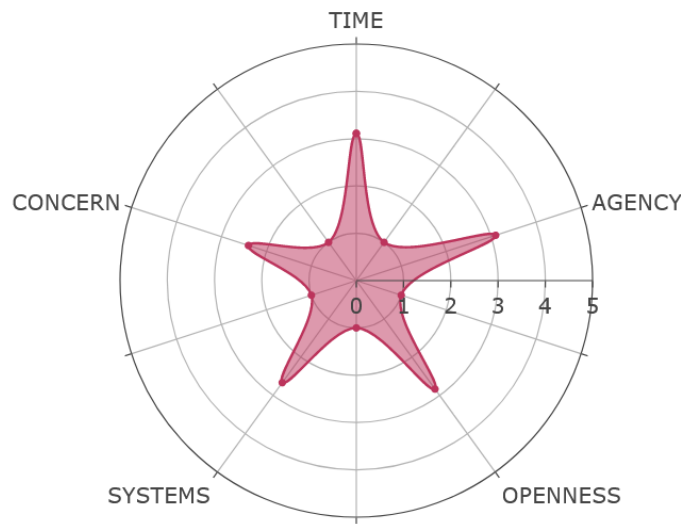


PERSONAL FUTURES CONSCIOUSNESS PROFILE



updated 2.11.2023



(Example results diagram only)

HOW TO UNDERSTAND YOUR RESULTS

How did you score on the Futures Consciousness test? This document outlines characterizations of your futures consciousness divided into the five dimensions: **Time Perspective**, **Agency Beliefs**, **Openness to Alternatives**, **Systems Perception**, and **Concern for Others**. All aspects of futures consciousness can be developed, so your test results may look very different over time due to your life experiences and personal development.

For each of the five dimensions of futures consciousness this document gives general descriptions of people for whom the dimension is a strength and descriptions of people who find utilizing that dimension challenging. *The characterizations should not be taken too literally*, as there are many variations beyond the two alternatives described here. Please read the descriptions and consider the questions and exercises to gain an understanding of your current futures consciousness and ideas about how to develop it further.

Increased awareness of the role that each of the five dimensions of Futures Consciousness (FC) play in individuals' day-to-day lives could help you to take a broader view on future possibilities and to pursue goals more effectively. If you are interested in actively improving your futures consciousness, some questions for you to think about and tips for practicing each of the dimensions are given. Please note that changes will not happen quickly, but over time, your thinking patterns may change.



Time Perspective

Characteristics

The score in the Time Perspective dimension of FC indicates a person's tendency to be aware of the future developments and consider the way how events follow each other over time. The higher the score in this dimension, the more successful a person tends to be at doing this in appropriate contexts.

Advantages of a strong TP

People with a strength in Time Perspective tend to be able to take a long term view and consider potential consequences to various actions over time. They may be able to switch their perspective fluently from today's urgent issues to longer-term consequences and actions to prevent problems in the long run. For people with a strength in Time perspective thinking about the future comes naturally and is applied in day-to-day situations.

Challenges with limited TP

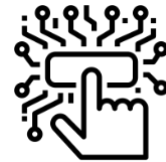
People who find the Time Perspective dimension challenging are more likely to have their thinking dominated by present or past concerns. There may be little room for thinking about the potential of the future and long-term future consequences in their day-to-day lives. People who do not overcome the challenges of taking a long time perspective tend to assume that the problematic consequences of today's actions can be postponed to the indeterminate future.



Developing Time Perspective – Exercise

- *Think of a big, important event from decades ago, in your own lifetime or that of your parents' lifetime.*
- *Calculate how many years have passed since this event and the present, then project the same number of years from the present into the future.*
- *Which year would it be? Does the year in the future feel closer or further than the year in the past? How old would you be in the projected year in the future?*





Agency Beliefs

Characteristics

The score in the Agency Beliefs dimension of FC indicates how much a person tends to trust in their own ability to influence future events. The higher the score in this dimension, the more accurately a person tends to be able to judge their own ability to influence an event as well as make an accurate assessment about whether an event can be influenced.

Advantages of a strong AB

People with a strength in Agency Beliefs tend to be active agents in the shaping of our common future. They display a high trust in their capabilities as well as the ability to recognize when and where they are able to act to influence the future. Having a high score in this dimension can indicate that failures are not discouraging experiences, but rather, they are valued as learning opportunities to better understand oneself and one's environment.

Challenges with limited AB

People who have a disinclination towards Agency Beliefs tend to think that the future is generally not open to being changed, being mostly influenced by external factors, luck, or fate. A lot of time and energy may be misdirected worrying about things that cannot be influenced. Obstacles are generally found to be discouraging and may trigger a feeling of powerlessness leading to a passive or reactive attitude.



Developing Agency Beliefs – Exercise

- Consider an occasion when you tried to influence the future, by yourself or together with others. Write a brief description of the situation.
- Above the description, note down the actions which were successful and the factors which helped them succeed.
- Below the description, write down the actions which were not successful and the factors which hindered their success.
- Which of the above factors were within your control and which were outside your control? How could you have refocused your efforts on the factors that you were capable of influencing?
- Was it difficult to think of an occasion when you tried to influence the future? Do you think you should try to influence the future more often?





