



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

# Introduction to Overcoming Immunity To Change™

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Leading with Influence Program

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# Introduction

For an overview of how this process fits into the Leading with Influence Program, please download and read the **Leading with Influence Program Overview** from your online resource: <http://www.curiosityskilledthecat.com/index.php/doeelwiresources>

Then, please read this document and complete the task before your Introductory Workshop.

N.B. We will be using the information you record at the end of this document during the Introductory Workshop. Please make sure you complete the task well before that workshop and bring this completed document with you.

## Why Overcoming Immunity to Change™?

We have heard these many times:

*“People resist change”, “Change is hard!”, “No-one likes change”, etc.*

And, there are also some beautiful quotes supporting the notion of change:

*“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”  
~ Viktor E Frankl, author of Man’s Search for Meaning*

*“In our struggle for freedom, truth is the only weapon we possess.”  
~ The Dalai Lama*

*“Life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”  
~ George Bernard Shaw*

*“It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg.  
~ C. S. Lewis*

Clearly, collectively, we are conflicted about change.

There is a growing body of evidence that the "difference that makes the difference" with regards to organisational outcomes is the willingness and capacity of the organisation to support individual development and growth. The Department of the Environment and Energy has provided this program as part of their support for your development. The Program Overview has more about that.

*“The single biggest failure of leadership is to treat adaptive challenges like technical problems” ~ Heifetz and Linsky, Cambridge Leadership Associates*

*“There is no greater waste of resources in ordinary organisations than the energy expended every day to hide our (perceived) weaknesses and manage others' favourable impressions of us”  
~ Kegan, Lahey, Fleming, Miller, Making Business Personal HBR, April 2014.*

In the Leading with Influence Program, we will be working with an effective process for personal change called Overcoming Immunity to Change™. This document is your starting point for that aspect of the program and is, in effect, the start of the program.

Overcoming Immunity to Change™ is often abbreviated to "TTC" which misses the essential word - **Overcoming**. Rather than giving you a wordy explanation of this we would like you to watch the following recording of Lisa Laskow Lahey Ed.D., one of the developers of Overcoming Immunity to Change™, recorded at the 2017 The Leadership Circle™ Conference in Sydney. In this video Lisa walks you through the process of seeing the Immunity to Change then discusses the "overcoming" part. In this Leading with Influence Program you will be working on your own "Immunity Map" associated with an Improvement Goal you will select for yourself. More on that below.

The recording is 1 hour and 15 minutes long and is required watching as the starting point for this program.

Lisa Laskow Lahey Ed.D. is from the Graduate School of Education at Harvard. Her short bio is available at: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/faculty/lisa-lahey>

Her presentation at TLC Conference Sydney 2017 is available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6reQY1MIBA8>

During the presentation Lisa refers to some sample Immunity Maps. For your convenience and with Lisa's permission we have reproduced those maps below.

After you have worked through the video please complete the Pre-Introductory Workshop task after the sample maps and bring this document with you to the Introductory Workshop so you can build upon it there.

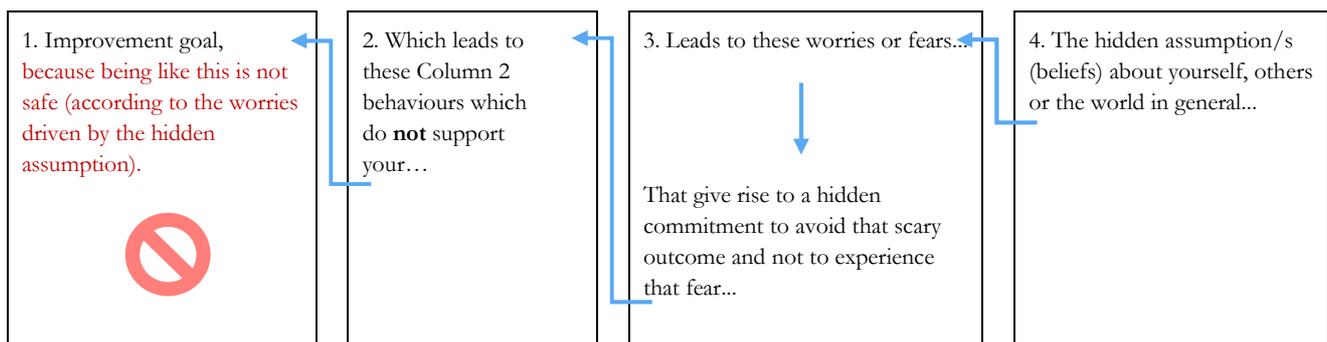
# Sample Immunity Maps from Lisa's video

