

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

VIRTUAL ENTRY ASSESSMENT MC

(474 WITH PRACTICE EXAM)

MAIL CARRIER — JOBS —



Virtual Entry Assessment MC (474) - Mail Carrier Jobs

Mail Carrier

City Carrier

City Carrier Assistant

Rural Carrier Associate

Postal exam 474, also called Virtual Entry Assessment MC 474 and the Mail Carrier VEA Exam, is the newly launched test used to fill all delivery positions including City Carrier, City Carrier Assistant, Casual City Carrier, Rural Carrier, Rural Carrier Associate, and Assistant Rural Carrier.

After applying for one of these jobs, you are sent an email with instructions and a link for taking the test. You must complete the exam within 72 hours of applying. If you do not complete the exam within 72 hours, your application is deleted. If you do not complete the exam within 72 hours, you can apply for other jobs that become available, but you will not be considered for the original job you applied for.

This is a self-administered exam that lasts about 45 minutes. You take it on your own at home or wherever you choose. You do not have to travel to a supervised testing site to take it.

You can use a computer, a tablet, or a smart phone to take the exam. At the beginning of the test, you must select which of these devices you will be using.

You are encouraged to complete the exam in one sitting, but you can exit the exam and return to finish it later if so desired. Your answers are saved up to the point you left the exam, and you are able pick it up and start again where you left it. But as previously mentioned, whether you finish the test in one sitting or leave it and come back to finish it later, you still must complete the exam within 72 hours of applying.

The test is formatted as a slide show with audio narration. All information, instructions, and questions are given both verbally and in writing as you progress from screen to screen.

Your score is available immediately upon completion of the exam. To see your score, log into your eCareer Candidate Profile on the Postal Service website. Your score can be found under the “Assessments” tab.

The highest possible score is 100, and the passing score is 70. (Military veterans entitled to preference points may be able to score slightly higher than 100.) If you fail or score below 70, rather than being given a numerical score, you are simply ranked as ineligible. The Postal Service will release no info about the scoring formula for this exam, and it is not possible to find out why you made a certain score.

It is imperative that you achieve the highest possible score due to the Postal interview policy. This policy states that only the top three scoring applicants are invited for an interview. You must have one of the top three scores for any chance whatsoever.

And you absolutely must make the highest possible score right now when you have the chance because, whether you pass or fail, you will not be able to take this exam again for twelve months. If you blow it now by failing or by not getting a high enough score, you are out of luck for a whole year. You can apply for jobs filled from different tests during that one year period, but you will not be able to apply for jobs filled from this exam.

Exam 474, by the way, is very similar to exam 477 which is used to fill customer service jobs. It is logical that these two exams are similar since they both fill jobs that deal with customers. Exam 474 fills jobs delivering mail to customers, and exam 477 fills jobs serving customers at the front counter.

Why Preparation for this Exam Is So Essential

There are various types of test preparation needed for different kinds of exams. Preparation for this exam is critical so that you know exactly what to expect and so that you will not be blown away by the bizarre questions and the odd way they are to be answered. All the questions on this test - literally 100% of the questions - fit this bizarre description. It is not unusual for applicants to fail because they never really understand the questions or how to answer them.

What is so strange about the questions and answers on this exam?

- The questions are all multiple choice where you are to select an answer that best fits you, your probable response to a work situation, your experience, your preferred approach to work, your personality, etc.
- The questions are mostly theoretical or hypothetical in nature and can often be misunderstood or not understood at all.
- Any or all of the answer choices can seem reasonable depending upon your particular personality and experience, and there is never one obvious answer that stands out as the best choice. In fact, different answers can be the correct choice for different people and/or for different jobs.
- In one section of the exam you are to select two answers, the action you would be most likely to take and the action you would be least likely to take in response to a given situation.
- In another section, each question consists of two descriptions that may be quite similar or radically different. You are to choose which description is more like you and then choose to what degree it is like you.

Although the scoring formula for this exam is not known, we do know that the Postal Service scores you by (1) creating a profile of you based upon your answers to these bizarre questions and then (2) comparing your profile to a theoretical profile of a theoretical perfect employee. And the theoretical profile of a theoretical perfect employee varies from one job to another. A numerical score is somehow developed based upon this comparison of profiles.

Preparation is also important to overcome Test Anxiety, a very real problem that causes applicants to perform below their potential and to score poorly. Test Anxiety can only be overcome by becoming familiar and comfortable with exam content. That is especially true on a strange exam like this one. That is one of the reasons we give you such detailed information about the exam and such realistic practice test questions. By the time you complete this guide, you will know exactly what to expect, and you will feel cool, calm, and confident when taking the exam.

You may expect a test prep guide to tell you what answers to choose on this exam, but that is simply not possible on a test like this. Applicants

sometimes try to choose answers that they think would make them look good to the Postal Service rather than answers that reflect their true personality, preferences, etc. Some of these applicants get away with it and even get a job, but many who try it fail. Answering questions in this fashion is known as test manipulation.

We cannot in good conscience suggest that you manipulate this test by trying to select answers you think they prefer. There are built-in traps and indicators within the questions specifically designed to expose manipulation attempts. The software that scores this exam is programmed to look for indications of manipulation and to deduct substantial points from your score for each manipulation attempt indicated. Both ethically and practically, your best and only course is to answer honestly and sincerely. Attempts to manipulate this exam may end up being the fastest route to failure.

Exam Content

The exam consists of an introduction and three sections. The introduction, which lasts about five minutes, gives you a brief bit of Postal Service history and a description of the jobs filled from this exam. Following are a description, instructions, and a sample question for each exam section.

Work Scenarios Section

This section is called “Work Scenarios” on exams 474, 475, and 476, but it is called “Work Situations” on exam 477. This section usually takes about seven minutes to finish. The instructions encourage you to work quickly, but it is not timed, so you can take as much time as you need.

This section has eight questions, each of which describes a situation that you might encounter on the job. The questions are presented one per screen. As you move from one question to the next, you are taken from one screen to another. The four answer choices are potential actions that you could take in response to the situation described. You

are to select two answer choices, the action you would be most likely to take and the action you would be least likely to take.

Select your answers by marking one answer choice on the left for the action you would be most likely to take and one answer choice on the right for the action you would be least likely to take. As discussed above, there are typically no obvious best answers for Most Likely or for Least Likely. All the answer choices may seem reasonable. You must simply choose the most and least likely actions that you personally would take.

Once you have made answer choices by clicking your most and least likely actions, a “NEXT” button appears at the bottom right corner of the screen. Clicking this button takes you to the next question. But do not click the “NEXT” button until you are really ready to move on because you cannot return to the previous question once you click the “NEXT” button.

Below is a sample Work Scenarios question. Most people will find that all of the answer choices for this sample question seem reasonable. There are no obvious correct answers. You must nonetheless choose which you would be most and least likely to do in the situation described.

You are confronted by a bad dog when attempting to make a delivery. *Which would you be most and least likely to do?*

Most



Pick One of Each



Least



Use a deterrent pepper spray on the dog to avoid an incident or injury.



Ask the property owner to restrain the dog.



Postpone delivery until supervisory advice can be obtained.



Call the local animal control agency to remove the dog.



Tell Us Your Story Section

The Tell Us Your Story section consists of twenty questions about your work experience and background. The questions are presented one per screen. As you move from one question to the next, you are taken from one screen to another. For each question in this section, you only select one answer choice by clicking it.

This section usually takes about two minutes to complete. As with the previous section, the instructions encourage you to work quickly, but it is not timed, so you can take as much time as you need.

Immediately upon clicking an answer to a question, you will be automatically taken to the next question. You can go back one question, but only one question, at any time if you need to double check your previous answer.

Below is a sample Tell Us Your Story question.

How much experience do you have in jobs where you were required to drive a company vehicle daily?

None

Less than 1 year

1-2 years

2-5 years

5-10 years

More than 10 years

Describe Your Approach Section

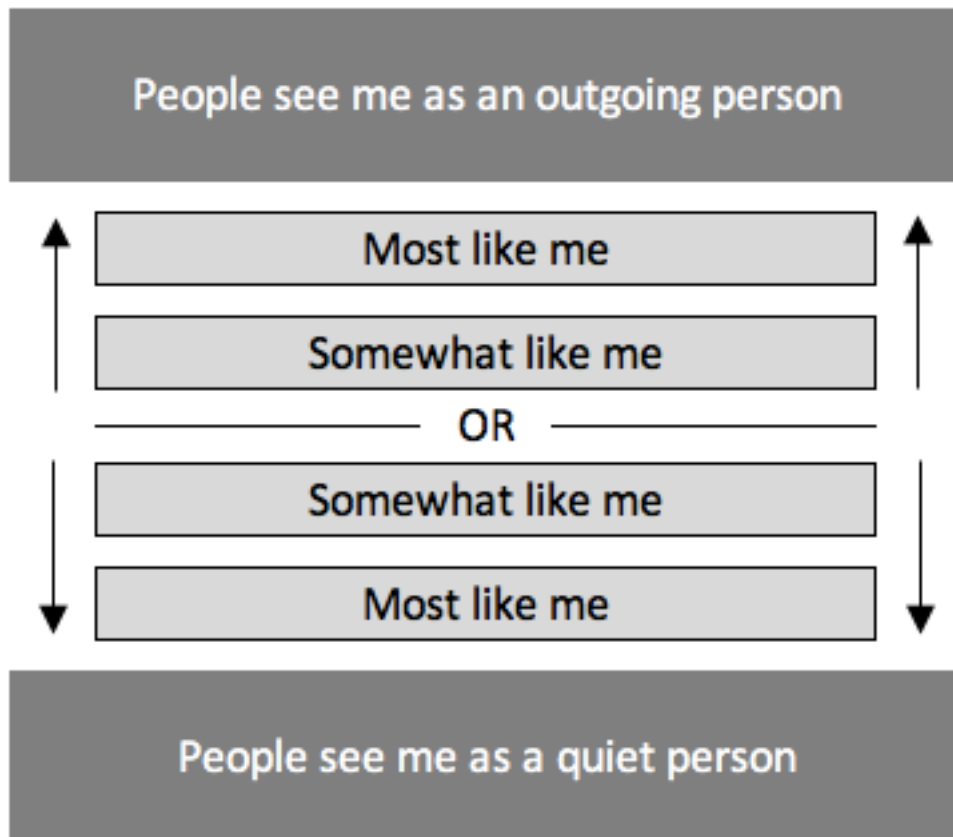
The Describe Your Approach section consists of 56 questions about numerous topics such as your preferred approach to work, your personality, how you relate to other people (especially coworkers and supervisors), how you handle stress, etc. The questions are presented one per screen. As you move from one question to the next, you are taken from one screen to another. You only select one answer choice for each question, but this is another case of bizarre questions and odd answer choices.

This section usually takes around six minutes to complete. The instructions encourage you to work quickly, but again it is not timed, so you can take as much time as you need.

Immediately upon clicking an answer to a question, you are automatically taken to the next question. You can go back one

question, but only one question, at any time if you need to double check your previous answer.

Below is a sample Describe Your Approach question. It will be much easier to describe the questions and how to answer while you are looking at the sample question.



Here is how you answer questions in this section.

- You only select and click one answer choice for each question despite the confusing structure of the questions.
- First choose which statement is more like you, the top statement or the bottom statement.
- If the top statement is more like you, click either “Most like me” or “Somewhat like me” under the top statement depending upon how well that description fits you. For this question, if you are an outgoing person as stated at the top,

and if you are a very outgoing person, you might click “Most like me” under the top statement.

- If the bottom statement is more like you, click either “Most like me” or “Somewhat like me” over the bottom statement depending upon how well that description fits you. For this question, if you are a rather quiet - but not a very quiet - person as stated at the bottom, you might click “Somewhat like me” over the bottom statement.

