

### Traits and time management

Traits are patterns of behaviour which are established early in life in response to prompts and rewards by significant adults. As children we learn to value behaviour which is valued by others around us. By the time we reach adulthood, these are established as patterns of behaviour we value in ourselves. We feel good when we demonstrate them, and often feel we've failed if we don't display this learned behaviour. Each has its down-side, however, and may impact negatively on how we use our time. Once we are aware of our traits, we can begin to make a choice concerning whether we want to change – *from Taibi Kahler, 1975*

Be perfect	I produce reliable accurate work; I pay attention to detail and my work looks good. I'm well organised; look ahead and plan how to deal with potential problems; projects run smoothly and efficiently
Please people	I'm understanding and empathic and draw team members together; I consider others' feelings and will encourage them; I enjoy being with others and show genuine interest in them; I want to please others and sometimes do what I think they want without checking
Hurry up	I respond well to short deadlines and I'm motivated by pressure; I really quite enjoy having too much to do! I sometimes delay starting jobs until they become urgent; I'm quick thinking and want to get on with things
Be strong	I stay calm under pressure and am energised by 'coping'. I can make difficult decisions about people without torturing myself about their impact; I can remain objective; I have a strong sense of duty
Try hard	I tackle things enthusiastically and get most energy from having something new to do; given a project, I'll identify a whole range of ramifications and possibilities and will pick on things others may overlook

Consider how your traits might impact on your ability to make most effective use of your time. People with a strong 'be perfect' driver, for example, will often spend time 'perfecting' their work, even though others may not notice the difference the additional time has made. Those with 'please people' as a dominant driver often find it difficult to say 'no' when asked for help, so end up overloaded with work from others – to the extent that their own (or worse still, their health) can suffer.

As yourself 'what's the worse that can happen if I choose not to follow my usual pattern of behaviour?' Try to be realistic in your response. And be aware that it takes time to change established patterns of behaviour.

How to challenge patterns of behaviour which might be reducing your efficiency in managing time	
<b>Be perfect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept that human beings, including yourself, are not capable of perfection</li> <li>• Set yourself realistic deadlines and accept that sometimes additional time doesn't add significantly to improved quality</li> <li>• Check how long routine tasks take and work towards reducing time spent</li> <li>• Sometimes 'good enough' has to be good enough</li> </ul>
<b>Please people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehearse saying 'no' in a way that feels comfortable</li> <li>• Empower others by handing back their 'monkeys': they will benefit in the long term</li> <li>• Avoid your default 'helpful' response by rehearsing responses such as 'can I let you know?' to buy time and consider the implications of what you're being asked to do</li> </ul>
<b>Hurry up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn to value time to think: you don't need to be 'doing' every second</li> <li>• Take time to check that you have understood the needs of others</li> <li>• Plan sufficient time to avoid mistakes</li> <li>• Breathe!</li> </ul>
<b>Be strong</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that, like all human-beings, you are vulnerable</li> <li>• Remember that if you're always giving to others and not allowing them to reciprocate, you disempower them</li> <li>• Practise accepting others' offers of help</li> <li>• Notice when you're feeling overwhelmed and ask for help</li> </ul>
<b>Try hard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reward yourself for tackling boring tasks by following with interesting ones</li> <li>• Delegate later stages of projects to ensure they are completed</li> <li>• Avoid making tasks more complicated than necessary</li> <li>• Ensure you are clear about the required outcome of any initiative so that it's clear when it's complete</li> </ul>