

COMMANDER GUIDE TO PERSONAL GROWTH

Get a fast, effective way to advance your growth
and optimize your potential



16Personalities

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Introduction



Why Personal Growth Matters to Commanders

As Analysts, people with the Commander (ENTJ) personality type are known for having a strong affinity for logic and creativity, but they also display unique qualities of their Extraverted and Judging traits – they like to act decisively. Commanders don't stop at hypothetical scenarios and thought experiments – they use their imagination to create the groundwork for purposeful, immediate applications as well as elaborate projects down the line. These types are less prone to imaginative distraction than other Analysts, making them energetic, visionary, and, in a word, intense. They strongly express their ideas but aren't as easily flexible when encountering alternate or conflicting ways of thinking.

Commanders truly revel in shaping their environment, but they also benefit from practicing openness: sharing their ideas and, in turn, learning from others. Bold – and often blunt – in word and deed, Commanders who balance their expressions of will with concern for the needs of others invite mutual respect that promotes achievement and intellectual growth instead of authoritarianism. Their appreciation of discipline helps them temper their sometimes fierce nature with inquisitiveness, kindness, and objectivity about their limits, and such personal growth is a worthy lifelong challenge for all Commanders.

Commanders' Decision to Grow

Personal growth isn't some theoretical veneer of self-satisfaction – that would seem useless to Commanders, who revere functional action. Personal growth is about judiciously assessing life and deliberately making useful changes by developing abilities that enable progress. It's about striving to become the best possible version of oneself, including finding a personal determination of what that means. No set of ideals or goals fits all people, even those of the same personality type, so it's important that personal growth reflects the true needs of the individual.

For Commanders, growth is often about expanding beyond rigid structure to explore alternative possibilities. It's not about changing their essential personality, but rather learning to optimize their abilities with interdisciplinary broadness – truly optimal approaches often require significant flexibility and continual evolution to stay at their peak. A carefully objective sense of self helps people with this personality type expand personal limits and act on their potential. It all starts with being willing to look inward to recognize what's balanced, respected, and achieved – and what could be improved.

Sharp assessments come easily to Commanders, but their views often lack suppleness, as they strive to build unassailable positions and stable practices through authoritative engagement. There's a certain strength in this way of living, but it also makes it difficult for people with this personality type to change themselves – or even to admit when change is needed. Certainty may feel like an asset, but balancing their consistent decisiveness with a truly open mind – and heart – is one of the most important areas of personal growth for Commanders.

Developing Healthy Perspectives

Often, a major source of unhappiness in Commanders' lives is the contrast between the intellectual ideals that they push for and the realities of the

external world that don't align with their vision. People with this personality type try to mold things as they see fit, and they may become frustrated with anything that they perceive as getting in their way. Acceptance and allowance aren't easy for Commanders to muster, especially when they think that something is right, wrong, or could be better – which they often do.

Trying to force things into conformity with their own conclusions can become a lifelong battle for Commanders. But personal growth isn't only about exercising their own potential to the fullest – it's also about evolving expectations beyond unproductive extremity. Nothing, and no one, is perfect all the time, and even the most perfectionistic and powerful Commanders can lighten the pressure on themselves and others by recognizing that fact.

These types rarely give up, and when they learn to evaluate – and value – themselves based on the merit of their efforts instead of static benchmarks, they may find that progress, success, and happiness can be ongoing. Personal growth isn't defined by measuring oneself against external standards – it's created by acting wisely on the potential of any given moment to forge life as masterfully as possible.

Curious about the traits that make up your personality type and the theory behind them? You can learn more [here](#).

Fulfillment and Development

Commanders can build a more fulfilling life by focusing on five related, but distinct, motivational aspects of personal growth. Because they're Judging types, much of what defines their happiness is based on control and structure. However, their Intuitive trait also makes them hungry for understanding, creative expression, and future progress. For Commanders, mastering a balance between exerting their highly specific visions and reshaping themselves when needed is critical to their personal growth – and happiness.

Real growth starts with an objective evaluation of whether their behavior is satisfying and effective or not. Then they can create options for improvement by reformulating their attitudes and actions. Not all personal growth is the product of deliberate effort, though; sometimes it emerges naturally from ongoing maturity, is prompted by challenges and crises, or is learned from wise people. Commanders benefit from keeping their minds open to unexpected sources of knowledge. As the saying goes, "You're either getting better, or you're getting worse. There is no staying the same."

Let's define the five motivational aspects in brief.

Personal Fulfillment

- **Self-esteem** is how much Commanders like themselves. Everyone is affected by their feelings, so accepting both their flaws and strengths builds a secure foundation from which they can proceed happily.
- **Self-respect** speaks to their sense of worth. People with this personality type value rational action, and when they live their beliefs and values, a balanced sense of pride in who they are follows accordingly.
- **Self-confidence** is the internal energy that helps Commanders maintain momentum in life. When belief in their own abilities is affirmed through positive action, Commanders have boundless vigor.

Active Development

- **Self-evolution** is the process of deliberate growth that Commanders undertake in order to activate their potential. Knowing when to assess and rebuild themselves, and then practicing that development outwardly, helps them advance in life.
- **Self-responsibility** is about taking charge of their lives by accepting accountability for what they can do to improve things. Being conscious of their behavior gives them the power to create the future they want.

Commanders' personal growth is aided greatly by their capacity for innovative thought and talent for seeing grand future potential. Although examining their own inherent biases and prejudices can prove to be a great challenge, people with this personality type don't allow such complexity to dissuade them. Commanders can be remarkably perceptive, and choosing to analyze their own strong and weak aspects is an exercise of one of their greatest strengths: objectivity.

