

## The highlights

Recently, researchers have discovered a **specific mental state or attribute** that resolves most problems in life—from domestic violence and bullying to corporate fraud and incompetence.



- What is this state or attribute? In essence, when people experience this state, their primary goal is to learn from other people and experiences.
- This state or attribute roughly corresponds to the quality we call humility.

## The benefits of humility

When people are humble, their resilience, relationships, and reputation all improve. In contrast to some misconceptions, humility often coincides with a sense of conviction, passion, and curiosity rather than a low self-esteem or a meek personality.



### Resilience

If humble, criticisms and challenges feel like opportunities to learn & not as threats. Negative emotions abate swiftly.

### Relationships

People assess the humility of other individuals to decide who to trust. So humble people are trusted, facilitating relationships.

### Reputation

Humble people are less defensive and more informed, enhancing their credibility.

## Initial attempts to foster humility



Here are some practices that foster humility. If you want to foster humility in other people, such as your staff, perhaps apply these practices yourself first. These activities will enable you to role model humility and inspire other people to follow.



- Identify occasions in the future in which you may be able to acknowledge some of your limitations or faults to other people.
- About once a month, deliberately engage in an activity that elicits modest levels of anxiety or stress, such as speaking in public.
- Over time, gradually increase the number of people—such as colleagues or friends—from whom you occasionally seek advice.
- Occasionally, express genuine rather than feigned compliments to people, especially people who differ appreciably from you
- Whenever you express a suggestion, attempt to highlight at least one drawback of this proposal.

### Limitations of these practices



These practices are not sufficient to sustain humility—or to generate the benefits of humility—in stressful and challenging circumstances. That is, these practices alone will not instill in people the profound motivation to learn from other individuals and experiences

## Practices that foster humility sustainably



Here is a limited sample of practices that, when repeated over time, can gradually entrench humility. These practices can boost resilience, relationships, and reputation considerably and enduringly.

- Again, perhaps apply these practices yourself first before you inspire other people.
- Later sections will extend these practices & present evidence to validate these activities.

### Enduring activities

When individuals perceive their future as vivid and certain—as well as feel their values and interests in ten years will be like their values and interests now—they feel motivated to learn from other people and experiences. They show humility. To foster this state

- identify activities, interests, or goals you naturally pursue—and then convert these pursuits into a very ambitious, and perhaps unattainable, aspiration,
- imagine yourself in some future roles that are compatible with this aspiration,
- record some practice or activity that you would like to complete every week or so for decades ahead and improves your capacity to secure these roles in the future.

For example, your aspiration might be to help disadvantaged people use AI more efficiently. Every week, you could read about more efficient methods to use AI.

## Practices that foster humility sustainably continued

To develop humility, individuals need to enhance their resilience—their tendency to recover in response to distressing or upsetting events, such as failures or criticisms. Otherwise, they will seem defensive rather than humble. These activities help foster this resilience.



Here are some practices that foster resilience. Later, we will discuss why these practices may be more powerful than many people realise.



- Whenever you feel distressed, attempt to smile, at least briefly. You could try to remember a joke that tends to elicit some laughter.
- Whenever you feel stressed, imagine your romantic partner—or a fictional partner in the future—touching you gently to comfort you.
- After some failure, generate as many ideas as possible—even vague or unrealistic possibilities—on how you could prevent a similar problem in the future. You can use AI to complete this task.
- Perceive feedback, failures, and similar challenges as opportunities to derive lessons you could impart to other people.
- Close your eyes. Repeat to yourself, about five times, a statement like the following:

Whenever I feel distressed or upset, I will say to myself—or to someone else—"Let me think about this matter for a while, and I am confident I will think of a solution later"...

# What is humility: a brief definition

Complete these words to ascertain a helpful definition of humility

## Humble people...



- acknowledge, explore, and embrace their limitations and shortcomings,
- appreciate other people and perspectives,
- integrate these insights with their existing beliefs, values, and tendencies.

Before we explore these three features of humility in more detail, we will demonstrate some of the benefits of humility

## What do you feel are the benefits of humility?



Complete one or more of the following exercises:



- Recall an occasion in which you acted with humility—such as a time you decided not to demonstrate your knowledge or refer to a recent achievement. How did you feel about yourself afterwards?
- Identify one or more people who you admire who you also perceive as humble. What do you like about these people?
- Identify some arrogant people you do not like. Why do you dislike these people.

From these exercises, list some of the benefits of humility from your perspective



**Established benefits of humility**

The following table outlines the benefits of humility that researchers have uncovered.

- Which one to three discoveries surprised you the most?
- Which one to three discoveries do you feel may be interesting to other people?
- Imagine a conversation in which you convey one of these discoveries to someone else (Mendonça et al., 2023).

Performance
<p>Generally, people who tend to be humble—and, for example, acknowledge their limitations, question their assumptions, consider diverse perspectives, and do not perceive themselves or their community as inherently superior—perform better on many tasks. For example, these individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• receive higher grades at university (Wong &amp; Wong, 2021), partly because they are more receptive to feedback,</li><li>• differentiate strong arguments from tenuous arguments better (Leary et al., 2017)—and are not as inclined to ascribe problems in society to secret deals or other conspiracies (Bertin, 2024)</li><li>• develop more extensive general knowledge (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2020),</li><li>• are more prudent, diminishing the likelihood of bankruptcy (Dixon et al., 2025).</li></ul>

## Resilience and wellbeing

Typically, people who exhibit the hallmarks of humility—such as acknowledge their limitations, embrace other perspectives, and strive to develop rather than seem defensive or feel special—tend to experience greater wellbeing. For example, these individuals

- experience a greater sense of autonomy, mastery, growth, positive relationships, sense of purpose, and self-acceptance (Ross & Wright, 2023; see also Wright et al., 2018),
- enjoy greater satisfaction with life and more pleasant emotions (e.g., Scharbert et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025),
- cope better and exhibit resilience in response to initial failures (Porter et al., 2020), unfavourable feedback (Wong & Wong, 2021), personal conflicts (Peetz & Grossmann, 2021), or other adversities (e.g., Zhang et al., 2025).

## Relationships

Typically, people who exhibit humility—such as acknowledge their limitations, embrace other perspectives, and strive to develop rather than seem very defensive, competitive, or conceited—are more likely to establish and to maintain trusting and supportive relationships (Peters et al., 2011). For example, these individuals

- are more generous, charitable, empathic, grateful, and willing to assist other individuals (Krumrei-Mancuso, 2017; Zhang et al., 2025)—even after controlling personality (Exline & Hill, 2012),
- establish more satisfying romantic relationships—relationships in which their partner feels satisfied too (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2024).



## Integrity

Individuals who are narcissistic are more likely to engage in academic misconduct, such as cheat or plagiarise. This relationship can partly be explained by a sense of entitlement (Curtis et al., 2022).

