

The background features a pair of golden scales of justice against a blue gradient. A graphic element consisting of a blue line, a green arc, and a purple arc is positioned behind the main title. The scales are slightly out of focus, with the top pan being more prominent than the bottom pan.

# Resilient Leadership

**Resilient Leadership Basic Training**

**Unit 3: Over-Under Functioning**

# Resilient Leadership



Resilient Leadership is a new way of **SEEING**, **THINKING** and **LEADING** that helps leaders navigate the hidden dynamics of organizations more effectively.

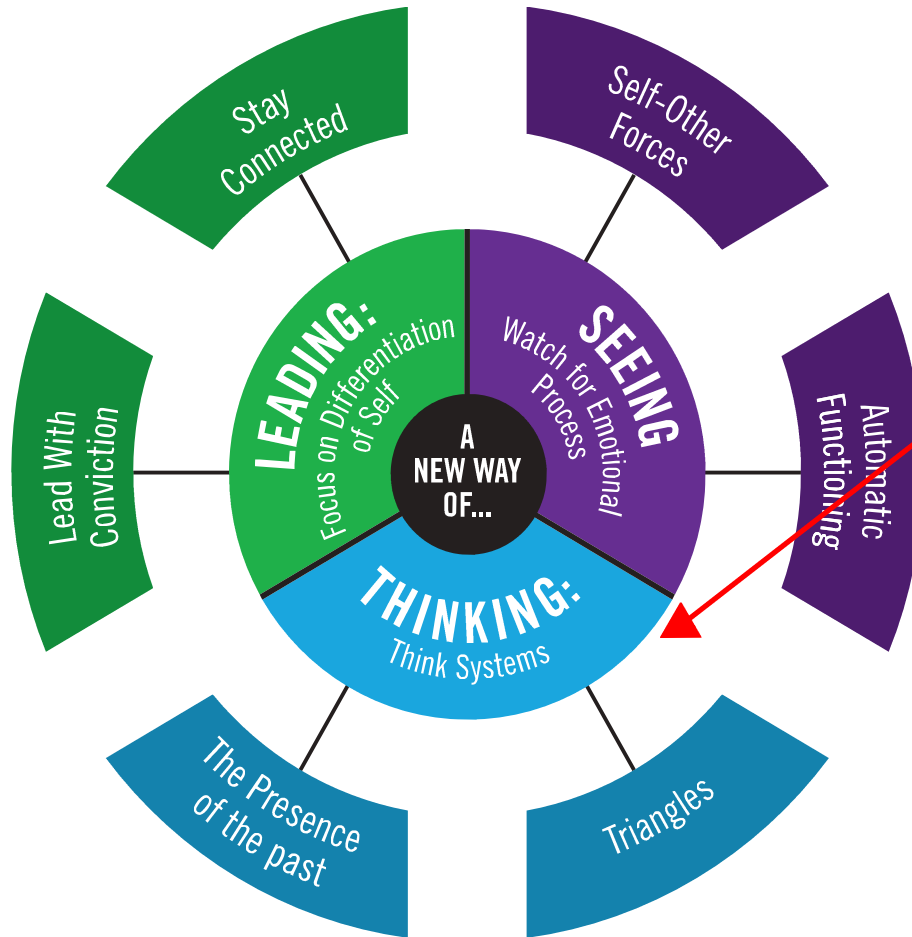
---

## Resilient Leaders are able to:

- Lead with calm, clarity and conviction in the midst of anxiety provoked by increasing complexity and accelerating change.
- Such individuals lead from strength, know how to care for themselves emotionally, spiritually and physically, and can sustain their leadership efforts over time.

# OVER/UNDER-FUNCTIONING: Where Does It Fit?

A New Way of THINKING



1. Reactivity
2. Stay Connected
3. **OVER/UNDER-FUNCTIONING**
4. Triangles
5. Non-Anxious Presence
6. Focus on Your Own Functioning
7. Lead with Conviction
8. The Fallacy of Empathy

# Over-Functioning: What does it look like?



Over-Functioning means getting stuck with the responsibility for the problems of others. It can also mean taking on sole responsibility for the welfare and ownership of the organization. Over-Functioning toward others means Under-Functioning toward oneself. It is a major source of stress for leaders and the chief cause of burnout.

**OR:**

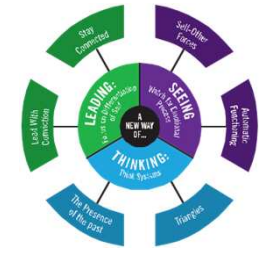
To over-function means to think, feel or act for another, in a way that erodes their own capacity or ownership for action.

