



Managing Your Saboteurs

Removing Barriers to Your Career Growth



Today's presenters



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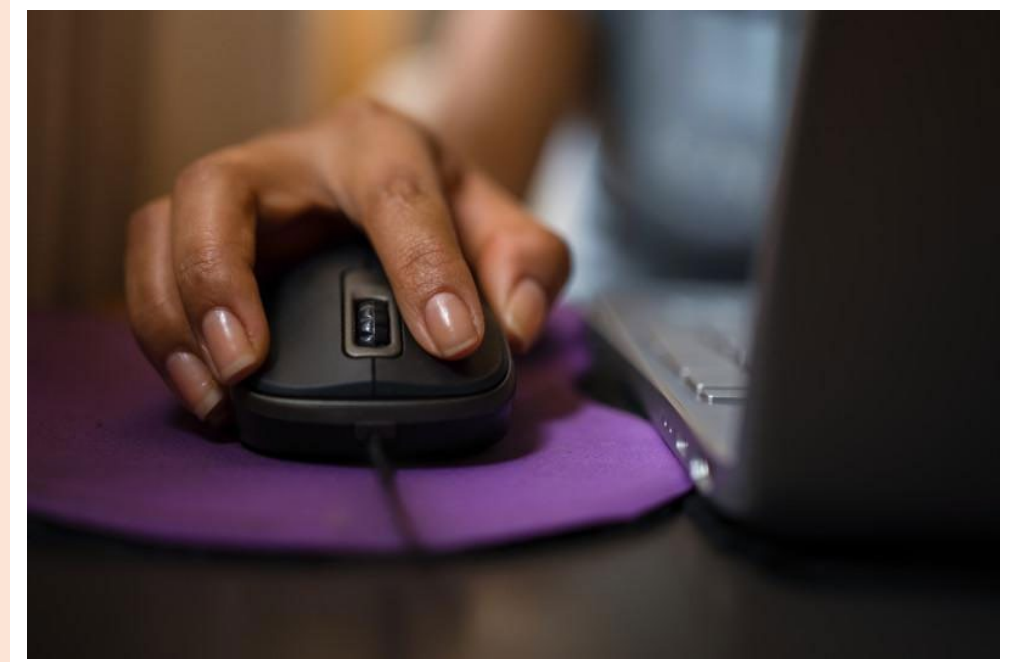
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House Keeping Rules

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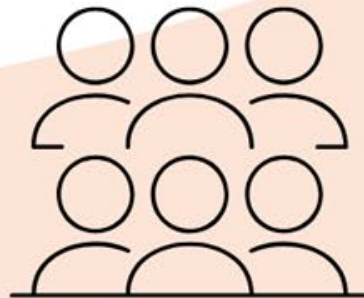
If you have any questions, please submit them through [Zoom Q&A button](#) .

The session will be [recorded](#) . The recording and presentation will be available on: [Inter-Agency Career Week 2026 webpage](#)



Due to the large number of participants in this session, we might not be able to respond to all of your questions.

Thank you for your understanding.



Tense and Relax



Agenda

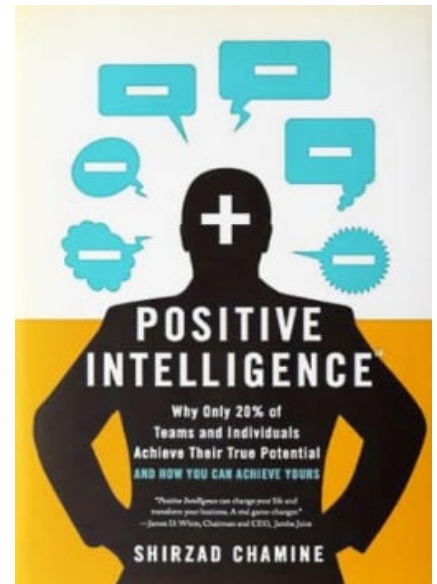
- “Tiny bit” of theory
- **Meeting** your **Saboteurs**
- **Exposing** their lies
- **Shifting out** of Saboteur mode
- Activating your inner **Sage** powers
- **Q&A** session



