

# Action-Planning Guide

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**1** Intellection

**2** Ideation

**3** Analytical

**4** Futuristic

**5** Learner

## Intellection

- Consider beginning or continuing your studies in philosophy, literature, or psychology. You will always enjoy subjects that stimulate your thinking.
- List your ideas in a log or diary. These ideas will serve as grist for your mental mill, and they might yield valuable insights.
- Deliberately build relationships with people you consider to be “big thinkers.” Their example will inspire you to focus your own thinking.
- People may think you are aloof or disengaged when you close your door or spend time alone. Help them understand that this is simply a reflection of your thinking style, and that it results not from a disregard for relationships, but from a desire to bring the most you can to those relationships.
- You are at your best when you have the time to follow an intellectual trail and see where it leads. Get involved on the front end of projects and initiatives, rather than jumping in at the execution stage. If you join in the latter stages, you may derail what has already been decided, and your insights may come too late.
- Engaging people in intellectual and philosophical debate is one way that you make sense of things. This is not the case for everyone. Be sure to channel your provocative questions to those who similarly enjoy the give and take of debate.
- Schedule time for thinking; it can be energizing for you. Use these occasions to muse and reflect.

- Take time to write. Writing might be the best way for you to crystallize and integrate your thoughts.
- Find people who like to talk about the same issues you do. Organize a discussion group that addresses your subjects of interest.
- Encourage people around you to use their full intellectual capital by reframing questions for them and by engaging them in dialogue. At the same time, realize that there will be some who find this intimidating and who need time to reflect before being put on the spot.

## Ideation

- Seek a career in which you will be given credit for and paid for your ideas, such as marketing, advertising, journalism, design, or new product development.
- You are likely to get bored quickly, so make some small changes in your work or home life. Experiment. Play mental games with yourself. All of these will help keep you stimulated.
- Finish your thoughts and ideas before communicating them. Lacking your Ideation talents, others might not be able to “join the dots” of an interesting but incomplete idea and thus might dismiss it.
- Not all your ideas will be equally practical or serviceable. Learn to edit your ideas, or find a trusted friend or colleague who can “proof” your ideas and identify potential pitfalls.
- Understand the fuel for your Ideation talents: When do you get your best ideas? When you’re talking with people? When you’re reading? When you’re simply listening or observing? Take note of the circumstances that seem to produce your best ideas, and recreate them.
- Schedule time to read, because the ideas and experiences of others can become your raw material for new ideas. Schedule time to think, because thinking energizes you.

- You are a natural fit with research and development; you appreciate the mindset of visionaries and dreamers. Spend time with imaginative peers, and sit in on their brainstorming sessions.
- Partner with someone with strong Analytical talents. This person will question you and challenge you, therefore strengthening your ideas.
- Sometimes you lose others' interest because they cannot follow your abstract and conceptual thinking style. Make your ideas more concrete by drawing pictures, using analogies or metaphors, or simply explaining your concepts step by step.
- Feed your Ideation talents by gathering knowledge. Study fields and industries different from your own. Apply ideas from outside, and link disparate ideas to generate new ones.

## Analytical

- Choose work in which you are paid to analyze data, find patterns, or organize ideas. For example, you might excel in marketing, financial, or medical research or in database management, editing, or risk management.
- Whatever your role, identify credible sources on which you can rely. You are at your best when you have well-researched sources of information and numbers to support your logic. For example, determine the most helpful books, websites, or publications that can serve as references.
- Your mind is constantly working and producing insightful analysis. Are others aware of that? Find the best way of expressing your thoughts: writing, one-on-one conversations, group discussions, perhaps lectures or presentations. Put value to your thoughts by communicating them.
- Make sure that your accumulation and analysis of information always leads to its application and implementation. If you don't do this naturally, find a partner who pushes you from theory to practice, from thinking to doing. This person will help ensure that your analysis doesn't turn into paralysis.

