

Growth Mindset Assessment Report for Leaders

PERSONAL PROFILE BROUGHT TO YOU BY
GROWTH CONSULTING ASIA

JOE SAMPLE

Personal Details

Joe Sample
JoeSample@email.com

Assessment Date: 10 February 2020
Print Date: 12 February 2020

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Introduction

This Growth Mindset Assessment Profile is based on Joe Sample's responses to the Growth Mindset Assessment which was completed on 10 February 2020.

The origins of the Fixed and Growth Mindset

Dr. Carol Dweck is a professor of psychology from the University of Stanford. She did research on why some children excelled in school and why some struggled. In the course of her work, she uncovered what is now known as the growth and fixed mindsets. In summary, the fixed mindset is the tendency to look at intelligence as fixed, that which cannot change later in life. It also tended to keep one rooted in their past successes, not venturing beyond the scope of their success, since intelligence is limited. After all, if they venture too far out, they may no longer be successful, and that would undermine all their efforts getting to where they are now. This tends to cause their decision-making to be laboriously slow – since they need to be 100% sure they will succeed before they do something. And since they cannot be sure, they vacillate. And at any sign that they might be heading towards failure, they will give up; so as to protect their fragile concept of intelligence and success.

On the other hand, the growth mindset is one that accepts that intelligence and knowledge can grow. They know that, after all, they don't know what they don't know; so staying within the relatively safe confines of their own intelligence will not uncover what they don't know. Hence, they are willing to "risk" their current success status to uncover what they don't know, often "failing" along the way. Yet they know that the best time one learns is when one fails and not when one is successful. So as they "fail", they learn, they adapt and they try again. As they test the limits of their knowledge and intelligence, they are rewarded with greater knowledge and intelligence, thereby creating a virtuous cycle of learning and growth. They understand that "failure" is the currency of intelligence, and the more they fail, the better they get at being successful. After all, failure and success are two sides of the same coin.

This created the baseline for GCA's research. We wanted to find out what drivers caused the growth mindset and if we could measure them. This led us uncover the 5 Dimensions of the Growth Mindset.

The Five Dimensions of the Growth Mindset

Over the years from 2015 till 2019, GCA teamed up with a psychology researcher who had a backend traits modelling system, to uncover what drivers impacted the growth mindset. Starting from more than 10, we slowly narrowed it down to 5 traits. These 5 traits – or dimensions – are the key drivers of the growth mindset. The five dimensions are:

- Learning
- Bounce Back
- Risk Taking
- Forward, and
- Pride

Learning

This dimension comprises your ability to learn, your love of new knowledge, your sense of wonder and your curiosity. It is no wonder that the growth mindset is also called the learning mindset.

But this dimension is not about being book smart. This is not about taking tests and passing exams. This is about finding things out; it is about experimenting with ideas, with concepts. It is about uncovering what you don't know, so that you expand your knowledge and intellect. It is about embracing "failure" for the richness that it provides.

Of course, one cannot deliberately fail at something; there is not much learning there. One must try his/her level best to do well and succeed, and by doing so, will get closer to being the ultimate success. And if not, then, one will learn. This is the Learning dimension.

Bounce Back

This dimension refers to one's resilience, one's ability to get up when one is down, dust the dirt off and move on. It is one's capacity to recover from a setback and not be overly weighed down by it. It is obviously about not giving up!

The thing about Bounce Back is that it is a little bit character, a little bit confidence, a little bit competence, a little bit connection and a whole lot of coping (5C's).

Character is obvious; we build resilience into our DNA over time. Every trial we face builds our character, and this empowers us to become more resilient and bounce back better.

Competence is also obvious. If we don't know how to do something, or what we need to do next, then our ability to bounce back is hampered.

Connection refers to the people we can call for help. We cannot do things on our own, especially when we fall. To bounce back, we need our connections to lend us a helping hand; just as we can be that helping hand for others in time to come.

Confidence is yet another key trait, and that comes when we have the above three in spades. Hence, you will see that all these come together to reinforce the Bounce Back dimension.

Lastly, coping. This is a BIG factor in bouncing back. By developing positive coping strategies like exercising, dancing, reading, etc, we can bounce back better!

Risk Taking

We are all familiar with the concept of risk, and for many of us, we try to avoid it! This is understandable. But there is benefit to risking oneself to learn because if we do not put ourselves out there, we will not be able to test what we know and what we don't. Of course, this does not mean that one can be reckless. This dimension is about taking small risks for the sake of learning, for the sake of growing, so as not to be stuck in the status quo.

What do we risk? Obviously if you are putting money down, then you risk that. Whenever money is concerned, we always say "fail fast, fail cheap"; meaning that if you are going to risk money, make it as little as possible, and get an outcome as quickly as possible. Rather than spending a huge chunk of money on one major project, break that up into smaller chunks of fast experiments. Fail fast, fail cheap.

