



mapping **TENDENCIES**
SELF AWARENESS SERIES



understanding our **TENDENCIES**

Abilities often have a polar opposite—a complement. We may express one quality most of the time, but not express its opposite (top two maps on right). Or we may not express either quality strongly, but bring a mix of both (middle map). It's even possible to express one pole most of the time, and express a concentrated aspect of the opposite pole every once in a while (bottom two maps).

It's important to know our tendencies and the tendencies of our colleagues. For example, one section of this tool explores the polar complements of being literal and being symbolic. If you tend to be highly literal, you may miss something essential in a situation beyond what's most easily seen. Knowing this tendency, you can compensate by creating a discipline around pausing and asking questions about context and connectivity. Or, knowing this tendency, you can enlist someone with a highly-developed symbolic pole to offer a complementary perspective.

This tool uses the sophistication of the yin-yang symbol to help you map tendencies. Take time to examine the example maps on the right, and then proceed to map each of the eight polar qualities described in the subsequent pages.

making a **MAP**



TENDENCY A



BALANCED A/B



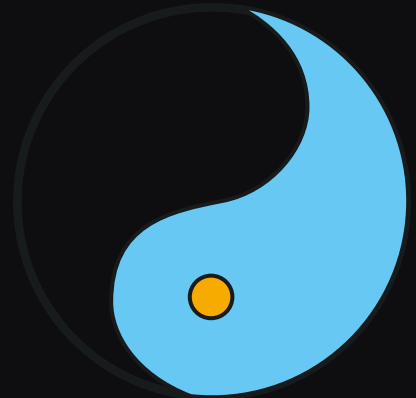
TENDENCY B

TENDENCY A
OCCASIONAL POLARIZED B



POLARIZED A & B

TENDENCY B
OCCASIONAL POLARIZED A



STAGING



PRECIPITATING

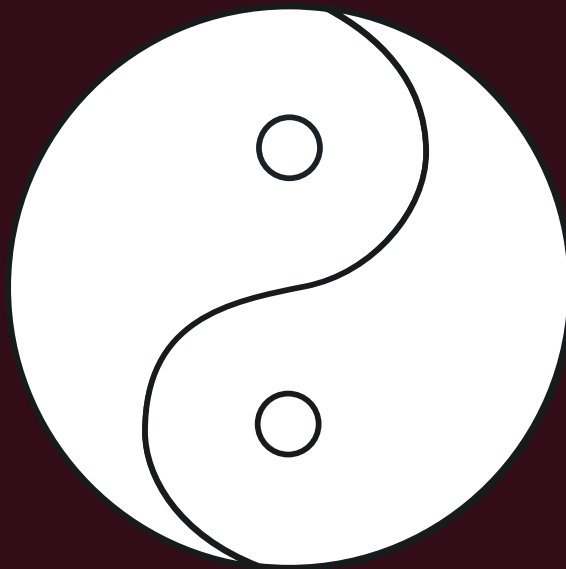
WHY IT MATTERS

STAGING: Good stagers understand all the individual things necessary to create something as well as the context necessary to get the best result. They are skilled at sequencing and tend to apply constant effort over time.

PRECIPITATING: Good precipitators are intrigued with quickly releasing the potential in any situation or system. They are skilled at providing the missing ingredient and often generate bursts of energies.

THE MIX: Having a mix of both polarities unleashes and attracts resources that accelerate your projects. But not having a strong *staging polarity* often limits the scope and complexity of more material projects. And not having a strong *precipitating polarity* often slows things down and misses the intrinsic potentials.

my tendency



APPLIED



CONCEPTUAL

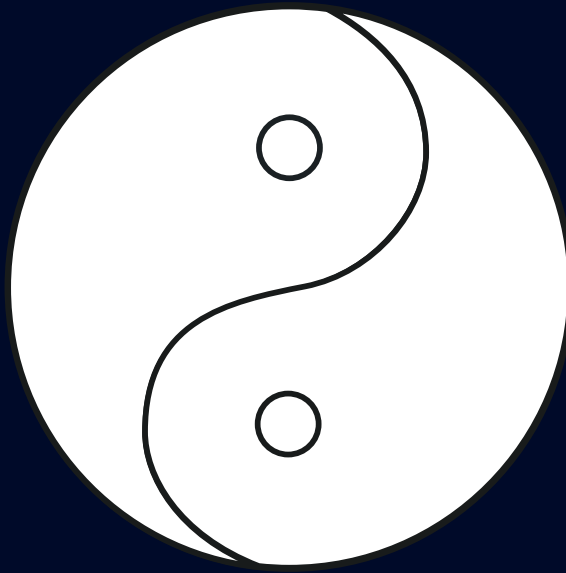
WHY IT MATTERS

APPLIED: A strong applied ability allows you to create things that are touchable, repeatable, and easily experienced. It's the skill of representing an idea in material form. People who tend to be highly applied get a sense of satisfaction from making something practical.

