

knowing our **TENDENCIES**

SELF AWARENESS SERIES





knowing our TENDENCIES

We all have tendencies. Speaking up too much—or not enough. Reacting too quickly—or too slowly. Promising too much—or not enough. Knowing we have a strong tendency allows us to compensate for it in situations where that particular tendency decreases the chance of the best thing happening.

It's important to know the tendencies of our colleagues. What seems foreign to us may seem entirely natural for them. Tendencies are often at the root of difficult relationships and why we struggle to find common ground and move ahead together. Knowing someone has a strong tendency that's opposite of ours allows us to approach the situation taking that into account.

The maps on the right illustrate a range of tendencies. The first map shows balance. The second and third show a moderate tendency one way or the other. The fourth and fifth show a strong tendency one way or the other.

Sometimes we may have one tendency most of the time, but express its opposite in certain circumstances. This is illustrated in the sixth and seventh maps.

Each of the tendencies described on the following pages has a blank map so you can illustrate yours.

BALANCED A/B



TENDENCY A



TENDENCY B



STRONG TENDENCY A



STRONG TENDENCY B



STRONG TENDENCY A WITH OCCASIONAL OPPOSITE



STRONG TENDENCY B WITH OCCASIONAL OPPOSITE



CONTROL



CONTROL TOO LITTLE

CONTROL TOO MUCH



Control is how we influence our environment. If we control too much, the best possibilities won't flourish, and we end up with a stripped-down version of what *could have been*. If we control too little, the fundamental matrix needed for creation never takes form, and our creative impulses don't have an adequate theater of expression. Fear is often the basis of both undercontrolling and overcontrolling. Our fear of loss creates a strong desire to overcontrol. If we are not *right on top of it*—absolutely all of the time—it's probably going to get away from us. And our fear of inadequacy creates a strong impulse to undercontrol. Since we may not have what it takes—or it may not be our place—let's leave it to someone else.

DEFERRING



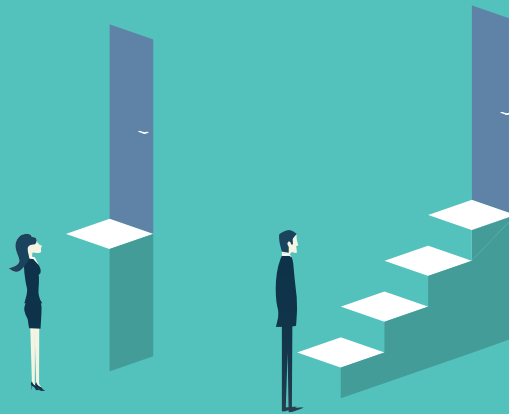
DEFER TOO LITTLE

DEFER TOO MUCH



Deferring to others allows them to lead, rely on their knowledge, or have the stage. When we defer *too much*, we may assume others know best even though *we do*. Or let others lead when we are best suited because it's easier—or because we don't feel it's our place. When we defer *too little*, we may assume our position is superior in situations where *it's not*. Or always reach for the reins resulting in others not contributing where they easily could—or gaining experience they need to become exceptional.

EQUALITY & PARITY



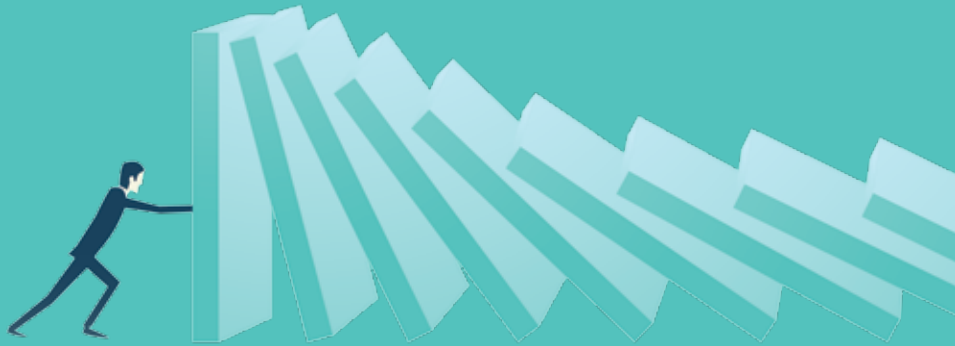
OVERVALUE EQUALITY

OVERVALUE PARITY



Equality is about the *same amount*—parity is about the *right amount*. Equality is important because it creates fairness by giving everyone access to the same thing. We seek to make things equal to design out bias or favoritism. Parity is important because it creates fairness by giving everyone what is most appropriate when you take everything into account. We seek to level the playing field by creating opportunities and rewards after viewing the situation from the broadest perspective. When we overvalue equality, we may insist on policies and protocols that seem fair when drawing the circle one way, but are not fair if you draw the circle larger. When we overvalue parity, we may reward or exempt individuals after viewing the situation from a more holistic perspective, but ultimately dilute the power of protocol and policy—and create the appearance of favoritism or discrimination. It's easier to agree on equality than parity. What seems like parity to one person may seem incongruous to another.

