

Stabilizing with a Predictable Standard

Understanding and Developing Introverted Sensing

A GROUP OF PILGRIMS TRAVELS MANY MONTHS TO VISIT A SAGE ON A MOUNTAIN TOP. THE PILGRIMS ENTER THE TEMPLE AND ASK:



Benefits for Self-Leadership

As you develop introverted Sensing, you will

- Feel a more solid connection to your roots
- Have practical knowledge to navigate life's many traditions and institutions
- Accumulate a thorough storehouse of experiences to draw on
- Be more comfortable and secure

Assessing Current Development

Before continuing, check the phrases in the table that describe you well.

Part 1
☐ Follow the work, ideas, and example of others who have come before you. ☐ Notice whether the details in front of you match what you are accustomed to. ☐ Review a lot of information over time to confirm a customary standard.
Part 2
☐ Feel inclined to put a stop to something new to your experience. ☐ Point out discrepancies between how things are and the way they have always been.
Part 3
☐ In emergencies, trust solutions that have stabilized the situation in the past. ☐ Compare an experience against a storehouse of familiar experiences to find what's reliable. ☐ Perform the same regular work or activity every day at an even, comfortable pace.

Scoring: Assign one point to items in part 1, two points to items in part 2, and three points to items in part 3.

Total points:

A score above nine indicates a likely preference for introverted Sensing. A score from four to nine indicates a possible supporting preference or development from life experience. A score below four suggests a lack of development.

Understanding How Introverted Sensing Works

At the core of introverted Sensing is a predictable standard—typically, a convention, historical practice, or tradition. It is what is most familiar to us, what we know and rely on. Based on its constancy, it may surely serve us well. A predictable standard might be a time-honored brand, a rock-solid relationship, a familiar furrowed brow, a team process that consistently works, or an enjoyable pastime. A standard may also be a form of government or a cherished cultural tradition or institution that has held steadfast for a group, for a culture, or for all people everywhere.

Best-Use Activities

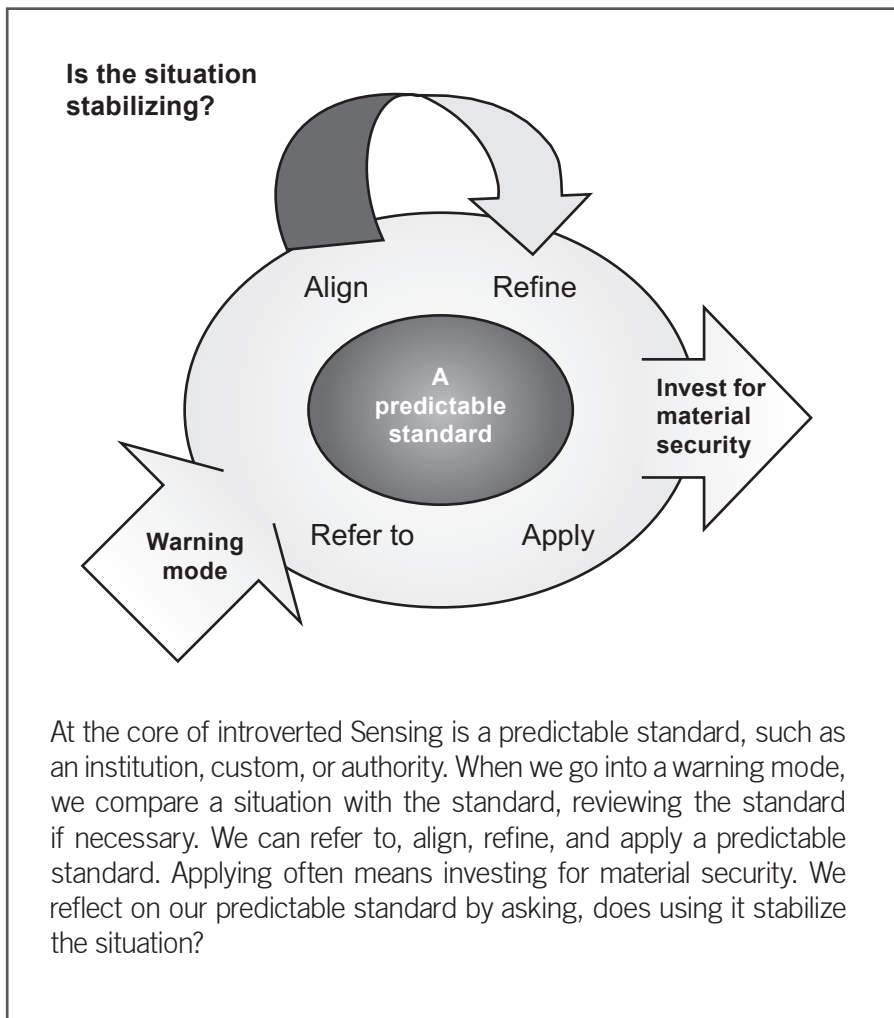
What can we do with a predictable standard? We can compare how things are now with the standard we are familiar with. This often involves recalling past details, guidelines, events, and reactions, with expectations of what is meant to happen. Does our restaurant meal match our prior experience with this dish? How does it compare to Mom's standard? What ingredients are necessary to make it more like what we know? Comparisons like these require a large storehouse of specific, rich experiences to draw on, and when we perceive that something doesn't match, we may feel uncomfortable.