## An Overcoming Immunity to Change™ Map Overview

To map your Immunity to Change follow the steps starting from Column 1

1. Improvement goal	2. What are you doing, or not doing, that works against your Column 1 goal?	3. My hidden/competing goal. Imagine doing the opposite of the behaviours in Column 2.	4. Big assumptions. "What assumptions must I be making that would keep me captive of (or give rise to) my Column 3 hidden commitments?"
<p><b>Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is not an outcome or result</li> <li>• Is true for you (rather than something that someone else thinks you should work on)</li> <li>• Implicates you (is not about someone else)</li> <li>• Is stated affirmatively</li> <li>• There is room for improvement</li> <li>• Is important to you (4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale)</li> </ul> <p>© minds at work</p>	<p><b>Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviours, including "self-talk" (but not inner states or emotions)</li> <li>• These behaviours get in the way or work against Column 1</li> <li>• Don't write why or what you are doing to accomplish your goal.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Worry box:</b></p> <p>Really picture yourself in that situation. What do you feel/think? What concerns, doubts, anxieties - even fears - do you experience?</p> <p>Write these in this box. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'll look like a slacker</li> <li>• I'll look stupid</li> </ul> <p>Consider that you may have a commitment to prevent this fear or loss from happening. Rewrite your fears from your Worry Box into "goal" statements.</p> <p><b>Hidden commitments:</b></p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I'll worry I'll look stupid" becomes "I am committed to NOT looking stupid"</li> <li>• "I worry I'll become angry" becomes "I am committed to NOT feeling my anger"</li> </ul> <p><b>Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is not noble, preserves the danger from your fear</li> <li>• Is self-protective</li> <li>• Shows <i>why</i> column 2 behaviours make good sense</li> <li>• Is in tension with column 1</li> <li>• You see your immune system and it feels powerful (score 4 or 5)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Criteria:</b></p> <p>Makes the hidden commitment necessary in order to keep yourself "safe"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected to fears; takes fears deeper</li> <li>• Has a bad conclusion for you</li> <li>• Can <i>feel</i> real and powerful (even if you know it is "wrong")</li> <li>• Limits your world</li> </ul>

To *understand* the immunity, work backwards from Column 4



## Example – Collaborative Leader

1. Improvement goal	2. What are you doing, or not doing, that works against your Column 1 goal?	3. My hidden/competing goal. Imagine doing the opposite of the behaviours in Column 2.	4. Big assumptions. "What assumptions must I be making that would keep me captive of (or give rise to) my Column 3 hidden commitments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be a collaborative leader who taps into the collective wisdom of my leadership team.</li> <li>Score 4.5 / 5</li> <li>We will fail if I continue to drive people the way I am. I'm working too hard with not enough support from them. If they feel more ownership, we'll all benefit.</li> </ul> <p>© minds at work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coming to the table with a predetermined definition of the problem and solution</li> <li>Always framing and writing the meeting agenda</li> <li>Speaking more than any other member of the team</li> <li>Taking charge of, and running every meeting (rather than sharing this responsibility with others, even though I claimed they were leaders too)</li> <li>Not asking for help when I need it</li> </ul>	<p><b>Worry box:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fears:</li> <li>I'll look and feel weak and soft</li> <li>I'll lose my value proposition</li> </ul> <p><b>Hidden commitments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To not appearing or feeling weak</li> <li>To being hugely important, indispensable and value-adding</li> <li>To always appearing to be on top of things</li> <li>To be the hero/star of the team (scoring the goals)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If I look weak, people won't follow me/my leadership</li> <li>I assume people want a leader who has the answers = strong</li> <li>I assume people don't want to take responsibility anyway</li> <li>If I am not indispensable, then I'm 2nd rate</li> <li>If I am not special, then I am replaceable</li> </ul>

