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POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE[®]

Why Only 20% of
Teams and Individuals
Achieve Their True Potential
AND HOW YOU CAN ACHIEVE YOURS

*"Positive Intelligence can change your life and
transform your business. A real game-changer."*
—James D. White, Chairman and CEO, Jamba Juice

SHIRZAD CHAMINE

Praise for *POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE*

“*Positive Intelligence* has had a lasting and transformative impact on me and others in my organization. It is a powerful framework for bringing out the best in everyone and quieting the worst. When you increase someone’s PQ, they will not only perform much better but also feel a whole lot more personal fulfillment, and less stress, along the way.

Positive Intelligence ranks in the top three most influential business books I have ever read. If I could give only one book to the thousands of team members in my organization to enhance their performance, it would be this book.”

—Lisa Stevens, Region President, Wells Fargo Bank

“*Positive Intelligence* can change your life and transform your business. A real game-changer.”

—James D. White, Chairman, President, and CEO, Jamba Juice

“I’ve worked closely with Shirzad and experienced him walking the PQ walk. What gives this book its power is his authentic sharing of how PQ principles transformed him as a leader and a human being.

Experienced leaders know that most change initiatives fizzle because of our mental Saboteurs. Shirzad gives us the tools to conquer these Saboteurs and create positive change that lasts. This is a must-read for any individual or team serious about unleashing peak performance.”

—Dean Morton, former COO, Hewlett-Packard (HP)

“Developing a personal leadership model is one of the most practical, energy-saving, and stress-reducing things that anyone can do for themselves. *Positive Intelligence* makes that job easier by focusing on mastering the two most critical voices in everyone’s heads: Saboteur and Sage. The best news is that leaders at every level can use its approach to get, and stay, on a more ‘winning’ trajectory. This is such a usable, lively, and compelling book.”

—Douglas R. Conant, former CEO, Campbell Soup Company, and *New York Times* bestselling author

“This is a very innovative and important application of original psychological thinking to the business field. The PQ model provides a solid basis for bringing meaning and significant change to one’s life. The strategies for identifying and dealing with Saboteur and Sage while harnessing untapped powers of the mind have proved highly effective in the business setting, and might well be applied elsewhere. If you want to create major positive change in yourself, your team, or loved ones, read this book.”

—Crittenden E. Brookes, MD, PhD, Stanford University, and Distinguished Life Fellow, American Psychiatric Association

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“I have worked with Shirzad personally and seen him work with many other Presidents and CEOs. His impact is often game-changing for a team and life-changing for the individuals. When a coach raises a team’s PQ, it can quickly shift every player from good to extraordinary. The player’s skills are the same, but he has learned to command those voices in his head to his advantage. That makes all the difference in performance. *Positive Intelligence* is a must-have for anyone who leads or coaches a team.”

—Jed York, President and CEO, San Francisco 49ers

“Shirzad delivers a simple, doable, groundbreaking set of exercises that can help you develop your ‘performance’ muscles, increase your PQ score, and gain access to previously untapped mental resources. Working out was never so rewarding or so much fun! So if you’re ready to get even better, get this book—today.”

—Marshall Goldsmith, *New York Times* bestselling author, *Mojo* and *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There*

“*Positive Intelligence* is an insightful book that identifies those internal voices (Saboteurs) that undermine self-confidence and prevent us from achieving our potential. In a clear and practical way, Chamine describes the actions that quiet those voices to allow us to listen to our internal Sage. This is an excellent book for anybody who seeks to increase their personal satisfaction, interpersonal effectiveness, and performance.”

—David L. Bradford, PhD, Senior Lecturer Emeritus, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University. Co-author of the bestselling books *Power up* and *Influence Without Authority*

“Working with Shirzad has had a profound impact on me. The tools and techniques to raise PQ are simple, concrete and pragmatic, yet incredibly effective. They help me remain focused on what truly matters and grounded amidst the swirl of daily life.

The PQ model is a brilliant breakthrough as it defines, measures, and improves your awareness of your own performance and happiness. It also helps solve the mystery of why so many smart people still fail to be successful. This book is a gift. Make sure you share it.”

—Jim Lanzone, President, CBS Interactive (CBS Corporation)

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AND HOW YOU CAN ACHIEVE YOURS**

SHIRZAD CHAMINE



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First Edition

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TreeNeutral[®]

To my daughter Teesa
To my son Kian

You have taught me more
than I could ever teach you.

On your worthy quest
for the great river's elusive source,
may you find a lake so pure,
with waters so still,
that you can see, truly see,
this magnificent being, you.

On your winding way,
when life throws you down,
may you, with great delight,
search inside the painted dust
for clues, unfolding
the grand mystery of you.

And when you get lost,
in the stormy moonless night,
may you trust, deeply trust,
as sage, ageless guide,
the true
beautiful
you.

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INTRODUCTION

I was twelve when I read an illustrated book about Sisyphus, the king who was being punished after falling from grace. For weeks I couldn't get the image out of my mind. This poor former king painstakingly pushing a huge boulder up a steep hill over and over again, only to see his efforts unravel right before making it to the top. What torture, I thought! I felt burdened and depressed just thinking about it.

It took me years of observing myself and others to realize that in many aspects of our lives we don't fare much better than Sisyphus. Many of our efforts at improving our success or happiness unravel just as surely as the giant boulder rolling back to the bottom of the hill.

Think about it. Why are most New Year's resolutions abandoned year after year? Why do most dieters succumb to yo-yo dieting? Why does that nagging and anxious voice in our head keep returning to torture us when we are trying to sleep? Why is our increased happiness so fleeting after we achieve what we thought would bring lasting happiness? Why do new leadership skills acquired in workshops soon give way to old habits? Why do expensive team-building retreats only result in temporary blips in team cohesion and performance?

We are indeed being tortured and punished, just as Sisyphus was. But here's the catch! The torture is self-inflicted. The reason so many of our attempts at improving our success or happiness fizzle is that we sabotage ourselves. More precisely, our own minds sabotage us.

Your mind is your best friend. But it is also your worst enemy. Undetected "Saboteurs" in your mind cause most of your setbacks without

your full awareness. The consequences are huge. Only 20 percent of individuals and teams achieve their true potential. The rest of us waste a lot of our time and vital energy playing Sisyphus.

With Positive Intelligence you can both measure and significantly improve the percentage of time that your mind is serving you rather than sabotaging you. This will permanently shift the balance of power inside your mind so you can achieve more of your vastly untapped potential—and help others do the same.

Positive Intelligence is ultimately about action and results. Its tools and techniques are a synthesis of the best practices in neuroscience, performance science, positive psychology, and cognitive psychology. I have honed these tools over many years, first through my own experience as CEO of two companies, and then through coaching hundreds of other CEOs, their senior executive teams, and, sometimes, their families. These tools had to pack a strong punch in a short time in order to fit busy and demanding lives—with some taking as little as 10 seconds to produce results.

I encourage you to have high expectations for what you can get out of this book. All of the stories in this book, while simplified for greater brevity and clarity, are based on actual experiences of my clients. If the experiences of those who have gone before you are any indication, the material in this book can change your life and be a game-changer for your team or organization. Please don't settle for anything less.

PART I

WHAT IS POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ?

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CHAPTER 1

POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ

Frank, the CEO of a publicly traded company, entered the greatest despair of his illustrious professional career when his company's stock lost two-thirds of its value in less than one year. He was so devastated by his own failure that he broke down crying when his ten-year-old daughter asked why he looked so sad. He could not stop blaming himself for the company's downward spiral, and he often woke up in the middle of the night with his mind racing for a way to get the company back on track.

Frank's senior management team was also experiencing high stress levels, feeling guilt, and pointing fingers over what had gone wrong. They worried about the impact on themselves, on the thousands of others working for them, and on their families. They had been working impossibly long hours to turn things around, without much success. That's when Frank reached out to me for help.

When I met Frank, I suggested that his best bet for a sustainable turnaround of his company was to raise the Positive Intelligence levels of himself and his team. Using the principles of Positive Intelligence, we devised a core question to reframe the team's perspective and redirect its effort: "What do we need to do so that within three years we can say this current crisis was the best thing that could have happened to our company?"

Frank's senior leadership team was skeptical when he posed the question during one of their weekly team meetings. But their skepticism subsided and their enthusiasm grew gradually as Frank opened each subsequent weekly team meeting with that same question. By contemplating the question and utilizing many tools of Positive Intelligence, they were able to shift their entire mind-set from anxiety, disappointment, guilt, and blame to curiosity, creativity, excitement, and resolute action. I predicted that within a year they would discover how they could turn their collective failure into a great opportunity. It took them less than six months.

Over the next year and a half, the company consolidated and streamlined its product offerings. It doubled down on its bet on the original value proposition of the company, which had been lost over years of chasing tempting but unrelated growth opportunities. During this time, the company's stock slowly recovered its value. Each month Frank and his team became more convinced that their "new" company would be far more dominant and successful than it had been in its prime.

When I checked in with Frank recently, he reported that he valued his increased sense of peace and happiness even more highly than his impressive professional and financial gains. This is a typical reaction, as increased Positive Intelligence impacts both. What Frank found most fascinating was that he began having more success once he finally stopped believing that his happiness depended on his success.

Chapter 10 is entirely dedicated to the details of how Frank and his team turned their company around.

WHAT ARE POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ?

As I've already suggested, your mind is your best friend, but it is also your worst enemy. Positive Intelligence measures the relative strength of these two modes of your mind. High Positive Intelligence means your mind acts as your friend far more than as your enemy. Low Positive Intelligence is the reverse. Positive Intelligence is therefore an indication of the control you have over your own mind and how well your mind acts

in your best interest. It should be relatively easy to see how your level of Positive Intelligence determines how much of your true potential you actually achieve.

To illustrate, when your mind tells you that you should do your very best to prepare for tomorrow's important meeting, it is acting as your friend. When it wakes you up at 3:00 a.m. anxious about the meeting and racing in a loop for the hundredth time about the many consequences of failing, it is acting as your enemy; it is simply generating anxiety and suffering without any redeeming value. No friend would do that.

PQ stands for Positive Intelligence Quotient. Your PQ is your Positive Intelligence score, expressed as a percentage, ranging from 0 to 100. In effect, your PQ is the percentage of time your mind is acting as your friend rather than as your enemy; or, in other words, it is the percentage of time your mind is serving you versus sabotaging you. For example, a PQ of 75 means that your mind is serving you about 75 percent of the time and is sabotaging you about 25 percent of the time. We don't count the periods of time when your mind is in neutral territory.

In chapter 8, I will show you how PQ is measured for both individuals and teams. I will also share compelling research indicating that the PQ score of 75 is a critical tipping point. Above it, you are generally being uplifted by the internal dynamics of the mind, and below it you are constantly being dragged down by those dynamics. Eighty percent of individuals and teams score below this critical PQ tipping point. And that is why 80 percent of individuals and teams fall far short of achieving their true potential for success and happiness.

You can measure your PQ score by visiting www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE

Current breakthrough research in neuroscience, organizational science, and positive psychology validates the principles of Positive Intelligence

and the relationship between PQ and both performance and happiness. As mentioned, PQ measures the percentage of time that your brain is working positively (serving you) versus negatively (sabotaging you). Though different researchers have used different methods to track positivity and calculate positive-to-negative ratios, the results have been remarkably consistent. For consistency and simplicity, I have translated various researchers' findings into their PQ-equivalent interpretations:

- An analysis of more than two hundred different scientific studies, which collectively tested more than 275,000 people, concluded that higher PQ leads to higher salary and greater success in the arenas of work, marriage, health, sociability, friendship, and creativity.¹
- Salespeople with higher PQ sell 37 percent more than their lower-PQ counterparts.²
- Negotiators with higher PQ are more likely to gain concessions, close deals, and forge important future business relationships as part of the contracts they negotiate.³
- Higher-PQ workers take fewer sick days and are less likely to become burned out or quit.⁴
- Doctors who have shifted to a higher PQ make accurate diagnoses 19 percent faster.⁵
- Students who have shifted to a higher PQ perform significantly better on math tests.⁶
- Higher-PQ CEOs are more likely to lead happy teams who report their work climate to be conducive to high performance.⁷
- Project teams with higher-PQ managers perform 31 percent better on average when other factors are held equal.⁸
- Managers with higher PQ are more accurate and careful in making decisions, and they reduce the effort needed to get their work done.⁹
- A comparison of sixty teams showed that a team's PQ was the greatest predictor of its achievement.¹⁰

- In the U.S. Navy, the squadrons led by higher-PQ commanders received far more annual prizes for efficiency and preparedness. Squadrons led by low-PQ commanders ranked lowest in performance.¹¹

Groundbreaking research in psychology and neuroscience upends the common assumption that we need to work hard so we can succeed so we can then be happy. In reality, increasing your PQ results in greater happiness and performance, leading to greater success. Success without happiness is possible with low PQ. But the only path to greater success with lasting happiness is through high PQ.

Besides impacting both performance and happiness, higher PQ can also literally impact your health and longevity:

- Research has shown that higher PQ results in enhanced immune system functioning, lower levels of stress-related hormones, lower blood pressure, less pain, fewer colds, better sleep, and a smaller likelihood of having hypertension, diabetes, or strokes.¹²
- Catholic nuns whose personal journals in their early twenties showed higher PQ lived nearly ten years longer than the other nuns in their group. Higher PQ can literally help you live longer.¹³

We could spend an entire book splicing and dicing research data on this topic. As a matter of fact, many excellent books already do. Amongst them are books by Shawn Achor, Tal Ben-Shahar, William Compton, Daniel Goleman, Edward Hoffman, and Martin Seligman. They provide insightful analysis of the rigorous academic research in this field in recent years.¹⁴ In my book, I'll focus on giving you specific tools to actually sharpen your Positive Intelligence and raise your PQ score in the midst of your busy work and life.

HOW POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ WERE BORN

They say “necessity is the mother of all invention,” and that was definitely true in the birth of the Positive Intelligence framework. I originally

developed this framework in an attempt to achieve both greater success and greater peace and happiness in my own life. All of the tools and techniques of Positive Intelligence were things that I tried out on myself first, long before realizing that countless others could benefit from them as well.

I had a tough childhood. I grew up in poverty—a sensitive kid in an abusive environment. Shortly after I was born, my father’s fledgling grocery store went belly up and my father went into hiding to avoid his loan-shark creditors, who were hounding us every day. My family was so superstitious that they decided I had brought bad luck to my father’s business. Since it was too late to get rid of me, they decided to at least change my name. My family never again called me by my real name: Shirzad. That event proved to be an apt omen for most of my childhood experiences. Not having many of my physical or emotional needs met, I developed a protective cocoon of depression. Bitter resentment and anger, at myself and at the world, followed me well into my adult years.

I had high ambitions, and as I got older I realized that I needed to figure out a way to stop feeling miserable, angry, and anxious all the time so that I could focus on making something of myself. Initially, my search took me to a study of the inner workings of the mind. A summa cum laude degree in psychology and a year of PhD studies in neuroscience proved equally disappointing in providing answers. I stopped asking deeper questions at that point. I decided instead to find happiness in professional achievements, like so many others seemed to be doing.

I spent the next four years getting a master’s degree in electrical engineering at an Ivy League school and working as a systems engineer at a preeminent telecommunications research laboratory. I studied and worked hard and earned top honors, which I thought would bring happiness. It didn’t, so I decided an MBA would accelerate my progress.

The life-changing turning point that led to my eventual development of the Positive Intelligence framework came when I was sitting in a circle with eleven fellow students in a Stanford MBA class called Interpersonal Dynamics.¹⁵ Our guideline for this group interaction was to be fully authentic and reveal everything we were really feeling and thinking in the moment. At some point, one of my classmates turned to me with some trepidation and said that he had often felt judged by me and

was bothered by that. I listened and thanked him politely for his helpful feedback, but in the back of my mind I was thinking, *Well, of course you feel judged by me, you idiot! You are the biggest loser in this group. How else could I be thinking of you?*

The group was about to move its attention away from me when another person turned to me and said something very similar. Again, I nodded and thanked her politely, while thinking that she was of course the second-biggest loser in the group. Then came a third and a fourth person, repeating the same thing. By now, I was beginning to feel uncomfortable and a little angry. But I was still discounting the feedback. After all, it was coming from a bunch of losers, I thought.

Then the person sitting immediately to my left, whom I admired greatly, got up in disgust and moved to the opposite side of the circle. It turns out that he had seen through my insincerity in acknowledging the feedback. He said he was so frustrated by my unwillingness to truly accept the feedback about my judgments that he couldn't even bear to sit next to me anymore. He said that he too had felt judged by me, albeit positively. He was upset because he felt I placed him on a pedestal and could never see him for who he really was.

That passionate and honest expression of feelings finally broke through the protective shell of my inner "Judge." In an instant I recognized that all my life I had seen everything through the lens of this Judge, categorized everything as good or bad, and placed everything in one box or the other. I instantly realized that this was a protective mechanism I began using during my childhood to make life seem more predictable and controllable. That day, sitting in a circle with eleven classmates, I discovered the hugely destructive power of this Judge "Saboteur" that had been hiding in my head—and that I had never even known existed.

That discovery changed everything. It revived my search for the mechanisms of the mind that lead to happiness or unhappiness, success or failure. What I eventually focused on were two related dynamics:

1. Our minds are our own worst enemies; the mind harbors characters that actively sabotage our happiness and success. These Saboteurs can easily be identified and weakened.

2. The “muscles” of the brain that give us access to our greatest wisdom and insights have remained weak from years of not being exercised. These brain muscles can easily be built up to give us much greater access to our deeper wisdom and untapped mental powers.

Exercises that focus on one or both of these dynamics can dramatically improve one’s PQ in a relatively short period of time. The result is dramatic improvement in performance and happiness, in both work and personal life.

PQ IN ACTION

I have been the chairman and CEO of the largest coach-training organization in the world, training thousands of coaches around the globe, leaders and managers in most of the Fortune 500 companies, and faculty at both Stanford and Yale business schools. I have personally coached hundreds of CEOs, often their executive teams, and sometimes their partners or families.

Many of the CEOs and senior executives whom I have coached over the years have been type-A personalities uninterested and/or uncomfortable with deep psychological exploration. Taking this into consideration, the Positive Intelligence tools and techniques were designed to generate results without needing to first develop in-depth psychological awareness. These techniques take a direct approach that literally builds new neural pathways in your brain, pathways that increase your Positive Intelligence. Greater insight automatically accompanies the building of these pathways, which equate to building new brain “muscles.”

This book is organized into six parts. Part I, which you are halfway through, provides a general overview of the PQ framework that continues in the next chapter. There are three different strategies for increasing PQ, discussed in turn in parts II, III, and IV. In part V, you will learn how PQ is measured for both individuals and teams so that you can keep track of your progress. Part VI discusses applications of PQ to many work and life challenges, including three in-depth case studies. At

the end of each chapter, an Inquiry will prompt you to connect the dots between what you are reading and your own work and life.

Your potential is determined by many factors, including your cognitive intelligence (IQ), your emotional intelligence (EQ), and your skills, knowledge, experience, and social network. But it is your Positive Intelligence (PQ) that determines what percentage of your vast potential you actually achieve.

By raising my PQ, I have been able to convert the considerable difficulties and challenges of my own life into gifts and opportunities for greater success, happiness, and peace of mind. I wrote this book with the belief that you can absolutely learn to do the same.

Inquiry

If you could significantly improve one important thing, personally or professionally, as a result of reading this book, what would it be? Keep that goal in mind as you read this book.

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CHAPTER 2

THE THREE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE PQ

When I lecture at Stanford University on the subject of creating sustainable positive change, I invite the students to make a bet. I tell them about my hypothetical neighbor who has been undertaking a series of initiatives to improve both success and happiness, for himself and others. He made a New Years' resolution to lose some weight and keep it off. He took his team on an expensive team-building retreat to help them become more cohesive and effective. He went to a two-day workshop to improve his own emotional intelligence and leadership competencies. He did all of this a year ago, I tell the students. Now they need to bet all of their money on whether they believe the changes that my neighbor made were mostly sustained or fizzled away.

How would you bet your money? Remarkably, about 90 percent of the Stanford students bet that the changes primarily fizzled. I tell the others that they would have lost their shirts on their optimistic bet: the odds that significant improvements in either performance or happiness are sustained are only 1 in 5.¹⁶

Research on happiness confirms that people generally fall back to what social scientists call their “baseline happiness” levels shortly after events or accomplishments that significantly raise their happiness. This includes winners of large lotteries.¹⁷

Many executives complain about the same phenomenon regarding their attempts to improve individual or team performance through

coaching, tough performance-evaluation feedback, conflict resolution and intervention, skill-building workshops, and team-building retreats. People prove resistant to change, even when they seem to think they want it.

Think about your own life. How lasting have your own increases in happiness been once you attained the things that you were certain would make you happier? Think about the many books you have read and the many trainings you have attended in hopes of increasing your own work performance or happiness. What percentage of those improvements lasted? Chances are, your own experience confirms that initial improvements typically fizzle or at least erode significantly. The question is, *why*?

The key to the answer, as I previously suggested, is one word: *sabotage*. Unless you tackle and weaken your own internal enemies—we'll call them the Saboteurs—they will do their best to rob you of any improvements you make. Ignoring your Saboteurs is analogous to planting a beautiful new garden while leaving voracious snails free to roam. This is where Positive Intelligence can help.

Positive Intelligence takes you to the frontlines of the unceasing battle raging in your mind. On one side of this battlefield are the invisible Saboteurs, who wreck any attempt at increasing either your happiness or your performance. On the other side is your Sage, who has access to your wisdom, insights, and often untapped mental powers. Your Saboteurs and your Sage are literally fueled by different regions of your physical brain and are strengthened when you activate those regions. Thus your internal war between your Saboteurs and your Sage is tied to a war for domination between the different parts of your brain. The strength of your Saboteurs compared to the strength of your Sage in turn determines your PQ level and how much of your true potential you actually achieve.

MEETING THE SABOTEURS

The Saboteurs are the internal enemies. They are a set of automatic and habitual mind patterns, each with its own voice, beliefs, and assumptions that work against your best interest.

Saboteurs are a universal phenomenon. The question is not whether you have them, but which ones you have, and how strong they are. They are universal—spanning cultures, genders, and age groups—because they are connected to the functions of the brain that are focused on survival. We each develop Saboteurs early in childhood in order to survive the perceived threats of life, both physical and emotional. By the time we are adults, these Saboteurs are no longer needed, but they have become invisible inhabitants of our minds. We often don't even know that they exist.

Any World War II history buff knows that the most powerful and devastating saboteurs were those who had ingratiated themselves and been accepted into the inner circle of the opposing side as friends and allies. The same holds true for your internal Saboteurs. The worst damage is caused by those who have convinced you through their lies that they are working for you rather than against you. They have been accepted and trusted into your inner circle and you no longer see them as intruders.

Here is a brief description of the ten Saboteurs, intended to give you a sense of how each one works. For now, don't worry about trying to remember all of them or assessing which ones are your top Saboteurs. You'll learn how to identify your top Saboteurs in later chapters.

Judge

The Judge is the master Saboteur, the one everyone suffers from. It compels you to constantly find faults with yourself, others, and your conditions and circumstances. It generates much of your anxiety, stress, anger, disappointment, shame, and guilt. Its self-justifying lie is that without it, you or others would turn into lazy and unambitious beings who would not achieve much. Its voice is therefore often mistaken as a tough-love voice of reason rather than the destructive Saboteur it actually is.

