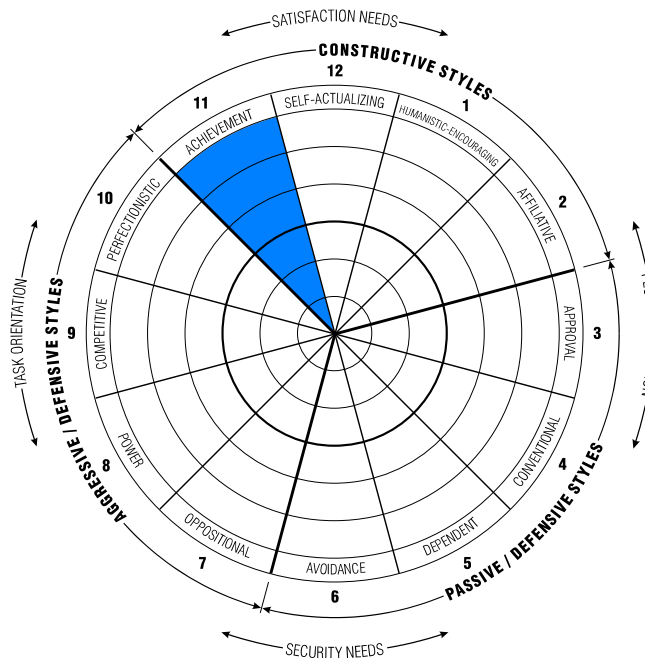


# The Achievement Mindset

Attitudes, Values and Beliefs for Pursuing High Standards of Excellence



## Achievement

Eleven o'clock position

**Style Description: self-set goals, shared responsibility, takes on challenging tasks**

Measures a way of thinking that is highly associated with personal effectiveness. Scores for this style indicate our interest in, as well as our proficiency at, attaining high-quality results on challenging projects. In many ways, the Achievement style characterizes the most constructive approaches to work. Achievers are motivated to succeed by their own values and beliefs. They know they can improve things, and do not hesitate to act on this knowledge. Achievers tend to find their work highly rewarding. They are most interested in getting the job done and in doing it well. These individuals often possess the skills necessary for effective planning and problem-solving.

# Achievement-based Cultural Norms

A whole range of beliefs, attitudes and values distinguishes those high on Achievement from others. One outcome of an Achievement way of thinking for work groups is a pre-occupation with self-set goals and a belief in striving for excellence. Such people (and groups) enjoy testing their abilities by constantly seeking to do things better. They are challenged by tasks that require skill, take personal responsibility for their performance, and seek feedback on how they are doing. They try to find more effective ways of reaching their goals. This enjoyment of tasks, and continuing to learn from their efforts, leads to greater insight into how they can improve and attain higher levels of performance. They are enthusiastic about facing challenges and are not threatened by failure. Their focus is on success and stretching their abilities. They give their best, not as a one off effort but are consistently able to maintain high standards of performance. All this produces a great sense of satisfaction and they will be persistent in their efforts if they feel their goals are attainable.

Achievement is about doing things well. To improve something is a natural incentive for high achievers. They appear to be at their best when they are involved in a task that is not easy and requires them to work hard and think it through in order to get results. It is the intrinsic satisfaction of improving something that drives them to look for opportunities where they can have influence. There is an underlying belief that there is a better way of doing things and they actively explore alternatives in order to make improvements. This seeking to do things better leads to higher performance and innovation. It also explains why Achievement values are synonymous with excellence.

## **Here are a few ideas's of how you might focus on strengthening your focus on achievement-based approach to work (cultural norms):**

### **1. Clear Goals**

Work to have a clear understanding of the goals and tasks you have on your plate each day. Check-in with your manager and other co-workers as required to ensure you have the resources to **accomplish results** in an effective and efficient manner.

### **2. Make Time Plan Your Day**

Secure 15-30 in the morning for **planning and organizing** the goals and tasks of your day and make use of a good time management systems to ensure you can re-prioritize tasks when required.

### **3. Take Time to Think and Plan Ahead**

In **knowing the business** in your respective areas, take time to **think and plan ahead**, be as proactive as you can in solving problems and bring forward solutions when possible.