Saboteurs vs Sage

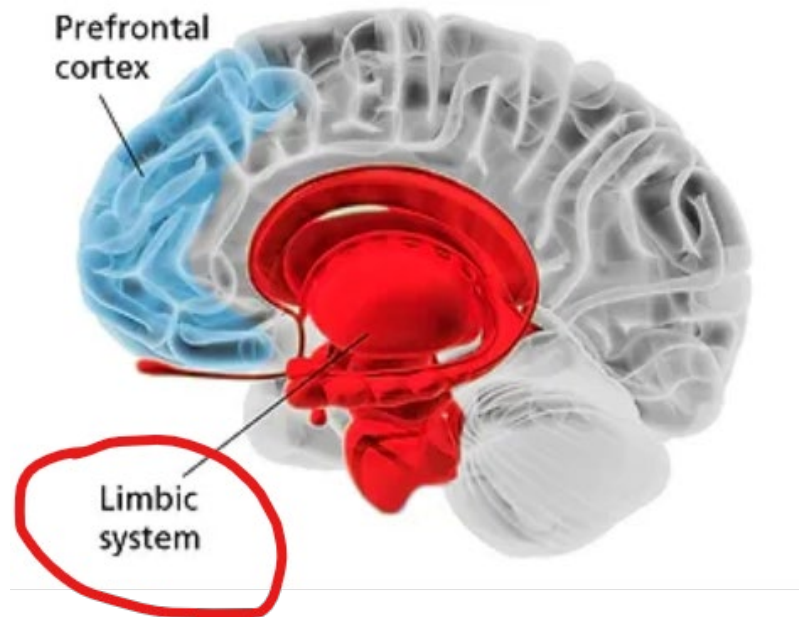
Positive Intelligence

- Shirzad Chamine
- Author of New York Times bestselling book "*Positive Intelligence*"
- Analysis of 1 million profiles discovered core factors that impact **performance & wellbeing**
- Negative response factors- **10 Saboteurs**
- 5 Positive response factors- **5 Sage Powers**
- *"Helping every human build mental fitness so they can fulfill their true potential for performance, well-being and relationships"*



Saboteurs

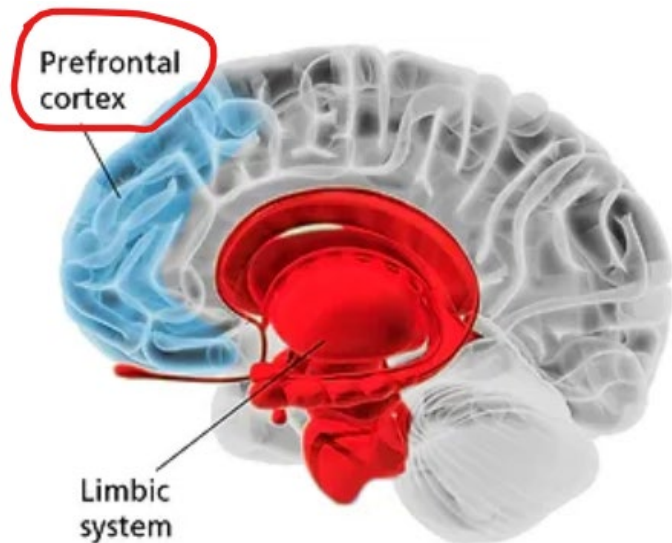
- Limbic system (**survive** region)
- Fast, emotion-driven processing
- Detect danger (real or perceived)
- Trigger stress responses



- Negative emotions are only helpful for a few seconds- they alert us to dangers or issues.
- Staying in Saboteur mode impairs our ability to:
 - see clearly
 - empathize with ourselves & others
 - create different ideas and options
 - choose the most impactful response

Sage

- Middle prefrontal cortex (**thrive** region)
- Empathy circuitry
- Rational decision-making
- Perspective-taking & long-term planning



- Sage helps us understand ourselves and others more effectively.
- The Sage enables us to access and respond with **curiosity, clarity, and purpose**, rather than reacting automatically.

Saboteurs vs Sage

Saboteurs = SELF-SABOTAGE

- **Motivate** you through **negative emotions**
- Fear, stress, anger, guilt, shame, insecurity...
- Might generate success but not happiness

Sage = SELFMASTERY

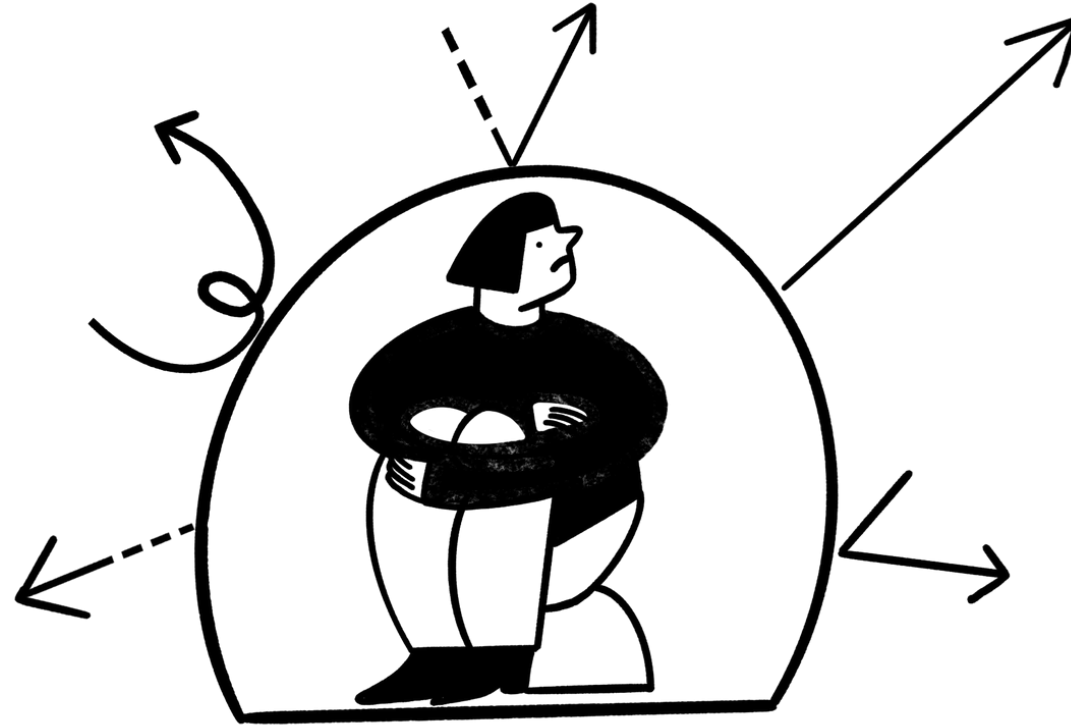
- **Motivates** you through **positive emotions**
- Empathy, curiosity, creativity, passion, purpose...
- Generates your highest success and sustained wellbeing