The Describe Your Approach questions can indeed be bizarre.

Sometimes the top and bottom statements can be quite opposite as in our sample question - outgoing vs. quiet. Other times the top and bottom statements seem to say the same thing in different words, so it is very difficult to choose an answer. And it is virtually never obvious which answer choice may be best.

Complete Practice Exam

Following is a complete practice exam. How realistic are the questions? They are actual questions from the real test paraphrased so they will not be in violation of copyright law.

However, you may or may not see these specific questions when taking your exam. There are a number of versions of the exam, and the different versions have different questions. It may be that only a few questions are different, or all the questions may be different. Or you may see the same questions but presented in a different order. If you happen to take the same version that these practice test questions came from, you will see these same questions in the same order but in their original wording. Regardless of what questions you see, the actual exam will be formatted exactly like this practice test.

As explained earlier, the Postal Service will not release any information about how this test is scored, so it is not possible to score this practice exam. And there are no definitive right or wrong answers, so it is not possible to provide an answer key. When taking both the practice exam and the actual test, you are to answer the questions honestly and

sincerely, so answers that may be right for you ... that accurately describe you ... may be wrong for another applicant.

The purpose of the practice exam is therefore not to score you or to judge the accuracy of your answers because such is simply not possible. The purpose is to assure that you know exactly what to expect when taking the real test, that you are not blown away by the bizarre questions, that you do not suffer from Test Anxiety, and that you are prepared to achieve your highest possible score.

The practice exam is broken down into its various sections. You will take it one section at a time. You can take all sections in a single sitting or take them individually as preferred. You have unlimited access and can return to the practice test as many times as you like.

The actual exam is taken visually on a computer, tablet, or smart phone screen. This practice exam is therefore taken the same way. To take it visually, read the questions and review the answers choices on your device screen, and then select answer choices in your mind. Marking answers is not necessary since, per previous discussion, the practice exam cannot be scored. The purpose of this practice exam is not to be scored since that is impossible. The purpose, as emphasized throughout this guide, is to assure that you know exactly what to expect when taking the real test and that you do not suffer from Test Anxiety.

Work Scenarios Practice Test

You are to select two answer choices for each of these eight questions, the action you would be most likely to take and the action you would be least likely to take, in response to the described situation. This section usually takes about seven minutes to finish. You are encouraged to work quickly, but this section is not timed, so you can take as long as you need.

1. A customer asks questions about shipping choices, but you do not know the answers.

Which would you be most and least likely to do?

Most



Pick One of Each



Least



Apologize and explain that, as a mail carrier, knowing about shipping choices is not part of your job.



Say you will have answers tomorrow and research the shipping choices after finishing your deliveries.



Ask your supervisor for answers so you can give them to the customer tomorrow.



Say you do not know about shipping choices and suggest that he look on the USPS website.



2. A new employee is having trouble learning his job which forces you and others to work harder to meet production standards. *Which would you be most and least likely to do?*

Most



Pick One of Each



Least

<input type="radio"/>	Do nothing because his production should improve over time.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Tell him to ask if he has questions about how to do his job.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Tell him how to do his job quicker and better.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Tell the Postmaster that the new hire is not working out and should be moved into a different type job.	<input type="radio"/>

3. A customer is angry because the nearby Post Office does not have a product he needs today. *Which would you be most and least likely to do?*

Most



Pick One of Each



Least

<input type="radio"/>	Go get the product at another facility and bring it back to the customer.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Tell the customer he should call the Postmaster to complain.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Say you will tell him when that product becomes available.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Suggest an alternate product that may work.	<input type="radio"/>

4. You are to complete a task before beginning deliveries. While doing that task, you see two coworkers having trouble with a job. *Which would you be most and least likely to do?*

Most ← **Pick One of Each** → **Least**

<input type="radio"/>	Help them out even if it prevents you from finishing your assigned task.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Ignore them and finish your task.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Ask somebody else to help them.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Give them only some quick advice so you can complete your task in time.	<input type="radio"/>

5. A customer complains to you about another Postal employee. *Which would you be most and least likely to do?*

Most



Pick One of Each



Least



Listen to his complaint, apologize, and suggest he talk to the Postmaster.



Explain that the employee in question is really a good worker but was just having a bad day.



Pass the complaint along to the Postmaster for handling.



Apologize to the customer and tell him you would like to help with his issue to assure he is satisfied.



6. A customer moved but is not receiving his mail because he did not submit a Change of Address form. He wants you to give him his mail anyway. *Which would you be most and least likely to do?*

Most



Pick One of Each



Least



Tell him there is nothing you can do until he submits a Change of Address form.



Explain that, for his own security, mail cannot be forwarded without a Change of Address form.



Tell him Postal policy prohibits you from giving him mail until a Change of Address form is submitted.



Apologize and explain how he can find and submit a Change of Address form.



7. A customer on your route asks how to find something on the USPS website. *Which would you be most and least likely to do?*

Most



Pick One of Each



Least



Explain where to find it and inquire the next day if he found it.



Explain where to find it and offer to help with any other issues he may have.



Offer to help him find it on his computer.



Help him find it on the website and suggest an alternative that is less expensive.



8. A customer asks about status of a package that you delivered days ago. *Which would you be most and least likely to do?*

Most



Pick One of Each



Least

<input type="radio"/>	Say it was delivered already and probably someone else brought it inside for him.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Show him proof of delivery and ask if it might have been stolen.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Tell him it was delivered already and that he should contact the Postmaster with any questions.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Show him proof of delivery and tell him he is responsible for the package once it is delivered.	<input type="radio"/>

Tell Us Your Story Practice Test

For each of the 20 Tell Us Your Story questions, select one answer choice that best describes your experience or background. This section usually takes about two minutes to complete. You are encouraged to work quickly, but this section is not timed, so you can take as long as you need.

1. How much experience do you have working directly with customers?

None

Less than 1 year

1-2 years

2-5 years

5-10 years

More than 10 years

2. How would your latest manager rate your punctuality compared to other employees?

The very best

Among the best

Above average

Average

Below average

Poor

3. How many jobs have you left voluntarily in the last four years?

0

1

2

3

4-5

More than 5

Not applicable, this will be my first job

4. How would your latest manager rate your customer service skills compared to others?

The very best

Among the best

Above average

Average

Below average

Poor

Not applicable

5. How would your latest manager rate your performance compared to others employees?

The very best

Among the best

Above average

Average

Below average

Poor

6. How many unexcused absences are acceptable before an employee is disciplined?

None

1-2 per year

3-4 per year

5-7 per year

8-10 per year

11-15 per year

More than 15 per year

7. How long were you at your latest job before voluntarily leaving?

I did not leave my latest job voluntarily

Less than 6 months

6 month - 1 year

1-2 years

2-5 years

5-10 years

More than 10 years

Not applicable, this will be my first job

8. How would your latest manager rate your verbal communication skills?

The very best

Among the best

Above average

Average

Below average

Poor

9. How would your latest manager rate your motivation to become a top performer?

Extremely high

Above average

Average

Below average

Fairly low

Extremely low

10. How many unexcused tardies did you have per month at you latest job.

None

1-2

3-4

5-7

8-10

More than 10

11. Have you ever left a job voluntarily before getting a new one?

Yes

No

Not applicable, this will be my first job

12. How would your latest manager rate the quality of your work?

The very best

Among the best

Above average

Average

Below average

Poor

13. How many times have you been honored for high performance on the job?

0

1

2

3-4

5-6

7-10

More than 10

Not applicable, this will be my first job

14. How many fulltime jobs have you left voluntarily within one month of starting?

0

1

2

3

4-5

More than 5

Not applicable, this will be my first job

15. How would your latest manager rate your attendance compared to other employees?

The very best

Among the best

Above average

Average

Below average

Poor

16. How many times have you been disciplined for violating a company policy?

0

1-2

3-4

5-6

7-10

More than 10

17. How many times per year did you have unexcused absences at your latest job?

None

1-2 times per year

3-4 times per year

5-7 times per year

8-10 times per year

More than 10 times per year

18. What is the longest time you stayed with one employer without voluntarily leaving?

Less than 6 months

6 month - 1 year

1-2 years

2-5 years

5-10 years

More than 10 years

Not applicable, this will be my first job

19. How many jobs have you left voluntarily in the last four years?

0

1

2

3

4-5

More than 5

Not applicable, this will be my first job

20. How long do you hope to work for the USPS?

Less than 6 months

6 month - 1 year

1-2 years

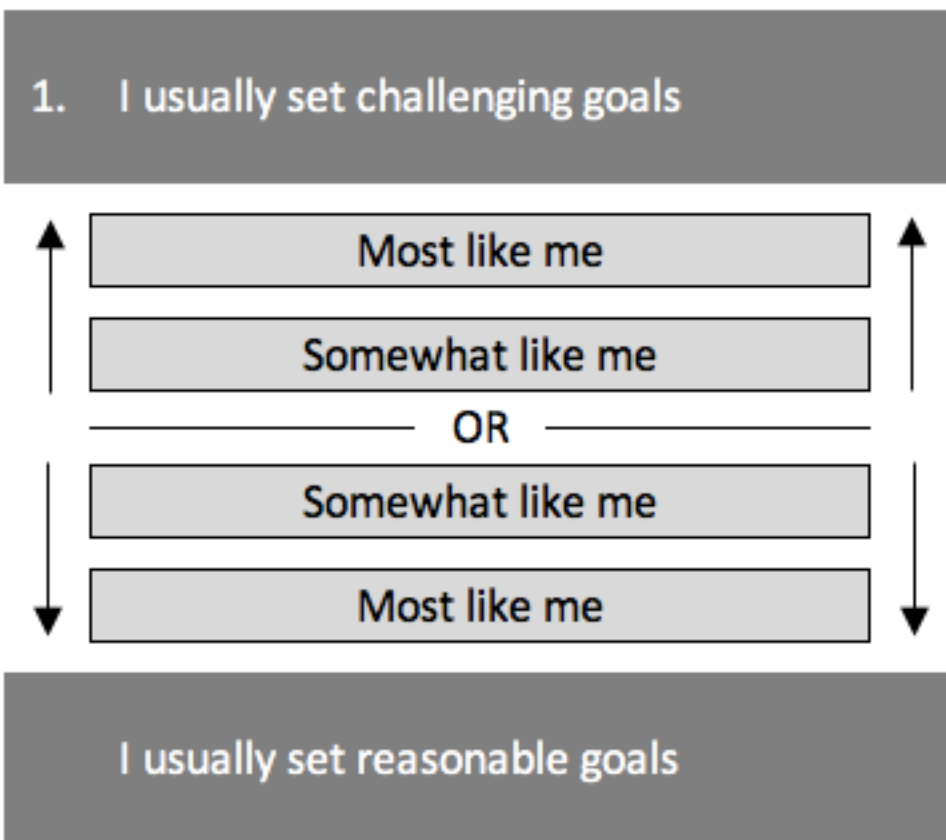
2-5 years

5-10 years

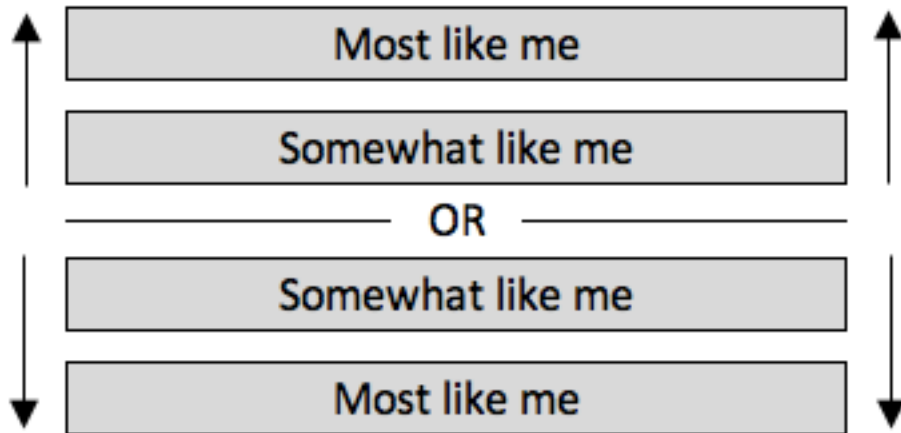
More than 10 years

Describe Your Approach Practice Test

The Describe Your Approach section has 56 questions and usually takes about six minutes to finish. You are encouraged to work quickly, but this section is not timed, so you can take as much time as you need. Each question consists of two statements, one at the top and one at the bottom. You are to (1) choose which statement (top or bottom) that is most like you and then (2) select the answer choice - “Most like me” or “Somewhat like me” - for that statement that best fits you.