CONCEPTUAL: A strong conceptual ability allows you to experience something more fully as an idea than as a material form. It's the skill of resonating with the highest potential in a person, place, or situation and embodying the subtle corresponding forms. People who have a tendency to be highly conceptual get a sense of satisfaction from simply imagining something, and they usually possess a heightened sense of how *one thing* connects to *another thing*.

THE MIX: Having a mix of both polarities allows you to bring more of the essential nature of an idea into material form. But not having strong applied polarity results in some of the best ideas never taking a form others experience. And not having a strong conceptual pole results in building material forms devoid of the *soul of the idea*.

my tendency



REDUCTIONISM



HOLISM

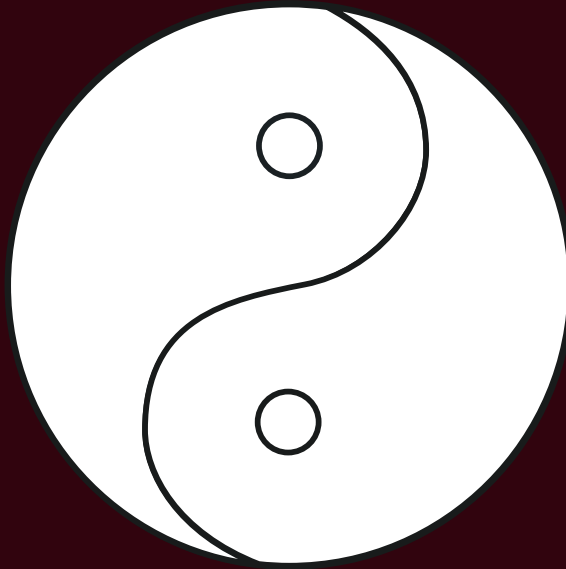
WHY IT MATTERS

REDUCTIONISM: Reductionists are good at taking the complex and complicated and reducing it to the perfect arrangement of individual parts and principles. They are logical, quick-thinking, and are annoyed by cloudy, nonsensical thinking. They often use expressions like *where the rubber meets the road* or *let's get to the bottom line*. Scientists are often skilled reductionists.

HOLISM: Holists are good at understanding how *any one thing* relates to *everything*. They notice subtle patterns most others miss and assume all action happens in concert—nothing can truly be done alone. They tend to react more slowly to the disruptive behaviors of others and seek to understand the larger context in which the behavior makes sense. Holists tend to be non-competitive and are often thought revolutionaries in society.

THE MIX: Having a mix of both polarities allows you to become the practical visionary—spanning from the old world to the new world. But not having a strong reductionism pole may cause you to get swept up in untenable, or even dangerous, ideas. And not having a strong holism pole may end in a prison of your *rightness*—isolated from everything around you.

my tendency



THINKING



INTUITING

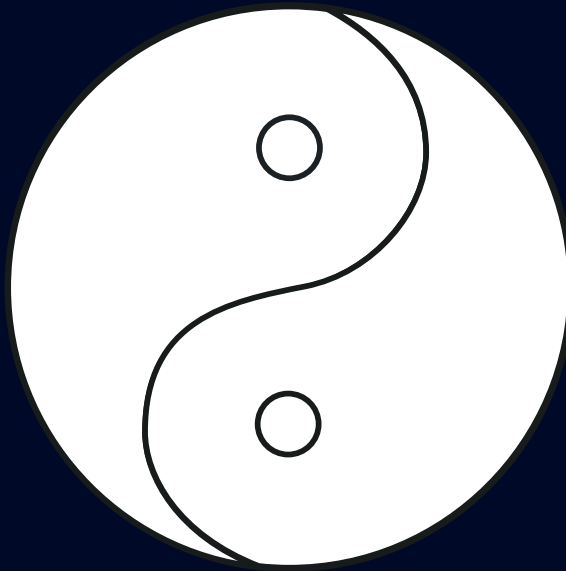
WHY IT MATTERS

THINKING: Thinkers use cognitive ability to navigate the world. They rely on information from the five senses and are good at *synthesis*. Skilled thinkers are disciplined around incorporating new information in the context of their existing worldview. When offering an insight, they usually begin with *I think*.

INTUITING: Intuitives use their capacity of knowing to navigate the world. They rely on information beyond the five senses and are good at *receiving*. Skilled intuitives are disciplined around incorporating every subtle sense of something into a dynamic and rapidly-evolving perception. When offering an insight, they usually begin with *I sense* or *I feel*.

