

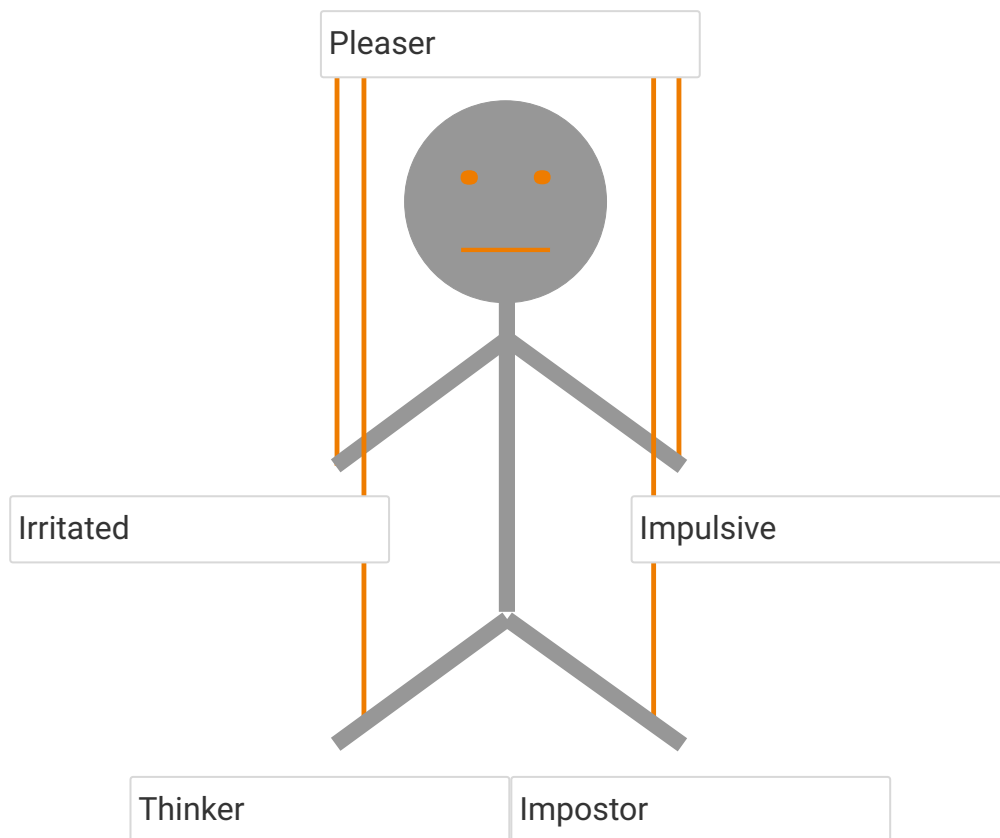
1.A What baggage of the past must I let go of?

Look at Pinocchio below. What is tying you down?

Have a thorough look at your life right now, professional as well as personal.

Identify the 5 most constraining characteristics you carry in your baggage at this time.

Write them down in the spaces around Pinocchio. Choose your own words – use the list for inspiration.



Expand on your baggage and current situation. What are your critical issues?

Focus on your 5 constraining characteristics and elaborate on them.

Pleaser: I tend to tell people what they want to hear and give people what they want. It's like a Pac-Man. I need to replenish the reservoir.

Irritated: I tend to react with irritation regarding new ideas or activities. I am always tense. It's like a sort of nervous energy - always under pressure.

Impulsive: I have a tendency to follow my own wishes and do something else than I planned. This procrastination gives me bad conscience.

Thinker: I think too much and act too little. Others can't read my intentions - they can only judge me upon my actions.

Impostor: I am afraid that others will find out that I'm not as competent as they think. One day, my facade will crumble and they will see the real little me.