Meeting your Saboteurs



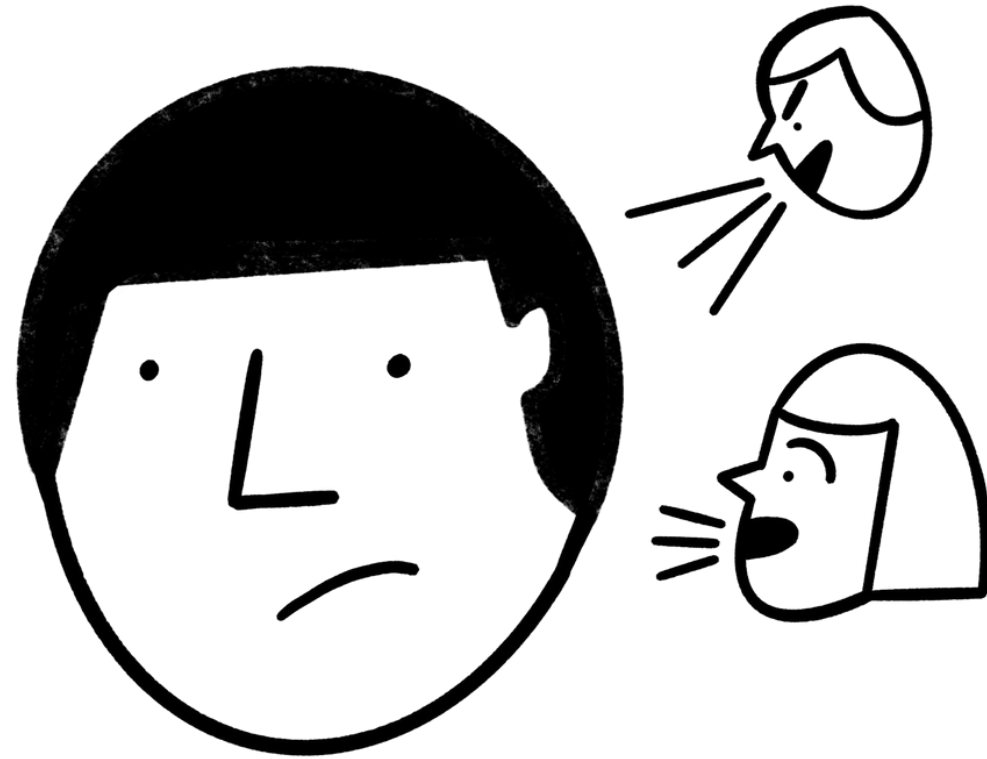
Origin of the Saboteurs



To survive and succeed I should...



But aren't they good for me?



10 Saboteurs





Judge

- The master Saboteur
- Find faults with yourself and others
- Generates negative feelings
- It is self-justifying
- Mistaken as a tough-love voice
- Activates your other Saboteurs
- Works with one or more Accomplice Saboteurs to hijack your mind and cause most of your setbacks



Spot your Saboteurs



Activity

Individually

- You will hear brief descriptions of the 9 Saboteurs
- Your task is not to analyse but to **notice what resonates instinctively**
- We are not labelling ourselves - we are **building awareness of patterns**

Rate the extent to which you identify with each saboteur

1. This does not really sound like me
2. This resonates a little
3. This really sounds like me!

Which inner thoughts do you recognise in yourself?

Avoider

**“Discomfort and conflict should be avoided
- it is better to keep things easy.”**

- Focuses on the positive and pleasant in an extreme way.
- Avoids difficult and unpleasant tasks and conflicts.



Avoider

- Avoids conflict and says yes to undesired things
- Downplays important problems and deflects others
- Struggles to say no and uses passive aggressive behaviour
- Procrastinates on unpleasant tasks and falls into routines



Characteristics

Avoider

- 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.



Thoughts

Controller

“If I am not in control, things will go wrong.”

- Has an anxiety-based need to take charge and control situations and people’s actions to one’s own will.
- Shows high anxiety and impatience when that is not possible.



Controller

- Strong need to control and take charge
- Connects through competition, challenge, physicality, or conflict
- Confrontational and pushes people beyond their comfort zones
- Thrives on doing the impossible and beating the odds
- Stimulated by conflict and sometimes unaware of how others are affected
- Intimidating communication style interpreted as anger or criticism



Characteristics

Controller

- I am either in control or out of control.
- If I work hard enough I can and should control the situation, so it goes my way.
- Others want and need me to take control. I'm doing them a favour.
- No one tells me what to do.



Thoughts

Hyper-achiever

“My worth depends on my success and achievements.”

- Is dependent on constant performance and achievement for self-respect and self-validation.
- Discounts latest achievement quickly, needs more.



Hyper-achiever

- Highly competitive and conscious of image and status
- Skilled at concealing insecurities and projecting a positive image
- Adapts personality to impress others
- Driven by goals and has a tendency to overwork
- Focuses more on perfecting their public image than on introspection
- Can come across as selfpromoting and may keep others at a safe distance



Characteristics

Hyper-achiever

- 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.