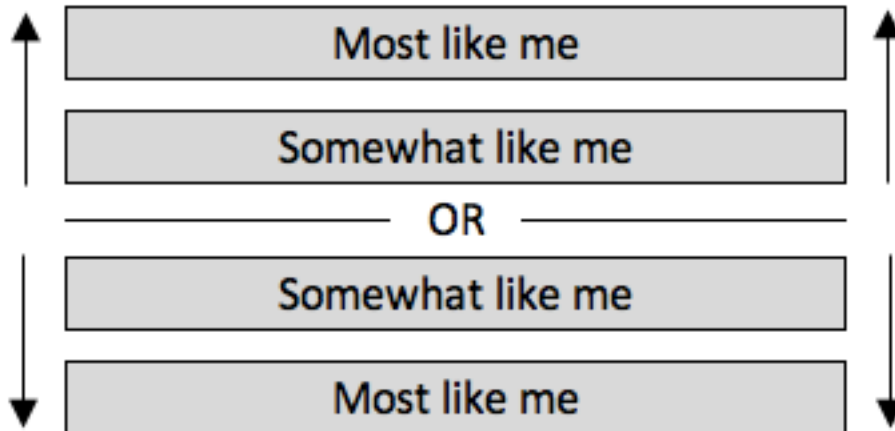


2. I can sometimes tell how other people feel



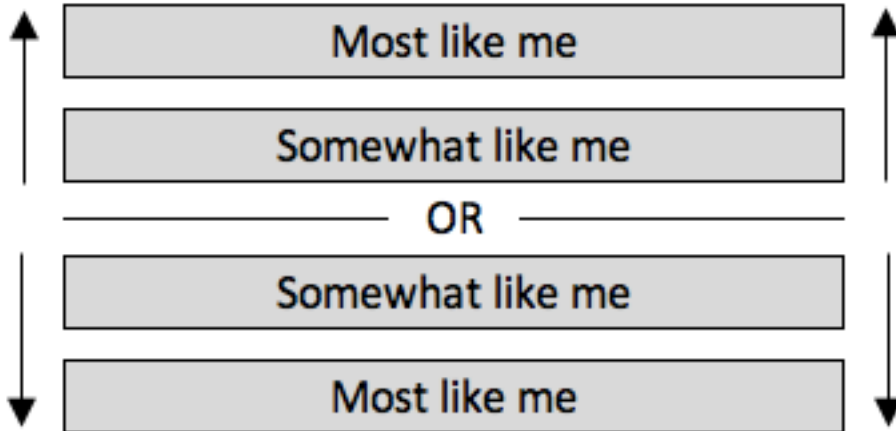
I can nearly always tell how other people feel

3. It is okay if I do not achieve my goal if I tried my best



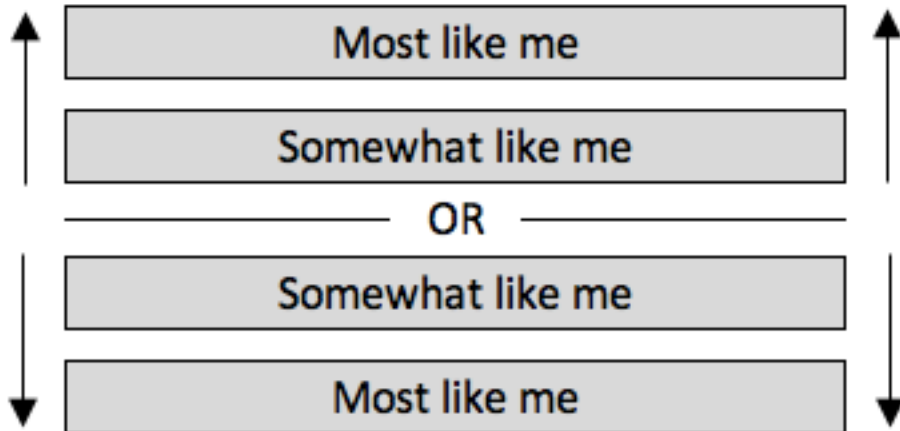
I set very high goals and am determined to achieve them

4. I accomplish all my job duties



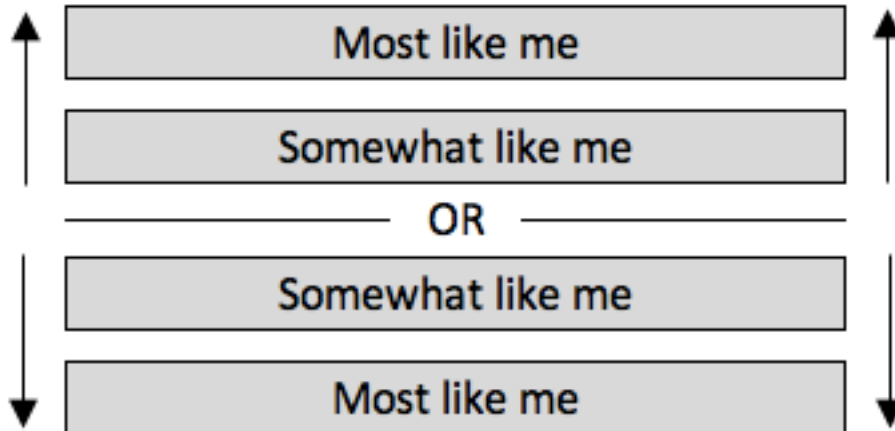
I almost always go above and beyond my job duties

5. It is easy for me to tell how other people feel



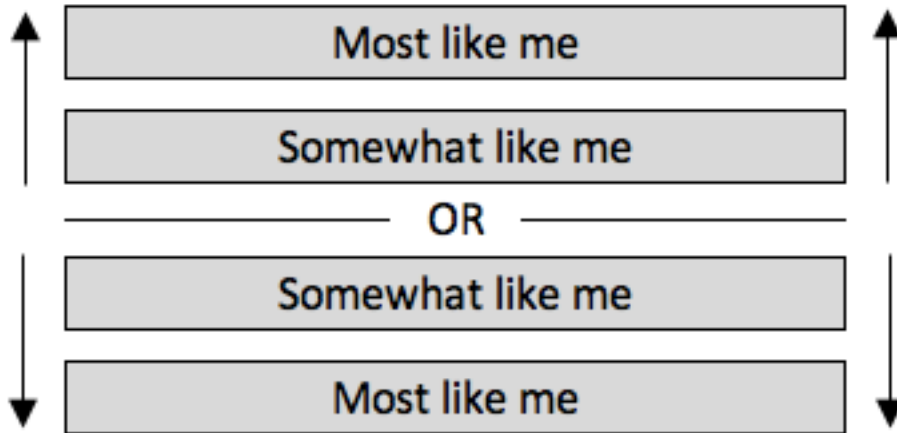
It is not easy to tell how other people feel

6. Not succeeding is okay if I tried my best



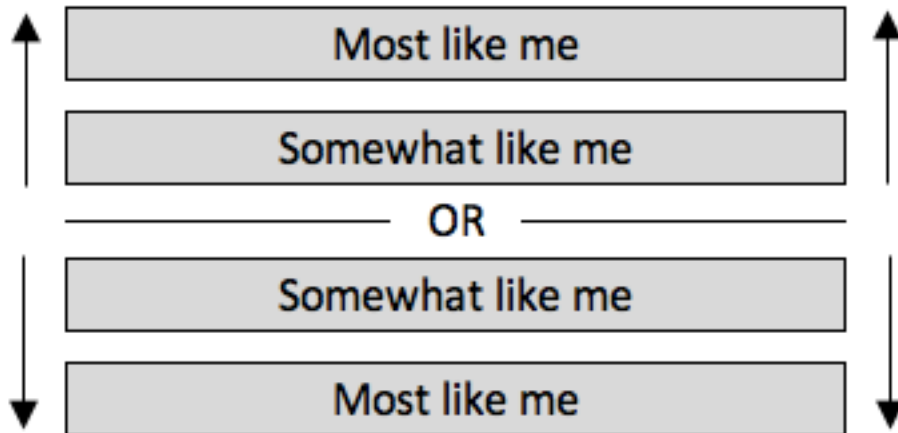
I am driven to succeed

7. I can tell how other people feel even if they try to hide their feelings



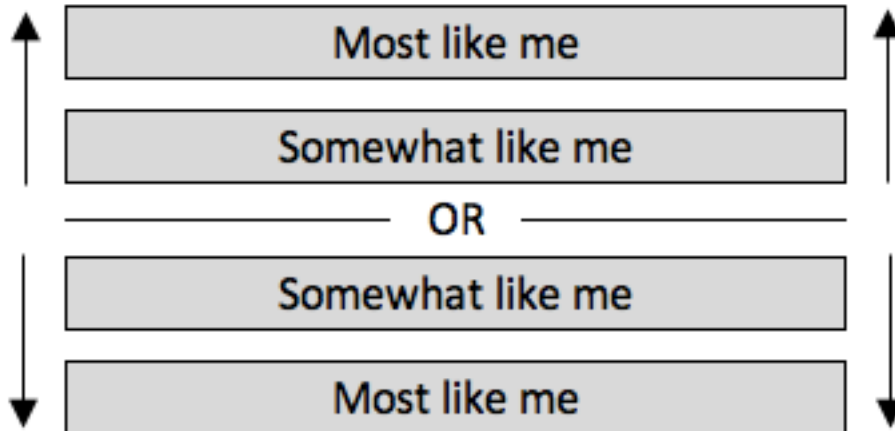
People should tell me if I do something that offends them