What else do you risk? Well, of course you risk your reputation, especially if you pride yourself to always be right. You risk people laughing at you, especially if you get it wrong. You risk telling people you actually don't know the answer, which to some, is career suicide. Except that it isn't.

All the above risks are par for the course when you are trying to learn; and if you are able to put all those on the line, you will be able to go beyond what you know, into what you don't. And as we have said, the learning mindset is the growth mindset. So, a little bit of risk taking is good; just don't be reckless!

Forward

Forward is the direction we will want to take in MOVING! So here, the key is action. Ultimately, all of us need to apply ourselves to move toward our goal.

But, do you expect the journey to be smooth? Do you plan every single step of the way from Point A to Point Z before you take your first step? Do you need to be 100% certain about your outcome before you embark (well maybe not 100% but a high enough percentage)?

The thing is, by the time we confirm steps A to Z, and we are ready to move, step C would already have changed. So, by the time you got there, you would still be none the wiser from when you first started planning!

We are not decrying planning. Indeed, as Benjamin Franklin once said, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." The point is, there is a time for planning and a time for action. The planning is not to get you 100% sure of all the steps; it is to give you better confidence in moving ahead. But remember, the minute you step on that pathway, your route would have changed, and you must be prepared for that.

But if you fear the journey because you know it will be evolving and changing, then you will never get started, and then you will never get to where you want to be!

Pride

In a way, all the earlier dimensions are positive, but this one may have a negative connotation. Yet, we are not referring here to arrogance; we are also not really referring to your feelings of pride in your work. It is somewhere in the middle.

What we mean by pride is the tendency to be stuck in the past; of viewing your past achievements as “sacrosanct” and of not risking your reputation from your past achievements by doing anything that would jeopardise it.

It also means doing things today based on what you used to do; based on the successes that you achieved earlier. People who tend to have high pride (which means this is a fixed tendency towards this dimension) can be heard saying, “I have ALWAYS done it this way, and it worked just fine!”

There will be some situations where what you had done in the past is still valid today, but what we need to be mindful of, is when it ISN'T. Hence, when someone has a high pride tendency, we need to uncover which of past experiences still work and which are no longer valid, and then change those.

By acknowledging that one's ideas or experiences may be wrong, one opens up a growth tendency towards “pride” and uncovers more of what will work today.

Understanding the growth mindset assessment zones and scores

Our research had led us to identify that there are three zones of mindset, not two. While there are the fixed and growth zones, we uncovered a third - the transition zone. This is the zone where people could display a mixture of fixed and growth tendencies, depending on the situation. So for some situations, they might display fixed tendencies, and then for other situations, they could display growth tendencies.

The scoring range for each of the zones is as follows:

SCORING	
GROWTH:	≥ 3.4
TRANSITION:	3.3–2.4
FIXED:	≤ 2.3

For the Learning, Bounce Back, Risk-Taking and Forward dimensions, the higher the score, the higher the tendencies are for these dimensions.

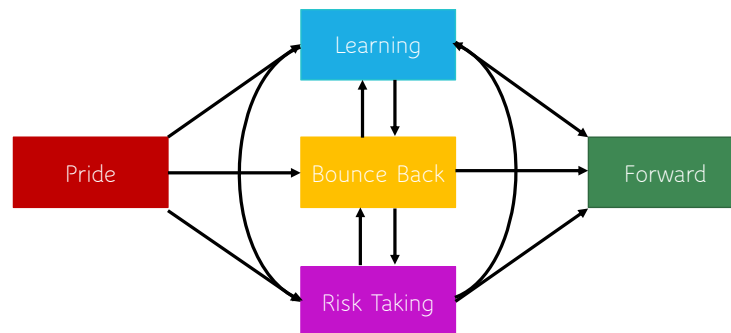
However, for the Pride dimension, the higher the score, the lower would be your pride tendency. Hence, if one scored 3.6 for Pride, it means that the person does not view his or her past successes as the solution for future problems, but is open to learning how to navigate the new normal.

Interrelationship of dimensions

At this stage, you would probably have noticed that one dimension impacts another, as another would impact yet another one. Obviously, if you can bounce back better, you can be more willing to take more risks. And, if you are more willing to take risks, you would be able to learn more.

You would also be able to see that if you are fixed in your Pride, you won't be able to learn. This will also impact on your ability to take risks as well as your bounce back.