# Over/Under-Functioning: **The 3 Big Ideas**



- 1** Whenever there is an over/under-functioning part of the system, there is always an opposite part working to maintain the balance.
- 2** Both over- and under-functioning are driven by anxiety.
- 3** Leaders who find themselves in an over- or under-functioning relationship can (and should) break the cycle.

Over/Under-Functioning: **First Big Idea**



- 1 Whenever there is an over/under-functioning part of the system, there is always an **opposite** part working to maintain the **balance**.



Every system works to maintain its balance “at all costs”.

# Small Group Discussion

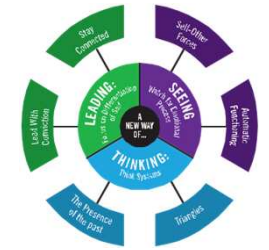


- **Reflect** on your experience of how the Over/Under-Functioning dynamic shows up in your workplace, either ORA as a whole, or the specific part of ORA where you work most of the time.

---

- **Share** with one another what your experience of this dynamic looks like.
- **Report out to large group:** Group leader will summarize major themes that have emerged.

# Over/Under-Functioning: **Second Big Idea**



- 2 Both **over-** and **under-functioning** are driven by **anxiety**.



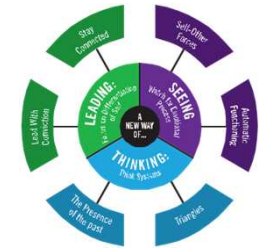
People who over-function are covering their anxiety by behaviors that make them feel strong and “in charge”.



People who under-function are trying to reduce their fear of failure by not really trying all that hard to succeed.



# Over/Under-Functioning: **Second Big Idea**



2 Both **over-** and **under-functioning** are driven by **anxiety**.

Typical workplace examples:

## OVER-FUNCTIONING

- Worrying too much about someone else.
- Thinking you know what is best for someone else.
- Offering advice before it's asked for.
- Expecting others to do it your way.
- Taking over someone else's job without being asked.
- Feeling responsible for someone else's feelings.
- Taking the position of "one up" with someone else.

## UNDER-FUNCTIONING

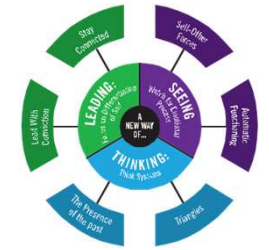
- Not making decisions
- Constantly seeking advice
- Habitually letting others have their way
- Not taking initiatives
- Adopting a weak or helpless persona
- Believing others are responsible for your feelings
- Taking position of "one down" with someone else

# Small Group Discussion



- **Reflect Activity:** Page 9
  - **Share** with one another your experience of Over/Under-Functioning.
- 
- **Report out to large group:** Group leader will summarize major themes that have emerged.

Over/Under-Functioning: **Third Big Idea**



- 3 Leaders who find themselves in an over- or under-functioning **relationship** can (and should) **break the cycle**.

**JUST DO IT!**

(And trust the reciprocal nature of the system to level things out when you change your functioning.)

