

What Do You Have to Make It Happen?

Directions: For each of the following statements, check the response that most accurately reflects your feelings or behavior.

Be sure the answer you put is how you *are*, not how you think you ought to be or would like people to see you.

Problem Solving and Creativity

	A Lot Like Me	Somewhat Like Me	Not Like Me
1. I see how I can improve things around me.	_____	_____	_____
2. I like the challenge of problem solving.	_____	_____	_____
3. When I have to do something new, I think about how I'm going to do it before I start doing it.	_____	_____	_____
4. Once I start something I almost always finish it.	_____	_____	_____
5. My boss and peers seek me out when they need help problem solving.	_____	_____	_____
6. I enjoy a vigorous brainstorming session.	_____	_____	_____
7. I like variety in my work day.	_____	_____	_____
8. I have a desire to contribute something beneficial to the world.	_____	_____	_____
9. I enjoy coming up with new ideas.	_____	_____	_____
10. I've been told many times that I'm independent.	_____	_____	_____
11. I need to see the whole picture before I make my decision.	_____	_____	_____
12. I enjoy making people laugh.	_____	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____	_____

SCORING: Add up the check marks from the “A Lot Like Me” column. Then add up the checks in the “Somewhat Like Me” column and “Not Like Me” column.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU: If you scored 9 or above in problem-solving and creativity, you probably enjoy situations where you are challenged to resolve issues and/or develop action plans.

If you scored 9 or above in “somewhat like me,” you probably enjoy some problem-solving in your work, but don’t want that to be your primary focus.

If you scored 9 or above in “not like me,” you would prefer to be in situations where someone else is responsible for figuring out ways to resolve issues. You may enjoy putting those plans into effect even though you may not enjoy developing those plans.

If you scored from 1 to 8 in the first two columns, you may be thinking, “Gee, where’s *my* creative spot?” That just means that the above descriptions may be more situational for you. In other words, you may find yourself more comfortable being creative away from work.

Power Problem-Solving. If you want to enhance your problem-solving skills regardless of where you scored, you can practice the following techniques. When dealing with a challenging situation, start by imagining several different ways of resolving it. Imagining for some people involves visualization, for others their kinesthetic or body sense. What is important is creating a clear path from your starting point to a complete resolution of the issue. Once you’ve generated a way to resolve the issue, then go back to your starting point and generate a second way. Keep doing that mentally, working through several possible solutions, taking each one to completion. Next pick the best solution or combine elements from two or more of your possible solutions. Mentally take yourself through each step in your solution to resolve any challenges that may happen along the way. Now you have designed the most effective solution and you are ready to execute the plan.

Several things occur by using this process. First, you’ve stimulated your creativity by challenging yourself to come up with more than one solution to the problem. You’ve given yourself the opportunity to troubleshoot any stumbling blocks that you may anticipate along the way. Resolving these ahead of time makes for a smoother more effective action plan. You’ve engaged your creativity again by being open to combining parts of possible solutions you’ve generated. Finally, you’ve greatly increased the likelihood that you will follow your plan to completion. Individuals who create a mental experience of moving through the steps required to solve a problem are likely to complete the process once they’ve started.

Stress	A Lot Like Me	Somewhat Like Me	Not Like Me
1. Stress is manageable.	_____	_____	_____
2. When I’m under stress, I’m usually in charge of the stress.	_____	_____	_____
3. I know I have a choice as to how I react to stress.	_____	_____	_____
4. I feel comfortable in my ability to deal with	_____	_____	_____

- outside stressors. _____
5. I'm aware of my self-talk that elevates my stress. _____
6. Stress is simply a part of my life. _____
7. I know what outside events trigger my stress. _____
8. I can describe how my voice and body changes when I'm stressed. _____
9. If I feel myself getting too stressed, I know what to do to manage it. _____
10. When my stress level goes up, I can feel it in my body. _____
11. For me, being stressed and being overwhelmed are not related. _____
12. I engage in daily activities that keep me relieved of my stress. _____

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU: If you scored 9 and above in “a lot like me,” you probably accept stress as a part of your life and are seldom overwhelmed by daily stressors. You may engage in activities which help you manage your stress, or you may be relatively unaffected by external stress.

If you scored 9 and above in “somewhat like me,” your stress probably builds before you notice it. You also probably have skills to help you reduce that stress. Once you notice you are stressed, you can apply your stress management skills.

If you scored 9 and above in “not like me,” you are at your best in a low stress job. Stressful situations are likely to be very difficult for you and may quickly put you into overwhelm.

Stress Busters. If you want to enhance your stress management skills, there are many books available on the topic. You may prefer to participate in stress-management classes or take up stress-reducing physical activities. These could range anywhere from yoga to running marathons. In other words, becoming proficient at stress management is something everyone can do and is an important component to a healthy life.

Stress is derived from our internal response to external events or internal thoughts. We commonly use the phrase “stressful situations” giving it the sense of an external stimulus that we do not have control over when, in fact, how we process what is happening creates our stress.