Avoider

The Avoider focuses on the positive and the pleasant in an extreme way. It avoids difficult and unpleasant tasks and conflicts. It leads you to the habits of procrastination and conflict avoidance. It results in damaging eruptions in festering conflicts that have been sidestepped and causes

delays in getting things done. Its lie is that you are being positive, not avoiding your problems.

Controller

The Controller runs on an anxiety-based need to take charge, control situations, and bend people's actions to one's own will. It generates high anxiety and impatience when that is not possible. In the Controller's worldview, you are either in control or out of control. While the Controller allows you to get short-term results, in the long run it generates resentment in others and prevents them from exercising and developing their own fullest capabilities. Its lie is that you need the Controller to generate the best results from the people around you.

Hyper-Achiever

The Hyper-Achiever makes you dependent on constant performance and achievement for self-respect and self-validation. It keeps you focused mainly on external success rather than on internal criteria for happiness. It often leads to unsustainable workaholic tendencies and causes you to fall out of touch with deeper emotional and relationship needs. Its lie is that your self-acceptance should be conditional on performance and external validation.

Hyper-Rational

The Hyper-Rational involves an intense and exclusive focus on the rational processing of everything, including relationships. It causes you to be impatient with people's emotions and regard emotions as unworthy of much time or consideration. When under the influence of the Hyper-Rational, you can be perceived as cold, distant, or intellectually arrogant. It limits your depth and flexibility in relationships at work or in your personal life and intimidates less analytically minded people. Its lie is that the rational mind is the most important and helpful form of intelligence that you possess.

Hyper-Vigilant

The Hyper-Vigilant makes you feel intense and continuous anxiety about all the dangers surrounding you and what could go wrong. It is constantly vigilant and can never rest. It results in a great deal of ongoing

stress that wears you and others down. Its lie is that the dangers around you are bigger than they actually are and that nonstop vigilance is the best way to tackle them.

Pleaser

The Pleaser compels you to try to gain acceptance and affection by helping, pleasing, rescuing, or flattering others constantly. It causes you to lose sight of your own needs and become resentful of others as a result. It also encourages others to become overly dependent on you. Its lie is that you are pleasing others because it is a good thing to do, denying that you are really trying to win affection and acceptance indirectly.

Restless

The Restless is constantly in search of greater excitement in the next activity or through perpetual busyness. It doesn't allow you to feel much peace or contentment with your current activity. It gives you a never-ending stream of distractions that make you lose your focus on the things and relationships that truly matter. Other people have a difficult time keeping up with the person ruled by The Restless and often feel distanced from him or her. Its lie is that by being so busy you are living life fully, but it ignores the fact that in pursuit of a full life you miss out on your life as it is happening.

Stickler

The Stickler is the need for perfection, order, and organization taken too far. It makes you and others around you anxious and uptight. It saps your own or others' energy on extra measures of perfection that are not necessary. It also causes you to live in constant frustration with yourself and others over things not being perfect enough. Its lie is that perfectionism is always good and that you don't pay a huge price for it.

Victim

The Victim wants you to feel emotional and temperamental as a way of gaining attention and affection. It results in an extreme focus on internal feelings, particularly painful ones, and can often result in a martyr streak.

The consequences are that you waste your mental and emotional energy, and others feel frustrated, helpless, or guilty that they can never make you happy for long. The Victim's lie is that assuming the victim or martyr persona is the best way to attract caring and attention for yourself.

THE SAGE

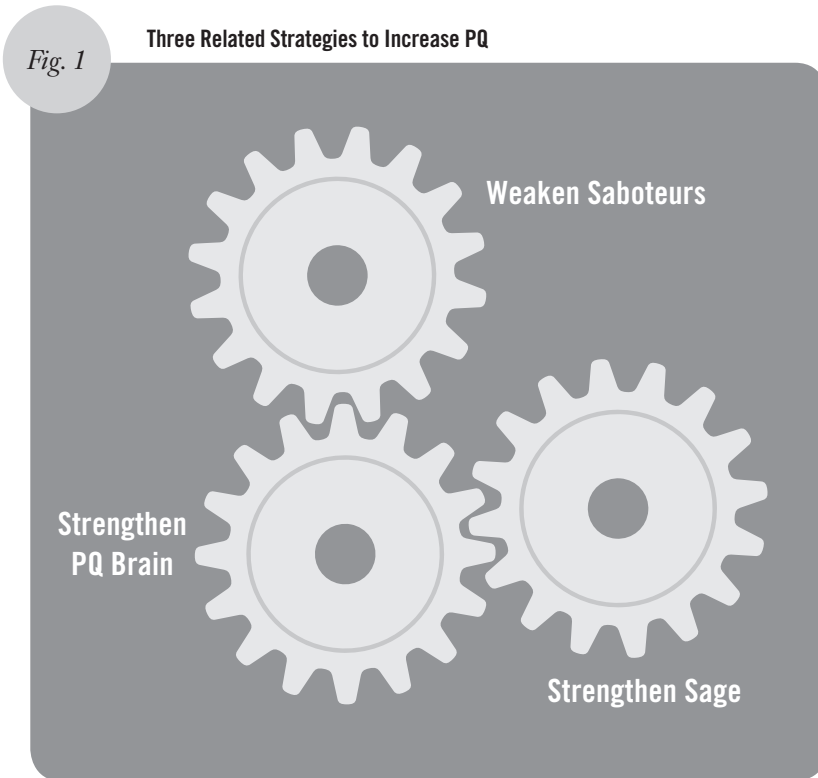
If your Saboteurs represent your internal enemies, your Sage represents the deeper and wiser part of you. It is the part that can rise above the fray and resist getting carried away by the drama and tension of the moment or falling victim to the lies of the Saboteurs. Its perspective on any challenge you are facing is that it is either already a gift and opportunity or could be actively turned into one. It has access to five great powers of your mind and taps into those powers to meet any challenge. These powers lie in regions of your brain that are different from the regions that fuel your Saboteurs.

Your Sage's five great powers are (1) to Explore with great curiosity and an open mind; (2) to Empathize with yourself and others and bring compassion and understanding to any situation; (3) to Innovate and create new perspectives and outside-the-box solutions; (4) to Navigate and choose a path that best aligns with your deeper underlying values and mission; and (5) to Activate and take decisive action without the distress, interference, or distractions of the Saboteurs.

In subsequent chapters I will show that you have a great reservoir of these powers within you, which often goes untapped. I will also show you how absolutely every challenge in work and life can be met with the Sage, its perspective, and its five powers. If you use your Sage to overcome these challenges, you will experience Sage feelings of curiosity, compassion, creativity, joy, peace, and grounded decisiveness even in the midst of great crises. You will see for yourself that your Saboteurs are never necessary to meet any challenge, despite the lies they have been telling you to justify their own existence.

THREE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR PQ

As I mentioned before, there is a direct connection between the different regions and functions of the brain and whether you are in Saboteur or Sage mode. The Saboteurs are primarily fueled by regions of your brain that were initially focused on your physical or emotional survival. We will call these regions your Survivor Brain. The Sage is based on entirely different regions of the brain, which we'll call your PQ Brain. This Saboteur-Sage brain link results in three separate but related strategies to increase your PQ: (1) weaken your Saboteurs; (2) strengthen your Sage; and (3) strengthen your PQ Brain muscles.



Strategy 1: Weaken Your Saboteurs

Weakening your Saboteurs involves identifying which thought and emotion patterns come from your Saboteurs and seeing clearly that they don't serve you. Typically, these Saboteurs justify themselves and pretend they are your friends—even worse they pretend they are you. In chapters 3 and 4, we will blow their covers and expose their tricks to reduce their credibility and power over you. To weaken your Saboteurs, all you need to do is to observe and label Saboteur thoughts or feelings when they show up. For example, you might say to yourself, “Oh, the Judge is back again, saying I'm going to fail” or “There's the Controller feeling anxious again.”

Strategy 2: Strengthen Your Sage

Strengthening your Sage involves shifting to the Sage perspective and accessing the five powers it uses to meet every challenge. You will see for yourself that you do have this Sage inside of you, and that it always offers you far superior ways to handle your challenges than the options the Saboteurs offer. In chapters 5 and 6, you will learn the Sage perspective and fun “power games” that will help you access and boost the Sage's five powers whenever you need them.

Strategy 3: Strengthen Your PQ Brain Muscles

Strengthening your PQ Brain muscles involves understanding the difference between your PQ Brain and your Survivor Brain. You will see how your PQ Brain muscles have remained underdeveloped over the years while your Survivor Brain muscles have been on steroids. In chapter 7, you will learn very simple, fun techniques that will quickly build up the strength of your PQ Brain muscles.

Each of these three strategies can be pursued independently of one another and result in increasing your PQ. Even better, they actually reinforce and build on one another. For example, you will learn to strengthen your PQ Brain muscles through many simple activities, including odd ones such as wiggling your toes attentively or rubbing your fingers together attentively for ten seconds. At first glance, these exercises might appear unrelated to your Sage and Saboteurs. However,

I'll show you that they help activate your PQ Brain, which in turn gives you greater access to your Sage perspective and powers.

In addition, stimulating your PQ Brain weakens your Survivor Brain, which fuels your Saboteurs. And every time you choose the Sage perspective, or observe and label your Saboteur thoughts or feelings, you automatically activate and strengthen your PQ Brain.

Each of these three strategies—weakening your Saboteurs, strengthening your Sage, and strengthening your PQ Brain muscles—can be carried out by using techniques that take ten seconds or less. They are designed to fit your busy work schedule and personal life. Different people gravitate to different strategies, and you will discover for yourself which one you find most gratifying and compelling. Once you've implemented your primary strategy, the other two will automatically follow.

DAVID'S STORY

David is one of those rare entrepreneurs who can begin a company and hold onto the helm well after it reaches the \$1 billion mark. Soon after his company went public, David found himself under unprecedented stress. After years of consistently explosive and profitable growth, his team seemed to be on its way to its first year of loss. The result would be devastating on his company's fledgling stock. David needed to turn the tide around, and he needed to do it fast. He asked me to work with his team.

After a quick PQ assessment, I told David that the fastest and most efficient way to dramatically improve performance was to improve his own PQ and that of his team. His PQ had come out as 48, and his team's PQ was 52. This meant they were either wasting much of their mental and emotional energy or using it to sabotage themselves. They could probably increase their performance incrementally by fine-tuning their strategy and tactics and upgrading their skills. But removing their own self-sabotage and tapping into their Sage powers would have much more dramatic and lasting effects.

David was at first puzzled by my suggestions. He and his team prided themselves on their use of positive thinking techniques and assumed that

this practice meant they already had high PQs. After all, the company's performance before going public had been good. The question was, why were they suddenly floundering? I suggested that the positive thinking techniques couldn't match the power of the underlying Saboteurs that were running interference. It seemed that the Saboteurs had been supercharged since the company had gone public, which makes sense: stress feeds and fuels Saboteurs. In addition, running a public company was different from running a private company. The team members' Saboteurs were making it more difficult for them to change some of the outmoded ways they were used to running the business.

Our first job was to focus on David, since the leader's PQ impacts the team's PQ significantly. I suggested that we start to increase his PQ by exposing and weakening his master Saboteur, the Judge.

David's first reaction was that he didn't have a strong Judge, as he was not a very judgmental person. I explained that the Judge is often well disguised, and that we often don't realize when we are judging. Most feelings of stress, anxiety, frustration, disappointment, regret, and guilt are the direct results of judging yourself, others, situations, or outcomes. The great stress and unease David was experiencing told me that he must have a strong Judge in his head that was pretending to be his friend.

To show the power of his Judge, we examined the thoughts that had caused David to toss and turn sleeplessly at 3:00 a.m. the morning before. He wrote down twenty thoughts. I asked him to categorize each as neutral, useful, or harmful. David decided that three of the thoughts were useful: remember to set up a meeting with a vendor, talk to HR about an employee's compensation package, and ask his assistant to book a trip to a conference. I agreed with David that these were useful thoughts. Still, I asked him what would have happened had these reminder thoughts not occurred to him at 3:00 a.m., interrupting his rest. He agreed that they would have probably occurred to him later that day and that nothing would have been lost.

David rated five thoughts as neutral. They included remembering his high school graduation day, his first trip to Africa, and his first winter in New York. We agreed to categorize those as neutral and random, even though a psychoanalyst would've had a field day with them.

Next we examined what David had accurately but hesitantly categorized as harmful thoughts, such as the possibility that the board would fire him if the company's performance didn't pick up. This had led to a cascade of thoughts about what would then happen to his reputation, whether he could keep his big house and expensive luxury cars, etc. Other anxiety-provoking thoughts included concern over potentially losing a big client that appeared unhappy and worrying that an upcoming presentation to investors would not go well. A few thoughts were about regrets. Why hadn't he reacted more quickly to a change in market dynamics? Why had he hired the wrong business development guy and wasted nine months before letting him go?

David said the reason he was hesitant to firmly categorize these thoughts as harmful was that they kept him on his toes, pressuring him to work hard to turn things around. I asked him whether this was the first time he was having these thoughts. He admitted that they were actually recurrent thoughts and that he'd had them tens or hundreds of times.

I told David it was okay if his mind reminded him of the importance of an upcoming meeting once. He could use the reminder to prepare for the meeting. But there was no redeeming value in his Judge repeatedly insisting on making him anxious at 3:00 a.m., when there was nothing he could do but toss and turn. I then explained that this was also true of his pondering past mistakes. Going over a mistake once as an attempt to learn from it and not repeat it was helpful. But to be badgered multiple times was not useful. The results were lack of energy, little rest, and constant anxiety, stress, disappointment, guilt, and regret. It was sabotage, pure and simple.

It slowly began to dawn on David that his Judge was not the friend it pretended to be. Given the Judge's role as the master Saboteur, we agreed to focus on David's Judge initially and not distract ourselves with any other Saboteur.

Ordinarily, this strategy of focusing on weakening the Judge would have been enough work for the upcoming week. But David wanted to progress as fast as he could, so we discussed adding the second strategy of building his PQ Brain muscles. We created a simple plan to connect these two strategies and turn his persistent Judge into his own PQ Brain

fitness trainer. Every time the Judge showed up, David would use it as a reminder to activate his PQ Brain muscles and make them stronger. This would only take ten seconds and could be done while he was in a meeting, driving, or exercising. The beauty of this plan was that the Judge would now be working toward its own destruction; as the PQ Brain strengthens, the Saboteurs weaken.

For example, if David had the thought, *What's wrong with you, David? Why did you screw that up?* he would say to himself, *Oh, there goes the Judge again*, and then activate his PQ Brain for ten seconds. We also discussed a variety of ways for him to activate his PQ Brain. His favorite methods were to take his next three breaths a little more deeply, wiggle his toes attentively and notice each of them, and feel each of his fingertips by rubbing them against one another.

David was skeptical that such simple exercises could have the dramatic effects I claimed they would. I explained that the saying “no pain, no gain” was one of the many self-fulfilling lies of his Judge and that something doesn’t have to be difficult to be effective. In addition to their significant positive impact, the exercises were also fun, relaxing, and energizing.

When I talked to David a week later, he was amazed by how prevalent his Judge’s voice had been. Once David had started noticing his Judge, he discovered its nasty fingerprints everywhere. It was as if his Judge were running a constant editorial commentary, whispering or shouting in his ears at all times.

David said he was simultaneously encouraged and discouraged by the work. He was discouraged that his internal enemy was so prevalent, powerful, and persistent. But he said there was an immediate change when he switched from saying “I don’t think we can make it” to “my Judge says he doesn’t think we can make it.” Once David exposed the Judge as an enemy and began noticing and labeling his destructive thoughts, the Judge lost some of its credibility and power over David.

After a couple of weeks focusing on the Judge and strengthening the PQ Brain muscles, we turned our attention to David’s accomplice Saboteur, the Controller.

The Saboteurs get stronger and more active with increased stress.

David's increased stress in recent months, fueled in good part by his Judge, had further energized his Controller Saboteur. The more things did not go his way, the more ironfisted his Controller became. This produced short-term results that temporarily reduced his anxiety but kept him and his team from seeing and seizing opportunities that would build a more sustained shift in their fortunes. In response to his Controller, David's team did as he wished but brought less of themselves to their work since they didn't have much room to maneuver.

When I spoke to David about this, he acknowledged that perhaps his Controller did not allow his team members to step into their own power and creativity. This was one reason he felt the full burden of the company on his shoulders. But David was also afraid to let go of the Controller, who kept saying things like, "I'm the one who has generated all the results for you. If I don't show up forcefully like I do, nothing gets done. There will be chaos. People need me to tell them what to do. They'll be lost without it. People may not like me, but they know I produce results."

It was true that the Judge and Controller got things done for David and brought short-term accomplishment, so we couldn't just let go of these Saboteurs without replacing them with the Sage. The good news was that when David activated his PQ Brain, he automatically strengthened the Sage's voice and accessed its great powers. David didn't need the harassment of his Judge and Controller to be a highly action-oriented, decisive, and effective individual.

David began to see the Judge and Controller all over the place. He said it was like buying a new red sports car and suddenly seeing the same car everywhere. The good news was that he was finding it fun to shift his attention to activating his PQ Brain for ten seconds when he saw his Judge or Controller show up. As he strengthened his PQ Brain, his Sage's wisdom broke through the Saboteur noises more and more frequently. He kept discovering that there was a better, easier, more creative, and more joyful way to deal with his challenges.

David learned to relax more, have more trust in himself and his team, and ease up on control to enable his team's collective wisdom and power to emerge. Since his team members were working on raising their own PQs, the wisdom and creative solutions that emerged from their

collective Sages far exceeded what any of them would have thought of alone in the past.

When David reported that he looked forward to his weekly team meetings and felt energized by them, I knew that the team's PQ must have improved dramatically. An assessment showed that it had gone from 52 to 78. David's own PQ had increased from 48 to 75. There was one exception to this progress, however. One of his team members seemed unwilling to shift the level of his positivity, leaving a deepening chasm between him and the rest of the team. He eventually resigned.

It took David and his team a couple of quarters to stop the downward spiral and begin the turnaround. The company's stock took a beating in the meantime, but it gradually recovered. I recently ran into David at JFK Airport, jetlagged but beaming, returning from a European family vacation. On the long flight back, he had started telling his eleven-year-old son about the Judge. His son had listened thoughtfully and said, "I will call mine PoopMaker, Daddy. He is always making a mess of everything in my head." We both agreed that this was an apt description of the Judge.

Inquiry

What do you find energizing, hopeful, or exciting about Positive Intelligence? What are you skeptical about? How would you know if your skepticism were generated by a Saboteur trying to stay in power?

PART II

FIRST STRATEGY: WEAKEN YOUR SABOTEURS

In part II, you will learn the first of three strategies for increasing PQ: weakening your Saboteurs.

In chapter 3, you will learn more about the master Saboteur, the Judge, and the nine accomplice Saboteurs. You will perform a self-assessment to determine which of the nine accomplice Saboteurs is strongest in you and learn techniques to weaken that Saboteur.

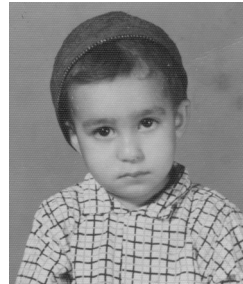
In chapter 4, you will focus on understanding the Judge in greater detail so you can expose and weaken it.

Do Not Distribute

CHAPTER 3

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE TEN SABOTEURS

I have a picture of myself from when I was about two years old. It shows me with a bowed head and stooped shoulders, in despair, peering through sad eyes that wondered what I was doing in this world and how much longer I could bear it. I know now that I had already started isolating myself from my fears and pains. This process, which eventually resulted in very strong Judge and Hyper-Rational Saboteurs, allowed me to survive my childhood. That is the initial role of all Saboteurs: helping us survive.



Since these Saboteurs formed the lens through which I saw and interacted with the world, it took me almost thirty years to discover that they even existed. Once I did, I also realized that even though I no longer needed them for survival as an adult, they continued to exert a great deal of negative influence in my mind.

Forty years after that picture was taken, I helped bring a little boy into this world, who is precious in every way. My wife and I pour everything we know into being great parents to Kian. Healthy, with a loving extended family, getting a solid education, and growing up in beautiful San Francisco, he is a lucky boy. Nevertheless, by the time he was ten, I saw the familiar formation of the Judge and, in his case, the Avider Saboteur. Saboteur formation is a normal process, and the first stage in

our mental development, when we develop survival strategies. The best parenting and upbringing cannot save us from this mental drama.

The formation of the Saboteurs begins to make clear sense once you realize that the primary objective of the first fifteen to twenty years of life is to survive long enough to pass on your genes. In that sense, we aren't much different from sea turtle hatchlings shuffling their way toward the safety of the ocean as soon as they break out of their shells. For the human child, however, survival has a component beyond physical survival. We also need to survive emotionally. The human brain is wired to pay close attention to our environment in our early years and adjust accordingly so we can bear the emotional strains we all encounter and make it into reproductive adulthood.

Even if you didn't have a difficult childhood, life still presented many challenges that your Saboteurs were initially developed to handle. You might have had loving parents, but there was still the scare of your mother getting sick and you not knowing whether she would ever come back from the hospital. Or maybe you had a sibling whom your parents seemed to favor over you. And of course there were kids at school who were taller, smarter, faster, or funnier than you, and the ones who didn't seem to like you. There was the time you failed publically, or got rejected, or betrayed. There was the time you felt terrified with the idea of death, or starvation, or one of the countless other dangers in this chaotic world. There was the time you promised yourself—which you likely don't consciously remember—that you would protect yourself better so bad things wouldn't happen to you as often.

Your Saboteurs were the buddies who helped you keep that promise. Childhood is an emotional minefield, regardless of how well you were parented. Saboteurs are a universal phenomenon. The fact that you might not be consciously aware of them doesn't mean they don't exist. If you don't think you have them, you're especially at risk: your Saboteurs are hiding well.

THE PROBLEM WITH SABOTEURS

We use many temporary mechanisms for physically surviving our childhood. These include using an umbilical cord, drinking only milk before our digestive system matures, and growing baby teeth until there is enough room for larger, more permanent ones. As we mature physically, we replace these mechanisms with ones that better fit our adult years. Ideally, our mental survival strategies would work similarly—we would abandon our childhood Saboteur strategies in favor of more mature ones better suited to the less vulnerable adult years. The challenge is that once formed, the Saboteurs do not voluntarily drop out and let go. They hang on in our heads and get entrenched.

Imagine what it would be like if as an adult you were still connected to your mother by an umbilical cord, or still could only drink milk, or still had your baby teeth. Imagine if you put a cast on your broken leg when you were five years old to protect it from further hurt—and then never took it off. As bizarre as that might sound, it is not too far from what actually happens to us mentally and emotionally with our Saboteurs. The Saboteurs were the initial casts that protected us, but not removing them in adulthood limits our mental and emotional freedom.

JUDGE, THE MASTER SABOTEUR

The Judge is the universal Saboteur, the one we all have: a predisposition to exaggerating the negative and assuming the worst is actually good for survival. If you're in the jungle and see the leaves in a nearby tree begin to shake, you would be better off assuming you are in grave danger, even though this assumption would be based on very little information. *This must be a tiger on its way to eat me alive, and I'd better run or hide*, you'd likely say to yourself. It is true that ninety-nine out of a hundred times, the Judge's exaggerated negative bias would have proven wrong for one of our distant ancestors, but the one time it was right would have saved his or her life. Those without the negative-leaning Judge, those who

waited to gather more complete and unbiased information before taking action, didn't survive long enough to pass on their genes.

