

Self-Reflection Exercise – VAL.oR Mentoring Programme

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About the Author



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In Print: [Kylie's Heel](#)

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How Open-Minded Are You? (A Quiz)

Be more creative by thinking freely and opening yourself to novelty.

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I prefer to think that few people choose to be close-minded on purpose. Yet unless you make an effort, you can get stuck in a rut. Why not enhance your thinking powers by raising your level of open-mindedness?

Just for fun, try out the following thought experiments and then check your score at the end.

How Open-Minded ARE You?

1. Imagine your local online newspaper is offering you the chance to lunch with and interview a famous dictator, known for his mistreatment of women.

- a. You turn down the assignment—you could never feel comfortable talking with him.
- b. You accept it—it's a great chance to learn something about how a dictator's mind works.
- c. Maybe, if you don't have to eat with him, which feels like you'd be approving of him.

2. You've decided it would be good to spend time volunteering—but where?

- a. You've always loved crafts and kids—you decide to get an arts class going for some needy kids.
- b. Your friend is involved in an anti-litter campaign—you pick up trash with her on a Saturday morning.
- c. You've always felt a little awkward around those in wheelchairs—you ask to help out at a local rehab facility.

3. You're asked to play the part of a porpoise in a school play.

- a. What fun! The idea intrigues you—you immediately try to think like a sea creature.
- b. No way. You hold out for leading lady, the part you'd prepared for.
- c. You'll do it only if everyone else plays animals too.

4. You're on your way to an interview for a part-time job at the far end of your city.

- a. You leave yourself plenty of time and take a new route. Getting a little lost can be so refreshing!
- b. You take the same route you've been travelling since forever.
- c. You notice a neat new jewellery shop on your way and make a mental note to visit it soon.

5. Good pals are dropping over on Friday night, and you've promised to feed them.

- a. You follow a familiar recipe exactly.
- b. You make something tried and true, but think, "What would happen if I added a pinch of cilantro?"
- c. You try fixing a new dish—what are friends for if not to experiment on?

6. You visit a new art museum where some of the paintings are offbeat and even off-putting.

- a. You rush by the weirder paintings, asking yourself, "What the heck was that artist thinking?"
- b. You spend extra time before the odder ones, thinking, "Hmm, I wonder what that artist was trying to get across here?"

c. You decide to go home and catch up on your Tivo'ed shows.

7. A foreign-looking woman shows up at your library's book club. Her bright red, curvy fingernails are at least two inches long.

a. You immediately decide she's a bimbo, and pay her no attention.

b. You ask around to find out if that's the style where she comes from.

c. You listen closely when she talks—she could be bright and fun, even if she's quirky.

8. Your brother presents you with an oak shelf he made himself.

a. You shove it in the closet—you have absolutely no use for such a thing.

b. You ask his help to put it up on a door—it's the perfect size for draping extra belts over.

c. You discover it stands up—you place it on your dresser and use it as a greeting card display.

9. It's family vacation time but money is short.

a. You suggest the entire family get to know each other better by visiting local spots this year.

b. You vote for "fundraising" and suggest having a huge family garage sale.

c. You tell everyone they should've planned the budget better.

10. You watched a film with an uncertain ending: maybe the heroine marries the guy or else she might go off on her own.

a. You have no trouble figuring out the ending that feels "right."

b. You'll probably come up with even more possible endings as you mull the story over later.

c. How frustrating! Why don't they just tell you how the story turns out and be done with it?

SCORING

1. a/1, b/3, c/2
2. a/2, b/1, c/3
3. a/3, b/1, c/2
4. a/3, b/1, c/2
5. a/1, b/2, c/3
6. a/2, b/3, c/1
7. a/1, b/2, c/3
8. a/1, b/2, c/3
9. a/3, b/2, c/1
10. a/2, b/3, c/1

Now, add your scores and, just for fun, see where you land on the open-mindedness spectrum:

(22-30) Mental Adventurer. You're quite open to experience. "You're acting mindfully when you don't simply dismiss activities and thoughts because they seem unappealing or even silly at first," says Ellen Langer, Ph.D., a Harvard psychologist and author of *Mindfulness and Mindful Learning*. The more open-minded you are, says Langer, the more imaginative you probably are, and the more creative you allow yourself to be. You are able to keep conflicting ideas in your mind. You're able to go beyond solving problems into discovering new ideas.

(16-21) Half-mindful. You're got the potential to be more open-minded, but you hesitate to let go of your old ideas and break new ground. Maybe you may care a little too much about what others think. "You can learn not to judge people and ideas too quickly," says Langer. "Keeping an open mind reveals so many possibilities."

(10-15) Rut-Sticker. You tend to be a follower. Langer warns, "Be careful not to let yourself become a mindless robot." Spend a day thinking about everything you do: are you just doing the same old thing you've always done or could you liven up the way you do things with a slight effort? Talk to someone new, try a new route, put yourself in someone else's shoes and see through their eyes.