In each of the following chapters, we'll first examine how Commanders use the five motivational aspects in balanced ways to lead fulfilling, productive, and happy lives. Then we'll look at how they may depart from beneficial behavior, as well as adverse effects they may experience because of imbalance. Finally, we'll discuss ideas to rebalance each of the aspects to get things back on track.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the quality of liking oneself, independent of things like societal measures, personal struggles, or self-perceived flaws. No one is perfect, but a positive self-image is a critical foundation from which growth can occur. Without it, happiness becomes tremulously dependent on circumstance. Self-esteem isn't a response to external factors, but rather a stable and internal state of self-love. It's essential to strive for, if not always easy to maintain.

Balanced Self-Esteem

Bold Creativity

Commanders are known for their ability to build complex ideas into ambitious projects and clever solutions. Although they often think in terms of technical mechanics, their visions can also be fantastic, and these types draw self-esteem from learning to appreciate their own inspiration. They thrive on their excitement when engaging grand ideas; therein lies a capacity for self-fulfillment, when they let their imagination inspire their efforts.

Creativity, especially when it takes an active form, can be a source of joy for Commanders. Their own creative cores are a source of affirmation that drives their happiness – a great way to build self-esteem. Inspiration is precious to any type that values creative output, and they can see their own value reflected when they innovate. When they tap into what's inside them to continually feed their actions in life, Commanders feel a sense self-love based on their own merits that can endure the occasional stumble.

Broadcasting Positivity

When their self-esteem is balanced, Commanders can be magnetic, constantly sharing their enthusiastic creativity and firm optimism. When their inner emotional state is one of happiness with themselves, it flows outward to

impress others, easily making them the center of attention. These personalities love give-and-take, and their self-esteem grows when they fairly exchange lively conversations, ideas, and actions with others. Commanders elevate everyone around them when they generously share their upbeat energy.

Frequently acting with such positive effects gives people with this personality type satisfying feedback for their efforts, creating a healthy cycle that allows them to counterbalance any negative self-perceptions and maintain their own self-esteem. It's easier for them to accept their imperfections when cheerful engagement is their default mode because it improves the way they view themselves – a positive change loop, with shame replaced by the happy ways they exchange energy with the world.

Unbalanced Self-Esteem

Unforgiving Self-Appraisal

One of the ways Commanders commonly undermine their own self-esteem is by placing too much emphasis on the divide between what is and what could be. If they turn this scrutiny on themselves too sharply, it can create a sense of inadequacy. They may judge themselves against the grandest potential they can conceive, failing to temper possibility with realism. Self-esteem cannot stand up to the infinity of things that could be better – a fact that escapes these energetic perfectionists when their expectations are out of balance.

This is especially problematic when Commanders compare themselves to other people. Feeling bad about themselves when someone else is ahead of them in some area can lead to self-criticism with an unbalanced expectation of supremacy at its core. Faced with such contradictions, they may be very hard on themselves. Commanders are proud of their abilities, and anything that contravenes that pride can unnecessarily swing their self-esteem in the wrong direction.

Ignoring Their Humanity

Negative feelings that harm self-esteem can be hard for people with the Commander personality type to process in healthy ways. Consequently, they often try to gain control over their lives by repressing their emotions, acting against their own humanity under the false assumption that it somehow makes them seem weak. Such a perspective simply isn't true, and their self-esteem is damaged when they struggle against perfectly natural feelings they think they should be stronger than.

Such denial can be outwardly apparent, even becoming a social barrier. Love, joy, passion, compassion, curiosity, and surprise can be as messy as they are beneficial, but Commanders don't always find them easy to integrate with their desire for emotional control. They may unwittingly clamp down on such wonderful feelings, along with darker ones. When they define their self-esteem by restricting their emotions instead of uplifting them, they're not mastering their nature – they're running from it.

Rebalancing Self-Esteem

Loving What They're Doing

Commanders can use their sharp perception to boost their self-esteem by evaluating how far they've come, rather than how far they've yet to go. Everyone is on a highly personal journey that has unique pitfalls and triumphs. Supporting the journey means focusing on progress, not position. Commanders can affirm a wellspring of self-esteem and recognize their own wonderful qualities simply by recognizing how they're using them.

Comparisons to others are inherently flawed. It's easy to find someone who's better at something; expecting otherwise is the height of arrogance, from which an unnecessary fall can occur. Everyone is different, so perfectly accurate comparisons are logically impossible – and therefore a waste of time.

Happiness needn't be relative, and Commanders can create balanced self-esteem by developing themselves rather than comparing themselves to others. For Commanders looking to recognize their own personal abilities in action, the following exercise can help:

- Pick a personal ability that brings you happiness (a latent skill, perhaps expressed as a hobby or burgeoning interest).
- If it's not already being actively improved, plan to do so. Join a club, enroll in a class, or simply procure the materials and work on it personally.
- Schedule the activity or engagement on whatever regular basis is fulfilling but doesn't interfere with other goals.
- Set a goal for the next stage of improvement, rather than targeting a specific level of skill or accomplishment. In other words, don't place an end on the road of enjoyment, just enjoy each step along it.
- Proudly note any perceptible progress (a whiteboard can be useful). For this exercise, the benchmark is appreciating each moment of progress in its own time, no matter how long it takes.
- Feel free to take on pursuits simultaneously. There's no reason Commanders can't brave open mic nights with their guitars one day and then head off to golf practice the next.
- Change it up if desired, but always work toward developing an ability that feeds personal joy and a sense of reward.

Commanders can develop a base state of self-esteem by making a conscious choice to view themselves positively. The evidence they require to truly believe it's working can be found in the recorded results of their efforts, and happiness can be found in the practice itself.

Exploring Emotion

If these types sidestep honesty about their emotions, they can diminish their ability to manage them. It's natural to be challenged by feelings, but acknowledging them fully enables the balanced self-control that Commanders so prize, as well as the self-esteem they need to thrive. Consciously exploring emotions builds self-esteem because it empowers controlled, healthy expression, rather than letting emotions rupture in chaotic ways that harm their view of themselves. Commanders take pride in proficiency, and conscious emotional intelligence is certainly something of which to be proud.

