

knowing our **TENDENCIES**
PART II IN THE 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 to 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



THINKING STYLE



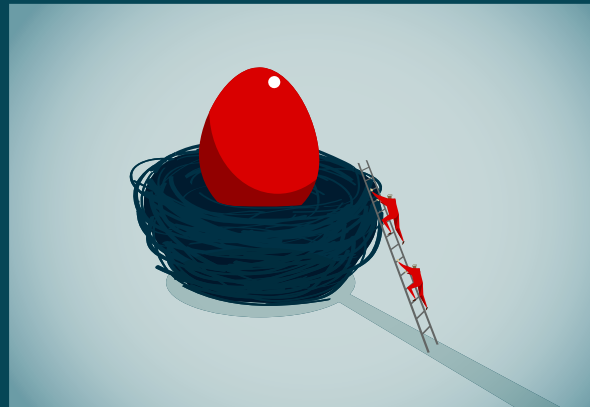
TENDS TO BE BLACK & WHITE

TENDS TO BE RELATIVE



Being black and white creates a clear pathway to quick and reliable decisions about things which we know a lot, and there is little ambiguity. Being relative allows us to make better decisions about things that are in a relationship with many other things. When we are too black and white, we are more likely to make snap decisions that don't take enough into account. When we are too relative, we may not act quickly and distinctly, and those we lead may get confused about what to do and what not to do.

BIRTHING & BETTERING



ENJOYS REINVENTING

ENJOYS REFINING



Some people revel in bringing new things into existence and reinventing old things. Other people revel in refining something over time into better and better forms. Birthing too many new things may siphon off the resources existing things need to thrive and cause the organization to lose its rootedness. Over investing in existing things may stifle innovation and increase the chances of the organization losing relevance over time.

TOUGH SITUATIONS



STAYS TOO LONG

EXITS TOO EARLY



Some difficult situations stimulate rapid growth, build skill, and help us learn what we would otherwise not learn about ourselves. Other difficult situations are simply toxic, impossible to shift, and potentially damaging. If we tend to jump out of tough situations too early, we may end up perennially fleeing the scene instead of facing and overcoming them. If we tend to stay in tough situations too long, we may get stuck in something ill-suited to us and end up missing ideal opportunities.

PROMISE



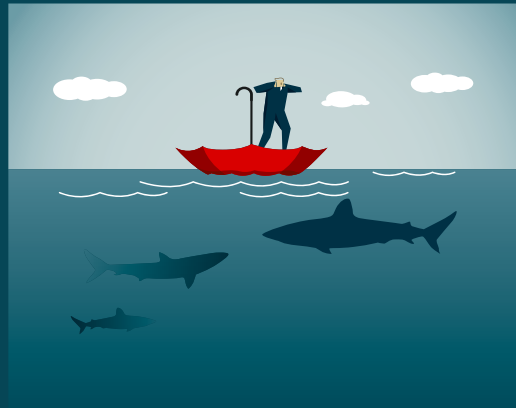
PROMISES TOO LITTLE

PROMISES TOO MUCH



Sometimes we promise too much because we want to rise to the occasion and please other people. Sometimes we promise too little because we are afraid of missing the mark and letting other people down. Promising too much may end up eroding the trust and confidence people have in us as we keep coming up short. Promising too little may design out good stretches and leaps—and eventually create doubt in others that we can get big things done.

NAÏVETY



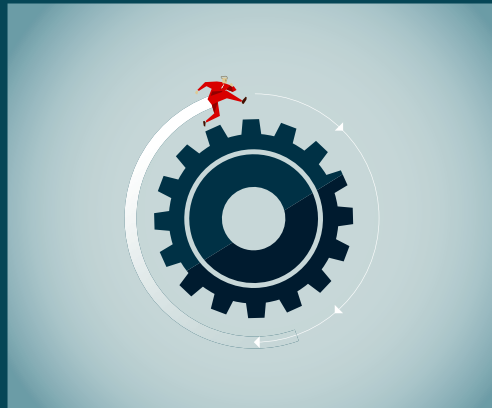
GETS BLINDSIDED BY TROUBLE

OVERASSUMES THERE'S TROUBLE



Overassuming threat—and underassuming threat—both make us naïve. But in different ways. When we overassume situations are potentially dangerous, we miss some of the best possibilities and also dull our perception of genuine threat. When we underassume situations are potentially dangerous, we may miss clear signs of trouble and end up getting blindsided.

PACE



THRIVES IN A MARATHON

THRIVES IN A SPRINT



Some people are good at the long haul—they take one measured step after the other, seemingly indefinitely. Some people are good at the dash—they rally massive amounts of energy and make seemingly impossible bursts. A strong tendency toward the marathon may result in missing windows of opportunity or moving so slowly people lose passion and commitment. A strong tendency toward the sprint may result in outpacing people and exhausting resources.

GETTING THROWN



GETS THROWN BY LITTLE THINGS

GETS THROWN BY BIG THINGS



Some people are more thrown by big things than little things. Other people are more thrown by little things than big things. People who get thrown by big things may lose their ability to focus all of their attention and resources on the one thing that matters most. People who get thrown by little things may get scattered and distracted by an array of things that, although irritating, don't really matter much one way or the other.

FREEDOM



GIVES TOO LITTLE FREEDOM

GIVES TOO MUCH FREEDOM



Freedom allows us to move with ease, be spontaneous, and discover new territory. Limitation allows us to define boundaries, organize and deploy resources, and keep things on course. Too much freedom and we may end up not acting together coherently enough to get anything done. Too little freedom and we may stifle people's creativity, spirit of discovery, and ability to dream big.

PIECES & SYSTEMS



DIVES INTO THE PARTS

PONDERS THE WHOLE



Some people are good at understanding and organizing all the pieces. Others are good at understanding the nature of the whole. Too much focus on the pieces and we may create something ill-suited to what's around it and irrelevant in the larger scheme. Too much focus on the big picture, and we may not have a sense of what's possible and end up pursuing something that never becomes manifest.

LUXURY

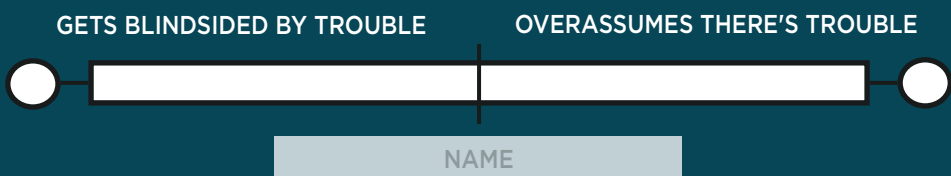
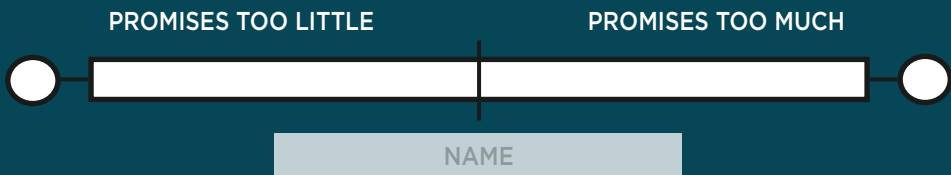
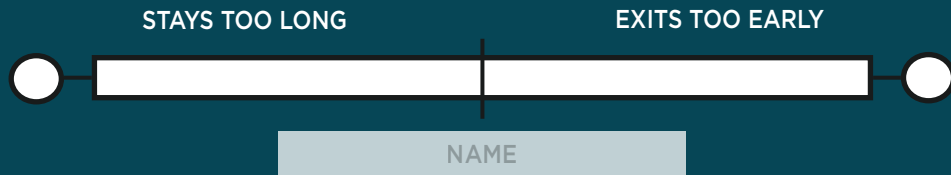
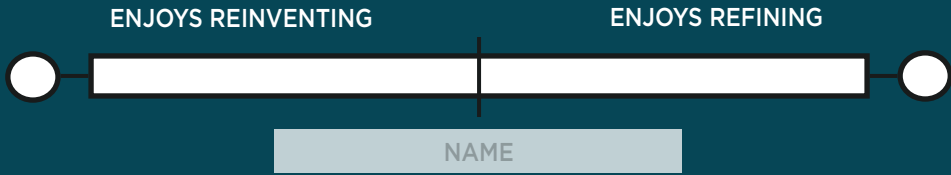
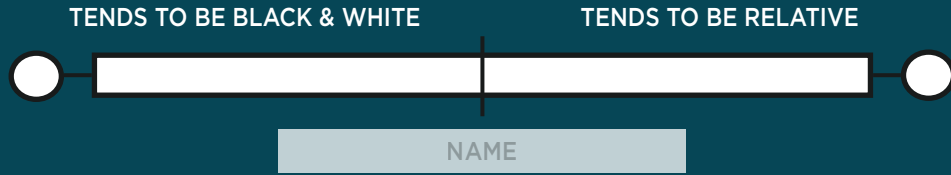