Hence, there is a strong inter-relationship among the dimensions, as shown in this system map:

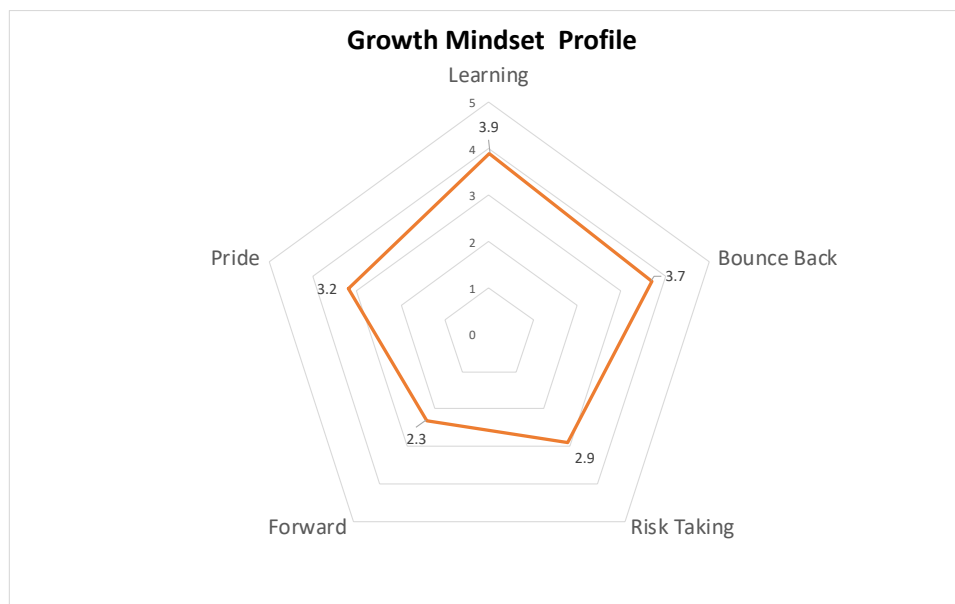


You will see that Pride impacts on Learning, Bounce Back and Risk Taking, and those, in turn, impact on one another, and all of them, finally, impact on Forward.

In other words, your tendency to learn, to take risks and to bounce back will all contribute towards your tendency to move ahead. But, all of these are controlled by your tendency to either think you already know the situation, or to acknowledge that what you know may not be enough to solve the situation.

Your Results

Your growth mindset assessment scores are shown here:



Analysis

1. Learning

Your Learning dimension is in the growth zone.

You have a growth tendency towards Learning. This means that you tend to uncover new knowledge in a wide range of subjects, either by way of formal learning or informally through experience. You are inquisitive and ask questions not to humiliate or embarrass but to understand and uncover. You also tend to be curious about the truth, asking questions with wonderment. In problem solving, you tend not to jump to conclusions but use both research and experiment to uncover what is really happening. You also tend to view “failures” as a means to learn something new, and change your tack from there. When it comes to reading, you find yourself interested in all types of information for the sake of finding new insights.

2. Bounce Back

Your Bounce Back dimension is in the growth zone.

Your growth tendencies for Bounce Back means that you tend to be able to pick yourself up from a fall, to dust yourself and walk on. You know how to create a support structure to call on whenever you enter into situations of uncertainty. This tends to give you the confidence to step into the unknown, relying both on your own resourcefulness as well as your support group. You also tend to be able to focus on what you can do next, rather than ruminate on what you had done wrong. You tend to believe that no one is perfect, and there is no shame in falling. You also tend to be confident in your ability to think, reason, respond, and move on.

3. Risk Taking

Your Risk Taking dimension is in the transitional zone.

You are in the higher half of the transition zone for Risk Taking. What this means is that you tend to be more growth minded in your risks, not minding very much how people react to your “failures”. You may be comfortable being laughed at, or even be seen as a “failure”. However, there are some fixed elements that you might not be able to let go of. Some of them may be related to losing money, time or other resources when you are wrong. This will sometimes make you cautious, and that can slow down your decisions. Other fixed elements may be related to your sense of self, your abilities to be looked upon as a successful person. You may be reluctant to risk that sense of success for a chance to see what is right or what is wrong. This tends to make you measured in your response when you come up against these fixed tendencies. Otherwise, you are quick in your response to test new ideas.

4. Forward

Your Forward dimension is in the fixed zone.

A fixed score for Forward does not mean that one does not move ahead; it means that one prefers to plan all the steps from where one is to where one wants to be. For you, this means that you tend not to want to leave the forward movement to chance, preferring to ensure that each step is certain, and all steps are accounted for, before you step off. This tends to make your decision to move slower than most people since you need complete confidence that once you get moving, you will be successful. Oftentimes, this leads to you overthinking the process, and planning more than acting. You also tend to find out fairly

early into your journey when you finally do step off, that your plans are not as accurate as you thought. This tends to impact your next decision, slowing you down even more.

5. Pride

Your Pride dimension is in the transitional zone.

You are in the higher transitional zone for Pride. What this means is that while you are confident in your convictions and experience, and you tend to use them to make your decisions about actions and the way forward, you will hear out the perspectives of others around you and take their point of view under consideration. However, in situations that are very clear to you that you are right and have seen the outcomes before, you simply make the decision and move ahead so as not to waste time. Notwithstanding that, you tend to spend some time contemplating whether your experience and your judgement fit the scenario, looking for areas where they diverge and then how you can bridge that knowledge gap.