When those with this personality type practice accepting their feelings, they create an ability to progress and prosper. Repressed feelings can have caustic effects that not only erode self-esteem but also breed coldness, which can interfere with social relations. When Commanders begin to understand feelings they've ignored, it frees the internal warmth of self-esteem and creates an appealing outward genuineness. Balancing emotions is a lifelong process, but Commanders' rational, willful approach can serve them well – here's one great way to start:

- When a feeling arises, observe it without judgement. A feeling is a natural response of the brain, not a defining factor of your being.
- Accept that the emotion is an inevitable by-product of events that's expected and not innately harmful if viewed appropriately.
- Try to understand the source. What happened? Map it out to trace and analyze its origins.
- If the feeling is negative, don't hide it or let it fester. Instead, try to find any root cause that can be addressed. This can help with processing the feeling, or even releasing it.
- If the feeling is positive, let it flow outwardly. Any excuse for a laugh or a smile should be vigorously embraced, whether alone or with others. Never let intellectuality, propriety, or ego dampen healthy joy.

- Communicate! Discuss feelings with trusted friends or family. There's nothing better than verbalizing emotions to bring them into focus, and getting things out in the open can provide a clearer view.

Commanders need not ignore their emotionality, nor try to change who they are, to build internal harmony. If anything, liking themselves comes from truly understanding and appreciating themselves as they are. For this ambitious personality type, taking deliberate steps to get in touch with their emotional aspects is a great way to restore balance to their self-esteem.

Self-Respect

Self-respect differs from self-esteem in that it's less about emotional harmony with oneself, and more about objective appreciation for one's own qualities and actions. Commanders build this motivational facet by being honest with themselves, taking pride in what they do, and respecting the talents that make them special.

Balanced Self-Respect

Guiding Principles

Commanders deeply value organized, consistent systems. They work hard to figure out their preferences in doing things, creating their canon of principles through both a search for function and ideas. Their principles are highly personal, but as energetic idealists, they cannot help but actively apply their conclusions to their environment. Establishing and living their principles is one of the core ways that Commanders build balanced self-respect.

People with this personality type are rarely content to shape only their own lives; Commanders naturally think that if something works for them, it can benefit others as well. Of course, not everyone has the same needs, so these types balance their approach by consciously using their cleverness to conceive plans that respect others' uniqueness. Nothing boosts Commanders' sense of self-respect like living out their ideals, then sharing such principles in balanced ways that garner them acceptance and positive feedback from the world as well.

Pride in Accomplishment

As rewarding as they can be, principles remain only theories unless they're put into action. A common way Commanders build and maintain balanced self-respect is by engaging both effort and achievement as independently worthy

actions. A mighty leap is mighty wherever one lands. These types seek to modify circumstances more than adapt to them; putting their ideas to work is a critical step in that process. Instead of just thinking that something “should” be a certain way, Commanders love to put innovative thought into practice.

Not always quick to seek radical changes, they nonetheless embrace bold action, including challenging the person in the mirror to walk their talk. When Commander individuals pursue goals (especially around something new), they affirm the strength of their abilities, which is something they can respect deeply in themselves, independent of specific achievements. Whether they’re redesigning a bathroom or running a marathon to raise money for charity, these types appreciate themselves through action and incorporate that value into a balanced sense of self-respect.

Unbalanced Self-Respect

Superiority Complex

Self-respect grows from internal strength, but when dealing with the world, Commanders face a challenge. For people who pride themselves on mental ability, a sense of superiority is all too easy to assume. When they build their self-respect without respecting other people’s views, they miss opportunities to improve what they know. Arrogantly lording their wisdom over others is hardly as admirable as improving the world around them – or learning something new.

Commanders may express such behavior by belittling the contributions and ideas of others, devaluing others’ efforts as “flawed” as a demonstration of their own intellectual prowess. When they lack balanced self-respect, they may overtly or subconsciously seek domination instead of addressing the root cause of any insecurity. However, arrogant Commanders likely won’t be able to fully respect themselves, and those they deprecate will never offer them the genuine peer appreciation they truly desire.

Too Heavy a Load

Commanders are known for being driven, and they tend to affirm their self-respect through their output. However, their broad, bold visions can lead them astray if they bite off more than they can chew. When they struggle under the weight of too many grand goals at once, their self-respect can suffer. Unfortunately, they're unlikely to back off, often refusing to pare down their efforts.

An imbalance may start as strain in such practical matters as logistics and resources, but it can easily become stressful or even emotionally damaging. For a personality type that often builds self-respect based on their accomplishments, overreaching can be risky, as it puts their sense of self on the line. If they can't do all they think they should be able to do, Commanders may feel there's something wrong with themselves, instead of simply acknowledging their perfectly human limits.

Rebalancing Self-Respect

Equitable Brilliance

Commanders can respect others without diminishing their sense of self-respect. One of the most crucial elements in any rational endeavor is the notion of peer review: the idea that, where an individual might err due to inherent bias or simple accident, a group of well-informed individuals can compensate for such errors. Commanders can apply this concept to their own thoughts and opinions, maintaining their own proud intellectuality while seeking ways to refine and prove their ideas among others, not against them.

Evaluating worthy input can reinforce the strength of their position and, likewise, their sense of self. In fact, Commanders' self-respect demands that their notions are correct; testing themselves against alternative views can accomplish this. By remaining open-minded and allowing for the possibility of

both their own shortcomings and others' admirable abilities, these types demonstrate their capacity to improve and excel, and that objectivity strengthens them. When Commanders feel like diminishing someone else's conclusions, they can try this exercise:

- Find the facts. Research both sides of the matter objectively, enough to answer the question of who's more correct.
- Note and retain the information needed to demonstrate the point.
- If others' research contradicts, alters, or expands personal conclusions in any way, find and thank them for prompting the learning, and share what was learned.
- If the research confirms your conclusions over others', don't force the issue. If something must be said, try: "Hey, I know you value knowledge, so I just wanted to share what I learned."
- Either way, move on. Knowledge is valuable because of what it can be used to accomplish, and Commanders can always find something more purposeful to do with what they know than merely feeling superior.