Openness to Alternatives

Characteristics

The score in the Openness to Alternatives dimension of FC indicates a person's tendency to question commonly accepted ideas as well as that person's willingness to consider the potential of alternatives. The higher the score in this dimension, the greater the range of possibilities considered and the more fundamental the assumptions questioned.

Advantages of a strong OA

People with a strength in Openness to Alternatives tend to be open to new ideas and are able to imagine many alternative – even extreme – paths unfolding towards different futures. They are generally keen to learn from new experiences and are able to evaluate alternatives critically. The fact that the future is unpredictable and uncertain is considered motivating and inspirational. Open attitude towards the future may increase flexibility in the face of sudden and unexpected events.

Challenges with limited OA

People who have yet to develop their Openness to Alternatives tend to think that the range of possible futures is narrowly limited or that there is only a single path forwards. They may be prone to seeking an optimal path or solution without questioning the underlying assumptions that inform such choices. They are likely to believe that seeking and evaluating alternatives is not their concern. The idea of an unpredictable and uncertain future is overwhelming.



Developing Openness to Alternatives – Exercise

- *If you could ask a visitor from the future five yes or no questions about the world in 20 years' time, what would they be? Write them down.*
- *Consider your questions: what are the assumptions underlying each of your questions? What have you assumed to be true, important, or universal?*
- *What changes might invalidate your assumptions? Elaborate them with a sentence or two for each of your assumptions, and identify an opportunity made possible by that change.*





Systems Perception

Characteristics

The score in the Systems Perception dimension of FC indicates a person's tendency to see relationships between human and natural systems, including groups, societies and ecosystems. The higher the score in this dimension, the more easily a person can recognize the interconnections between different kinds of systems, and the better they can recognize the possible consequences that actions taken in one system can have in another system.

Advantages of a strong SP

People with a strength in Systems Perception tend to be able to identify the larger systems of social, cultural and natural connections that influence how the future unfolds. They are also typically adept at identifying their own position in this network of connections. They are interested in the bigger picture, and tend not to focus too narrowly or on specific issues. They understand how the wellbeing of humans depends on the wellbeing of nature.

Challenges with limited SP

People who find the Systems Perception dimension challenging are more likely to think that they are separate and distinct from society and nature, and therefore that their actions do not have notable consequences or impacts on other people or the planet. They prefer to focus on narrow issues rather than the bigger picture. Development of this dimension is associated with an increased understanding of how the welfare of people, places and animals are inextricably linked.



Developing Systems Perception – Exercise

- *Mentally divide a page into three parts, in the middle part write down a decision that you will need to make in the next month.*
- *In the first part write 5-10 factors that could **influence** the decision and connect the issues to the decision with arrows.*
- *In the third part write 5-10 areas that the decision may have an **impact** on and connect the decision to the impacts with arrows.*
- *Does your image include consideration of the following?*
 - *Your family and friends*
 - *Your work and colleagues*
 - *Your neighbourhood and local environment*
 - *People or nature in your region*
 - *People or nature in your country*
 - *People or nature on your continent*
 - *People or nature on the planet*





Concern for Others

Characteristics

The score in the Concern for Others dimension of FC indicates a person's tendency to pursue favourable futures for groups beyond themselves and their immediate family. The higher the score in this dimension, the more inclusive a person tends to be, including groups distant in both time and space as being within the realm of their concern.

Advantages of a strong CO

People with a strength in Concern for Others tend to want the future to be better for everyone, not just for themselves or their close family and friends. Values of sharing and caring may be considered especially important to them, and they try to live according to their principles. They are also inclined to think that taking responsibility for promoting a better future for the whole world means being willing to compromise on the satisfaction of your own desires.

Challenges with limited CO

People who have challenges with the sense of Concern for Others are less likely to think that they play a role in the wellbeing of people who are unknown, distant or yet unborn. They tend to see themselves as responsible only for their own future, and for those closest to them. Development of this dimension is associated with an increased understanding of how one's happiness may be motivated by working towards improving the welfare of others.



Developing Concern for Others – Exercise

- *What would your life be like in 20 years' time if your main hopes and dreams of today have been fulfilled? Describe it briefly.*
- *From the perspective of this ideal future, looking back on your life leading up to this point, how have you helped others to pursue their own hopes and dreams? And how have others helped you reciprocally?*
- *From the perspective of this ideal future, looking back on your life leading up to this point, how might you pursuing your ideal future have made it difficult for others to pursue their hopes and dreams?*



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Ahvenharju, S., Minkkinen, M., & Lalot, F. (2018). The five dimensions of Futures Consciousness. *Futures, the journal of policy, planning and futures studies*, 104, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2018.06.010>

Ahvenharju, S., Lalot, F., Minkkinen, M., & Quiamzade, A. (2021) Individual futures consciousness: Psychology behind the five-dimensional Futures Consciousness Scale. *Futures, the journal of policy, planning and futures studies* 128: 102708–. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2021.102708>

Lalot, F., Ahvenharju, S., Minkkinen, M., & Wensing, E. (2019). Aware of the future? Development and validation of the Futures Consciousness Scale. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 36, 874-888. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000565>

Lalot, F., Ahvenharju, S., & Minkkinen, M. (2021) Aware of the Future? Adaptation and Refinement of the Futures Consciousness Scale (Open Access) *Psychological Test Adaptation and Development*, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1027/2698-1866/a000014>