### **4. Clear Roles - Clear Results**

Ensure you engage in discussions with your managers with regards to your roles and responsibility so it's clear who's **accountable for the result**. (i.e. who's "in the lead" and who's "providing team support.")

### **5. Focus on an Achievement-based Attitude**

Having attitudes, values and beliefs (a mindset) that focuses on "achieving what is possible" rather than thinking "we can't" can be helpful in support each others success. Find ways to help strengthening the internal motivation and desire to **achieve high standards of excellence**.

## **The Achievement-based Mindset**

### **You Are Committed To Pursing High Standards of Excellence**

If you have a high beliefs systems that support Achievement-based thinking, that indicates that you possess many of the characteristics associated with this effective style of thinking. You tend to feel positively challenged by what you confront in life. You strongly believe that you can change things and make them the way you think they could be, and are not afraid to take moderate, well-calculated risks.

You demonstrate a style of thinking that is consistently associated with nearly every measure of effectiveness. You consistently contribute an outstanding performance and are likely to be successful - both on and off the job. You probably find most activities you engage in highly rewarding.

You have a need to do things well and are motivated to succeed by your own values and beliefs. This strong internal motivation leads you to set and pursue your own goals and standards of performance, and seek realistic feedback from others.

Additionally, you are secure in the knowledge that your own effort counts - so secure that you resist too much direction, supervision or control. You work toward an internalized standard of excellence; in fact, you might be tempted to leave situations that don't invite innovation or a self-directed approach.

You possess the skills necessary for effective planning, goal setting and problem solving. You are incisive and think in terms of cause-and-effect relationships. You are most interested in getting the job done and doing it well. You are not distracted by the outside factors that plague most people.

### **How You See Yourself**

Your high score on the Achievement scale indicates that the following characteristics may describe you:

- You are likely to generate success - both for yourself and your organization.
- You are seen as a leader and helpful in working with others to accomplish goals.
- You are willing to give and receive feedback in the pursue of excellence.
- You tend to be highly respected by colleagues and associates.
- You are very forward thinking in your behaviour, actions and ideas.
- You set and accomplish your own goals while working to help support others in their success.
- You are responsibility with others effectively.
- You are realistic and pragmatic.
- You are a first-rate problem solver.

## What Does High Achievement Look Like?

A strong mindset on the Achievement scale indicates that these characteristics may describe you:

The success of individuals, organizations, and whole societies is most often determined by whether elements of achievement-oriented thinking are present. Yet, few people with an Achievement thinking style understand how it drives them to be effective or what causes its positive results; therefore, they may not be able to help others develop this style. Below are suggestions designed to encourage an achievement orientation. Reflection on a number of these suggestions to see if you have adopted many of these behaviours.

You may want to use these suggestions as a checklist by taking note of those upon which you could build. Or use these suggestions as starting points for helping to develop an achievement orientation in others around you.

- Make goal-setting a habit, then spend less time talking about your goals and more time taking action to accomplish them.
- Practice (or teach) the language of achievement ("I'm confident that we...", "There's an opportunity here...").
- Assess the way you've spent the past year. List your significant accomplishments. If the list is short, think about what specific actions you could take to improve your performance next year.
- Focus on what's important to you - not on what you think you should do or what others want you to do.
- Assume a leadership role when working in a group. Practice sharing responsibility and building others' confidence.
- Seek out an achievement-oriented mentor or role model. Ask for the person's help in guiding your self-improvement efforts.
- Reach beyond your current skill level to become even better. Refuse to be satisfied with the status quo. Consistent, focused effort will help you improve your performance.
- Don't let roadblocks or obstacles prevent you from getting the job done. Plan ahead to address what could go wrong and how you will handle it.
- Admit your mistakes openly and encourage others to do the same. See negative experiences as opportunities to learn what not to do next time.
- Take advantage of opportunities to give and receive constructive feedback.
- Take a small or moderate risk.
- Instead of doing something the same tired way, experiment a little. Make it a point to do this more often so it becomes comfortable.
- Hold brainstorming sessions with your peers or co-workers regarding the future. Ask for their input on what the organization can do to become more forward-thinking, change ready.