Fighting to be "right" is a noble cause when it's about improving the self. Others, however, may need to find their own wisdom without being forced. Commanders build balanced self-respect by finding, embracing, and sharing their truth, not by using it as a weapon.

Bite, Chew, Repeat

These types can maintain their self-respect by embracing the joy of pursuing goals without spreading themselves too thin. When they balance realism and vigorous engagement, Commanders can deepen their self-respect as they express themselves through effort – staying on top but not necessarily trying to serve the full scope of their imagination all at once. Being a super human is possible without trying to be superhuman, and even Commanders have their limits.

Sometimes the satisfaction of accomplishment is intensified through focus, and Commander individuals certainly bring intensity to their goals. Using this virtue to focus their energy on a reasonable number of pursuits can help them avoid stumbling under too heavy a load. A lifetime of amazing achievement is created in steps, and they can build balanced self-respect by understanding that it may not be possible to stride forward in too many directions at once. Their own sharp analytical skills can help Commanders manage their priorities. Before adding another iron to the fire, they can consider the following:

- What's the benefit? It's important to balance personal interest with broader gains.
- What will it cost? Cost can take many forms, including money, time, stress, impact on relationships, and the effects on other commitments.
- How long will it take? Research can help formulate an estimate.
- How likely is success? Belief is an asset, but a dose of realism is useful.
- Is the pursuit itself rewarding, or only the final achievement? Some of the most beneficial things are those that generate value along the way, such as learning or joy, regardless of their ultimate outcome.
- Is there consumption overlap? For example, a goal that requires money might not drain other resources such as time, but two goals that both require a lot of time might cause conflict.
- Is there a compensatory effect? Some things that consume the same resource might yield different benefits that balance out. For example, replacing a septic tank and taking a vacation can both be expensive, but one can provide relief from the other.
- Can it wait? Just because something is interesting doesn't mean it needs to be done right away.
- With the insight you gain by answering the above questions, evaluate and prioritize goals to create a reasonably sustainable level of engagement.

Commanders rarely fear (or even acknowledge) exhaustion, but realistic limits on resources can nonetheless interfere with achieving inspired goals. It's important for these types to get results that feed their self-respect, and their decisive objectivity can help them manage their efforts in a balanced way.

Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is the energy that propels Commanders to explore and accomplish their goals in life. It starts from within, building on the foundation of self-esteem and self-respect by relating those inner strengths to the exterior world. Everyone wants to feel capable, and self-confidence is important because it opens the door to action.

Balanced Self-Confidence

Visions of Progress

Commanders aren't so named because they like to sit and watch life happen. They may have diverse interests and beliefs, but one thing they have in common is a desire to craft concepts into reality. For these types, balanced self-confidence is often a marriage of their intellectual ideals with their firm vigor, leading to the pursuit of their vision. When Commanders put time and energy into developing balanced self-esteem and self-respect, those qualities almost automatically erupt outward as positive, progressive action.

People with this personality type aren't satisfied by mere exuberance, though; they feel compelled to implement logical systems that reflect their conclusions about the world and their place in it. No other personality type is more concerned with advancement than Commanders, and they demonstrate balance by not only improving their own lives, but also trying to better the planet as they progress through it. Finding inspired ways to do so keeps their self-confident energy strong and invites beneficial returns.

"I've Got This!"

Self-confidence isn't just about advancement for Commanders; it's also about how they handle unexpected challenges and learn from mistakes and misfortune. Building on the blocks of self-esteem and self-respect helps them

remain durable and energetic whatever may come. Those qualities help them maintain balanced self-confident energy with open-mindedness so that life's harder feedback seems constructive rather than destructive, leading to inspired action. Despite the knowledge that they can't predict everything, Commanders can always pick themselves up and move forward.

The wisest of these types don't necessarily regard setbacks with excessive frustration, either, but rather as potentially valuable, exciting learning opportunities. Broken things can be rebuilt, and examining failure with curiosity rather than frustration is a great step toward achieving a better result next time. Commanders are great at creating solutions to problems, which increases self-confidence as they feel able to make just about anything better, including their own futures.

Unbalanced Self-Confidence

Running Roughshod

Often gripped by powerful inspiration, Commanders' otherwise healthy sense of self-interest can get way out of balance. They tend to get so caught up in pursuing their desires that they ignore any detrimental effects their actions may have on others. Achieving their visions can be so exciting that they may unconsciously discount the values, needs, or concerns of others in the process, even pushing those close to them in unwanted directions. Their energy can cause harm if it's used without empathy, or even regard, for anything other than what they want.

What makes such behavior so troubling is that Commanders may recognize it, yet not see anything wrong with it. Unbalanced self-confidence can gain frightening momentum, and when they think they're right, they can seem to trample others, not seeing any reason to compromise their perspective for something they see as inferior. They may simply wave away responsibility for

collateral damage – either under the flag of serving a higher cause or simply because the rest of the world isn't "strong" or "smart" enough to handle them.

The Frustration of Failure

To put it simply, Commanders have demanding expectations that are hard to meet. Self-confidence includes chasing ambitious hopes, but when failure dashes their hopes, their cutting nature turns inward, and their energy suffers. This is especially common when externally recognized benchmarks such as academic accomplishments or professional or social status are at stake. When these types put too much pressure on themselves to "win," any failures can drain the enjoyment from what should be happy pursuits.

Of course, in life, failures are inevitable and common, which poses a challenge for a personality type whose ethos is striving to be the best. When Commanders tie their energy to mistaken assumptions of complete success, anything less can damage their self-confidence, even if such stumbles aren't their fault. Frustration and blame are common traps these types fall into when they feel they've failed, and they may even act out in anger as a result.