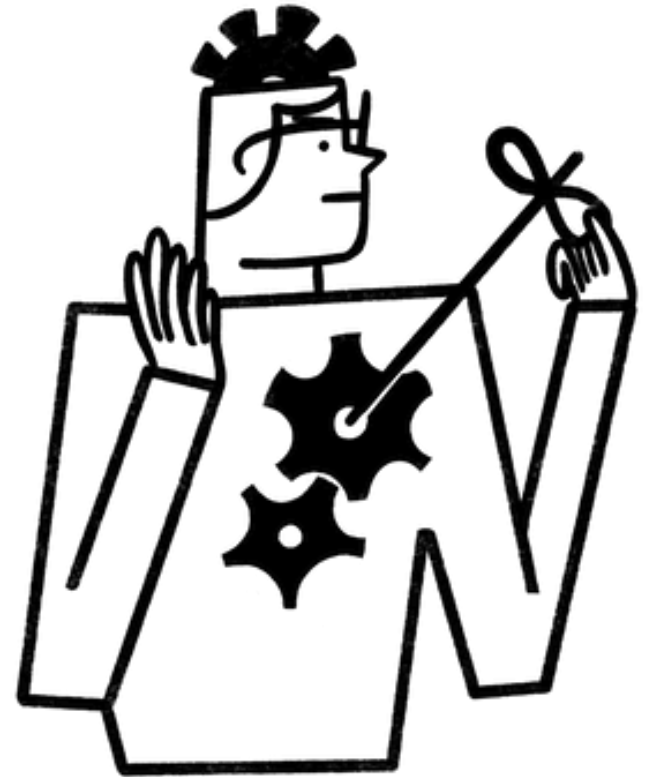


Thoughts

Hyper-rational

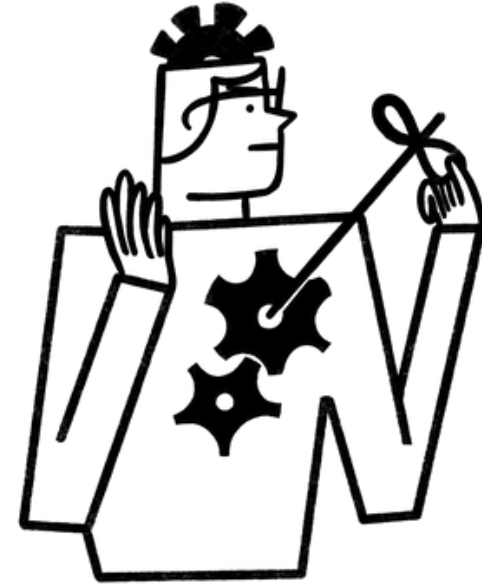
“Emotions are messy, logic is superior”

- Intensely and exclusively focuses on the rational processing of everything, including relationships.
- Can be perceived as cold, distant, and intellectually arrogant.



Hyper-rational

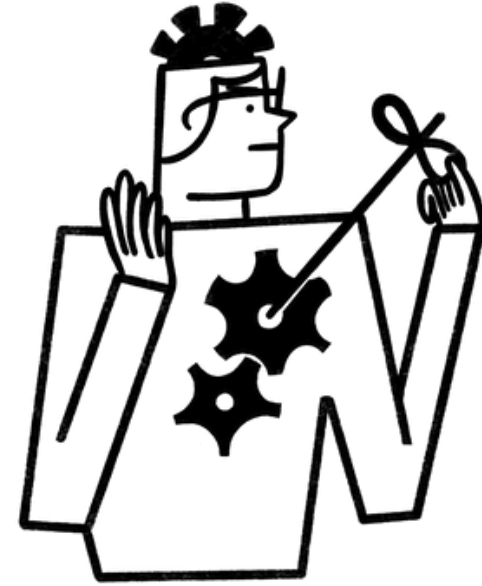
- Heavily focus on data, facts, and analysis dismissing emotions (own & others)
- Can come across as cold, detached or dismissive
- Prefer problem-solving over listening and validating feelings
- Can lose track of time
- Strongly skeptical and enjoys debate



Characteristics

Hyper-rational

- The rational mind is where it's at. Feelings are distracting and irrelevant.
- Many people are so irrational and sloppy in their thinking.
- Needs and emotions of others distract me from my projects. I need to shut out intrusions.
- What I value most is knowledge, understanding, and insight.
- My self-worth is attached to mastering knowledge and competence.



Thoughts

Hyper-vigilant

“The world is full of risks - you must stay alert.”

- Shows continuous intense anxiety about all the dangers in life and a strong focus on what could go wrong.
- Has vigilance that can never rest.



Hyper-vigilant

- Constantly scanning for danger and mistakes
- Anticipates problems and suspicious of others' motives
- Tends to seek reassurance from rules, authority figures, and institutions
- May over-plan and over-think
- Chronic anxiety, difficulty relaxing or switching off
- Can appear tense, controlling & pessimistic



Characteristics

Hyper-vigilant

- When is the other shoe going to drop?
- What could go wrong? If I relax, something bad will happen.
- 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.