## Leadership

When leaders are humble rather than narcissistic or conceited, they tend to enhance the performance of their teams or organisation and are more likely to be perceived as effective (Lynch & Benson, 2024). For example

- the organisations they lead perform better on the share market than expected (Petrenko et al., 2019),
- the teams they lead tend to collaborate more effectively (Ou et al., 2018; Owens & Hekman, 2016) as well as support customers more proactively and effectively (Peng et al., 2023),
- these teams also adapt effectively and proactively to accommodate recent changes and innovations in the sector (Chaudhary et al., 2025),
- the individuals they lead feel more supported and satisfied with their jobs (Krumrei-Mancuso & Rowatt, 2023).

### Did you know



Individuals tend to prefer political leaders who exhibit humility, especially in circumstances in which cooperation and discussion with opposing communities are vital (Koetke & Schumann, 2025).

## Did you know



To earn a higher salary, many staff highlight their experience, their education, and the long hours they work, praise colleagues to seem likeable, or even attempt to intimidate co-workers occasionally. Interestingly, staff who utilise these strategies, called impression management, tend to earn a lower salary and receive fewer promotions (Debus et al., 2024).

## Exceptions and caveats

Admittedly, the benefits of humility, and the drawbacks of narcissism, entitlement, and conceit, may not be as pronounced in all circumstances. Below are some of these caveats. To what extent do these caveats may apply to your circumstances?



In Western nations, narcissistic people tend to refrain from acts that are intended to benefit the community, such as donations to social causes. But, in some Eastern nations, in which individuals may be more inclined to define themselves by their community and relationships, narcissistic people may be more inclined to initiate these acts to pursue status in their community (An et al., 2024).

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In some workplaces, most people, including leaders, embrace the importance of freedom and autonomy. These people recognise that individuals should be granted the right to express themselves and even to deviate from social norms occasionally.

In other workplaces, people are more concerned about law and order. They believe that individuals who deviate from social norms should, in general, be swiftly punished.

In workplaces that prioritise law and order, staff tend to prefer leaders who are authoritarian, dominant, and even masculine—leaders who control and restrict their staff (Chen et al., 2024). Consequently, individuals in these workplaces may, at least initially, be concerned that humble leaders will not control and restrict other people sufficiently.

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Some facets of narcissism may be helpful in specific settings. For example, in US states in which narcissism is higher, obesity is not as prevalent, perhaps because narcissistic individuals are often especially concerned about their appearance (Gruda et al., 2024).

## The drawbacks of humility

In the following space, list what you feel might be the drawbacks of humility. For example, you might assume that people who are humble do not feel assured and confident.

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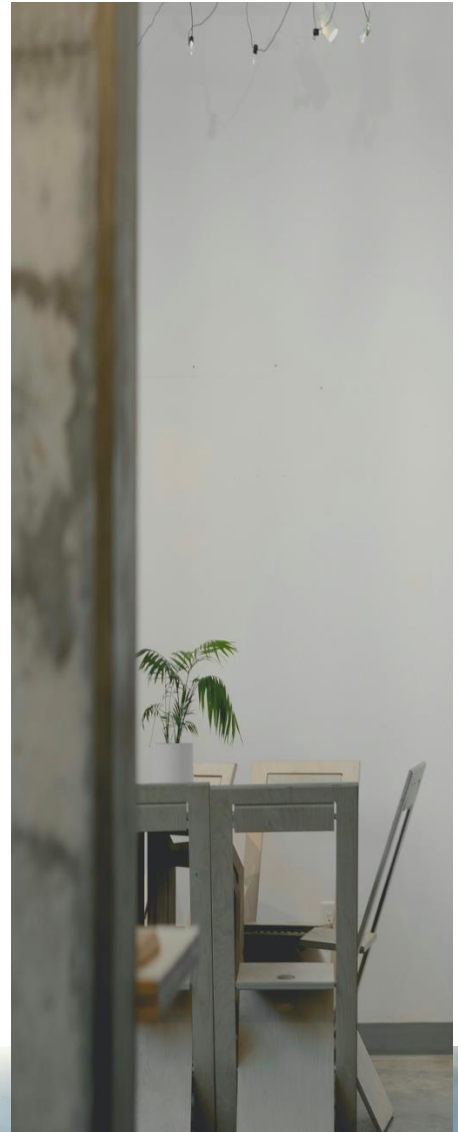
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Research has refuted some of the perceived drawbacks of humility--such as the perception that humble people are not assured and confident.

- People who are humble, rather than narcissistic, are often more assured and confident because they are not as defensive. Their perception of themselves is thus more stable and resilient.
- Likewise, humble people are more inclined to seek, to respect, and to embrace feedback about their behaviour. This feedback helps individuals clarify both their strengths and limitations. So, humble people are often more attuned to their strengths and talents than other people.





In the following table, the left column outlines some perceived drawbacks of humility. The right column outlines the evidence that challenges these perceptions. Scan this table to determine whether this information tempers some of the apparent drawbacks of humility.

Perceived drawback	Reality
People who are narcissistic, arrogant, or entitled—rather than humble—often display unmitigated confidence and may thus impress customers and investors	<p>People who are humble can also display unmitigated confidence and demonstrate leadership at times. As leaders, these individuals tend to promote innovation in their teams. Yet, unlike their narcissistic counterparts, humble people can activate or disable these inclinations—and can thus adjust more appropriately to the circumstances (Zhang et al., 2017).</p> <p>If you feel the need to display humility and confidence simultaneously, you could display body language that manifests this confidence. For example, you could adopt a more dominant posture, with your elbows away from your chest, your legs apart, while you lean back slightly. In response, the other person may feel and behave more submissively (Tiedens &amp; Fragale, 2003).</p>
People who are humble may not seem to be credible.	People who are humble often willing to ask questions and to seek advice. Interestingly, after people seek advice, especially about complicated matters, their credibility improves rather than deteriorates (Brooks et al., 2015).

Perceived drawback	Reality
People who are narcissistic, arrogant, or entitled—rather than humble—tend to be more confident and competent in negotiations	When negotiating, people who are narcissistic, arrogant, or entitled tend to belittle the product or service the other person is offering, expressing statements like “That product is not worthy of this price”. In contrast, people who are humble may indicate they cannot afford the product or service, expressing statements like “I cannot afford this amount at this stage”. The strategy that narcissistic, arrogant, or entitled adopt, however, tends to be less effective. The other person is more likely to experience unpleasant emotions, diminishing the likelihood of compromise (Bhattachary & Dugar, 2023).
People who are humble may not seem to be credible.	People who are humble often willing to ask questions and to seek advice. Interestingly, after people seek advice, especially about complicated matters, their credibility improves rather than deteriorates (Brooks et al., 2015).

Even if you strive to foster humility, you are welcome to pursue inspiring aspirations, but you should question your expectations. For example, you might pursue the aspiration to be a leader of a division. But, to manage your expectations, identify two or three reasons this goal may not be as feasible as you first assumed.

**Did you know**



People who fail to fulfill their aspirations are no more likely than people who do fulfill their aspirations to experience mental health concerns. Yet, people who fail to fulfill achievements they strongly expect are likely to experience mental health concerns (Sendroiu et al., 2021).