Rebalancing Self-Confidence

Sharing Momentum

There's no reason Commanders need to trample others. Firm direction and vigorous momentum can be used to another effect – moving people forward together. They can rebalance their tendency to dominate by creating *appealing* opportunities for others to willingly join with them. They needn't dilute their visions to share them, but by respecting others, Commanders can make others more likely to appreciate what they're trying to do. And, if people don't choose to join, these types can extend respect further by not dragging others into something they don't want.

What does this look like in the real world? Commanders can magnanimously welcome others into their plans in the hopes that they'll become a helpful part of the action. They can describe their ideas and mission with bright vigor, and those who see the virtues of their views may offer their own contributions. Commanders certainly have the mental agility to incorporate others' ideas into their own vision, and they often find unexpected inspiration through such brainstorming. They can rebalance their runaway-train mentality by inviting some passengers aboard, using the following exercise:

- When engaging a goal, whether personal or professional, watch how it seems to affect other people. How are they reacting?
- Share personal excitement and inspiration with them. They may be more supportive when they see an idea illuminated by the optimistic enthusiasm of its creator, so talk about the wonderful potentials.
- If people aren't behind an idea, ask them for suggestions on ways to make it better.
- Benefit and responsibility often go together, so inviting people to participate constructively can help them feel like more than bystanders.
- Whenever possible, use others' input to create broadly appealing gains – a great way to gain others' support and assistance.
- If others still don't like the goal despite the previous steps, and if you still plan to act, try to be respectful in dissent.
 - Make it clear that your intention to move forward anyway isn't personal.
 - Reiterate that you are seeking cooperation.
 - Consider asking to revisit the issue later. Demonstrating ongoing willingness to make things work is a far more productive approach than conflict.

When Commanders put their best foot forward while striding powerfully – and maybe even offering their hand – others may feel motivated rather than downtrodden. When this forceful personality type demonstrates openness and a desire to work with others, their energetic self-confidence seems a lot less like a trampling and a lot more like leadership.

Willingness to Fail

Failure is hard for Commanders. But perfection is a logical impossibility, so accepting the inevitability of occasional failure can release them from frustration with themselves. Instead of pinning their self-confidence purely on success (and suffering the attendant stress of such a limited view), these types can focus on their ongoing improvement. Such a “growth mindset” is ultimately one of the most powerful skills Commanders (or anyone) can practice, serving not only to guard against losing confidence, but as a tool for making real progress.

To create balanced self-confidence, they can examine disappointing experiences with all their intellectual might to extract useful insights, turning such events into opportunities. Asking, “What can I learn from this?” is a critical step to becoming better. Those who define themselves only by their successes can have many opportunities to feel terrible, but forging setbacks into something useful is a command move that affirms an ability to progress – and balanced self-confidence blossoms from such ability. One bold way to practice handling failure is to deliberately engage it with low stakes:

- Pick a skilled activity with which you are completely unfamiliar – a painting night, tennis lesson, dance class, or public karaoke, for example. Choose something so outside your existing skillsets that proficiency will be very unlikely.
- Consider inviting trusted friends into the experience – people who share laughter, not judgement.
- Participate in the activity.

- Relax your mind and stay in the moment.
- While doing it, deliberately set the following mental bars for success:
 - Sincere effort
 - Lightheartedness
 - Expanded physical or emotional limits
- During the activity, observe your stress levels. Are ego or unrealistic expectations of success interfering with learning, progress, and enjoyment? Don't let them.
- Laugh away any embarrassment – literally and out loud.
- Learn from the experience, even if it brings up insecurity. Accept that improvement is an ongoing thing.

When Commanders learn to handle failure and try again, they create the self-confident sense of being successful that overcomes any inevitable missteps. Letting go of frustration and putting energy into wiser attempts are skills that get better the more these types practice them.

Self-Evolution

Change can be hard, and the need for it isn't always apparent to Commanders who have carefully built themselves to a certain point. However, anything thus built doesn't preclude further progress, and these types can always choose to advance. Self-evolution is the idea that they can turn their love of understanding and optimization onto themselves, constantly looking for ways to improve.

It's very important to realize that self-evolution isn't necessarily about specific measures, but instead about creating personal fulfillment and extracting whatever is desired from life. This may include academic or financial aspirations or something as simply soul-satisfying as mastering a skill. It may also mean developing their emotional intelligence to better understand themselves and others. The point of self-evolution isn't to be on an austere march of obligation toward their goals, but rather to continuously develop personal potential into reality.

Balanced Self-Evolution

Kindness Creates Connections

In the pursuit of reasoned, rational action, no type is more vigorous than Commanders. However, how others perceive them is also very important to them – even if they're convinced of their own abilities, they want others to acknowledge them for who they are, and they seek such acknowledgment by connecting with people. For them, empathy and emotional intelligence aren't natural priorities, so while they're developing these skills, they rely on other strengths when engaging with others: smart ideas, rational logic, and a willingness to boldly engage.

Commanders turn those qualities toward balanced connections with others by making people the beneficiaries. Demonstrating their intellect is a common way

they seek to build their standing. When their efforts are inquisitive and kind, and when they aim to learn about others, they find people to be receptive – and often appreciative – of their energy. Nothing feels better to Commanders than being applauded for what they do and who they are, and firm, unerring, bold kindness is a balanced path to such acclaim.

Determining Transformation

Commanders love mechanisms that improve life. As much as they deeply value consistency and dedication, they also want to advance their methods and views. This ongoing process often leads to moments of critical decision-making – letting go of habits or established practices can almost feel like admitting to making mistakes because the structures they've worked so hard to build must be modified. However, they understand it's a necessary step to creating something better, and once they make these decisions, they commit to them with forward-looking willpower.

For stability-minded Judging types, too-frequent change can frankly be annoying, but Commanders maintain balance by keeping their doors propped open for new thinking – they don't want to miss good opportunities. Even more importantly, their esteem for rational logic leads them to recognize their own mistaken perceptions, and then they work to correct them. The only thing they dislike more than being wrong is ongoing wrongness. Commanders embrace change because improvement makes solid sense.

