

Mindset Leadership Quotient

MLQ

Challenge Intelligence Diagnostic

A self-assessment tool for leaders facing challenge,
pressure and complex decisions.

HOW TO USE THIS DIAGNOSTIC

1. Read each statement and reflect honestly on your experience.
2. Score yourself 1–5 using the guide on each page.
3. Circle your score for each indicator.
4. Total your scores by dimension, then add all six for your overall MLQ score.
5. Use the reflection prompts to identify a real example for each indicator.

YOUR MLQ SCORE

24–48 Developing | 49–72 Building | 73–96 Strong | 97–120 Exceptional

SCORING GUIDE — choose one score per indicator

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 I don't recognise this in myself</p> <p>2 I'm aware of this but not consistent</p> <p>3 I do this but mainly when it's comfortable</p> | <p>4 I do this even when it's difficult</p> <p>5 I can point to specific examples under real pressure</p> |
|--|---|

INNER ORIENTATION · DIMENSION 1 · Microleadership habit: Show Up**Embraces Pressure***"Do you bring your full self to difficulty, or do you shrink and withdraw?"*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 When things get difficult, I stay visible and keep showing up.</p> <p><i>Reflect: Think of a recent moment of pressure. Did you lean in or pull back?</i></p> | ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 |
| <p>2 I bring the same energy to hard conversations as I do to easy ones.</p> <p><i>Evidence: Can you point to a difficult conversation you chose not to avoid?</i></p> | ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 |
| <p>3 People around me would say I step forward when the stakes are high.</p> <p><i>Evidence: What would your team or peers say about how you behave under pressure?</i></p> | ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 |
| <p>4 I treat pressure as a normal part of the role.</p> <p><i>Reflect: When pressure arrives, is your first instinct to resist it or to work with it?</i></p> | ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 |

Embraces Pressure — dimension score

___ / 20

SCORING GUIDE — choose one score per indicator

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 I don't recognise this in myself</p> <p>2 I'm aware of this but not consistent</p> <p>3 I do this but mainly when it's comfortable</p> | <p>4 I do this even when it's difficult</p> <p>5 I can point to specific examples under real pressure</p> |
|--|---|

INNER ORIENTATION · DIMENSION 2 · Microleadership habit: Dare to Fail**Backs Themselves**

"Do you back your own ability to figure it out, or does self-doubt pull you back from the edge?"

1 I take on challenges even when I'm not certain I have all the answers.

Reflect: When did you last commit to something before you felt fully ready?

1 2 3 4 5

2 I back my own judgement when it matters, even if others are uncertain or unconvinced.

Evidence: Can you point to a moment you held your position under pressure from others?

1 2 3 4 5

3 I am willing to be bold and try something new even when there is a real risk of it not working.

Evidence: What is a recent example where you chose the bolder option?

1 2 3 4 5

4 I am honest with myself about what is holding me back and take steps to address it.

Reflect: What is one thing you know gets in your way — and what have you actually done about it?

1 2 3 4 5

Backs Themselves — dimension score

___ / 20

SCORING GUIDE — choose one score per indicator

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 I don't recognise this in myself</p> <p>2 I'm aware of this but not consistent</p> <p>3 I do this but mainly when it's comfortable</p> | <p>4 I do this even when it's difficult</p> <p>5 I can point to specific examples under real pressure</p> |
|--|---|

CHALLENGE ORIENTATION · DIMENSION 3 · Microleadership habit: Find a Way**Creatively Tenacious***"When blocked, do you keep generating new routes or do you accept the dead end?"*

- 1** When my first approach doesn't work, I look for a different way rather than stopping. 1 2 3 4 5
Reflect: What do you do in the moment when an approach fails?
- 2** I evaluate multiple options before deciding which route to take. 1 2 3 4 5
Evidence: Can you describe a situation where you mapped out several options before choosing?
- 3** I keep going on the things that matter, even when progress is slow or the path is unclear. 1 2 3 4 5
Evidence: What is something you have persisted with despite repeated obstacles?
- 4** I look outside my immediate experience for ideas — other industries, people, or approaches — when I'm stuck. 1 2 3 4 5
Reflect: When did you last borrow an idea from an unexpected source to solve a problem?

Creatively Tenacious — dimension score

___ / 20

SCORING GUIDE — choose one score per indicator

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 I don't recognise this in myself</p> <p>2 I'm aware of this but not consistent</p> <p>3 I do this but mainly when it's comfortable</p> | <p>4 I do this even when it's difficult</p> <p>5 I can point to specific examples under real pressure</p> |
|--|---|

CHALLENGE ORIENTATION · DIMENSION 4 · Microleadership habit: Live in the Gap**Cuts Through**

"In the moment between stimulus and response, do you take stock and act with precision — or react and regret?"