Self-Reflection

Think through the above analysis for your growth mindset dimensions. Answer the following questions, and discuss them with your coach:

1. In what areas do I agree with the description of my mindset?
2. In what areas do I disagree with the description of my mindset?
3. How much of what I disagree to is based on my Pride getting in the way?
4. In what situations in my life have I displayed the mindsets outlined above?
5. What else have I learnt about myself?

Growth Mindset for Leaders

In 1978, James Macgregor Burns developed the transformational leadership theory where he proposed that leaders adopted one of two styles: the transactional or the transformational. The transactional leadership style is one which appealed to the person's self-interest. In other words, it **asks what the country could do for the person**. The transformational leadership style is one which exhorts the person to go beyond self-interest, focusing on motivations, morale and values. This is the **"Ask-what-you-can-do-for-the- country"** style. Bernard M. Bass picked up the discussion from 1985, outlining the need for both transactional and transformational leadership traits to lead to a big payoff.

Transactional Leadership Traits

Two factors that characterize transactional leadership are *initializing and organizing work* (accomplishing the tasks at hand), and *showing consideration for employees* (satisfying the self-interests of those who do good work, or punishing those who don't). The latter revolves around promise, reward and punishment – transactions between the leader and the follower. However, such transactions are a prescription for mediocrity, especially if such leadership revolves around "management-by-exception (MBE)" – intervening only when things do not go according to plan. Bass identified three levels of MBE:

1. active, in which the transactional leader will monitor the progress from afar and take corrective action if the follower fails to meet certain standards;
2. passive, where the transactional leader waits for problems to arise before taking action (embracing the concept of "*If it ain't broke, don't fix it*"); or
3. laissez-faire, where he avoids any form of action whatsoever.

Moreover, the promise of rewards or the avoidance of penalties depends on whether the leader has control over these rewards and penalties, and whether the followers want the rewards or fear the penalties. In short, if the trappings of transactional leadership are not trusted, there is little performance.

Transformational Leadership Traits

Transformational leaders move followers beyond normal self-interest through **idealized influence** (positive charisma), **inspiration**, **intellectual stimulation** or **individualized consideration**. It elevates the followers' level of maturity and ideals, as well as concerns for achievement, self-actualisation, and the well-being of others.

Idealised influence (as opposed to undesirable influence, as exerted by Hitler) and **inspirational leadership** are displayed when the transformational leader envisions a desirable future, articulates how it can be reached, sets an example to be followed, and shows determination and confidence.

Intellectual stimulation is demonstrated when the leader helps followers become more innovative and creative, providing them opportunities to learn and grow, and embracing the failing forward process.

Individualised consideration is demonstrated when the leader shows active attention to the developmental needs of their followers, supporting and coaching them to meet these needs. Transformational leaders delegate assignments as opportunities for growth.

Aligning Transactional and Transformational Leadership

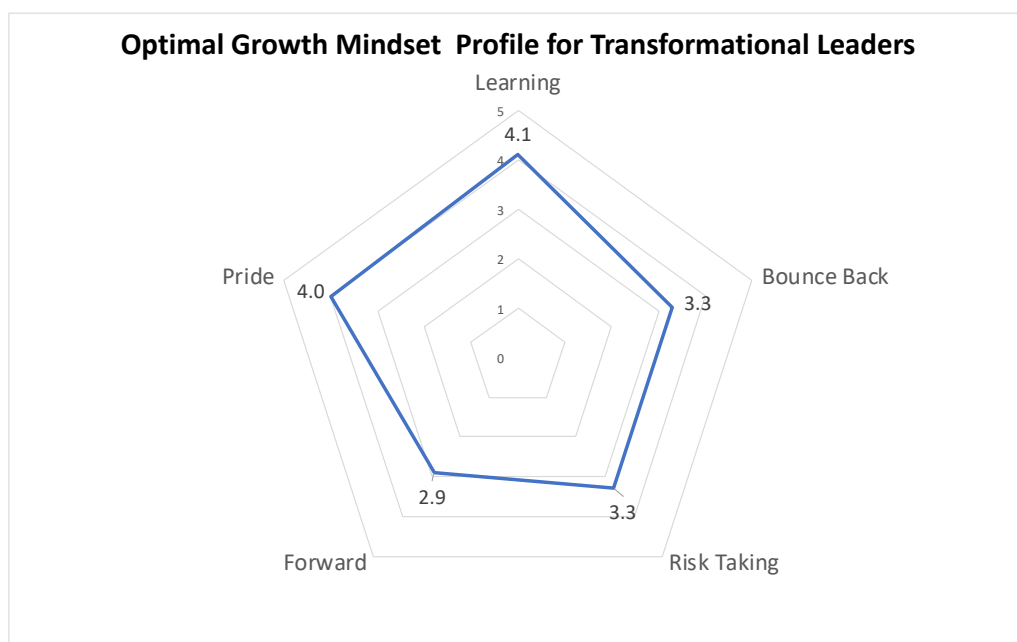
There was a time when transactional leadership was enough to get things done. Forty years ago, parents believed that it was most important to teach children to be respectful of authority, to respect religion, to respect the government, to avoid questioning authority. Today, parents feel that it is their responsibility to teach children to accept responsibility, be willing and confident to accept challenges, and to question authority when necessary. The picture of the “ideal” worker in the 1970s was one who was totally dedicated to one organisation, taking every bit of instruction that was handed to them, and never questioning authority. To be transformational then, it was sufficient to just move the individual past his personal self-interest for the good of the organisation. The normal worker of the 2000s, in contrast, is one who is more discerning and does not accept anything that the leader dishes out to them without thinking it through, asking especially, “So, what’s in it for me?” Moving followers towards the good of the organisation requires alignment of individual self-interest with the values of the organisation. Workers these days will not move in an altruistic manner, requiring self-interests equally to be aligned with