8. Setting your goals too high only leads to disappointment



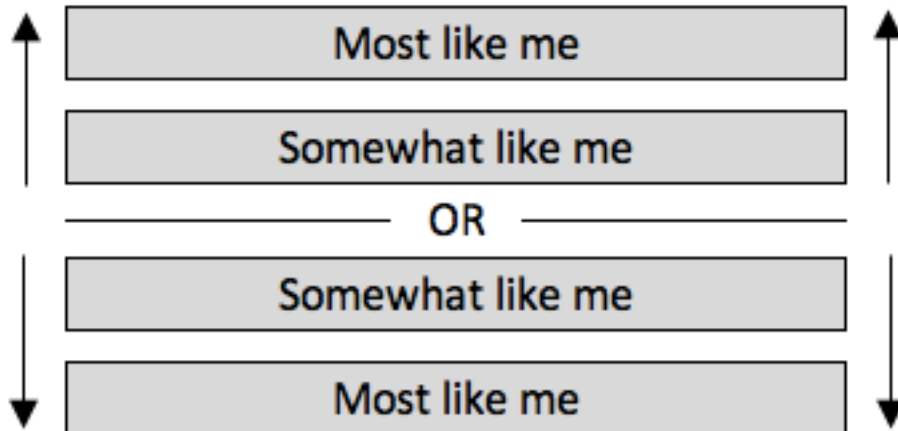
Challenging goals stimulate me

9. Employees should do what they are told to do on the job



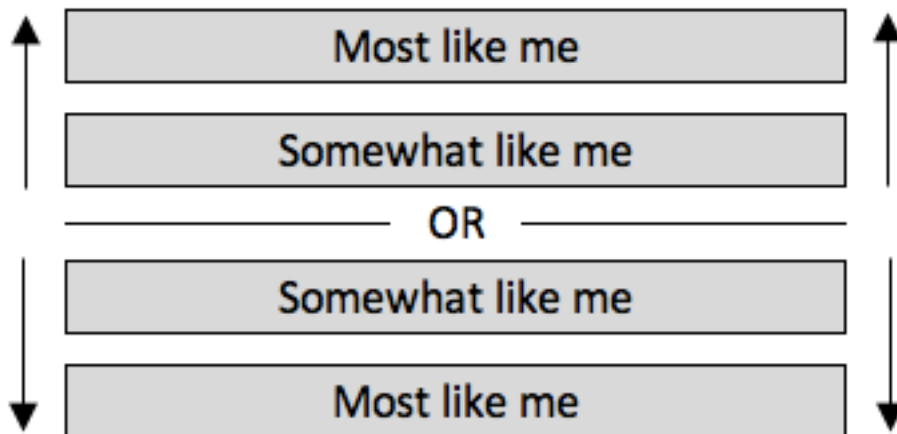
Employees should do more than what is expected at work

10. People should tell you when something is wrong



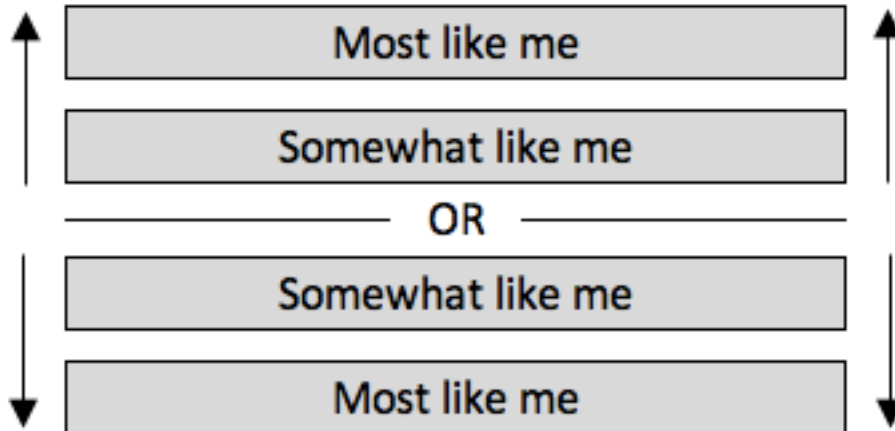
I naturally sense how other people feel.

11. Achieving my goals is important



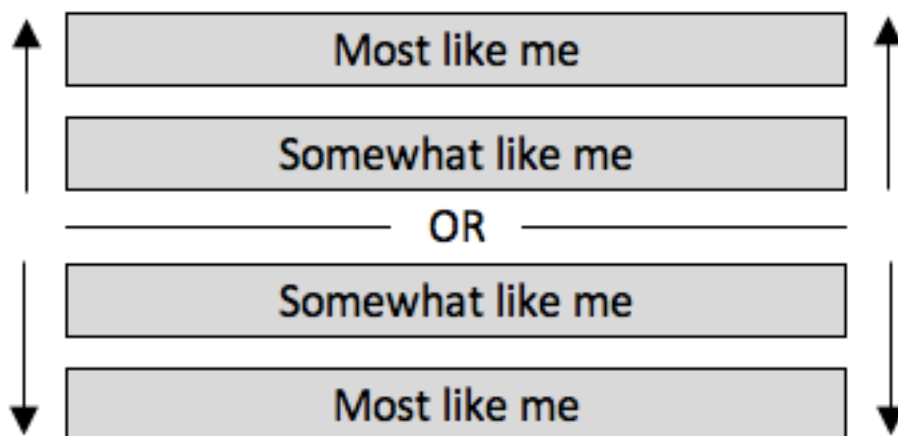
Trying my best is important

12. I finish all my tasks at work



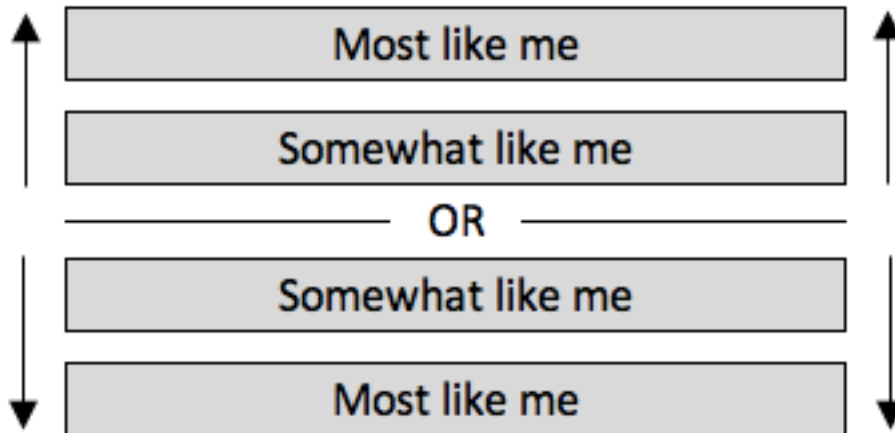
I do more than finish my tasks at work

13. People should say if something bothers them



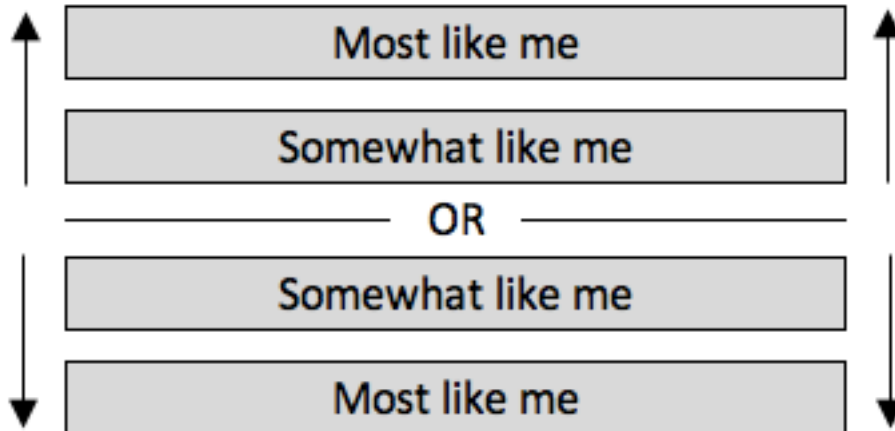
I can quickly tell if somebody is upset

14. I prefer goals that force me to push the limits



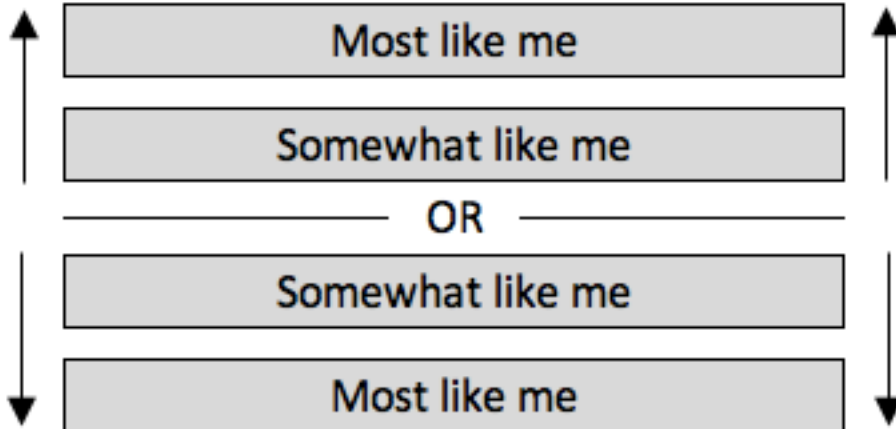
I prefer easily accomplished goals

15. I do what is expected on the job



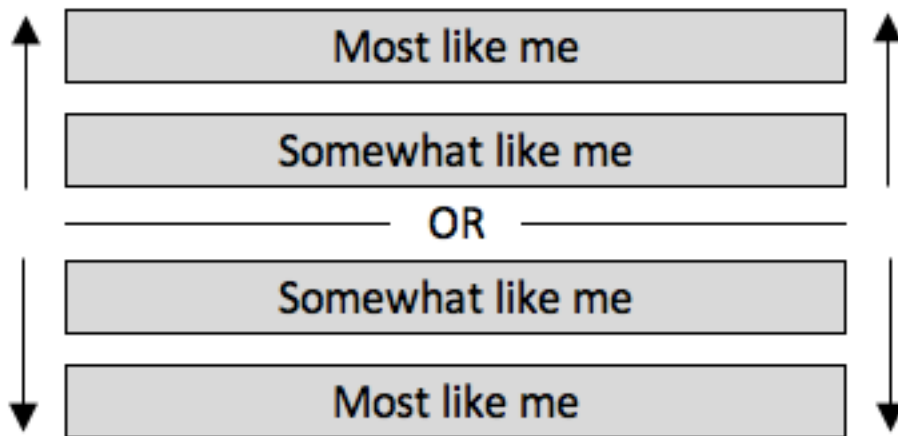
I do more than what is expected on the job