### Growing the Achievement Style

[https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/106-growing-the-achievement-style/id1371885437?  
i=1000486329641](https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/106-growing-the-achievement-style/id1371885437?i=1000486329641)

## **The Achievement Mindset - What Can You Change?**

You can't always change or influence the people around you, but you can control your reactions to them. These reactions originate in your *thoughts*, or the way you perceive and process information and experiences. Your thoughts are powerful resources; what you think defines who you are and what you do in every aspect of your life. By modifying what you think, you can change how you behave.

### **Using the Behaviours Listed in this Guide to Initiate Change in Your Achievement Mindset**

Exploring and reviewing the list of achievement-based behaviours is the vital first step in the process of changing your behaviour. The inventory has undergone over 45 years of extensive research, and has been established as a valid, reliable way to help you take an objective look at yourself.

You can use the Achievement-based behaviour guide to:

- Understand what you were like now, and will cause you to be that way.
- Recognize the consequences of your behaviour and how it affects yourself and others.
- Pinpoint your own unique strengths, as well as any "stumbling blocks" to your effectiveness.
- Identifying more constructive ways of thinking and behaving.
- Decide what aspects of your behaviour you want to change.
- Develop a specific strategy to help bring those changes about.

### **Moving from Thought to Action**

To receive the fullest benefit from exploring the list of Achievement-based thinking, devote some time to interpreting and thinking about what you learned, and setting goals around what you want to change.

Below are some helpful change guidelines to assist you, followed by a thorough plan of action you can complete to most effectively direct your efforts.

### **Achievement Mindset Change Guidelines**

1. Acknowledge and except all aspects of yourself. Remember, the question is not "am I a good or bad person?" but rather "what is preventing me from being more effective in the Achievement area, and what can improve?"
2. Recognize that your sense of self-worth *is not* connected to your Achievement scores or the impressions others have of you. You are worthwhile because you were a human being - tying your self-worth to outside factors can limit your ability to make positive changes in your behaviour.
3. Specifically define what you want to change about being more Achievement-based and why. Clearly describing an aspect of your behaviour, stating the problems it creates for you, listing why you want to change it, and detailing the actions you plan to take will properly focus the change process.
4. Increase your confidence by concentrating on what you do well. Overcome your preoccupation with failure by focusing on your successes. Make a list of all you do well, and read it when you were feeling under confident.
5. Practice using more effective Achievement behaviours in your mind. These "practice sessions" will gradually begin to affect your real-life performance in 1:1 or group interactions. Picture yourself deliberately changing what you decided to change. Then, imagine yourself as you will be after successfully making the change.

6. Discipline yourself to consistently monitoring your thoughts and constantly testing your assumptions. This can be done most easily by observing the situations in which cause you discomfort or stress.

7. Remember that you cannot change your Achievement mindset overnight. It is taken years to develop your current behaviour; it will take some time to modify it. Your progress will deepen on how dedicated and sincere you are in your commitment to improving yourself. Move towards an image of your "ideal self" one step at a time.

You may have been asked to review this guide for many reasons. Perhaps you have been part of an organizational change, a reorganization, culture change process or you face and personal transition such as interpersonal feedback, retirement, return to work, change of career, or change of lifestyle. Think of this handout as a smorgasbord of ideas, techniques, and strategies - and then create the mixture that will be most helpful to your situation.

The following are five keys for succeed into personal change:

1. Listen to yourself.

Pay attention to your hunches about what you need to do to become more Achievement-based. Don't let a good idea get away. Record your thoughts, responses, and action ideas in the action planning section in the back.

2. Focus on a few Achievement behaviours or actions at a time.

Do not overwhelm yourself - it is a good way to go nowhere. Focus on one or two Achievement-based actions of the time. Build success in small steps.

3. Give yourself time.

Apply the 21 day rule of change in behaviour. It takes about 21 days to establish a habit of implementing and practicing Achievement-based behaviours - and about 21 days to get rid of an ineffective one.

4. Challenge yourself to take risks and build capacity.

Adults learn best from experience. Ensuring you trust yourself to try new things is essential in building your capacity to grow and develop.

5. Review your action plan daily.

Put your list of actions where you can see them regularly. Staying focused on what you want will help you.

