

Inner-Directed Thinkers

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How we think determines how we act. How clearly we are able to think determines what we are able to understand. All people think with biases and different clarities of thought. This essay is about a particular kind of thinking which we call inner-directed.

A few years ago, I had an 8 A.M. appointment with an inner-directed person to review her Profile results. She appeared at 9 A.M. singing to herself, happy as she could be. She greeted me with a smile saying, "I would have been here at 8 o'clock but I was home thinking. I like to think in the morning." She showed no guilt or remorse for having made me wait.

In 1988, a company hired an inner-directed person for a management position. The person quit in the middle of the first day because, "He got a better offer."

Inner-Directedness

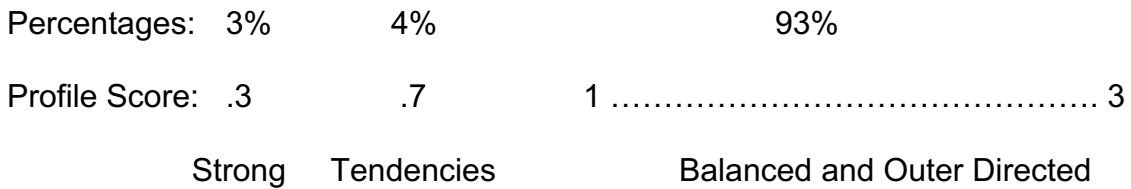
The late Dr. Robert S. Hartman, Nobel-prize nominee and developer of the Hartman Value Profile, discovered an objective way to identify and measure the different ways people think. His ability to measure how clearly people think led to the discovery that most people can think more clearly about others and the world than they can about themselves. An example of this is when we are better able to give sound counsel to our friends and then are unable to heed the same counsel ourselves. Such people are said to have not yet reached their potential in thinking about themselves, so Dr. Hartman called them "immature" thinkers. These people, who comprise the majority of all people, are the opposite of inner-directed thinkers.

Over the past eight years, I have profiled more than 5,000 people in various businesses and professions. Approximately seven percent of the population think more clearly about themselves than they think about others. Dr. Hartman called this thinking imbalance, 'atychal' (unlucky) or 'inner-directed' thinking. Inner-directed people's ability to think about themselves has developed beyond their ability to think about the world and other people. According to Dr. Hartman,

"To be inner-directed is the opposite of being immature. We call it world immaturity or purity.

The Hartman Value Profile not only identifies inner-directed thinking, it also measures differing degrees of inner-directedness. While more than 70% of the population will have momentary glimpses of inner-directedness, 7% of the population will consistency live with the effects of inner-directed thinking.

The Inner-Directedness Scale:



One way to understand how an inner-directed person differs is to use the square peg and square hole analogy. While most of population of square pegs can function in their roles that vary from square, rectangular, trapezoidal, and parallelogramic holes, the inner-directed person can only function effectively in a square hole. Inner-directed persons are either in a role that matches or in one that doesn't. The fit has to be more precise and accurate than with people who are not inner-directed. When inner-directed people are working in that role that fits them, they fit in it better than anyone else and excel beyond the norm! On the other hand, when their roles do not fit their abilities, interests, and values, then the likelihood of success is very low.

Inner-directedness leads to significant strengths. It enables persons to succeed where others will fail, to press on when others will quit, and to draw strength from within while others have to get approval and support from outside themselves.

Inner-directedness: What It Is

People are inner-directed when the overall balance score in their Value Profiles indicate their ability to see and understand things about themselves (their feelings, capabilities, personal goals and values, etc.) is better than their population of square pegs can function in their roles which vary from square, rectangular, trapezoidal, and parallelogramic holes, the inner-directed person can only function effectively in a square hole. Inner-directed persons are either in a role that matches or in one that doesn't. The fit has to be more precise and accurate than with people who are not inner-directed. When inner-directed people are working in that role that fits them, they fit in it better than anyone else

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People are inner-directed when the overall balance score in their Hartman Value Profiles indicate their ability to see and understand things about themselves (their feelings, capabilities, personal goals and values, etc.) is better than their ability to see and understand those things in others. Their thinking ability favors their own views. Their goals, ability to succeed, and inhibitions also come from inside themselves and not from others. This uniqueness is measured by the Value Profile and is:

One who has clearer thinking about the self than about the world. One who has a better balanced view of self than of the world resulting in his/her having a higher degree of self acceptance than acceptance of others, One who has a better capability to solve subjective, self problems than objective, others,,focused problems, or some combination of the three.

The Inner-directed Person is clearer on issues about one's self than on issues about others and the world around, has more internal peace and a healthier sense of well,,being about one's self than about the world and others. and understand those things in others. Their thinking ability favors their own views. Their goals, ability to succeed, and inhibitions also come from inside themselves and not from others. This uniqueness is measured by the Value Profile and is:

can solve self problems with greater objectivity and clarity than can help solve problems for others, has a very difficult time understanding the feelings, perspectives, or orientations of others, especially in stress,,filled situations, gets her/his cues, agendas, reasons for doing certain things, and inhibitions from within rather than from others.

