

## QUIZ

### *Do You Think for Yourself?*

Answer the following fifteen questions by checking either *Agree* or *Disagree*. If in doubt, think about your past rather than what you happen to think right this minute.

In general I want to please.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

I have voted for the same political party all my life.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

I don't like to be picked out and noticed.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

I believe that if you can't say something good about somebody, say nothing at all.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

I am not a leader and don't want to be.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

I'm not all that special.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

People don't think I'm an oddball.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

Rather than argue, I will keep my opinions to myself.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

Not much about my life inspires me.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

It is important to take one for the team.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

No one really considers me a mentor or role model.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

Sensible goals are better than wild dreams that will never come true.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

Our family mostly sees things the same way.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

Hard mental challenges intimidate me.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

I'm no expert.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

Total: Agree = \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree = \_\_\_\_\_

### ASSESSING YOUR SCORE

Thinking for yourself is the opposite of being a conformist. If you marked Agree ten times or more, you are unusually conformist. If you marked Disagree ten times or more, you are unusually nonconformist. These are not value judgments. They point to unconscious beliefs and assumptions about how life works.

We all have a mixture of conformist and nonconformist inside us, so most scores will be fairly evenly divided between *Agree* and *Disagree*. We sometimes think for ourselves, yet we sometimes go along to get along, too. Unless you value nonconformity,

however, you can't really think for yourself. Your inner programming prevents you from doing so, in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. One person might associate non-conformity with social activism, protest, being a crank or oddball, while someone else might associate nonconformity with radically new thinking by a Newton or an Einstein.

It becomes a struggle to value yourself as an original when the tug of conformity makes you fear being too original. You might have heard of the tall poppy syndrome, the practice of shaming people for standing out from the crowd. An online article describes the syndrome this way: "It is often said that Australians tend to cut tall poppies down to size by denigrating them. It may have its origin in an obsolete 17th-century sense of the word *poppy*, meaning 'a conspicuous or prominent person or thing, frequently with implication of likely humiliation.'"

What really matters is to be free of framing things as the tall poppy who might be cut down or as the egotist who must stand out from the crowd. Either way, unconscious drives are in control. It is important, no matter whether anyone else approves or disapproves, to know that you are an original.