

REASONS FOR LOW RESULTS

The gap between how you see yourself and what the GCI shows on these competencies can be for several reasons:

- I. **The subjective self.** Sometimes how we see ourselves is only partially accurate. *The exaggerated self.* Research in social psychology consistently shows that most people tend to exaggerate the positive aspects of themselves and minimize the negative things—despite the fact that we think we are very objective. This can be reinforced by the fact that most people will tell us things about ourselves that are more likely to protect the relationship than be totally accurate.

The fallacy of perception. Perception, by definition, is subjective. Many of us have had the experience of having someone tell us something about ourselves that completely surprised us— positively or negatively. Or, we have had someone tell us a very different impression they had of someone else even though we were both experiencing the same situation. All this simply means that our view of ourselves might not always be as accurate as we would hope it is.

The relative factor. Your assessment on the GCI shows your *relative standing*, which can be very different from your *absolute standing*. Both ways are valid ways to measure people and things. Your *absolute standing* on, say, Inquisitiveness, might be moderately strong. Translated to a common scale used in psychological assessments, that means that if your average result on all the questions you took was 3.6 on the 1 – 5 scale the GCI uses, you would likely be placed in column 4, for example. Instead, it is possible that you find yourself in column 2. How can that be? Simple. The scoring method the GCI uses is a *relative* scoring method because most of our lives, we are judged on relative scales. At work, our supervisor usually evaluates our performance, implicitly or explicitly, by comparing us to others. Are we in the top 5%, 15%, etc. of employees on our teamwork skills? As a student applying for admission to a university or for a scholarship, the committee compares our dossier with others' dossiers. Do we land in the top 5% or 10% of applicants? When we apply for a job or are being considered for a promotion, the interviewer or evaluator compares us to the others in the pool. We are constantly comparing and being compared to. So when we look at our GCI results, often the results seems lower than it “should be” because we are thinking of ourselves on an absolute standard when the GCI is evaluating us on a relative standard.

The authors of the GCI felt it would be more helpful to us if we knew how we stand relative to others on the dimensions because it is a more real-world view of how others are likely to evaluate us and make decisions about us. Even if we are fairly self-confident, for example, if we are not as confident as most people, it will negatively affect our performance and the view that others have of us to accomplish certain objectives. Others will make decisions about us based on how we compare to others. The authors of the GCI assumed that we would rather understand how we compare to others so we can better evaluate whether we need to and want to improve.

- Situational factors.** On occasion, sometimes the situation we are experiencing at the time we take the GCI affects our answers to the questions. *A significant life event.* Throughout our life, we will, unfortunately, experience a life event that has a very negative effect on us—a divorce, a sick loved on, a failed performance on something very important to us, etc.. We become generally depressed, which in turn clouds or normal judgment. We become down on life, and that includes ourselves. If we take the GCI or GCI during a period such as this, there is a high likelihood that our results could be negatively affected by it.

Momentary significant preoccupation. Similarly, it might not be a life event but maybe momentarily we are experiencing a great deal of stress. It may come from our work or a combination of factors. Whatever we are experiencing that stresses us leads to a lack of attention to the present task. When this happens, our answers to the questions on the GCI/GCI might not be as well thought out and could be more negative or more positive than how we would normally respond.

Insufficient consideration. In other cases, some of us might have an aversion to psychological assessments or we just don't believe they can really tell us anything of importance or that we don't already know. The result is that we don't really read the statement carefully and/or we don't consider the responses carefully. Then, however, when we get the results and they are different from what we think of ourselves, we are surprised—negatively or positively. If we are surprised negatively, instead of admitting that we might not have taken the assessment as seriously as we should have, it can be easier to discount the results.