# A brief intervention now

Thus far, we have discussed the benefits of humility—compared to narcissism, entitlement, and arrogance. But you might not feel entirely committed to this pursuit of humility until you forge some progress on this pursuit



To achieve this goal:

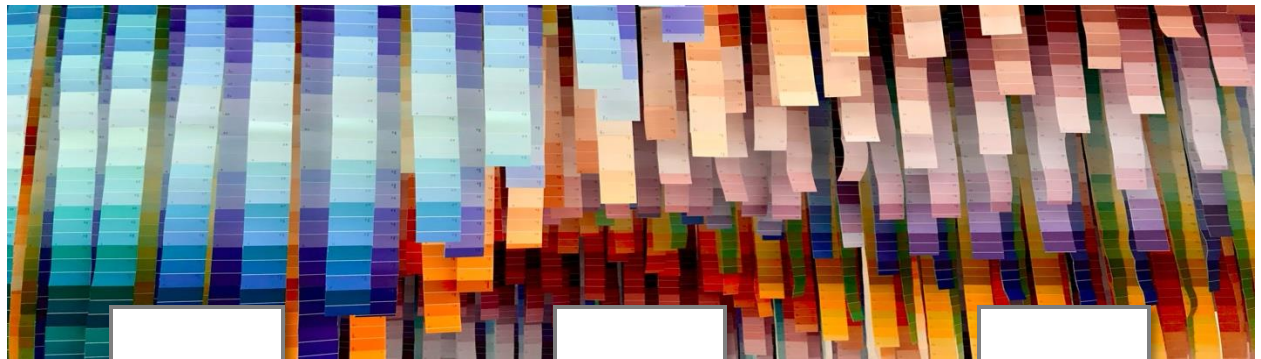


- first skim the left column in the following table, representing common strengths,
- identify between two and four strengths that you feel you have developed or demonstrated,
- for each of these strengths, consider the corresponding drawbacks or complications that appear in the right column.

Strength	Corresponding drawback or limitation
<b>Persuasive</b> in debates and negotiations	You may not always listen effectively or shift your opinions in response to useful information.
<b>Leads</b> people effectively	You feel uneasy when you cannot shape decisions
<b>Courageously</b> expresses opinions that people may not like	You may offend or hurt people unnecessarily—or may overlook the merits of alternative arguments.
<b>Confident and sociable</b> in social settings	You may not listen effectively to people who are more reserved, annoy people who feel their voice is stifled, or not reflect on your own behaviour.
<b>Collaborates</b> effectively with other people	You may not always feel confident reaching decisions alone.
<b>Sympathetic and caring</b> of other people	You may not be able to express feedback that could initially upset, but ultimately help, other people.

Strength continued	Corresponding drawback or limitation
<b>Rational;</b> can use evidence and numbers to reach decisions	You may reach decisions that overlook the broader perspective
<b>Intuitive</b> and able to trust hunches to reach decisions	You may not be able to justify your decisions effectively. Your decisions may be biased by your own preferences.
<b>Careful</b> and able to identify and to prevent risks	You may overlook beneficial but uncertain opportunities
<b>Open</b> to novel ideas and changes	You may perceive your work as tedious and unstimulating
<b>Intelligent</b> and able to understand complicated or intangible ideas	You may not always be practical enough to achieve goals efficiently
<b>Creative</b> and able to suggest novel, helpful, and diverse ideas.	You may disregard useful but conventional practices prematurely or struggle with routines
<b>Adaptable</b> and flexible enough to accommodate diverse circumstances or people	You may sometimes feel inauthentic or uncertain about what you really believe
<b>Disciplined;</b> sacrifices pleasure now to pursue future goals	You may not appreciate your environment or situation enough.
<b>Persistent</b> and conscientious	You may persist on tasks too long rather than change your course of direction when necessary.
<b>Resilient</b> in response to criticism and optimistic about the future	You may dismiss feedback and not adapt your practices when necessary.. Or your expectations may often be unfulfilled, eliciting disappointment in you or the people who trusted you.
<b>Relaxed and composed</b> , seldom showing unpleasant emotions	You may not plan effectively to avoid problems. Or you may perceive your relationships as superficial rather than genuine.
<b>Ambitious;</b> strives to fulfill steep goals	You may not maintain and nurture your friendships and relationships—and may feel detached from other people and exhausted.
<b>Decisive;</b> reaches decisions swiftly	You may be impulsive and regret some choices. Your decisions may be misinformed at times.

From this information, identify some of your potential limitations. Imagine acknowledging this limitation to another person. For example...



1	2	3
You might imagine speaking to a colleague	You might imagine yourself saying “You look so comfortable in this photo. I am not so comfortable in formal settings	Form the intention to acknowledge one of these limitations in the next week or so.

When you acknowledge your limitations or shortcomings, confine these faults to specific circumstances. To illustrate, you might indicate you are unconfident in formal settings rather than say you are socially inept generally. You may even decide to exaggerate your faults humorously, such as “I’m so bad with numbers, while attempting to sleep, I need a calculator to count sheep”.

# Many brief interventions later



The following table lists some other actions that could boost your humility, at least to some extent, quite rapidly. You could perhaps



- skim the following table,
- identify at least two activities that you might attempt in the future,
- for a few minutes, imagine the precise circumstances in which you might attempt these activities; then, as vividly as possible, imagine yourself undertaking each activity;
- finally, silently repeat to yourself several times your commitment to undertake these activities in specific circumstances, such as “on the first day of each month, I will deliberately engage in an activity that elicits stress”.

This activity, called an implementation intention, has been shown to significantly increase the likelihood you will fulfill one of your plans.

Activity	Illustration or justification
Search and watch videos in which credible individuals present arguments that contradict your opinions. Attempt to integrate some of their arguments with your opinions.	<p>When people attempt to consider and integrate contradictory perspectives, their capacity to solve problems creatively also improves (Bianchi et al., 2020)</p> <p>These experiences can enhance resilience, promote growth, as well as foster empathy.</p>
Occasionally, express genuine compliments to people—especially people who differ appreciably from you	<p>After individuals praise other people, they often feel more resilient (see also Grant et al., 2020).</p> <p>When people deliberately and confidently approach individuals who differ from themselves, they tend to embrace diverse perspective better.</p>

Activity continued	Illustration or justification
Over time, gradually increase the number of people—such as colleagues, mentors, friends, or relatives—from whom you occasionally seek advice.	<p>That is, gradually develop a list of people from whom you can seek advice. Then, formulate a plan on how often you will seek this advice.</p> <p>Ask questions about topics in which your knowledge is limited.</p> <p>When people honestly acknowledge what they do not know about a topic, they may subsequently learn more effectively (Mendonça et al., 2023).</p>
If you disagree with someone during a meeting or conversation and feel emotional about this matter, ask a question to seek more information rather than attempt to counter their argument.	<p>Similarly, when you disagree with an argument, identify opportunities to express your opinion at least two days afterwards rather than during the discussion.</p> <p>Interestingly, people who speak infrequently, but thoughtfully, during meetings often seem more credible as well (Brykman &amp; Raver, 2021).</p>
Whenever you express a suggestion, highlight at least one drawback of this proposal.	
Google “youtube simon moss humble meditation”. Listen to this video, called humble meditation.	<p>This YouTube video presents a meditation that lasts a bit over 20 minutes. The exercise, called humble meditation, introduces a range of peaceful exercises that also promote both mindfulness and humility. You can listen to this YouTube video often—as well as just listen to parts.</p> <p>Mindfulness may foster humility. For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mindfulness helps individuals modify their thought patterns—and thus may enhance the impact and benefits of the various exercises (Wang et al., 2023).</li><li>• mindfulness fosters respect towards diverse individuals, diminishing prejudice and discrimination (Lueke &amp; Gibson, 2016).</li></ul>

## Did you know



When staff communicate online, they should refrain from backgrounds or other filters. During these conversations, if staff vividly, but incidentally, observe the hobbies or daily lives of each other, they perceive one another as more authentic, trustworthy, and human. Consequently, they invest more effort into these relationships (Hardin et al., 2025).