16. I treat people fairly all the time



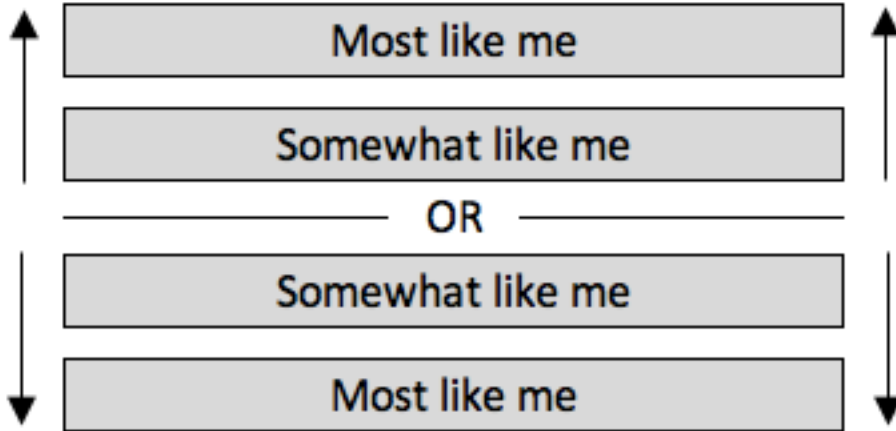
I sometimes treat people unfairly

17. Successful people are just lucky



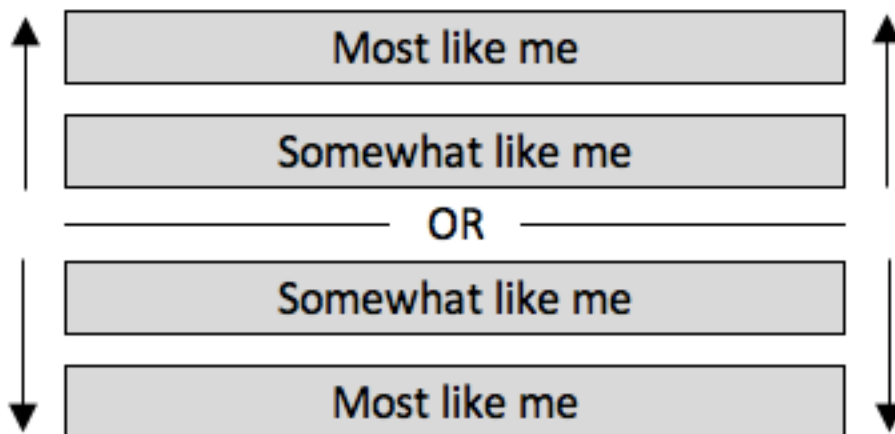
Successful people work harder

18. I can sometimes treat people rudely



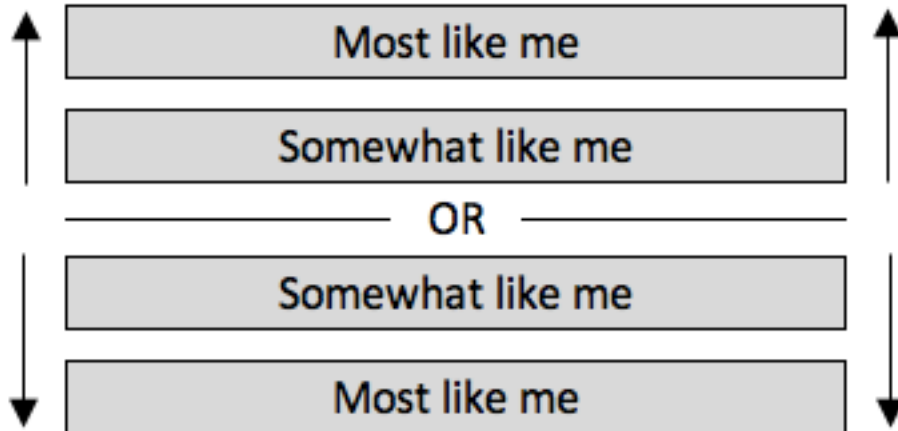
I never treat people rudely

19. I am responsible for my own success or failure



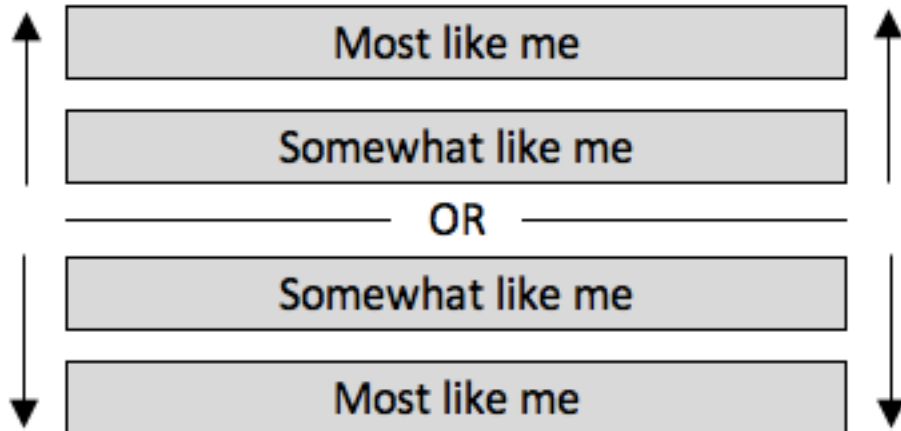
Factors beyond my control influence my success or failure

20. You must do your own work and not expect others to help



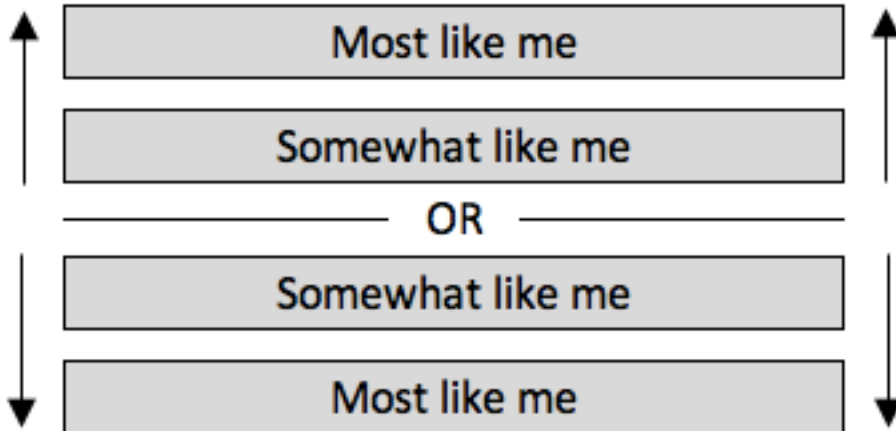
I frequently help others with their work

21. I get to know others easily



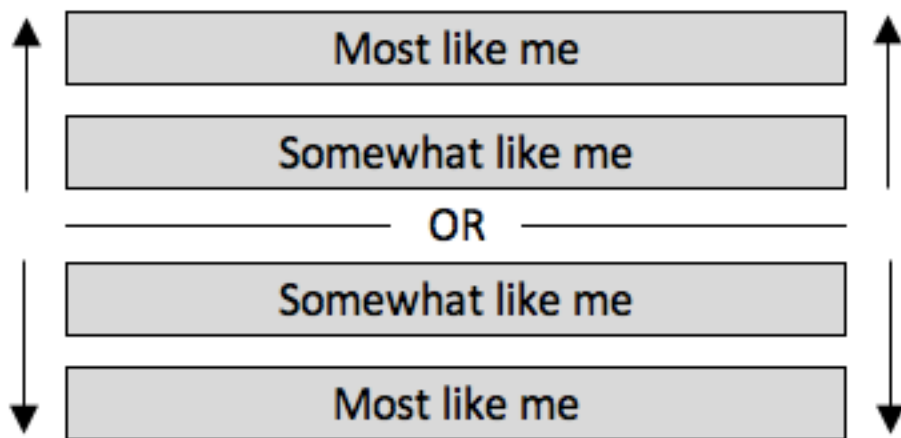
It takes me a while to get to know others

22. I occasionally talk about people behind their back



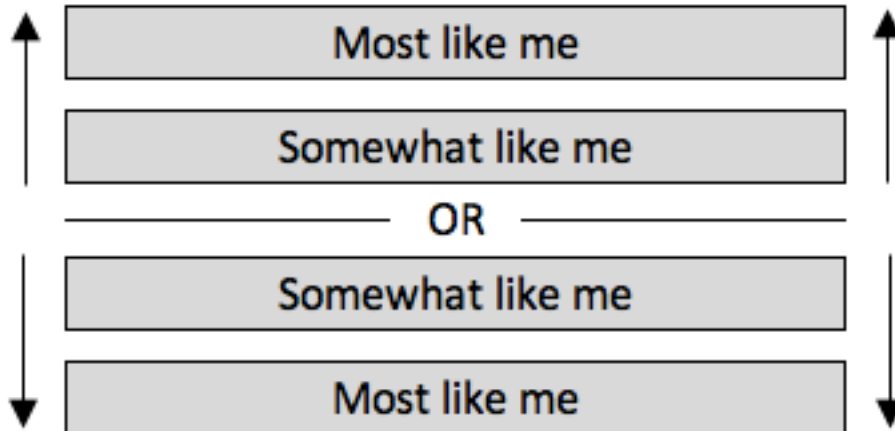
I never talk about people behind their back

23. I perform best in relaxed circumstances



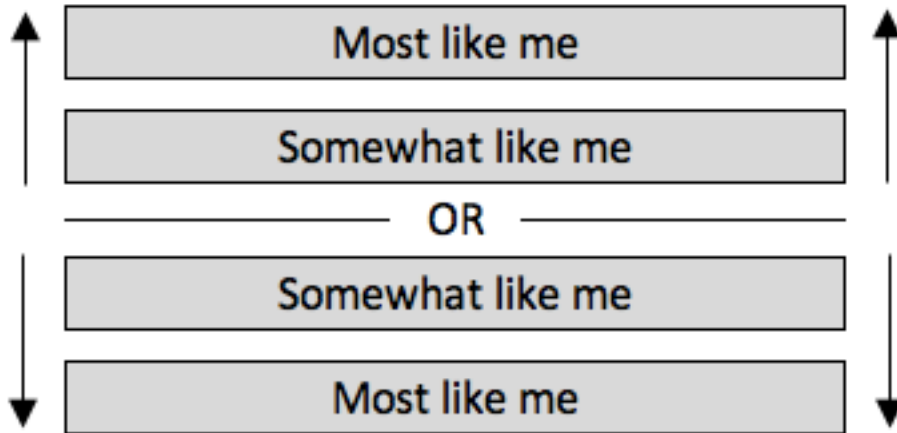
I perform best in high-stress
circumstances

24. Anyone can succeed with hard work



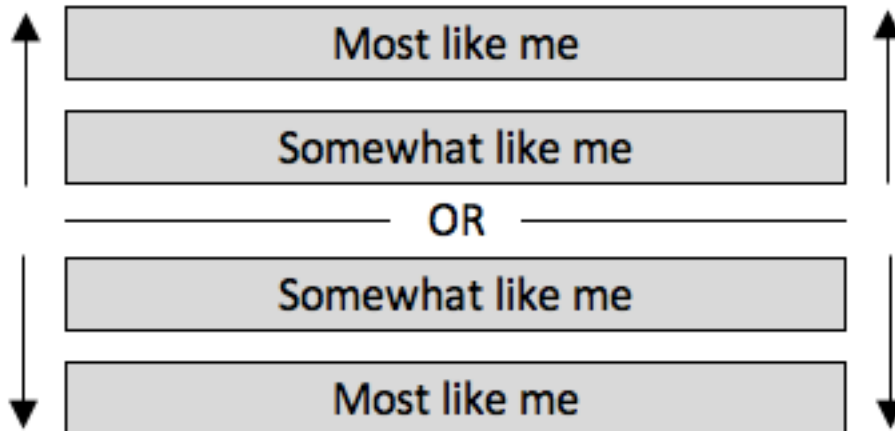
Hard work does not guarantee success

25. I often help coworkers



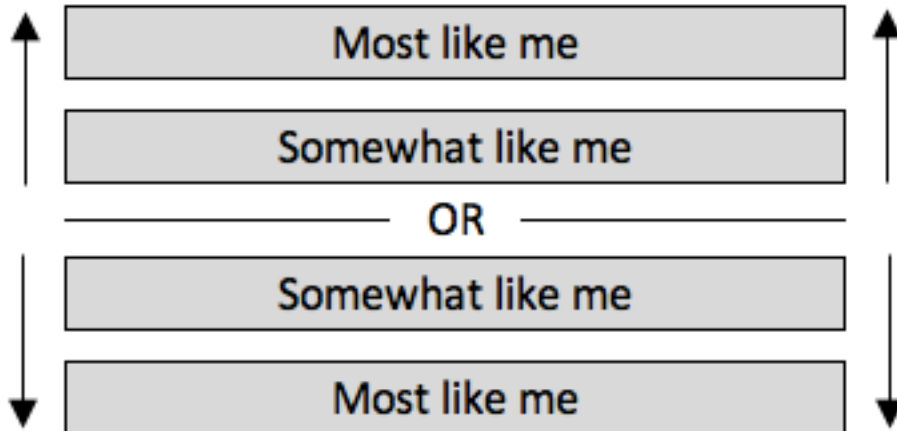
People should be able to do their own jobs

