

## A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

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*Gittinger's Personality Assessment System (PAS) may be described as a theory of personality which is based upon the belief that at birth, every individual has inherent predispositions toward certain kinds of intellectual, procedural, and social-interpersonal styles. It is a developmental theory which assumes that these predispositions will be molded and shaped through interaction with the environment. The Personality Assessment System utilizes observable behavior and/or psychological test data in the assessment process. Its primary value lies in the fact that it readily lends itself to use as a tool for the prediction of behavior.*

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The PAS postulates that personality develops simultaneously and continuously in three dimensions, an intellectual dimension, a procedural dimension, and a social-interpersonal dimension. The polar characteristics of the first dimension are defined as Internalized (I) or Externalized (E). The polar characteristics of the second dimension are defined as Regulated (R) or Flexible (F). And the polar characteristics of the third dimension are defined as Role Adaptable (A) or Role Uniform (U).

Internalized (I) qualities include insulation, self concern, intellectuality, and a preoccupation with a world of one's own creation. The internalized character is schizoid, and in the extreme it is autistic.

Externalized (E) qualities include environmental dependency, outgoing activity, and a preoccupation with an objective 'real world' that exists outside of oneself. In the extreme, the Externalized character is over affective and totally dominated by events.

Regulated (R) qualities include a disposition toward order and organization, a preoccupation with detail, a facility for rote learning, and a mind set that is insensitive and logic-tight. In the extreme, the Regulated character is rigid, and unable to see the forest for the trees.

Flexible (F) qualities include sensitivity, a tolerance for ambiguity, and a preference for learning by trial-and-error. In the extreme, the Flexible character is chaotic.

Role Adaptable (A) qualities include social facility, social responsiveness, and a capacity to react spontaneously and appropriately to social demands and expectations, which invites acceptance and accommodation by others, and induces confidence in oneself. In the extreme, the Role Adaptable character is a social chameleon lacking integrity.

Role Uniform (U) qualities include social aloofness, awkwardness or ineptness, which invites rejection by others and instills a lack of confidence in oneself. In the extreme, the Role Uniform character is socially immobilized and entirely dependent upon a single style or pattern of behavior.

At any point in its development, a given personality will be characterized by an interaction of variables from each of these dimensions. Thus, personalities can be classified as fundamentally:

- IRA, or self-motivated, organized, procedural, and socially effective; a 'political' style

- IRU, or self-motivated, self-concerned, organized, and socially aloof; a 'scientific' style

- IFA, or self-centered, sensitive and socially active; an 'artistic' style

- IFU, or self-centered, sensitive and aloof; a 'contemplative' style

- ERA, or outgoing, organized and socially skilled; an 'entrepreneurial' style

- ERU, or environmentally attuned, organized, procedural, but socially restrained; a 'technocratic' style

- EFA, or outgoing, relating, sensitive, and socially involving; a 'theatrical' style

- EFU, or outgoing, sensitive, relating, dependent but socially awkward; a 'defensive' style

Personality develops as these predispositions or characteristics interact with the forces and the people that are influential to that person. If his qualities or characteristics are accepted, rewarded or reinforced, they tend to be confirmed and to mature 'in-kind'. If the influential figures in the environment rebuff, reject or punish these characteristics, the individual is under pressure to change. This gives rise to 'compensation', the most important dynamic in the PAS. Compensation takes place in two ways: first, the individual is under pressure to arrest, restrain, suppress or otherwise avoid or amend the 'offending' quality. Second, he may choose (or be forced) to acquire qualities or characteristics that are opposite to the original tendency. Thus, Internalizers are placed under pressure to be outgoing and to behave

like Externalizers; the insensitive Regulated personalities are encouraged to learn how to be sensitive and flexible and Role Uniform personalities are pressured or seduced into learning to be socially active and charming. As compensation takes place, the individual is conditioned to react against his original dispositions with apprehension or anxiety or a sense of guilt (because he has been punished for them in the past). He invests his new, opposite qualities with enthusiasm, dedication, and a chronic, motivating 'tension'. Compensation not only results in a conditioned change in the individual's behavior; it builds in emotional qualities that shape the individual's motives, motivations, anxieties, loyalties, goals and guilt.

Depending on the forces in his environment, an individual may keep all of his original qualities intact; or he may be under stress to change one, two, or all three of his original (or 'Primitive') predispositions. If he is allowed to mature without the pressures and stresses of compensation, he acquires a basic personality that is psychologically very comfortable for him, and very consistent with his primitive style; but he will also be very bland, under motivated, and a sociologically immature person. His temperament and his sensitivities will be self-centered, and he will show little evidence of ambition or responsibility.

In those areas where compensation takes place, the individual will show considerable drive, motivation and energy. Thus, the compensated I (or Ic) become a basic E (or e\*, in PAS notation), and outperforms the primitive E's in being outgoing and environmentally active. Similarly, the compensated R, as an f\*, rivals the primitive F in his efforts to be sensitive and understanding, and to acquire a sense of per-

spective. The primitive A, brought under pressure to restrain his charm and to 'get serious' about intellectual or procedural activities that do not depend on his social finesse, may actually become hostile and anti-social as he develops his basic u\* 'style', and finds that he must fend people off in order to concentrate on his non-social skills and interests. It follows that a primitive IRA who is 'stressed' in childhood to compensated in all dimensions, and who therefore acquires a basic e\*f\*u\* personality, will no longer be recognizable as an IRA. He will feel guilty or anxious about any activity that seems self-centered or self serving; he will deny any implication of insensitivity or lack of perspective; and he will insist on being professional, objective, and impersonal in dealing with others. But he will be very energetic, dedicated, committed, serious and relentless in pursuing his sensitive, outgoing, humanitarian ideals. He will be under a great deal of psychological stress (which may show up in tension disorders later in life); but he will strive to be an effective and productive citizen.

Just as compensation serves to mold the basic personality and establish the basis for most of the emotional dynamics of the personality, an additional quality of 'modification' serves to mold the contact personality. Modification is more conscious, more under the control of the individual, it plays a role in what he wants to be, whereas compensation served the purposes of what others wanted him to be. Modification, and the contact personality, establish what we 'see' in dealing with others (especially in casual or formal contacts); compensation and the basic personality establish what the individual 'feels', and what we learn of him in more intimate association.

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In the absence of psychological tests, biographic histories and reports of observed behavior make it possible to classify people within the PAS 'space'. Having classified them on the basis of behavior, it is possible then to make inferences about their drives and motives. It is in this respect that the PAS has been used as a "latent structure" to examine the psychological dynamics, as well as the histories, of subjects in the study.