## Time to enable meaningful relationships

When conversations are superficial or rushed, common in social media, people may not listen to each other carefully and respectfully, impeding humility. Indeed, according to Carr (2025), when individuals use social media or other online platforms to communicate, they are more inclined to dislike each other. That is

- in these forums, people learn many superficial details about one another,
- they become aware of differences between themselves and other individuals,
- people tend to be more attuned to differences than similarities—and these differences often provoke distrust.

Therefore,

- if possible, arrange settings in which you can converse with one or two colleagues in depth,
- in these settings, you may become more attuned to motives or interests you share rather than superficial differences.





If rushed, staff not only converse superficially but are not as inspired to learn, diminishing their humility. Specifically, whenever people feel inundated with work, they tend to become irritable. Their primary motivation, thus, is to complete their tasks as expediently as possible. They do not therefore feel as motivated to develop or to extend their knowledge, skills, and attributes (Beck & Schmidt, 2013). Consequently, they may not be as receptive to feedback or advice. So

- as a team, identify opportunities to diminish the degree to which staff feel rushed at work,
- derive these suggestions from the following table as well as personal experiences and ingenuity.

Suggestion	Evidence or benefits
<p>Organise Pomoro sessions that staff can attend. Perhaps once a week, arrange a session, lasting three hours, in which staff are collectively encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• work silently for 25 minutes,</li><li>• break for 5 minutes.</li></ul> <p>Obviously, these sessions are applicable only to staff who can complete their tasks alone.</p>	<p>These sessions have been shown to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• diminish fatigue &amp; improve mood, concentration, and motivation relative to sessions in which individuals chose the duration of their breaks,</li><li>• preserve their productivity despite these benefits in mood (Biwer et al., 2023).</li></ul> <p>Furthermore, if staff feel they can decide when to rush and when to work at a more leisurely pace, called time control, a heavy workload is not as likely to elicit feelings of irritability (Baethge et al., 2024).</p>
<p>Staff should, if possible, attempt to check emails only three times a day. Staff who often email each other could meet once a day or so to discuss key topics instead.</p>	<p>When staff check emails only three times a day, they are generally not as likely to feel overwhelmed with work (Kushlev &amp; Dunn, 2015).</p>

# The planning fallacy

## Did you know



One of the reasons that staff feel overwhelmed can be ascribed to the planning fallacy—the tendency of staff to underestimate the duration they need to complete some task. For example, tasks that staff believe they can finish in 2 weeks often demand 3 weeks. So, staff often feel rushed.

Fortunately, to prevent the planning fallacy and to diminish time pressure, researchers have uncovered a series of strategies that could be effective. Here are some strategies to adopt **when planning a task and estimating when the task will be complete**



Identify the subtasks that must be completed, but in reverse order. That is, first stipulate the last subtask that should be completed, then the second last subtask, and so forth. Attempt to outline each subtask in detail.

**Reason:** When people consider the subtasks in reverse order, they become more attuned to the challenges that might transpire, diminishing the planning fallacy (Wiese et al., 2016; see also Min & Arkes, 2013).



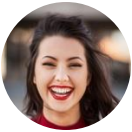
Imagine each subtask from the perspective of someone else—as if someone is watching you or your colleagues undertake all these activities.

**Reason:** When people imagine the task from the perspective of someone else, they feel a sense of detachment from these activities and may thus be more willing to consider obstacles (Buehler, Griffin, et al., 2012).



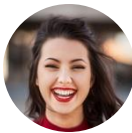
Identify which of the subtasks have been completed before. Attempt to recall one to three obstacles or complications that individuals experienced in the past that could unfold again. Imagine the frustration that leaders may express if these problems delay the task.

**Reason:** When people feel empowered, they often divert their attention from potential complications, amplifying the planning fallacy. Direct instructions to consider these complications overrides this tendency (Weick & Guinote, 2010).



Identify which one to three subtasks might demand the most effort and concentration. Record a reason why these subtasks might be challenging.

**Reason:** When people orient their attention to a challenging subtask, the deadline feels closer, diminishing excessive optimism (Hadjichristidis et al., 2014; Jiga-Boy et al., 2010)



When ready to estimate the time that is needed to complete each task and subtask, first record an optimistic estimate. Then record a pessimistic estimate. Finally, consider the most likely estimate.

**Reason:** When people consider both an optimistic estimate and pessimistic estimate, they recognise these forecasts are uncertain (Bordley et al., 2019). This uncertainty may dampen their optimism and, therefore, diminish the planning fallacy.



At the end of this project, insert a subtask that, if necessary, could be deferred. For example, the last subtask on most projects could be to review the implementation of all subtasks and identify how these subtasks could be completed more efficiently in the future.

The previous approach, in which individuals strive to uncover the obstacles to each subtask, is suitable when the project is scheduled to end soon, such as within a month or two. However, if the task needs to be completed later—such as in a year—this approach may need to be adjusted (see Peetz et al, 2010).



When projects are likely to be completed 6 or more months in the future, while planning these projects



- individuals should dedicate more time to consider all the methods, and opportunities they could utilise to facilitate performance,
- in these circumstances, excessive discussion about obstacles can even magnify the planning fallacy.

If the project and timelines are developed in a team setting, people often want to seem upbeat and thus feel reluctant to underscore possible obstacles or complications.



Therefore, to offset this tendency in team settings, leaders should



- remind staff that experienced and insightful employees often recognise possible complications that other people overlook
- encourage staff to identify possible complications and challenges, both publicly and anonymously.



**Did you know.** Managers are more likely to underestimate the duration that a large team, rather than a small team, needs to complete tasks, called the team scaling fallacy (Staats, Milkman, & Fox, 2012). Managers often underestimate the complications that large teams experience

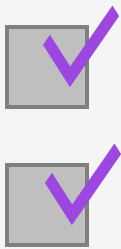
# The Joy Express

If people can experience greater levels of joy within short periods of time, they do not feel as rushed for several reasons:

- After people experience joy or similar feelings, they can sustain effort longer and are thus more productive (Tice et al., 2007).
- People often feel the need to experience positive emotions. If they can elicit these emotions swiftly, they can fulfill this goal more rapidly & thus feel they have saved time.



As scholars have revealed (e.g., Perlow et al., 2025), people are more likely to experience significant joy within short periods if



- they diversify the activities they undertake (for one reason, see Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2012),
- they share at least a third of these activities with another person,
- these activities are not passive but demand either physical movement or concentration—such as learning a skill.