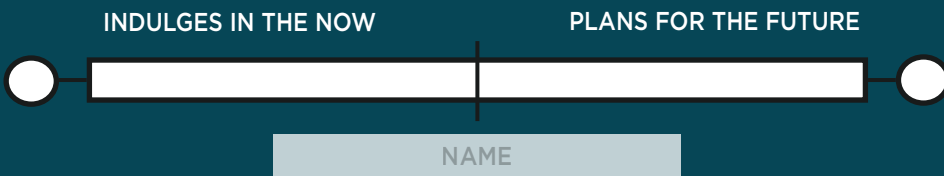
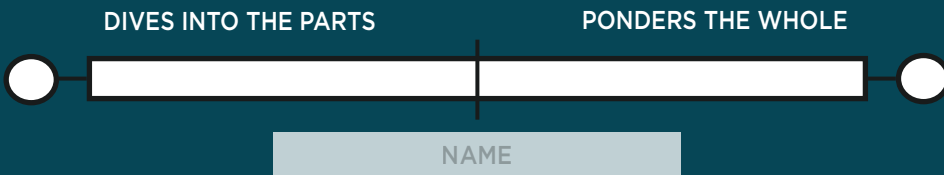
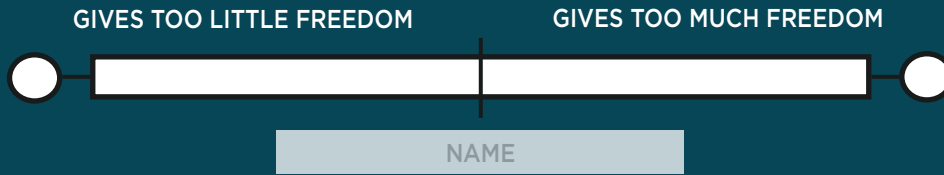
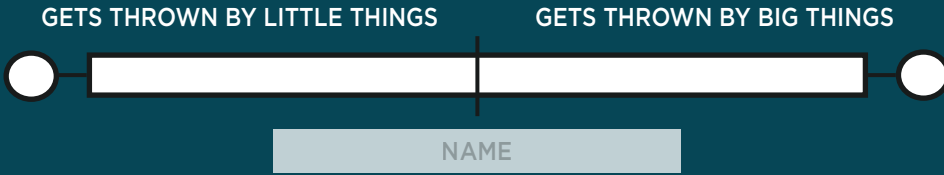
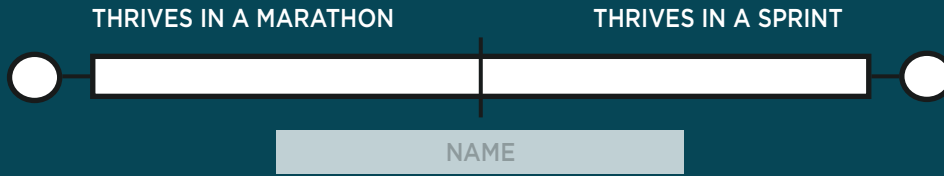
INDULGES IN THE NOW

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE



Some people love to live in the now, go big, indulge, and seize the moment. Other people love to plan for the long haul, use resources in moderation, and be more temperate. If we indulge too much right now, we may jeopardize our ability to embrace a wide array of experiences into the distant future. If we indulge too little, we may miss once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that demand we go all in, all the way. Right now.





THIS MAP BELONGS TO



www.kaiser.net

KNOWING OUR TENDENCIES II KAISER INSTITUTE LLC

