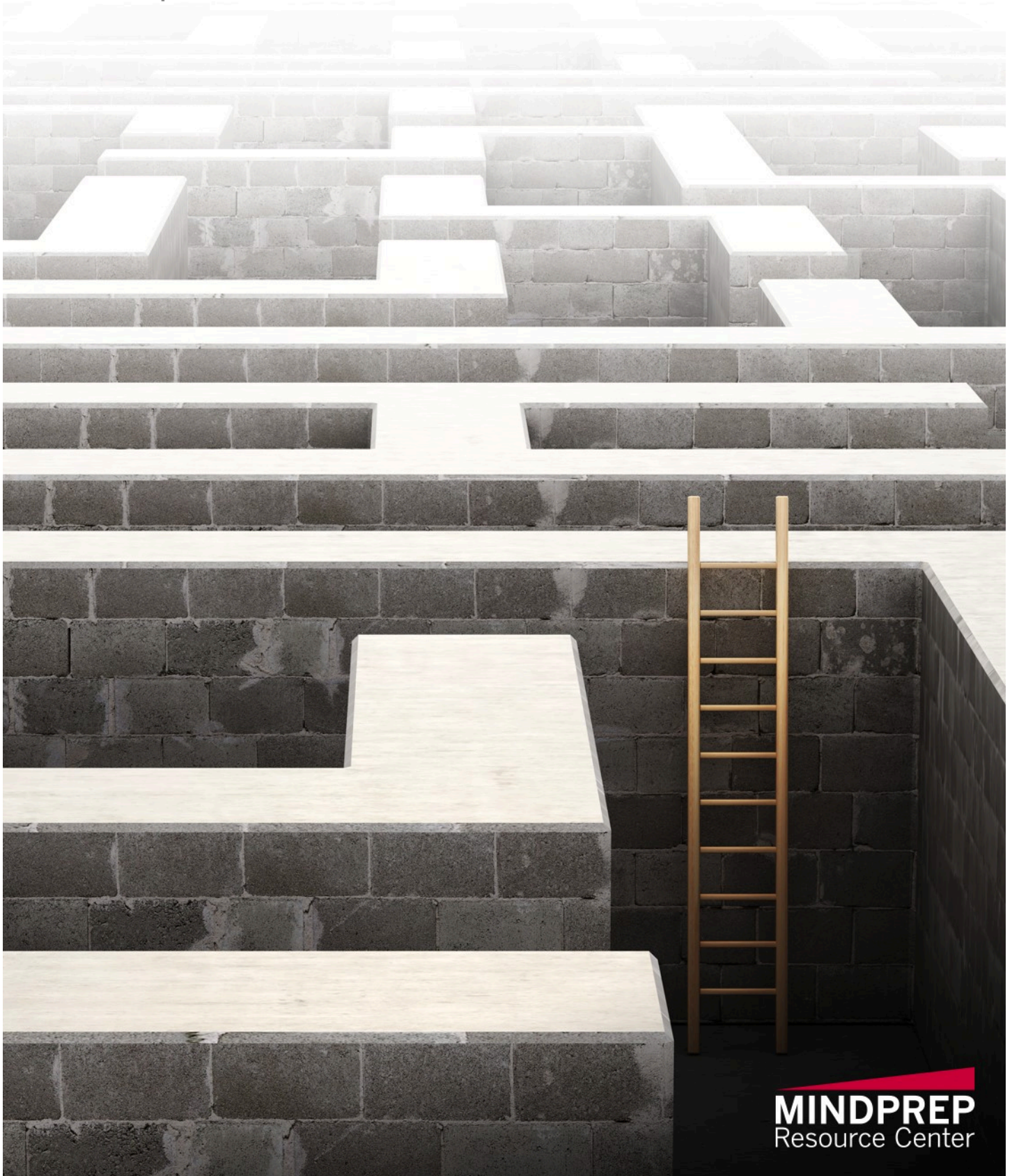
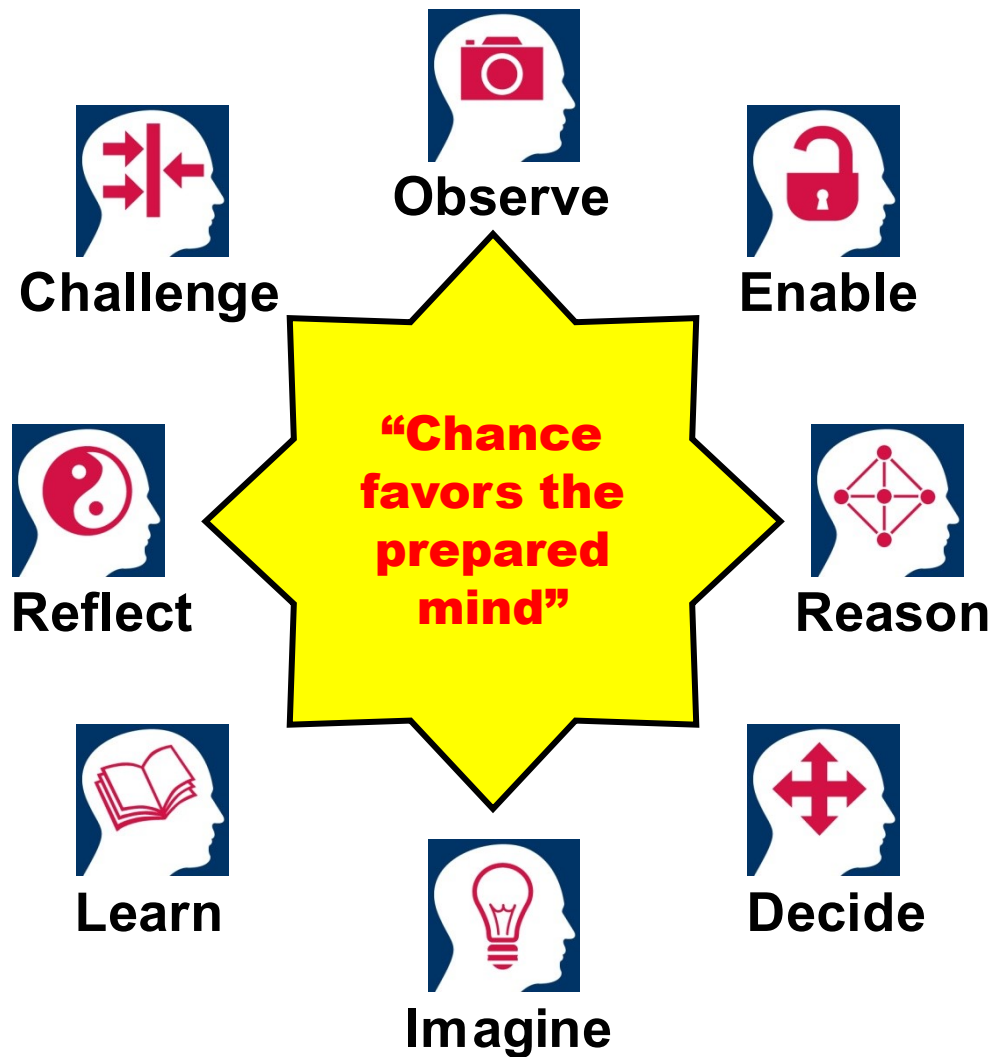