To help you achieve this goal, you could

- use the following table to identify a diversity of activities you could attempt,
- write each activity on a piece of paper,
- every few days, randomly choose one of these activities.



Suggestion	Examples
Consider how to vary your daily activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you walk, vary the time or location, so you can observe a range of views, from sunrise to stars.</li><li>• When preparing or ordering meals, consider options you have never tried before.</li><li>• When driving to cafes or other spots, consider suburbs you have seldom, if ever, visited before.</li></ul>
Consider how to vary the art—such as music or TV—you enjoy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to unfamiliar music artists or styles—perhaps with a friend.</li><li>• Follow unfamiliar podcasts or even listen to categories of podcasts you have not heard before.</li><li>• Watch genres of TV shows, videos, or movies that are unfamiliar to you.</li><li>• Attend public lectures, concerts, theatre, galleries, festivals, markets, or other events that diverge from your usual habits</li></ul>
Consider the knowledge or skills you may like to develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Watch videos, read books, or attend classes on a skill you could acquire—such as cooking or speaking another language.</li></ul>
Consider diverse physical activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vary your exercise routine continually—such as the duration, location, intensity, or technique.</li><li>• Try a range of skills or sports, either alone or with other people.</li></ul>



## Egalitarian values

Some teams adopt egalitarian values, in which individuals tend to perceive everyone as equal in their underlying potential or value to society. These individuals everyone and every community has developed strengths and limitations. To illustrate, these individuals may recognise that

- young people may not have developed the knowledge or wisdom of their older counterparts—but are more attuned to recent trends and likely to improve in the future,
- some communities may not be affluent but may be more cooperative and cohesive.

### Did you know



After people consider three benefits of egalitarian values, they are not as likely to feel entitled or to exhibit narcissism (Piff, 2014).

Despite this finding, some people may be concerned about the potential complications of egalitarian values. On the following page, the left column presents some of these concerns. Consider, discuss, and record arguments that counteract these concerns.

## Concerns about egalitarian values



If everyone is treated as equal, when teams reach decisions, the opinions of uninformed staff may dilute the opinions of experts—impairing or delaying these decisions.



If everyone is treated as equal, individuals who work harder or more effectively may not feel their efforts are respected.



If everyone is perceived as equal, leaders may not be granted respect. If their directives are dismissed, teams are not as likely to operate well.



Attempts to perceive everyone is equal are inauthentic, because some members are perceptibly more valuable to a team than other members.

## Counterarguments of these concerns

e.g., egalitarian values do not imply that expertise should be disregarded. Instead, egalitarian teams value expertise but realise that staff who might not seem experienced may still offer a unique, useful perspective.

e.g., egalitarian values do not imply that exemplary work is not rewarded. Instead, although staff who excel may receive greater income or other benefits, egalitarian teams will attempt to cultivate opportunities that enable all individuals to thrive.

e.g., egalitarian values do not imply that leaders should not be respected. Instead, egalitarian teams recognise that some people are better positioned to act as leaders—but appreciate that other roles may be of similar value.

e.g., admittedly, some people may seem more valuable to a team than other people. Yet, individuals who do not seem as valuable now may develop their capabilities, may have developed capabilities that could become more relevant later, or may have developed capabilities that are overlooked.

Despite this finding, some people may be concerned about the potential complications of egalitarian values. On the following page, the left column presents some of these concerns. Consider, discuss, and record arguments that counteract these concerns.



**Examples**

When teams adopt egalitarian values and perceive everyone as equal in potential, they tend to respect diverse perspectives. Accordingly, their decisions are more likely to be considered, informed, and original.

When teams adopt egalitarian values and perceive everyone as equal in potential, the staff tend to facilitate the learning and development of one another—rather than assume their peers cannot improve over time.

When teams adopt egalitarian values and perceive everyone as equal in potential, staff tend to trust, respect, understand, and assist—rather than denigrate or disregard—their peers, including people who may not be thriving. Staff thus feel supported—a state that foster collaboration.

When teams adopt egalitarian values and perceive everyone as equal in potential, individuals are not as likely to demonstrate narcissism: a trait that can provoke conflict and irresponsible behaviour.

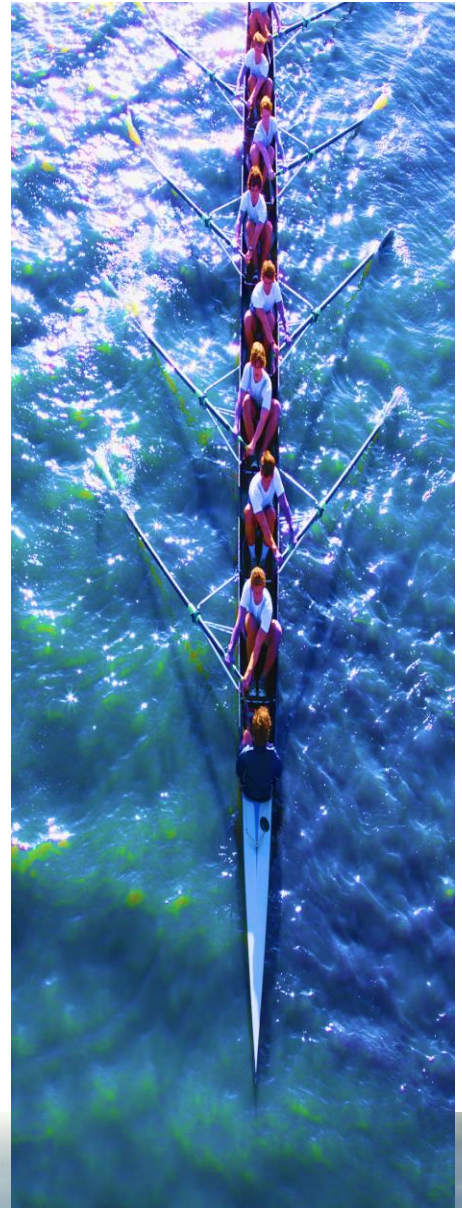
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## Stability & continuity

Before you continue to foster humility, you should recognise and then overcome one of the key obstacles to this state. Specifically, in recent years, individuals have become increasingly unsure about their future. Their future seems hazy, uncertain, and unstable, exacerbated by rapid changes in technology, COVID-19, the threat of war, generative AI, and other events. In these circumstances,

- people are not as inclined to sacrifice their pleasure now to benefit their future,
- therefore, rather than attempt to develop skills that could be useful in future years, people want to feel good about themselves now,
- and, so, individuals overestimate their capabilities, diminishing their humility.

Fortunately, some practices have been shown to foster a sense of stability or continuity in a dynamic and uncertain world, overcoming these problems and promoting humility.



First, identify a vivid, significant moment or event you experienced in your past that is still relevant to who you are today—a moment and event that benefited your life and you remember often. To illustrate



- perhaps you received some advice or discovered some information that shaped your life,
- perhaps you achieved some important goal or met a significant person.

Relive this event in your mind, as vividly as possible, for a few minutes. After this exercise, people can imagine the future better (Biondolillo et al., 2023).



