

Tapping into the POWER of your Authentic Self

"The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are." Carl Jung

We're living in a world that's starved of authenticity. We want our leaders, colleagues, family and friends to be authentic but we're often sadly disappointed by them and ourselves for following suit. At times we long for a compass to guide us in life, instead we drift with the flow, which doesn't always work out the way we had hoped.

Tapping into the power of your authentic self-increases your life satisfaction as you begin to align yourself with your beliefs, values and a purpose. Living your authentic self will help you achieve *flow* states of peak performance more often. As a result, life and work become more fulfilling. You'll operate more effectively if you work with what you have as natural abilities and recognise your boundaries. This doesn't mean you can't break through barriers and limiting beliefs, but acceptance of where you're starting from and your true nature will lead you to make wiser decisions.

When we don't align what we do with who we are, we become frustrated because we're giving away our personal power. We're socialised from an early age to fit in, and as a result we often leave a lot of our potential in the car park or at home, when we go to work or into some other social environment.

So how do we discover our true nature?

We're all built up of many types of intelligences. I refer to our five main preferences as:

Behavioural intelligence = *Drivers*

Cognitive intelligence = *Developers*

Ecological intelligence = *Facilitators*

Environmental intelligence = *Champions*

Universal intelligence = *Awareness*

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We're all doing, thinking, relating, communicating and sometimes self-aware animals. We've all these abilities and more, but we develop our habitually preferred method of achieving results in life, by the time we're seven years old.

People who use behavioural intelligence as their mode of operating, I refer to as Drivers. They are assertive and instinctive problem solvers who like to get the job done now. Developers are analytical in approach and like to improve ideas and products to the nth degree in the pursuit of excellence. Ecological types are the Facilitators of our groups, the 'social glue' if you will. They are able to empathise intuitively and bring harmony to relationships. Environmental types are socially focussed, diplomatic, amiable and make great Champions of new trends because of their communication and creativity skills.

People who have reached a level of self-awareness, can actually step outside of themselves and reflect on which strengths are needed and in what situation. I call this Universal intelligence. Buddhists might call it being '*enlightened*' but whatever we call it, it's a heightened awareness of reality and an acceptance of that reality.

We've developed these '*preferences*' over millennia, as a survival mechanism. They help us operate effectively in teams by helping us blend our individual strengths to achieve success.

These preferences also drive a universal life cycle that all humans systems evolve through. We may see something in the world around us that could be improved upon and, with the aid of a good idea, we try to improve it. We '*drive*' that idea into existence. If it survives past birth i.e. '*catches on*' we '*develop*' the idea further. We then '*facilitate*' the idea throughout the community by collaborating and connecting with our group. Eventually the '*champions*' take the latest idea to the crowds who will then, with collective intelligence, innovate on that idea further. And so it goes on.

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At each stage a different behavioural intelligence is best suited for the task we face. Often we have to step outside of ourselves and act differently from our habitual self to get the best results or we can work in a team of people who complement our skills.

Sometimes people and teams get stuck at a particular stage they've an affinity for, as a kind of '*arrested development*'. A useful indicator of this is when members of a team all agree with each other consistently. The person who invented sliced bread is a good example of what happens when our own personal development or that of a team, plateaus and stops evolving through the lifecycle.

Otto Rhowedder invented the first bread slicing machine, but was so obsessed with *developing* the idea, he forgot to get it out to the local community and subsequently the *champions*. Bread slicing spent years in obscurity until a more commercial operation took over and went straight to building the minimal viable product, manufacturing the bread slicing machines and selling the sliced bread.

Just as arrested development happens in the universal life cycle, we can also experience frustration and confusion if we're not clear about our own strengths, what drives us and what's needed in the situations we find ourselves in.

The POWER profile helps us get clarity about what's 'under the hood', what motivates us and what to focus on.

"When you are living the best version of yourself, you inspire others to live the best versions of themselves." Steve Maraboli

Purpose: Daniel Pink, author of '*Drive. The Surprising truth About What Motivates Us*' along with Martin Seligman, founder of Positive Psychology and legendary psychiatrist and Holocaust-survivor Viktor Frankl, all agree; having a sense of purpose makes you more productive, resilient and happier.

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“For me, I am driven by two main philosophies: know more today about the world than I knew yesterday and lessen the suffering of others. You'd be surprised how far that gets you.” Neil de Grasse Tyson

Ask yourself what the highest meaning for your life could be.

Mine is to help:

‘Co-create a world which is environmentally sustainable, socially just and a personally fulfilling place to live and work.’

When we're operating at our highest level of being, we're all trying to make the world a better place. To find your purpose, write a line at the top of a blank page:

My life purpose is

And then write the first thing that comes to mind. After you've written something. Ask yourself “Why?” Then re-write altogether or make slight adjustments until you feel you've got to your big ‘WHY?’

Your life purpose will be evident when there is no other reason or ‘why’ necessary. For instance; if you wrote

My life purpose is to save 10 million children from dying of dehydration,

Then you are close to your purpose, but that is actually a mission. If you were to ask ‘why?’ after that statement, you might finish with “

“My Purpose is to make the world an easier place for children to flourish.”