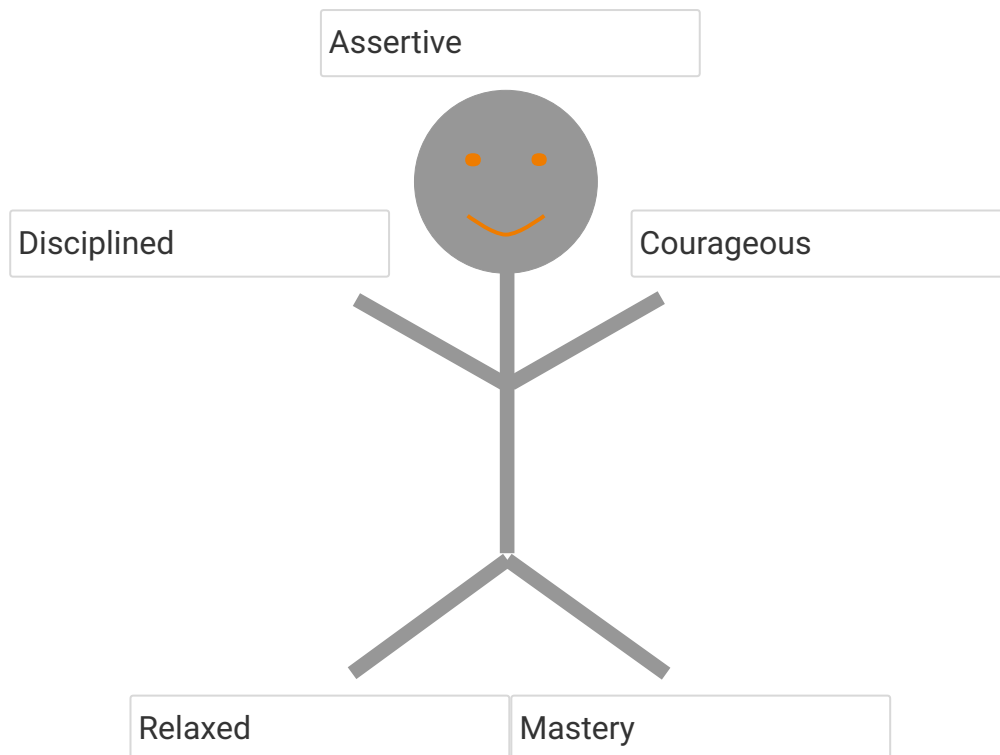
1.B What is meaningful to me right now?

Now look at Pinocchio again. You want to make those strings disappear!

Decide on 5 characteristics which will define you from now on. What does it take to set you free? Determine how you want to be perceived by the world.

Again, you can look to the examples for inspiration, but make sure to express your own characteristics.

Think like Pinocchio: *'I've got no strings to hold me down!'*



Expand on what is meaningful to you right now, and who you want to be.

Project yourself into the future. Focus on the 5 characteristics. Sense how you will feel when you have become that person.

Forget all self-limitations. Remember that the strings are gone!

Assertive: I stand up for my own meanings. I am not afraid of disagreeing. I am not conflict-averse.

Disciplined: I do what I say I will do. I carry through. I rise at 6 in the morning, go for a run and have solved the most pressing issue of the day before 10am. I am respected for my grit.

Courageous: I set ambitious goals and lift myself towards them. I have a sense of traction and control. I am respected for my standards.

Relaxed: I feel at ease and content. I trust myself, others and my future. I am confident that I will succeed in life.

Mastery: I am the best version of myself. I have reinvented myself and am now my own role model. I grasp my life in a holistic way.

2.A Heaven and Hell

Start by choosing your birth year as starting year.

Then fill in the major events of your life and plot in your wellbeing for each event on a scale from -100 to 100. Note that 0 is neutral or indifferent, so the scale moves around 0. Use positive numbers for wellbeing above neutral and negative numbers for wellbeing below neutral.

Please be brief in your descriptions like *Married, Manager at NN, Father dies*.

Try to use the full scale from -100 to 100 instead of piling everything together around the middle.

Limit yourself to one event and one score per year – if you have years with more than one important event and contradicting wellbeing scores, then be creative and use the preceding or next years.

The objective is to give an overall picture of your life’s main events and ups and downs.

1966	Cabin in the woods	60
1967	Event	Score
1968	Little Brother	70
1969	Broken Leg	-60
1970	New School	70
1971	Teacher Died	-80
1972	Gymnastics	80
1973	Event	Score
1974	Event	Score
1975	First Love	90
1976	Parties	80
1977	Partying	80