Unbalanced Self-Evolution

Unintentionally Harsh Logic

Even the most progressive ideals can turn cold when they discount less tangible aspects of humanity. Commanders' rational mentality can make them capable achievers, but when they rely only on sterile, efficiency-themed rationales to guide their evolution, their logic can become frighteningly severe.

They may even see emotionality as a weakness that people should evolve past. Crafting ideals from dispassionate logic can easily result in damage – to others as well as themselves – but individuals with the Commander personality type may not see feelings as important compared to the progress for which they strive.

Behavior that can come off as high-handed callousness is rarely intended – or even realized – as such by these types, who may simply be carried away by trying to improve themselves and the world. Surgery without anesthetic is a good analogy for this unnecessarily rough path to self-evolution; their energy and sense of logic may focus unforgivingly on efficient results more than feelings. It can be hard for them to think any other way, but such an unbalanced lack of consideration for themselves and others can slow their progress by ignoring critical emotional development.

The Density of Structure

Their reliance on structure can make it hard for Commanders to embrace change, especially within. Even keenly analytical minds can be tested by objective reviews of their own conclusions and behavior. But, like any other personality type, they're far from immune to ego's blinding effect. Often, the more vigorously they try to optimize their views and actions, the more stone-like their thinking becomes. If Commanders become convinced they've achieved some personal pinnacle, their lack of openness to evolving an ideal may hold them back.

Resistance to change can breed combativeness in these types, as they may confuse inflexible thinking with the righteous assertion of truth, working energetically to defend even outmoded convictions. Commanders can be passionate, but if they fight too hard for established concepts (something they rail against in others), they almost certainly limit their knowledge – and their personal growth. Change is inevitable, and fighting it is a poor use of their abundant energy, especially when they value advancement so much.

Rebalancing Self-Evolution

Feelings Are a Fact

Commanders can rebalance overly harsh logic by consciously choosing to do so – it's halfway accomplished merely by their determination. They need not feel others' emotions in their own hearts to accept the value of being kind, although that valuable potential increases through practice. Logical reasons to prioritize kindness include its benefits to self, the effects on others they're close to, and future social potential. In other words, Commanders can offer kindness as both a simultaneously genuine and transactional gesture – as do most people, even if unconsciously.

Feelings have tremendous influence over people's thinking, so Commanders can recognize the value of kindness as a powerful aid to lofty goals. Unkind behavior, no matter how it may be supported by facts, makes people feel threatened; they become reactionary, as stress shuts their ears to the voice of reason and rationality. This is antithetical to Commanders' desire to improve the world through that very voice. Kindness, especially from strong individuals, strengthens others and elevates their thinking. Commanders can tap into the power of kindness through simple, direct, conscious actions to help others:

- Seek opportunities to use personal power or ability to help others in major or minor ways – for example, assisting an infirm stranger down some stairs, volunteering locally, pitching in a few hours on a neighbor or coworker's personal project.
- If such opportunities seem to present itself, ask to help – don't just butt in.
- Ask others for explanations of the outcomes they hope for, as well as how they're trying to achieve them.
- Offer only positive approval: Agree with what works and offer constructive solutions. Don't point out flaws.

- Offer direct assistance: Offer to take an aspect of the task off someone's plate, then finish it.
- Do only what's asked and agreed to. Kindness means helping others, not taking over.
- Feel free to set up-front limits on your involvement to avoid becoming overwhelmed and so there's energy to spread kindness to other people and goals as well.
- Ensure consistency and follow through on all offers – a natural, essential thing for Commanders.

Commanders love being problem-solvers, and helping others is a kind and sensible form of problem-solving that tends to be remembered. The return on investment only begins with gratitude. Commanders often find their energy returning to them in the form of compassion, ideas, or simply others' willingness to help them when they need it.

Advancing Through Change

These types can take a lesson from the material world: Absolute rigidity equates to a lack of movement, including toward progress. Those who don't wish to be stuck in place (or cracked) must develop some ductility. With Commanders' ability to examine and explore reality, progressive change is certainly within reach. Their ability to assess things and act decisively helps them ensure that changes are good ones, and they can remain open to making the best possible decisions as new opportunities present themselves.

Being willing to evolve their conclusions is a huge asset to Commanders, and it relieves a lot of stress. Sticking to proven practices may seem like a source of stability, but it can also cause them to miss opportunities. Instead of insisting only on what they've decided, Commanders can view their established understanding as a sturdy foundation to build on – using any resources available. A measure of openness combined with their sense of energetic

action allows these types to evolve. Commanders can start by practicing positive change voluntarily:

- Pick one aspect of yourself, your mind, or your life in general that could change for the better. Focus on changing a habit (eating a healthier diet, setting the alarm 15 minutes earlier to enjoy a little personal time in the morning, or reading instead of watching TV, for example).
- Consciously practice acting on the change at least once per day.
- Feel free to include anyone who can help things proceed – involving others is a great way to practice personal change.
- While practicing the new habit, note the benefits gained, and use that satisfaction to inspire the next change.
- Mix it up: After a week or two, pick another thing to change and start the process over again. Keep building or advancing at least one personal quality.

Commanders are adept at following through once they decide to make changes – it's the initial decision to change that can require some serious effort. However, their desire for advancement helps these types embrace self-evolution as they focus on building something new and wonderful rather than polishing monuments they've already finished.

Self-Responsibility

This facet of personal growth is about Commanders' decisions and what they value. Consciously accepting ownership of all aspects of their actions is key to personal growth, and self-responsibility represents both accountability and capability in Commanders' lives, including recognizing the limits on their responsibility.