Risk

	A Lot Like Me	Somewhat Like Me	Not Like Me
1. I experience risk as opportunity.	_____	_____	_____
2. I'm comfortable with some risk if there is a potential for financial reward.	_____	_____	_____
3. I don't mind taking risks as long as I've done the research.	_____	_____	_____
4. I experience risk as exciting.	_____	_____	_____
5. I'm willing to take whatever risk necessary to accomplish the goal.	_____	_____	_____
6. Taking risks is a part of living life to its fullest.	_____	_____	_____
7. Because I'm well prepared, the risks I take aren't really risky to me.	_____	_____	_____
8. I know I have to take some risks to meet my goals.	_____	_____	_____
9. I get bored unless I'm taking risks.	_____	_____	_____
10. The opportunities are more important than the risk.	_____	_____	_____
11. For me, risks are calculated adventures.	_____	_____	_____
12. I put fear aside so I can move forward and take a risk.	_____	_____	_____

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU: If you scored 9 and above in “a lot like me,” you probably know how to put yourself in charge of any decision you make that may involve some level of risk. This may seem as if it comes naturally to you or you may have learned the skills to cope with risk. You may make decisions that to others appear risky, however, for you those decisions are matter of fact. If given a choice, you probably prefer to take a risk than to miss an opportunity.

If you scored 9 and above in “somewhat like me,” you probably are comfortable taking some risk by choosing the level of risk that suits you and the situation. While you are clear about *what is too much risk* and *what isn't too much*, others may experience your risk-related behavior as inconsistent. You're not totally risk tolerant nor are you totally risk averse. You are at ease with the middle ground.

If you scored 9 and above in “not like me,” you have a preference for safety and security. Your comfort zone excludes risk-taking and involves maintaining status quo. You may view any risk regardless of size as too big of a risk to take. Because of the perception of an uncertain or improbable outcome, you may miss opportunities.

Risky Business. If you want to strengthen your relationship with risk, you can begin by defining what risk means to you. Start with the sentence:

Risk to me means: _____
_____.

Make a list of activities that have some level of risk for you. This could be your “bucket list.” Pick one desirable activity from the list you want to accomplish. Keep in mind you can make more progress by taking small, safe steps rather than giant, scary leaps. You may want to begin by taking a class, reading a book on the subject, talking with an expert or similar risk exploration. Gaining knowledge can increase your comfort level enough so that you will take the next small step.

Motivation	A Lot Like Me	Somewhat Like Me	Not Like Me
1. I describe myself as a self-starter.	_____	_____	_____
2. Once I know what my goal is, it's full steam ahead.	_____	_____	_____
3. I'm not easily distracted from the task at hand.	_____	_____	_____
4. It's important that I have a sense of self-satisfaction with my work.	_____	_____	_____
5. The only failure in life is to not attempt something I would like to do.	_____	_____	_____
6. I don't necessarily need others to push me to finish a project.	_____	_____	_____
7. I can keep myself going when faced with an obstacle or challenge.	_____	_____	_____
8. I keep focused on the goal.	_____	_____	_____
9. Delayed gratification is fine with me.	_____	_____	_____
10. External incentives do not usually motivate me.	_____	_____	_____
11. Regardless of distractions, I return to complete the task at hand.	_____	_____	_____
12. I find it difficult to work with people who are not self-motivated.	_____	_____	_____

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU: If you scored 9 and above in “a lot like me,” you probably have a strong inner drive to accomplish whatever you set your mind to. While you may enjoy receiving awards and recognition, they are not what drive you. You are able to push ahead even when faced with unexpected complications. You may be known as a change agent.

If you scored 9 and above in “somewhat like me,” you may get deterred from time to time while working on a task. You probably appreciate acknowledgement from others and may need it to stay on track. You are comfortable working independently, but also need the stimulation from others to balance both internal and external motivation.

If you scored 9 and above in “not like me,” you may experience the possibility of receiving rewards, winning contests, and other forms of external satisfaction as motivating. When involved in completing a task, having short-term goals with rewards is more motivating than having to wait for the reward at the end of the project. You may be content with the way things are in your life.

Raising the Bar. To raise your level of self-motivation, create your own reward system. Creating a personal short-term reward system can keep you on track when the external rewards are not in place. What can you do for yourself to celebrate reaching a goal or completing a task? Generally, rewarding yourself for small steps toward a goal will keep you more motivated than postponing any reward until its completion.

What would constitute a reward for you? Buying yourself flowers? Going to a movie? Spending time with someone who energizes you? Treating yourself to your favorite restaurant? Acknowledge these special treats as rewards for what you have accomplished. The idea is to feel good about what you have done and to keep yourself looking forward to the next accomplishment with its reward. When and if the external reward comes, it will be a bonus instead of the only motivator you have. Building your personal reward system adds to your motivation skills.

Has your heart rate gone up a notch? Feeling a little warm all over? Now that you’ve identified your potential financial ménage a trios and have an idea where you are with problem-solving and creativity, risk, motivation, and stress, fling those panties across the room and let’s get to work.