organizational vision. In other words, a transformational leader needs to be able to address transactional needs while leading their followers to become transformational. For this to happen, trust in leadership is crucial.

The optimal growth mindset profile for a transformational leader

Contrary to popular belief, the optimal transformational leader's profile is not all growth dimensions. This is because the leader needs to bear in mind the makeup of his team, and will need to bring together people of differing mindsets. As such, the transformational leader will need to balance out his growth traits with some degree of fixity.

The optimal profile for the transformational leader is shown here:



Notes in understanding the term “optimal”

1. There is no specific ideal or optimal profile. The scores here are a reflection of the relative dimensional strengths. Hence, a plus or minus 0.2 score is still within the accepted “optimal” range.
2. Even if people exhibit a different profile from this standard, it does not mean that the person cannot be transformational.

3. Scores higher than this standard are not necessarily better, nor are scores lower than this standard necessarily poorer. One needs to understand the impact of the dimension on leadership before one can be certain.

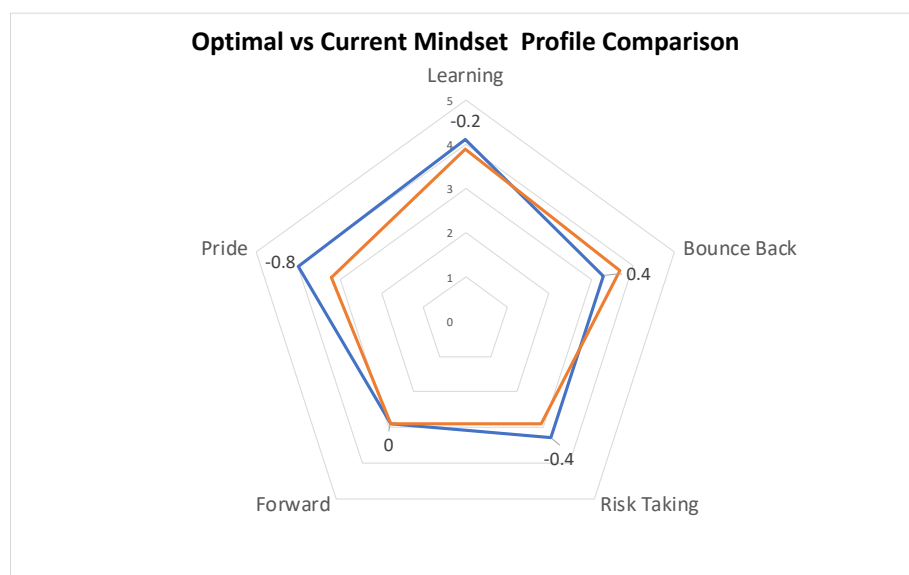
Understanding the Optimal Transformational Leadership Profile