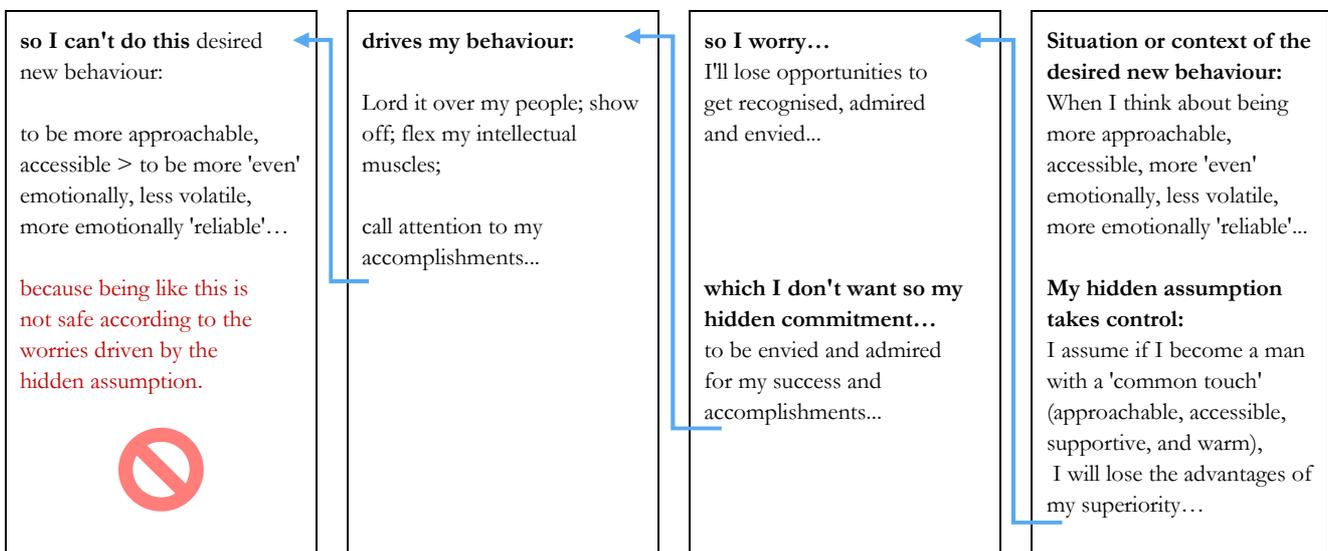
To understand the immunity, work backwards from Column 4

<p><b>so I can't do</b> this desired new behaviour:</p> <p>to be a collaborative leader who taps into the collective wisdom of my leadership team...</p> <p>because being like this is not safe according to the worries driven by the hidden assumption.</p> 	<p><b>drives my behaviour:</b></p> <p>Speaking more than any other member of the team...</p> <p>Taking charge of, and running every meeting (rather than sharing this responsibility with others, even though I claimed they were leaders too)...</p>	<p><b>so I worry...</b></p> <p>I'll look and feel weak and soft...</p> <p>which I don't want so my hidden commitment...</p> <p>to not appearing or feeling weak...</p>	<p><b>Situation or context of the desired new behaviour:</b></p> <p>When I think about being be a collaborative leader who taps into the collective wisdom of my leadership team...</p> <p><b>my hidden assumption takes control:</b></p> <p>I assume people want a leader who has the answers which = strong...</p>
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# Example – Emotionally Available Leader

