

Exercise: Imperfection Perfected

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION: We all have vulnerabilities and character flaws. Yet how one responds to these characteristics varies widely and often defines success. Take a moment to reexamine personal character imperfections and your approach to managing them.

EXAMPLE: Nelson Mandela, now revered for ending apartheid in South Africa and being the country's first black president, was a revolutionary and imprisoned for conspiring to overthrow the white-only government. During his lengthy time in prison, Mandela's introspection transformed him from being a violent extremist into the human rights icon we think of today.

INSTRUCTIONS: No one is perfect. Even the most accomplished leaders have character vulnerabilities, flaws, and imperfections. By this time in your life, your focus may not be so much on changing your character, but rather, effectively managing those parts of your character that may be less evolved than what you would want them to be.

Are you aware of shortcomings or imperfections in your character that you would like to manage more effectively? Could these aspects of your character make you vulnerable to lapses in your personal values and ethical leadership?

Direct and honest admission to the existence of such areas is in itself a test, of sorts, of your self-awareness. Furthermore, remaining in self-denial about a character issue and consequently failing to actively manage the issue could lead to career-ending consequences. With this context in mind, use the space below to reflect on your character imperfections, vulnerabilities, or shortcomings that you have come to identify in yourself over the years. Then, describe how you effectively (or ineffectively) manage these aspects of your character.

My character imperfection:
I manage it (effectively/ineffectively) by:

My character imperfection:
I manage it (effectively/ineffectively) by:

My character imperfection:
I manage it (effectively/ineffectively) by: