

GrokIChing on Novo Nordisk NVO under CEO Mike Doustdar

GROK'S PROMPT:

I asked Universal Intelligence I Ching about the future of Novo Nordisk NVO under CEO Mike Doustdar

The Oracle's answer was negative with a Time/Space (Hexagram) Keeping Still - which is not the usual job of CEO that is actively managing but rather of a CEO who is basically surviving.

The managerial practice of doing nothing for the first six months after his appointment and dedicating himself to managing by walking around and eventually start moving with vision and purpose is classic managerial maneuver of getting a corporation out of trouble.

But the question is, why should we invest in a CEO under such circumstances. It would be better to find a CEO with a clear Mandate of Heaven.

The 2 Moving Lines contain nothing positive.

The Moving Hexagram is even worse – Youthful Folly, which points to little actual managerial experience of the total corporate vision. It was the same Time/Space of President Bush II. It is not an issue of talent. It is an issue of experience.

Universal Intelligence I Ching says:

YOUTHFUL FOLLY has success.

It is not I who seek the young fool;

The young fool seeks me.

At the first oracle I inform him.

If he asks two or three times, it is importunity.

If he importunes, I give him no information.

Perseverance furthers.

In the time of youth, folly is **not** an evil.

One may succeed in spite of it, **provided** one

- finds an **experienced** teacher and
- has the right **attitude** toward him.

This means, first of all, that the youth himself

- must be **conscious** of his lack of experience and
- must **seek** out the teacher.

Without this **modesty** and this **interest** there is no guarantee that he has the necessary **receptivity**,

which should express itself in **respectful acceptance** of the teacher.

This is the reason why the teacher must **wait** to be sought out instead of offering himself.

Only thus can the **instruction** take place

- at the right time and
- in the right way.

Please provide an analysis for my readers from a managerial as well as from an investor's point of view.

GROK'S ANSWER:

### Managerial Perspective

From a managerial standpoint, the I Ching reading for Novo Nordisk under CEO Mike Doustdar presents a nuanced view of leadership transition, emphasizing caution, introspection, and the need for guided growth amid potential inexperience. Hexagram 52, "Keeping Still," symbolizes a period of rest and stability, akin to a mountain—immovable yet grounded. This aligns with classic managerial practices during a CEO onboarding, such as the "do nothing for the first six months" approach you mentioned, which involves observation, "managing by walking around," and building internal alliances before implementing major changes. In Doustdar's case, with over 30 years at Novo Nordisk, including as Executive Vice President of International Operations, this hexagram could reflect a deliberate pause to assess the company's challenges, such as intensified competition in the GLP-1 market (e.g., from Eli Lilly) and recent supply constraints. However, the hexagram warns against prolonged inaction; true rest is a polarity that complements movement, suggesting Doustdar must transition to purposeful action to avoid organizational stagnation. Recent reports indicate he's already implementing cost controls, like a hiring freeze in non-critical areas and performance-based bonus adjustments, which could be seen as early steps toward "going forward when the time has come."

The moving lines add layers of caution. The second line ("Keeping his calves still") implies dependency on stronger forces—perhaps the legacy of predecessor Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen or market pressures—and an inability to fully intervene in ongoing issues, like declining U.S. market share due to compounded rivals. This could manifest as Doustdar being "swept along" by external dynamics, such as regulatory scrutiny or supply chain bottlenecks, limiting his immediate impact. The third line ("Keeping his hips still") highlights the dangers of forced calmness, leading to internal suffocation—analogue to stifled innovation or employee morale if bureaucracy persists, as some insiders have noted in the wake of rapid growth. Managerially, this underscores the risk of artificial rigidity; Doustdar should foster natural composure through delegation and empowerment, as he's hinted at by reviving the "Novo spirit" and decentralizing decision-making.

The resulting Hexagram 4, "Youthful Folly," shifts focus to inexperience, portraying a novice at the foot of a mountain facing an abyss. Despite Doustdar's extensive tenure, the CEO role demands a holistic corporate vision he may lack, much like the user's comparison to President Bush II—talent exists, but experience in steering a

global pharma giant through turbulence (e.g., a \$70 billion market value drop) is untested.

The oracle's advice is clear: success requires seeking an experienced teacher with modesty and receptivity. For Doustdar, this could mean leaning on the board, external advisors, or even the Novo Nordisk Foundation's long-term governance structure to navigate folly.

Perseverance, thoroughness, and avoiding importunate questioning (i.e., indecisiveness) are key; his internal promotion suggests familiarity, but the reading warns against complacency. Overall, this setup favors a learning-oriented leader who builds high-performing teams, as Doustdar has emphasized, but demands proactive mentorship to transform folly into wisdom.

### Investor's Perspective

As an investor, this I Ching reading signals cautionary risks in Novo Nordisk's trajectory under Doustdar, balanced by potential for measured growth if inexperience is addressed. The primary Hexagram 52 evokes stability but also potential inertia—unappealing in a high-growth sector like obesity and diabetes treatments, where Novo holds a dominant position with drugs like Wegovy and Ozempic. Investors might interpret "keeping still" as a survival mode amid recent setbacks: the company slashed 2025 sales guidance by 5% due to slowed semaglutide growth and U.S. losses, triggering a sharp stock decline (shares fell ~58% from peaks, trading around \$56 as of late August 2025).

This hexagram's emphasis on a "quiet heart" could translate to disciplined cost management, evident in Doustdar's early moves like the hiring freeze and bonus restructuring, which aim to protect margins and refocus on core GLP-1 assets. However, prolonged stillness risks missing opportunities, such as expanding into emerging markets or countering Eli Lilly's advances, potentially eroding investor confidence further.

The moving lines amplify concerns: the second line's inability to "rescue" suggests Doustdar may struggle against entrenched issues like compounded drug competition, leading to heart "not glad"—a metaphor for subdued earnings growth (Q2 2025 showed 18% sales rise but profit warnings).

The third line's "suffocation" warns of forced austerity backfiring, possibly through talent attrition or innovation slowdown, as seen in whispers of a "performance culture" shift that could unsettle the workforce.

From an investment lens, this implies higher short-term volatility; the stock's beta of 0.27 indicates relative stability, but recent events have amplified downside risks.

Transitioning to Hexagram 4, "Youthful Folly," highlights the core investor dilemma: betting on a "young fool" (inexperienced CEO) who must seek guidance for success. Doustdar's internal rise brings continuity and deep operational knowledge, fostering optimism among some (e.g., views of his track record in growth and teams), but surprises others who favored an external hire for fresh vision.

The oracle stresses perseverance and a teacher-student dynamic; if Doustdar demonstrates receptivity—perhaps through strategic updates or pipeline advancements (e.g., recent FDA approval for Wegovy in liver disease)—it could unlock upside, with analysts targeting \$98/share.

Yet, without this, folly persists: the reading questions a "clear Mandate of Heaven," implying investors might prefer CEOs with proven turnaround experience elsewhere. Given Novo's undervaluation (trailing returns lag benchmarks) and 30% class growth potential, this is a hold-or-buy for patient investors monitoring Q3 results, but a sell for those seeking aggressive momentum. Diversify into peers like Lilly if the "teacher" dynamic falters.

Novo Nordisk NVO under CEO Mike Doustdar



6	The Top		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
5	The Fifth Place		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
4	The Fourth Place		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
3	The Third Place		H	H	H		3	3	3		9
2	The Second Place		T	T	T		2	2	2		6
1	The Beginning		H	H	T		3	3	2		8

**Click below to view the interpretations and cases:**

<https://icic.com/?p=8999>

### HEXAGRAM 52 – Ken - Keeping Still, Mountain

Above KEN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

Below KEN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

The image of this hexagram is the mountain,  
the youngest son of

- heaven and

- earth.

The male principle is at the top,

- because it strives upward by nature;

the female principle is below,

- since the direction of its movement is downward.

Thus

there is rest

- because the movement has come to its normal end.

In its application to man, the hexagram turns upon

**the problem of achieving a quiet heart.**

It is very difficult to bring quiet to the heart.

While Buddhism strives for

- rest through an ebbing away of all movement in nirvana,

the Book of Changes holds that

- **rest** is merely a state of polarity that always posits **movement** as its complement.

Possibly the words of the text embody directions for the practice of yoga.

## **THE JUDGMENT**

KEEPING STILL.

Keeping his back still

So that he no longer feels his body.

He

- goes into his courtyard And
- does not see his people.

No blame.

**True quiet means**

- **keeping still when the time has come to keep still, and**
- **going forward when the time has come to go forward.**

In this way

- **rest and movement are in agreement with the demands of the time,**
- and thus
- **there is light in life.**

The hexagram signifies the end and the beginning of all movement.

The back is named because in the back are located

all the nerve fibers that mediate movement.

If

- the movement of those spinal nerves is brought to a standstill,
- the ego, with its restlessness, disappears as it were.

When

a man has thus become calm,

he may turn to the outside world.

- He no longer sees in it the struggle and tumult of individual beings, and therefore

- he has that true peace of mind which is needed
  - for understanding the great laws of the universe and
  - for action, in harmony with them.

Whoever

- acts from these deep levels
- makes no mistakes.

## THE IMAGE

Mountains standing close together: The image of KEEPING STILL.  
Thus the superior man  
Does not permit his thoughts To go beyond his situation.

1The heart thinks constantly.  
This cannot be changed,  
but the movements of the heart - that is,  
a man's thoughts -  
should restrict themselves to the immediate situation.  
All thinking that goes beyond this only makes the heart sore.

## THE LINES

Six in the second place means:

Keeping his calves still.  
He cannot rescue him whom he follows.  
His heart is not glad.

The leg cannot move independently;  
it depends on the movement of the body.  
If a leg is suddenly stopped while the whole body is in vigorous motion,  
the continuing body movement will make one fall.

The same is true of  
a man who serves a master stronger than himself.

- He is swept along,
- and even though he may himself halt on the path of wrongdoing,
- he can no longer check the other in his powerful movement.

Where

- the master presses forward,
- the servant, no matter how good his intentions cannot save him.

Nine in the third place means:

Keeping his hips still.  
Making his sacrum stiff.  
Dangerous.  
The heart suffocates.

This refers to enforced quiet.

The restless heart is to be subdued by forcible means.

But fire when it is smothered changes into acrid smoke that suffocates as it spreads.

Therefore, in exercises in meditation and concentration, one

- ought not to try to force results.

Rather,

- calmness must develop naturally out of a state of inner composure.

If

- one tries to induce calmness by means of artificial rigidity,
- meditation will lead to very unwholesome results.

## **MOVING HEXAGRAM**

**Click below to view the interpretations and cases:**

**<https://icic.com/?p=8855>**

### **HEXAGRAM 04 - Meng - Youthful Folly**

Above KEN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

Below K'AN THE ABYSMAL, WATER

In this hexagram we are reminded of **youth and folly**, in **two** different ways.

- The **image** of the upper trigram, Ken, is the mountain, that of the lower, K'an, is water;
  - the spring rising at the foot of the mountain is the **image** of inexperienced youth.
- **Keeping still** is the attribute of the upper trigram; that of the lower is the **abyss**, danger.
  - **Stopping** in perplexity on the brink of a dangerous abyss is a symbol of the folly of youth.

However, the two trigrams also show the way of **overcoming** the follies of youth. Water is something that of necessity flows on.

When the spring gushes forth, it does **not know** at first where it will go.

But **its steady flow** fills up the deep place blocking its progress, and success is attained.

### **THE JUDGMENT**

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One may succeed in spite of it, **provided** one

- finds an **experienced** teacher and
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This means, first of all, that the youth himself

- must be **conscious** of his lack of experience and
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Without this **modesty** and this **interest** there is no guarantee that he has the necessary **receptivity**,

which should express itself in **respectful acceptance** of the teacher.

This is the reason why the teacher must **wait** to be sought out instead of offering himself.

Only thus can the **instruction** take place

- **at the right time and**
- **in the right way.**

A teacher's **answer** to the question of a pupil ought to be **clear and definite**

like that expected from an **oracle**;

thereupon it ought to be **accepted** as

- a key for resolution of **doubts** and
- a basis for **decision**.

If **mistrustful or unintelligent** questioning is kept up, it serves only to **annoy** the teacher.

He does well to **ignore it in silence**,

just as the oracle

- gives one answer **only** and
- refuses to be **tempted** by questions implying doubt.

Given in addition a **perseverance** that never slackens

until the points are mastered one by one,

real success is sure to follow.

Thus the hexagram counsels

- **the teacher as well as**
- **the pupil.**

## THE IMAGE

A spring **wells up** at the foot of the mountain: The image of YOUTH.

Thus the superior man fosters his **character**

By **thoroughness** in all that he does.

A spring

- **succeeds** in flowing on and
- **escapes** stagnation by filling up **all** the hollow places in its path.

In the same way character is developed by **thoroughness** that skips nothing but, like water,

**gradually and steadily** fills up all gaps and so flows onward.