



Axiology

A tool for taking coaching clients to the next level

By Harvey Schoof, BS, MA

Over the past several decades many useful assessments have been developed to identify people's skills, personalities, behavior, temperament, etc. Many of these have been extremely helpful in gaining insights about the people we work with. However, if your experience is at all like mine, you've occasionally felt like these assessments might not be getting to the source of the real issues that influence personal and professional performance.

About 20 years ago, I had the good fortune to run across a little known but highly effective measurement system called Axiology, which is the science of

“Think of the potential of being able to recognize and understand ‘why’ people behave the way we do.”



Outer World

INTRINSIC, “Empathy”

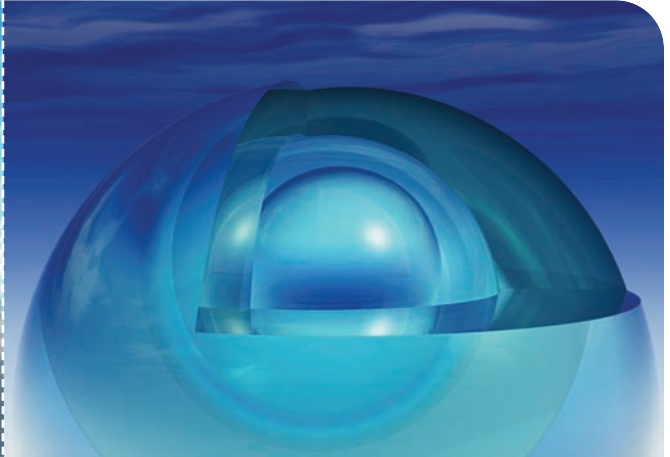
Other persons as unique individuals; the spiritual, irreplaceable worth of others; the value of a “thing” as it exists in itself.

EXTRINSIC, “Practical Judgment”

Material value; things; classes or groups of things; other things as they serve useful roles or have functional value; comparison of things, people or situations; concrete, functional value in general, practical concrete thinking and organization.

SYSTEMIC, “Systems Judgment”

Analytical or structured thinking; structure, order or consistency in thinking; theoretical or conceptual organization and planning; valuing what “ought to be”; the rules.



Inner World - Self

INTRINSIC, “Self Esteem”

The self as infinitely valuable; the unique individuality of each person; the understanding of “who” one is; actual strengths and limitations.

EXTRINSIC, “Role Awareness”

“What” one is; the role function one plays; the sense of using time in a useful, functional way; career thinking; satisfaction or dissatisfaction with what one is doing in the world.

SYSTEMIC, “Self Direction”

“Where” one is going or “ought” to be going; self direction; persistence; drive motivated from commitment to inner principles and goals; self concept; ideal self image.

value. The word ‘axiology,’ derived from two Greek roots ‘axios’ (worth or value) and ‘logos’ (logic or theory), means the theory of value. This science made it possible to objectively measure how people actually make value decisions, which we know are the underlying source of all of our choices and actions.

Measuring The “How”

The creator of this extraordinary system of measurement was Nobel nominated Robert S. Hartman, PhD. His mathematical and logical structure of value concepts is the cornerstone of axiology. His system allows us to measure ‘how’ a person thinks and perceives rather

than ‘what’ he or she is thinking. In other words, value science helps us recognize what we pay attention to, what is important to us, and what our prejudices may be. Axiology explains and measures the thinking which forms the foundation for and leads to our behavior – and it makes these mea-

surements as accurately as a thermometer measures temperature.

Think about the implications of using an assessment that can actually identify how people think and make

apex of everyone's valuing process. To the degree that we develop our capacity to make good value decisions we live in harmony with the world and with ourselves. However,

which in turn has greater value than things of systemic value. In practical terms this means that when people make choices that put following the rules before caring for

“Using Axiology, coaches can now gain insights about the underlying thoughts and attitudes that are influencing their clients even before their first coaching session.”

decisions. Think of the potential of being able to recognize and understand “why” people behave the way we do. Armed with these insights, coaches can provide people with a deeper understanding of the thoughts, beliefs and the old mental programs that may be blocking them from achieving their life's desires.

Deceptively Simple

Hartman's mathematical model is deceptively simple and yet extraordinarily sophisticated. He defined a hierarchy of value that mirrors what we “know” to be true. His discovery brought to light the principles of order and structure that influence not only our moral decisions, but also all of our value judgments. Hartman's value mathematics resulted in a mathematical system which successfully orders the values of our everyday experiences.

He validated the concept that all value choices can be placed in two basic categories (Inner World and Outer World) with three dimensions of value in each category. These three dimensions of value form the

to the degree that we do not develop these capacities, we live in confusion and under tension because either our vision of the world or our vision of ourselves or both is out of focus. Consider the implications of knowing exactly where your client is in regard to each of these dimensions (see chart 1).

Discovering Value

What we find in practice is that people make decisions based on what they value. Hartman's model presents a universal hierarchy of value that explains that anything of intrinsic value has greater value than things of extrinsic value,

“To the degree that we develop our capacity to make good value decisions we live in harmony with the world and with ourselves.”

the people, their value choice is out of balance. Axiology helps us recognize where and how our thinking is leading to choices that ultimately undermine our relationships and effectiveness.

Typically we think about concepts like attitudes, likes, dislikes, beliefs and values as being intangible. We usually consider them to be subjective, i.e. based on people's personal experiences and the words they use to describe them. The science of Axiology provides a solution to this problem by forming a mathematical frame of reference that can be applied to any and all value situations. It enables us to objectively determine the hierarchical criterion for a good decision.

Axiology offers coaches the opportunity to work with clients who are beyond the search for the “quick fix” and really ready to get to the bottom of the issues that have been holding them and their organizations back. As a professional coach you owe it to yourself and your clients to explore this unique and powerful assessment. •