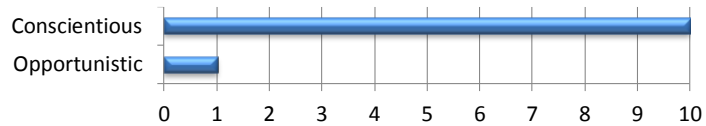


Alison is a middle manager at a production facility. She manages a team of 8 Team Leaders. Her Expert Guide on the Conscientious personality dimension shows the following:



She has been reading her Expert Guide daily for the past week and has decided to begin with the Increasing Insight and Self - Awareness exercises.

1. Increasing Insight and Self - Awareness

Increase Insight

Change always begins with learning more about yourself and becoming more self - aware. As we emphasised in Module 3 you should carefully read your Expert Guide on a DAILY basis. Then, when you are ready you should begin to answer the following questions to increase your insight into how this trait possibly affects your behavior:

Sidebars - in the pages that follow you will find sidebars that provide explanatory notes on the self - awareness exercises

How is your tendency to be Conscientious working for you in your job?

I find that planning ahead helps me to anticipate problems before they arise. As a result my team is prepared for contingencies. I think the fact that I make sure that tasks are structured and that I make a point of follow - up and follow - through not only ensures that tasks are executed on time, but also helps me to establish credibility with my colleagues and customers.

Many of the counterproductive behaviors associated with being Conscientious have been discussed in the Expert Guide. Which of them apply to you?

I do find that at times I focus too much on the detail. Sometimes I get the feeling that my Team Managers resent me. If I'm honest with myself it's probably because I micro - manage them. I think it's also because I can be inflexible.

Sidebar

Because there are many productive behaviors associated with a personality dimension, we include this step because it is helpful to remind yourself of the productive uses of your personality, and how you apply them.

Sidebar

Initially you will probably find that many of the counterproductive behaviors listed in your Expert Guide are only in your PERIPHERAL AWARENESS. Continued reading of the Expert Guide and repeated "applications" of the self - awareness exercises will help you to bring them into you CENTRAL AWARENESS and enable you to take OWNERSHIP of them.

How does this constrain your effectiveness as a leader?

I've never really thought about this. I have always seen my conscientiousness as a strong point. But the Expert Guide is making me question my assumption and I have to consider that it perhaps works against me as well. I think I should ask my team members whether I micromanage them and am inflexible and what effect this has on them. Again if I am honest, I have to admit that I don't like being micromanaged. It makes me feel like I am being treated like a child. I know it's childish but in retaliation I am tempted to not give my best when that happens. When my manager is inflexible and insists on sticking to the rules when there is a good case for bending or breaking I find it highly frustrating and demotivating. It drains my energy. Perhaps I sometimes have the same effect on my team leaders, although I'm not sure when I micromanage and am inflexible.

Sidebar

Once again, this may not initially be apparent. However as the counterproductive behaviors come more into focus with repeated use of the Expert Guide, you will automatically begin catching yourself engaging in them. This will enable you to step back and engage in METACOGNITION and REFLECTION. This means simply distancing yourself from yourself, and thinking about what you are thinking and doing. These are key processes for developing EQ. Admittedly insights do not always come easily, and so we strongly encourage you to, like Alison, have the courage to ask people how your behavior is impacting on you.

Increase Self - Awareness

Observe your own behavior at work for a few days. Make a check next to the counterproductive behaviors you have become aware of.

Counterproductive Behaviors	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Inflexible	x x	x	x x x x	x x	x
Over – structuring tasks					
Perfectionism					
Micro - Management	x x	x x x x x	x x x x	x x x x x x x	x x x x x x
Getting lost in the detail					

Sidebar

A useful method for you to become more aware of your counterproductive behaviors at work, is to keep a daily diary like the one Alison has used on the left. Perhaps the most practical way to implement this is to print the table out and keep it on your person. Then select one or two of the counterproductive behaviors listed, and make a check in the box every time you become aware of using it. This will help you to see in what situations you use it, and also how it affects you and those you work with.

Make notes on how these Counterproductive Behaviors constrained your effectiveness.

I printed out this table and kept it in my pocket for the entire week. I decided to focus on me possibly being inflexible and micromanaging people. At first I was not that aware of these behaviors. However after the first few times of catching myself I began to notice more and more how I was guilty of these behaviors. I began to realise that micromanagement especially was a problem. I became aware that when I delegated tasks or when people asked me if they could do something, I wanted to know all the details or tell them exactly what that should do and how they should do it. At first I didn't notice it, but later I starting picking up on people's reactions - the emotional cues they were giving me in their body language. Some just seem to switch off and just go through the motions with me. Others became annoyed but tried to hide it. Some team managers challenged me on a few points but I still insisted on things being done my way. So maybe I am inflexible. Overall, I think my effectiveness was constrained in various ways. Micromanaging took up a lot of my time that I could have spent on other important tasks. Secondly, I was not empowering people to do things - instead I was taking over and thinking for them, so next time they will need my input again instead of relying on their own initiative. I am thinking that the biggest cost though was in terms of motivation and initiative. I could see that often my staff were doing things because I expected it of them, and not with enthusiasm or adding their own initiative. This has got me thinking about what opportunities are being missed and what the financial cost of this is to the company...

Sidebar

Making notes on how counterproductive behaviors worked against you is a great way for you to find the MOTIVATION to change. Usually we pay a price for them and when we start to identify what it is, we are energised to change. Remember the article on developing new habits? Eliminating counterproductive behaviors is rewarding because over time it makes your job easier and more enjoyable.