all the events that occurred? This is called 'running an internal dialogue' or simply, talking to yourself. While it is good to analyse problems so that they don't occur again, uncontrolled 'self-talk' can waste time and cause you to become even more stressed. If your 'self-talk' is negative, try replacing it with positive thoughts about yourself, your life and your work.



NORM DATA

For your information, some database reference material is presented below. This data shows the percentage of people sampled who have QO₂ scores higher than the value listed.



The norm data shows that for a development sample of people across a number of job functional areas, 25% have a QO₂ lower than 1.6. As your QO₂ is less than or equal to 1.6, you are unlikely to be influenced by over-enthusiastic colleagues who may see opportunities everywhere. You will want to carefully check that all possible obstacles have been identified and considered before moving forward. This is a great strength at work as you can help others to avoid pitfalls and costly mistakes.

If you want to achieve a better balance in your QO₂, you could look at how to further develop your skills in 'seeing opportunities', as indicated in the section 'How to Balance Your QO₂'. If you are already implementing this advice, you are well on the way to balancing the risks in any decision you take.



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