1. **Learning and Pride dimensions are growth.** This is important because if one wants to empower one's people, to share with them a purpose to their work, to challenge them to be better versions of themselves, one will have to be able to hold back one's successes, one's knowledge, one's impulse to get things done and allow the team to learn by doing. By being able to uncover, on their own, what works and what does not; by being able to plot the discovery path to test hypotheses and solutions, the team will grow into a more self-confident, self-reinforcing and self-organising group. This allows team members to take ownership of tasks and be responsible for the outcomes.
2. **Risk-Taking is in the higher transition zone.** Why should Risk Taking not be higher? Simply, there has to be a balance between bravado and caution. While you may be able to accept some blame, some ridicule, some element of being called a "failure", not everyone in your team can. Hence, the optimal level is one whose risk taking is high enough to accept performance wobble as the team experiments with new ideas, and yet low enough to make sure the slippages are not irreparable.
3. **Bounce-Back is also in the higher transition range.** This is in line with Risk Taking. We want resilience to be high enough to support Risk Taking, but not too high that allows too much risks to be taken. As you are aware, Risk Taking and Bounce Back are very closely linked, and an increase in one can lead to the increase in the other. This is not to imply that a leader cannot have higher scores in either - or both - of these dimensions, but with the higher scores come higher tendencies to take risks, which as explained earlier, might not be optimal. Hence, having a balanced tendency for Bounce Back is a good thing for a leader.
4. **Forward is also higher transition, but a lower level than Risk Taking or Bounce Back.** It might come as a surprise to some that the optimal score for Forward is the lowest of all the dimensions, albeit still in the higher transition range. After all, as leaders, should we not be concerned with the progress of the team? Should that not translate to a higher Forward score? Here is where the difference in the understanding of the scores is important. It does

not mean that the lower the score, the lower the tendency to move ahead. It relates to the amount of control, of certainty, of planning, that one would have. Hence, the lower the Forward score, the more control one would like; the higher the score, the less the control and planning one would take. Indeed, when we map the MBE levels to the Forward score, the passive and laissez faire levels have correspondingly higher Forward scores. The active MBE level, which is the most effective level for leaders since we need to employ the right amount and level of carrots and sticks to align self-interests with organisational goals, demands that there be elements of planning, administering, measuring and rewarding. These are best achieved at the lower spectrum of the higher transitional score.

Gap Analysis

The intent of knowing the gap between our current scores and the optimal scores is so that we understand how our current tendencies either help us or hinder us in becoming a transformational leader, and what we can do to develop ourselves to become better. Let us see how your profile compares with the optimal:



Points to note:

1. Your tendencies for each dimension meet the optimal profile when your score is ± 0.2 from the optimal.
2. Your tendencies exceed the optimal profile if your scores are $\geq +0.3$ from the optimal

3. Your tendencies do not exceed the optimal profile if your scores are ≤ -0.3 from the optimal.
4. It does not mean that if your score for a dimension exceeds the optimal, you are better than the optimal.
5. It also does not mean that if your score does not exceed the optimal, you are worse than the optimal.

The following provides you with the meaning of your gap, and offers developmental suggestions to get you in a better position, if necessary, for each dimension.

1. Learning

Your Learning dimension meets the optimal.

You have a growth score for the Learning dimension, which is very important for a transformational leader. As your teams need to learn as they progress, so too must you. And your score demonstrates your tendency to learn, and that will support your team in learning too. And since you are not afraid to fail because you know that failing leads to learning, you will also understand and support your team if they should fail. Your encouragement to them in the face of failure will empower them to embrace learning by doing, and help keep communication lines open.

Development:

Continue to expand your areas of expertise. Get involved in team development in new competencies. This will show that all people in all levels of the organisation go through the same processes to learn and grow. This will further encourage your team to take on the continuous learning cycle. This is how we get from good to great.

2. Bounce Back

Your Bounce Back dimension exceeds the optimal.

Being in the growth zone for this dimension is great. You have high resilience to failure and this will allow you to pick yourself up from any “failure” should you be faced with them. You have the character, the competence, the connections, the confidence and the coping skills to deal with setbacks. This should always be embraced and harnessed. Yet, you might not want to overly apply them in your leadership situations for fear of instilling overconfidence. This has the unintended consequence of making you or your team take too much risk, thereby setting

them up to fail. Intentional failure is not a good thing, because it was a result of hubris. Stretch your team, by all means. But don't set them up for failure, that is irresponsible as a leader.

Development:

Learn to dial down the hubris. Limit resources. Don't inject overconfidence. There is a thin line between the two, but an important one, if you intend to keep your team humming along a growth pathway, and not a self-destruction one.

3. Risk Taking

Your Risk Taking dimension does not meet the optimal.

Even though you may not have met the optimal score, you are still within the higher transition zone in this dimension, and that means that you are comfortable to risk your reputation, your successes, your achievements – and that of your team – so long as it is within certain capability limits. You will tend to look at the cost of the risk as an investment, and you can accept certain amount of losses, so long as it is within limits. You are not known to be conservative, but neither are you brash. You are able to manage the downside of any initiative well, insulating you and your team again unkind comments and

Development:

Be on the lookout for instances where you might be taking too much risk or where you might be too conservative. Learn to work with a coach to calibrate your response to such situations so that you do not inadvertently hold up the development of yourself or your team; or conversely, to bet more than the bank!

4. Forward

Your Forward dimension meets the optimal.

