

Image Management In My Situation Chart Instructions

Think about an upcoming situation where you're experiencing tension, trepidation, stress, or anxiety. It could be a conversation, a presentation, or a meeting. The Image Management Chart is designed to support you to bring your best self to any situation.

Box 1a: Situation/Context

Describe the situation in a couple of sentences. What is the situation/context? Who is the audience? What is the topic? What are you nervous about?

Box 1b: Desired Images

How do you want to appear in this situation? How do you want to be seen by the other people? How do you want to see yourself? How would you like them to judge you? (Whether you are like that or not.)

Box 1c: Dreaded Images

How do you absolutely NOT want to appear in this situation? How do you want to avoid appearing to others? What judgments do you want to make sure they do not have about you?

Note: Dreaded Images can be the way you tend to be and you don't want anyone to know that about you, or they could be something you aren't and you surely don't ever want anyone to think that about you. The same applies to Desired Images, whether you are that image in life or not, you surely want people to see you that way.

Box 2: Fear, Anxiety, Concerns

What are your concerns, fears, anxieties, mind-chatter about this situation? Think in terms of final result, performance, collaboration, quality of communication, how might you feel during the event...

What are your fears going into this situation, during and after the situation?

What are you afraid might go wrong or not work out? What dissatisfactions are you liable to feel?

Box 3: Counterproductive Behaviors

Consequently, what counterproductive behaviors do these images trigger? How are you likely to behave in order to appear like your desired images or to NOT appear like your dreaded Images?

- What are you likely to do? (get intense, get angry, withdraw)
- What are you likely not to do? (not ask for clarifying questions,...)

How might your DDIs impact the way you do/don't do things
(E.g. ask questions but with an edge or awkwardly; stay silent but stew with mind-chatter and sulk...)

These are behaviors driven by “fears” and/or “proving”-- not optimal behaviors you want or think you should have. Capture both voluntary and involuntary behaviors.

Box 4a: Benefits

What benefits do you get from the knee-jerk counterproductive behaviors in 3? In what ways are you emotionally invested in these counterproductive behaviors? What do they give you, allow you to avoid, etc.

- What benefits does your ego get out of this system? *Relief from anxiety, admiration, satisfaction (but without joy)*
- What result do you hope to get if you are seen as that image?
- Ask yourself the question multiple times. Look for the layers behind each answer. *(Example: from “being seen” to “mattering” to “being loved”. These often are lookalikes – it looks like we are obtaining love from these behaviors, but in the long run we really aren't.)*

Box 4b: Costs

What are the costs and anxieties of your counterproductive behaviors?

A. For You:

- What are the costs to you of this system?
- What anxieties do you experience from this system?

B. For Others:

- What are the costs for others?
- What anxieties does it create for others?
- How would you feel and react if you were on the receiving end of the behavior you captured in the chart? (well, that is how others feel/react to you when you behave that way, so this answer can go in the box).

C. What are the costs/anxieties to our common goals, to our relationship?

Before moving on, conclude/summarize:

Compare the costs with the benefits. What do you notice? What conclusions can you draw?

Benefits are shorter-term, superficial, and are mostly about you. Costs however are longer-term, have a wider impact to others, and significantly outweigh the benefits in the long run.

You are creating more of what you don't want in your life because of your unconscious attachment to your image management. Your attachment to be perceived a certain way contributes to creating what you are trying to avoid.

Do you want to approach this differently?

Replace this unconscious way of reacting with a conscious decision – a goal that you can reconnect with in the moment to remind you of what is more important to you than managing your image.

Box 5: Goals

Think about what goals would be **more** important than your DDI(s). Goals motivating enough that are willing to take the risk of not appearing your desired images, or appearing your dreaded images as you pursue these goals. They could be a Learning/Growing Goal or a Contribution Goal (or both).

What is your goal for this situation?

Contribution Goal –	Learning Goal –
What purpose is it serving me to have this conversation? Who do I want to do this for and why? <small>What is the purpose/something larger than me</small>	How is having this conversation a meaningful opportunity for me? What can I learn? How do I want to grow through the situation?

Check it/ Test it: “Are you willing to appear [pick a main dreaded image] in order to [express the chosen goal]”

The goal is important because, as a result of the chart, you have increased your awareness. But that doesn't change what will happen. When you recognize you are managing your image, or catch yourself in one of your knee-jerk counterproductive behaviors, you can reconnect with your goal.

Box 6: Practices

What practices can you experiment with for this situation and for these goals? IF/WHEN you see yourself falling back into one of the counterproductive behaviors (that you have identified in 3) THEN what can you practice instead? What can you practice in advance to avoid falling into these behaviors?