PUSHING



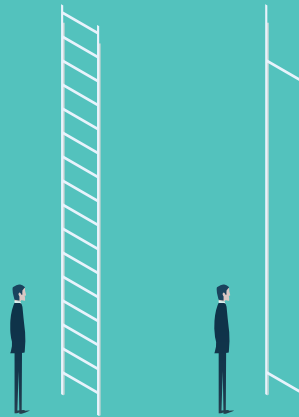
PUSH TOO LITTLE

PUSH TOO MUCH



Pushing is how we exert force and get things moving—it's how we influence the balance point between *something* happening and *nothing* happening. Or how we redirect what's off course. If we push too much, we might compel someone to act before they are ready, or insist they pursue a course of action before they understand its merit and meaning. If we push too little, people who work for us may stay too far inside their comfort zone, and they may not have the fire to pursue what they assume is slightly out of reach. Pushing too little can also result in missing vital windows of opportunity or averting negative consequences in situations where quick and distinct action is essential.

STEPS



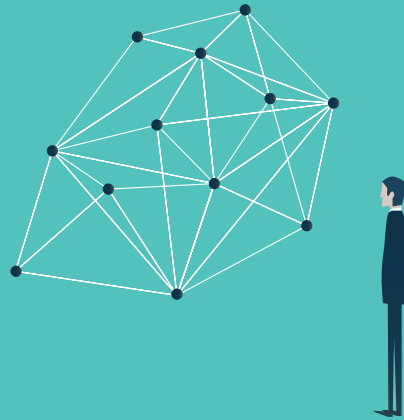
TAKE STEPS THAT ARE TOO SMALL

TAKE STEPS THAT ARE TOO BIG



Big steps allow us to accomplish a lot in a short period of time. Small steps allow us to eventually accomplish the seemingly impossible. Taking steps that are too small burns time and resources and keeps us from reaching the destination in time. Taking steps that are too big creates risk when we miss something essential or fail because we've overestimated our ability. When we overvalue the security of small steps, we accomplish a lot of the ordinary, but are unable to stretch towards the extraordinary. When we overvalue the promise of big steps, we are fueled by one big win and then unwisely leap for one after another that is simply out of reach.

POTENCY & SCOPE



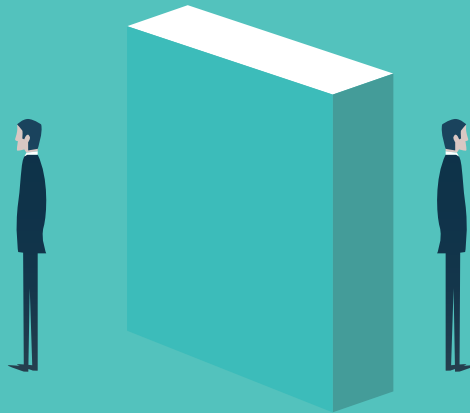
DO A FEW THINGS PERFECTLY

DO MANY THINGS SUFFICIENTLY



Sometimes, doing a few things *really well* makes a big impact. Other times, doing many things *pretty well* makes a big impact. Refining a few things allows us to harness the potential of potency. Doing many things allows us to harness the potential of scope. Having a strong preference for potency over scope sometimes leads to the error of over-concentration or over-accentuation—we channel our energies, resources, and attention to only one thing at the expense of everything related to it. Having a strong preference for scope over potency sometimes leads to the error of diffusion or dilution—we don't build, clarify, and refine something enough to unleash its potential. A strong preference towards potency can lead to missed windows of opportunity as we insist on making something a little better, and a little better yet—until it's no longer relevant. A strong preference towards scope can lead to surface accomplishments without the depth for things to endure.

BOUNDARIES



UNDERVALUE BOUNDARIES

OVERVALUE BOUNDARIES



Boundaries mediate the space between *us* and the *other*. Overvaluing boundaries keeps us from entering the mix because we don't think it's our place to jump in. It also limits our creative potential and keeps us from opening up to wild and unfamiliar possibilities. Undervaluing boundaries creates resistance, as others feel we aren't respecting their space. It also allows elements and impulses from others to affect or muddle us in unhelpful ways. Ideally, we create boundaries that are context intelligent. This means having more distinct boundaries at some times, and opening up in ways that make us uncomfortable at other times.

CONSIDERATE & FRANK



BE TOO CONSIDERATE

BE TOO FRANK



Being considerate minimizes the chance of a negative reaction because we take the needs of others into account. Being frank maximizes the chance that other people know where we stand because we are simply and directly stating the thing as we see it. When we are too considerate, we may not say something important because it might upset the other person or cause them to react negatively. When we are too frank, we may offend someone and jeopardize the *whole of the relationship* for the sake of bringing clarity to *just one thing*.