THE MIX: Having a mix of these polarities allows you to harness both thinking and intuiting to accomplish what neither can alone. But not having a strong thinking pole makes navigating life's ordinary realities difficult. And not having a strong intuiting pole results in missing the most important nuances of life. Weakness in either creates its own naïveté.

my tendency



REALISM



IDEALISM

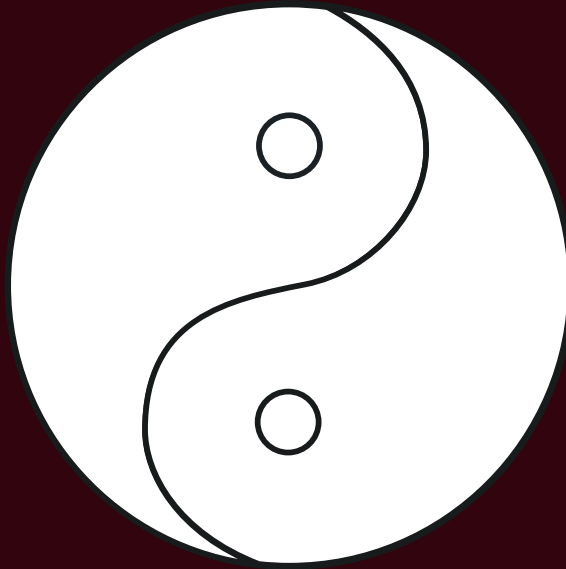
WHY IT MATTERS

REALISM: Realists are quick to accept the *situation as it is*—right now. They embrace the seemingly inevitable, but continue to work for the best outcomes. Visionary realists design around the knowns of a situation to create something that furthers the state of the art. But they are clear about boundaries, resource limitations, or political dynamics.

IDEALISM: Idealists are quick to embrace the *situation as it could be*—even if it seems entirely unrealistic right now. Visionary idealists design around their *sense of a situation* and often seek to bring an unthinkable first-of-its-kind to the world. They tend to be less concerned with boundaries, resource limitations, or political dynamics.

THE MIX: A posture of balance between realism and idealism can result in either the best or worst of both worlds. In the best world, you create things that slightly exceed your wildest imagination, but must exhibit some degree of faith because all of the steps from here to there cannot be known. In the worst world, you are paralyzed by a seeming unspannable gap between the *way things are* and the *way things could be*.

my tendency



LITERAL



SYMBOLIC

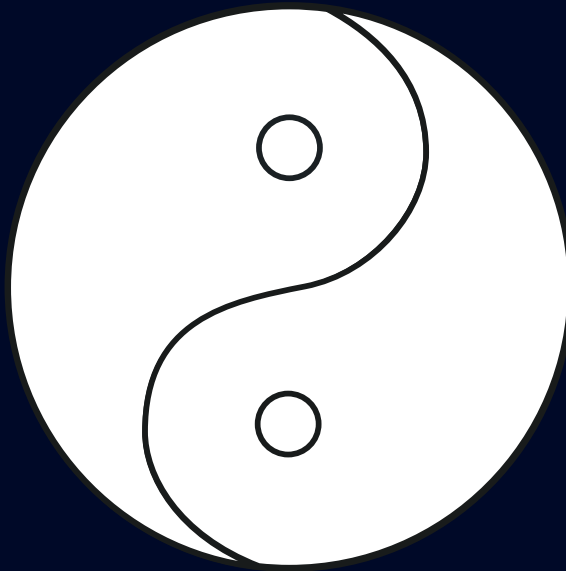
WHY IT MATTERS

LITERAL: A literal view of the world interprets events at face value—a thing is usually what it appears to be. Literal thinkers love Occam’s razor—*the simplest explanation tends to be the best*. Literal thinkers are less subject to paranoia or conspiracy theories. And they often quickly analyze complex situations and plot a common-sense way forward.

SYMBOLIC: A symbolic view of the world interprets events at face value at the beginning, but quickly looks for deeper meanings that may connect it to other events. Symbolic thinkers love the phrase *a thing is what it is and is always symbolic of something else*. So they often change course after taking something into account that is out of view for more literal thinkers.

THE MIX: Having a mix of both poles allows you to act quickly and cleanly in ordinary circumstances, but affords insight into more extraordinary circumstances—into the hidden dimensions. But not having a strong literal pole can result in chasing phantoms. And not having a strong symbolic pole can result in surety around an apprehension that’s actually missing the most important elements.

my tendency



THIS MAP BELONGS TO



www.kaiser.net

MAPPING TENDENCIES

KAISER INSTITUTE LLC

 BY-NC-ND