Second, imagine and then record an enjoyable or rewarding task you may be completing at work in two years—such as presenting an inspiring speech or assisting a child. Write about this event in some detail, such as who is nearby, the location of this event, the emotions you are experiencing, the activities that preceded or succeeded this event, and so forth. This exercise, called episodic future thinking, often increases the degree to which people are willing to sacrifice their pleasure now to benefit their future (Biondolillo et al., 2023).

Third, identify one or more activities that could benefit your health, relationships, or environment—activities that, until now, you have not undertaken frequently enough. Examples may include



- eating fruit during breakfast each morning,
- flossing teeth twice a day,
- calling a lonely relative every month,
- stretching every day, and so forth.

Record at least one of these activities here. To complete these activities, you may need to motivate yourself and resist other temptations. Such activities have been shown to enhance your capacity to resist temptations in other facets of your life as well (de Ridder et al., 2020).

Fourth, identify activities, interests, or goals you naturally pursue—and then convert these pursuits into an extremely ambitious, and perhaps unattainable, aspiration. To illustrate



- if you like photography, you could set the goal to publicise a social or environmental problem that many people overlook,
- if you like to cook, for example, perhaps set the aspiration to design a menu that is designed to prevent diabetes,
- if you like technology and travel, you could set the goal to visit every nation in Asia and teach disadvantaged people how to develop apps,
- if you like to speak other languages, you could set the goal to become a translator in a language that few people speak,
- if you like gardening, may be set the goal to create a permaculture farm that supports the local community and biodiversity.

Record one or two ambitious, if not unattainable, aspirations here. These aspirations have been shown to foster a sense of stability.

Fifth, imagine yourself in a future role that is compatible with one of these aspirations. Consider which of your skills, qualities, networks, or opportunities you could utilise and enhance to pursue this role. Then, record some practice or activity that both improves your capability to secure this role in the future and could be completed every week or so for decades ahead. Here are some examples:



- twice a week, you might trial an AI tool that is relevant to your field,
- every week, you may seek advice from a different person,
- every week, you might read about a development in your industry,
- every fortnight, you might learn a new recipe or song on the guitar.

Please record one to three of these activities here. These sustainable activities also foster a sense of stability in life.

Finally, over time, you should develop resources and materials you could use in the future to secure these fulfilling roles as well as thrive in these roles. Here are some examples:



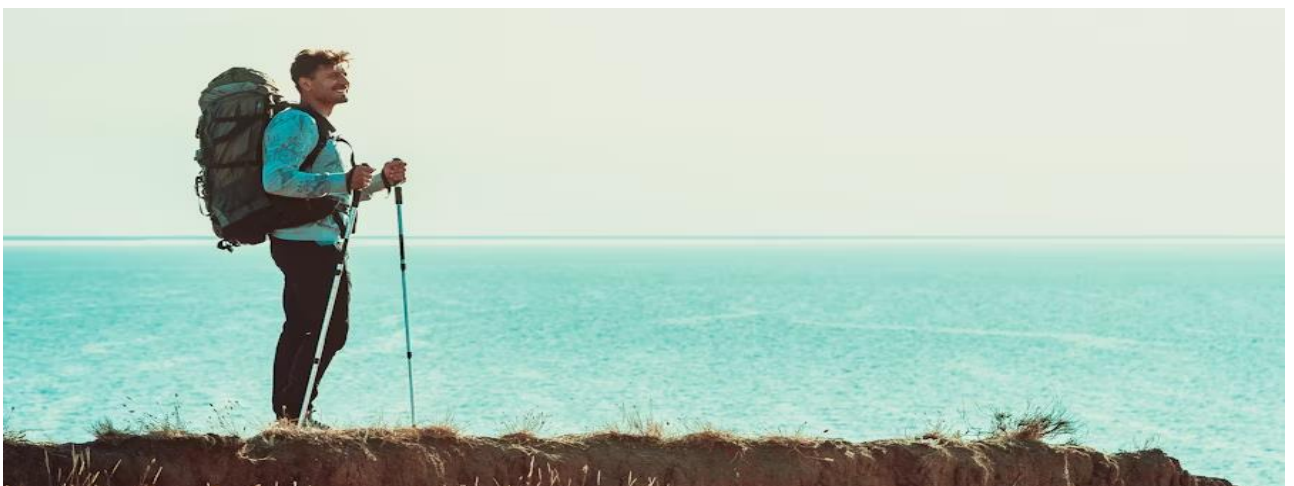
- you might accumulate some responses to emails that may be useful if you are granted these roles,
- you may even accumulate recommendations you would like to express to this future image of yourself.

Perhaps record in this space other possible examples of resources and materials you could develop and accrue. Besides humility, these exercises tend to evoke positive emotions, such as enthusiasm (Mao & Li, 2024).

### Did you know



If people feel a sense of continuity—a sense their values, goals, and life in ten years will overlap with their values, goals, and life now—they are more likely to feel authentic and perceive their life as meaningful (Hong et al., 2024). This sense of meaning enhances their wellbeing and happiness (He et al., 2023).



The facilitator should then collate these practices and activities—and instruct the team to

- sort these practices and activities into clusters,
- identify which of these clusters may be relevant to the organisation,
- formulate a few objectives or actions the team could pursue in the future that enable members to complete the sustainable practices and activities at work.



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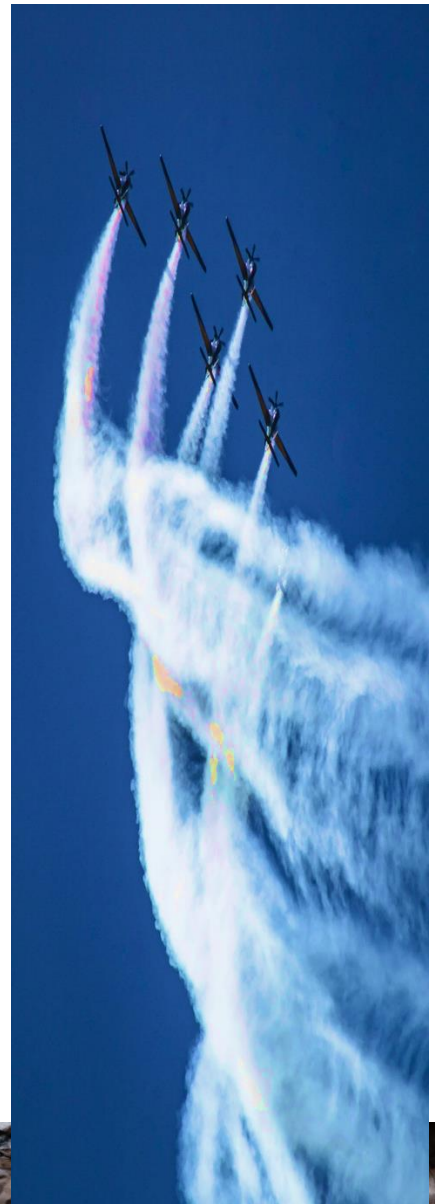
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## The benefits of awe

Feelings of awe or wonder elicits a sense of humility (Stellar et al., 2018) and continuity (Pan & Jiang, 2022) as well as similar consequences (Zhang et al., 2025). Awe can also diminish rumination and thus may dampen feelings of depression (Bogaert et al., 2024.) Several reasons can explain why awe fosters humility:

- when people experience a sense of awe, their attention shifts from daily trivialities to magnificent possibilities.
- Individuals who feel awe become aware of possibilities that transcend their understanding, demonstrating their ignorance and fostering humility (Krumrei Mancuso et al., 2024),
- even reflections about sacred, divine, miraculous, or blessed experiences also promotes this humility for similar reasons (Krumrei Mancuso et al., 2024).