# Small Group Discussion

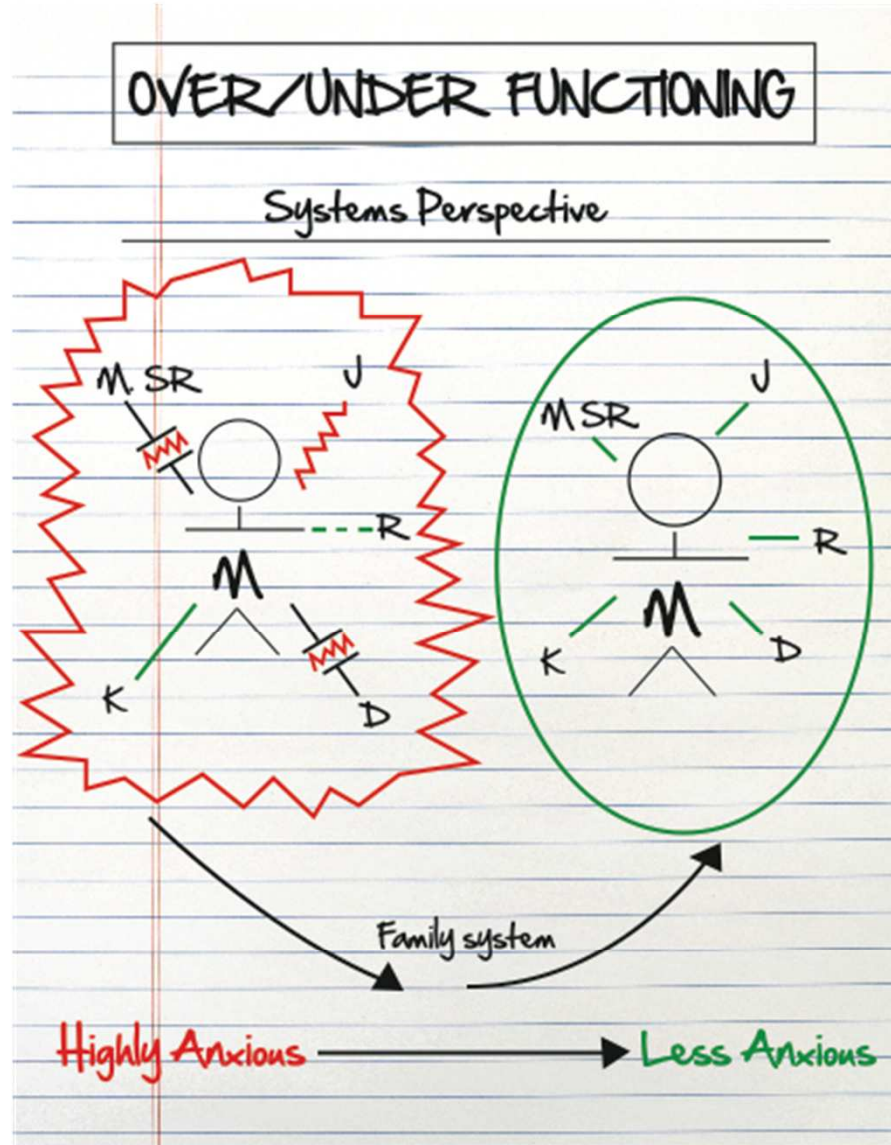


- **Discuss** the realistic possibilities you see to reduce your own Over/Under-Functioning and what specific steps can be taken by you in the next 90 days to make progress in that direction.

---

- **Report out to large group:** Group leader will summarize major themes that have emerged.

# Over/Under-Functioning: Re-Cap



# The Incredibles

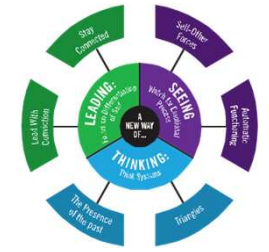
What did you see?



- Which of the over-functioning behaviors listed on page 8 does the wife, Helen, display in this scene?
- Which of the under-functioning behaviors does the husband, Bob, display?
- If Helen were to stop over-functioning, what might that look like – what would she be saying or doing differently? If Bob were to stop under-functioning, what might that look like – what would he be saying or doing differently?

Small Group Discussion:

# Connecting to Your Work Environment

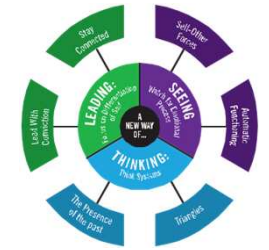


- To what extent do you see the Over/Under- functioning pattern in your current work environment (or in another organization where you worked)? What impact does this pattern have on people, their productivity and their performance?
- How are/were those who repeatedly over-function treated and looked upon? How are/were those who repeatedly under-function treated and looked upon?

## What do you find most challenging and why?

- 1 **Seeing the pattern of over/under-functioning in yourself or others?**
- 2 **Recognizing it as a reaction to escalating anxiety, versus a thoughtful response?**
- 3 **Breaking the cycle once you observe it?**

# Practices to Take Home



- 1** Whenever there is an over-/under-functioning part of the system, there is always an opposite part working to maintain the balance.

Notice over- or under-functioning in relationships you are part of at work and identify the specific behaviors you see that are the characteristics of both the over- and under-functioning participant. Identify key learning points from your observations, and a concrete step you can take to help bring better balance to the relationship.

- 2** Both over- and under- functioning are driven by anxiety.

Think about your family of origin and see if you can detect a pattern of over-functioning or under-functioning in specific sub-groups within the family during times of elevated anxiety. Determine one or two ways you can help bring better balance by acting as a calming force among family members.

- 3** Leaders who find themselves in an over- or under-functioning relationship can (and should) break the cycle.

Identify one significant situation where you over- or under-function with someone who reports to you and plan how to make gradual steps to move the relationship closer into balance.