# Changing Achievement Mindsets - Action Planning Worksheet

**Step 1: My reflection on the Achievement behaviours means I tend to believe that:**

---

---

---

**Step 2: My internal motivation towards Achievement is**    \_\_ Low    \_\_ Medium    \_\_ High.    \_\_ Very High

## Step 3: Significant Influences

We think and behave as we do because we have been influenced by significant people and situations in our lives. Consider *your* life: try to identify and isolate the influences you've experienced that may be associated with the style.

Significant Person (or situation) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas / Behaviours You Might Have Learned \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4: Consider the consequences of using the Achievement style and list them as indicated below.**

### Personally

#### Positive Consequences

---

---

---

---

---

#### Self-Defeating Consequences

---

---

---

---

---

### Professionally

#### Positive Consequences

---

---

---

---

---

#### Self-Defeating Consequences

---

---

---

---

---

**Step 5: Consider how your life would be different if you change your behaviour to be more Achievement-based.**

**Some Positive Differences**

---

---

---

**Some Negative Differences**

---

---

---

**Step 6: Changing your Achievement behaviours**

Changing your Achievement behaviour involves changing your mind regarding some ideas you hold around how you value and interact with people. Consider what you will have to give up and what you will gain. What cherished ideas must you challenge? Go back to your reflections on the Achievement-based behaviours and review both the words and statements that identify this style and your responses to them.

How would you like things to be different? (Same suggestions below)

---

---

**Becoming More Effective: Continuing To Improve**

To further increase your effectiveness, you might consider strengthening your use of some of the behaviours described in this section or use the following suggestions as guidelines.

Achievers have an incisive thought process and appreciate cause-and-effect relationships. They are most interested in getting the job done and doing it well. They are not distracted by the outside factors that plague most people. High achievers often possess the skills necessary for effective planning, goal-setting and problem-solving. The Achievement scale measures the healthiest possible working attitudes and styles. Achievers tend to be motivated to succeed by their own values and beliefs. This internal motivation inclines them to set and pursue their own goals and standards of performance. Because of this tendency, they require less supervision and control. They may tend to resist too much direction because they typically have higher standards of performance than their immediate bosses. Achievers can be very effective leaders when they share responsibility and inspire confidence in others. The Achievement style, when combined with elements of the Humanistic- Encouraging style, gets results that lead to excellence.

High achievers aim for excellence in all facets of life, from their careers to personal relationships. These individuals assume the following:

1. It's critical to maintain an internal, personal standard of excellence. Intrinsic motivation is more effective than extrinsic motivation.
2. Cause-and-effect relationships account for why things happen—not luck, fate, chance, or magic.
3. One's own effort counts and determines outcomes.
4. Self-set and self-selected goals are more motivating than goals imposed by others.
5. Feedback from others is necessary to improve one's own performance.



**Step 7: What barriers now exist to making this change?**

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 8: How can you overcome these barriers? Try to *challenge your assumptions* about your behaviours.**

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 9: What will you gain by making this change and becoming more Achievement-based?**

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 10: What do you plan to do to bring this change about?**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 11: Seeking Support**

Depth psychologists know that our capacity for growth relates to our ability to internalize and take personal responsibility for the following three parts of our lives –

- a) Insight** (self awareness and internal motivation to grow and transform is essential here - the behaviours around Achievement-based thinking provide a language and framework);
- b) Endurance** (courage and alignment with your core values helps here);
- c) Action** (moral strength and motivation to grow / learn helps here).

Seek support for your change efforts. Ask one or two trusted family members, friends or work members for their help. Solicit feedback from them on your progress.

With whom will you share your intentions and plans to change? \_\_\_\_\_

How can they best assist you? \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 12: Accountability** - By what date do you intend to take action? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Achievement Thinking:**

The Achievement scale of measures a way of thinking that is highly associated with personal effectiveness. High scores in this style indicate one interest in, as well as ones proficiency at, attaining high-quality results on challenging projects. In many ways, the Achievement style characterizes the most constructive approaches to work. Achievers are motivated to succeed by their own values and beliefs.

They know they can improve things, and do not hesitate to act on that knowledge. They are most interested in getting the job done and in doing it well. Their ability to share responsibility, inspire others, and build confidence makes achievement-orientated people excellent leaders.