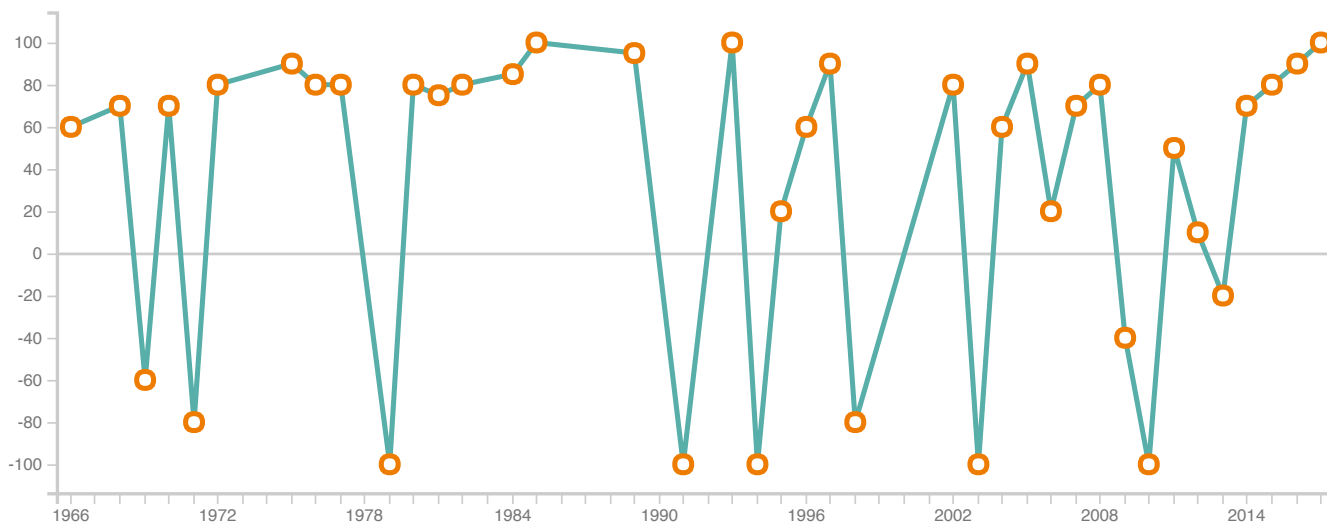
1978	Event	Score
1979	Brother's Suicide	-100
1980	Exchange Student	80
1981	Straight A Student	75
1982	University	80
1983	Event	Score
1984	Own Appartment	85
1985	Bachelor of Arts	100
1986	Event	Score
1987	Event	Score
1988	Event	Score
1989	Product Manager	95
1990	Event	Score
1991	Death of Father	-100
1992	Event	Score
1993	Marriage	100
1994	Still-born Baby	-100
1995	6-month Project	20
1996	Marketing Manager	60
1997	Daughter	90
1998	Operation	-80
1999	Event	Score
2000		

	Hospital	Score
2001	Event	Score
2002	Marketing Director	80
2003	Wife's Operation	-100
2004	New House	60
2005	Son	90
2006	150 Traveling Days	20
2007	Executive Education	70
2008	Chief Commercial Officer	80
2009	Stress	-40
2010	Delaying	-100
2011	Travelling the World	50
2012	Job Seeking	10
2013	Frustration	-20
2014	The Personal Business Plan	70
2015	From Pleaser to Leader	80
2016	CEO of a Smaller BtB Business	90
2017	Relaxed Readiness	100

2.A Heaven and Hell

Here is your life in a graph. You will probably notice that your life is predominately in the upper or lower part.

Look at the picture overall and make sure it is credible and realistic. Go back and edit your events and wellbeing scores until you are satisfied that the graph paints the right picture of your life.



Reflect on your typical reactions – how did you overcome your crises, and how did you make the most of your highs? What worked for you and what didn't? Look for patterns. Reflect on what you could change in order to become more resilient and best prepare for future life crises.

I've always worked hard to overcome crises.

Looking back, I see that it was an exercise of forgetting and denial. You can't work around crises. You need to go through them and confront the issues - also your internal ones. I've always felt comfortable taking on more challenges - just bring them on!

My breakdown in 2009 and being delayed in 2010 brought forward a new sense of reality. I also have my limits. My two years of job-seeking also made me more humble. Now I appreciate my daily life to an even higher degree.

The Personal Business Plan has helped me tell myself a new and more positive story. I don't need to live up to other people's expectations, I need to take care of my own interests and look after my family. For the first time in my life, I feel relaxed, at ease and in control.

2.B What do I like doing?

Take 6½ minutes to write down what you like doing. You must write without interruption. Associations will follow freely. Don't stop writing. You can do it. Now!

I like

having success, reflecting, producing,
interacting, being present, living a great life,
playing, discovering, learning, having fun, eating out,
traveling the world, trekking,
being with the children, being with my wife,
helping people, earning money,
developing new things,
being independent, feeling free, being positive, being optimistic,
leaving a legacy, being a role model,
watching movies, going to concerts, listening to music,
going to the theatre, gardening,
being with friends, inspiring others,
building a great future for my family,
planning and enacting the good life
and many other beautiful activities!