Each person's Judge develops its own particular characteristics in response to that individual's specific needs for survival. We have a powerful psychological need for a mental construct that makes sense of our experience of life, and the Judge helps us fit all the pieces together. The Judge's interpretation is always full of flaws and negative biases, but in early life it is still helpful in sorting out the world around us to create a coherent mental construct of our experience.

In my case, as a child I felt I was not getting much caring and attention. My mind could make sense of this in one of two ways. I could have interpreted the situation accurately and admitted that I was being raised by flawed parents who didn't know how to give me the attention I needed and deserved. But this would have forced a terrifying realization and made my emotional survival more difficult. I depended on my parents for my life. Seeing them as flawed would have been as terrifying as a diver deep undersea realizing that his air supply mechanism was flawed and about to fail. Instead, the Judge came to the rescue. The Judge's solution was that I was deeply flawed and unworthy of my perfect parents' time: *Why should they show any more affection for someone so undeserving?*

In addition to forming my sense of low self-worth, my Judge also had to help me survive by beginning to judge others around me as deeply flawed—it would have felt terrifying to be a defective being in a world where everyone else was so great. Thus these two survival mechanisms of the Judge—judging myself and judging others—were firmly established at a very early age.

I was of course not consciously aware of much of this. Saboteurs are rarely consciously formed. It wasn't until my powerful experience at the Stanford MBA class many years later that I realized this invisible mechanism was deeply entrenched in the way I interpreted and reacted to everything in my life.

Figure 2 summarizes the characteristics of the Judge. At the bottom of the table, rate the strength of this Saboteur in yourself. If you rate it very low, please keep in mind that it might be because yours is hiding particularly well, as mine had done.

Fig. 2

	JUDGE
Description	Finds faults with self, others, and circumstances. Causes much of our disappointment, anger, regret, guilt, shame, and anxiety. Activates accomplice Saboteurs.
Characteristics	Self: Badgers self for past mistakes or current shortcomings. Others: Focuses on what is wrong with others rather than appreciating the good things about them. Gets into inferior/superior comparisons. Circumstances: Insists a circumstance or outcome is “bad” rather than seeing it as a gift and opportunity.
Thoughts	What is wrong with me? What is wrong with you? What is wrong with my circumstance or this outcome?
Feelings	All guilt, regret, shame, and disappointment are from the Judge. Much of anger and anxiety is instigated by the Judge.
Justification Lies	Without me pushing you, you will get lazy and complacent. Without me punishing you for mistakes, you will not learn from them, and you’ll then repeat them. Without me scaring you about bad future outcomes, you will not work hard to prevent them. Without me judging others, you will lose your objectivity and not protect your self-interest. Without me making you feel bad about negative outcomes, you won’t do anything to change them.
Impact on Self and Others	The Judge is the master Saboteur and the original cause of much of our anxiety, distress, and suffering. It also is the cause of many relationship conflicts.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

THE NINE ACCOMPLICE SABOTEURS

The Judge uses at least one accomplice Saboteur to ensure your early physical and emotional survival. In my case, my Judge's accomplice was the Hyper-Rational Saboteur. I'm a sensitive person, and I started life feeling deeply. But most of what I was feeling deeply was either painful or scary. So, it made perfect sense for me to begin to shut out all feelings. I escaped, instead, to a purely rational and analytical world where I could play with and have a sense of control over ideas and logic. Even more importantly, this rational focus began to provide my greatest source of attention and acknowledgment, from teachers heaping praise on their prize student. Unknowingly, I was developing my Hyper-Rational Saboteur, which allowed me to get some caring and respect. Again, it took me about thirty years to discover that I had actively numbed my own feelings and in the process deprived myself of any ability to develop deep relationships or enjoy the true emotional joys of life.

While the Judge is the master Saboteur in everyone, the accomplice Saboteur it teams up with is different from individual to individual. For example, among my four siblings I developed the Hyper-Rational Saboteur, one brother developed the Victim, one developed the Controller, one developed the Avoider, and one developed the Stickler. We'd all experienced similar difficulties throughout childhood, but our survival strategies ended up differing widely.

Nature and nurture both play a part in determining which accomplice Saboteur we develop. Any parent with more than one child was probably amazed to discover how different the kids' dispositions were, right out of the womb. As a father of a strong introvert son and a boldly extrovert daughter, I can attest to the differences being obvious in the first few months of life, even though my wife and I made great efforts to raise both children in the same way.

Our unique personalities end up influencing which accomplice Saboteurs we develop. Two dimensions of our personality in particular play a part—our motivations and our personal styles of handling challenges.¹⁸ We will now explore these two dimensions to see how they impact which Saboteur is developed.

Motivation

There are three primary motivations that underpin our emotional survival needs. Each person leans toward one of these three motivations:

1. **Independence:** A need for boundaries with others and maintaining independence from them.
2. **Acceptance:** A need to maintain a positive image in the eyes of others, to be accepted by them and gain their affection.
3. **Security:** A need to control life's anxieties and push away or minimize them.

All of us are driven by each of these motivations to some extent. The question is, which one is your primary motivation? Since much of Saboteur-formation is subconscious, you can't necessarily rely on your rational mind to answer that question. Don't worry about figuring out the answer right now.

Style

You exhibit one of three different styles in order to satisfy your primary need for independence, acceptance, or security:

1. **Assert:** This is the most active and commanding of the three styles. You take action that demands the fulfillment of your primary need for independence, acceptance, or security.
2. **Earn:** You work hard to earn the fulfillment of your need for independence, acceptance, or security. This contrasts with the more "demanding" nature of the Assert style.
3. **Avoid:** You withdraw yourself or your attention from activities, thoughts, feelings, or other people in order to fulfill your need for independence, acceptance, or security.

Again, don't worry at this point about figuring out which of these three styles is your dominant one.

IDENTIFYING YOUR TOP ACCOMPLICE SABOTEUR

The intersection between your primary motivation and your primary style determines your most likely accomplice Saboteur. However, nurture and outside circumstance also play a role. Trauma or extreme distress, especially during our early years, can change the Saboteur-development process, as can the Saboteurs our parents exhibit. Some children mimic their parents and grow similar Saboteurs, and some develop Saboteurs that are complementary to their parents'. For example, the child of a parent with a Controller Saboteur might develop the Pleaser to maintain peace.

The following table shows how the nine accomplice Saboteurs relate to motivation and style. An in-depth exploration of how each Saboteur exhibits its corresponding motivation and style is beyond the scope of this book and can be found on www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

The Nine Accomplice Saboteurs

Fig. 3

STYLE	MOTIVATION		
	Independence	Acceptance	Security
Assert	Controller	Hyper-Achiever	Restless
Earn	Stickler	Pleaser	Hyper-Vigilant
Avoid	Avoider	Victim	Hyper-Rational

Our initial aim in exploring our Saboteurs is not to develop a deep psychological understanding of their roots. Our focus is more on the current manifestation of their thoughts and feelings in ourselves, and how they sabotage us today. We rely on what we can consciously observe in ourselves. This will automatically result in discoveries about our Saboteurs' deeper and even subconscious roots in due course. (For a discussion of the subconscious connection, see Appendix A.)

A description of each of the nine Saboteurs' typical thoughts, feelings, characteristics, justification lies, and impact on one's self and others follows. The descriptions are by no means exhaustive; they are intended to provide you with the overall flavor of each Saboteur. You will find that your own experience conforms to some but not all the characteristics of any given Saboteur. As you read, focus on getting an overall impression of each Saboteur's tendencies and personality rather than getting bogged down in the specific details. Once you have a feel for each one, determine which is most likely your Judge's top accomplice.

You are likely to occasionally exhibit the characteristics of several of these nine Saboteurs. Don't let that discourage or confuse you. All you need to do is focus on your Judge and the top accomplice Saboteur. This focus will significantly activate and build up your PQ Brain muscles, depleting the oxygen supplies of *all* Saboteurs. In addition, since your Judge is your master Saboteur and tends to trigger the others, its weakening impacts all of them. Once you reduce the power of the Judge and key accomplice Saboteur in your head, the others will come crumbling down automatically.

As you review the following profiles, it might be helpful to bring to mind people you know who seem to have very strong versions of certain Saboteurs; this will help you remember the Saboteurs better. You might also take some preliminary guesses about which Saboteurs seem to be at play in your boss, your colleagues, your spouse, or your children.

The best way to do this Saboteur assessment is fast. Your first impression is likely more accurate than what you come to after too much analysis. See if you can spend ten minutes, meaning about one minute per Saboteur, to review and rate the strength of each Saboteur in yourself. Once you do a preliminary pass on all nine, come back to your top few and compare them in order to determine your top accomplice Saboteur. Some people report that their top accomplice Saboteur is different at work and at home. If that holds true for you, it's fine to make that distinction and identify a different Saboteur for each environment.

Alternatively, you can assess your Saboteurs online at www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

Fig. 4

	AVOIDER
Description	A focus on the positive and pleasant in an extreme way. An avoidance of difficult and unpleasant tasks and conflicts.
Characteristics	Avoids conflict and says yes to things that aren't actually desired. Downplays importance of some real problems and tries to deflect others. Has difficulty saying no. Resists others through passive-aggressive means rather than directly. Loses self in comforting routines and habits; procrastinates on unpleasant tasks.
Thoughts	This is just too unpleasant. Maybe if I let it go it will take care of itself. If I deal with this now, I will hurt someone's feelings. I'd rather not. If I get into conflict with others, I might lose my connection with them. I've found balance. I don't want to mess with it. I'd rather give someone else his or her way than create a scene.
Feelings	Tries to remain even-keeled. Feels anxiety about what has been avoided or procrastinated on. Fears hard-won peace of mind being interrupted. Suppresses anger and resentment.
Justification Lies	You are a good person to spare others' feelings. No good comes out of conflict. It is good to be flexible Someone needs to be the peacemaker.
Impact on Self and Others	Denying the conflicts and negativities that do exist prevents the Avoider from actually working with them and turning them into gifts. Feeling numb to pain is different than knowing how to harvest the wisdom and power of pain. What is avoided doesn't go away and festers. Relationships are kept superficial through conflict avoidance. Others' trust level is reduced because they are not sure when negative information is being withheld.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fig. 5

	CONTROLLER
Description	Anxiety-based need to take charge and control situations, bending people's actions to one's own will. Results in high anxiety and impatience when that is not possible.
Characteristics	<p>Strong need to control and take charge.</p> <p>Connects with others through competition, challenge, physicality, or conflict rather than through softer emotions.</p> <p>Willful, confrontational, and a straight-talker. Pushes people beyond their comfort zones.</p> <p>Comes alive when doing the impossible and beating the odds.</p> <p>Stimulated by conflict and connects through conflict. Surprised that others get hurt.</p> <p>Intimidates others. In-your-face communication is interpreted by others as anger or criticism.</p>
Thoughts	<p>I am either in control or out of control.</p> <p>If I work hard enough I can and should control the situation so it goes my way.</p> <p>Others want and need me to take control. I'm doing them a favor.</p> <p>No one tells me what to do.</p>
Feelings	<p>Feels high anxiety when things are not going his or her way.</p> <p>Becomes angry and intimidating when others don't follow.</p> <p>Impatient with other's feelings and different styles.</p> <p>Does feel hurt and rejected, although rarely admits to it.</p>
Justification Lies	<p>Without me, you can't get much done. You need to push people.</p> <p>If I don't control, I will be controlled, and I can't live with that.</p> <p>I am trying to get the job done for all our sakes.</p>
Impact on Self and Others	The Controller does get temporary results, but at the cost of others feeling controlled, resentful, and unable to tap into their own greater capacities. The Controller also generates a great deal of anxiety, since many things in work and life are ultimately not controllable.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fig. 6

	HYPER-ACHIEVER
Description	Dependent on constant performance and achievement for self-respect and self-validation. Highly focused on external success, leading to unsustainable workaholic tendencies and loss of touch with deeper emotional and relationship needs.
Characteristics	Competitive, image- and status-conscious Good at covering up insecurities and showing positive image. Adapts personality to fit what would be most impressive to others. Goal-oriented and workaholic streak. More into perfecting public image than introspection. Can be self-promoting. Keeps people at safe distance.
Thoughts	I must be best at what I do. If I can't be outstanding, I won't bother. I must be efficient and effective. Emotions get in the way of performance. Focus on thinking and action. I can be anything I want to be. I am worthy as long as I am successful and others think well of me.
Feelings	Doesn't like dwelling in feelings for too long—they distract from achieving goals. Sometimes feels empty and depressed inside, but doesn't linger there. Needs to feel successful. That's what it is all about. Feels worthy mainly through accomplishment. May fear intimacy and vulnerability. Closeness with others might allow them to see imperfections.
Justification Lies	Life is about achieving and producing results. Portraying a good image helps me achieve results. Feelings are just a distraction and don't help anything.
Impact on Self and Others	Peace and happiness are fleeting and short-lived in brief celebrations of achievement. Self-acceptance is continuously dependent on the next success. Loses touch with deeper feelings, deeper self, and ability to connect intimately with others. Others might be pulled into the performance vortex of the Hyper-Achiever and become similarly lopsided in their focus on external achievement.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fig. 7

	HYPER-RATIONAL
Description	Intense and exclusive focus on the rational processing of everything, including relationships. Can be perceived as cold, distant, and intellectually arrogant.
Characteristics	<p>Possesses an intense and active mind, sometimes comes across as intellectually arrogant or secretive.</p> <p>Private, and doesn't let many people into deeper feelings. Mostly shows feelings through passion in ideas.</p> <p>Prefers to just watch the surrounding craziness and analyze from a distance.</p> <p>Can lose track of time due to intense concentration.</p> <p>Strong penchant for skepticism and debate.</p>
Thoughts	<p>The rational mind is where it's at. Feelings are distracting and irrelevant.</p> <p>Many people are so irrational and sloppy in their thinking.</p> <p>Needs and emotions of others distract me from my projects. I need to shut out intrusions.</p> <p>What I value most is knowledge, understanding, and insight.</p> <p>My self-worth is attached to mastering knowledge and competence.</p>
Feelings	<p>Frustrated with others being emotional and irrational.</p> <p>Anxious about preserving personal time, energy, and resources against intrusions.</p> <p>Feels different, alone, and misunderstood.</p> <p>Is often skeptical or cynical.</p>
Justification Lies	The rational mind is the most important thing. It should be protected from the wasteful intrusion of people's messy emotions and needs so it can get its work done.
Impact on Self and Others	Limits the depth and flexibility of relationships in work and life by analyzing rather than experiencing feelings. Intimidates less analytically minded people.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fig. 8

	HYPER-VIGILANT
Description	Continuous intense anxiety about all the dangers in life and a strong focus on what could go wrong. Vigilance that can never rest.
Characteristics	Always anxious, with chronic doubts about self and others. Extraordinary sensitivity to danger signals. Constant expectation of mishap or danger. Suspicious of what others are up to. Expectation that people will mess up. May seek reassurance and guidance in procedures, rules, authorities, institutions.
Thoughts	When is the other shoe going to drop? If I make a mistake, I fear everyone is going to jump down my throat. I want to trust people, but I find myself suspicious of their motives. I need to know what the rules are, although I might not always follow them.
Feelings	Skeptical, even cynical. Often anxious and highly vigilant.
Justification Lies	Life is full of dangers. If I don't look out for them, who will?
Impact on Self and Others	This is a hard way to live. Constant anxiety burns a great deal of vital energy that could otherwise be put to great use. Loses credibility due to the "boy who cried wolf" phenomenon. Others begin to avoid the Hyper-Vigilant as the intensity of the nervous energy drains them.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fig. 9

	PLEASER
Description	Indirect attempt to gain acceptance and affection by helping, pleasing, rescuing, or flattering others. Loses sight of own needs and becomes resentful as a result.
Characteristics	Has a strong need to be liked and attempts to earn it by helping, pleasing, rescuing, or flattering other people. Needs frequent reassurance of the acceptance and affection of others. Can't express own needs openly and directly. Does so indirectly by making people feel obligated to reciprocate.
Thoughts	To be a good person I should put the needs of others ahead of my own. It bothers me when people don't notice or care about what I have done for them. They can be so selfish and ungrateful. I give away too much and don't think of myself enough. I can make anyone like me. If I don't rescue people, who will?
Feelings	Expressing own needs directly feels selfish. Worried that insisting on own needs may drive others away. Resents being taken for granted but has difficulty expressing it.
Justification Lies	I don't do this for myself. I help others selflessly and don't expect anything in return. The world would be a better place if everyone did the same.
Impact on Self and Others	Can jeopardize taking care of one's own needs, whether emotional, physical, or financial. Can lead to resentment and burnout. Others can develop dependence rather than learn to take care of themselves, and feel obligated, guilty, or manipulated.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fig. 10

	RESTLESS
Description	Restless; constantly in search of greater excitement in the next activity or in constant busyness. Rarely at peace or content with the current activity.
Characteristics	Easily distracted and can get too scattered. Stays busy, juggling many different tasks and plans. Seeks excitement and variety, not comfort or safety. Bounces (escapes) from unpleasant feelings very quickly. Seeks constant new stimulation.
Thoughts	This isn't fulfilling. The next thing has got to be more exciting. These negative feelings suck. I must shift my attention to something engaging. Why can't anyone keep up with me?
Feelings	Impatient with what is happening in the present. Wonders what is next. Fears missing out on other more worthwhile experiences. Feels restless and wants more and more options. Worries that focus on any unpleasant feeling will grow and become overwhelming.
Justification Lies	Life is too short. It must be lived fully. I don't want to miss out.
Impact on Self and Others	Underneath the surface of fun and excitement of the Restless is an anxiety-based escape from being present and experiencing each moment fully, which might include dealing with unpleasant things. The Restless avoids a real and lasting focus on the issues and relationships that truly matter. Others have a difficult time keeping up with the frenzy and chaos brought by the Restless and are unable to build anything sustainable around it.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fig. 11

	STICKLER
Description	Perfectionism and a need for order and organization taken too far.
Characteristics	<p>Punctual, methodical, perfectionistic.</p> <p>Can be irritable, tense, opinionated, sarcastic.</p> <p>Highly critical of self and others.</p> <p>Strong need for self-control and self-restraint.</p> <p>Works overtime to make up for others' sloppiness and laziness.</p> <p>Is highly sensitive to criticism.</p>
Thoughts	<p>Right is right and wrong is wrong. I know the right way.</p> <p>If you can't do it perfectly, don't do it at all.</p> <p>Others too often have lax standards.</p> <p>I need to be more organized and methodical than others so things get done.</p> <p>I hate mistakes.</p>
Feelings	<p>Constant frustration and disappointment with self and others for not living up to high standards.</p> <p>Anxious that others will mess up the order and balance it has created.</p> <p>Sarcastic or self-righteous overtones.</p> <p>Suppressed anger and frustration.</p>
Justification Lies	<p>This is a personal obligation. It is up to me to fix whatever mess I encounter.</p> <p>Perfectionism is good, plus it makes me feel better about myself.</p> <p>There is usually a clear right way and a clear wrong way to do things.</p> <p>I know how things should be done and must do the right thing.</p>
Impact on Self and Others	<p>Causes rigidity and reduces flexibility in dealing with change and the differing styles of others.</p> <p>Is a source of ongoing anxiety and frustration.</p> <p>Causes resentment, anxiety, self-doubt, and resignation in others, who feel continually criticized and resign themselves to the fact that no matter how hard they work, they will never please the Stickler.</p>
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fig. 12

	VICTIM
Description	Emotional and temperamental style to gain attention and affection. An extreme focus on internal feelings, particularly painful ones. Martyr streak.
Characteristics	If criticized or misunderstood, tends to withdraw, pout, and sulk. Fairly dramatic and temperamental. When things get tough, wants to crumble and give up. Represses rage, resulting in depression, apathy, and constant fatigue. Unconsciously attached to having difficulties. Gets attention by having emotional problems, or being temperamental and sullen.
Thoughts	No one understands me. Poor me. Terrible things always happen to me. I might be uniquely disadvantaged or flawed. I am what I feel. I wish someone would rescue me from this dreary mess.
Feelings	Tends to brood over negative feelings for a long time. Feels alone and lonely, even when around family or close friends. Experiences feelings of melancholy and abandonment. Dwells on envy and negative comparisons.
Justification Lies	By acting this way, I at least get some of the love and attention I deserve. Sadness is a noble and sophisticated thing that shows exceptional depth, insight, and sensitivity.
Impact on Self and Others	Vitality wasted through focus on internal processing and brooding. Backfires by pushing people away. Others feel frustrated, helpless, or guilty that they can't put more than a temporary Band-Aid on the Victim's pain.
Strength	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EXPOSING THE LIE

The most common skeptical remark I hear from high-achieving executives is, “I have achieved so much of my success through listening to my Judge or being a Controller, a Stickler, etc. That’s what it takes to generate results. Why would I give that up?”

A Saboteur does its greatest damage if it convinces you that it’s your friend and you accept it into your trusted inner circle. Each Saboteur has some very reasonable-sounding justifications for its actions—it tells you how it is your friend and why it is good for you—but these justifications are nothing but well-masked lies. For example, the Judge, Controller, Hyper-Achiever, and Stickler would convince you that without them you would turn into a lazy, unambitious, or complacent couch potato. It is not a lie that they have indeed pushed you and others to succeed and accomplish. The lie is that your greatest success would come through them. Let’s expose that lie.

Say you have just made a costly mistake on something important. Your Judge beats you up over it and causes you to feel guilty, angry, or remorseful. Its distressing messages keep hounding you and keep you up at night, worried about what happened and the consequences. It scares you into working really hard to make sure the mistake doesn’t happen again. Next time around, you will have real anxiety about not screwing up. You might do better, but you will have paid a high emotional toll along the way. Moreover, your high distress actually makes you more likely to make other mistakes while anxiously focusing on not repeating your original error.

The Sage offers a very different approach. First, it will empathize with you and reassure you that, even though you made a mistake, you are still a wonderful person. It tells you to have compassion for yourself—we are all fallible human beings. It tells you that everything, even your mistakes, can be turned into gifts and opportunities by the way you react to them. Now, because you are feeling better and not beaten up, you are less defensive and more likely to take a good look at your mistake and explore what really happened and where you went wrong. The Sage might then have you come up with creative solutions for how you could do better next time and prevent even bigger mistakes. With the Sage perspective,

you are more likely to be creative because your PQ Brain regions are activated. These regions are far more creative than the Survivor Brain, where the Judge lives. At the end of this process of empathizing with yourself, exploring what happened, and coming up with creative solutions, you will be more energized to take decisive action and do better the next time. You won't have wasted an ounce of vitality and energy beating yourself up and suffering through the negative drama.

Both your Saboteurs and your Sage may lead you to success, but they do so by taking very different paths. The Saboteurs push you into action and success through anger, regret, fear, guilt, anxiety, shame, obligation, etc. But the Sage pulls you into action through compassion, curiosity, creativity, the joy of self-expression, a desire to contribute and create meaning, and the excitement of action. Would you rather be pushed or pulled? Only the Sage lets you achieve success without sacrificing happiness and peace of mind.

I can't emphasize the importance of this point enough: you can't confront an enemy that you aren't sure is your enemy. If a voice in your head is still saying that you need your Judge, Controller, Stickler, Hyper-Achiever, or any other Saboteur to succeed or be happy in life, you are still buying into their lies. The Sage is far more discerning, aware, agile, vigilant, creative, decisive, and action-oriented than any Saboteur. As you continue reading this book, put this to a test. Take any work or life challenge and see that it can be met most effectively by your Sage's great powers. Don't fall for the Saboteurs' seductive lies; they aren't your friends and you don't need them. The Sage always offers a better way.

WEAKENING YOUR SABOTEURS

The key point about weakening your Saboteurs is that you shouldn't fight them, at least not in the typical way we think of fighting. If you were to get upset and angry when you saw your Victim, Pleaser, or Restless, guess what you would be doing? You would be "judging" your Saboteur, and in doing so you would be activating and strengthening the ring-leader of them all, the Judge.

The most effective strategy for weakening your Saboteurs is to simply observe and label your Saboteur thoughts or feelings every time you notice them. The author Eckhart Tolle uses an apt metaphor to describe this phenomenon. He says the “egoic mind,” which is his collective term for all the Saboteurs, is like a giant snowman that melts away under the light of conscious awareness.¹⁹ The bulk of the work in weakening your Saboteurs involves exposing them to the hot light of awareness by simply observing and labeling them when they show up.

To better observe and label your Saboteurs, it might be helpful to create more personalized descriptions and names for them. For example, my name for my Judge is “the Executioner” and my name for my Hyper-Rational is “Robot.” Others have called their Judge “Darth Vader,” their Stickler “Anal Joe,” their Controller “Drill Sergeant,” their Hyper-Achiever “Workaholic,” and their Victim “Martyr.” You get the picture.

Let’s say you determine that your key accomplice Saboteur is the Controller and you give it the name “Drill Sergeant.” Now if you are in the middle of a meeting and you get a visit from your old friend the Controller, you observe and label your Saboteur thoughts by saying, “The Drill Sergeant is insisting it will only work her way.” Or you can observe and label the resulting emotions: “The Drill Sergeant is feeling anxious and angry that this meeting isn’t going her way.” You do all this in the back of your mind. It takes hardly any time or effort. It’s very quick, like stamping a passport.

You might wonder how this simple act of observing and labeling could possibly have a big impact on you. It does, and here’s why: By their very nature, Saboteurs do far greater damage when they do their work while hiding under the radar, pretending they are your friend or that they are you. Observing and labeling them blows their cover and discredits their voice. Notice the difference between saying “I don’t think I am capable” and “the Judge doesn’t think I am capable.” The snowman will melt under the light of your awareness.

In chapter 7, you will learn the additional technique of using each sighting of your Saboteurs as a reminder to activate your PQ Brain for ten seconds. This will accelerate the demise of your Saboteurs by quieting the part of the brain that gives rise to them.

PROPER USE OF SABOTEUR ASSESSMENT

In my research to determine the 10 Saboteur types, I studied a great variety of both eastern and western personality profiling systems. This included the 9 Enneagram types,²⁰ the 8 types used in native American and Mayan traditions,²¹ and the Jungian types, in addition to an analysis of the most common personality “pathologies” diagnosed in the practice of modern psychology.²² I discovered a great deal of overlap between these different systems. This shouldn’t be surprising given that they all try to explain the same phenomenon using different frameworks.

In this research I often encountered the risky practice of people saying “I AM x,” based on some kind of inevitably error-prone assessment or diagnostic test. The problem is that once you say “I AM x . . .” you are declaring that you are one with x. You are boxing yourself into the narrow confines of that type, reinforcing the very lie of the Saboteurs.

In the PQ practice, please make sure you insist on a separation. Thus, you are **not** a Controller; your top Saboteur happens to be the Controller for now. And even if that Saboteur might be your most dominant one now, your top Saboteur would be different once you successfully weaken your Controller. In this practice, you recognize yourself as a magnificently dynamic and ever evolving force of nature. The only constant in you is your never-changing true essence—your Sage.

Inquiry

A Saboteur initially served a purpose—to protect you physically or help you survive emotionally. How did your Judge and your top accomplice Saboteur help you in your youth?

Do Not Distribute

CHAPTER 4

JUDGE, THE MASTER SABOTEUR

In all my years of coaching, I have never worked with anyone who was not substantially sabotaged by a persistent Judge character, even though many were initially unaware of that fact. Your Judge Saboteur is your private enemy number one. It impacts your well-being, success, and happiness far more than any public enemy ever could.

The Judge accomplishes its staggering destructive sabotage by having us feel negative and unhappy through constant faultfinding with (1) ourselves, (2) others, and (3) our circumstances. It does so under pretense of being rational and reasonable and trying to be helpful. The Judge knows how to hide well and might in fact have become so invisible that we're unaware of its existence. This is why discovering my brutal Judge for the first time that day in my MBA group was such a powerful revelation; he was obvious to others but completely hidden from me.

This chapter is about enabling you to become aware of the enormous damage inflicted by your Judge and the insidious and often well-disguised techniques it uses to sabotage you. You will learn to become more aware of what your Judge looks and feels like—to develop its mug shot, so to speak. Knowing when your Judge is surfacing will enable you to identify and label it in its act of sabotage. Doing so is key to reducing its power and increasing your PQ.

1. JUDGING SELF

The first way the Judge sabotages us is by making us judge ourselves. As with most people's Judges, mine had started taking hold in my mind in early childhood. By the time I was an adult it was so much a part of my thinking that I never questioned its voice as anything but my own. I took what it said about me seriously. And what it said about me was not pretty. Despite years of having ranked at the top of most of my classes, having attained multiple degrees from prestigious universities, and having held significant positions at world-class organizations, I still lived with a voice in my head that constantly found me falling short of an imaginary ideal. This judgment ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous, from faulting and shaming myself for not having changed the world, to wondering how I could ever get another date given my receding hairline. Everywhere I turned, this voice was there to tell me I wasn't quite what I needed to be.

While my powerful encounter in my MBA class had woken me up to my judgments toward others, my Judge was still well hidden in the damage it was doing to myself. My first real glimpses into how universal and destructive the Judge is to the self came in my first year in business school. Having been first in my class almost all my life, I was suddenly surrounded by 320 others who had similar achievements. The euphoria of having been accepted to a top-ranked business school quickly gave way to believing I was the sole mistake of the admissions office. Everywhere I looked I was much more impressed with the achievements and abilities of others than with my own. I was keenly aware of my many shortcomings. This of course led me to put extra energy into constructing a façade of togetherness and confidence.

Over the months, I slowly began to detect signs of similar insecurities in many of my classmates. By the beginning of my second year, these observations had allowed me to relax my self-judgments a little. I began to wonder about the big price I had paid in unnecessary pain and suffering in my first year. As I looked at the panic and insecurity so widespread in the faces of the incoming first-year class, it became clear to me that this phenomenon was repeating itself all over again. I decided to take a chance and share some of my own feelings of self-judgment

and insecurity, with the hope of shedding some perspective on how widespread this phenomenon is. I wrote a five-page, single-spaced letter about how to achieve a better perspective, made 320 copies of it, and put one in the inbox of every first-year student over an October weekend.

I spent a restless Sunday night wondering what the reaction was going to be the next morning. Since I had put my name on the letter, if my premise was wrong, I would have just outed myself as the single most insecure person in the whole business school and lost much credibility in this tight-knit community that was so important to my future. As it turned out, the reaction far exceeded even my most optimistic hopes. The letter struck a chord with so many people that my inbox was inundated with thank-you letters from people relieved that their suffering and self-judgments were unjustified, and not unique to them.

What's more, a year later the new second-year class replicated what I had done and put copies of my letter in the mailboxes of all the incoming first-year students. When I attended my twenty-year reunion, I was told by a faculty member that in the prior twenty years my letter had become a tradition, gifted from each second-year class to the incoming first-year class caught in the grips of self-doubt and self-judgment. This was my first real glimpse into the fact that the Judge's destructive power over us is a relatively universal phenomenon, and that most people suffer it alone.

This understanding deepened over years of leading retreats and coaching others. I once led a two-day leadership development retreat for about one hundred CEOs and presidents. At one point in the retreat I gave everyone a three-by-five card and asked them to write down, anonymously, an important thing about themselves that they had never shared with others in fear of losing credibility, acceptance, or respect. After shuffling the cards, I started reading them out loud. They were replete with confessions of feeling inadequate, undeserving, unworthy of love; guilt over letting others down as a leader, parent, or spouse; fear of being lucky rather than competent; fear of being fundamentally flawed; and fear of everything coming tumbling down one day. After I read all the cards, there was a stunned silence. Many said they felt a huge weight off their shoulders because for the first time in their lives they had realized that their inner torment was commonly shared.

Most successful, high-achieving people are privately tortured by their own Judges. This is rarely obvious to those around them. Externally, we all show our happy and fully confident fronts.

This realization had a profound effect on me. For the first time in my life, I felt fully “normal”—I realized that the Judge and the insecurities it generates are universal, an ailment common to everyone. When I interact with people now, I no longer wonder *if* they have a nasty internal Judge, but instead, *how* it is hiding and doing its damage in that individual.

Our ways of dealing with our Judge-induced insecurities are different, as I have found in my coaching practice. This is because different people’s Judges trigger different accomplice Saboteurs. Larry, the head of a manufacturing facility in the Midwest, buried himself in work so he could run away from hearing and being tormented by these voices. He ran, terrified of not being busy. Mary, the head of a marketing services organization, turned her insecurities inside out and showed up with arrogance, an aura of superiority, and a pretense of invulnerability, which is ultimately all about hiding insecurity. Peter, the head of a highly successful telecom company, had a habit of dwelling in self-judgments and torturing himself privately while showing a confident public face. This double-life resulted in a great deal of stress that included insomnia and increasingly frequent physical breakdowns. Catherine, the VP of operations of a global software company, tried to bury her self-doubts deep in a locked compartment, terrified she would one day be exposed to herself and others as the flawed being that she was; she met any hint of criticism with a violent reaction. Our methods of dealing with the Judge are different and may not be as clear-cut as these examples. The Judge is still there, however, doing its devastating damage.

Why Do I Love Thee?

The Judge’s most damaging lie is that we are not worthy of love or respect by just being who we are. Instead, it forces us to constantly perform for them; this forms the construct of “conditional love.” Most of us grow up experiencing love that is conditional on being good or performing, and we get into the habit of placing the same conditions on self-love.

But conditional love is not real love. It's more like receiving a carrot for good behavior.

Given the ubiquity of the Judge's conditional love game, I have embarked on a very different kind of game with my son to prevent a strong version of his Judge from taking hold. I start tickling him and tell him that I will only stop if he keeps giving me the right answers, which he has learned to give over the years. Here's how the game goes, as I tickle him and stop only to hear his answers through his laughter:

Me: Kian, do you know why I love you so much?

Kian: No, Daddy, I don't know.

Me: Is it because you are so handsome? (Trust me, he is *very* handsome!)

Kian: No, Daddy, it isn't because I'm handsome.

Me: Is it because you are so smart?

Kian: No, Daddy, it isn't because I am smart.

Me: Is it because you do so well on your homework and get good grades?

Kian: No, Daddy, it isn't . . .

I keep going down the list that includes his kindness and generosity, his talent in sports, his sensitivity and thoughtfulness, and so on. At some point, I feign great frustration:

Me: So why is it, Kian? Why *do* I love you so much?

By now Kian has learned to say (and he says it with firmness and certainty): "Daddy, it's because I am *me*."

Occasionally I ask Kian to remind me what this answer means. He says it means that my love for him is not conditional on anything he does. It is for his essence, for the being looking back at me when I first held him the day he was born. He knows that in his essence he is worthy of love, always. He is to never worry that he might lose it, regardless of his successes or failures and the ups and downs of life.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

The Judge, of course, has an aneurism hearing all this. It will give you dire warnings like, "This is a recipe for your child becoming lazy or

irresponsible; if his actions have no consequence on how you feel about him, why should he try to achieve anything?” Does that sound familiar? Is your love for yourself unconditional? At the end of a bad day, in which you’ve made terrible mistakes with negative consequences, how much self-love do you feel?

Does your Judge warn you that you would turn into a lazy, unambitious, unaccountable, complacent, or selfish being without it kicking your butt constantly? This is a key rationale the Judge uses to stay in power. This view is a fundamentally cynical one asserting that you, and human beings in general, will only do the right thing under pressure, or out of fear of guilt, shame, or negative consequences. This cynical view ignores the enormous untapped Sage powers within you and the fundamental nature of your essence.

This is another case of the push versus pull difference between the Sage and Saboteurs. While the Judge might push you into action through threats, fear, shame, or guilt, the Sage pulls you into action through anticipation of the joy of exploration and discovery; through the compelling and deeply seated human urge to find meaning in life and to matter; through the joy of creativity and possibility; through the longing of the human heart to connect, care, and be cared for; through appreciation of the mystery of life; and through a desire for clearheaded action toward desired outcomes.

Both the Judge’s view and the Sage’s view are self-fulfilling prophecies. Each of us is a mixed bag, both divine and wretched. Whether you are in Sage or Saboteur mode determines which version of you gets manifested. Which version would you choose for yourself? For people in your company and team? For your spouse and children? Unless you develop mastery over your Judge, the ringleader of your Saboteurs, it gets to choose for you.

2. JUDGING OTHERS

The second way the Judge sabotages us is by judging others. The Judge plays a central role in team, professional, and personal conflicts.

This phenomenon is easiest to illustrate using a personal relationship example, which can then be applied to work settings. I will use the case of John, an executive I coached, and his wife, Melody. In the early stages of their relationship, the romance phase, they had danced in the euphoric energies of their Sages while the Saboteurs were forced onto the sidelines. Many of the Sage qualities were evident. They were deeply curious about each other, open to experimenting with new ways of being, caring about what the other was feeling and experiencing, and trusting of the mystery and wisdom of the circumstances that had brought them together. It was a glorious situation of the Sage in John seeing the Sage in Melody, and vice versa. As is common, the Sage energy in one had reinforced and encouraged the Sage energy in the other. In a virtuous reinforcing cycle, they were each bringing the best out of the other by bringing the best out of themselves. Everything was great. What was there not to love?

But as we know, Saboteurs don't like staying on the sidelines for too long. At some point, John began judging and being irritated by Melody's fear-based controlling behavior (her Controller). He reacted at first with mild and then increasingly stronger irritation. This helped to trigger his other big Saboteur (the Victim) in the form of frequent bouts of self-pity for what he had to live with. Reacting to John's Victim, Melody's Judge emerged full-force, wondering whether she could respect the new John. This led to her favorite strategy to avoid difficult feelings: indulging in food and restless busyness (the Restless Saboteur).

By this point, the Judges on both sides were firmly established as the ringleaders, reacting to the Saboteurs in the other and denying their own culpability in triggering those Saboteurs. The exhausting, self-reinforcing negative cycle of the Saboteurs had begun. Each party was bringing the worst out in the other. They each began to wonder what had attracted them to the other in the first place. It was impossible to love the other's Saboteurs, and each wondered if the other had changed.

The fact is that the other person hadn't necessarily changed. John was always a mixed bag (of Saboteurs and Sage), and he will always remain a mixed bag, even as he learns to better restrain his Saboteurs over time. The same was true of Melody. The same is true of me, you, and every

human being alive. The Judge causes trouble when it has you focus narrowly on the Saboteurs of the other. This focus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as your Judge triggers and reinforces the other person's Saboteurs, which in turn become evidence for your Judge that it was right to begin with. Your Judge of course will never take any responsibility for its own role in triggering and reinforcing your counterpart's Saboteurs. In reality, we are co-responsible for which version of the other person comes out in interactions with us.

Of course, relationships go through ups and downs, good times and bad times. As a rule of thumb, if you find yourself in an exhausting, knock-down, drag-out fight with your colleague, partner, spouse, or child, chances are very high that the Judge in you is busy judging the other, and vice versa. And yes, that is especially true in cases where you are 100 percent sure you are right and the whole thing is the other person's fault.

While the harmful role of the Judge is glaringly obvious within our personal relationships, it is equally central to tensions and conflicts in work-related settings. I rarely coach a team that is not constantly sabotaged by judgments team members make about one another. In some teams this is done in a blatantly open and confrontational way. In others, it is done in a more subversive and indirect way. In either case, unless the team members explicitly learn greater mastery over their own Judges, the collection of Judges in the room can cause significant and ongoing friction that costs a great deal in lower trust, wasted energy, heightened stress, and reduced productivity. What is the price you would put on the damage that judging another person is causing for you, within your personal relationships or at work?

3. JUDGING CIRCUMSTANCES

The third and final way the Judge sabotages us is by judging the circumstances and events in our lives and finding them lacking. This leads to one of the Judge's biggest and most destructive lies: "You will be happy when . . ."

Many of the CEOs I coach who are in their mid-forties or early fifties show signs of a midlife crisis of some sort. Ironically, the deepest crises are experienced by those who have attained many of the goals they had set out to achieve. These goals often have to do with financial achievements and reaching the pinnacle of one's profession. The crisis comes from finally achieving these long-sought-after goals and realizing that the promised happiness that was supposed to accompany them is nowhere to be found. At the heart of the midlife crisis is the question, *Can anything really bring me that elusive peace and happiness I've been chasing all these years?* The chase has, of course, been orchestrated by the Judge and its big lie: "You will be happy when . . ."

When you examine this lie more closely, you will see that there are actually two lies embedded within it. The first lie is that you can't be happy with your current circumstances. Much of our unhappiness stems from this lie alone. This lie places a "when" condition on your eventual happiness; it could be when you make your first million, when you get promoted, when you get to run your own company, when you raise the kids and see them off to college, when you achieve retirement security, etc.

The second lie is that the "when" is a moving target rather than a promise to be kept. When you do make the first million, the Judge will allow you a two-minute or two-day celebration before it has convinced you that you can't be really happy until you also have a second vacation home like your best buddy from college. After all, you're just as smart as she was, and it's only fair that you have one too, right? The "when" gets renegotiated the moment it is about to be reached. Millions of people die every year still waiting to reach the last "when." This ever-moving target is a mirage and a key technique the Judge uses to ensure your everlasting unhappiness.

The fascinating thing is that each "when" is selected based not on objective criteria but on relative comparisons that are completely arbitrary. I was a firsthand witness to the absurdity of this phenomenon while living in San Francisco in the late nineties, at the epicenter of the dot-com craze. I watched highly educated and very successful people lose perspective completely and allow their Judges to renegotiate their "when" targets to absurd levels.

Peter, an entrepreneur who had long ago declared \$10 million to be the target for his happy retirement, rejected a \$125 million offer for his company. His rationale? His college buddy had sold his for \$330 million and was now traveling with his own personal jet. After running some numbers, Peter had decided that the lifestyle he could now envision—including a personal jet and vacation homes on multiple continents—required a target higher than \$125 million, and he couldn't be happy with that offer. As it turned out, within a year he witnessed the complete collapse of his company's valuation and eventual bankruptcy. His "when" was then renegotiated by his Judge. He could now be happy when he came out of debt, got to \$10 million in net worth, and regained some respectability in his field. I ran into Peter recently at a conference and found out that he was still chasing his renegotiated \$10 million "when." So many years later, the sighs and regrets of the Judge still seeped into his words as he spoke about his life. He was completely oblivious to the fact that even now he was earning an amount of money and living a lifestyle that placed him among the top one percent of people in the world. Peter's Judge was still in charge, chasing the new "when."

I encountered many such examples: Jackson, a forty-five-year-old man who had previously been fine with a target retirement age of sixty, but who felt like a failure because he still had to work while his neighbor, who'd hit it big during the dot-com boom, had retired at forty-two; Allison, a marketing VP who had previously been fine with a steady rise on the corporate ladder in a company that treated her well, but who suddenly felt like a failure for not having jumped ship like one of her junior associates who struck it rich in a start-up; Tim, the CEO of one of the most reputable publically run brick-and-mortar companies, who had gone overnight from feeling on top of the world to feeling like a worthless dinosaur. It is stunning the tricks the Judge plays in renegotiating the "when."

As we will discuss in chapter 5, the "when" for peace and happiness is actually now, regardless of the circumstances of your work or personal life. Any other "when" is the lie of the Judge. The Sage helps you feel peace and joy regardless of what's going on in any area of your life, while the Saboteurs make you feel unfulfilled regardless of the circumstances. The Sage is right: It's not about the circumstances. It's not about

the “when.” It’s about who is whispering or screaming in your ear while interpreting the circumstances for you.

Think about each “when” you’ve declared for yourself in the past and actually reached. How long did your happiness last before you (your Judge) renegotiated a new one? What “when” are you chasing right now as a condition of your own happiness and peace? Would you be willing to reconsider and give up that “when,” believing instead that you can have great peace and happiness in your work and life right *now*?

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JUDGING AND DISCERNING

I often hear people say that without their Judge they wouldn’t be able to defend themselves from mistakes, wouldn’t give people tough corrective feedback, wouldn’t fire people who need to be fired, wouldn’t say no when they need to, wouldn’t take corrective action in time, and so on. Such claims confuse discernment with judging.

If someone has turned in his projects late five times in a row, the voice of discernment in you should simply state that fact and say that it is therefore likely, unless something shifts, that the person will be late turning in his next project. This is discernment; you’re paying attention to the state of things as they are. Once you’ve made an observation like this, you can activate your Sage to figure out what to do with that discernment. You could sit down with that person to explore the underlying causes of his behavior and see if you can help. You could work on contingency plans so that the lateness won’t impact you adversely. You could choose to fire the employee if all previous attempts at changing this pattern have failed and he’s showing no openness to change. The Sage can help you do any of this without feeling angry, blameful, scornful, disappointed, or betrayed.

The presence of those negative feelings indicates that the Judge has taken over and that you are judging rather than discerning. Pay attention to the emotions involved. If you are calmly noticing what isn’t working or what has gone wrong in order to figure out how to move forward, you are discerning. If you are feeling upset, disappointed, anxious, or

resentful, you are judging. Indeed, that is how the Judge causes much of your distress in any situation. Your distress is not caused by what happened; it's caused by your Judge's reaction to it.

WEAKENING YOUR JUDGE

So what is one to do with an internal enemy who is so devious, pervasive, and damaging, and who shrewdly camouflages these characteristics? As with any other Saboteur, your key job is to observe and label your Judge's thoughts and feelings every time you observe them.

Given that the Judge's damage is done on three entirely different fronts—judging yourself, the people around you, and your external circumstances—you might want to remind yourself of its typical patterns in each of these areas. You might also want to come up with your own personal name for your Judge based on its personality. As I mentioned earlier, I call mine “the Executioner” given his brutal take-no-prisoners stance. Others have called theirs “Destroyer,” “Insatiable,” “Brutal,” “SOB,” “Know-It-All,” “Sourpuss.” The name you give it should reflect its true nature. If you can't come up with any name that works better for you, go ahead and stick with “Judge.”

The act of observing and labeling your Judge alone will have a significant impact in your life. Notice the difference between saying “I can't make it” and “My Judge says I can't make it.” Or “You made me look bad intentionally” and “My Judge says you made me look bad intentionally.” Or “This is a terrible situation” and “My Judge says this is terrible situation.” Do you notice the big difference between the impact of these two kinds of statements? The Judge loses much of its credibility and power over you as you isolate it as an unwelcome intruder. In the past it was treated as royalty, as a moral compass, as the center of intelligence, discernment, ambition, or drive—but not anymore. Observe the Judge and simply call it on what it does.

This is the beginning of the end of your biggest impediment to greater success and happiness. You will be amazed by what you find out once you begin watching the Judge.

Inquiry

What would change, at work or in your personal life, if your Judge's voice were significantly weakened?

Do Not Distribute

PART III

SECOND STRATEGY: STRENGTHEN YOUR SAGE

In part III, you will learn the second of three strategies for increasing PQ: strengthening your Sage.

In chapter 5, you will learn the power and wisdom of the Sage perspective and contrast it with the far more common Judge perspective.

In chapter 6, you will learn about the five powers of the Sage and how they can meet any challenge in your life. For each power, you will learn a “power game” that boosts that power and gives you greater access to it when needed.

Do Not Distribute

CHAPTER 5

THE SAGE PERSPECTIVE

I am a relatively predictable and consistent coach. When someone comes to me in mental or emotional distress, I hear the person out and show compassion for his or her suffering. But before we get too far into the discussion, I state the following key principle of Positive Intelligence: *All* your distress is self-generated. To be more precise, *all* your distress in the forms of anxiety, disappointment, stress, anger, shame, guilt—*all* the unpleasant stuff that makes up your suffering—is generated by your own Saboteurs.

I emphasize *all* because I have found that under the influence of their Saboteurs, people want to bargain and negotiate. They claim that while they might agree that most of their distress is self-generated, their current distress is different and justified based on the severity of the situation. How could I possibly not be upset over the loss of my biggest client? How could I possibly not be upset at myself for screwing up on this project? How could I not feel constant disappointment and frustration over the incompetence of my teammate? How could I not feel stressed over the possibility of losing my job and my house in this terrible economy? How could I not be furious at my teenager's obstinate behavior? The answer, always, is the same. Activate your Sage to deal with the situation and you will feel quite different.

Your Sage has access to your five great powers: empathy, exploration, innovation, navigation, and decisive action. With these powers, your

Sage can meet all the challenges that you face in a way that will not only generate the best results but also lead to the highest level of personal satisfaction, peace of mind, and happiness along the way.

We'll explore each of the Sage's five powers in more detail in the next chapter. In this chapter, we'll focus on the Sage perspective, which helps to amplify its five powers. We will see how the Sage perspective, unlike the Judge perspective that causes you so much distress, leads to peace of mind and focused action even in the middle of the greatest crises.

There are two small caveats to saying all distress is Saboteur-generated. The first is in the instance of grieving as a way of honoring the loss of something or someone, which is a healthy process. Second, as I will discuss in chapter 8, a few brief seconds of feeling anger, disappointment, guilt, or shame are fine as immediate reactions to events. This is similar to feeling pain when you touch a hot stove. A moment of physical pain should alert you to remove your hand to avoid further damage. A few seconds of psychological pain should similarly alert you to shift your mind to the Sage mode so you can deal with the situation without further distress and damage from your Saboteurs. If you don't shift your mind, it is like keeping your hand on the hot stove and continuing to feel the pain that was only initially useful.

SAGE PERSPECTIVE VS. JUDGE PERSPECTIVE

The Sage perspective is about accepting what is, rather than denying, rejecting, or resenting what is. The Sage perspective accepts *every* outcome and circumstance as a gift and opportunity. (I emphasize *every* to take away a loophole through which the Saboteurs could sneak in.) This may sound like a radical perspective. It is the exact opposite of many of the assumptions of the Judge, which most of us have believed wholeheartedly for years or decades. The Judge's perspective is that many outcomes and circumstances are *bad*—certainly not gifts—and are therefore legitimate reasons to feel distress.

A Chinese parable illustrates a key difference between the Judge and the Sage perspectives:

The Stallion Story

And old farmer lives on his farm with his teenage son. He also has a beautiful stallion that he lovingly cares for.

The farmer enters his stallion into the annual country fair competition. His stallion wins first prize. The farmer's neighbors gather to congratulate him on this great win. He calmly says, "Who knows what is good and what is bad?" Puzzled by this reaction, the neighbors go away.

The next week, some thieves who heard about the stallion's increased value steal the horse. When the neighbors come to commiserate with the farmer, they find him again very calm and gathered. He says, "Who knows what is good and what is bad?"

Several days later, the spirited stallion escapes from the thieves and finds his way back to the farm, bringing with him a few wild mares he has befriended along the way. To his neighbors' excited rounds of congratulations, the old farmer once again says, "Who knows what is good and what is bad?"

A few weeks later, the farmer's son is thrown off one of these new mares as he is trying to break it in, and his leg is fractured. As the neighbors gather to commiserate with the old farmer, he once again reminds them, "Who knows what is good and what is bad?"

The following week, the imperial army marches through the village, conscripting all eligible young men for the war that has just broken out. The old farmer's son is spared due to his fractured leg. The neighbors no longer bother to come to the old farmer to congratulate him. By now they know what his response will be: "Who knows what is good and what is bad?"

When our Judge says something is bad, we need to take that statement with a grain of salt—if not outright dismissal. Our Judge convinces us that we know what is good and bad at any given moment, but the truth is that we actually don't.

Our Judge's perspective is narrowly focused—it has severe tunnel vision. It reacts to the immediate effect of something, ignoring the many

longer-term possibilities of its impact that could easily be the opposite. Life of course doesn't stop at the immediate effect. Even our stallion story doesn't end where we left it. Who knows what happened next in that story? It might be that the son, saved from military draft due to his fortuitous injury, caught the plague epidemic sweeping through the village a month later and died. Or, he might have stayed behind, met the woman of his dreams and married, producing a child. His child might have turned out to be a great scientist curing many ills. Or his child might have turned out to be mentally troubled and burned down the village. When the farmer refused to lose any sleep over his prized stallion being stolen, he was seeing life through the perspective of his Sage rather than through the tunnel vision of his Judge.

IS THE SAGE ACTIVE OR PASSIVE?

The stallion story presents an incomplete view of the Sage perspective and can be misleading if taken literally. The farmer just believes and waits *passively* for a bad thing to turn into a good thing. That can be viewed as fatalistic and impractical, like sitting on the couch and watching TV and believing everything will magically work out on its own. The Sage, however, is anything but passive. Its perspective is that *everything* is a gift and opportunity, but it doesn't believe that as a matter of passive and blind faith. The Sage uses its five great powers to turn that perspective into reality and actively create a gift out of a bad situation. If action is required, the Sage is quite decisive and takes the necessary steps. It moves into action, however, without any of the distress, interference, or distractions of the Judge or the other Saboteurs.

Many spiritual traditions advocate for something similar to the Sage perspective as a matter of spiritual faith; these traditions teach that everything in life happens for a reason and is part of the greater mystery of life. However, as someone who has coached many agnostics and atheists, I would not expect you to buy into the Sage perspective as a matter of spiritual faith. The Sage perspective is the most pragmatic strategy to

pursue, regardless of faith. This is because the Sage perspective and the Judge perspective are both self-fulfilling prophecies.

Anxiety, disappointment, frustration, shame, blame, and guilt, the Judge's favorite feelings, are never your best fuel for action. Those fuels might propel you forward, but with a huge amount of pollution and wasteful friction along the way. The moment you allow yourself to feel the distress of the Judge, you have validated his perspective; you are wasting precious moments of your life in distress. In addition, as we will discuss in chapter 7, when your brain shifts to distress mode, tunnel vision sets in. Your distressed brain focuses on problems rather than opportunities. The Judge and the Saboteurs that the distressed brain activates spiral in on themselves and snowball once they get started, thus making sure the "bad" situation will indeed be a bad situation.

Your Sage has the same snowballing, self-fulfilling effect, but in reverse. Your Sage moves you into action not out of feeling bad, but out of empathy, inspiration, the joy of exploration, a longing to create, a desire to contribute, and an urge to find meaning in the midst of even the greatest crises. From the Sage perspective, there is no such thing as a bad circumstance or outcome. Every outcome simply points to the first step toward the next positive outcome. The Sage moves you one positive step at a time, regardless of what life throws at you.

HOW I DISCOVERED MY SAGE

In my early thirties, still relatively fresh out of business school, I came up with the idea for some career development and performance management software. Using my still relatively fresh software-engineering skills, I coded an interactive prototype and then went boldly calling on CEOs of established Fortune 500 companies to enlist them as investors and board members. To my great delight, I secured significant personal investments from CEOs of several Fortune 500 companies. Hewlett-Packard later became the first company to purchase the software for all its employees. Others followed.

As the stress of delivering on the huge expectations built up, my Saboteurs got increasingly energized and started running the show. My colleagues at my company—the very people who had been inspired by my vision to join me—were now shocked to see an increasingly untrusting CEO who was in Judge mode much of the time and would not delegate. I was violating and destroying the very vision that had attracted them to the company, but they couldn't get through to me after repeated attempts.

On the most painful day of my professional life, I returned from lunch to a shocking scene that instantly made my heart sink. The chairman of the board, the most trusted and supportive senior director, the president, and the most senior VP of my company were all sitting around the boardroom table, waiting for me. Unable to get through to me, the president and VP had gone over my head to the chairman of the board and senior director. It was like a professional intervention, if there is such a thing.

I was confronted with irrefutable evidence of my failings as a leader. I had attracted everyone to the company with a vision of enlightened leadership, yet I had become a micromanager, distrusting and controlling everyone who reported to me. I had turned into a tyrant, a character I didn't even know I was capable of being. I was endangering the company's very survival.

I found the experience so painful, so humiliating, and such a betrayal (in the eyes of my Saboteurs) that I was literally in a daze for almost a week. My Judge was front and center in the beginning: *How could the people I had trusted do this to me? Didn't they see that I was working my heart out and doing all of this for the good of the company? Surely they must have done it for self-serving reasons. I must have been wrong when I had trusted them as people of integrity.* And on and on.

Ordinarily, I would have either lashed out or walked away, actions that would have been orchestrated by my Judge. This time, neither was an option. Many of the investors and clients had come in because of me. I owed it to them to stay and see this thing through. I was stuck and had to work with the people I felt had betrayed me.

This painful situation turned out to be the most valuable gift of my

professional life. The pain and stress became so unbearable that at some point I was forced to shift to the Sage perspective, even though at the time I knew nothing of the Sage versus Saboteur construct. I simply had to turn this painful situation into something I could begin to feel good about. I had to turn it into a gift. There were two ways I could think of doing this: First, I could rebuild the frayed relationships to a place where they would be even stronger than before the intervention. Second, I could turn the situation into a great growth opportunity for myself as a leader.

I began to actively look at what was good, not bad, about the people I had so fiercely judged. I began to listen more deeply to what they were trying to tell me all along. I got to witness them over and over again fighting with impeccable integrity for what was right—for our collective vision, not just for themselves. I came to fully trust that what they had done in that boardroom was an act of great courage and caring, not only for our collective vision but also for me. I eventually rebuilt mutual trust, caring, and respect with all the parties involved. If anything, these relationships became stronger than they had ever been. To this day, I remain close friends with the chairman, director, president, and VP who confronted me on that fateful afternoon in the boardroom, and I'm grateful to them all.

To turn the situation into a growth opportunity, I had to confront many of the false assumptions I'd made about myself and others. I had to come face-to-face again with my nasty Judge and began to discover its accomplice: an intellectually aloof and arrogant Hyper-Rational. At the time, I still didn't have names for these characters in my head, but I came to see their devastating damage clearly. I was also beginning to discover the power of the Sage in myself.

I cannot even begin to count the many huge gifts that came out of my most humiliating professional experience. I wouldn't trade those lessons for all my formal education in psychology or business. Neither my subsequent successes as a CEO and coach nor this book would have been possible without that experience.

THE THREE-GIFTS TECHNIQUE

I developed the Three-Gifts technique to help people shift to the Sage perspective. The most challenging thing I do when I coach people who are in the middle of intense work or personal challenges is to shake them out of the certainty of their Judge perspective so they can at least consider the Sage.

If you had been sitting across the table from me on that fateful afternoon in the boardroom and told me to trust the Sage perspective and accept the confrontation as a gift and opportunity, I would have thrown you right out. To be more precise, my Judge would have thrown you right out. On that day, my Sage was nowhere to be seen, and this is true of most of us as we encounter a crisis. The question is, how can you access the wisdom of your Sage's perspective when the stress and difficulty of your situation has supercharged your Saboteurs?

To get the ball rolling toward the answer to that question, I employ the Three-Gifts technique: I ask people to come up with at least three scenarios where their supposedly bad situation could turn into a gift and opportunity. The time frame doesn't matter. It could be within days, months, or years. People are often skeptical of my request—they are usually certain that the situation is completely bad. However, I refuse to continue with our dialog until they have come up with at least three scenarios.

I once asked the head of sales of a company to come up with three scenarios for how the recent loss of the company's biggest customer could turn out to be a great gift. After some initial hesitation and skepticism, she suggested the following: (1) This could sober up the whole company to the fact that we are losing our edge and trigger more urgent action on new product development, which could in the long run get us many more clients; (2) This could make my sales team more open to upgrading its skills; (3) This could free up our service staff to serve our existing customers better and result in even more referral sales than what we lost with the recent customer. If she needed to, she could have come up with ten more possibilities.

For the highly skeptical or resistant, I sometimes have to repeat an

important reassurance: accepting a bad outcome as a gift does *not* mean inviting more of it or doing nothing about it. For example, you will do your best to not drop a glass. But once it slips from your hand and is broken, any amount of time and energy spent on anger, blame, regret, or worry is completely wasted. If you decide to actively turn the broken glass into a gift, you might closely examine how and why it slipped from your hand so that you can prevent an even more expensive glass from being broken in the future. Or the gift might be that the accident gives you a chance to practice becoming more assertive and resourceful as you figure out a creative way to convince the vendor to replace it for free. Or, you could learn how to make glass objects as a new hobby, eventually not only replacing the glass but also developing a lifelong source of amusement. You get the picture.

You don't always have to actively turn a bad situation into a gift. Your other option is to just let it go and put it behind you without any residue of unhappiness, regret, or distress. It is easier to do this once you really come to believe the Sage perspective that, if you wanted to, you could invest the time and energy to turn the situation into a gift. Once you trust that you have the choice, it is easier to choose to just let it go.

Ironically, deciding to just let a negative situation go rather than actively turn it into a gift is a gift in itself: you're strengthening the Sage muscle that allows you to let go of regret, guilt, or shame. This in turn weakens your Judge and strengthens your Sage for the challenges you'll face down the road. This might sound like a circular argument, and it is. You choose to initiate either the snowballing, self-reinforcing, and self-fulfilling perspective of the Sage, or the snowballing, self-reinforcing, and self-fulfilling perspective of the Judge and the other Saboteurs. Which do you want to guide you through life?

WHAT ABOUT *REALLY* BIG PROBLEMS?

When I present the Sage perspective in my leadership seminars, someone often asks, "How could *everything* that happens be a gift and opportunity? How could that possibly be the case with a major illness or with the death of a loved one?"

I point out research that shows that, on average, able-bodied adults who become quadriplegic through an accident return to their pre-accident “baseline happiness” levels within a relatively short period of time.²³ But this is an average. What this average hides is that some people allow tragic events to victimize them for life. They live and die bitter and resentful. On the opposite side, those who choose the Sage perspective turn tragedies into life-affirming events that bring great meaning and purpose to their lives. Christopher Reeve and Michael J. Fox are two prominent examples of people who chose to turn their afflictions (spinal cord injury and Parkinson’s disease, respectively) into a life purpose of helping millions of others suffering from the same afflictions.

Any parent’s greatest dread, and perhaps life’s most devastating tragedy, is the loss of a child. In 1980, Candy Lightner encountered this great tragedy. On a sunny Saturday morning in California, her thirteen-year-old daughter, Cari, posed for her softball team photos in her orange-and-white uniform. She then started walking with a friend to a church carnival she’d been looking forward to attending. The carnival was within Cari’s sight when she was hit and killed by a drunk driver who had been previously convicted three times of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Many—perhaps most—in Candy Lightner’s shoes would have lived the rest of their lives victimized by this loss. She activated her Sage perspective instead. Four days after her daughter’s death, Candy said, “I promised myself on the day of Cari’s death that I would fight to make this needless homicide count for something positive in the years ahead.” She then founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). By so doing, she turned the tragedy of her daughter’s short life into a program that would eventually save countless lives.²⁴

Of course, it takes an incredibly strong Sage to do what Candy Lightner did. I would like to think that my Sage is strong enough to rise to such an occasion, but I cannot be sure. And I hope I will never have to find out. If I found my Sage muscle inadequate for such a challenge and found myself hijacked by my Saboteurs for an extended period, I would remind myself that the only sane way to deal with the tragedy is to keep building up the Sage muscle. With increased strength, the Sage muscle

can eventually regain control and work toward turning the tragedy into a positive force in the world.

Some people's Saboteurs trick them into getting fixated on extreme cases of tragic loss in order to discredit the Sage approach. If you find yourself unconvinced that even extreme tragedies can be turned into positive opportunities, put that issue aside as an exception and instead concern yourself with the 99 percent of life's challenges that indisputably benefit from the Sage's perspective.

We can't control or choose much of what happens in work and in life. We can, however, determine the impact that these events have on us by choosing how we respond. Let your Sage do the choosing.

Inquiry

Pick one thing in your life, whether at work or at home, that's causing you particularly high distress right now. Try the Three-Gifts technique on it: think of at least three ways the problem could turn into a gift and opportunity at some point in the future.

Do Not Distribute

CHAPTER 6

THE FIVE SAGE POWERS

The Sage and its five powers can meet every challenge, no matter how momentous or daunting. It meets challenges in a way that results in the best outcome while at the same time generating positive emotions and minimizing negativity and stress.

We all have the five powers of the Sage. We've all demonstrated the ability to Empathize with ourselves and others; Explore with deep curiosity; Innovate creative options; Navigate among our options and choose the paths that best align with our deepest-held values and purpose; and, finally, Activate our intention in order to generate results.

But the problem is that our typical use of these powers is often “polluted” by a great deal of Saboteur interference, and they often lose much of their impact. In this chapter, I will show you how to use these powers in a “pure” form. I will also show you fun “power games” to boost and gain deeper access to these powers.

Not every challenge will require all five powers, or require them in any particular order. If the house is on fire, you will probably want to just Activate your intention to run. If the solution is obvious, you don't need to Innovate. If your options don't have long-lasting importance or consequence, you don't need to consult your Sage's power to Navigate. Once you activate your Sage, you will know which power to use and when.

1. EMPATHIZE

Empathizing is about feeling and showing appreciation, compassion, and forgiveness. Empathy has two targets: yourself and others. Both are important. Deeper empathy for yourself typically makes it possible to have deeper empathy for others. For most people, having true empathy for oneself is the hardest thing to do. Why? You guessed it—the Judge’s pervasive interference.

When Empathy Is Needed

Think about the Sage’s power to empathize as the antidote to the Judge’s badgering. After years of judging myself and others, I came to believe that most of us are doing our darnedest to be the best human being we know how to be. We are imperfect, all of us. We fall short of our ideals almost all the time. As a result, we are badgered by our own and others’ Judges almost constantly. Let’s cut ourselves and one another some slack.

Empathy recharges our batteries and renews the vitality that is drained by the Judge’s violence toward ourselves. It bandages the wounds of the warrior before sending him out for another fight. It is most useful when the recipient of the empathy—whether you or someone else—is feeling some emotional pain and difficulty. Think of empathy as the power you should use when the emotional reserve is running low, when the person needs some recharging before moving on with problem-solving action.

Given that you probably don’t go a day without falling short of some ideal and being beaten up by your own or others’ Judges for it, you probably don’t want to go a day without bringing some empathy to yourself.

What Gets in the Way

Many of us grow up with our Judge telling us that empathizing with ourselves is counterproductive. *You need to be tough on yourself*, says the Judge. But denying yourself empathy is not a sign of strength, as the Judge would have you believe. It’s setting yourself up for constant beating.

The Judge warns you that if you empathize with yourself or others’ avoidable hardships, you are encouraging more of the behavior that caused the hardship. *You’d better punish rather than empathize*, it says. A key

fallacy of this argument is the belief that empathizing with pain means condoning the action that brought the pain about. If your child plays in the part of the playground that you warned him not to play in and breaks his leg, you would first get a cast on his leg and empathize with his pain. After the pain subsided, you would have a conversation about lessons learned and how to avoid the same mistake in the future. The Judge, of course, would strongly disagree with this approach and demand chastisement from the start.

Power Game: Visualize the Child

Once you switch to your Sage perspective, you will automatically have access to all its five powers, including Empathy. To boost this power even further, consider playing our first power game, “Visualize the Child,” for just one minute in the back of your mind.

If you go to a playground and watch five-year-olds play, you will probably feel instant empathy and caring for these total strangers. This is in part due to the fact that at this age a child still mainly radiates with his or her Sage essence energy. The off-putting Saboteurs that make us less likable as adults are not yet as visible.

You can use this fact to shift your brain to feel empathy and caring for yourself or others. Visualize yourself as a child in a setting where your essence is shining through. Perhaps you are holding a puppy, building a sandcastle, chasing a bunny, or snuggling with a loved one. Pick a vivid and detailed image that instantly triggers feelings of caring and empathy. You might even want to find an actual picture of yourself as a child in which your original personality is shining through. Put that picture on your desk or on your phone or computer so that you see it frequently. This image will be a reminder that your true essence is worthy of unconditional caring and empathy when you are feeling beaten down by your own Judge, or others’, or the troubles of life.

The same holds true for generating empathy for others. If you are feeling upset at someone due to their Saboteurs, you have been hijacked by your own. To recover back your Sage, you could activate any of your five Sage powers. If you choose to activate the Sage’s power to Empathize, visualize the other person as a child in her true essence before she

started getting weighted down by Saboteurs. Visualize her eyes and facial expression, her manner of carrying herself, and what used to light her up as a child. Visualize her hold her puppy, snuggle with her mom, or chase a butterfly. Trust that the same essence is still inside her, underneath her Saboteurs. You can do this in the back of your mind even while you are interacting with her in a meeting. It will instantly impact how much empathy you feel.

2. EXPLORE

As children, we all knew how to explore in a pure way, experiencing great curiosity and fascination in discovery. The Sage way of exploring has a similar purity, like a child walking along a shoreline and turning over rocks to see what's underneath. The pure energy and emotion that the Sage's Explore mode generates is based in curiosity, openness, wonder, and fascination with what is being explored. A strong Sage can activate this exploration mind-set even in the midst of a great crisis.

When Exploration Is Needed

Exploring is helpful when understanding a problem or situation more deeply could put you on a better path forward. The Sage's question is, what more can I discover? Most of us draw conclusions, devise solutions, or take actions before we've adequately understood the situation through exploring it fully.

What Gets in the Way

How often do you experience pure Explore mode? How often do you find yourself in a place of deep curiosity, openness, and wonder in the middle of a challenging situation or crisis? Chances are, not very often, because of interference from Saboteurs.

You have probably felt frustrated when someone you are arguing with listens selectively and hears only what fits his or her own argument. We all do this under Saboteur influence. We think we are openly

exploring and being curious, but our field of exploration is significantly narrowed by our Saboteurs.

One thing that brings in the Saboteurs is that we don't allow the Explore mode to happen purely as a stand-alone step. We are often too busy trying to anticipate the next step, or maneuvering to win an argument, to let our Sage explore. The Judge has us look only for what proves the other wrong. The Controller only picks up on evidence to insist on its own way. The Hyper-Vigilant only picks up on signs of danger and ignores all indications of the contrary. The Avoider tries to ignore all signals that something difficult must be confronted. You get the picture.

This comes at enormous cost to us. We torpedo our ability to truly discover all the important and relevant information before we move on to a solution or action. We miss out on discovering the most transformational and important stuff, things we didn't know we didn't know.

While the Explore mode is important for looking at new challenges, it is also critical for learning from our past failures and mistakes. We often avoid exploring our mistakes and failures fully because the Judge's presence makes the act too painful or too contentious. The Sage, of course, would be able to turn those mistakes into gifts and opportunities, in part through the powerful discoveries that are made in Explore mode.

Power Game: Fascinated Anthropologist

When you play the role of Fascinated Anthropologist, you become a keen observer and discoverer of what simply is, without trying to judge, change, or control the situation. Try being a Fascinated Anthropologist in a difficult situation. A Fascinated Anthropologist does not selectively filter information that fits his or her preexisting judgments or desired outcome. The only goal is to discover things exactly as they are. For example, if you are in conflict with someone, could you even for three minutes let go of your own grievances and demands, becoming fascinated instead with discovering why the other person is feeling exactly how he or she feels?

3. INNOVATE

While the Explore power is about discovering what is, the Innovate power concerns inventing what isn't. True innovation is about breaking out of the boxes, the assumptions, and the habits that hold us back. "What's a whole new way to do this?" is the operating question for Innovate.

When Innovation Is Needed

The power to innovate is needed when the old way of approaching a situation, or the more obvious ways of dealing with it, does not suffice. A new outside-the-box approach is required.

What Gets in the Way

We are all stuck in all sorts of boxes all the time. The set of beliefs and assumptions that we operate under form the walls of our boxes. Many of these limiting beliefs and assumptions, all produced by our Saboteurs, are unexamined or even unknown. When we try to have a purely left-brained and rational approach to innovation, we will only come up with various configurations of solutions that still operate within those limits. Without the Sage's power of innovation, we stay in our box, merely changing our location within it.

You need your PQ Brain and the Sage to escape from those limitations and engage in true outside-the-box innovation. To protect your Sage's power to innovate from Saboteur interference, you need to give your mind one simple instruction: Come up with as many ideas as possible. Period. No evaluation of the ideas as you come up with them. Evaluation during innovation is the back door through which the Saboteurs enter.

It is easier to illustrate this concept in a team environment and then apply it to the dynamics inside your own head. Imagine you are at a meeting in which you and your colleagues are to come up with innovative new ideas about a product. If Joan throws out an idea and John shows his disapproval by raising his eyebrows, the Judge has crept in. Everyone will begin to be more careful about what they throw out next, worried about being judged and looking foolish. The Sage's energy will begin to

give way to the Judge's energy, which is interested in self-preservation and not looking foolish. Innovation suffers greatly. The same would happen if any of the accomplice Saboteurs disapproved of ideas counter to their vested interests. The point is that no evaluation whatsoever should be allowed during the Innovate mode.

The same holds true inside your own head. If your Judge or another Saboteur calls your own initial ideas foolish or impractical, you will begin to shut down internally and will fail to innovate. Your own internal mental promise should be to generate as many ideas as possible, in rapid-fire succession, without any evaluation whatsoever. The aim of the Innovate mode is volume of ideas, not quality. This will lead to higher quality ideas automatically as it energizes your PQ Brain, the engine of your greatest ideas.

The good news is that all you need at the end of this process is *one* idea that passes the test. Evaluation of your options may or may not need the Sage. This evaluation could be based on simple objective criteria such as cost, effectiveness, impact, degree of difficulty, etc. But if the options you are evaluating have any significant bearing on your values, purpose, or meaning, then you would tap into your Sage's power to Navigate to help you decide.

Power Game: "Yes . . . and . . ."

To play "Yes . . . and . . ." follow every new idea you have by saying "Yes, what I love about that idea is . . . *and* . . ." With this approach, every idea is appreciated rather than judged before the next one is generated in reaction to it. Keep going as fast as you can, in rapid succession. This game can be played both inside your head and in a team setting.

For example, let's say you are brainstorming how to improve the guest experience in your hotel chain. Bob starts by saying, "Maybe we can play soothing music in the lobby." Janet continues: "Yes, what I love about that idea is that it relaxes the guests. And we could look into aromatherapy research to see if any aromas are proven to be relaxing." Kathy jumps in: "Yes, what I love about that idea is that we would be consulting scientific research. And maybe we could also look into positive psychology research to improve the training of our greeting staff."

4. NAVIGATE

The Sage's power to Navigate is about choosing between various paths and alternatives based on a consistent internal compass. The coordinates on this compass are your deeply-held values or what gives your life a sense of meaning and purpose. If you keep navigating with this compass, your cumulative choices will generate the fulfillment that comes from living life in alignment with your ideals and principles.

When Navigation Is Needed

You should use your Sage's power to Navigate only when multiple paths are available, some of which may be more aligned than others with your sense of values, purpose, or meaning.

I often find people feeling stuck since they can't chart a complete path from where they are to where they want to be in the long run. I tell them their situation is analogous to finding themselves at the edge of some unknown territory without a map. To make it even more challenging, the whole area is covered in dense fog. If your goal were to emerge at the north end of this territory, there would be no way for you to chart a step-by-step path to get yourself there. You would need to rely on a compass. If you hit an impossible hill or obstacle in the middle, then you would take the most north-leaning path around it. In due time, if you kept checking the compass and making sure you took each step with north in mind, you would emerge close to where you wanted to be.

Similarly, many people think that the answer to the meaning of life will one day emerge with fanfare and fireworks. They feel stuck because they don't have full clarity about their purpose in life or what would make their life happiest or most meaningful. I tell them to consult their Sage's Navigation compass for their little steps, knowing that these steps will eventually get them to a very meaningful place. Without the compass, we could take many steps that on their own might appear successful but in the end could have us running in circles. A midlife crisis is a good example of this phenomenon.

This is as true of individuals as it is of teams and organizations. The

coordinates on a team's compass are the group's commonly shared values or whatever brings a deeper sense of meaning or purpose to that group.

What Gets in the Way

Our most deeply held values and the things that bring meaning and purpose to our lives do not lie in the rational mind, they live in our "hearts." In my experience, the vast majority of individuals, teams, and organizations that proudly exhibit their documented statement of values or purpose only have a superficial conceptual relationship with those words, which only live in their heads. Consequently, they mean little in action.

For the Sage's Navigation power to have a meaningful impact, there needs to be a deeper, more visceral connection with the coordinates of the compass. They need to arouse emotion and inspire.

The Sage's Navigation function is also susceptible to pollution from Saboteurs, all of whom bring in their own biases. For example, the Judge uses guilt and obligation as coordinates on the compass. The Hyper-Vigilant tries to navigate us to the path that feels least risky. And the Avoider encourages us to navigate a path that sidesteps conflict at all cost. These criteria for navigation, while pleasing to the Saboteurs, do not result in the best course of action.

Power Game: Flash Forward

When faced with the fork in the road, imagine yourself at the end of your life looking back at the choices you are now facing. From that vantage point, what do you wish you had chosen at this juncture? The reason this exercise works is that at the end of our lives, many of the trivial Saboteur-related concerns fall away and are revealed as false. The things that stand out are those that are real, those that bring value, meaning, and purpose to our lives.

The team version of Flash Forward is to imagine how you wish you had conducted yourselves as a group at this juncture at a point in the future when the team or organization no longer exists.

5. ACTIVATE

Some worry that the Sage's attitude of accepting everything as a gift and opportunity will lead to passiveness, laziness, and lack of ambition and action. The reality is exactly the opposite. The Sage's Activate power moves you into pure action, where all your mental and emotional energies are laser-focused on action and not distracted by the Saboteurs.

When Activation Is Needed

You need the Sage's power to Activate when it is clear what course of action you want to take. This power allows you to move into pure action, without the procrastination, distraction, or interference that Saboteurs cause.

For example, if someone has done you wrong, you might go through the Sage's Empathize mode and decide to forgive him or her, freeing yourself from resentment and bitterness. At that point, you might choose to let the whole thing go. Or, you might choose to forgive but still seek compensation. If you decided to proceed with the action of seeking compensation, you would shift into your Sage's Activate mode. Your action would be pure and unencumbered with anger, the need for revenge, disdain for the other person, bitterness, anxiety over outcome, or any of the other dramatic tendencies of your Saboteurs. You would simply and cleanly think about the best strategy for getting your compensation and proceed with the action necessary to make it happen. You would be more likely to succeed, as all your mental and emotional energy would be focused on getting the action right.

When you watch a martial arts master in battle, such as one of the Jedi in *Star Wars*, you get a sense of the pure action of the Sage. When a warrior with a strong Sage is attacked from all sides, he knows that the only way he can survive is by completely quieting and centering his mind. This means pushing aside all the mind-chatter coming from Saboteurs. Doing so allows the Sage to concentrate all his mental power on the urgent task at hand. If for one split second he allows himself to get angry at the enemy attacking him from the left, that momentary lapse of focus could mean getting killed by the enemy attacking from the right.

The paradox here is that the most urgent action can be taken by the

quietest of minds, those that are free of the Saboteur interference and can concentrate on pure action. This is the opposite of the frantic energy that most people bring to urgent situations.

You now have a different explanation for why athletes choke in the moments that matter the most and what would be possible for them if they could learn to strengthen their Sage powers.

What Gets in the Way

Every single Saboteur gets in the way of taking pure action. The Judge wastes your energy by causing fear, stress, anger, disappointment, guilt, or shame even while you are taking action. The Avoider and the Restless both have you avoid dealing with a painful situation, albeit by using different tactics. The Controller and Stickler cause your action to be rigid, limiting the helpful contribution of others. The Hyper-Achiever wants you to take action that is solely focused on some achievement-oriented objective that ignores more important priorities, such as relationships. The Hyper-Rational has you miss critical emotional signals from yourself and others as you take action. The Victim convinces you to remain inactive to ensure that you will become a victim and prove it right. The Pleaser has you focus your action only on activities that please others and win you acceptance. The Hyper-Vigilant wastes enormous amounts of your energy worrying about contingencies, creating anxiety that is not warranted by the actual risks.

Power Game: Preempt the Saboteurs

In this game, you put yourself in the shoes of your top Saboteurs and try to anticipate how they might try to sabotage your action. You anticipate the thoughts they would whisper or scream in your ears in the middle of the action and what lies they would use to justify those thoughts. Once you anticipate their sabotage, you will be able to intercept and let go of those thoughts easily when they arise in the middle of your action. A key component of defeating any enemy is to predict and prepare for its move. You have in effect preempted the Saboteurs by discrediting their attack proactively while in a centered Sage mode.

Figure 13 summarizes the Sage's five powers, when each is needed, and

a power game that boosts your access to that power. You can find more power games at www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

Fig. 13

The Five Sage Powers

SAGE POWER	WHEN NEEDED	POWER GAME
Empathize	Strong feelings involved. Emotional reserves running low.	Visualize the Child
Explore	Need to discover more about what is going on before deciding or acting.	Fascinated Anthropologist
Innovate	The obvious or existing ideas don't suffice. Need to think outside the box.	"Yes . . . and . . ."
Navigate	Need to find alignment with deeper values, purpose, or meaning.	Flash Forward
Activate	Need to take action without Saboteur interference.	Preempt the Saboteurs

THE CASE OF MARY

Mary was the VP of product development for a midsize sporting goods company. She had been a fast-rising star, due mainly to her analytical and strategic brilliance. While considered brilliant by everyone, she was not particularly well liked by her troops and didn't tend to inspire them. The new CEO of the company was much less tolerant of leaders who were strategically or technically brilliant but not strong in leadership skills. Mary had been told that her days were numbered unless she improved her relationships with her team members and others in the company.

When I first spoke with Mary, her Saboteurs were clearly in control. She was visibly upset about the new CEO who was suddenly putting so much more emphasis on this “touchy-feely nonsense,” as she called it. “Leadership is not a popularity contest,” she protested.

When I suggested the Sage perspective, that she should accept the whole situation as a gift rather than a problem, she was clearly not impressed. To soften her Judge’s grip on her, I insisted she come up with at least three scenarios in which this ultimatum could be turned into a gift and opportunity. She shot back, sarcastically, that perhaps this would accelerate her departure and that she’d hopefully be going somewhere where she’d be appreciated. I insisted on more possibilities and she eventually came up with a few. This weakened her Judge a little, but not much. The Sage was still in the shadows.

After some more work on at least allowing room for the Sage’s perspective, Mary agreed to give her five Sage powers a try in order to turn that perspective into a self-fulfilling reality.

1: Empathize

Mary found the invitation to empathize with herself to be at best an irrelevant distraction and at worst counterproductive. She said she was proud that she had successfully dragged herself out of her difficult family circumstances in large part because she had been tough on herself and not allowed herself to wallow in self-pity. It took a while for her to agree that self-pity was very different from self-compassion. As a competitive athlete, she likened self-compassion to bandaging an injury before heading back onto the field.

Mary agreed to be kinder to herself in the following week and play the Visualize the Child power game to boost her Sage’s power to Empathize. She agreed to look at a picture of herself at a younger age every day to access greater empathy and appreciation for herself. This would be particularly helpful when she found herself feeling emotionally beaten up by herself or others, which was often. She also agreed to observe and label her Judge thoughts as often as she could.

Mary was in a sober mood the next week, saying she was stunned by the voracity, viciousness, and persistence of her Judge. She had found a

name for her judge: “the Destroyer.” She discovered why she needed the constant antidote of her Sage’s Empathy for herself.

Accessing empathy for herself led Mary to also feel a little more empathetic and less judgmental of those who might have complained about her leadership, although her reaction was still mixed.

2: Explore

To fully access her Sage’s power to Explore, Mary agreed to play the Fascinated Anthropologist game during the upcoming week. She agreed to observe and rate the shifts of energy and emotions during interactions between members of senior management.

Mary’s report the next week was impressive. True to her perseverance and drive, she had actually logged sixteen interactions. She had noticed that in roughly a third of her interactions the energy and emotions of the other person had shifted toward deflated or negative. The other two thirds appeared to have been neutral. She contrasted this against her colleague Tom, whose interactions seemed to be roughly half neutral and half resulting in higher energy or more positive feelings in the other people. She said she was both fascinated by her discoveries and embarrassed by them. She had barely finished that sentence when she observed that her Judge, the Destroyer, was probably the one who had caused the embarrassment.

3: Innovate

With all that she had discovered, Mary was ready to come up with some solutions to the problem. I suggested the Sage’s Innovation process, of course. To create a Saboteur-free environment for Mary’s Sage to Innovate, Mary agreed to play the “Yes . . . and . . .” power game for a period of twenty minutes. I acted as a scribe but didn’t contribute any ideas.

It was slow going at first, as she was clearly still judging ideas before allowing any to come out of her mouth. But by the last ten minutes, her Sage was clearly in charge, evident in the rapid speed with which she was generating ideas without filtering and in how some of them were completely outside the box. She generated seventy-five ideas, of which many were impractical, but some had real promise.

4: Navigate

Mary dismissed all but five of the ideas due to impracticality or difficulty. I suggested her Sage's Navigation compass to help decide between the remaining options. She agreed to play the Flash Forward power game to access her own internal compass. By looking back at her situation from the perspective of the end of her life, she narrowed her options down to two.

One option was to replace all her "No . . . but . . ." with "Yes . . . and . . ." This idea had come from her observations as a Fascinated Anthropologist; she'd noticed how much more frequently than her colleague Tom she used the words "no" and "but" in her interactions with others.

Mary's other choice was the gutsiest idea she had generated. To make a clear and dramatic shift in her public image and signal a clear intention to change, she was going to dress as Butt-Head, of *Beavis and Butt-Head*, during the upcoming Halloween office party. She would then tell people about her conscious choice to stop being "*But-Head*" moving forward. She said that before consulting her Sage's compass, she was leaning away from that option, considering it too risky. But after consulting the compass in the Flash Forward game, she was clear that at the end of her life she would absolutely have wanted herself to take the boldest path.

5: Activate

The next question for Mary was what would stand in her way of taking pure action on her two choices, unencumbered by any Saboteur interference. To answer that, Mary played the Preempt the Saboteurs power game. She came up with three ways that her Saboteurs would try to get in the way of her action: (1) the Judge would call her weak or a loser for having to do this; (2) the Judge would get upset at others for not cutting her more slack as a leader; (3) the Hyper-Achiever would want to keep a good public face rather than admit to failures. Since Mary was in Sage mode, she could clearly see the harm these Saboteur thoughts would do. This made it easier for her to intercept, label, and discredit those thoughts as they happened once she took action.

As it turns out, the Halloween costume was a perfect launch for the "new" Mary, since it was so uncharacteristic of her to make fun of her

own shortcomings. It gave everyone an idea of how serious she was about working on her issue, and of her humility in exploring and acknowledging her imperfections. This helped others be patient with her over the next six months as she kept practicing and improving her new Sage powers. As is sometimes the case with such work, progress took the form of two steps forward and one step back at times of high stress, during which the Saboteurs regained strength. The new CEO took notice of Mary's progress and highlighted her work as a model for courageous leadership and lifelong learning, which were values he wanted to promote. The "Yes . . . and . . ." way became Mary's trademark style and was adapted by others in the organization.

Mary called me the day after the Halloween party the next year. Her entire team had surprised her by all coming in dressed as Butt-Heads. Somehow, she said, this was the most satisfying validation of her success in developing her leadership skills.

Inquiry

What is one area of your work or life where you could use some fresh and creative new perspective?

Play the "Yes . . . and . . ." game by writing idea after idea nonstop for ten minutes without any evaluation along the way.

PART IV

THIRD STRATEGY: BUILD YOUR PQ BRAIN MUSCLES

In part IV, you will learn the third of three strategies for increasing PQ: building your PQ Brain muscles. You will learn the difference between your Survivor Brain and your PQ Brain in greater depth. You will also learn fun, simple, and concrete techniques for building up your PQ Brain muscles.

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CHAPTER 7

PQ BRAIN FITNESS TECHNIQUES

Remember from our earlier discussion that your Saboteurs and Sage are controlled by two different areas of your brain. The Saboteurs are fueled by the parts of your brain that were initially focused on your physical and emotional survival, what we call your Survivor Brain. The Sage, on the other hand, is fueled by the areas of the brain we call your PQ Brain.

Activating your PQ Brain increases the volume of the Sage's voice in your head and decreases the volume of the Saboteurs. That is why strengthening the muscles of your PQ Brain is the important third strategy for increasing PQ. The techniques you will learn in this chapter were specifically designed to fit your busy and demanding lifestyle.

THE SURVIVOR BRAIN

To understand the PQ Brain, it is helpful to first understand its counterpart, the Survivor Brain. The Survivor Brain consists of the most primitive parts of the brain, the brain stem and the limbic system, both of which are involved in initiating our response to danger. The left brain is the primary hemisphere involved in the survival functions.

The hallmark of the Survivor Brain is the fight-or-flight response. A brilliant design of nature, this response instantly shifts the brain and body's priorities to survive immediate danger. Our eyes reduce peripheral

vision, focusing on the object of danger or path of escape. All nonessential brain and body functions are diminished as blood is directed to the larger muscles of the heart and limbs, enabling a quick escape.

In addition to narrowing the body's focus, the fight-or-flight response also narrows the *mind's* focus to anticipating and escaping danger, to the detriment of other functions. In particular, it activates the mind's survivor agents, the Saboteurs. Activating the Saboteurs diminishes access to Sage powers, which are more about thriving than surviving. When the brain is in survival mode, it is so focused on seeing signs of danger and finding something or someone to blame that it misses signs of opportunity and fails to appreciate what is right.

The Judge rules the Survivor Brain. Its very existence is due to the Survivor Brain: the Judge's extreme negative bias was helpful to the physical survival of our ancestors in a dangerous and unpredictable world of predators, enemies, and natural disasters. As we have seen, the Judge triggers and is in return further triggered by the accomplice Saboteurs. Thus the Survivor Brain fuels all the Saboteurs, and in return those Saboteurs keep fueling the Survivor Brain. This is a vicious cycle that feeds on itself until you learn to quiet your Survivor Brain and activate its antidote, the PQ Brain.

To illustrate, let's say you lose an important client. Your Judge declares this as a definitively "bad" thing, and therefore a cause for distress. That in turn triggers his accomplice, which was originally formed to help you survive and cope with the distress initiated by the Judge. So you might become rigid and overly perfectionistic in your next client presentation (Stickler), or procrastinate on securing another client presentation (Avoider), or get melancholy and feel sorry for yourself to get some attention (Victim), or distract yourself with something fun to take your mind off of dealing with the situation (Restless), and so on with each of the Saboteurs. These Saboteurs will eventually perpetuate the problem and therefore feed the Judge distress energy, which started the whole thing.

The Sage approach, of course, would have been to embrace the whole event as a gift and opportunity, starting a very different cycle, a virtuous one involving your PQ Brain rather than the Survivor Brain.

Most people today live in relatively constant distress and anxiety. This is related to a low-grade but perpetual fight-or-flight response masterminded by the Judge in reaction to the challenges of life, both personal and professional. Though the fight-or-flight response originally evolved to get us out of acute, short-term danger, most of us run the Survivor Brain continuously. The consequence of this perpetual stress and anxiety is heightened blood pressure, increased cardiovascular disease, reduced immune system function, reduced longevity, and reduced happiness and performance.

THE PQ BRAIN

The PQ Brain is the part of the brain that gives the Sage its perspective and its five powers. It consists of three components: the middle prefrontal cortex (MPFC), the Empathy Circuitry, and the right brain.

The MPFC is a relatively small region of the brain that plays several critical PQ functions. These include observing yourself, pausing before action, soothing fear, staying centered in the middle of challenging situations, and gut wisdom. As you can see, the MPFC counteracts many of the effects of the Survivor Brain and energizes the Sage.

“Empathy Circuitry” is my term for a few different areas of the brain that are together responsible for experiencing empathy for yourself and others. It also helps your brain tune in to the emotions and energy of others. (For more detail, see Appendix A.)

The right brain deals with the big picture, imagery, nonverbal language, and the detection of invisible things such as energy and mood. It helps with our awareness of our physical sensations and emotions. This contrasts with the left-brain focus on language, linear and logical thinking, and details. The left brain is clearly important in handling the details of our day-to-day lives, whereas the right brain enables us to thrive in a life rich with relationships, curiosity, discovery, joy, and meaning.

As children, the strengths of our Survivor Brain and our PQ Brain are far more balanced than they are when we get older. As we grow up, our Survivor Brain is continually exercised, rewarded, and strengthened,

while the PQ Brain atrophies. In the vast majority of adults, the Survivor Brain muscles are far stronger than those of the PQ Brain.

The great news is that the PQ Brain muscles respond very quickly to being exercised and can develop great strength in a relatively short time.

A Life-Changing Realization

In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton writes, “The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”²⁵ This illustrates one of the most critical principles of PQ: The positive and uplifting Sage feelings of peace, joy, and true happiness are simply impossible to feel when your Survivor Brain is in charge, and this would be true even if you were in heaven. On the other hand, you will automatically experience the Sage’s uplifting feelings and perspective when your PQ Brain is fully energized, even if you are in hell (figuratively speaking, of course). In other words, how you feel depends on which region of your brain is active, rather than on your situation or circumstance. Happiness is an inside game, literally and neurochemically.²⁶

Dr. Jill Taylor, a Harvard-trained neuroanatomist and prominent brain researcher experienced this truth personally in the most dramatic of ways. She suffered a severe stroke in 1996, which shut down much of her Survivor Brain regions and left her PQ Brain regions mostly in charge. No longer impacted by her previously dominant Survivor Brain, she experienced a complete cessation of her anxious mind-chatter and found her mind stunningly quiet. With her PQ Brain now in charge, she experienced a euphoric sense of peace, joy, and compassion. This was despite the fact that she was witnessing her body become paralyzed and her stellar career heading to ruin.