You tend to feel positively challenged by what you confront in life. You strongly believe that you can change things and make them the way you think they could be, and are not afraid to take moderate, well calculated risks. While you recognize that you will encounter occasional problems and setbacks, you generally try to account for all that could go wrong and formulate contingency plans to get the job done.

You typically derive satisfaction from setting and being guided by your own goals, and may have a tendency to impose these goals on others, unthinkingly and without malice. To encourage achievement-orientated thinking, it is more effective to help others discover for themselves, as you have, the power of personal goals setting.

You want to do things well, and tend to focus on the quality of both your performance and the results you achieve. You typically work best with minimal supervision; you may resist attempts to control what you do and how you do it. In fact, you might be tempted to leave situations that don't invite personal innovation or a self-directed approach.

## **The Key Components of Achievement**

### **A belief in cause-and-effect thinking**

This style of thinking is the opposite of believing in fate, luck, chance and magic. People who practice cause-and-effect thinking believe things happen for a reason (everything has a cause). They feel a sense of control about outcomes. They know that it is not always possible to identify all the causes relating to a specific event, but they nevertheless exert a good deal of effort in trying.

### **A belief that individual effort counts**

Achievement thinkers believe that they CAN make a difference, so they always do their part no matter how insignificant it may seem.

### **A willingness and desire to set goals**

Individuals with a strong Achievement motive are constantly setting themselves goals and challenges. Because of their belief in cause-and-effect, they are able to clearly identify what they must do to achieve the results they desire.

### **The establishment of high standards of excellence**

Achievers have the attitude that no matter how well it went today, it could be probably better tomorrow. Fueled by this desire for excellence, they set out to see what they can achieve.

# The Key Components of Achievement (Con't)

## **Allow full discussion of ideas**

Appropriate use of meeting and discussion techniques designed to get at ideas and attitudes before critical decisions are made. Open questioning of plans and approaches is welcomed in sound group work.

## **Desire and need for feedback**

Those individuals high on Achievement constantly seek feedback on how they are doing. They use this information to set goals and monitor progress.

## **Recognize achievement**

Real achievement in groups is recognized. Evidence and facts set the ground rules. Ideas are seen against an overall plan of action. Short-term solutions are examined but always with an eye to the future implications and rewards. Decisions are not dependent upon who suggested the idea but on the merit of the idea itself.

## **Look to the Future**

A positive and effective working group climate that provokes thought about the future direction will tend to appeal very much to achievement-orientated people.

## **Let the individual review his/her performance**

Encourage group members to talk about his/her performance to you, including success, problems, plans, hopes, aspirations and failures. In a non-critical way, draw out their assessment of what they have done or failed to do. Share your ideas if they are relevant to what has been said.

## **Create probability of success**

Set the task at a level where there is a reasonable probability of success. Some uncertainty excites the strongest motivation. Create public and open ways of evaluating success. In an achievement climate, people tend to concentrate on objective standards of success.

## **Emphasize task completion**

A commitment by group members to complete tasks accompanied by an emphasis on what, rather than who, went wrong, means the accent is on correction and prevention. Group members can then focus on the task, not defending him/herself.

## **Strengthen belief in self-improvement**

A strong belief at almost every level that the individual by his/her effort can bring about improvement in the group and in his/her own performance. Group members listen and encourage ideas.

## **Encourage co-operative goals setting**

Goals setting is co-operative, taking into account the expectations and estimates of the person involved. Factual information and realistic estimates are used to set the guidelines.

## **Emphasize success**

A positive approach is taken. Everything is done to reduce fear of failure and to build group structures and processes that emphasize the expectations of success of task completion and teamwork.

## **Achievement Behaviours Defined**

*Core Thinking Patterns for Individual, Team and Organizational Effectiveness*

### **An Achievement Culture...**

Characterizes organizations that do things well and value members who set and accomplish their own goals. Members of these organizations set challenging but realistic goals, establish plans to reach these goals, and pursue them with enthusiasm. Achievement organizations are effective; problems are solved appropriately, clients and customers are served well, and the orientation of members (as well as the organization itself) is healthy. Achievement is about doing things well. To improve something is a natural incentive for high achievers. The achievement style measures a way of thinking that is highly associated with personal effectiveness. Scores for this style indicate our interest in, as well as our proficiency at, attaining high-quality results on challenging projects. In many ways, the achievement style characterizes the most constructive approaches to work. Achievers are motivated to succeed by their own values and beliefs. They know they can improve things, and do not hesitate to act on this knowledge. Achievers tend to find their work highly rewarding. They are most interested in getting the job done and in doing it well. These individuals often possess the skills necessary for effective planning, problem-solving and sound use of resources.