HEART & HEAD



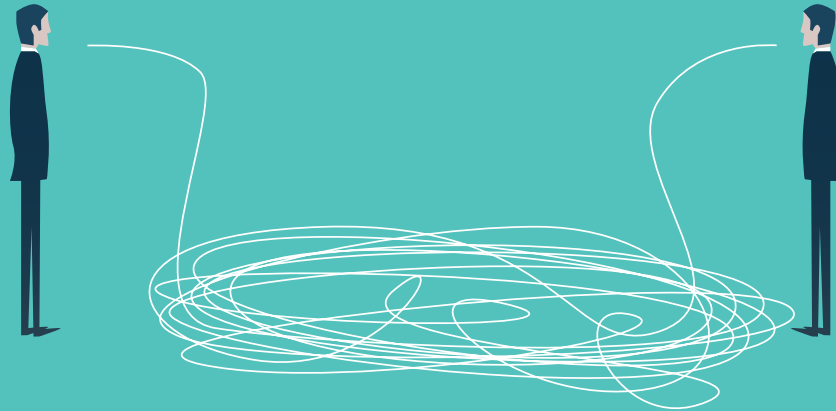
LEAD WITH HEART

LEAD WITH HEAD



Heart-forward leaders ignite passion in others, are magnetic, and create enthusiasm by giving people a *sense of the thing*. Head-forward leaders create clarity in others, inspire with vision, and create enthusiasm by giving people a *comprehension of the thing*. When we are too heart-forward, we may inspire others to leap toward something that's untenable, and enthusiasm wanes as practicalities are taken into account. When we are too head-forward, we may convince people of the merit of an idea, but lose people's enthusiasm because they don't feel moved.

SPEAKING UP

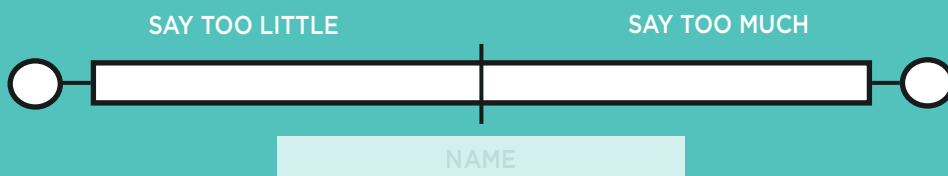
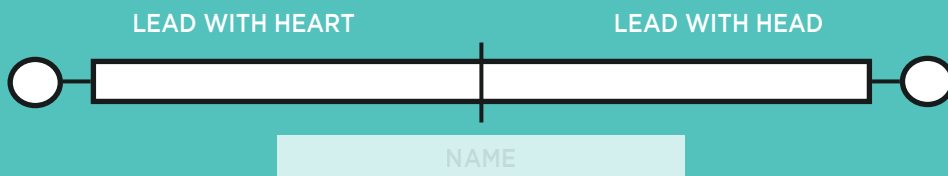
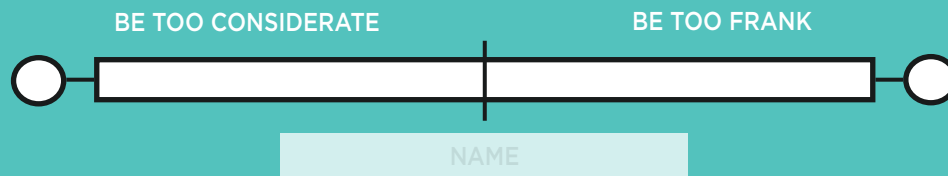
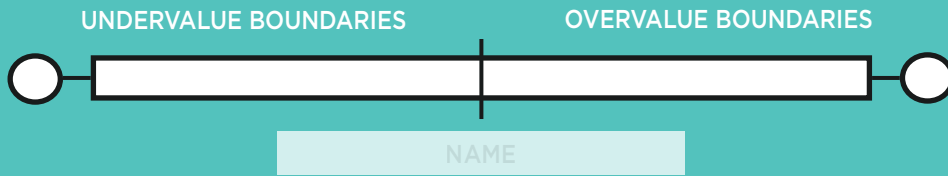
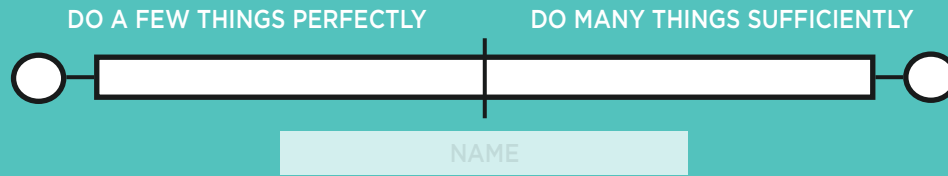


SAY TOO LITTLE

SAY TOO MUCH



Most teams have individuals more likely to jump into the conversation than others. When we speak too often or interject too quickly, we stifle the contribution of others who are less comfortable jumping in. And when we say too little or hesitate to interject, the group doesn't benefit from our wisdom and unique point of view. It's important for teams to develop a sensitivity to the way each person tends to enter the conversation or stay on the sidelines. Knowing each other's tendency allows us to create the conditions to draw insight from every person. This means that some learn to pause more before speaking than seems natural, and others learn to step in more quickly and abruptly, even if it's uncomfortable.



THIS MAP BELONGS TO



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