

Exercise: Mindset Self-Assessment

Excerpted from *Collaborative Competition: A Women's Guide to Succeeding by Competing*

Take a moment and reflect about **how you think and act at work**. Answer the questions quickly, not spending more than one to two seconds on each. Rate yourself on a 1-to-10 scale, with 1 being low and 10 being high. There are no right or wrong answers, and you won't have to share the answers with anyone. The goal is to provide yourself with increased self-awareness.

1. When you approach a new experience or are learning a new skill, do you tend to do the minimum (1) or do you tend to go all out—taking lessons, even neglecting other obligations—to make sure you will be the best (10)?

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

2. How would you describe your approach to competition and winning, with (1) meaning it is nice but not critical and (10) meaning winning is the most important goal?

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

3. Would you consider yourself someone who constantly strives for 100%? (1) means you hardly try at all, and (10) means everything must be perfect.

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

4. How would you describe your approach to collaborating with others when you are forced to work on a project team, with (1) meaning you don't care who is on your project team, and (10) meaning you are unhappy if you must collaborate with others who don't have as strong a work ethic?

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

5. How much do you care about advancement at work? (1) means not at all, and (10) means that if you are not constantly moving up, you think about changing jobs.

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

6. If you don't achieve an important career/project goal, how much impact does that have on how you feel about yourself? (1) means not at all, and (10) means that you feel like a failure.

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

7. How much do you care about how your team members perceive your work? (1) means not at all, and (10) means that it significantly affects your self-worth.

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

Review your results

Review your results. Calculate your average score.

- **Noncompetitive Individual Contributor** - 1 to 5 means you are not very competitive and tend to do everything yourself; you are not motivated by competition and may tend to under perform or not advance to your potential.
- **Situational Collaborative Competitor™** - 5 to 6.5 means you are somewhat competitive and can delegate some things; others' perceptions of you are inconsistent and can range from fairly goal oriented to solid team player depending on the situation.
- **Collaborative Competitor™** - 6.5 to 8.5 means you fall in the range where the majority of the Collaborative Competitive™ people fall; they are competitive, collaborative, and very satisfied with their work and life overall. You are able to go for and achieve your goals, delegate, collaborate with others to get the work done, and have a healthy view of competition.
- **Perfectionist Competitor** – 8.5 to 10 means you are extreme regarding competition and being perfect. You need to win and have things go well all the time or you don't feel good about yourself and your work. You don't tend to collaborate unless you have to and prefer to work with people who have a strong work ethic like you. Competition involves a winner and a loser and anything less than perfect is mediocrity.

Other possible results

You could also find that your scores are an even split or that your scores are all over the place. The keys to an effective interpretation are to both notice the patterns and to look at the individual scores.

- If a pattern is not clear, then think about where you are now and where you are going, and focus on the specific items that seem most relevant.
- If there is an even split, once again think about where you are now and where you are going and what is easy for you and what is challenging for you at work.
- I have never seen anyone with results split within categories.

Score Categories

To help you understand your scores, think about the different topics and how you answered those particular questions.

- Numbers four and seven focus on teamwork.
- Numbers two, three and six focus on the importance of winning and striving for 100%.
- Number one focuses on how you feel about learning new things.
- Number five concerns career advancement at work.

How to move from practicing counterproductive perfectionism to productive perfectionism or *Collaborative Competition™*.

If your scores were in the 1 to 3 range

Start slow and don't beat yourself up. Start to try the Collaborative Competitive™ mindset by identifying some safe activities in which you wouldn't care if you won or lost. Begin to get out of your comfort zone. The emphasis here is on baby steps, enjoying the process, and on success.

If your scores were in the 3 to 5 range

You are competitive in some areas and not in others. Your goal is to increase your awareness of your strengths: what activities are comfortable for you as a competitor? And what activities are you comfortable delegating? The next step is to identify some areas in which you aren't competitive but would like to be, and to experiment with taking risks in some new areas. Also, examine whether you want to be a manager or leader, or prefer to be in an individual-contributor role. Either is fine: the key is to be aware and accept who you are. If you want to lead and manage, you are going to need to increase your scores to get closer to the Collaborative Competitor™ range.

If your scores were in the 5 to 6.5 range

You are fairly comfortable competing in certain situations, and the next step is to learn how to be more strategic or systematic in thinking about competition. For instance, you may be comfortable competing outside of work but not going for the big job at work. Or vice versa. The goal is to increase your awareness about the boundaries of your comfort zone and link the use of your competitive skills to career goals.

If your scores are in the 6.5 to 8.5 range

You have a healthy balance between competition and collaboration. Your approach may be an uncon-

scious habit, or you may really enjoy competing or collaborating with others to win but don't plan it. The goal is to have your approach be both strategic and enjoyable. This means that Collaborative Competition™ becomes a conscious and systematic process requiring your to be aware and planned in your choices. The end goal is conscious competence in all areas of your career and life.

If your scores are 8.5 or above

You are comfortable competing and may be quite good at it. The challenge for you is to examine if you are being strategic with your competitive approach. Can you delegate or collaborate? And are you enjoying the competitive process? Or are you burning yourself out, alienating yourself and others? Is your identity too tied to what you do? You may want to channel your competitiveness primarily outside of work. Ask people that you work with how collaborative you are, to see if you need to develop that side of your approach.