- 1** I pause before responding to a difficult situation rather than reacting immediately.
- Reflect: Think of a recent high-pressure moment. Did you choose your response or did it just happen?*
- ☐ 1
 ☐ 2
 ☐ 3
 ☐ 4
 ☐ 5

- 2** I make clear decisions under pressure rather than deferring or being vague.
- Evidence: Can you point to a moment you made a clear call when the situation was uncertain or tense?*
- ☐ 1
 ☐ 2
 ☐ 3
 ☐ 4
 ☐ 5

- 3** I manage my emotions well enough that they inform my decisions without driving them.
- Reflect: When did you last feel a strong emotional reaction and choose how to use it rather than be used by it?*
- ☐ 1
 ☐ 2
 ☐ 3
 ☐ 4
 ☐ 5

- 4** People would describe me as someone who stays measured and decisive when things get heated.
- Evidence: What would colleagues say about how you behave in high-pressure or conflict situations?*
- ☐ 1
 ☐ 2
 ☐ 3
 ☐ 4
 ☐ 5

Cuts Through — dimension score

___ / 20

SCORING GUIDE — choose one score per indicator

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 I don't recognise this in myself | 4 I do this even when it's difficult |
| 2 I'm aware of this but not consistent | 5 I can point to specific examples under real pressure |
| 3 I do this but mainly when it's comfortable | |

RELATIONAL ORIENTATION · DIMENSION 5 · Microleadership habit: Be a Connector**Connective Intelligence**

"Do you draw on experience, wisdom, insight and imagination — yours and others' — to create solutions that couldn't exist alone?"

I actively seek out the perspectives and experience of others when facing a difficult challenge.

1

Evidence: When did you last deliberately bring someone else's thinking into a problem you were solving?

1**2****3****4****5**

I make connections between ideas, experiences and people that others don't always see.

2

Reflect: Can you describe a moment where you joined dots that created a new possibility?

1**2****3****4****5**

I draw on lessons from past experience — my own and others' — to navigate new challenges.

3

Evidence: What is an example of a past experience that shaped how you handled a more recent challenge?

1**2****3****4****5**

I stay curious and open to unexpected sources of insight even when under pressure to act fast.

4

Reflect: When did you last pause to consider a completely different angle before committing to a solution?

1**2****3****4****5**

Connective Intelligence — dimension score

___ / 20

SCORING GUIDE — choose one score per indicator

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 I don't recognise this in myself</p> <p>2 I'm aware of this but not consistent</p> <p>3 I do this but mainly when it's comfortable</p> | <p>4 I do this even when it's difficult</p> <p>5 I can point to specific examples under real pressure</p> |
|--|---|

RELATIONAL ORIENTATION · DIMENSION 6 · Microleadership habit: Live to Serve**Collective Awareness**

"Do you actively hold the impact on others in mind — or does pressure pull you toward ego and self-protection?"

1

When making decisions under pressure, I consider the impact on others before I act.

Reflect: Think of a recent decision made under pressure. Who else did you factor in?

1

2

3

4

5

2

I stay focused on what the people around me need rather than on how the situation reflects on me.

Evidence: Can you describe a moment where you put the needs of others ahead of your own reputation or comfort?

1

2

3

4

5

3

I am aware of how my response to a challenge affects the people around me.

Reflect: How do the people around you experience your behaviour when you are under pressure?

1

2

3

4

5

4

People would describe me as someone who thinks about the wider team or group even in difficult moments.

Evidence: What would your team say about how you balance your own needs with theirs when things are hard?

1

2

3

4

5

Collective Awareness — dimension score

___ / 20

Your MLQ Score Summary

Transfer your dimension totals below and add them up for your overall MLQ score.

INNER ORIENTATION

Embraces Pressure

Microleadership habit: Show Up

___ / 20

Backs Themselves

Microleadership habit: Dare to Fail

___ / 20

Inner Orientation subtotal

___ / 40

CHALLENGE ORIENTATION

Creatively Tenacious

Microleadership habit: Find a Way

___ / 20

Cuts Through

Microleadership habit: Live in the Gap

___ / 20

Challenge Orientation subtotal

___ / 40

RELATIONAL ORIENTATION

Connective Intelligence

Microleadership habit: Be a Connector

___ / 20

Collective Awareness

Microleadership habit: Live to Serve

___ / 20

Relational Orientation subtotal

___ / 40

OVERALL MLQ SCORE

/ 120

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

97 – 120 **Exceptional**

Your challenge mindset is a genuine strength. You consistently bring the full range of challenger behaviours under pressure. Focus on sustaining this and developing it in others.

73 – 96 **Strong**

You demonstrate challenger behaviours reliably. Review your dimension scores to identify where the remaining development opportunity sits.

49 – 72 **Building**

You show challenger qualities in comfortable situations but have room to grow under real pressure. Your lower-scoring dimensions are your priority development areas.

24 – 48 **Developing**

This is valuable insight. There is significant opportunity to develop your challenge mindset. Use your dimension scores to understand where to start.