The life-changing insight she gained was that life looked and felt fundamentally different depending on what region of her brain was dominant. She eventually fully recovered all of her brain functions, but she was now very clear on which part of her brain should dominate. Her moving account is described in her book, *My Stroke of Insight*.²⁷

The point here is not to try to get rid of half of your brain. As Jill Taylor found out, you need many of the functions of your Survivor Brain to handle the day-to-day routines of life. The goal, rather, is to move

your Survivor Brain from the captain's seat to the copilot's seat, to have it demoted from running you to being run by you. The new captain, your PQ Brain, which fuels your Sage, knows when and how to command its copilot. To accomplish this, of course, you want to strengthen your PQ Brain muscles, enabling your Sage to take charge more often.

BUILDING PQ BRAIN MUSCLES

To develop your biceps, you could lift a dumbbell repeatedly. The PQ Brain equivalent of lifting a dumbbell is very simple: shift as much of your attention as you can to your body and any of your five senses for at least ten seconds. This is a PQ rep, just like the reps you do at the gym.

These simple reps require and therefore activate and energize your PQ Brain muscles. For example, commanding yourself to stop being lost in thought and instead become aware of your physical sensations requires the MPFC and right-brain parts of the PQ Brain. Numerous studies have definitively linked focused attention on present physical sensations with activation of PQ Brain regions.²⁸ These studies have also shown that such exercise permanently rewires the brain by forming new neural pathways that remain active even when the person is no longer focusing on the exercise. This is similar to how your muscles remain strong long after you leave the gym. (For more detail, see Appendix A.)

Many experts recommend taking at least ten thousand steps every day in order to remain physically healthy. (This equates to walking approximately five miles.) The PQ Brain equivalent is doing one hundred PQ reps every day. In other words, shift as much of your attention as you can onto your body and any of your five senses for at least ten seconds one hundred times a day. You don't need to worry about keeping exact time—ten seconds is the equivalent of about three breaths.

Every day is filled with opportunities to get in PQ reps. For example, chances are you have been lost in your head for the majority of the time you've been reading this book, not really aware of your body. So right now, as you continue to read, begin to feel the weight of your body on your seat for about ten seconds (or three breaths). Or begin to feel the

temperature, texture, and weight of the book you are holding in your hand. Or begin to be aware of your next few breaths and how your chest and stomach rise and fall. Or try to hear all the sounds around you while you continue reading. You just got a few PQ reps in toward your daily goal of one hundred.

As you can see, it is not difficult to build the PQ Brain muscles. It just takes a little practice. Just as you can't develop your biceps by reading about bodybuilding, you can't strengthen your PQ Brain through thinking, reading, or discussing concepts. You need to do the reps. Here are other examples of how you can turn your common activities into opportunities to do PQ reps:

Daily routines: You can turn many of your current daily routines into PQ muscle-builders. Next time you brush your teeth, see if you can become laser-focused on one physical sensation of brushing for a minimum of ten seconds. For example, really feel the vibrations of the brush's bristles against your teeth and gums, smell the toothpaste, or feel the bubbles of toothpaste foam bursting in your mouth. Focus on one of these sensations at a time and keep letting go of thoughts as they come to you. It's easy to get a few reps in every time you brush your teeth.

When you take a shower, give yourself permission to stop your busy mind-chatter for one short minute, focusing instead on one physical sensation. For example, pay close attention to the sensation of the drops of water hitting your skin, or the sound of the water hitting the bottom of the shower, or the nuanced feeling of lather against your skin. Focus on one sensation at a time. Closing your eyes often helps, as it reduces visual distraction, unless it is your visual sense you want to focus on.

Physical exercise: You can also turn your current physical exercise routine into an opportunity to do many PQ reps. When you exercise, zone in rather than zone out. Take a few minutes during your routine to pay close attention to one of your five senses. For example, if you are on a gym machine, close your eyes for a few minutes and listen closely to the machine, your breathing, and any other sounds around you. Or really feel the various sensations in each muscle that the exercise engages. If a muscle aches, put all of your attention on the nuanced sensations of that ache rather than trying to escape the ache. If you run, focus for a few

minutes on the visual details of your surroundings as you run, paying close attention to the colors and textures. Then shift your focus for a few minutes to listening and hear the songs of the birds, the sound of your feet hitting the ground, your own breathing, and the sound of wind in your ears.

Eating: The pleasure of eating can be significantly enhanced while also exercising your PQ brain. Next time you sit down for a meal, take at least one minute to become fully present and mindful of eating. Take a bite and then close your eyes, if possible, and pay careful attention to the texture and flavor of the food as you chew. You will notice that the pleasure of eating is enhanced when you are also getting a few PQ reps in.

If done consistently, doing PQ reps while eating will be more powerful than any diet plan. You won't eat as quickly and you will get a lot more pleasure and satisfaction from far less food. Most weight problems are associated with eating absentmindedly as a way of satisfying a psychological rather than a true physical hunger. Activating the PQ Brain and in turn quieting your Saboteurs significantly diminishes that psychological hunger.

Listening to music: Next time you are listening to a piece of music, zone in rather than zone out. See if you can spend at least a couple of minutes in full mindfulness of the music. For example, pick one instrument and pay close attention to the sounds it makes. Be fully present to every nuance of every note rather than drifting away as we often do when we listen to music. This will both enhance your listening pleasure and develop your PQ Brain.

Playing sports: Next time you play a sport, make a point of paying close attention to the sensations of your weight on your feet, the breeze on your face, your grip on the club or racket, or your foot against the ball. Pay close attention to both watching the ball's spin and feeling its impact. Actively let go of thoughts as they arise and sink into a deeper and deeper body wisdom that is only possible with PQ Brain activation. This is what happens when athletes report getting into "the zone," where their physical exertion becomes effortless and flows.

Why do athletes sometimes choke in difficult situations? Why does a basketball player miss the easy two-pointer that would have won the

game in the last second? The only difference between this moment and the hundreds of times he made the shot in practices is the Judge's distracting voice. What would happen to his performance if that voice were quieted through PQ Brain activation, allowing him to focus entirely on the basket and the ball? Try this and you'll discover a significant impact on your performance in the sports you play.

Being with loved ones: Next time you hug someone you love, can you be fully present for ten seconds? Can you be so present that you actually feel their breathing or heartbeat? Can you feel yourself in your body, feel your feet on the ground, and feel your breathing rather than being lost in the chatter of your mind? When you speak to them, can you see the pupils, colors, and sparkle of their eyes?

One minute of being fully present with a loved one has a deeper and more lasting impact on your relationship than spending a whole day together while you have a scattered mind.

HOW TO REMEMBER TO REMEMBER

As you can see, getting one PQ rep toward the hundred is very easy. The hard part is remembering to do it often enough to make it to a hundred. There are two easy structures you can use to help yourself remember: (1) do it every time you go to the bathroom; (2) do it every time you observe and label your Saboteurs.

1. Bathroom as Reminder

Since you are trying to establish a new routine, it's helpful to connect this routine to an existing one. Why not use the bathroom as a reminder? After all, it's a routine you do on workdays and weekends, at home and while away.

Regardless of how busy you are, promise yourself that you will give your busy mind a rest for one minute every time you go to the bathroom. Hopefully, you can see how absurd it would be for your Saboteurs to argue that you are simply too busy to give your mind a rest for one minute every hour or so. If you make yourself this simple promise, you will easily be able to establish a routine to get one hundred PQ reps a day.

To do your reps during that minute, you could feel the weight of your body on your feet as you stand up from your chair to go to the bathroom. Feel the carpet or floor under your feet as you walk toward the bathroom. Feel the texture and temperature of the bathroom door as you push against it. Feel the temperature and texture of the sink faucet. Hear the water in the sink and feel the water and lather on your skin. All the while, keep letting go of the many thoughts that try to distract you during this minute.

If you were to remain fully aware of your physical sensations throughout this entire minute, you would earn six counts toward the hundred. However, you would most likely find yourself drifting in and out of focus, in which case you would give yourself fewer counts.

2. Saboteurs as Reminders

As your Sage knows, you can turn everything into a gift and opportunity, including your Saboteurs. Since they insist on showing up frequently, you can turn them into your PQ fitness trainers. Promise yourself that every time you catch and label a Saboteur, you will get a PQ rep in for ten seconds. This will serve two purposes. You will turn a Saboteur visit into an opportunity to build your PQ Brain muscle. And you will take some oxygen away from this Saboteur by shifting from Survivor to PQ Brain. It's a double win for you. What poetic justice it is to channel your Saboteur's energy into its own eventual demise!

The combination of these two reminder systems can easily get you to your hundred reps a day. For example, perhaps in the hour between two bathroom visits, while you were sitting in your team meeting, you caught yourself getting upset and anxious and labeled these feelings as your Judge or Controller. You then used each opportunity to bring your attention to feeling your breathing, or feeling the weight of your body on your seat for a few breaths, and got a rep. Let's say you counted three PQ reps during that hour. And you gave yourself a count of four during your one-minute bathroom visit. You have now added seven counts toward the hundred in the course of an hour. The bathroom structure allows you to keep a running tally throughout the day and monitor your progress.

Please make sure you don't allow any of the Saboteurs to make the

job of counting toward a hundred a chore that causes you additional anxiety and stress. Your count doesn't have to be precise; doing ninety-seven dumbbell reps instead of a hundred and three won't make a big difference. If you forget the count, just take a guess. If you go through a day and forget to do any reps, don't allow the Judge to come in and beat you up over it. Start fresh the next day.

Your Judge might also try to convince you that you are failing at this because you can't cease your mind-chatter on command. Indeed, your mind-chatter will *not* cease just because you command it to do so, but don't get discouraged. You will find yourself drifting in and out of focusing on your physical sensations as you attempt your reps. This is perfectly normal. Over time, your-mind chatter will lose much of its intensity and volume, but it will never fully go away.

This practice should be fun, interesting, and joyful. When it doesn't feel that way, you'll know your Saboteurs are trying to convince you to stop.

THE PQ GYM

Doing PQ reps throughout the day is analogous to lifting heavy objects throughout the day; both practices utilize and gradually strengthen your muscles. However, as any athlete knows, you can greatly accelerate the development of your muscles by going to the gym every day and lifting increasingly heavy weights for a concentrated period of time.

The PQ equivalent of gym workouts is finding five to fifteen minutes a day to sit quietly and do the PQ reps intensively. After years of working with high-strung type-A personalities, I have developed guided, closed-eye processes that result in deep activation of the PQ Brain for even the most restless and distracted. In addition to giving you a good PQ workout, these guided sessions are deeply relaxing and charge up your physical and emotional batteries. There are a few different versions of these guided processes with different lengths to accommodate your needs, and you can download the audio files from www.PositiveIntelligence.com. In a typical fifteen-minute session, during which you might drift away

in your mind-chatter for about half the time, you could reach a count of forty-five successful reps (900 seconds, divided by 10 seconds per rep, divided by 2). So if you find yourself falling short of your goal of a hundred toward the end of a day, this PQ gym is a fast way to make up the shortfall.

21 × 100

Dr. Maxwell Maltz, a plastic surgeon, noticed that it took twenty-one days for patients to cease feeling phantom sensations in amputated limbs. With further research, he concluded it takes twenty-one days to create a new habit and postulated that it takes that long for new neural pathways to be built and old ones to atrophy.²⁹ This process is, of course, what we have been calling muscle-building for the brain.

What this means for you is that you must promise yourself that you'll get a hundred PQ reps per day for twenty-one consecutive days. By the time you get to the twenty-first day, this will have become a joyful new habit, and you will wonder how you ever lived without it.

Figure 14 on the following page is a sample chart created by Nancy, a director of operations for a Silicon Valley company, for one day of her practice. Few people are so methodical in keeping track of their PQ reps, and you are not expected to create a similar written record of your practice. I share this chart to give you a sense of what a typical day's PQ rep practice might look like.

Your practice might look quite different from Nancy's. You might choose to take count in writing like Nancy, or you might choose to keep track in your head and approximate. You might get many more of your counts by observing and labeling your Saboteurs and doing a rep after every instance. Or you might choose to get half of your counts in by committing to a fifteen-minute PQ gym workout. Or you might get many of your counts in by doing your physical exercise routine on the treadmill more attentively, or spending fifteen minutes eating attentively. Many of these activities will bring great relaxation and even joy while also building up your PQ Brain muscles.

Fig. 14

Nancy's PQ Rep Chart

Hour	Activity	# of Reps
6–7 a.m.	Lying in bed. Attention to weight of head on pillow. Feel of comforter.	2
	Caught and labeled Judge against myself. Shifted attention to three deeper breaths.	1
	Brushing teeth with eyes closed to notice all the sounds involved in brushing. Fascinating!	1
7–8 a.m.	Treadmill machine. Closed eyes for one minute and heard all the sounds.	3
	Shifted all attention to burning sensation of pain in calf muscles. The sensation changed and pain went away after a couple minutes. Cool!	6
8–9 a.m.	Smell of coffee. Warmth of cup in hand.	2
	Driving to work. Feel of butt on seat.	1
	Caught Stickler. Shifted to feeling coffee cup in hand.	1
9–10 a.m.	Forgot. Carried away with email.	0
10–11 a.m.	Labeled feeling anxiety. Shifted to noticing sensation of anxiety as tightness in shoulders.	3
11–12 a.m.	Bathroom. Warmth of water on hand. Sound of water.	1
	Caught Judge against Jack. Shifted to feeling feet on the floor.	1
12–1 p.m.	Couple of minutes of eating attentively. Food tasted so much better.	6
1–2 p.m.	Did five-minute PQ gym. Drifted away almost half the time.	15
2–3 p.m.	Forgot. Carried away and angry at Tom in meeting.	0
3–4 p.m.	Bathroom reminded me again to do reps.	3
	Caught continuing Judge thoughts against Tom. Shifted to noticing weight of feet on floor.	2
4–5 p.m.	Caught continuing Judge against Tom and noticed anger. Shifted attention to noticing sensation of anger as tightness in forehead and shoulders.	3
5–6 p.m.	Forgot. Carried away in miscellaneous activities.	0
6–7 p.m.	Caught Judge angry at traffic. Shifted to deeper breaths.	1
	Caught Judge again. Shifted to listening attentively to the drumbeats in the song on radio.	3
7–8 p.m.	Hugged Joey attentively. Felt his breathing and heartbeat.	1
	Caught Stickler upset at kitchen slightly out of perfect order. Shifted to feeling sensation of my clenched teeth and tight shoulders.	1
8–9 p.m.	Ate a few bites with eyes closed. Fascinated by sounds and muscles of mouth in chewing. Tasted much better, too.	3
	Caught Stickler wanting to tell Frank the “right way” to do it. Shifted to feeling butt on the seat.	1
9–10 p.m.	Took Spot for a longer walk to make the count to 100. Felt breeze on face and heard all the sounds while walking. Felt feet and leg muscles half the time. In and out of focus. Twelve minutes.	36
10–11 p.m.	Bathroom and brushing attentively.	6
	Total Reps	103

SIZE OF MUSCLE VS. SIZE OF CHALLENGE

As your PQ Brain muscle gets stronger, you will be able to handle bigger problems in life without getting hijacked by your Saboteurs. How big does a problem need to be to have you get hijacked by your Judge and/or accomplice Saboteur? Do you sweat the small stuff, or only the big stuff? The answer depends on the strength of your PQ Brain muscles, which also correlates with the strength of your Sage.

To illustrate, let's say you have medium-strength PQ muscles. Let's say this means your PQ muscles are strong enough to lift "weights" that are thirty pounds or lighter, metaphorically speaking. In other words, you remain centered, peaceful, and in Sage mode as long as the challenges thrown at you are thirty pounds or lighter. Let's say challenges such as hitting traffic congestion, getting messages from an angry and difficult customer, or being rejected by a small prospective client all weight thirty pounds or less. This means you would be able to quickly recover from an initial Saboteur hijacking in response to these challenges, re-center yourself, and approach them with your Sage perspective. You would recover from feeling upset very quickly by just doing a few PQ reps to activate your PQ Brain.

Perhaps discovering that your expensive new car was destroyed by a hit-and-run driver is heavier than thirty pounds. Perhaps being rejected by a very large and game-changing potential customer after working on their account for six months is weightier. Perhaps being criticized publicly by your boss on a costly mistake is weightier than thirty pounds, too. Only you know what challenge is too heavy for your current PQ muscles to handle.

You will know when a challenge is too heavy for your PQ muscles when you find yourself having a hard time recovering from a Saboteur hijacking. During this time you'll notice yourself feeling upset or anxious or angry or disappointed or guilty or any of the other varieties of Saboteur feelings we have discussed. Even a few PQ reps may not give you relief. You might temporarily focus on feeling the physical sensation of your back against the chair, or your feet on the floor, or your breathing, only to fall right back to your angry or anxious feelings.

If the weight thrown at you is far greater than the strength of your PQ muscles, you may be so dominated by your Saboteurs that you aren't

even able to observe yourself in the middle of the challenge at all. You may simply get swept up in the drama roller coaster, stuck in full reactive mode. You won't even remember to label your Saboteurs or do any PQ reps.

Life will always throw weighty challenges at us. Lasting peace is ultimately about developing the PQ Brain muscles to a point where they are strong enough to handle any situation. Once this level is reached, we can stay in Sage mode as we confront any challenge; we can feel peace, curiosity, joy, compassion, or any of the other Sage feelings rather than distress, disappointment, regret, anxiety, or anger. With the Sage's perspective and powers, we are confident that we can choose to either actively turn any situation into a gift or simply accept it and let it be.

THE PQ REPS AT WORK

Let's consider another example of the PQ reps at work. Say you are driving to work and you suddenly think, *I think I will screw up this meeting and then I'll be in real trouble*. Since you have studied the characteristics of your Judge, you instantly recognize that as a Judge thought. You label it, thinking to yourself, *There goes the Judge*. Catching your Judge reminds you to get a few reps in. So you now shift your attention to feeling your physical sensations for the next few breaths. You feel the weight of your body on your seat for several breaths. That's two reps. Then you feel the texture and temperature of the leather on the steering wheel for a few breaths. That's another rep. You then choose to listen to the air whistling through the window of your car and the sound of the car's engine and tires on the road. You get a couple more reps in. For about ten seconds, you feel the slight up-and-down movement of the car as it adjusts to the surface of the road. Another rep. Then you get distracted again and drift away in thought, no longer getting any reps.

You arrive at work and the meeting indeed goes very badly. Throughout the meeting you are carried away with the drama and fail even once to observe yourself and get any reps in. You get little access to your Sage. You exit the meeting and are lost in the thoughts and feelings generated by the meeting. You are mostly upset.

You get back to your office, feeling resentful of your boss and thinking he stuck it to you again. You are feeling sorry for yourself. Suddenly you remember that all your upset feelings are self-generated through your Saboteurs. You remember that feeling resentful and pitying yourself are parts of your Victim pattern. You label this and say to yourself, *Oh, here is my Victim again.* This helps you to let go of those feelings temporarily and get some work done. You forget to use your Saboteur sighting as a reminder to do any reps.

Then you feel the need to go to the bathroom, and you remember that you promised yourself you'd do a few reps during each bathroom visit. You notice the feel of the carpet under your feet as you walk to the washroom. You notice the warmth of the water on your hands as you wash. You notice the sound of the water. You notice the texture of the paper towel as you dry your hands. You remain aware of your physical sensations for almost half a minute before you drift away to your racing thoughts. So you decide to give yourself half the counts possible in a minute—three reps.

This shift of focus calms you down to some degree because it has activated your PQ Brain a little. But this challenge is weightier than the strength of your PQ Brain muscles and your Sage, so your calm is temporary and wears off quickly. You get hijacked again. By the time you go back to your desk, you notice that you are feeling resentment and self-pity again. You label this as your Victim. Catching your Saboteur reminds you to do a rep. For three breaths you feel your butt on your seat and the weight of your hands on the desk. You give yourself another count toward one hundred.

Then you forget about the whole thing and get carried away by a phone call. Half an hour later, you catch the Victim thoughts and feelings again, and you repeat the process. Since the Victim insists on returning again and again, you use each return as a signal to redirect your attention to your physical sensations and get a few counts in. You get quite a workout that day as you turn your persistent Victim Saboteur into your personal PQ Brain fitness trainer.

After a few months of this practice, you find yourself anticipating the upcoming client presentation. You hear the Judge's voice saying that you'll screw it up. You notice that with no conscious effort on your part the voice

is a lot less powerful than it used to be; it doesn't even faze you. Its volume has dropped from a blaring 100 to a much more manageable 25.

At the meeting, your presentation goes okay, but the client throws a bad-news bombshell about a big acquisition that might result in the loss of the client. As you hear and respond to the news, you chuckle to yourself and think, *Wow, look at you. You're taking the bad news in such stride. A few months ago you would have lost it!* You chuckle again.

You begin noticing in other occasions that you automatically handle situations with a part of you (the Sage) that stays above the fray and keeps everything centered. This automatically happens when your PQ muscles reach a certain level of strength. All it takes is a little practice.

MY OWN PRACTICE

I have come a long way since gazing into that camera in sadness and resignation as a child. By my mid-thirties, I had discovered the powerful Judge and Hyper-Rational Saboteurs, my old invisible survival buddies, and recognized them as my biggest obstacles to greater success and happiness. By following the practices I have outlined, I was able to turn both my Saboteurs into personal PQ fitness trainers. Every time I noticed them surfacing, I was motivated to do a few reps to build up the muscles to counter them. Today I still hear both their voices in my head. Their messages are still the same, but I can barely hear them. Their whispers can no longer drown out the voice of my Sage.

Simultaneously, my Sage's voice has increased substantially in volume and strength. Depending on the intensity of the "bad" stuff happening in my work or personal life, I still occasionally get hijacked by my Saboteurs. However, very few things get me down for more than a few minutes before I recover and return to my Sage mode. I still exercise my PQ Brain muscles, since I am as committed to keeping them strong as I am to remaining physically fit. These workouts are intensely enjoyable now and something I look forward to. I would not dream of letting my PQ Brain muscles go flabby ever again.

HOW TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

Over the many years of coaching and teaching this material, I have discovered that a majority of people who initially commit to doing daily practice to build their PQ muscles and weaken their Saboteurs fizzle out in their attempts. Sooner or later, their Saboteurs trick them into stopping the practice or doing it only sporadically.

Your Saboteurs will use every weapon in their arsenal to convince you to stop, so they can retain their power. The first day you forget to do the practice, they beat you up to make you feel guilty, prolonging your slump. The first time you use the PQ techniques and don't feel immediate relief, they tell you these techniques will never work. The first day you are burdened with too many tasks, they tell you that you are too busy for PQ, while tending to far less important tasks. Some Saboteurs might even trick you into making this practice stressful or burdensome, taking the practice so "seriously" that you feel anxiety over doing it right, counting just the right number of PQ reps, etc. They try to make the practice hard, so you quit.

To overcome these common setbacks, I recommend several strategies:

1. Get at least one practice buddy who agrees to do this work with you. Support and challenge each other and hold each other accountable to do the daily practice.
2. Use all three strategies of weakening your Saboteurs, strengthening your Sage, and building up your PQ Brain muscles through PQ reps. The cumulative effect is powerful.
3. Break down the practice into bite-sized components for each day, so you can build one muscle at a time. For example, one day focus on just weakening the Judge Saboteur. Next day focus on your other top Saboteur. Another day focus on practicing the Sage perspective. Make it one focus per day.
4. Commit for a minimum of six weeks. 21 days only works if you do the practice perfectly every day. Most people need six weeks due to the inevitable failures along the way.

