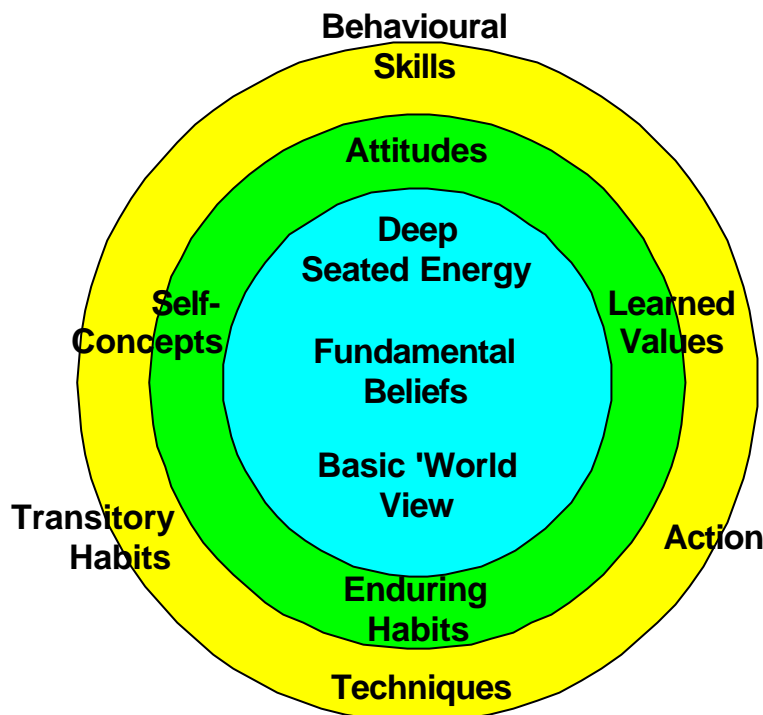


Layers of Personality

Introduction to the Concept of Layers of Personality



Action Profiling, P Ramsden, J Zacharias
Gower 1973 and 1993

Most people readily acknowledge that there are some fundamental parts of their 'identity' that remain stable whatever they do to develop themselves.

It is 'metaphorically speaking' possible to peel away layers and to uncover deeper and deeper levels that describe an individual. This diagram shows three layers of "Personality", set out in concentric rings like the rings of an Onion.

The Outer Layer is the one we tend to keep on display - the one that the 'world' observes and the one against which we are mostly 'judged' by others. In the outer layer we are able to observe our behavioural skills - the various actions that we take - the techniques that we use to get into action - and many of our day to day habits that come and go over time.

The Middle layer contains some of the deeper attitudes that we hold beneath the surface of our day to day actions and behaviour. By exploring this layer we can learn much more about how we see ourselves and understand about those Values we have been learned in our life. This Middle Layer also hosts some of our more Enduring Habits.

The Central Core holds our deep seated energy, our inner motivation to act and the way that we are likely to interact with others. In our core we will find our basic 'world views' and strongly held beliefs. Our Decision Footprint measurable through the Action Profile® System resides here.

Each Decision Footprint is unique and encompasses over 12 million discrete profiles. Your personal profile provides a description of your core decision-making and communication processes



describing how you are most likely to function when working with others. These core preferences are established by adulthood and do not change significantly throughout our lifetime, but our understanding of it can be used in an individual and personal way to improve the way we make decisions and to build authenticity and trust in our communication with others.

It is helpful to consider these core decision and communication processes alongside our learned behaviours (the outer rings of the 'onion'). Many of these can be identified through the use of questionnaires such as the MBTI and the 16PF. This invariably adds an additional dimension to the analysis.

As we discover more about ourselves, so we become more aware of other factors and grow to better understand others.

Our Unique Decision Footprint and how we relate to others

Our very individual 'style', our personal Decision Making process, is a kind of personal 'signature' that sets out the communication dynamics we create whenever we work with other people. We are never able to experience a meeting that is not affected by the dynamic of our personal contribution. We all know how, when someone enters a room the dynamic in the meeting changes. Each of us brings our own decision-making strengths and weaknesses with us and we will influence the way the meeting progresses, and how it 'feels' to be in the room, as a result. This may be described as 'more focused', or 'more creative', or 'more relaxed' This represents the impact an individual's personal style has on that meeting.

When a team result or a team decision is required we often intuitively, use our colleagues' contribution, whether it be focus, creativity, or light-hearted approach to progress the meeting to a successful conclusion. Of course we know that sometimes an individual's contribution is less helpful, perhaps if their strengths and motivations do not match what is needed to achieve the best result in a specific meeting. If for example, we are trying to think up creative ideas we maybe need to park the focus, just for a while in order to free things up. Similarly, someone might put pressure on the meeting to speed the process up or to move on when perhaps more exploring or evaluating is required.

When there is a lack or surplus of a particular natural quality in the room, we can, if we are aware of the issues these factors create, use some form of structured process or checklist to enable us to follow the steps needed to reach a conclusion. When we do this it can seem like hard work, we may feel impatient or irritated by the need to work in our low areas or allow someone else to contribute in an area that we already feel has been over played. However, most decision processes need to be considered from many angles to get the best result and to avoid having to revisit the decision because we rushed ahead without all the facts or we didn't fully appreciate all the implications of what we decided to do.

Analysis of your Decision Footprint through the Action Profile® System enables us to precisely identify a number of these core and natural personal processes so that we can use them to best effect in the meeting, and achieve that elusive commitment and buy-in from everyone involved



Key Points about the Decision Footprint

The following points are key to understanding the strength of this system, its relevance to the individual and the power that the knowledge can bring.

- ◆ It is a culture free measurement of core motivations and decision processes that do not change significantly, over time. So once you have the information it can be relied upon without needing to be revised.
- ◆ It provides a framework for describing how an individual is likely to make a decision.
- ◆ It translates well into the analysis of managerial thinking
- ◆ People can be motivated through their strengths
- ◆ You can borrow their strength to get a better decision
- ◆ High scores can be excellent - however, when too high can create challenges, e.g. On the negative side, high Determining leads to a tendency to be inflexible, to want to push when it would be better to give up, stubbornness and discomfort in situations that require a quick change of course, and, likewise high Evaluating may mean that the individual may not be able to proceed without absolute clarity, may pre-judge issues and not be able to leave things in abeyance.
- ◆ Low motivational areas can also bring positives, e.g. low generating scores will mean the ability to concentrate energy and maintain focus because the individual will not be distracted by the need to seek alternatives, and, low Anticipating allows the individual to go into action without having worked out all the possible problems first, to work with undefined objectives and be comfortable in dealing with the unexpected.
- ◆ You can learn techniques to minimise the challenges presented by very low and very high scores - as an individual and in the group situation.
- ◆ Not everyone starts the decision process in the same place or follows the same pattern; e.g. managers may feel that they are arguing over the content of the decision when in fact they are arguing over the process by which the decision is being made.
- ◆ The impact of the profile motivations is complicated by the interaction preferences of the individual. e.g. someone whose preference is to share will make their views and opinions known and they will readily share their thoughts and what they know, although this can sometimes be regarded as intrusive or outspoken and it can take up a lot of time. Someone whose preference is for privacy, on the other hand, is capable of independent thought and can work well alone, thereby making efficient use of time. However, he may appear to shut others out, it is hard to know where he is coming from or going to and he risks not gaining support.