**Pick one of the following practices you can commit to incorporating into your leadership competencies.**



## Integration Tool for Over/Under-Functioning

Over/Under-Functioning is a form of reactivity, fueled by anxiety. This means that for the most part it is an “automatic” phenomenon—we don’t even notice we are doing it, because it flies below the radar of our conscious awareness. Our over- or under-functioning feels “natural” because it is a spontaneous expression of how we have been conditioned to respond to an anxious situation. That is why it is so often difficult—if not nearly impossible—for an over- or under-functioning individual to recognize what can be very obvious to others. Several steps are necessary in order to lower or stop our over- or under-functioning behaviors. The following worksheet/questions will help you engage in these steps and find new, less reactive ways of functioning in anxious situations.



<b>(1) Think about a situation or relationship in which you suspect you are over- or under- functioning. Identify a specific behavior of yours in this context that is indicative of your tendency to over- or under-function.</b>	<b>(2) Explore the anxiety that is underneath the identified behavior you want to change. (Hint: Get in touch with the feelings that arise when you imagine no longer engaging in the behavior you have identified. Describe the triggers that make you anxious.)</b>	<b>(3) List the resources available to you to sustain a focus on the problematic behavior. (This is about building awareness: Who is a trusted person you can ask to offer feedback and help you monitor your behavior? Consider keeping a log of the times when you “slip” and fall back into those familiar patterns.)</b>	<b>(4) Develop a concrete action plan that will help you manage your anxiety and do the opposite of what you feel is the “natural” response in those familiar situations. (This will feel awkward at first, but deliberate, sustained behavior that is opposite your accustomed way of acting will steadily make you less anxious and build new pathways in your brain, producing a “new normal” way of behaving.)</b>

### SAMPLE WORKSHEET

<b>(1) Think about a situation or relationship in which you suspect you are over- or under- functioning. Identify a specific behavior of yours in this context that is indicative of your tendency to over- or under-function.</b>	<b>(2) Explore the anxiety that is underneath the identified behavior you want to change. (Hint: Get in touch with the feelings that arise when you imagine no longer engaging in the behavior you have identified. Describe the triggers that make you anxious.)</b>	<b>(3) List the resources available to you to sustain a focus on the problematic behavior. (This is about building awareness: Who is a trusted person you can ask to offer feedback and help you monitor your behavior? Consider keeping a log of the times when you “slip” and fall back into those familiar patterns.)</b>	<b>(4) Develop a concrete action plan that will help you manage your anxiety and do the opposite of what you feel is the “natural” response in those familiar situations. (This will feel awkward at first, but deliberate, sustained behavior that is opposite your accustomed way of acting will steadily make you less anxious and build new pathways in your brain, producing a “new normal” way of behaving.)</b>
<p>–My friend Marcy is chronically late for our weekly team meetings, and often comes unprepared.</p> <p>–I always take notes so I can fill her in on what she has missed.</p> <p>–Often I make excuses to the others about why she is late or a no-show.</p>	<p>–Marcy has come to count on me to keep her up to speed and tells me how grateful she is for having such a loyal friend. That makes me feel really good and needed.</p> <p>–I’m afraid if I deliberately stopped covering for her, she will feel betrayed, and it could even end our friendship.</p> <p>–Most of all, I worry that I will blame myself for the consequences if she gets into real trouble because she misses something important because no one has given her a heads-up.</p> <p>–I’ve always seen myself as a great friend, especially to those who need my help. Will this make me feel like I am not a true friend?</p>	<p>–Bill has spoken to me on more than one occasion about the fact that I am not really doing Marcy a favor by constantly rescuing her. Maybe I can ask him to help me by reminding me not to do so much rescuing.</p> <p>–I need to read some more about over-functioning people and why they do it. Maybe I can learn more about what’s underneath this behavior on my part.</p> <p>–I’m going to keep a diary of all the times when I feel the need to rescue Marcy— and I’ll note the times when I fall back into it as well as when I’m firm in my resolve not to. Maybe I can learn some more about my triggers by studying any patterns I see.</p>	<p>–I’m going to talk to Marcy and tell her what I am thinking and how I am more and more convinced that in the long run I am really not doing her any favors by covering for her. I will explain that she should no longer expect me to fill her in on meetings she misses, and please not to ask me to keep notes for her any longer.</p> <p>–I’m going to bring Bill in on what I am doing and debrief with him on my progress on a regular basis. I will give him permission to challenge me if he sees me slipping.</p> <p>–I will keep in close contact with Marcy in other ways to reinforce in her mind that our friendship is not at stake or any less strong.</p>



# Resilient Leadership

## Thank You

Your feedback on this training is important as we seek to improve it for others.