5. Declare your daily practice as a top priority. Once you get into a regular rhythm, your practice requires about 15 minutes per day. Notice that this represents less than 2% of your 1,000 waking minutes. Next time your Saboteurs tell you that you don't have time for your daily practice, challenge what they have made higher priority.

To maximize the depth and impact of your practice, you might also want to consider the six-week training program that I lead for individuals and teams. Every week over a live video session I deliver an experiential version of this content so the concepts become more deeply and personally felt. That sets up the week's practice, which is guided by a smartphone App delivering a specific and different focus of practice each day throughout the six weeks. The App further motivates your practice by scoring and tracking your progress in building PQ muscle and each of the five Sage powers. And if you choose to, you are assigned to a learning pod of similarly committed participants so everyone gets to the finish line.

The finish line, which 90-100% of the participants in each program reach, is based on building enough new neural pathways in your brain to feel a profound shift in yourself and continue ongoing practice on your own. Details for the six-week Positive Intelligence training program that I lead, and the exclusive App that accompanies it, are at www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

Inquiry

Are you willing to commit 15 minutes per day to weaken your Saboteurs, strengthen your Sage, and build up your PQ Brain muscles? How might your Saboteurs trick you in the coming days to have you stop your practice?

PART V

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

In part V, you will learn how individual and team PQ scores are calculated to measure Positive Intelligence. This will enable you to measure your progress as you use the three strategies for increasing Positive Intelligence in yourself or your team.

Do Not Distribute

CHAPTER 8

PQ SCORE AND PQ VORTEX

In this chapter, we will explore how PQ scores for both individuals and teams are calculated and discuss what the PQ score means in practical applications. We will also explore the PQ tipping-point score. Being above or below this PQ tipping point determines whether you or your team are constantly feeling dragged down or uplifted by an invisible energetic vortex.

Metrics are an important part of creating and maintaining positive change. If you are exercising, you get encouraged by seeing progress in miles run, calories burnt, or the weight of dumbbells lifted. When dieting, you track your weight on the scale. During PQ practice, you track progress toward your hundred PQ reps, and you measure your PQ score.

As described in chapter 1, your Positive Intelligence Quotient (PQ) is your Positive Intelligence score expressed as a percentage, ranging from 0 to 100. In effect, your PQ is the percentage of time your mind is serving you rather than sabotaging you (acting as your friend versus your enemy).

For example, a PQ of 75 means that your mind is acting as your friend 75 percent of the time and as your enemy about 25 percent of the time. We don't count the time that your mind is in neutral territory. The question is, how do you measure whether your mind is being your best friend or your worst enemy?

As previously discussed, a key premise of Positive Intelligence is that *all* your negative, destructive, or wasteful feelings are generated by your Saboteurs, regardless of the circumstances. Every ounce of your energy wasted on anxiety, stress, anger, frustration, self-doubt, impatience, despair, regret, resentment, restlessness, guilt, or shame is a choice that was made by the Saboteurs in your mind. But every challenge can be met by the Sage, its perspective, and its five powers. The Sage's perspective and powers generate only positive feelings.

It follows that the fastest way to detect whether your mind is acting as your friend (Sage) or enemy (Saboteurs) is by noting the feelings you are experiencing. PQ is measured by calculating the percentage of Sage-generated feelings versus Saboteur-generated feelings in the course of a typical day. You can take the confidential two-minute PQ test by visiting www.PositiveIntelligence.com. With the understanding that you have good days and bad days, your PQ score is calculated over a "typical" period of time in your work and life. For example, your score during your Hawaiian vacation by itself might not be an accurate read of your PQ. You might repeat the PQ test to get an accurate score that is not biased by the variations caused by your atypical days.

You can determine a team's PQ with a similar method, except that the team members report the feelings that they typically experience when interacting with other members of the team. The same goes for PQ scores of entire organizations, relationships, and even marriages. The PQ score is a key predictor of how much of the true potential of an individual, team, partnership, or marriage is actually achieved.

IMPACT OF PQ ON HAPPINESS

If we define happiness by the percentage of time we experience life's positive and desirable feelings, your PQ score becomes your happiness score. By positive and desirable feelings, we mean all the feelings generated in the Sage mode. In the Sage's Empathize mode, these feelings would include compassion, empathy, and forgiveness. In Explore mode, they would include curiosity, awe, and wonder. In Innovate mode, you would feel the

great joys of creativity. In Navigate mode, you would feel grounded and centered in your deeper sense of values, meaning, and purpose. And in Activate mode, you would feel the quiet power, resolve, and satisfaction of taking pure action without Saboteur drama and interference.

You only need to know someone's PQ score to know how happy they are. You could instantly say a billionaire in full health with a PQ score of 50 is far less happy than a middle-class paraplegic person with a PQ score of 80. You wouldn't need to know anything else about their life circumstances to make this comparison.

This explains why researchers have shown that external events, such as winning a big lottery or becoming a paraplegic through an accident, on average have little lasting impact on happiness. Within a relatively short period of time, happiness usually reverts to what researchers call "baseline happiness" levels that existed prior to these events.³⁰ Other researchers, in a slight variation of this theme, have found that external circumstances account for only 10 percent of variations in happiness.³¹ Happiness is indeed an inside game.

IMPACT OF PQ ON ACHIEVEMENT

The relationship between performance and PQ is also straightforward. PQ determines how much of your actual potential is achieved, as described in the following formula:

$$\text{Achievement} = \text{Potential} \times \text{PQ}$$

Your potential is determined by many factors, including your cognitive intelligence (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), skills, knowledge, experience, network, and so forth.

This commonsense formula is not intended to generate precise scientific calculations and does not incorporate the tipping point dynamic discussed later in this chapter. It is simply meant to illustrate the general relationship between potential, achievement, and PQ. At higher PQ levels, most of your energy gets channeled through the five powers of the Sage and is focused on creating the outcomes you desire. At lower PQ

levels, some amount of your energy is used to sabotage your efforts, or at the very least is wasted on all the friction, drama, and distraction associated with the Saboteurs.

This formula confirms what we already know: most people have far more potential than they have tapped. Only 20 percent of individuals and teams have PQ scores compatible with reaching most of their true potential. The fastest and most efficient way to increase achievement and performance is to increase PQ, not potential. This is because part of your potential, such as your IQ, is fixed, and the rest of your potential is built over many years of acquiring skills, knowledge, experiences, and support networks. Your potential is already high and significantly untapped. Investing in even more skills, knowledge, or experience will add to your potential incrementally, but not dramatically in a short period of time. On the other hand, PQ can be increased dramatically in just a few weeks or months.

To illustrate, imagine yourself on a beach. You've entered into a contest to build as many sand castles as possible in a few hours. Now imagine that every half hour a wave (a Saboteur) comes in and destroys half of what you have built. If you want to improve your performance, you could invest your time in attending a workshop that teaches you how to build sand castles even faster, increasing your castle-building potential incrementally. This would of course result in better performance. Alternatively, you could spend some of your time on building a sand wall to prevent the waves from sabotaging your castles every half hour. (This would be equivalent to building up your PQ "wall" to protect yourself from Saboteurs.) Guess which method would result in more dramatic improvements in your final performance and outcome?

THE PQ TIPPING POINT: 75

In chapter 1, I cited many research studies that showed the link between PQ and the happiness and performance of individuals and teams. Now let's look at the evidence from some of the most prominent researchers in the field that points to the existence of an important tipping point for PQ.

Given the way I have defined and measured PQ, the tipping point occurs at the PQ score of approximately 75.

Please note that different researchers used different methods of measuring and tracking positivity and negativity, although their results were highly consistent. In addition, these researchers have typically reported their results as a ratio of positive/negative, such as 3:1. I have taken the liberty of presenting those ratios as percentages in order to stay consistent with the PQ format. For example, I have translated a positive/negative ratio of 3/1 into a PQ equivalent of 75 (3 positive to 1 negative means positivity 75 percent of the time).

In a study of team performance, Marcial Losada observed the interactions of team members with one another. Sixty teams were placed into Low-Performance, Medium-Performance, and High-Performance categories based on objective data that included profitability and customer satisfaction scores. While other dimensions were also measured and compared, the positivity/negativity ratio proved to be the most dramatic differentiator of the three performance categories (See figure 15).³²

Fig. 15

PQ Equivalent Scores of Teams

TEAMS	PQ EQUIVALENT SCORE
Low Performance	29
Medium Performance	66
High Performance	85

Barbara Fredrickson has produced similar results in working with individuals. After earning her PhD from Stanford, she has emerged as a leading researcher in her field, winning the American Psychological Association's inaugural Templeton Prize in Positive Psychology. Fredrickson studied individuals who were independently rated as "flourishing"

or “languishing.” Flourishing was determined by measuring thirty-three factors.

Fredrickson’s results, when averaged between the two populations she studied, translated to PQ equivalent scores of 77 for flourishing individuals versus 69 for languishing individuals.³³

Perhaps the most publicized research on these positive/negative ratios is John Gottman’s on marriage, prominently highlighted in Malcolm Gladwell’s *Blink*.³⁴ He can successfully predict, with over 90 percent accuracy, whether a newlywed couple will be married or divorced four to six years later. He identified an average PQ equivalent score of 82 for “flourishing” marriages and 41 for marriages heading to dissolution. Gottman’s results are consistent with the tipping point.

Robert Schwartz, a clinical psychologist, provided further validation. His mathematical modeling, successfully confirmed in working with patients, indicated the “optimal” mental state to be slightly above the tipping point, and “normal” (average) states and “pathological” states to be below.³⁵

What is remarkable is that, despite using different ways of measuring the positive-to-negative ratios, these researchers produced consistent findings.

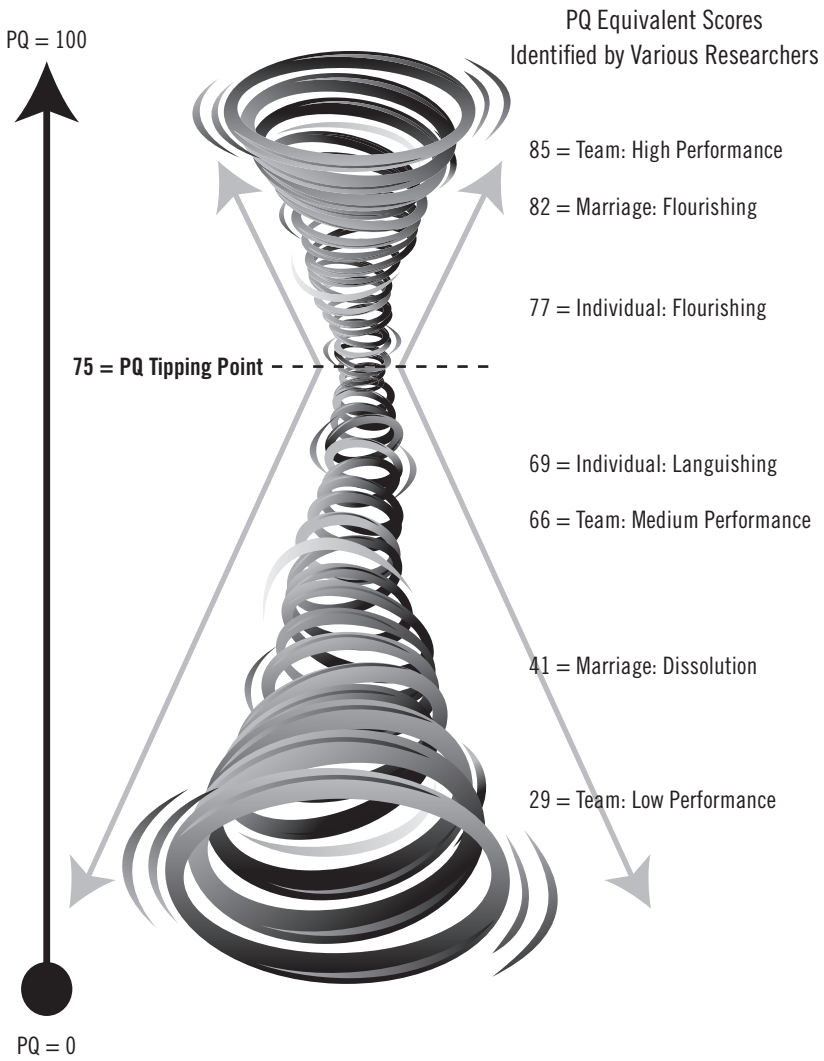
THE PQ VORTEX

My own work with both individuals and teams has been consistent with the PQ tipping point of 75. I like the metaphor of a vortex to describe the energetic phenomena on either side of this tipping point. Below a PQ of 75, an individual or team is constantly being dragged down by the invisible forces of a net-negative vortex. Above a PQ of 75, an individual or team is constantly being uplifted by a net-positive vortex. In an individual, these vortices are experienced inside the brain. In the case of a team, the vortex is experienced in the interactions among the team members. Figure 16 is a graphic representation of the vortices.

Have you known people who have such a vortex of negativity around them that you have to work hard to resist being dragged down when

Fig. 16

The PQ Vortex



you're with them? Have you ever belonged to a team whose meetings make you feel dragged-down, anxious, self-conscious, suspicious, or defensive the moment you enter the room? Can you remember any period of time when the negative force of the mind-chatter inside your own head was so powerful that it exhausted you and you didn't know how to stop it?

Conversely, have you ever walked into a room where the energy was so positive and uplifting that you immediately felt better, more hopeful, and more energized? Can you think of anyone who has such a strong vortex of positivity around them that your mood is immediately lifted when you're near them? Have you ever known a leader in whose presence you stand an inch taller and believe in yourself more, regardless of whether he or she is even talking to you? Can you remember when your mind was in such a flow that you embraced every challenge and obstacle as a fun game or opportunity? All of these effects are the result of the invisible PQ vortex that each individual or team exhibits at any given time. This vortex affects your energy level, mood, and perspective, often without you realizing it.

When you are in the net-negative vortex, it will take constant energy investment to keep your head above water and hold things together. In the net-positive vortex, you feel uplifted naturally, without too much effort, as if you're flying with a tailwind. If you're caught up in a net-negative vortex—if you have a headwind—you might still get to your destination, but you'd use much more fuel and take longer. If your personal PQ or your team's PQ score is below 75, you are wasting a lot of your energy just dealing with distress—energy that could otherwise be used to get things done.

Only 20 percent of us score above a PQ of 75, and that's why only 20 percent of individuals and teams achieve their true potential.

WHAT CAUSES THE PQ VORTEX?

Why does the PQ vortex exist? The answer differs depending on whether a PQ vortex is happening inside an individual's head or inside a team. Let's look at the difference.

The Individual's PQ Vortex

The reason the PQ vortex occurs in an individual's brain is twofold. First, the way the human brain is wired causes the negative or positive modalities of the brain to spiral in on themselves. Second, as we've seen in previous chapters, both negative and positive brain modalities become self-fulfilling prophecies in the external world. They generate results that reinforce the initial negative or positive brain modality that produced them in the first place. This too reinforces the spiraling vortex.

The human brain is wired to perform two primary functions: survive and thrive. In survive mode, your Survivor Brain takes control, primarily looking for the negative and dangers to your physical and emotional survival. In thrive mode, the PQ Brain looks for opportunities to grow, discover, explore, create, be in awe and appreciation, and reach its own full potential.

When PQ is 75 and above, the PQ brain is mostly in charge and the Survivor Brain is doing its job in the background. Your Sage thought patterns loom large in thrive mode and your Saboteurs take a back seat. When PQ is below 75, the situation is reversed.

Once we switch into either survive or thrive mode, multiple regions of the brain are activated, and they spiral in on one another and snowball, causing the vortex effect. For example, the amygdala is involved in making us feel safe or in danger. Once the amygdala determines that there is credible danger, the brain shifts primarily into survive mode. This results in a cascade of neurochemical events, including the release of the stress hormone cortisol. Few people realize that when you go into fight-or-flight mode, the mind—not just the body—becomes narrowly focused. It begins to selectively look for the negative signs of danger while ignoring positive signs of opportunity.

When in survive mode, thriving takes a back seat. Although many opportunities might arise for a shift to a positive thriving mode, the brain with this narrowed focus is incapable of registering and capitalizing on them; this is part of what keeps the negative vortex going. Negativity is therefore a self-reinforcing and self-fulfilling mechanism in the brain. Once you get into it, you feel the pull of its vortex wanting to keep you in.

The good news is that positivity is also self-reinforcing and self-fulfilling. Positive emotions bathe our brains in serotonin and dopamine. These chemicals have multiple effects. They make us feel good. They energize the learning centers of our brain, which help us in organizing, storing, and retrieving new information. They facilitate making and keeping more neural synaptic connections, which in turn help us think more quickly, be more adept at complex and big-picture problem solving, and generate more outside-the-box creative possibilities. These are all Sage tendencies. Once in the positive vortex, there is an uplifting pull to stay there.

The Team's PQ Vortex

A team whose PQ is below 75 is also stuck in a net-negative vortex. A key factor in the functioning of this vortex is the brain's mirror neuron system. Our brain's mirror neurons ensure that we act as tuning forks to one another, unconsciously and automatically mimicking the other brains around us. The most visible manifestation of this is that we yawn when another yawns, or cringe when we see another in physical pain. The less visible manifestation is that energy, mood, and even PQ levels can be contagious. For example, it's more likely that your own Saboteurs will come out swinging if someone approaches you with his or her Judge in charge.

Let's say Jane has a moderate PQ of 70 but John has a low PQ of 30. The question is, who would tune into whom during an interaction between the two? Would they meet in the middle and each exhibit a PQ of 50? Would Jane lift John up to 60, or would John drag Jane way down to very low PQ behavior?

There are two factors that help determine the answer. One is the relative status and power of each individual. If Jane is John's boss, he's more likely to be pulled up by her rather than she is to be dragged down by him. Another factor is what I call the "radius of the vortex." This is analogous to a person's force of personality. Some people's vortex, whether positive or negative, has a small radius and doesn't affect others much. Others have a larger vortex radius. We all know people whose negative vortex can sink the energy of any room they walk into. On the other

hand, we also know people whose positive vortex has such a large radius that they light up a city block wherever they go.

In a team composed of people with various PQ scores and PQ vortex radiuses, the team eventually settles at one collective team PQ, like a roomful of grandfather clocks that eventually tick in synchrony. Our mirror neurons are responsible for this contagion effect.

A great leader or team player knows how to shift the collective PQ of a team to above 75 so that each individual within the team is uplifted by it. Each individual within such a team is likely to exhibit higher PQ behavior than they would on their own. This is what it means when we say someone “brings out the best” in others. If Peter has a PQ of 60, he might exhibit fewer Saboteur tendencies and a stronger Sage when interacting within a high-PQ team. When he goes home, he’ll be back to a PQ of 60 in interactions with his family. I know people who are so uplifted by their team’s high-PQ dynamic that they find their work life far more fulfilling than their home life. They feel better about themselves and see a better version of themselves show up within such a team than on their own.

If you are a member of a team, ask yourself this: Do you generally feel uplifted or dragged down when you interact with your team? You can ask the same question about your marriage or your relationship with your kids or parents.

WHY 75, NOT 50?

You might be asking yourself, *Why isn’t a PQ above 50 adequate to start a net-positive PQ vortex?* At a PQ of 50, there is one negative for every positive, while at a PQ of 75 there are three positives for every negative. Why do we need three positives to counteract each negative? The reason is that the brain is biased toward survival, and the Survivor Brain is wired to hang on to the negative and amplify it while ignoring or discounting the positive. After all, dangers to our survival are negative things, not positive ones. Unless you counteract each negative inside your own

brain, on your team, or in your relationships with three positives, you will be feeling the downward drag of a net-negative vortex.

THE UPPER LIMIT OF PQ

There is an upper limit to observable PQ around a score of 90. My interpretation of this upper limit is that a minimal level of negativity is inevitable, and is actually helpful. I want to emphasize *minimal*, so we don't give the Saboteurs the excuse they need to get back into convincing us they are our friends. If we use the physical body analogy, we would say that while we should aim to avoid pain, it is critical that our body be capable of feeling pain. For example, if you touch a hot stove, you will feel pain temporarily. This pain is a critical signal to you that you need to move your hand. If you didn't feel this pain, your hand might be badly burned before you realized you needed to move it.

It is inevitable that you will feel anxiety, anger, shame, guilt, disappointment, and many other negative feelings at times. These feelings wake you up and tell you that you need to pay attention. The problem with the Saboteurs is that they want you to keep feeling that way. They want you to keep your hand on the stove, to keep feeling the anger, the guilt, the disappointment, the anxiety. Instead, we need to learn to shift to Sage mode soon after the pain gets our attention, shifting our feelings into positive territory. The necessity of this minimal amount of negative feeling is why I believe PQ has an upper limit.

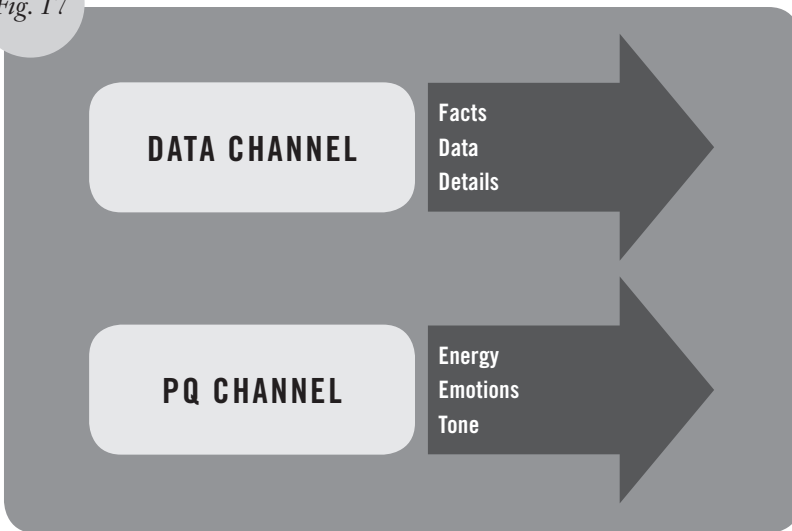
THE PQ CHANNEL

If you are watching channel four on TV, the program being broadcast on channel five is invisible to you, but it's made visible once you tune into that channel. Similarly, the powerful energy and information contained in the PQ vortex can become more visible to you once you learn to tune into the channel through which energy, emotions, and tone are communicated. This is the PQ Channel.

The PQ Channel is very different from the more visible “Data Channel” through which we communicate facts and details. We tend to be tuned into just the Data Channel, but any interaction between two people simultaneously transmits information on both the Data and PQ Channels. As we will see in later chapters, the information on the PQ Channel is often more important to leading, building relationships, motivating, inspiring, and selling. Great leaders, parents, educators, mentors, and salespeople know that.

Fig. 17

The Two Channels of Communication



To illustrate, Bob, your colleague, might be the kind of guy who always says “I’m fine” on the Data Channel anytime you ask him how he is. But through his energy and tone, shown on the PQ Channel, he might be broadcasting a vortex of negativity, a cry for help, a longing for acknowledgement, or a sense of resentment over an unresolved conflict with you. If you are not tuned into that channel, you will be missing what is really happening in your relationship with Bob. The same might be true with your whole team, your clients, your spouse, or your child. What people say is a small part of what they are actually communicating in any interaction.

Learning to tune into the PQ Channel has a powerful impact on your effectiveness in interacting with others. And, of course, it is your PQ Brain that knows how to best tune into the PQ Channel.

Inquiry

Pick an important relationship. If you counted the interactions in which positive or negative energy is exchanged between you and the other person, would the ratio typically be at least three positives to one negative?