



**Examine** your  
**Tolerance for Ambiguity.**

Many people find ambiguity and uncertainty more difficult to deal with than change itself. How do you stack up on this personality trait?

People with a low tolerance for ambiguity like for their world to be systematic, orderly, and predictable. Give them a map, a schedule, a plan . . . the more structure, the better. The fuzzier the situation—that is, the more they have to deal with unknowns and a lack of clarity—the more bothersome it becomes. When forced to wait for answers, wondering how things will turn out, the vagueness gnaws at them and they get itchy to bring about resolution. Closure becomes the top priority. Trouble is, in attempting to drive out ambiguity and improve their psychological comfort level, they often complicate matters and compromise their position. Patience might have produced much better options.

In contrast, people with a high tolerance for ambiguity find it much easier to handle the open-endedness of uncertainty. They're comfortable feeling their way along . . . giving the situation time to unfold . . . letting it teach them how to proceed. They're willing to improvise and deal with reality as it arrives. This keeps them open to possibilities and positions them to maneuver toward opportunity.

So which way do you lean? On a 10-point scale—with 1 being very low tolerance for ambiguity, and 10 representing extreme comfort with ambiguity—where would you score? Seriously think about it. Now circle the number that you think fits:



Joe Louis, the legendary boxer, said, “Everyone has a plan until they’ve been hit.” The lower your score, the harder the punch when uncertainty takes a swing at you.

Here’s the thing to remember: Your tolerance for ambiguity will color your view of the situation at hand and predispose you to react a certain way. But you’re still the person in charge of you.

“ Wanting to know where we are going is often how we fail to go anywhere at all. ”

—Julia Cameron