In order to be sure of a standard, we might seek to clarify what it means officially. So we need well-educated experts and historians and a reliable memory for details. Since we don't want to distort a convention or tradition and risk destabilizing a situation, we prefer staying with something exactly as we learned it. Step-by-step instructions and plenty of practice are very effective for preserving how-to knowledge. With abstract information, such as a philosophical idea, we seek clarification to preserve and stick with the meaning that was originally intended by those who developed or presided over the idea.

Social roles and institutions, such as the family, our community, and our national and ethnic affiliations are long-lasting and act to stabilize life as a whole. Reenacting traditions and rites, whether singing Christmas carols or celebrating birthdays or bar mitzvahs, reinforces this stabilizing effect. Since we are a part of these institutions, we have a responsibility to review and maintain standards and precedents, whether these

are time-tested methodologies, the positions of authority figures who've earned respect, or carefully hammered out public policies. We fulfill jury duty summons, look both ways before crossing the street, keep tax returns seven years, and hold doors open for those who deserve it. Even in times of uncertainty we remember that change is the one constant: we are not the first generation to experience disruption or chaos, and we will be passing on the predictable standards to our descendants.

FIG. 4.1. Cognitive snapshot of introverted sensing



Since life can be unpredictable, a reliable guide, map, or set of signposts is prized. This guide might be how to succeed in college, how to raise children, or even how to die peacefully. Our elders are role models for how to handle such tasks. Similarly, we value having extra resources on hand for emergencies. And what should we hold at bay that's destabilizing? Stockpiling, planning, monitoring, and investment lead to material, social, and emotional security.

Even with change we remain solid. In new surroundings we might look around for what's familiar and hold strongly to that, perhaps applying what we know to make things more comfortable, such as ordering familiar food while traveling. We are not easily swayed by the present since it doesn't last compared to long-term institutions, commitments, and relationships. When a new standard is called for, we still can ask what precedent tells us. We build on the work of others, doing careful research and cataloging existing ideas before trying something new. We add to tradition, standing on the shoulders of those who have come before us. These precedents are not to be lightly abandoned.

People who prefer introverted Sensing draw on a storehouse of detailed standards and experiences to maintain a steady, comfortable pace as they navigate life and make sense of all aspects of living.

Mind-Set and Feedback

Using introverted Sensing requires that we maintain reliable practices. This often means sustaining and stabilizing group and cultural institutions and giving a warning or setting up roadblocks when standards are threatened. Even if we dislike something new, if a decision for change has been reached through established institutions and civic values, then we can accept it. If we didn't, we would be a disruptive element. Change is acceptable so long as it is carefully monitored and managed.

We know a standard is reliable if it stabilizes a situation. When a customary way of doing things is stable in the midst of great change, we find a tremendous feeling of comfort and relief.

Possible Misuses

Sometimes use of the introverted Sensing process becomes rigid and dominating because of stress or because it is used without skill and without other processes to balance it. When this occurs, we may

- Find ourselves engaging in pack-rat behavior, hoarding material goods to feel secure
- React more intensely than we want to when we recall memories of a negative experience, as if the experience is happening again
- Hear from others that we are overly focused on warnings about safety and lack of comfort
- Be perceived by others as somewhat stuck in the past or rigidly adhering to a known standard
- Find it hard to keep up with changes; for example, when our bank changes its customary, familiar procedures

Case Studies

The following vignettes illustrate introverted Sensing. The first is an everyday personal situation and the second is an organizational situation that includes other processes.