1.	2.	3.	4.
Improvement goal	What are you doing, or not doing, that works against your Column 1 goal?	My hidden/competing goal. Imagine doing the opposite of the behaviours in Column 2.	Big assumptions. "What assumptions must I be making that would keep me captive of (or give rise to) my Column 3 hidden commitments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be more approachable, accessible &gt; to be more 'even' emotionally, less volatile, more emotionally 'reliable'.</li> <li>Score 5+</li> <li>If I don't succeed on this front, I'm never going to progress in this organisation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holding impossibly high expectations for others and self</li> <li>Very judgemental - extreme black and white decisions</li> <li>Talking too much</li> <li>Procrastinating, and then having to act urgently</li> <li>Hair trigger responses to disappointment, what I see as a lack of integrity or injustice</li> <li>Lord it over my people; show off; flex my intellectual muscles; call attention to my accomplishments</li> <li>Not letting myself get close to others</li> <li>Not sharing my emotional needs, saying what I want or need on this level</li> </ul>	<p><b>Worry box:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fears:</li> <li>My reputation will suffer</li> <li>My team will become lax</li> <li>I'll become common</li> <li>I'll become lax!</li> <li>I'll lose opportunities to get recognised, admired &amp; envied</li> <li>I'll be simple</li> </ul> <p><b>Hidden commitments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To not reduce my reputation in any way</li> <li>To keep my team members insecure so that they will stay driven</li> <li>To not be too common</li> <li>To not lose my insecurity</li> <li>To keep getting recognition</li> <li>To be self-sufficient; to not rely on others</li> <li>To be envied and admired for my success and accomplishments</li> <li>To be enviable</li> <li>To not be too direct; to come across as complex and mysterious; to not be too simple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I assume if I become a man with a 'common touch' (approachable, accessible, supportive, and warm), I will lose the advantages of my superiority</li> <li>I assume the 'common touch' is incompatible with intellectual superiority</li> <li>I assume I must continue to feel superior to feel good</li> <li>I assume that any tolerance for mistakes or weakness in myself is incompatible with my station in life</li> <li>I assume that if I lose my insecurity I lose my drive (and the same for others)</li> </ul>
© minds at work			

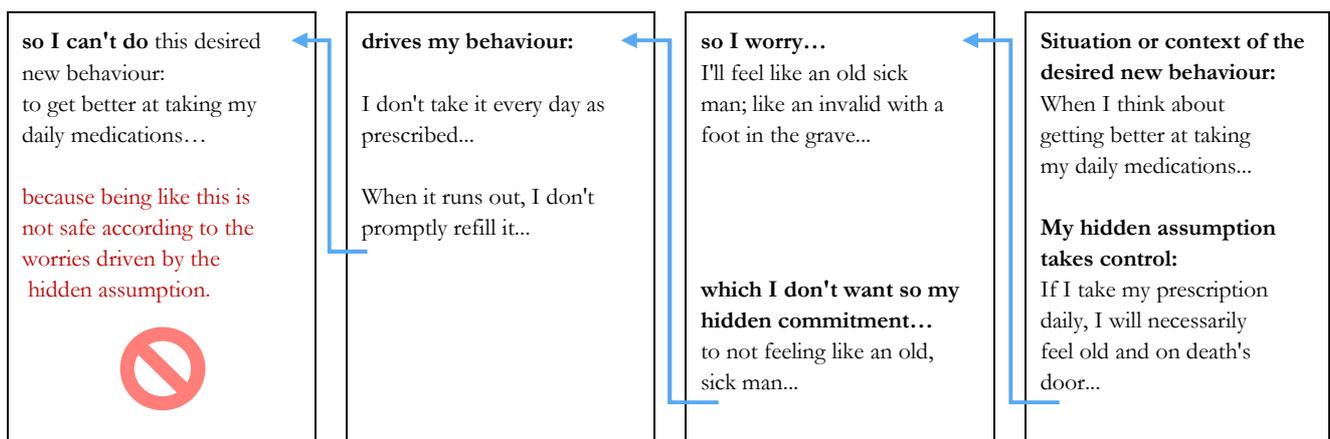
To understand the immunity, work backwards from Column 4



