THE PRESENT / PART ONE

Understanding *your faults.*

Notice the patterns that hold you back, and make room for a different way forward.



THE COMPACT GUIDE

60-90 minutes / at your own pace

All the guidance. Your own notebook.

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A LITTLE ORIENTATION

Inside these pages

Follow the exercises in order, then repeat the worksheets for the traits, goals, or experiences you choose.

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GETTING STARTED

Before you begin

Notice the patterns that hold you back, and make room for a different way forward.

This is a space for you. Write honestly, at your own pace. Take a break and return whenever you are ready. Suggested lengths and times are guides, not deadlines.

> Print this compact guide and write in your own notebook. Label each answer with its exercise title, and keep related worksheets together.

These pages work entirely on paper. No account or internet connection is needed after downloading. Keep your completed pages somewhere private.

Your path through this program

01 Understand your patterns

02 Choose what matters

03 Reflect & find a way forward

> Select traits from each category, narrow your choices, and put them in priority order. Repeat the three reflection exercises for every trait you decide to explore.

GETTING STARTED

A little background

To complete the following exercise, there are a number of things that are useful to know (you may have encountered this information previously if you have completed the faults analysis exercise, but it might be worthwhile to review it):

Everybody's personality is composed of two higher-order traits. The first higher-order trait is known as plasticity, and can be thought of as the tendency to be flexible, exploratory, curious and quick to adapt. The second higher-order trait is known as stability, and can be thought of as the tendency to be structured, organized, emotionally stable and focused.

A little background / continued

Plasticity

Plasticity, the first higher-order trait, can be further broken down into two sub-traits: Extraversion (the tendency to be enthusiastic and dominant) and Openness (the tendency to be open-minded and intelligent).

Extraversion (Outgoing vs Reserved)

- Sociable
- Active
- Adventurousness
- Positive
- Excitement-Seeking
- Gregarious

Openness (Original vs Traditional)

- Fantasy-prone
- Aesthetically-minded
- Philosophical
- Creative
- Intuitive
- Intellectual

Stability

Stability, the second higher-order trait, can be further broken down into three sub-traits: Conscientiousness (the tendency to be orderly and industrious), Emotional Stability (lack of negative emotional volatility and the tendency to withdraw), and Agreeableness (politeness and compassion, as opposed to belligerence or aggression).

A little background / continued

Conscientiousness (Conscientious vs Carefree)

- Competent
- Orderly
- Decisive
- Achievement-oriented
- Self-disciplined
- Deliberate
- Industrious

Emotional Stability (Calm vs Nervous)

- Anxious (reversed)
- Angry (reversed)
- Hostile (reversed)
- Depressed (reversed)
- Self-Conscious (reversed)
- Vulnerable (reversed)

Agreeableness (Agreeable vs Assertive/Aggressive)

- Warm
- Trusting
- Straightforward
- Altruistic
- Modest
- Compliant
- Tender-minded
- Nice

Impact of Personality Traits

There are advantages and disadvantages to each trait, particularly at the extremes. Extremely sociable, extraverted people can be dominant and impulsive, while introverted, quiet people can easily become isolated and depressed. Extremely open people can be scattered and overwhelmed by their own thoughts and ideas, while closed-minded people may become narrow and inflexible. Exceptionally conscientious people can be obsessive about order, judgmental and rigid, while their more carefree counterparts may be messy, undisciplined and careless. People very high in emotional stability may engage in risky, dangerous behavior, while those who are more neurotic can become so preoccupied by anxiety and pain that they are unable to function. Finally, extremely agreeable people may never stand up for themselves, while those who are too assertive can be aggressive, callous and bullying.

Change

Personality is reasonably stable over the lifespan, and is also powerfully influenced by hereditary or genetic factors. Despite this, personality can broaden or even transform. As people age, for example, they tend to become more agreeable, conscientious and emotionally stable.
Changing personality means changing habits of action, presumption and perception. Personality change requires the formulation of clear future goals, as well as discipline and practice. People who are too agreeable can learn to stand up for themselves. Disorderly people can become more conscientious. Introverted people can become socially skilled. People who experience paralyzing levels of negative emotion can learn to explore.

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Extraversion/Introversion

Choose 2-10 habits that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Sometimes act without thinking
- [ ] Can spend too much money
- [ ] May dominate the conversation excessively
- [ ] Could be a better listener
- [ ] May attract too much attention to myself
- [ ] Sometimes talk too loudly
- [ ] May exaggerate the truth
- [ ] Find it difficult to spend time alone
- [ ] May spend too much time pursuing fun and excitement
- [ ] Do not let the quieter people have a chance to talk

Extraversion/Introversion / continued

- [ ] Try too hard to be the center of attention
- [ ] May be too dependent on the admiration or attention of others
- [ ] Talk about myself a lot
- [ ] Keep in the background
- [ ] Lose opportunities because I am too isolated
- [ ] Find it difficult to approach others
- [ ] Bottle up my feelings
- [ ] Wait for others to lead the way
- [ ] Am not very enthusiastic
- [ ] Have a difficult time starting conversations
- [ ] Can be too theatrical or dramatic
- [ ] Can be a little grandiose
- [ ] Often feel uncomfortable around others
- [ ] Have too little to say
- [ ] Am too quiet around strangers
- [ ] Don't laugh much or have fun
- [ ] Am a very private person
- [ ] Feel drained by social interactions
- [ ] Could be more socially skilled
- [ ] Have a social circle that is too small

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Openness/Traditionalism

Choose 2-10 habits that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Pursue too many activities at the same time
- [ ] Have a hard time planning for the future because I am interested in everything
- [ ] Sometimes see meaning in things that probably isn't there
- [ ] Have a hard time making up my mind because I can always see all the sides of an argument
- [ ] Can become possessed by an idea
- [ ] Sometimes every thought I have immediately suggests an overwhelming number of ideas
- [ ] Have had a hard time forming a clear identity
- [ ] Am interested in so many things that I don't know what to focus on
- [ ] Am sometimes attracted by ideas that are radical but have not been thought through
- [ ] Jump around too much from topic to topic when I am talking to people
- [ ] Am so interested in creative activities that it is hard to concentrate on things that are practical
- [ ] Daydream too much
- [ ] Have had experiences or thoughts that were strange enough to frighten me
- [ ] See connections between things too easily

Openness/Traditionalism / continued

- [ ] Have done crazy things just because I was curious about what might happen
- [ ] Am seldom interested in abstract, philosophical ideas
- [ ] Do not attend movies or plays
- [ ] Do not care for change
- [ ] Do not like to read challenging material
- [ ] Seldom seek out new experiences
- [ ] Will not probe deeply into a subject
- [ ] Tend to think that creative people are strange
- [ ] Am good at a too-narrow range of things
- [ ] Avoid sophisticated fiction and stories
- [ ] Am unimaginative
- [ ] Do not involve myself in creative activities
- [ ] Do not really understand or value art
- [ ] Try to avoid complex people
- [ ] Am unlikely to initiate a new project
- [ ] Always do things the same way once I have learned how to do them

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Conscientiousness/Carelessness

Choose 2-10 habits that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Am too perfectionistic
- [ ] Insist that everything be in perfect order
- [ ] Have to plan everything
- [ ] Cannot stand to be late for an appointment
- [ ] Can be very judgemental
- [ ] Will work on a project beyond what is useful and necessary
- [ ] Always believe that failure is a consequence of insufficient personal effort
- [ ] Can be contemptuous of other people and of myself
- [ ] Don't like to tidy up
- [ ] Make a mess of things
- [ ] Get obsessed with details and lose the big picture
- [ ] Dislike deviation from the rules, even when it is necessary
- [ ] Seriously dislike having my routine or schedule upset
- [ ] Feel that I am being unproductive if I relax
- [ ] Get upset at myself when I misplace something
- [ ] Believe that I have to be flawless
- [ ] Cannot tolerate having to finish a task imperfectly or quickly
- [ ] Do things in a half-way manner
- [ ] Find it difficult to get down to work
- [ ] Leave my belongings around

Conscientiousness/Carelessness / continued

- [ ] Surf the web or watch TV or waste time in other ways even if I have a project due
- [ ] Neglect my duties
- [ ] Often procrastinate
- [ ] Am sometimes willing to bend the truth to get out of an obligation
- [ ] Have few clearly defined goals
- [ ] Am without real ambition
- [ ] Frequently make excuses
- [ ] Waste my time
- [ ] Feel unmotivated to complete my work
- [ ] Have no stable daily routine for sleeping or eating

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Emotional Stability/Low Stress Tolerance

Choose 2-10 habits that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Am sometimes not afraid of things I should be afraid of
- [ ] Might have done fewer stupid things if I felt shame more often
- [ ] Am easy-going to a fault
- [ ] Don't appear to learn as well from my mistakes as others do
- [ ] Don't worry about things that should bother me
- [ ] Am sometimes too calm about things
- [ ] Criticism, even when warranted, does not seem to affect me
- [ ] Do not seem to benefit from negative feedback
- [ ] Am frequently irritable or angry
- [ ] Am too self-conscious for my own good
- [ ] Have found myself in dangerous situations because I was not paying attention
- [ ] Things that should bother me don't seem to
- [ ] Sometimes think if I was more worried about things I might do better in life
- [ ] Can do careless or inappropriate things without seeming to experience guilt
- [ ] Don't pay enough attention to costs and potential future dangers
- [ ] Am often too optimistic
- [ ] Often take counterproductive or unnecessary risks
- [ ] Am easily disturbed and upset
- [ ] Am too moody and emotionally unstable
- [ ] Blow little things out of proportion

Emotional Stability/Low Stress Tolerance / continued

- [ ] Feel ashamed of my body
- [ ] Feel inadequate when introduced to new people
- [ ] Compare myself unfavorably to other people
- [ ] Grumble and complain about things
- [ ] Let my fears stop me from doing things I want to do
- [ ] Feel hurt often, even by little things
- [ ] Feel too fearful, afraid and anxious
- [ ] Get stressed out easily
- [ ] Have a hard time calming down after becoming upset
- [ ] Often feel depressed and blue

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Agreeable/Assertive

Choose 2-10 habits that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Avoid conflict even when it is necessary
- [ ] Cannot negotiate for myself very well
- [ ] Can bottle up my feelings until I become resentful
- [ ] Am polite to a fault
- [ ] Find myself too upset after I have a conflict with someone
- [ ] Am sometimes dominated by other people
- [ ] Trust people too easily
- [ ] Am loyal to a fault
- [ ] Can be indifferent to the feelings of others
- [ ] Am too suspicious of other people's motives
- [ ] Can be detached and cold when others are hurt and upset
- [ ] Don't generally show gratitude
- [ ] Am willing to manipulate others for personal gain
- [ ] Find myself making excuses for other's inappropriate behavior
- [ ] Will sacrifice my own feelings for the comfort of others
- [ ] Can be overly sentimental
- [ ] Feel sorry for people who may not deserve it
- [ ] Would probably help me if I could be more competitive
- [ ] Don't know how to deal with mean people
- [ ] Find myself believing that people are basically good, even when there is evidence to the contrary
- [ ] Have a hot temper
- [ ] Am not interested in other people's problems
- [ ] Will charm people to get my way
- [ ] Am quite critical of others
- [ ] Can be vengeful
- [ ] Infrequently help others

Agreeable/Assertive / continued

- [ ] Insult people
- [ ] Can be aggressive and domineering
- [ ] Tend to always put myself first
- [ ] Could be better at cooperating

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Choose what matters most

Choose 2-20 of your selected traits to explore. We suggest 6-9. Each one will have three short reflections.

> Refer back to the traits you checked in the category lists. Write your final selection below, or in your notebook.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Put your priorities in order

List the traits that matter most to you at the top. You can change this order later.

> Write your chosen traits from most to least important. Use this order for the reflection worksheets.

REPEAT FOR EACH CHOSEN TRAIT

Describe an experience

> Use this exercise for every selected trait, working in priority order.

Please write a short story about a time when this fault created a situation that had a negative impact on your life. Approximately 1,000 characters is a useful starting point.

REPEAT FOR EACH CHOSEN TRAIT

An alternative outcome

> Use this exercise for every selected trait, working in priority order.

What might you have done differently in that situation to minimize the effect of this fault?

REPEAT FOR EACH CHOSEN TRAIT

A way forward

> Use this exercise for every selected trait, working in priority order.

How could you work on improving this pattern in general, so that similar situations do not repeat themselves?

YOUR FINAL REFLECTION

A moment to look back

Read through your pages. You can revisit any answer as your perspective changes.

What do you understand more clearly now?

What is one small step you want to take next?

Before you put these pages away

- [ ] I have worked through the exercises I chose.
- [ ] I have reviewed my reflections.
- [ ] I have chosen a next step.
- [ ] I have put my pages somewhere private.