Being in the higher transition zone for Forward means that while you are comfortable to take that first step and commit resources to meeting goals, you also know that you cannot do it blindly and without at least an overview of the steps you would be taking to get to where you want to be. You are also comfortable to pivot your ideas if you come to a dead-end, chalking that to circumstances and learning along the way. This will give your team members the confidence and the drive to move forward, reaching first for the low hanging fruits, and then scaffolding that to higher and loftier goals. You always encourage your team to move ahead,

but not without a plan, even though you know that all plans are bound to change. And therein lies the beauty of a resilient plan – it allows for change.

Development:

Learn how to develop scenarios. This is a key management tool that leaders can use to give both themselves and their team, the confidence in going forward. It does not typically map all the steps, but it does so in broad strokes so that the strategic components of the decision are captured in the plan and worked on.

5. Pride

Your Pride dimension does not meet the optimal.

In the higher transitional zone for Pride, you tend to have some fixed tendencies regarding your past experience and knowledge. You are confident in your abilities and the depth of knowledge and experience, and you make that known at times, even though you prefer to keep that to yourself while you hear out your team members. You are open to hearing what they have to say, and you are keen to see how your knowledge stacks up with the current information. While you are generally open to hearing what they have to say and will suppress your urge to correct them, you tend not to hold your peace when they are truly far away from the reality that you know to be true. For these cases, you will prefer to just tell them they are wrong, point them in the right direction, and tell them to move on. After all, you say, time is money! Yet, when you are leading a team, it would be better to allow them to uncover all these by themselves, even if they are obviously wrong. You know they are wrong because of your experience, something they don't have. But how will they get it on their own if they are not allowed to uncover what is right or wrong with their thinking? By jumping in, you do not allow your team to fail and then to learn to recover and to learn.

Development:

Leaders always have these dual opposing needs – development and performance. Sometimes, it is so much easier to just tell them what is wrong so that we do not allow performance to slip. Yet, that will put paid all your efforts at developing them. You should learn to keep quiet, allow them to learn, while you can engineer a fail-safe solution that will kick in when the situation turns for the worse. This way, you allow your team members to learn, while you still manage the performance. A truly growth-minded win-win solution!

Self-Reflection:

1. What aspects of the analysis do I agree with?
2. What aspects of the analysis don't I agree with?
3. What reasons do I have for not agreeing?
4. In what ways can the aspects I don't agree with be right?
5. What do I need to do to develop my mindset for leadership?

Working with the Growth Mindset

The growth mindset

- works on openness
- works with experience
- works with humility
- works on possibilities
- works on failure
- works on solutions

1. It works on openness

The thing about the growth mindset is, you need to be open; open to learning, open to sharing, open to being wrong. It is only in an environment of openness that we can risk being wrong and not be judged for that. If these are not present, you would not be able to build a growth minded organisation. As such, we need to build a culture that does not hide behind structures, behind politics, behind power. It needs to be open to the truth, and it has to have a culture that does not shoot the messenger when that truth is uncovered.

2. It works with experience

Knowledge begets knowledge; growth begets growth. And these stem from experience. Hence, get your experienced people to share; get them to contribute. And if you don't have any, then go out there and get some experience yourself! Because that powers learning, which powers the growth mindset!

3. It works with humility

If we cling to our past achievements, thinking that we know the way forward today because we knew the way forward yesterday, then we might be in for a rude shock. Covid19 has changed the status quo already, and what we used to do all the time right up to December 2019, may well not be valid now. Hence, we as an organisation, must be humble enough to accept that we do not know what we do not know now, and go forward to learn anew.

4. It works on possibilities

Since we won't likely know what we don't know post-Covid19, and more importantly, what we used to know may not even be valid, then we need to be open (there we go again!) to possibilities. Since we won't know for sure, all we can do is churn out the possibilities, and go out there and TRY! If we are waiting for a sure thing to happen, nothing is going to happen; and we will be wondering why the bus has not stopped at our stand. There are no sure things in this world, only possibilities. It is up to us to turn the possibility into a sure thing through experiments, tests and trials. The faster we are able to convert the possibilities into a sure thing, the better it would be for us. But be reminded that your competitors are also seeking the same opportunities, the same possibilities. Hence, you need to embrace it fast or be left picking up the crumbs!

5. It works on "failure"

Of course, we don't deliberately go out to fail; but we also understand if we do not "fail", we are not putting enough effort to find out what works and what doesn't. Hence, we should not be afraid to fail. We will identify the risks, mitigate those that we can, and accept it as a cost of doing business for those we cannot. You certainly cannot mitigate every risk away; and neither should you! If you have squared all your risks away (normally by getting smaller and smaller), then where's the learning going to take place? Where's the failure? But don't engineer a catastrophic failure; fail fast and fail cheap. Make the cost of failure small, and the speed of failure quick. As an organisation, you will thus be able to fail quickly, so as to learn quickly!