Case A

Heather is out touring in an unfamiliar foreign city. The ancient ruins she and her friends saw earlier were very interesting because they reminded her that however much things seem to change, daily human activities like going to the market, raising children, and attending religious services haven't changed at all. The tour guide was extremely detailed and clear. As Heather listened, the guide impressed upon her what life was like in ancient times. But right now, she's separated from her friends and feels disoriented. The sun peeks out and she reorients herself to go north back to the hotel. Her cell phone rings. It's a friend. His voice is reassuring. She passes by a flower shop and notices a fine rare species that she remembers from her childhood. She feels comforted by this familiar sight, realizing that even in such a faraway city she can find commonalities with her own life.



Case B

Jocelyn is the most reliable diplomat the corps has. She was trained by some of the most skillful members of the older generation and soaked up everything, educating herself beyond the courses and fieldwork. The world is in constant flux, yet Jocelyn knows that from history we can understand what might occur. Many parties she meets come from highly unstable places. As she meets them she draws on her storehouse of past experiences—the patterns of problems and specific solutions that have worked. She draws from these to suggest positive possibilities. Often the places need stabilizing before she can try to establish a major institutional change, but these parties also need hope. A few light touches of humor help too. Jocelyn reads a great deal of history. She has a deep sense that one can rely on civilization.



Perspective Shifting

Here are some suggestions for how to communicate with, learn from, and influence someone who is using introverted Sensing.

- **Communicating to Build Rapport**
 - Ask what predictable standard the other person is using. He or she may refer to a manual, established procedure, leader, parent, authoritative or influential figure, historical precedent, institution, law, value, tradition, meme, or custom. Use the other person's terms when you converse.
 - To gauge how the person feels about adhering to the standard, ask if he or she feels secure or is feeling uncomfortable about an unstable situation. Use inclusive language, such as "our standard" as opposed to "your standard."
- **Learning to Build New Skills**
 - Find out about the standard. Educate yourself on who established it and when. Was there a different standard before then? What promoted the need for the standard? Who maintains it now, and what kind of training was required? This may take quite a bit of research.

- Ask the other person to describe how using the standard has a stabilizing effect on a situation. At what point is extra vigilance needed, and what signs indicate that the stabilizing effect is working? For example, how and when do we cross from free speech to inciting problems? Most likely you will discover there are ever-more detailed standards to review and learn about.
- **Influencing for Best Use**
 - Consider whether other standards are being compromised or sacrificed in the service of the current one.
 - Ask how much the person has been able to go into a warning mode and what predictable standards he or she might have forgotten about or probably needs to review again.
- **Helping to Discover New Outcomes**
 - Ask the other person whether the situation is being stabilized as much as it can. That is, has following this standard really protected our values? You may need to give examples of past situations where another standard worked better.
 - If the person is dissatisfied, could another predictable standard also provide stability? (The person may not know what that new standard might be.)

***There is always a comparison to be made,
and if it is familiar, it is to be trusted.***

Developing Introverted Sensing

The following exercises will help you develop the introverted Sensing process. Get your self-assessment score from the beginning of this chapter and then set your starting point using the chart below.

If you scored	Then start with
0–3	The Introductory Exercises
4–9	The Basic Exercises
10+	The Advanced Exercises

As you work through the coming exercises, you may find some are particularly challenging. Include all the following steps to get more satisfying use of this process:

1. To access the process in the most effective way, go into a protective and concerned warning mode. (See pages 166–167 to enter this mode.)
2. Access the core of the process: which predictable standard is appropriate to stabilize the situation?
3. Engage in best-use activities, such as comparing the situation with what you are familiar with or reviewing your storehouse of experiences for what to expect.
4. Try for a desired outcome by investing (time, money, etc.) toward ensuring future security.
5. Get feedback and calibrate: is the standard we're relying on providing a sense of security?
6. Integrate your use of introverted Sensing with other cognitive processes (usually extraverted Thinking or extraverted Feeling).

As you develop this process, you'll be able to engage these steps all at once for increasingly coordinated and smooth use.

Introductory Exercises

These exercises will help you get comfortable researching details, finding what is predictable, and becoming more familiar with your background.

INTERVIEW AN ELDER

Sit down and interview one of the oldest people you know, preferably someone who knows your family's or organization's past very well and ideally someone you share roots with. Give the person time to speak, and be ready to hear information you didn't know or plan on asking about. Ask questions to get details and clarity on what happened when, with whom, where, and so on.