- Take an academic course that will expand your Analytical talents. Specifically, study people whose logic you admire.
- Volunteer your Analytical talents. You can be particularly helpful to those who are struggling to organize large quantities of data or having a hard time bringing structure to their ideas.
- Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. This person's impatience will move you more quickly through the analytical phase into the action phase.
- You may remain skeptical until you see solid proof. Your skepticism ensures validity, but others may take it personally. Help others realize that your skepticism is primarily about data, not people.
- Look for patterns in data. See if you can discern a motif, precedent, or relationship in scores or numbers. By connecting the dots in the data and inferring a causal link, you may be able to help others see these patterns.
- Help others understand that your analytical approach will often require data and other information to logically back up new ideas that they might suggest.

## Futuristic

- Choose roles in which you can contribute your ideas about the future. For example, you might excel in entrepreneurial or start-up situations.
- Take time to think about the future. The more time you spend considering your ideas about the future, the more vivid your ideas will become. The more vivid your ideas, the more persuasive you will be.
- Seek audiences who appreciate your ideas for the future. They will expect you to make these ideas a reality, and these expectations will motivate you.
- Find a friend or colleague who also has powerful Futuristic talents. Set aside an hour each month for "future" discussions. You can push each other to greater heights of creativity and vividness.

- Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. This person can remind you that you do not discover the future, you create it with the actions you take today.
- You inspire others with your images of the future, yet your thinking may be too expansive for them to comprehend. When you articulate your vision, be sure to describe the future in detail with vivid words and metaphors. Make your ideas and strategies more concrete via sketches, step-by-step action plans, or mock-up models so that others can readily grasp your intent.
- Surround yourself with people who are eager to put your vision into motion. They will feel exhilarated by your Futuristic talents, and you can harness their energy to propel the vision toward reality.
- Be prepared to provide logical support for your futuristic thinking. Your exciting visions of future success will be best received when rooted in real possibility.
- Your Futuristic talents could equip you to be a guide or coach for others. Unlike you, they might not be able to easily see over the horizon. If you catch a vision of what someone could be or do, don't assume that he or she is aware of that potential. Share what you see as vividly as you can. In doing so, you may inspire someone to move forward.
- Musing about the future comes naturally to you. Read articles about technology, science, and research to gain knowledge that will fuel your imagination.

## Learner

- Refine how you learn. For example, you might learn best by teaching; if so, seek out opportunities to present to others. You might learn best through quiet reflection; if so, find this quiet time.
- Develop ways to track the progress of your learning. If there are distinct levels or stages of learning within a discipline or skill, take a moment to celebrate your progression from one level to the next. If no such levels exist, create them for yourself (e.g., reading five books on the subject or making three presentations on the subject).

- Be a catalyst for change. Others might be intimidated by new rules, new skills, or new circumstances. Your willingness to soak up this newness can calm their fears and spur them to action. Take this responsibility seriously.
- Seek roles that require some form of technical competence. You will enjoy the process of acquiring and maintaining this expertise.
- As far as possible, shift your career toward a field with constantly changing technologies or regulations. You will be energized by the challenge of keeping up.
- Because you are not threatened by unfamiliar information, you might excel in a consulting role (either internal or external) in which you are paid to go into new situations and pick up new competencies or languages quickly.
- Research supports the link between learning and performance. When people have the opportunity to learn and grow, they are more productive and loyal. Look for ways to measure the degree to which you and others feel that your learning needs are being met, to create individualized learning milestones, and to reward achievements in learning.
- At work, take advantage of programs that subsidize your learning. Your organization may be willing to pay for part or all of your instructional coursework or for certifications. Ask your manager for information about scholarships and other educational opportunities.
- Honor your desire to learn. Take advantage of adult educational opportunities in your community. Discipline yourself to sign up for at least one new academic or adult learning course each year.
- Time disappears and your attention intensifies when you are immersed in studying or learning. Allow yourself to “follow the trail” by scheduling learning sessions during periods of time that will not be interrupted by pressing engagements.