

# Mindset

**W**ho are you—or more specifically, what is your mindset? You need to know so your career won't sink in the wash of coming changes as you sail ahead into a new century. And you need to mind the Ps—major career management areas—and the Qs that define their scope. Person. How much do you know about yourself, your true desires, your talents and skills?

Perspective. Does your self-image match how others see you?

Place. How do shifts in the market and workplace apply to you?

Possibilities. What opportunities do those shifts create for you?

Plan. How can you prepare yourself for the possibilities of the future?

Ask how far off your view is from the following mindsets and what you need to do to close the gap.

## Person

- What professional strengths and skills are you using competently?
- Are there skills or talents yet to surface that could renew your motivation?
- When you take the time for a deep journey into who you are, what do you find that's unfulfilled or unheard?
- What do you need to do to allow those core competencies to emerge in your work?



Have you the right mental framework for what's about to happen? Best mind your Ps and Qs.

By Beverly L. Kaye

Here are several primary career mindsets that will make the difference between hanging on for the ride and creating the future of your dreams:

**The Mindset of the Inquirer.** As an accomplished inquirer, you're vigilant on the inner and outer fronts and allow no important questions to go unasked. You're an insatiable learner. You quickly and willingly access your most caring and non-judgmental inner observer. From there, you easily gain useful information about your capabilities, passions, and true level of fulfillment. You ask yourself relentlessly, *Is the service or product I deliver appropriate for me and my customers?*

**The Mindset of the Imagineer.** As you commute to work or engage in your favorite form of exercise, you, the imagineer, are able to envision all of the details of the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century You at work. You see yourself having discovered your niche (the particular spin that makes your offering unique), and you know how the success it brings feels, sounds, and smells.

**The Mindset of the Player.** From a place of inner balance and alertness, you operate in the playing field of your own choosing. With enthusiasm, you can picture your fellow players and feel the inspiration, trust, and respect that flow with ease among you. The promise of being in the game with compatible peers fuels your future ambitions.

## Perspective

- If you were to ask a trusted colleague for his or her impression of you as a professional, what do you think the colleague would say?
- Have you come away from anyone recently with the sense that person didn't really see you or had a poor impression?
- What do you think that person would say about you?

Here are some mindsets that can help you glean essential knowledge about yourself as a professional:

**The Mindset of the Congruence Seeker.** You are persistently on the alert for glitches between your self-image and the feedback you receive about how others see you. You consciously pay attention to the alignment between the intent of your behavior and its impact. You're able to turn any incongruities into truthful messages to yourself. With those messages, you're able to foster authentic, effective shifts in your thinking and behavior.

**The Mindset of the Feedback Junkie.** You're always open to receiving feedback about how you're perceived. You're skillful at discovering knowledge about yourself in each of your interactions. You know when it's appropriate to ask for feedback and how to pay attention and receive information without asking for it directly. Even when you may not agree with it, you're able to see the grain of truth in feedback. You respond by experimenting with new behaviors.

**The Mindset of the Reputation Regulator.** As an effective reputation regulator, you keep an ear to the ground to track the development of your reputation capital. You understand that managing your career means managing your reputation—a key asset for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century You so you can work well with the people of your choosing. You're aware that your reputation isn't cast in concrete and that it can be modified and regulated by a responsive attitude and changes in your behavior. You know that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process and that your reputation is as flexible as you are.

## Place

- In the marketplace, your field, and your organization's culture, what trends

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do you suspect are most likely to affect your current career plan?

- ❑ Which doors will open to you in the next five years and which will close?
- ❑ What actions do you need to take to be ready for the opening doors and so that you can walk away without regret from the closing doors?
- ❑ As you build your alliances, how can you sidestep sensitive corporate cultural issues?

These mindsets can put you in the right place at the right time:

**The Mindset of the Change Chaser.** You're persistent in sniffing out shifts in the business drivers that relate to your work, especially in the areas of competition, customer feedback, technological developments, economic influences, legislation, and globalization.

**The Mindset of the Trend Tracker.** You read avidly and mine the Internet in search of changing patterns that feed directly into your career path. Because you're always alert to what's showing up on the horizon of your field and related fields, you delight in finding indicators that say you're either headed in the right direction or need to change course. As John Naisbitt said, "You are able to ride the horse in the direction it's going."