RESEARCH ALL THE DETAILS

Pick elements from the interview to research, ideally areas that relate further to you and also to a larger historical picture. You might research a foreign country or faraway town that your ancestors came from or a prestigious role someone played, such as being the head chef to a king. Research as much as you can. Read books and watch factual films. Go to a large library and sift through relevant newspaper and magazine articles. Understand the context as well as the specifics. For the king's chef, what was going on in the country at that time? Visit other people to find out more. And look through old letters, heirlooms, and other items of the period.

CONTINUE A TRADITION

Reflect on what you've unearthed. What feels as though it really reconnects you to your roots? Add an element of that tradition to your life, whether it's a restored photo, a recipe, or a piece of artwork an ancestor created.

Basic Exercises

These exercises will help you get comfortable exploring predictable standards, from world and family history and traditions to how your organization and community work.

READ A LOT OF HISTORY

Pick some reputable books—ones that are factual, are written by long-time experts, and give a window into daily life as well as big events. Consider books that were published fifty years or more ago, if possible, in addition to recent books to get a more thorough perspective. As you read, consider which institutions, organizations, movements, and ideas have lasted. How did they respond to challenge and change in order to survive and thrive? What conventions have changed or remained? And what are some lessons for today? Try to step back to see the present as a moment in the panoramic sweep of human history and human nature. Similarly, look at institutions, organizations, and ideas that have mostly vanished. Why did they fail? You will likely find failures in character, lack of preparation for adversity, and the inability to uphold key values. In a vanished organization you might uncover failures in service, production quality, and adherence to a mission.

As you read, focus on comparisons with today, observing how life or standards differ. The Roman Empire and the American Revolution can be as relevant, if not more so, than last year's brightest stars in the news. A family-run organization that's lasted two hundred years is certainly impressive. Focus on what made these civilizations, organizations, movements, and ideas enduring and successful. Focus on details and character.

READ BIOGRAPHIES

Soak up information about the lives that have influenced the world today, for good or ill, as well as the lives of people who are role models for success. What were their family lives and career lives like? Pay special attention to qualities of character that these people held or developed as they weathered adversities. What were their beliefs and the ideas they followed? Who were their role models? As you read, compare these notable individuals and groups to people you know now in similar positions and to yourself.

RESEARCH THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA

Ideas powerfully shape our lives. They affect how we think and the decisions we make. Choose an idea related to your career or in a field of high interest to you. As ideas are handed down and passed around, especially by nonexperts or through questionable sources like the Internet, they tend to get distorted and lose their original meaning and depth. There-

fore, as you research, learn not only about the original thinkers and their intended meanings but also how, when, and by whom the idea has been carried and distorted. Document everything you read and the people you interview, and then write a report or lecture on what you've learned. Include references for others to confirm your research and build on what you've done.

LEARN HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION WORKS

Focus on an institution relevant to your daily life, such as the organization you work for or encounter the most, perhaps your local government, which often has tremendous influence on the quality of life. Get to know this organization or institution in detail. What are its responsibilities? What roles or positions exist and who currently fills these roles? If you work in a big company, do you know the president's name? If you are part of a far-flung network of researchers, do you know the names and writings of the lead experts? Consider how you can use this information to solve problems—whom do you need to go to and what questions do you need to ask? Similarly, note whom to pay attention to because one day you might fill one of these higher roles. Knowing an organization also allows you to help and direct others.

REVIEW YOUR ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY AND STANDARDS

Who was the founder of your organization? Even large, impersonal organizations have traditions started by their founders; many times these traditions are known by only a few people. What ups and downs has the organization faced over time? What standards or procedures exist as a result of this history to make the organization what it is today?

CARRY ON TRADITIONS

Learn in depth about your family traditions and ethnic background, everything from food and clothing to religion and mythology. This may take some time, perhaps many years. Don't rush it. Simply continue over time to steadily learn and absorb these details while incorporating them into your life. Carry on in your own life, and the lives of your family and community, as many traditions as possible. Over time you might learn your ancestors' language, which might just be Old English. Also

visit your family's place of origin. Honor and sustain your background by cooking traditional meals, going to community festivals, and so on. Consider how your background informs who you are as a person.

CULTIVATE GOOD HABITS

Good habits sustain us when circumstances are grim and open doors to better opportunities. These include grooming and etiquette, proper spelling and pronunciation, and thorough knowledge of social and cultural conventions. Practice expanding your vocabulary. Dress in a way that is comfortable and familiar to the people around you.