### **Organizational (OCI) Behaviours of Achievement-based Thinking**

- take moderate risks
- pursue a standard of excellence
- take on challenging tasks
- explore alternatives before acting
- know the business
- work for the sense of accomplishment
- openly show enthusiasm
- think ahead and plan
- set moderately difficult goals
- work to achieve self-set goals

### **Group (GSI) Behaviours of Achievement-based Thinking**

1. setting goals and work towards them.
2. breaking the task or problem down into more manageable parts.
3. ensuring adequate consideration to the possible negative consequences of solutions/strategies.
4. analyzing alternatives carefully with the goal in mind.
5. staying focused on the objective.
6. following a plan or schedule to make good use of time available for the discussion.

### **Individual (LSI) Behaviours of Achievement-based Thinking**

Ambitious	High level of aspiration	Enjoys planning	Enjoys difficult tasks
Realistic	Likes tasks that require skill	Usually thinks ahead	Achieving
Enjoys a challenge	Shares responsibility well	Good analytic skills	Sets own goals
Enthusiastic	Goes to the heart of the matter	Results-oriented leader	Thinks for self
Pleasant	Earns others' confidence, respect	Learns from mistakes, and corrects	
Likes responsibility	Likes to measure progress on tasks	Explores most alternatives before acting	
Looks for challenges	Honest and direct in feelings		

## The Achievers Creed

I believe...

Excellence in all things is an obtainable goal. It is something toward which one strives and aspires, but it is not something that can be demanded of others; for the very fact that it is demanded and not self selected destroys the essence of the achievement motive.

That achievement thinking lies in the realm of the possible, of improving things, and making anything better. It is not dissatisfaction with what is, but rather a constant vision of what is possible. That accomplishment, understanding, and improving oneself and ones' surroundings is an intrinsically positive force in human affairs. Human beings are goal setting creatures with imagination and vision. While this may not characterize the bulk of the population, it is characteristic of all human potential.

Being effective at what one does, in the broadest sense of the word, is a way in which all human beings build self esteem and self value. The opposite of success at what one does is not failure, but rather indicates a greater need to learn, improve, and try again - because it is possible. I further believe that this manner of building self esteem is uniquely within individual control and is not subject to the unforeseeable judgement of other people or time. That someone did it better does not mean I failed. That the artificial focus upon winners and losers obscures the accomplishments of many and unnecessarily rewards a performance that may only be minutely different. Such an overemphasis upon one winner tends to blur the abilities and the accomplishments of many. This blurring diverts attention from the process of excellence and draws it to winning, which is by comparison superficial.

That knowing, doing, striving, cooperating, creating and understanding are all worthwhile activities in their own right. I believe it is a fundamental mistake to embellish the act of achievement to the point where the extrinsic factors are more recognized than the intrinsic factors. Such over-reaction causes a focus upon the wrong stuff and upon the wrong method of recognition.

In a fundamental way that my effort, my thinking, my knowledge, my actions can make a significant in the quality of my life and in the quality of the life experienced by those around me or in my area of influence. While I have every right to take pride in my accomplishments, I do not believe that such achievements elevate my sense of worth over other people; the worth is my own. Conversely, my failure is not a measure of the person, but of the response to the situation.

That the human being is the highest form of life and, as such, each has an indisputable worth. This belief is to me the absolute mainspring of human progress. Without such a belief, there is little basis to judge anything. That it is from the mode of cooperation that we can progress beyond our self-centred selves and attain some synergistic effect from the combination of individual effort. Competition does not contain any such powerful effect, yet it is applauded and nearly worshipped.

That the nature of humans is more cooperative than competitive, and more compassionate than aggressive, and that our worst selves emerge from fear, threat and anxiety - not from our nature.