## Example – Cholesterol Medication Patient

1.	2.	3.	4.
Improvement goal	What are you doing, or not doing, that works against your Column 1 goal?	My hidden/competing goal. Imagine doing the opposite of the behaviours in Column 2.	Big Assumptions. "What assumptions must I be making that would keep me captive of (or give rise to) my Column 3 hidden commitments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get better at taking my daily medications</li> <li>• Score: 5</li> <li>• Because taking it will lower my cholesterol and my doctor says it will prevent me from having a heart attack.</li> </ul> <p>© minds at work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't take it every day as prescribed</li> <li>• When it runs out, I don't promptly refill it</li> <li>• When I get those automatic phone calls from my pharmacy telling me that my medications are ready to be refilled, I hang up right in the middle of the voice mail message</li> </ul>	<p><b>Worry box:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fears:</li> <li>• I'll feel like an old sick man</li> <li>• I'll feel like an invalid with a foot in the grave</li> </ul> <p><b>Hidden commitments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To not feeling like an old, sick man</li> <li>• To not be reminded daily of my mortality</li> <li>• To avoid feeling aware of my mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If I take my prescription daily, I will necessarily feel old and on death's door</li> <li>• Taking a daily medication means there is something wrong with me</li> <li>• Being aware of my mortality takes the fun out of my life</li> </ul>

To understand the immunity, work backwards from Column 4



## The four stages to releasing your immunity

As described in the video by Lisa Lahey and supported by the Leading with Influence Program.

<p>Unconsciously "Immune"</p>	<p>You are "subject to" your hidden assumptions.</p> <p>Your Column 3 "hidden commitment" to not experience your Column 3 worries / fears leads you to your Column 2 behaviours instead of your Column 1 desired improvement goal.</p> <p>Therefore, you are "immune" to achieving your Column 1 goal and do not know you are immune.</p>
<p>Consciously "Immune"</p>	<p>As a result of your Immunity to Change process you can now "see" the immunity process as described in the row above.</p> <p>Your hidden assumption is now no longer hidden - it is now an "object" - a phenomenon you can "see".</p> <p>You are still "immune" to achieving your Column 1 goal but at least you are conscious of it.</p>
<p>Consciously "Released"</p>	<p>How to overcome your "immune system" so that you can achieve your Column 1 improvement goal. i.e. so you are "released" from being subject to it and instead have choices about when and where it might be helpful, or not.</p> <p>Step 1: Observe the big assumption in action  Step 2: Stay alert to natural challenges and counters to the big assumption  Step 3: Create a continuum of progress  Step 4: Write a biography of your big assumption  Step 4: Design a first test of your big assumption  Step 6: Examine the results of your first test  Step 7: Develop / run / evaluate further tests</p>
<p>Unconsciously "Released"</p>	<p>You have made new habitual patterns in your mind so your old big assumption is now contextualised as just one possible course of action rather than an automatic reaction to an aspect of the world around you.</p>

## Pre-Introductory Workshop Task

As mentioned above, an integral part of this program is the work you will do on your own Immunity Map. The **Program Overview** frames the reason the Overcoming Immunity to Change™ process is such an important part of the Leading with Influence Program.

### Your Improvement Goal

Now you have:

1. watched Lisa's video and followed along with the sample maps;
2. reviewed the Column 1 Criteria on the Overcoming Immunity to Change™ Map Overview on page 3;
3. reflected upon the Improvement Goal you would like to work on during this program ...

please record your current idea about an Improvement Goal below and bring it with you to the Introductory Workshop.

N.B. Don't worry if your initial thoughts about a suitable Improvement Goal don't feel particularly strong. If they do, that's great! If not, there will be time at the Introductory Workshop and afterwards to evolve your current thoughts into a strong goal. For now, just note down what you think about it and compare it to the Column 1 criteria for refining if necessary.

Your Improvement Goal:

On a scale of 1 - 5 where 5 is "essential", how important is it that you achieve this change?

Once you have achieved this change, how would you be different? In other words, **why** is it important for you to make this change? Write why here: