

## **EXERCISE Recognizing the Status Quo and Innovation Cycles**

**Purpose** Help students spot each of these patterns and their emotional markers, in themselves and others, in a range of situations

**Recommended for** Trail 5 - Status Quo Cycle & Trail 6 – Innovation Cycle

This can be done as two separate exercises, one for each cycle, or combined into a single session that explores and compares these patterns.

**Time required** 10-15 minutes, per pattern

### **Key Points**

We see and exhibit these patterns constantly.

It's usually easier to spot them in others than in ourselves (especially the Status Quo Cycle).

We tend to develop emotional attachments to these patterns—sometimes quite strongly.

Neither pattern is inherently “good” or “bad.” They can both be useful.

**Instructions** You want to be sure students are familiar with the cycle(s) you want them to think about. So, they need to have completed that trail. You may want to replay that video or do a brief refresher with them. One way to do this is to engage them in a dialogue, with questions like:

What does it mean to “detect & correct” (or “explore and discover”)?

Can you think of some examples?

When have you seen someone do this? What was the effect?

When have you done it? What were you feeling? What was the effect?

Which pattern do you think you tend to favor? Why? How? When?

You may need to lead them a little but draw out how strongly they sometimes cling to these patterns. For example, how they may be certain that there is a “right” way to do something, or strongly uphold certain values (Status Quo Cycle). They may recall being intensely curious about something or experiencing a dramatic “Aha!” (Innovation Cycle).

Just about every negative emotion is in some way connected to the desire to detect and correct something, either in someone else or in ourselves. It's our response to something we think should be, or should have been, done differently. Emotions like:

Anger, frustration, fear, disappointment, embarrassment, exasperation, annoyance, irritation...

Alternatively, the Innovation Cycle prompts a different set of responses like:

Curiosity, openness, optimism, bravery, joy, wonder, delight...

Some reactions are produced by both patterns, but for entirely different reasons:

Satisfaction, relief, fulfillment, approval, pride, contentment...

You want students to appreciate how immersed they are in these patterns, how often they use them—usually without thinking about it, and reflect on whether they might like to make some personal changes in how they perceive and apply these patterns.

**Variations:**

Have students break into small groups to discuss these patterns. Then, have them report out and facilitate a larger discussion.

List examples of each pattern on a flip chart or white board as you have students call them out. Then, have students analyze how they compare. You could also do this for the emotions associated with each pattern.