26. I am slow to make friends



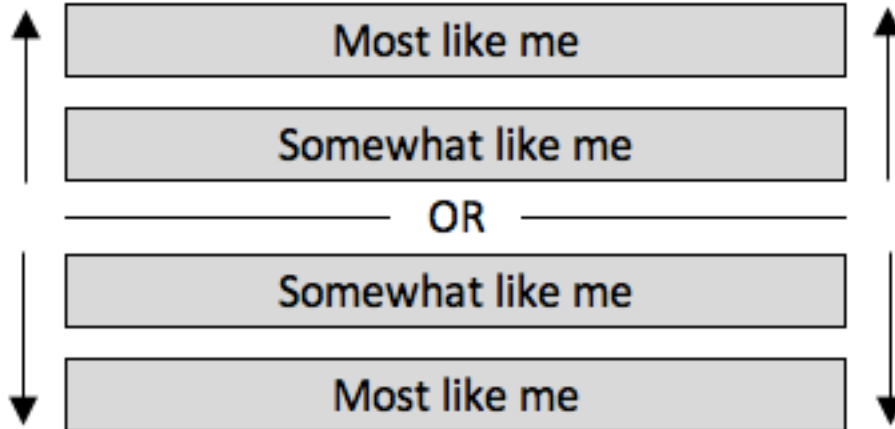
I am quick to make friends

27. I do not make mistakes on the job



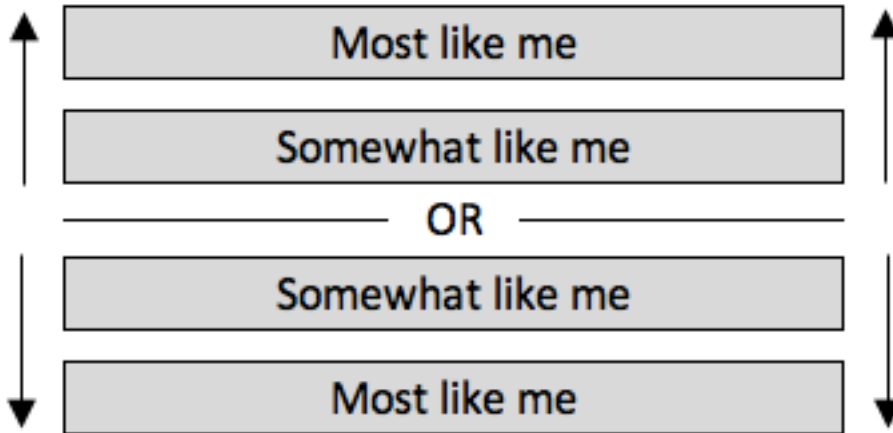
I have made mistakes on the job

28. I perform best under stress



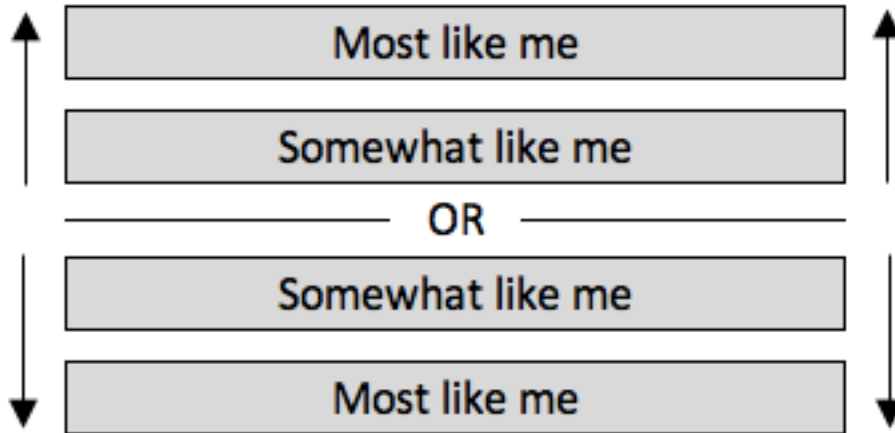
Stress negatively affects my performance

29. Success comes from a combination of hard work and good luck



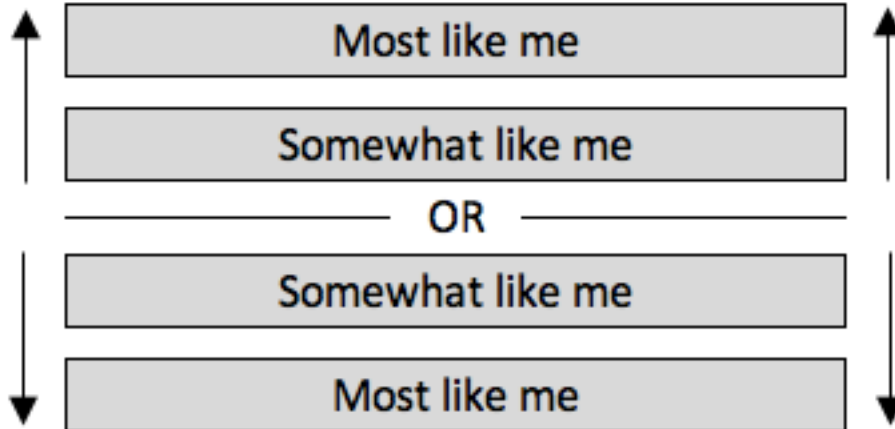
Success comes from hard work

30. All I want to do on the job is finish my assignments



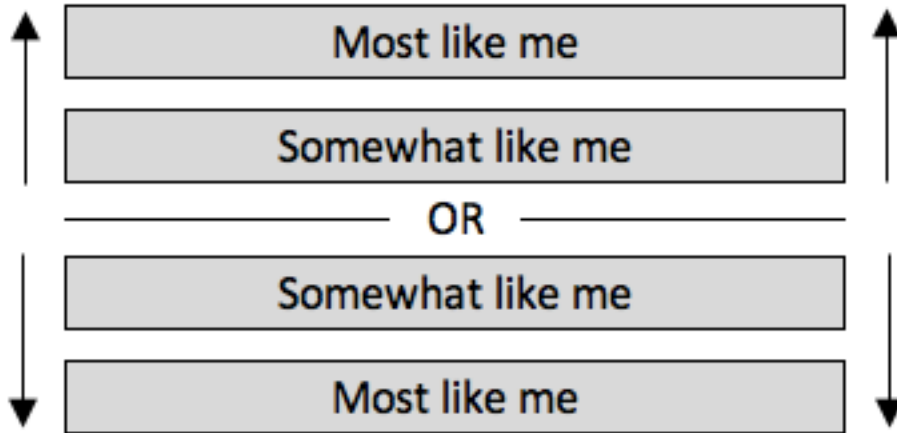
It is important to help others on the job if they need it

31. I am a quiet person



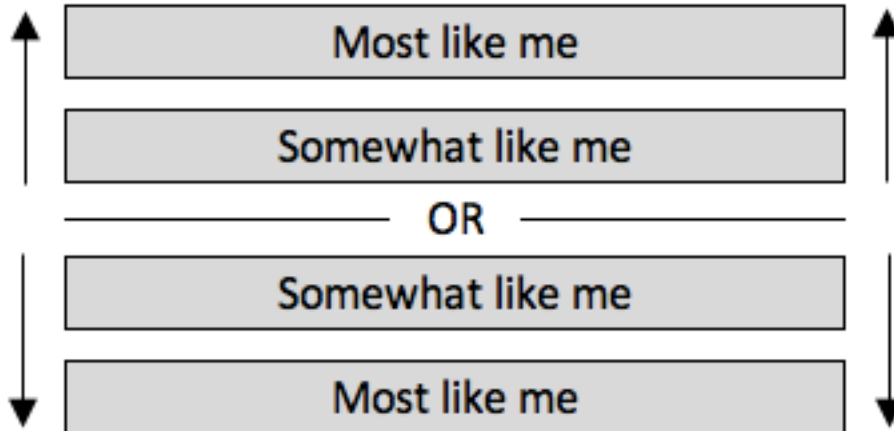
I am a talkative person

32. I do not like some types of people



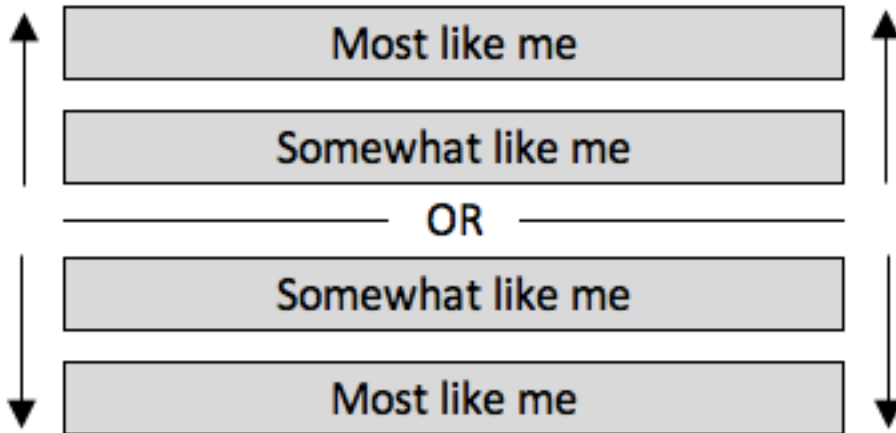
I like all types of people

33. Stressful work situations do not bother me



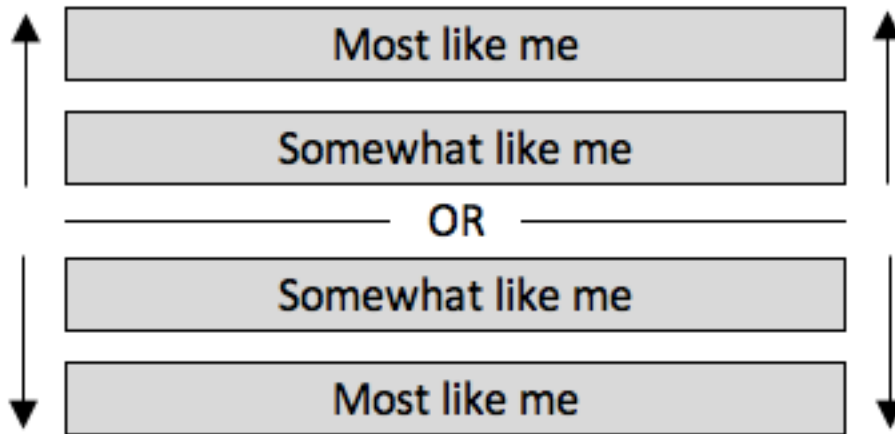
I try hard to avoid stressful situations