6. It works on solutions

Finally, the growth mindset is solution-focused. That means that it is not simply focused on a problem, but in finding a solution to that problem. Of course, not all problems will have a satisfactory solution; or even any! But every problem presents an opportunity, as we have seen with Covid19. None of us ever thought that our people can work from home over long stretches of time, and more importantly, to deliver on performance as though they were in the office. This calls into question the need to have such big and expensive offices. But that is just one "problem" among the long list of other problems. The key here is to help our organisation be growth minded, be solution-focused, and not problem-centric.

Don't focus on the problem, focus on the solutions.

Leading in times of uncertainty

In this segment, we discuss the element of motivation. Leaders all around want to get the most and the best from their people, to ensure that their performance is at peak level, while keeping them satisfied in their roles. Covid-19 has created a lot of uncertainties – from jobs to wages to performance management. Indeed, to move forward as an organisation, we need to embrace the growth mindset, especially so now that we don't know what we don't know, and the future is murky. We must help our people embrace greater flexibility, greater learning, greater growth!

Here are some ways you can lead your staff beyond uncertainty.

1. Encourage them to take risks

Staying close to shore never helped Christopher Columbus; and neither will it you! In this period when your competitors are prepping to jump the gates once they are released, you too need to do the same. You certainly cannot be caught off-guard! So, your people will need to take some risks, and you as a leader must encourage them to do so; but just be mindful not to bet the whole company on this one big gamble (that is the stuff of the fixed mindset!).

Remember our mantra...

Fail Fast. Fail Cheap.

2. Reassure them that you got their back

The most difficult and painful thing to accept is after you encourage them to take risks and when they fail, you throw them under the bus! We have seen many such behaviours before but in this time of uncertainty, we need to reassess that position. We have to go into all our opportunities as a team. You may not be personally doing the heavy-lifting, but you got to have their back; you have to reassure them that nothing bad will happen to them if they are risking their position, their reputation, their competences for the company. Reassure them, not just by words – that is an important first step – but more importantly, by action.

3. **Be the first to pick them up when they stumble**

And they will. But don't operate your leadership from afar, be close to the ground. So when things go wrong for them, be the first to help out. Be the first to listen to them. You do not have to solve their problem – because we have seen how important it is for you to allow them to solve their own problems – but by being there for them, by giving them a new perspective, by offering them a way to bridge between them and other teams, you are providing them with exactly what they need at the time they need it. Be the first; not the last.

4. **Set realistic, achievable targets**

In times of uncertainty, our targets get out of whack! Performance cannot even be measured, rewards are hard to define, headcount is even changing! This creates a lot of uncertainty. What the transformational leader needs to do is set realistic, achievable targets; you want to stretch them but not demoralise them. Because, growth mindset or not, if we stretch people past their productive zone, they will be extremely unproductive and miserable. The growth mindset will turn to fixed; and your efforts of making to a new endpoint will be thwarted. So be careful when you set targets; stretch them and motivate them but don't be so unreasonable that they give up even before they try!

5. **Understand that what worked in the past, might not work now**

If the collective Pride score in your organisation is low, you need to be careful; it means a lot of people are stuck in the past. Imagine having 20 people in the organisation all telling you how you should do your job because 5 years ago, they did it in some manner which you should now follow! They would all have missed the mark! We need to learn to be adaptable by accepting, as an organisation, that we don't know what we don't know; and we must now form new hypotheses to test. It could well be that what we did in the past is still valid; but it could well be totally invalid. No one knows for sure, since the situation is so uncertain! So rather than saying that we know the way forward, say instead, "We know how to find the way out of this uncertainty!" And that way, for individuals and organisations alike, is not to do things as you had always done, but to identify what works now, and start doing that!

Conclusion

Leadership is an ever-evolving skill. It is not like mathematics or computing where once you know how to count or code, you can always do that; similar to riding a bicycle. But leadership as a competency rises and falls based on the context, quite like the growth mindset. As such, as we enlarge our experiences for each of the different dimensions, we learn to adopt the right leadership skills, and at the same time, the growth mindset. Just as there is no one set of right leadership skills, neither is there one set of right growth mindset profile. And while we have presented the optimal growth mindset for a transformational leader, we also know that different profiles will still allow you to be a good leader. And as all good leaders do, we continuously develop; develop ourselves as we develop our team.

We invite you to take the growth mindset assessment every 4-6 months to plot how you are developing yourself. You don't have to make any more payment for it, you simply go to www.growthconsultingtest.com and take the assessment, noting your scores and how they evolved over time. That will support you in your quest to become a better transformational leader.

For more information on the growth mindset reports, corporate training, and coaching, please go to www.growthconsultingasia.com

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Growth Consulting & Training Pte Ltd (dba Growth Consulting Asia)

300 Tampines Avenue 5, #09-02 Tampines Junction

Singapore 529653

Tel: +65-6679-5880

Email: info@growthconsultingasia.com