Furthermore, when a team of individuals experience this awe together, they are more likely to feel a sense of camaraderie with one another (Jaussi & Dionne, 2003) .



In small workgroups, identify some opportunities in which the team may be able to experience awe together. For example, they could

Examples of awe

- watch people complete awesome feats, like juggling while completing the Rubik’s cube—often on the reddit site “nextfuckinglevel”,
- observe footage of majestic landscapes, huge canyons, or outer space on YouTube,
- reminisce about times in which you felt awe and amazement,
- visit a remarkable landmark, such as a mountain view.
- watch an eclipse, fireworks, or aurora,
- observe the night sky in a remote location,
- watch the performance of exemplary magicians; these experiences have also been shown to foster curiosity (Subbotsky et al., 2010)—a key feature of humility and determinant of resilience in stressful circumstances (Kaczmarek et al., 2024).
- read facts that depict the colossal magnitude of some natural or scientific features, as illustrated in the list below.

Then, during the session, as well as perhaps several times a year, the team should attempt to experience a moment of awe and wonder together. After these moments, members could discuss changes to the vision or practices of this team.



Bensford law: In many datasets—such as the house prices, electricity bills, and lengths of rivers—about 30% of numbers begin with a 1, 17% begin with a 2, and progressively fewer numbers begin with higher digits.



52! exceeds the number of atoms in this galaxy.

One drop of water contains about 1.67 sextillion molecules, in which sextillion is 1 followed by 21 0s, like the number of observable stars.



The Great Wall of China is longer than is the distance from England to NZ.

# Strength spotting

Humble people appreciate diverse individuals and, therefore, should excel in strength spotting: the capacity to identify the strengths and qualities of other people (Linley et al., 2010; Tobias et al., 2024). Yet, many individuals are not especially adept in identifying these strengths in other people. Instead, to develop this skill, you could

- in the first column of the following table, list the names of colleagues in your team,
- in the second column, enter 1 or 1strengths of each person—perhaps deriving these strengths from the earlier table that attached a drawback or limitation to each strength.

Person	Strength	Strength after conversation
e.g., Jane Smith	Optimistic	Coding
.		



Next, pairs of participants should discuss what they have learned during this session and which insights they might apply in the future. During this conversation, attempt to uncover one or more strengths of this person. Specifically

- you may detect moments in which they demonstrate joy, energy, confidence, or passion when they refer to some activity,
- or individuals may refer to activities in which they thrived, sustained over a long period, or learned rapidly,
- these activities tend to represent potential strengths.

## Roles of participants

Occasionally, apply the same approach when you converse with colleagues in the future. Whenever you feel these conversations reveal a strength, record this strength in the third column of the following table. If possible, inform people of the strengths you observe, such as “I feel you develop rapport with people easily”. Then seek feedback, such as “Has this strength developed over time?” or “Are you able to utilise this strength?” When combined, these activities enhance your capacity to detect strengths and thus may

- foster your humility, as you recognise the qualities of other people,
- improve your skills, as you identify qualities you could perhaps emulate or develop,
- improve your capacity to invigorate other individuals by highlighting their strengths;

## Role of facilitators

Finally, in this session, the facilitator should,

- randomly choose some of the strengths of individuals that were uncovered during this session,
- for each strength, encourage a small workgroup to consider how the team could utilise this strength more often at work.

### Did you know



After individuals consider their strengths and networks, their life tends to feel more significant as well as meaningful (O’Dea et al., 2004; Soto et al., 2024).



These activities are helpful because of several reasons. Specifically, when people are attuned to their strengths or utilise their strengths at work

- they experience a greater sense of vitality and engagement at work, especially if colleagues recognise these strengths (Moore et al., 2022),
- they feel more aligned to the organization, because they feel the workplace recognises their capabilities (Wang & Ding, 2024), enhancing their commitment,
- hence, they feel more inclined to assist their colleagues—but only if their workload is reasonable instead of excessive (Wang & Ding, 2024).

# Receptivity to opposing beliefs and ideologies

## Introduction to receptivity

One of the key features of humility is called receptivity—the tendency of some people to be receptive to opposing beliefs or ideologies. That is, humble people tend to genuinely consider opinions or beliefs that diverge from their own assumptions or preferences, such as the arguments of political rivals. To learn about the hallmarks of this receptivity to opposing beliefs (Minson & Chen, 2022),

- identify someone you greatly admire,
- on a scale from 1 to 10, rate the degree to which this person exhibits the following hallmarks of receptivity to opposing beliefs; then rate yourself on these traits.
- consider how you differ from the person you admire on these traits?



## Hallmarks of receptivity



I believe that listening to people who express opinions that diverge from my beliefs can be valuable and informative



I often find that people who express arguments that diverge from my beliefs are compelling and logical.



When I read or listen to opinions that diverge from my beliefs, I often feel interested and excited—not angry, disgusted, or upset.

I believe that no belief is sacred and that people should be able to debate almost every matter.

## The benefits of receptivity

Many studies have investigated the benefits of this receptivity (e.g., Yeomans et al., 2020). For example, people who seem receptive to opposing beliefs can more readily persuade, convince, and influence other individuals. Likewise, colleagues tend to perceive anyone who is receptive as

- someone with whom they would like to work and collaborate in the future,
- someone who they can trust—that is, a person whose judgment tends to be astute,
- someone who they perceive as professional—that is, a person who they would like to represent their organisation.

Therefore, people should learn how to demonstrate they are receptive, as well as how to be receptive, to opposing beliefs and opinions.



# 1 Explicitly refer to your receptivity



First, to convince people of your receptivity, explicitly indicate that you value receptivity to opposing beliefs and apply practices that are consistent with these values.

Here are some examples of comments you could express. Perhaps record other comments that refer to your values or practices around receptivity.

## Some examples of useful comments



- I trust the judgment of people who are receptive to perspectives that diverge from their own beliefs
- To challenge myself, I consider perspectives that diverge from their own beliefs
- I believe the world would be better if people were receptive to opposite beliefs.
- To refine my understanding of the world, I deliberately read and listen to opinions that differ from my own beliefs.



- ....
- ...
- ...

## 2 Show doubt and regret to demonstrate your receptivity

Some people say they are receptive to opposing beliefs but, in practice, divert their attention from arguments that diverge from their assumptions about the world. Therefore, rather than only refer to your receptivity, you should also demonstrate this receptivity. The following practices have been shown to increase the extent to which people seem receptive to diverse beliefs. Scan your diary and identify a planned event in which you may be able to apply each of these practices.



Convey uncertainty, such as expressing doubt about an opinion or indicating a range, not a specific number or outcome, when forecasting the future.

**Examples:** “I am not entirely certain, but I believe...” or “I believe we can increase sales by 2% to 10%”.



Acknowledge mistakes you have committed, such as recognising your previous beliefs or decisions were incorrect.