FIND AND STAY IN YOUR COMFORT ZONE

In any situation, find the places, people to talk to, and ways of doing things that are most comfortable and familiar to you. These might include foods, music, and other details. As the environment changes, or as you go somewhere else, move without hurrying and stay with what's comfortable. Where you are most comfortable is a good starting point to try new things, and a good place to return in order to relax. Also, share with others what makes you comfortable and uncomfortable. This sharing can create a sense of community when everyone knows and attends to where his or her comfort zone is.

Advanced Exercises

These exercises will help you hone your basic use of the introverted Sensing process and develop some advanced use. Learn to take a more active role in maintaining and passing on what's reliable.

IDENTIFY WHAT'S UNSAFE OR INSECURE

Look around your organization, community, culture, or family environment and compare what you see with what you've now learned are predictable standards. Look for what is unsafe, in violation of established values, problematic, or otherwise suggestive of a possible future turn for the worse. This might be something as seemingly minor as a dangerous parking lot or as scandalous as a prominent leader not properly fulfilling the responsibilities of his or her position. Look for people acting out of a desire for personal gain, people who lack competence and training, or people who are poor judges or poor examples of good character.

STABILIZE THE PRESENT

After researching your history, culture, organization, and other institutions and learning how people have handled problems in the past, you are in a solid position to help stabilize and correct problem areas right now. Find out what resources are available to help you resolve the problem. These resources might be supervisory committees, ethics panels, an ombudsman, or a particular procedure. Go through these channels so you aren't perceived as a problem. The result might be a change in standards, a safety mechanism, or a required certification process. Going through proper channels may take some time, particularly in large or far-flung organizations where there are many people to consult and procedures or standards to review before moving ahead. Remember that your organization is itself a standard. You are helping to maintain the reliability and prestige of this standard.

VOLUNTEER TO HELP

Sometimes no existing standard covers a particular concern or dangerous situation, or no one is competent or willing to apply the existing standards. It may be that no one is looking out to stabilize a situation and shepherd the people in it at all. Now is the time for you to volunteer if you feel sufficiently comfortable and ready to do so. Having others at your side to assist and advise you can make this step more comfortable. Consider the appropriate way to volunteer. It might be to fill a support or research position, assist other members of your organization, work with your peers toward a common end, or even go outside the organization to give or get help. In a broader way, volunteering might mean running for public office or performing in some other major position of responsibility. Volunteer roles, filled responsibly, often lead to official positions later.

ESTABLISH NEW PREDICTABLE STANDARDS

As times change and we face new challenges, new standards are needed to sustain the growth process. An example is an individual's journey through the important points of life, such as going to college, getting a job, getting married, and having children. At each of these points, we benefit when we can turn to reliable sources of information and guidance. When helping others, you can draw upon your own rich storehouse of personal experience and upon the knowledge you

have soaked up of others' experiences to give advice. As you establish the new standard, get feedback so you can be sure it is accepted and carried out. Also make sure that the standard maintains the quality or value of what has come before, whether it is an organization's good name, people's reputations, the value of an idea, or confidence in a particular brand.

ANTICIPATE THE FUTURE

What do you expect to happen in the future? You can form expectations by looking at the paths society has laid out and the experience of those who've come before you and even by consulting experts who are known for predicting from trends. When you were in high school you probably had a good idea what was coming next—either college or a job. Most people expect to get married—marriage being an institution older than history. We all grow old and can expect to need support when we decline.

INVEST FOR THE FUTURE

Investing for the future includes saving, storing, and planning, as well as monitoring and protecting what has been set aside for the future. Investment might mean money and material goods, but it also means investing in a stable, productive, and successful life. Getting a solid education helps ensure a higher-paying job than you can expect with a lack of education. Investing a summer in learning etiquette can open doors throughout your life, as can learning how to balance your checkbook. Also, have a backup plan or safety net. Communities and organizations provide safety nets, and being a responsible member of your community brings respect, which can mean care and support in your old age.

WORK AT A STEADY, EVEN PACE

With so many details to manage, with so much accumulation of knowledge, and with the high pace of change, it is worthwhile to work at a steady, even pace each day as an investment in your health and to accomplish as much as possible. Find a place to live and stay where the people and practices are familiar and comforting.

SHEPHERD AND SUSTAIN THE NEXT GENERATION

We are neither the first nor likely the last generation. Take everything that you've learned and use it to contribute to and maintain a safe, stable environment for your children and the next generation, passing on your knowledge and experience. This means participating in your family life, your community, and your nation.