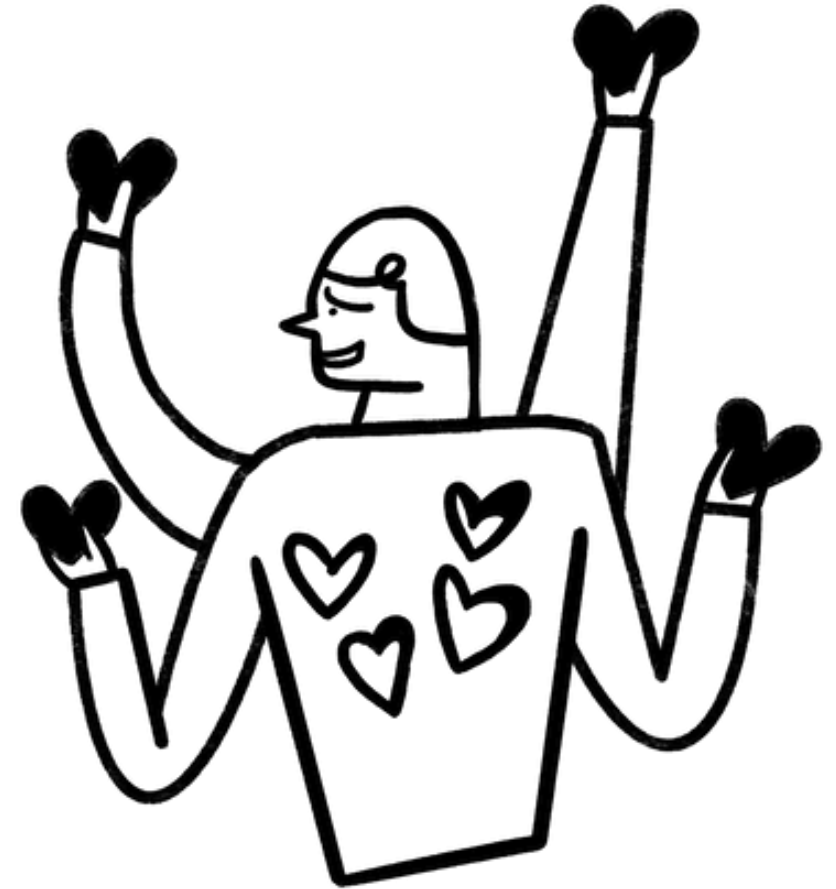


Thoughts

Pleaser

“I only feel valued when others are happy with me”

- Indirectly attempts to gain acceptance and affection by helping, pleasing, rescuing, or flattering others.
- Loses sight of own needs and becomes resentful as a result.



Pleaser

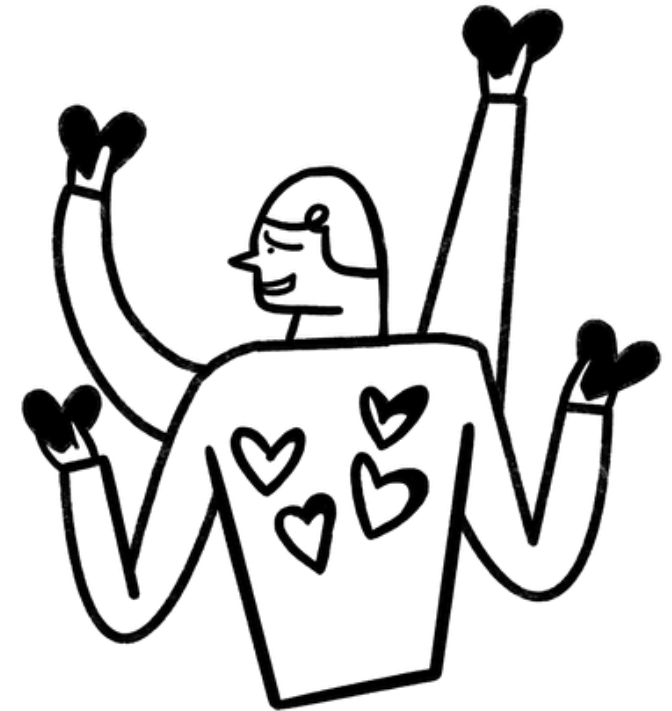
- Strong need for approval through pleasing, over-apologizing or flattering others
- Avoiding conflict at all costs
- Saying yes when they want to say no
- Requires frequent reassurance of acceptance and affection from others
- Struggling to express their own needs but can create a sense of obligation in others to reciprocate



Characteristics

Pleaser

- 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?



Thoughts

Restless

“There is always something better - I should move on.”

- Is constantly in search of greater excitement in the next activity or in constant busyness.
- Is rarely at peace or content with the current activity.



Restless

- Easily distracted and seeks excitement
- Often juggling many tasks
- Prefers novelty over comfort, and avoids unpleasant feelings



Characteristics

Restless

- This isn't fulfilling. The next thing has got to be more exciting.
- I am bored, I want to avoid these negative feelings. I must shift my attention to something engaging.
- Why can't anyone keep up with me?



Thoughts

Stickler

“There is a right way to do things - and it should be done perfectly.”

- Is a perfectionist and takes the need for order and organisation too far.
- Is anxious trying to make too many things perfect.