**The Mindset of the Alert Anthropologist.** You're on the lookout for cultural clues to keep you on your career track and off the sidelines. You know ahead of time how to stay on the up side of your colleagues and bosses, and how to fit with the corporate program. Because you're aware of your colleagues' individual triggers and corporate hot buttons, you can make informed choices about when to be alert and present or when it's more appropriate to tread with care.

## Possibilities

When considering a career move, you have several possible choices:

- ❑ With a promotion, you can go up.
- ❑ You can take your current skills and apply them in a lateral function.
- ❑ You can stay in your current position and perform a development task that will enrich your skills.
- ❑ You can make a calculated downward move.
- ❑ You can find mentors from whom to learn new skills.
- ❑ You can expand your professional network by joining a professional association,

You actively create opportunities, and, as they emerge, you seize them with gusto and gratitude.

or you can seek to work at an organization that you think might suit you better.

When you consider the possibilities within each of those options, which one attracts you the most? Which is the most practical? Which most closely meets your aspirations?

Is there a product you've wanted to invent or a unique service only you can offer? Is the timing right for bringing forth what you have? Should you consider leaping out of your current frame?

The following mindsets will allow you to keep your options open and create new possibilities:

**The Mindset of the Global Framer.** As a global framer, you don't allow yourself to be boxed into limited vistas. You want to see all of the possibilities, and you're willing to stretch beyond what has been comfortable in the past. You delight in the challenge of reinventing yourself in expanded, comprehensive frames.

**The Mindset of the Accomplished Juggler.** You're adept at multitasking and are willing to pursue many possibilities at once. You also know when you are and are not achieving a necessary sense of balance between your professional life, personal life, and emotional and physical health. Drawing from the non-judgmental inner observer of your Inquirer Mindset, you're able to pay attention to all of the wobbles of your balancing act with minimal guilt.

**The Mindset of the Ambiguity Survivor.** You have a high tolerance for confusion and may even relish it because you know that it's a close relative of change. You're able to live within the paradox of past comforts versus your vision of a more fulfilling future. You know that the greater the spread between the past and future scenarios, the more your creativity will flourish.

## Plan

- ❑ Where do you want to be in five years?
- ❑ What do you need to do to get there?

- ❑ What have you learned from the previous Ps?

- ❑ Can you use your discoveries to create a plan for your journey into learning and the next phase of your career?

These mindsets will support your creating and realizing that plan:

**The Mindset of the Elegant Risk Taker.** Having discussed your plan with several mentors whose career paths are similar to yours, you feel ready to take responsible risks. Even though you choose your risks carefully for their relevance to your plan, you don't play it so safe that you can't move forward. You confidently distinguish between what's risky and what's ridiculous.

**The Mindset of the Anxiety Appreciator.** Just as you are tolerant of paradox, you also tolerate your natural response to fear. You know that the butterflies in your stomach were once lowly caterpillars, so you let them teach you to fly. You're keenly aware that your fear of success is also your fear of failure, and even when anxiety arises, you invariably choose success.

**The Mindset of the Aha! Seeker.** You know an *aha!* when you see one (or touch or feel one), and you're prepared to either take note or take action on those flashes of discovery because you take risks elegantly, experience anxiety appreciatively, and notice attentively all that is going on around you and within you. Your creative juices bubble and flow, and you mine your own *ahas!* mindfully. You actively create opportunities, and, as they emerge, you seize them with gusto and gratitude.

So, how did you do with the Ps and Qs? Which caused you to feel challenged in your current career strategy? Which made you feel validated? In the areas in which you felt challenged, what do you need to learn to be comfortable with the uncertainty that lies ahead and to make the opportunities tied to that uncertainty work in your favor? In the areas in which you felt validated, carry on! The new millennium awaits you. ❑

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Beverly L. Kaye is president of *Career Systems International*, Sherman Oaks, California; [beverly.kaye@csibka.com](mailto:beverly.kaye@csibka.com). Her new book is *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay* (Berrett-Koehler, 1999).