34. Hard working people deserve their rewards



Rewards are sometimes given to undeserving people

35. I frequently give up my own time to help others on the job



The only thing I want to do on the job is get my own work finished

36. I am very friendly

Most like me

Somewhat like me

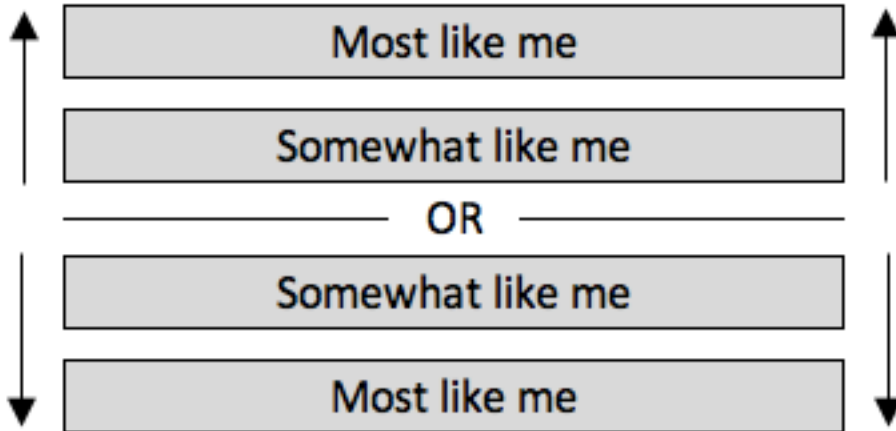
OR

Somewhat like me

Most like me

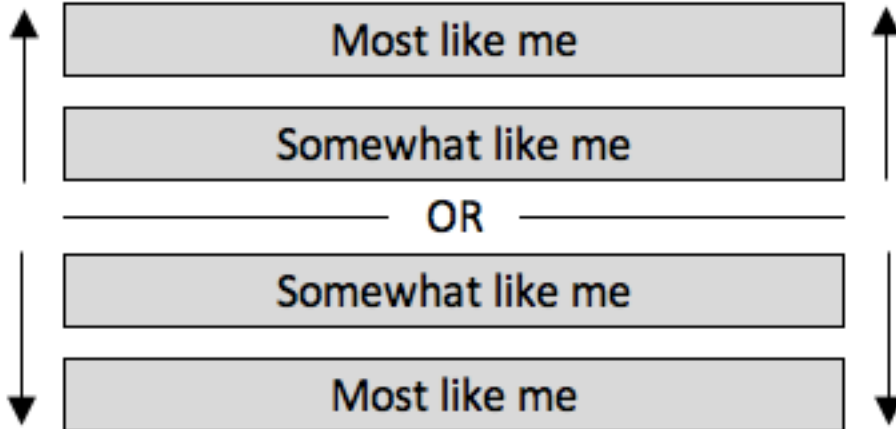
I find it difficult to connect with others

37. Coworkers often frustrate me



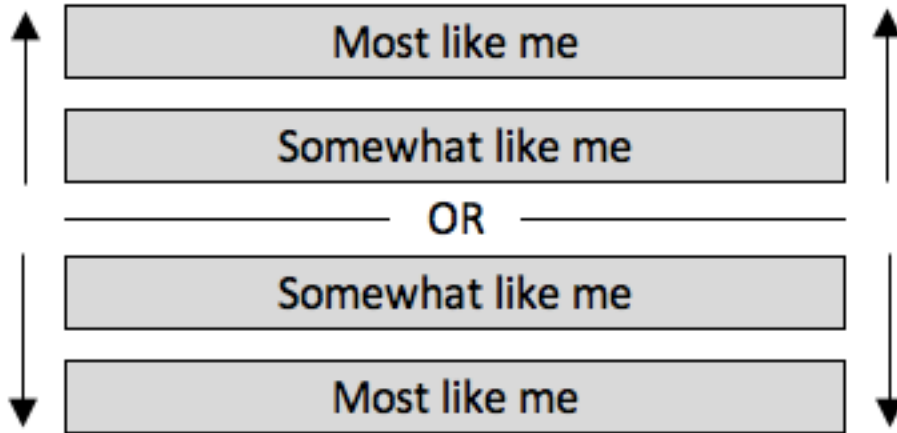
Coworkers never frustrate me

38. I like to work in a relaxed setting



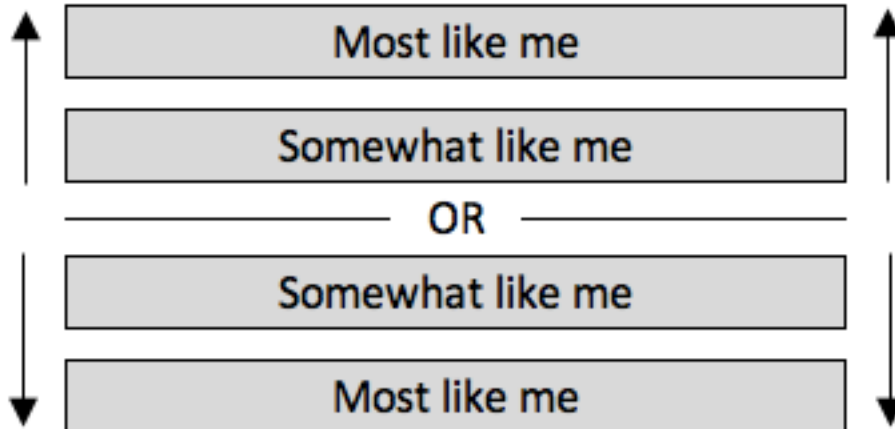
I like to work under stress

39. Hard work leads to success



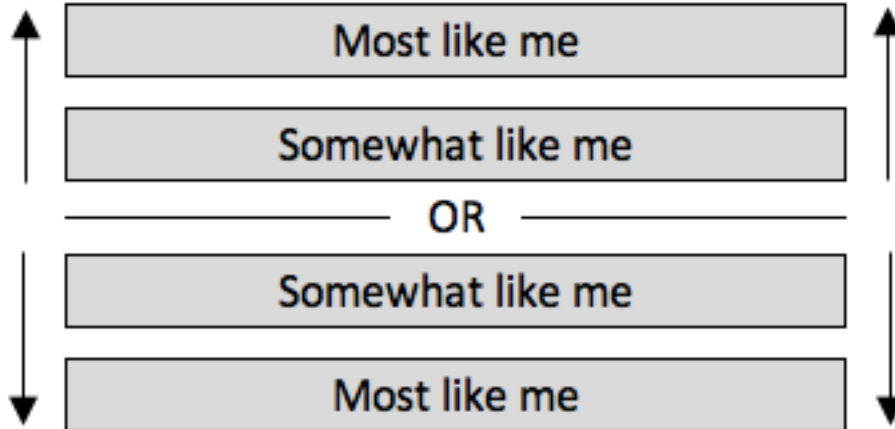
Hard work does not always lead to success

40. People should not look to coworkers for help



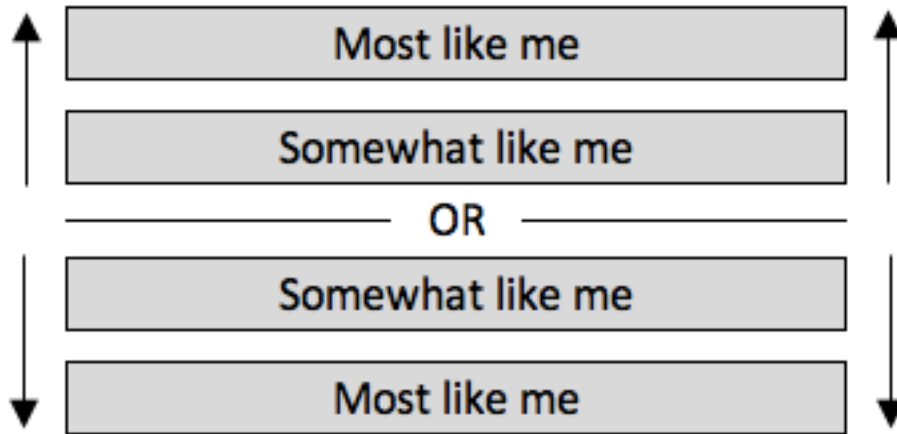
I am willing to help coworkers when they need it

41. People describe me as withdrawn



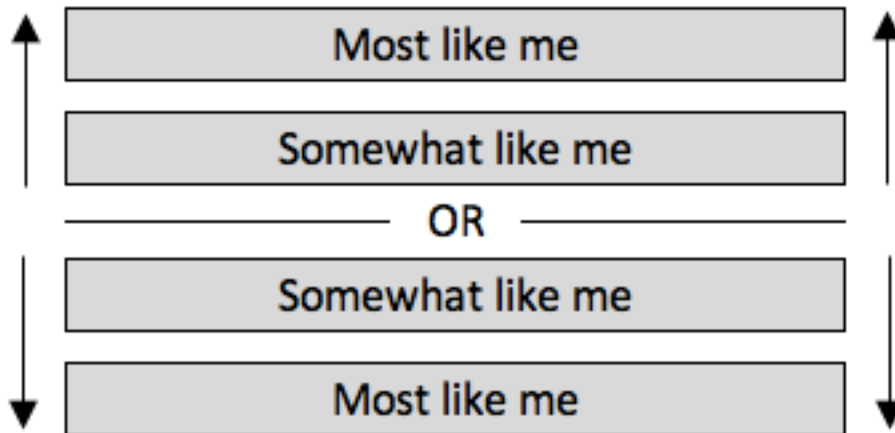
People describe me as loud

42. I get more done when working at a fast pace



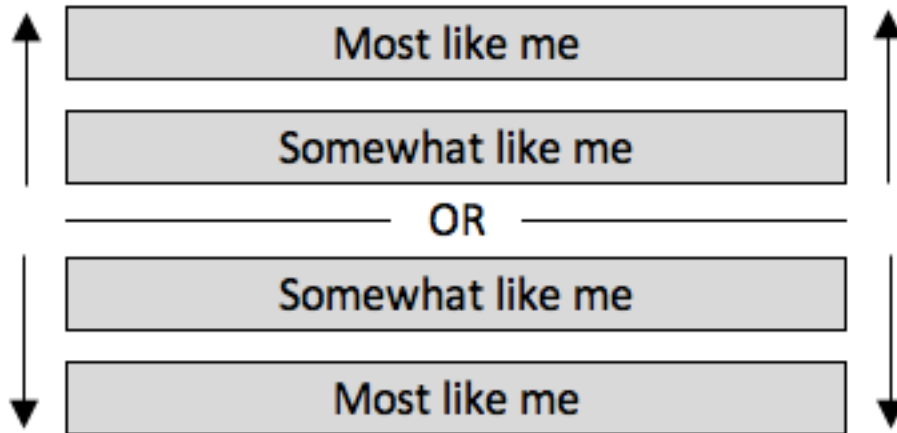
I get more done when working at a slow and steady pace

43. I usually see the downside quicker than the upside in any situation



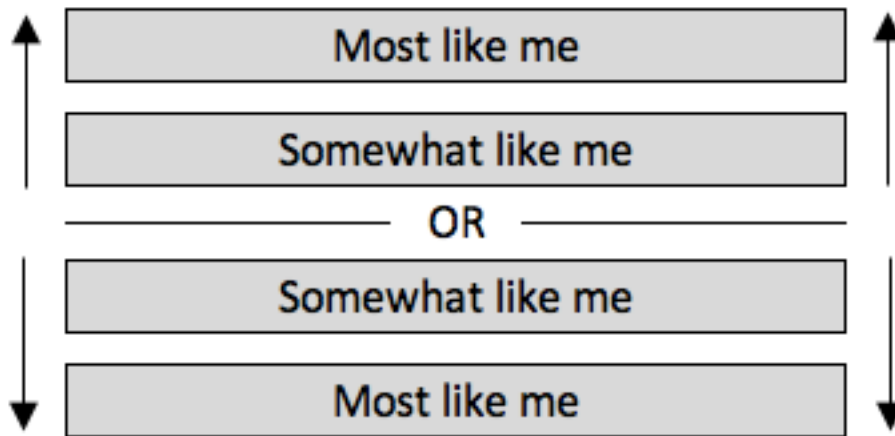
In many situations, I can find the upside that most do not see