Stickler

- Punctual, methodical, perfectionist.
- Can be irritable, tense, opinionated, sarcastic.
- Highly critical of self and others.
- Strong need for self-control and self-restraint.
- Works overtime to make up for others' sloppiness and laziness.
- Is highly sensitive to criticism.



Characteristics

Stickler

- Right is right and wrong is wrong.
- I know the right way.
- If you can't do it perfectly, don't do it at all.
- Others too often have low standards.
- I need to be more organized and methodical than others, so things get done.
- I hate mistakes.



Thoughts

Victim

“Life is harder for me than for others - I am not fully supported.”

- Uses emotional and temperamental style to gain attention and affection.
- Has an extreme focus on internal feelings, particularly painful ones.
- Has a martyr streak.



Victim

- Withdraws and sulks when criticised or misunderstood
- Tends to be dramatic and temperamental
- Wants to give up when things get tough
- Represses rage, leading to depression, fatigue, and apathy
- Unconsciously attached to having difficulties
- Seeks attention by being emotional or temperamental



Characteristics

Victim

- 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.



Thoughts

Poll – Select up to TWO Saboteurs that you recognised most in yourself

Avoider

Controller

Hyper-achiever

Hyper-rational

Hyper-vigilant

Pleaser

Restless

Stickler

Victim



Step 1 - Notice



Step 2 - Pause



The Granny Story - A Lesson in Perspective

We hear you protest: **“But I can’t get out of my Saboteur mode! “**

And we say: **“Yes, you can! AND you do it exceptionally well already ... when you need to”**

Step 3 - Shift



Growth Mindset and Neuroplasticity

You are not stuck with your Saboteurs: Your brain is re-programmable

- The brain rewires itself based on what we practice
- Repeated thoughts strengthen neural pathways- for better or worse

A growth mindset creates new options

- Instead of “This is just how I am” → “This is something I can work with.”
- Every pause, reframe, or wiser response builds a new neural path.
- Small, repeated shifts change careers

Over time, your Sage gets stronger and your Saboteurs lose influence.

Judge

In the moment:

- Label it: *“That is my Judge talking.”* (creates distance)
- Ask: *“What would I say to a friend or colleague in this situation?”*
- Shift to neutral facts: *“The presentation had 2 mistakes,”* instead of *“I was terrible.”*

Systematically:

- Keep a “wins log” (daily 3 things done well)
- Reframe mistakes weekly: *What did I learn this week?*
- Practice self-compassion language deliberately: *“While I was late with the monthly report, I delivered all my other tasks on time.”*

Growth mindset
The shift from:
“Something is wrong with me or others”
to
“What can I learn and improve from this?”



Transition to Sage:

See situations clearly without emotional distortion
Respond with curiosity rather than criticism
Turn every experience into a learning opportunity

Avoider

In the moment:

- Use the “5-minute rule”: start the task for just 5 minutes
- Ask: *“What’s the smallest step I can take?”*
- Name the avoidance: *“I’m avoiding this because ...e.g. it’s uncomfortable.”*

Systematically:

- Break work into micro-deadlines
- Track avoidance patterns (what types of tasks trigger it?)
- Build a habit of starting **before** you feel ready

Growth mindset
The shift from:
“I will avoid discomfort”

to

“Growth happens when I take small steps
into discomfort”



Transition to Sage:

Face challenges with curiosity
Take small, consistent action
Build confidence through progress

Controller

In the moment:

- Ask: *“What can I realistically influence right now?”*
- Let one small thing go (delegate, don’t over-correct)
- Pause before reacting when things deviate from plan

Systematically:

- Practice delegation intentionally (start small)
- Reflect weekly: where did being in control help vs. get in the way?
- Build tolerance for uncertainty (e.g., try new unfamiliar tasks/projects)

Growth mindset
The shift from:
“I need to control everything”
to
“I can influence outcomes while trusting others and adapting”



Transition to Sage:
Stay calm in uncertainty
Empower others
Lead through influence rather control

Hyper-achiever

In the moment:

- Notice: The urge to jump onto the next thing and ...
- Ask: *“Am I choosing this, or proving something?”*
- Take a deliberate pause e.g. 24 hrs after completing something before rushing to start a new task

Systematically:

- Set process goals, not just outcome goals- e.g. *“Did I achieve XYZ but how did I achieve them?”*
- Practice completion rituals e.g. what went well, what did I learn?
- Schedule recovery time in and outside work (skills, hobbies)

Growth mindset
The shift from:
“I am what I achieve”

to

“I grow through how I engage, learn, and contribute”



Transition to Sage:

Act from purpose, not pressure
Balance achievement with sustainability
Define success in a more meaningful, long-term way

Hyper-rational

In the moment:

- Name the pattern: *“I’m over-analyzing this instead of acting.”*
- Ask: *“What would I do if I couldn’t think about this any longer?”*
- Add an emotion-based question: *“What do I value here besides what I can logically justify?”*
- Set a timer (e.g. 10-15 minutes) and commit to a decision.

Systematically:

- Limit research time before decisions (e.g. define “enough information” upfront). No re-opening.
- Take small, low-risk decisions without full certainty and observe the outcome.
- Reflect weekly: Did over-analysis improve results-or delay it?

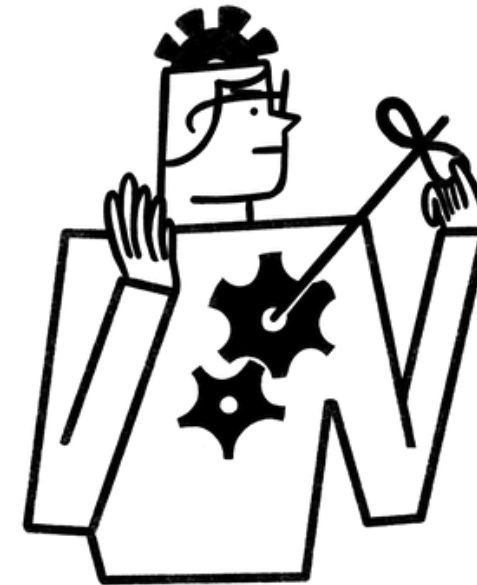
Growth mindset

The shift from:

“I need complete certainty before acting”

to

“I can make thoughtful decisions with incomplete information and adjust as I go”



Transition to Sage:

Balance logic with intuition and values

Decide with clarity and confidence

Stay connected to both outcomes and people

Hyper-vigilant

In the moment:

- Ground yourself physically (slow breathing, feel your feet)
- Ask: *“What evidence supports this fear?”*
- Re frame: *“What’s a more likely outcome?”*

Systematically:

- Limit rumination time (set a “worry window”)
- Track how often worst-case scenarios actually happen
- Build tolerance to uncertainty gradually

Growth mindset
The shift from:
“I need to anticipate every risk”

to

“I can handle uncertainty and respond as things unfold”



Transition to Sage:

Stay grounded in the present
See risks clearly without amplifying them
Act with calm, balanced judgement

Pleaser

In the moment:

- Pause before saying yes
- Ask: *“Do I genuinely want to do this?”*
- Find a boundary phrase: *“Let me check my priorities and get back to you.”*

Systematically:

- Define your top 3 priorities- use them as a filter
- Practice saying ‘no’ in low-stakes situations
- Track when saying ‘yes’ leads to overload or resentment

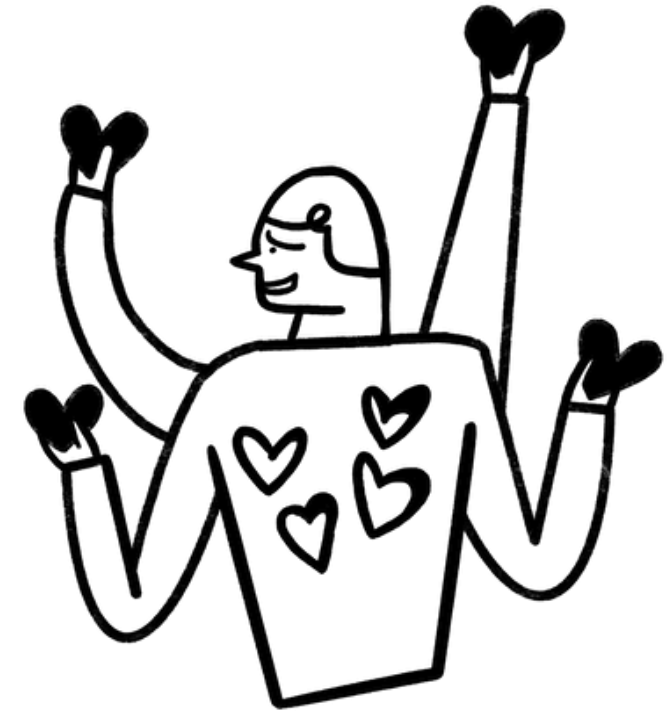
Growth mindset

The shift from:

“I need to please others to be valued”

to

“I can contribute meaningfully while respecting my own priorities”



Transition to Sage:

Balance others' needs with your own
Set clear, respectful boundaries
Show up with authenticity and intention

Restless

In the moment:

- Notice the urge to switch tasks
- Commit: *"I'll stay with this for 10 more minutes"*
- Remove one distraction (close a tab, silence notifications)

Systematically:

- Use time blocks (e.g. 25-50 min focused work)
- Train attention (mindfulness or deep work sessions = specific time bound tasks)
- Align work with meaningful goals to reduce boredom-driven switching

Growth mindset
The shift from:
"I need something new"
to
"I can create value by going deeper"



Transition to Sage:
Stay present
Focus intentionally
Choose depth over distraction

Stickler

In the moment:

- Ask: *“Is this improving impact or just polish?”*,
“What is good enough?”
- Set a limit: *“I will stop at version 1.0”*
- Share something slightly unfinished

Systematically:

- Define clear “done” criteria before starting
- Review where perfectionism added little value
- Practice delivering at 80% instead of 100% (good enough)

Growth mindset
The shift from:
“It must be perfect”

to

“It must be effective and fit for purpose”



Transition to Sage:

Stay present

Focus intentionally

Choose depth over distraction

Victim

In the moment:

- Shift language: from *“I have to”* → *“I choose to”*
- Ask: *“What one thing can I influence here?”*
- Take a small action immediately

Systematically:

- Focus on circle of control vs. concern
- Build problem-solving habits (list options & choose one)
- Reflect on past situations where you created change

Growth mindset
The shift from:
“I am stuck and things are happening to me”
to
“I can influence outcomes, even in small ways”



Transition to Sage:
“Focus on what is within your control
Take constructive action
Build confidence through ownership and
progress”

Step 4 - Act



How to Generate Positive Change

- **Step 1: Notice:** Am I feeling strong negative emotions? Which ones?
Name the Saboteur(s)
- **Step 2: Pause:** Take a few deep breaths.
- **Step 3: Shift:** Ask a deeper (Sage) question.
Remember: curiosity over judgment.
- **Step 4: Act:** Take a small, constructive step.