Prepared Mind Checklist

A MindPrep Essentials Tool



The famous French microbiologist, Louis Pasteur, advised us that “chance favors a prepared mind.” That quote was the basis of the book that Bill Welter and Jeanne Egmon published in 2006, *The Prepared Mind of a Leader*.



Here is a summary of the eight skills that you need to use if you want to be better prepared for the future. All eight are needed and all eight are “obvious.” But most organizations underutilize three of them. Consider your organization; our observations are on the bottom of the last page.

Do you regularly ...	N	Y	Common barriers	Simple tools
<p>Observe changes in the larger environment? Do you look beyond the obvious?</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habit; we see what we expect to see We allow ourselves to become time starved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know the common warning signs of trouble. Actively look for the “strange” and the unusual in your business environment.
<p>Reason and connect the relevant dots of what you have observed? Do you spend quality time thinking things through?”</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are organizationally biased toward “action” and don’t want to waste time thinking. Biased frames; we use the wrong lens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use cause mapping to get to root issues. Draw mindmaps of what you see around you; make sure to label the links.
<p>Imagine a future yet to be? Do you create mental scenarios based on what you’ve observed?</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative bias; we want to put everything in a spreadsheet Fear of looking foolish; we think that imagination is for kids. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use analogy. Conduct regular “what-if” sessions. Learn to develop “pre-mortem” scenarios.
<p>Challenge your assumptions and allow others to challenge you? Are you open to “second guessing?”</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complacency; the “curse of knowledge” Fear of going against the norm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer and demand tough questions Set tough (but not impossible) goals for you and your team.
<p>Learn from the changes around you? Do you revisit your mental models of “how the world works?”</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intellectual arrogance; we “know” we are right all the time. Obsolete mental maps; the world has changed but we have not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask compelling questions Develop a “curiosity culture” in your team.

Do you regularly ...	N	Y	Common barriers	Simple tools
Decide among the alternatives available? Do you take a stand on important issues?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk averse; consensus is used too often. • Ideology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the decision criteria & tradeoffs • Craft a clear vision of success
Enable the success of others? Do you provide knowledge, means and opportunity for others to succeed?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride; no one can do the job as well as we can • Insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralize control of important operations. • Develop a strategic framework that allows for lower level discretion
Reflect and honestly consider <u>your</u> role in both successes and failures?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of any thought that we might be involved with a failure • Bias for action, not thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use after-action reviews • Learn to actually close-out important projects.

NOTE: All of these skills seem obvious and should be used by all concerned. However, the reality is that all organizations underutilize some of these skills because of culture and time-pressure. Be honest, which of these “obvious” skills are not fully utilized in your organization?

(In our experience the skills of *imagining*, *challenging*, and *reflecting* are most often underutilized.)