44. I prefer calm days



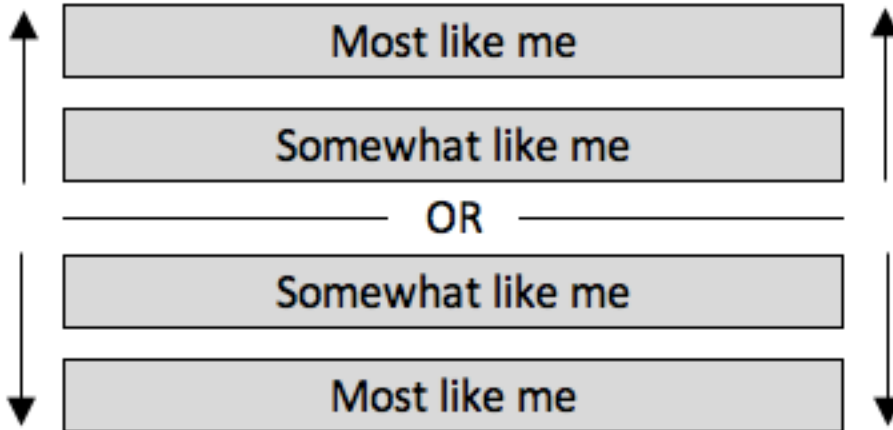
I prefer fast paced days

45. I look for what could go wrong



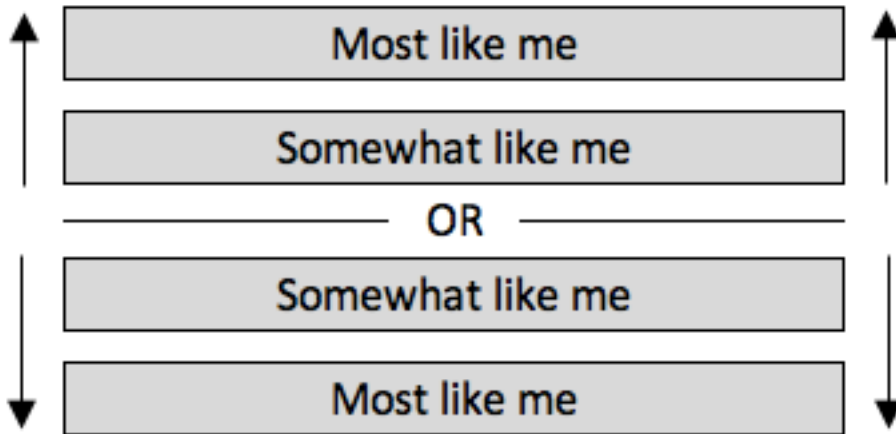
I look for positive outcomes

46. I avoid tasks that appear very difficult



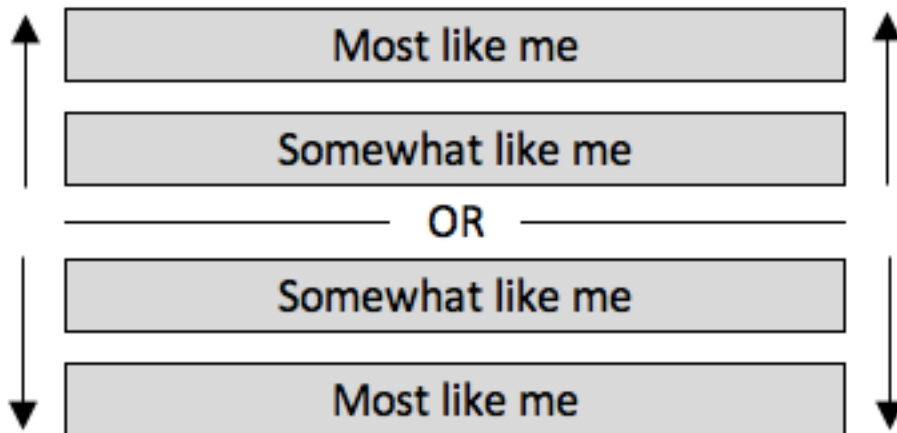
I am able to handle difficult tasks

47. I am at my best when relaxed



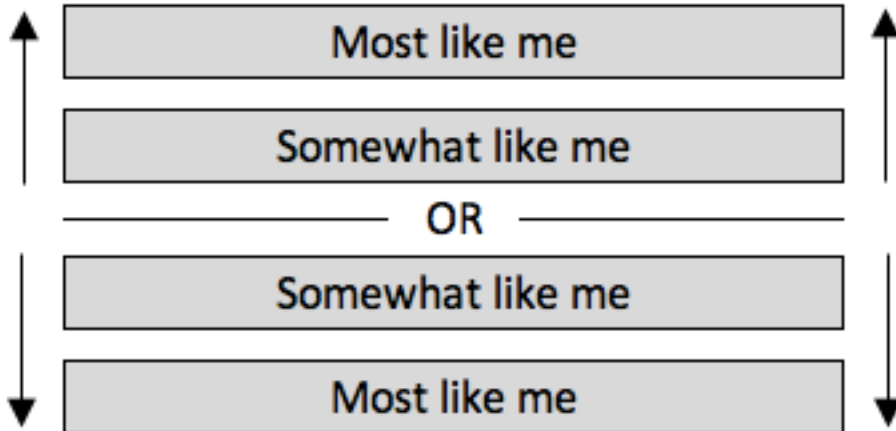
I am at my best when working at a fast
pace

48. People see me as an optimist



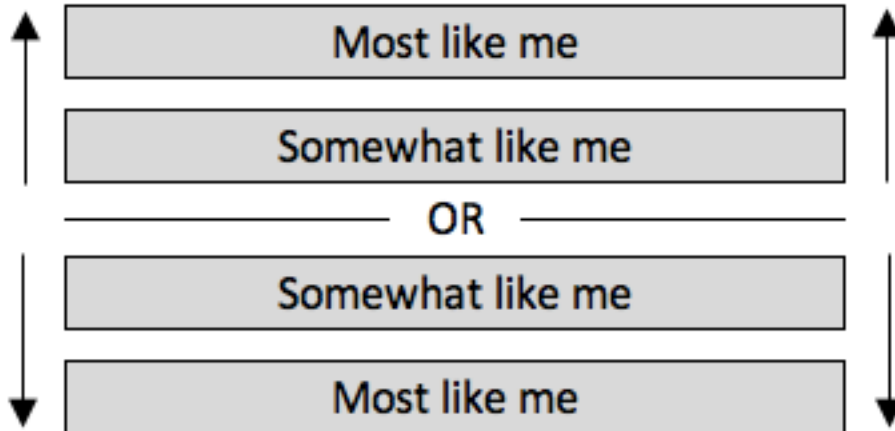
People see me as a pessimist

49. Some problems have no solution



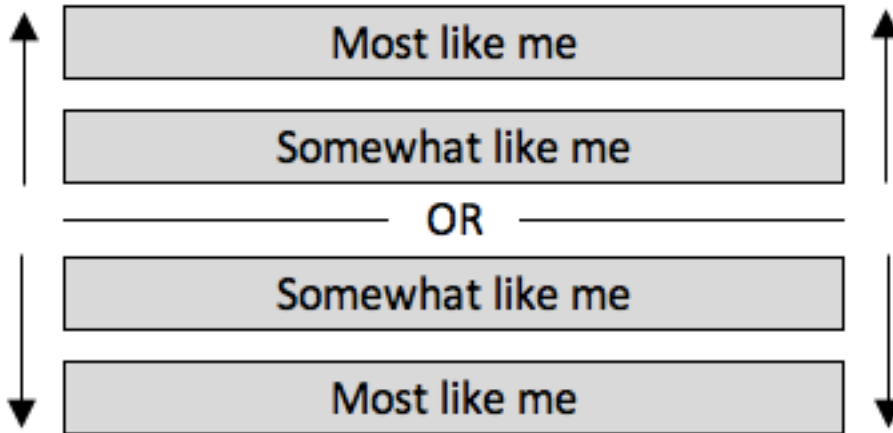
Any problem can be solved

50. I am happiest when very busy



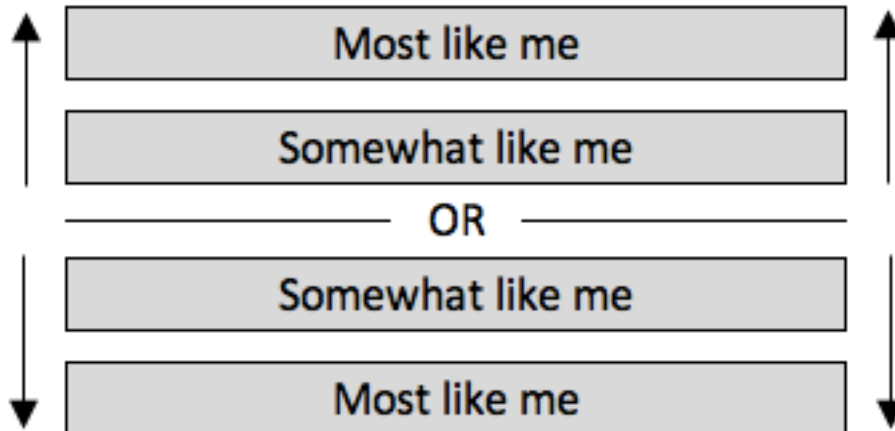
I am happiest when things are slow

51. I usually look for the positive aspects of a situation



I usually look for the negative aspects of a situation

52. I am confident in my abilities



I am not always able to accomplish goals

53. My performance is best under stress

↑

Most like me

Somewhat like me

OR

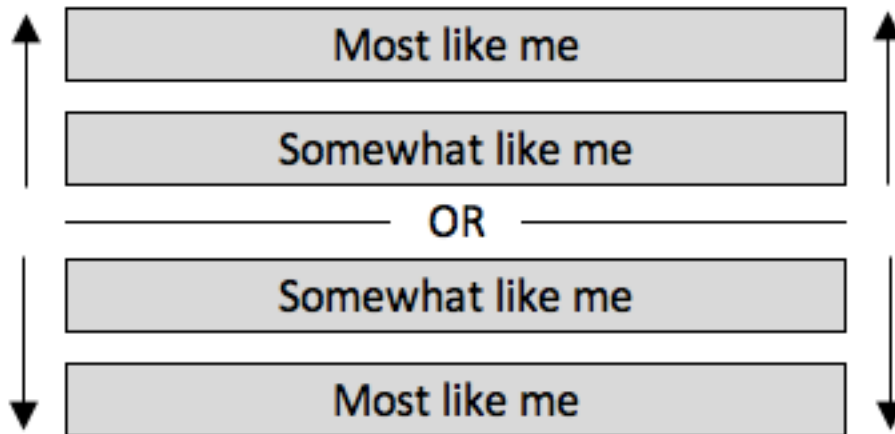
Somewhat like me

Most like me

↓

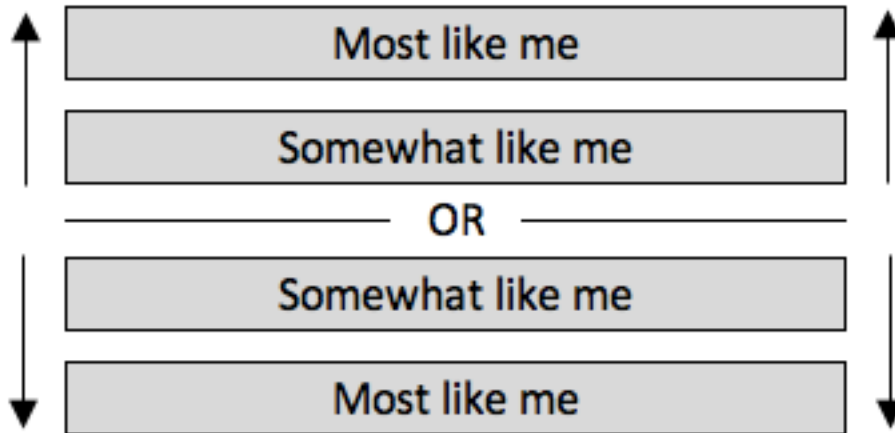
My performance is best when relaxed

54. People should look for the good in situations



People should look for the what could go wrong in situations

55. I can manage whatever happens



Some problems just cannot be solved

End of Practice Exam