**Example:** “I now regret this decision”



Highlight drawbacks of your position or proposal, such as concede a minor blemish in an argument you are advocating.

**Examples:** “Compared to rivals, this proposal is better on 4 of the 5 key measures”.



Convert statements to questions if possible.

**Example:** “Do you feel we could try this option instead?”



### 3 Use specific words to demonstrate this receptivity

The following list presents some words or phrases, presented in **bold**, that exemplify and demonstrate receptivity to opposing beliefs (Hussein & Tormala, 2024; Yeomans et al., 2020). To help you remember to use these words or phrases, in the next 10 emails you write, include at least one of the words.



#### First-person single pronouns and agreement

- I **understand** your argument
- This argument **makes sense to me**
- I **appreciate** this concern you raised
- I **agree** with this argument.



#### First-person plural pronouns

- **We** need to solve this matter
- This change could help **us**.



#### Hedges

- I **somewhat** believe this option is better
- I do feel this option **may be** better



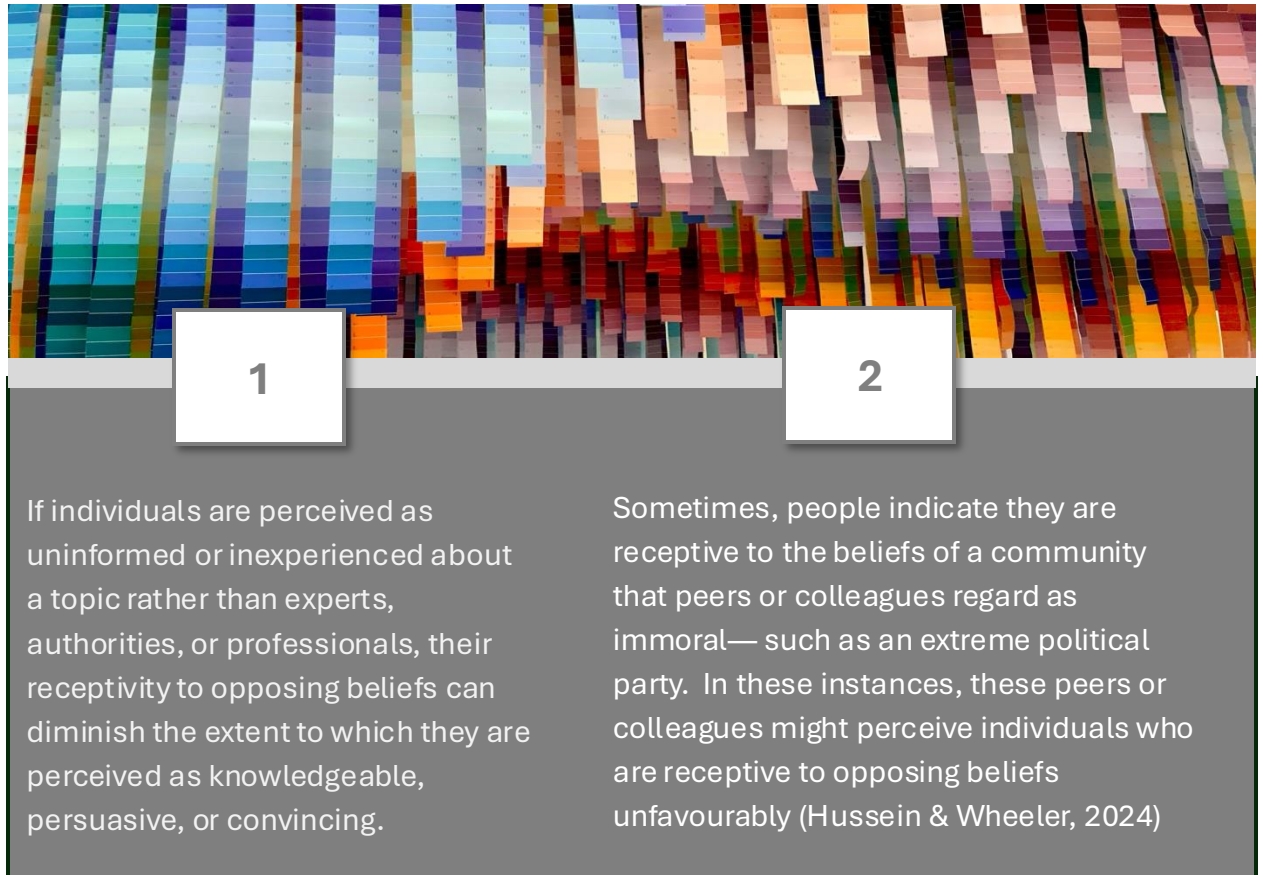
#### Positive words rather than negations

- I feel this option is **helpful**
- **Yes**, this issue is important

Note: You should limit words like “no” or “wrong” if possible

## Caveats to consider

To reiterate, in general, people should be receptive to opposing beliefs and should demonstrate they are receptive to opposing beliefs. However, research has uncovered two complications that people should consider:



To accommodate these complications, first consider how you establish your credibility or expertise before you display the hallmarks of receptivity, doubts, or regret. Here are some examples. Perhaps record some additional examples too

- Although I have been reading about this topic for 5 years, I am still uncertain about a few key matters.
- Although I have spoken to 50 experts on this topic, I am still learning.



Second, if ever you inform people that you are reading or listening to the arguments of a rival community, organisation, or political party, here are some strategies to consider.



Indicate that you are exploring these arguments primarily so you can more refute these opinions more convincingly.

**Examples:** “If I read their work, I feel I can more easily rebut uninformed arguments in the future”.



Indicate you reading or listening to individuals who are unique—and differ from other members of this rival community, organisation, or political party.

**Example:** Although I would not usually read their arguments, I feel this person is unique because she actually is frustrated with both parties”.

# How to foster a culture of receptivity

As a leader, you should also embrace this receptivity as well as encourage your staff to embrace receptivity. To achieve this goal, you could first organise a couple of workshops on how to influence as well as interact and negotiate with other people. In these sessions, you could embed some of the previous materials on receptivity. In addition, you might consider the following exercises that past research has shown tends to foster receptivity to opposing ideologies (for a review, see Minson & Chen, 2022):



## Workshop activities to practice



- Encourage staff to adopt the perspective, such as the goals, hopes, and challenges, of their opponent—even if only to learn how to counteract this perspective (Todd & Galinsky, 2014).
- Before presenting an argument about a topic, encourage staff to consider the opposite of their beliefs on this topic (Lord et al., 1984).
- Before negotiating with someone from a rival community, such as a regulator, encourage staff to consider both the qualities you like and dislike about this person (see Brauer et al., 2012).



Second, when you need to inspire staff, underscore the potential of organisations and communities to improve dramatically over time. For example,

- You may discuss how conflicts between European nations have dissipated since early last century
- You may refer to leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. or Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who inspired significant change in society

Can you identify other examples in which organisations or communities have changed significantly? This belief that groups can curbs unfavourable attitudes to rivals (Goldenberg et al., 2018; Halperin et al., 2011) and thus promotes receptivity.