2.C What don't I like doing?

Identify what derails you and what your show stoppers are. Which specific factors tend to destabilize you? Is there a pattern? What common elements drain you of energy? Once again take 6½ minutes, don't stop writing and follow all your associations.

I tend to procrastinate.

I don't like anybody telling me what to do. There is a great leap from idea to implementation. I have so many great ideas and have trouble prioritising them in order to succeed with the ones that are most value-creating.

I have a tendency to take criticism personally. I need to reconstitute - to replenish the reservoir. In order to help others I need to always be my strongest me. I am a very resilient person, who needs to check in from time to time to see, whether the circumstances have changed.

I am not a great risk taker - I need to up my game.

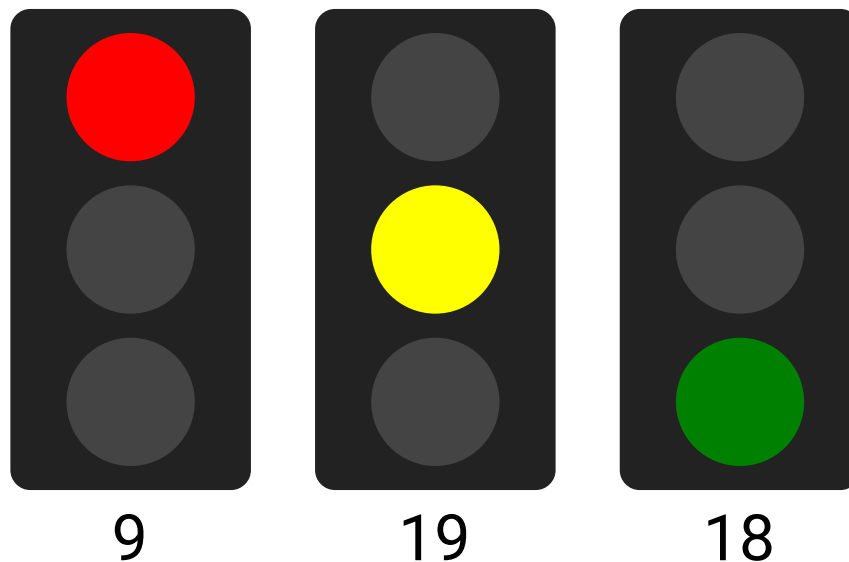
Also planning more long-term rather than simply producing short-term.

I need to stop doubting myself. Onwards and upwards!

6.C Why must I do something now?

Here are your personal traffic lights. The numbers under each color show how many symptoms you experience

- Always (red)
- Often (yellow) and
- Sometimes (green).



Assess your level of discomfort. The principle is that green lights are not dangerous. They are like a headache, i.e. they are annoying and not productive, but occasional headaches are not critical. Yellow lights are more serious. Like reduced hearing and popping in your ears, they should be accepted only for short periods of time. Finally, red lights mean that you should stop doing whatever you are doing. They could reflect symptoms like spots in front of your eyes and difficulty focusing.

If you have red lights, you may be operating at the boundary of your maximum performance. Being on constant standby is taking its toll on you. You need to alter your perspective and change your behavior.

Reflect on your traffic lights. What is causing you frustration? Are you lacking some satisfaction in your daily life? Think about why you simply cannot let things go on as they are.

I have had the following red light symptoms for a number of years. It is only now that I experience a sort of relaxed readiness, feeling on top of the situation, planning and acting in a controlled way. I feel at ease in my life. So what did I do?

Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms: I got massage

Lightheadedness, faintness, dizziness: I started meditating

ringing, buzzing or “popping sounds”: I started running in order to get my pulse up

Difficulty breathing, frequent sighing: I started doing breathing exercises

Frequent urination: I drank less coffee and alcohol

Difficulty in making decisions: I changed my daily routine, rising earlier and starting with the tough decisions

Nervous habits, fidgeting, feet tapping: I focused more on the task at hand, eliminating multi-tasking such as continuous presence on social media

Rapid or mumbled speech: I started thinking more before talking, giving myself the advantage of reflection

Excessive defensiveness or suspiciousness: I simply accepted that I am good enough and that people like me because of who I am and not because of what I do.

It has been a great journey and I have started new rituals and new relationships, combining my professionalism and my passion.