Balanced Self-Responsibility

Authority over Life

These types have a gift for dissecting concepts and events, and they see causes and probabilities surrounding almost anything. Combining this with self-responsibility gives them influence over their lives because they can choose actions that create joy, personal progress, and harmony with their environment. Commanders crave control, but because their will isn't the only factor in life, that's not always possible. They create balance when they use their abilities to deal gracefully and constructively with whatever happens, instead of pushing too hard against an unwelcome fate.

That can mean different things depending on the situation – more an *attitude* of positive action than a specific course of action. Self-responsible Commanders use their knowledge and power to consciously engineer the best possible outcomes, including knowing when to relax and back off. True greatness – and personal growth – isn't really a measure of ability, but rather how adroitly that ability is used. When they claim accountability for their lives, they also gain authority, and every adversity becomes an opportunity for them to learn, refocus, and create a better future.

Accepting the Challenge

As they take responsibility for their lives, Commanders may come up against upsetting things or people. Tolerance isn't easy for a type that so actively envisions their ideal world, yet these types often find it to be the only functional solution available. In the face of the disagreeable, they can firmly balance their reactions by recognizing that it's not their responsibility to "fix" everything – sometimes it's not even an option. Knowing when to accept that which they cannot or need not change frees up a lot of useful energy.

They must work harder than most to overcome frustration and release themselves from judgement, but Commanders are up for the challenge of balancing their exacting vision with wise acceptance. They appreciate the value of living in progressive motion – they'd rather hurdle a wall than keep smashing into it. When they practice acceptance, they step off the narrow path of perfectionism into an expanded mode that enables them to stride forward despite upsetting obstacles.

Unbalanced Self-Responsibility

Dangerous Blame Game

Commanders tend to see everything as a system and are often able to understand things in complex detail. This can be a virtue when they're creatively constructive, but when they experience misfortune, their vigorously analytical tendencies may lead them to hunt down and attack any perceived sources. It's dangerously easy for such an expressive personality type to erupt when others' incompetence or deficiency seems to be at fault – so easy that they may not see any personal accountability, or feel the need to take the self-responsible step of turning their ire into restorative action.

In fact, Commanders' tendency to blame any perceived inadequacy – be it a mechanism, method, or person – often feeds a cycle of negative, sometimes

aggressive judgment, even around legitimate complaints. The energy they focus on finding fault could be better used to move forward, but when Commanders think they're right and don't see any culpability in themselves, they may convince themselves they don't have any responsibility to remedy the situation. This attitude can take them from productive action into unbalanced, angry cynicism, hardly a state in which these types achieve growth or joy.

Bossing the World

Commanders' keen perceptions detect the myriad problems that are a part of everyday reality. However, harshly criticizing everything they see as "broken" and trying to force unwanted changes in the world are unbalanced behaviors that rob others of their own right to self-responsibility. It's simply unrealistic for Commanders to attempt to make everything the way they think it should be, and when such overreaching efforts inevitably fail, they can become angry. When they insist on trying to command everything, they may end up being at war.

Such an unbalanced attitude not only threatens Commanders' own happiness and health, but it can also be hurtful to others, harming relationships in their personal and professional lives. Self-responsibility certainly includes taking progressive or curative actions, but Commanders can do a lot of damage when they assume the obligation – or right – to judge and control everything. When they think they see the "best" way, they struggle to be permissive, often putting themselves at odds with people around them.

Rebalancing Self-Responsibility

Command Response-Ability

Life presents many opportunities to find fault – after all, the world is full of flaws. However, self-responsible Commanders can choose paths forward of

firm optimism and creativity instead. It's good to understand the root of a problem, but identifying a cause is different than blaming it; blame is a destructive attitude, whereas understanding a problem with a constructive mindset is a gesture of power because it affirms an ability to effect change. Accepting their restorative abilities also frees Commanders to recognize any part they may have played in their problems without shame – a wise use of rational objectivity.

To take that wisdom even further, they can learn from such realizations with a mind to prevent problems in the future. When they embrace both self-responsibility and their abilities, they often find that participating in solutions – even overseeing those they previously criticized – is a far more satisfying and productive use of energy than blame. These types are easily capable of envisioning and enacting grander plans than finger-pointing. Commanders can use the following steps to help turn their minds toward progress instead of blame:

- Ask, "What happened?" Before assigning blame, seek answers with a cool, analytical mindset. The truth may come to light and provide a useful perspective.
 - Go over the chain of events to uncover the details of what happened.
 - Ask others for their take on events. Limiting the analysis to only one perspective would be to ignore additional data.
 - Map things out on paper, if needed, including others' description of events.
 - If the root problem can be identified, see whether the situation can be improved constructively. This is a great time to seek the counsel of trusted, respected friends, family, or coworkers.
- Be forgiving. Inanimate objects can't apologize, and people can't undo history. Forgiveness benefits those who give it. After all, stress and

anger can do real physical and mental harm. Calm tolerance is a rational investment in personal health.

- Elevate others. Instead of pointing out how people are wrong, respectfully offer them mentorship, helpful energy, and the benefit of personal experience – and be graceful if they decline.
- Move forward. Feelings of blame don't always go away quickly, but staying focused on progressive action is helpful, so tap into personal energy and creativity to seek a solution that can make things better.

The above are rational and helpful steps, but frankly, sometimes frustration and the desire to blame can be irrationally raw. Consider this classic tool that any type can use to release negative feelings:

- Let it out. Write an unrestrained rant about the problem and then read it aloud in private, letting out emotional energy along with the spoken words.
- Afterward, destroy the paper so that it can't be read again.
- If desired, repeat the exercise whenever the need arises. The act of composing and then tangibly expressing and releasing negativity opens a window of relief that Commanders can step through to get back on track.

Blame implies victimization, but Commanders prefer to see themselves as capable agents of their own destiny instead of as victims. These types create useful and balanced self-responsibility by examining how they can improve things instead of blaming themselves, others, or circumstances for their problems.