Extra Resource - Worksheet

Exercise 1- My key accomplice Saboteur

- Self assessment
- Complete the Saboteur assessment

Exercise 2 - Saboteur assessment results and reflection

Exercise 3 - Sage power game - Innovate

[Saboteur - Assessment](#)

[Saboteur - Worksheet](#)



Saboteurs

Q&A



Sage

	Monday, 04 May	Tuesday, 05 May	Wednesday, 06 May	Thursday, 07 May	Friday, 08 May
03:00-04:00 (New York) 09:00-10:00 (Europe) 10:00-11:00 (Nairobi) 14:00-15:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - From the UN to the Private Sector: Skills that enable Career Transition	Pres (E) - Thriving in Uncertainty	Pres (E) - Beyond the algorithm: Preparing your career for Life 3.0	Pres (E) - Habits under Pressure: working more intentionally	Pres (E) Behavioural Science for Career Development: Evidence-Based Steps for Action
04:30-05:30 (New York) 10:30-11:30 (Europe) 11:30-12:30 (Nairobi) 15:30-16:30 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Inside the Recruiter's Mind: How Hiring Really Works in the UN and Beyond	PD (E) - Private Sector Unlocked: How to Enter, Adapt, and Succeed	Pres (E) - Upskilling for the Future: How to Stay Marketable Inside and Beyond the UN	Pres (E) - Becoming a UN Volunteer; What is in it for you? The Hidden Benefits of Volunteering.	PD (E) - Beyond the UN Blue: Navigating Your Career Transition to Other IGOs
06:00-07:00 (New York) 12:00-13:00 (Europe) 13:00-14:00 (Nairobi) 17:00-18:00 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Talent on the Move: Growing your career through mobility	Pres (F) - Recherche d'emploi optimisée par l'IA : éthique, sécurisée et tournée vers l'avenir	Clinic (E) - AI for Your Career: Practical Tools and Prompts for Career Management	Pres (E) - Leading from Within: Self-Awareness, Authenticity, and Inner Resilience	Pres (F) - Maîtriser les entretiens d'embauche: Transformer son expérience en levier de réussite
07:30-08:30 (New York) 13:30-14:30 (Europe) 14:30-15:30 (Nairobi) 18:30-19:30 (Bangkok)	Clinic (E) - Mapping Your Motivators for Career Choices	Pres (E) - Mapping Professional Achievements to Job Application and Interview	Pres (E) - Breaking Down Job Descriptions	Pres (E) - What remains when everything changes: Insights from Third Culture and Global Nomad Research	Clinic (E) - The skills shift: What skills-based hiring and AI agents might mean for a UN career
09:00-10:00 (New York) 15:00-16:00 (Europe) 16:00-17:00 (Nairobi) 20:00-21:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Your Career, Your Conversation	Pres (E) - Strengthening Your Adaptability Muscles - AQ: The Adaptability Quotient	Pres (E) - Managing Your Saboteurs: Removing Barriers to Your Career Growth	Pres (E) - Use Your Strengths to Boost Your Career	Pres (E) - Activating Inner Resources in Uncertain Times
10:30-11:30 (New York) 16:30-17:30 (Europe) 17:30-18:30 (Nairobi) 21:30-22:30 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - A Mind-Blowing Tour of AI Tools to Accelerate Your Career	Pres (E) - From Sat Nav to Compass: Navigating Your Career in a Changing UN System	Pres (S) - Construye tu Asistente de Carrera con IA	Pres (E) - Building a winning profile from application to interview	Pres (E) - Mentoring 2.0: From Top-Down to All-Around
13:00-14:00 (New York) 19:00-20:00 (Europe) 20:00-21:00 (Nairobi) 00:00-01:00 ⁻¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (F) - Opportunités de carrière aux Nations Unies pour les jeunes professionnels et conseils pour réussir sa candidature	PD (E) - Thriving Globally - The human side of relocation	Pres (E) - Career Development: How you can turn a Psychosocial Hazard into a Thriving Strategy	Pres (E) - Youth Engagement: Put in Practice! (Young Talents in the UN System)	Pres (E) - Working for Justice
14:30-15:30 (New York) 20:30-21:30 (Europe) 21:30-22:30 (Nairobi) 01:30 ⁻¹ -02:30 ⁻¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Mastering Job Interviews: Turning Your Experience into Impact	Pres (S) - Cómo dominar las entrevistas de trabajo: refleja tu experiencia con impacto	Clinic (S) - Desarrollo de habilidades y redes profesionales a través de la mentoría	Pres (E) - Make career moves with confidence using the 5i Framework	Pres (E) - Own your Future, Make your Role Matter



THANK YOU!

The presentation, recording and other resources will be shared on our dedicated [Inter-Agency Career Week Page](#).

Please fill out the [Evaluation Survey](#) Your feedback matters to us!

If you have any questions, please reach out to IOM's Career Development and Transition Unit - cdt@iom.int.

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