How you choose to accomplish that is your mission. In this case by:

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'Saving 10 million children from dehydration by providing potable water where they live.'

The purpose gives you a reason, the mission is a direction which ideally is aligned with your strengths.

Want to make yourself happier, although somewhat frustrated at times? Go follow your purpose or make your present work support your higher purpose.

Overview: Think about what a good day would look and feel like. A day when you've been in the zone and you've managed to include pastimes you enjoy. Now write this down or maybe paint it. Perhaps make a vision board by cutting out images from magazines and mount them on a cork board.

An overview is more than a vision, it includes what it would feel like and sound like; e.g. what would people say to you?

For me, an example would be:

"That thing you said, has really helped me gain clarity and feel positive about my future."

If you're a chef it might include smells and tastes too. Include as many of the senses as possible.

Another method is to write the good day down as a possible future diary entry. Write about what you did from when you got out of bed in the morning, and what you did throughout the day including where, when and who with. Add as much detail as possible. By doing this you programme your reticular activation system, a filter in the brain which subconsciously is on the lookout for things you want.

Getting clear on your best future is a form of self-leadership and the main tool of visionary leaders for as Antoine de Saint-Exupery declared:

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"If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

Wisdom: Ask yourself what you have to believe that will allow you to live a happier and more successful life.

Google have a list which includes:

"You don't have to wear a tie to do serious work"

And;

"We're always looking for new places where we can make a difference. Ultimately, our constant dissatisfaction with the way things are becomes the driving force behind everything we do."

Have fun and come up with your own list of pearls of wisdom, rules and standards. Try for ten.

You might have plenty of negative beliefs about yourself and your situation. Don't worry, everybody does. We have to counter balance the negative with some positive ones to start with. Then we have to *'try them on for size'* or *'act as if'* if we want to overcome analysis paralysis.

In Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) -a philosophy around the way we use our mind and language as way to model excellence - practitioners refer to these wisdoms as 'pre-suppositions'. NLP practitioners don't believe that they are absolutely true, but acting as if they are, will achieve better results more of the time.

Ecology: Your ability to ecology check on your decision making is something that is often forgotten about worldwide. It's how companies like VW and banks end up in trouble and how we've ended up with some disastrous political

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decisions. We've collectively got to get this right in future or we're heading for an apocalyptic end.

Defending your values helps you sleep at night and stops you being a Lemming type creature that follows the crowd. Remember nothing great was ever created by following the crowd. Values point to the relationship you have with yourself, others and even the earth. It's about what's important to you and which way your moral compass points.

Write down on post-it notes or in a notebook a list of values. It might be that you value prestige or personal development. You may want to be inspired in your work or work in a team that values fairness and equality. After you've written a long list, reorganise them into an order of priority. Now focus on achieving the top three.

Often people find that an important values comes out further down the list. As if they're being suppressed to fit into the present situation you find yourself. You can adapt this list dependent on life circumstances. But it's a good indicator of what's really important to you, the way you want to live and as a result, helps you in your decision making.

As John Ratzenberger encouraged:

"Find people who share your values, and you'll conquer the world together."

Route Forward: We're all travelling along on our own unique timeline. It's a good idea to reflect on where you've come from and what has influenced your path up to this point. Maybe you could investigate deeper and understand what unconscious drivers maybe at work. Enlist the help of a coach, therapist or close friend, who can act as a sounding board.

Carl Jung realised the value of investigating our inner journey when he proffered:

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“Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.”

When deciding your future, people find it helpful to reflect on where they want to go, so the earlier overview exercise, is about starting with the end in mind. Now you add more details about how you're going to get there. Retrace a path back mentally from that perfect day or perfect life and realise which 'positive habits' you used to get you there. And think about milestones along the way.

There are two parts to this, one is about performance goals which lead towards your achievement goals.

Performance goals are your behaviours that if you do repeatedly, will bring you closer to your achievement goals. They are your success habits. It could include: work out every day to increase your fitness goals. Connect meaningfully with X amount of new people every day to build up a better network.

Your achievement goals are the milestones that will take you closer to your big Mission. Research with Olympic athletes points to the fact that the most successful athletes are goal and result focussed. They record their results and this stops them from procrastinating or kidding themselves about their progress. In order to measure your success along the way, you must first have something to aim for. This will then become your route forward. As John Shedd encouraged:

“A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.”

In conclusion:

Your POWER profile is an all-around perspective of you. Your purpose is your true north. Your values, beliefs, success habits and overview, help guide you in your daily decision making. There is no black and white in life, it's all about

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experimenting, testing and iteration. And remember James C Penny's *Golden Rule*:

"...the compass must be ever at hand through life's journey. It will see us through trying times. And perhaps the most trying of all times comes when success is riding high and we may be tempted to "throw the compass overboard." It is then we must remember that all good days in human life come from the mastery of the days of trouble that are forever recurrent."