Inner-Directedness: The Advantages

Apart from God or the limits of being a human being, the only thing that can stop an inner-directed person is her/himself. Compared to a person who is not inner-directed, when all other things are equal, an inner-directed person has a significant advantage. Inner-directed people are able to keep on track regardless of what others think, say, or do. They have an ability to tap resources that lie deep within themselves and utilize those resources. And they can provide themselves with needed reinforcement, when no one else is encouraging them.

My research shows that inner-directed people are often the leaders in their fields. I have interviewed world,,renowned chefs, world class athletes, 23 of the top sales persons in the U.S.A. and some of the most successful lawyers, doctors, and real estate developers throughout the country. A disproportionately high percentage of these people are inner-directed. Inner-directed people excel when

they are in roles that match their aptitudes, interests and experience. Being inner-directed means the person can

- *press on toward a goal in spite of what others are saying or doing,
- *pace her/himself with an internal clock that keeps accurate time in spite of how fast or slow others are going,
- *and focus her/his attention on the goal and not become distracted or lose the focus.

"...in certain ways the inner-directed person has a significant advantage, especially in contexts where individual performance is beneficial."

Inner-directed persons are unique in that they can use all of their potential to accomplish personal goals. A recent study of 80% of the managers in a small, island population revealed that inner-directed persons can shut themselves off from the effects of negative social pressures. This island society believed in a lifestyle of leisure and family bonding. People who advanced in business or associated with businesses from the U.S. were outcasts. Our study of this sub-culture revealed the percentage of inner-directed persons who stayed in management positions was more than 500% higher than the norm. Conversely, a high percentage of persons who were not inner-directed left their management positions after less than a year. They were unable to cope with the social rejection over an extended period.

Follow-up interviews confirmed my hypothesis: the inner-directed persons were able to value their own contributions, careers, and goals more highly than they valued the approval, interests, desires, and priorities of their family members and friends.

Inner-directedness: Disadvantages

Every strength has a back-side which can limit its usefulness. While inner-directed people have unusual abilities, they also have weaknesses to an unusual degree. The inner-directed person's perceptions or thought patterns often include:

Blind self-reliance:

"I don't need you. And I don't need anyone else!"

A false belief that their experience is normative:

"If I have a problem, then you have the same problem. If I do not have that problem, then neither do you."

Self-reliance and mistrust of others:

"I'm fine but I'm not sure about you or the world."

Belief that their perspectives are normative:

"If it's clear to me, then it's clear to you, also."

Inability to be constrained by outsiders:

"You can not control me nor can you affect me."

Need to assert their individuality:

"I just had to be the first woman pastor, I couldn't do anything else until I had done this."

"Inner-directed persons can shut themselves off from the effects of negative social pressures."

Bad Luck

Dr. Hartman noted that inner-directed persons are often subject to bad luck. What he meant by bad luck was an inappropriate rejection of accomplishments when they merited recognition or an inability to fit in and function in the world. These result from the inner-directed person's inability to understand the perspectives and motivations of others, and inability to see what is happening around them when it does not correspond to how they think things work.

Recently, this rejection occurred with an inner-directed, world-class runner. The runner, when asked by reporters about an upcoming race, expressed self-confidence and certainty that he was going to win. All of the sports writers wrote negative articles about this runner, even after he won! He deserved recognition, for he had won the world championship race. Yet his self-assuredness and independence led the writers to scorn his accomplishment. One writer was quoted, "Why would we want to write a glowing review of his race? He made it real clear that he can succeed without help from anybody else. So we decided to let him succeed without our help!"

What has been particularly interesting and consistent is that many inner-directed people perceive that they have good fortune. I have conducted more than two dozen interviews of inner-directed people, all of whom said that they were very fortunate and lucky. Their friends and associates said these people had not received the recognition they deserved or often were out of synch with what was actually happening around them.

Communicating

Communicating effectively is hard. For inner-directed people it is even harder. Communication depends on a person's being able to understand and make clear judgments from others' responses. The inner-directed person will usually not wonder if the other person truly understands because he "knows" the other person understands. In the thinking pattern of the inner-directed person lies the belief that if he understands what he means, then everyone else does, also. The inner-directed person rarely feels a need to explain or clarify what they mean nor do they seek clarification of what others mean. This causes them to ignore the usefulness of both feedback and give and take while communicating.

Recently, I interviewed a young, inner-directed manager, who had divorced her husband. As we talked about her patterns of thinking, I told her that she would have to work harder at communicating. Her eyes began to tear up as she nodded her head saying, "That is why I ended up getting a divorce. Every time I talked with my husband, he would give me some stupid, irrelevant response! I never thought that I could have been part of the problem. Everything was so clear to me, I figured it had to be clear to him, also. I got so frustrated with his answers that I couldn't stand being around him!"

Managing

Inner-directed people usually have a difficult time managing others. They struggle as managers because they do not readily understand or relate personally to the perspectives and needs of others. From their perspective, all people can draw strength from within to reach their goals. They believe others don't need to be inspired, watched, given direction, attended to, or rewarded. Many inner-directed people believe that anyone who does need oversight, support, direction, or encouragement is "lazy and should be fired!". Since much of an effective manager's job is motivating, understanding and juggling the perspectives and dynamics of a diverse team of people, inner-directed persons have a difficult time being effective managers.

Being Managed

Inner-directed people have a very difficult time letting others direct them or assign their activities. The manager of an inner-directed rock star put it well, "I learned very early in our business life that he (the rock star) could not be managed. Whenever anyone tried to tell him what to do, he would do something else. Because he is the best at what he does, I decided that I would manage the world around him and let him manage himself. It has worked out perfectly since I

made that decision." You are wasting your time and energy if you try to direct or lead an inner-directed person over time. They manage themselves.

Relationships

Inner-directed people usually have to work very hard at (deal with a great amount of stress) keeping their personal relationships healthy. Their thinking about others is not as clear as their thinking about themselves, their contributions, or ideas. Whenever they are in a stressful situation, they go inside where the thinking is clear. This movement to inside away from the outside induces stress in the relationship. The person with whom they are relating will feel unappreciated, misunderstood, and minimized by the inner-directed person's self focused responses and actions. All of nature flows along the path of the least resistance; therefore the inner-directed person will shy away from the outside world back to himself where things are clear and more comfortable. It sometimes is "just too hard" to give enough energy to get to that point that he understands the other person's perspective.

Ironically, many of these people find themselves lonely and wishing for companionship. This loneliness produces stresses that lead them to pursue relationships, often leading to marriage. When the loneliness stresses diminish, the stresses caused by having to work at the relationship begin to intensify. The result is the inner-directed person withdraws into her/his own world once again. Maintaining healthy relationships requires concerted effort, and for inner-directed people that effort is even more taxing.

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Examples of Inner-directed People's Behavior

Every person's behavior is consistent with her/his thinking pattern. Therefore our behavioral patterns are consistent and fairly predictable. From doing more than a hundred Hartman Value Profile reviews of inner-directed people, I have come to expect the unexpected. I have come to expect that inner-directed people will do things without regard for the feelings or perspectives of others. Here are some true stories things I and professional associates have experienced with inner-directed people.

An associate interviewed an inner-directed person who was the top salesperson in his insurance company. The inner-directed person had a goal of saving a specific amount of money to retire. Even though that person was the top producer of his company and making more than \$200,000 a year, when his savings account reached his pre-determined figure, he quit and moved.

I recently interviewed a thirty year old, inner-directed person who made the following statements

"In every relational encounter I throw the first punch."

"I have no fears, and no one can control me."

"I have never been to a doctor and I never will need one."

"Other people could have what they want, they just choose not to take it."

An inner-directed manager of a company, who served as the employee counselor, was asked by a co-worker to, "Please, come quickly, Mary Jane has a serious problem and has asked for your help!" The manager looked at his calendar and replied, "I'll be able to see her in two hours, I've scheduled this time for some budgeting work."

A young woman, who was the first female minister in her denomination, said to me, "I so want to help people and know that God expects it of me but it is so hard for me to do. I am much better and more effective when I am doing tasks by myself. I am happier, easier to get along with, and more at peace when I don't have to struggle with others' feelings and desires. But when I am in that situation, I wonder if I am doing the Lord's work."

I had an appointment 400 miles from my office to review the Hartman Profile results with an inner-directed manager. I flew down for the 1:30 meeting. As I was waiting in the lobby for the person to meet me, I started wondering what unique experience I would have with this person. He came out at 1:45, led me to his office and said, "I've got a challenge for you. You get to do our one and a half hour review of my Profile in 15 minutes. I have to leave for the airport."

Suggestions for Inner-Directed

The first suggestion for the inner-directed person is accept and thank God for your uniqueness and strengths. A small percentage of the population can do what you can do. The ability you have is astounding to those who are not inner-directed. You have always lived with this ability and most likely assumed that other have this ability, too. Realize that you have a significant gift that can bring you and others considerable joy, fulfillment, and peace.

The second suggestion is to learn how to value others who differ from you. A natural response to people who differ is to devalue how they think and act. While their thinking patterns are different, they are as viable, valuable and as "right" as yours. Where you are strong in thinking about and valuing yourself, they are strong in thinking about and valuing others. Actually, it is the non-,inner-directed people who can serve as your tutors in developing your thinking about the world and other people.

The third suggestion, while important for all people, is more critical for inner-directed people. Pursue a role or position that is a match with your aptitudes, intelligence, and experience. Do not accept second best and do not try to fulfill the wishes of others. It will only be frustrating and short term for you. Pursue your lofty goals and don't give up. You can produce significant good for others, the world, and yourself. If managing people is extremely hard and stress-,filled for you, then pursue those roles which use your strengths apart from management.

The final suggestion is to listen carefully to the responses you get from other people. As you hear responses that seem to be strange, probe more deeply into the sources and perspectives that generate such responses. Many perspectives exist that will be new to you. To increase your effectiveness you will have to work harder at thinking about other people and things outside yourself. While communicating and working with others will be work, keep in mind that the fruit of those efforts will make it worthwhile!