The Strength to Accept

Tolerance and acceptance can seem like useless concepts when Commanders want to mold the world to suit their views. However, as they mature and accept that they can't control everything – or everyone – those skills become

extremely valuable for rebalancing unbeneficial frustration. When these types accept responsibility for their actions and reactions, rational objectivity reveals that frustration isn't only unnecessary but also within their power to change.

Self-responsibility is a logical path to calm acceptance that leads Commanders away from futile anger and toward productive action. It's okay to call out things that seem wrong – Commanders have wonderful insights to offer – but fighting to control what they cannot does little to bring happiness or progress. It's more rewarding to embrace opportunities to act on their visions without getting stuck when they can't, and tolerance can help avoid such pitfalls. Here's a daring exercise they can use to practice such a skill (it may require a little planning in advance):

- Enter a social situation antithetical to your personal opinions and decide to withhold judgement or thought. (For example, an atheist could sit in the back of an orthodox religious service.)
- Quietly listen and absorb for 10–15 minutes (or longer if the subject proves interesting).
- Don't discuss the experience with other participants. This is an internal practice, not a social one of argument or agreement. If you are asked to discuss the experience, perhaps offer a friendly, "Just curious, but I'd prefer not to discuss it."
- Allow internal judgement (intolerance), but simply observe it instead of delving into it – collect the facts, not the feelings.
- If emotions like anger or frustration come up, feel them for five seconds, then refocus. It's important to respect and allow emotions, even while rebalancing them.
- Try to understand exclusively the upsides to the thing being examined, even if it's not personally agreeable: What are its positive points? How does it benefit people? Why do people like it, and how is that legitimately lived? Commanders have the mental strength to walk in others' shoes.

- Tally up the positives and see whether they collectively make the thing more acceptable. Something needn't be enjoyed or even engaged to be tolerated.
- If possible, meet up with a friend afterward and discuss these observations.
- Realize that the objectionable thing will always be there – but choosing to focus on it or not is a matter of self-responsibility.
- Take this idea into everyday life: Where it's beneficial to place attention and energy is a personal choice.

There's no magic bullet with which Commanders can fight their own discomfort when they perceive genuinely odious things. However, trying to force change isn't always enough to make life happy. Sometimes personal growth comes from recognizing the advantages of acceptance, and then finding the strength to progress despite the world's offenses.

Final Words

Masters and Commanders of Their Lives

Commanders are aptly named, but “command” can have different meanings, one of which is domination. Those who look down on others and the world achieve only a relative position of dominance that’s built on conflict, by claiming superiority rather than demonstrating worthiness. But balanced self-esteem and self-respect give Commanders the self-confident energy to unabashedly show the world their virtues. They don’t need to hide their imperfections, either, because acknowledging flaws is a declaration of intent to grow beyond them.

This brings us to another meaning of “command”: mastery. Continually pursuing ascendant growth, Commanders lift themselves with personal energy, cheerful willingness to apply their abilities, and a determination to improve themselves through objective self-evolution. These qualities create personal greatness regardless of comparisons to others, and just as certainly, they attract admiration and respect. Luminous, positive actions earn genuine regard and may even create opportunities for learning and leadership.

Leadership doesn’t necessarily mean directing other people. Commanders can also practice brave self-leadership, forging rewarding, self-responsible paths. They can feel good about living daringly when their perceptions lead to actions that benefit others as well as themselves. At their best, Commanders are heralds of rational progress and lofty principles – loud, proud voices for the positive potential in all things. They are the source of ideas conceived with bold imagination, plans wrought with focused insight, and grand deeds achieved through energetic commitment. For these types, when all things are balanced, all things are possible.

Advancement Isn't Always a Battle

Throughout this e-book, we've discussed many ways that Commanders may approach a range of aspects of their lives. We've touched on their impressive qualities, some less-than-ideal tendencies, and some ideas for how they can improve themselves. These types tend to view things in black and white, but it's very important for Commanders to realize that who they are at any stage isn't shameful. Evolving doesn't necessarily mean fighting "bad" parts of themselves, but instead choosing their behavior consciously.

The point isn't to cause Commanders to discount or disdain any part of their being, but rather to encourage them to make wise decisions about which parts to feed and which parts to rest now and then. For example, winning an argument, however thrilling, is quite familiar for most Commanders, but empathizing deeply with someone may be a valuable undiscovered talent. Change means adding to who they are, and any behavior intently practiced can eventually become a natural component. Commanders can continuously redefine themselves through their actions, and this is a joyful thing. Figuring out which of their many mental or emotional skills can take any given moment to its grandest potential is an exciting – and logical – way to live.

A Powerful Force for Good

One thing Commanders can keep in mind as they create and express who they are is the concept of pluralism – not everyone wants to think, act, or live the same way, and that's okay. Commanders can honor such differences as a part of the great experiment of existence – many people trying many things for many reasons and needs. Just as people are responsible for their own lives, so do they earn the right to attempt their own course. Commanders wouldn't have it any other way for themselves, and they can certainly respect the sovereignty of others. Their determination and decisiveness create success when they insist on a constructive outlook instead of becoming sidetracked by unproductive criticism – and life is a whole lot more fun.

Of course, respecting others doesn't mean that Commanders should restrain themselves from engagement – they can't be truly happy without vigorously advocating for their beliefs, including improving themselves, others, and the world. What's key to developing such strength is realizing that tolerance and respect don't replace the proud sharing of ideas and opinions – they enable it. When Commanders refine their steely pugnacity into a voice of reasoned encouragement, the world listens, and when their ideas are beneficial to others, the world thanks them. A pointed, rational argument can be a wonderful thing – it all depends on what the aim is, and why.

True strength is the ability to uplift minds and circumstances. Commanders are at their best when their words contain positive energy and solid information, and when their deeds build something great. Wanting to be powerful is in no way a bad thing, but how that power is used is a serious matter – everyone must choose whether to play the hero or the villain. We hope that this e-book makes it clear that Commanders have all the tools they need to be as great as they desire, and that their reaction to all that seems so wrong in the world can be to reach out and make it better.

Next Steps

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