

RQ Dimension — Proactive

About this Dimension

For an individual, being Proactive means taking charge of his or her own life vs. taking a back-seat to other people's actions and decisions and circumstances that are outside of his or her control. Resilient people, rather than simply reacting to their circumstances, actively engage their situation. They tend to have an internal locus of control where they believe that they have the capacity and the *responsibility* to determine their own destiny vs. feeling powerless in a given situation. Resilient people, as a result, focus on *expanding* their influence over their world through assertive behaviors and actions. This proactivity enables them to preserve their self-efficacy in the face of any change — even a traumatic one.

Being Proactive, involves being “clear-eyed” about the situation a person finds him or herself in and then identifying constructive actions that he or she can take to best protect his or her interests (and, perhaps, the interests of others) while moving toward realistic goals, given the circumstances.

Being Proactive does *not* mean that an individual will always be successful in his or her pursuits. People who assume a proactive stance will still experience setbacks and frustrations. But it does mean that the person will have tried to exert his or her influence over these external forces—or at least how he or she *responds* to these forces—such that he or she is able to hold his or her head high, knowing that he or she did the right thing when faced with difficult circumstances.

Strategies for Developing the Proactive Dimension

Becoming more proactive involves someone assuming a new mindset vs. learning a new set of behaviors. This new mindset involves a person understanding that, in any circumstance and in response to any situation, he or she *always* has a choice in how to respond. Developing this mindset begins with strengthening a person's conviction that he or she always has a choice in how to respond to any situation and then gaining self-confidence in taking action.

- Describe a difficult situation or challenge that you are facing. Then identify three actions that you could take to increase your influence in this situation. Explore these actions and then identify some next steps you could take for increasing your influence in the situation.
- Reflect upon the life stories of Nelson Mandela, Harriet Tubman, Victor Frankl, or others who have overcome great obstacles and identify the lessons from these life stories. Examine the power of taking action in the face of adversity, focusing on the things that you can change rather than on what others may be doing or not doing.
- Identify the single greatest obstacle that you see to taking proactive action in the face of some challenge or difficulty. Identify the steps that you could take to directly reduce or eliminate this barrier to taking personal action.

- If you are facing a significant challenge or crisis, develop a personal plan for becoming more proactive in this situation that involves first identifying (a) *what* is the challenge or situation you are facing; (b) what is your personal objective in this situation: *What do you want to accomplish in tackling this situation; what personal outcome do you hope for for yourself*; (c) identify the array of actions/choices that you might take to move toward achieving your objective; and (d) select the most promising/reasonable course of action from among the array of actions/choices.