PRIMAL
PERSONALITY
ASSESSMENT®

Identifying Personal Motivations for Greater Creativity, Productivity and Personal Fulfillment

Executive Summary

The Primal Personality Assessment® uniquely uncovers the essence of personality—the specific motivations that drive a person's behavior and decision-making; the activities and interests they may find most fulfilling. It is a 21st Century tool grounded in positive psychology.

Social scientists believe that understanding motivations enhances our ability to effectively engage in life so that our experiences and contributions are creative, productive and fulfilling. According to Teresa M. Amabile of Harvard University in *Creativity in Context* (1996):

> *Intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity, but extrinsic motivation is detrimental. It appears that when people are primarily motivated to do some creative activity by their own interest in and enjoyment of that activity, they may be more creative than they are when primarily motivated by some goal imposed on them by others.*
>
> *…social psychology factors are important in creativity and, among these, the most crucial may be those that either lead people to concentrate on the intrinsically interesting aspects of a task or lead them to concentrate on some extrinsic goal.*

In a study of motivations and goal attainment, Judge, Bono, Erez and Locke (2005) conclude that:

> *A growing body of research suggests that people who choose goals that are concordant with their ideals, interests, and values are happier than those who pursue goals for other reasons (e.g., extrinsic or defensive reasons).*

The Primal Personality Assessment® identifies a person's deep interests and values—referred to in self-determination theory as identified and intrinsic motivations. Self-determination theory is a dominant theory of motivation in social, work, education and sports psychology. In their application of the theory in work motivation, Gagne and Deci (2005) describe the effects of accessing identified and intrinsic motivations on job performance:

> *When people are autonomously motivated at work they tend to experience their jobs as interesting or personally important, self-initiated, and endorsed by relevant others. When people perform effectively at these jobs, they experience satisfaction of the basic psychological needs and have positive attitudes toward their jobs.*

The substantial research completed by these social scientists—and many others—confirms that understanding and accessing identified and intrinsic motivations can lead to greater happiness and satisfaction because it provides people with the insightful opportunity to set goals and to place themselves in work and life situations that match their core interests and values. This alignment leads to positive experiences and outcomes, including:

- **Greater vitality and persistence** in pursuing and achieving life and work goals, including sustained behavioral change.
- **Significantly increased job satisfaction,** well-being and commitment.
- **More effective performance,** particularly on tasks requiring creativity and conceptual thinking.
- **More effective high-performance motivation** versus rewards, deadlines, surveillance, evaluations and other commonly-used management tools.
- **Promotion of volunteerism** and other prosocial behaviors.
- **A greater degree of personal flexibility** and psychological well-being.

According to self-determination theory, three basic psychological needs must be satisfied in order to achieve this level of motivation and engagement: competence, autonomy and relatedness. The Primal Personality Assessment® identifies the specific psychological motivations that drive an individual's behavior and decision-making, as well as the list of activities they may find "most" and "least" engaging. This powerful insight provides people with a deeper understanding and sense of self which enables them to make enlightened choices in life and work that better fulfill their own core interests and values.

Positive Psychology and Self-Determination Theory

The Primal Personality Assessment® is based in positive psychology, which advocates creating an atmosphere of dominant positivity to foster creativity, trust, productivity, mindfulness, hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy.

There are various psychological theories that provide a roadmap for achieving these psychological states and the personal fulfillment and performance benefits they provide. These include self-determination theory, self-congruence theory and social-cognitive theory. All are focused on maximizing human potential and promoting the individual quest for psychological growth and achieving a greater sense of self.

According to self-determination theory, the more self-determined the behavior, the greater the individual's motivation. Satisfying identified and intrinsic motivations is the most self-determined—and therefore most effective—form of motivation. By contrast, external motivations (e.g., tangible rewards such as pay, approval, punishment) and introjected motivations (e.g., doing things I feel I "should" do) are least self-determined, and therefore, less motivating. In fact, numerous studies have shown that tangible rewards significantly undermine feelings of autonomy that are central to intrinsic motivation.

Greater Self-determined Behavior = Greater Motivation

Implications for Leaders

Applying these theories and the decades of related research, leaders who focus on autonomous motivation (e.g., engaging people in activities they find interesting and aligned with core values) will engender greater productivity, creativity and commitment than those who rely on controlled motivation (e.g., using pressure tactics or relying on extrinsic rewards).

Communications That Motivate Engagement and Action

Studies also have shown that communications are far more powerful and persuasive when the messages are framed in terms that fulfill a target group's intrinsic motivations versus extrinsic goals. That means identifying, recognizing and speaking to the different core motivations represented by the group. Research shows that framing messages to appeal to intrinsic motivations leads to deeper engagement, more in-depth processing of information and more prolonged engagement.

Transformational leaders tap into these motivations by creating communications platforms that resonate with key stakeholders. As described by Warner Burke of Columbia University in *Organizational Change and Practice* (2011):

> *The leader has a sense of what followers need and want; it is simply that these desires are not in the conscious awareness. It is about beliefs and values that people hold but do not necessarily discuss. They are implicit and tacit. Gardner's examples (1995) of this type are Ronald Reagan when he was president of the United States and Margaret Thatcher when she was prime minister of the United Kingdom. They both, Gardner has argued, tapped into latent beliefs and desires of their respective constituents, beliefs*

and values that support a free-market system, that oppose socialism and prefer capitalism, and that provide people with a feeling of freedom and choice. In the corporate world, innovative leaders might surface a strong desire on the part of employees to be more collaborative as opposed to competing with others in the organization, and to be more involved and engaged in the business, or to be a participant in changing the organization.

The Primal Personality Assessment® is a 21st Century tool that enables leaders to inspire constituents by identifying their deepest, innate motivational beliefs and values, of which they may even be consciously unaware.

Benefits of the Primal Personality Assessment®

The Primal Personality Assessment® provides the insight individuals need to better align their values and interests in life and work so they are more successfully fulfilled, productive and creative. It also is vital information for organizational leaders who seek to better motivate, engage and sustain the commitment of constituents and stakeholder groups by addressing and embracing their deepest, underlying motivational needs and desires.

Through testing, the Primal Personality Assessment® has identified eight distinct personality groups:

- Primal Enterprisers®
- Primal Guardians®
- Primal Harmonizers®
- Primal Holistics®
- Primal Ideators®
- Primal Individualists®
- Primal Nourishers®
- Primal Originators®

The online assessment instrument is brief. After completing the assessment, participants receive an immediate online report that includes:

1. **Primal Group** —an overall description of the personality group.
2. **Primal Motivations** — a list of the specific core motivations for that personality group.
3. **Engagement and Fulfillment** — a list of activities and interests that may or may not be of interest to that personality group, in the future.
4. **Insights to Explore** — considerations for creating more fulfilling and productive life and work experiences.

The information and insights are specific, clearly written in laymen's terms, and immediately actionable.

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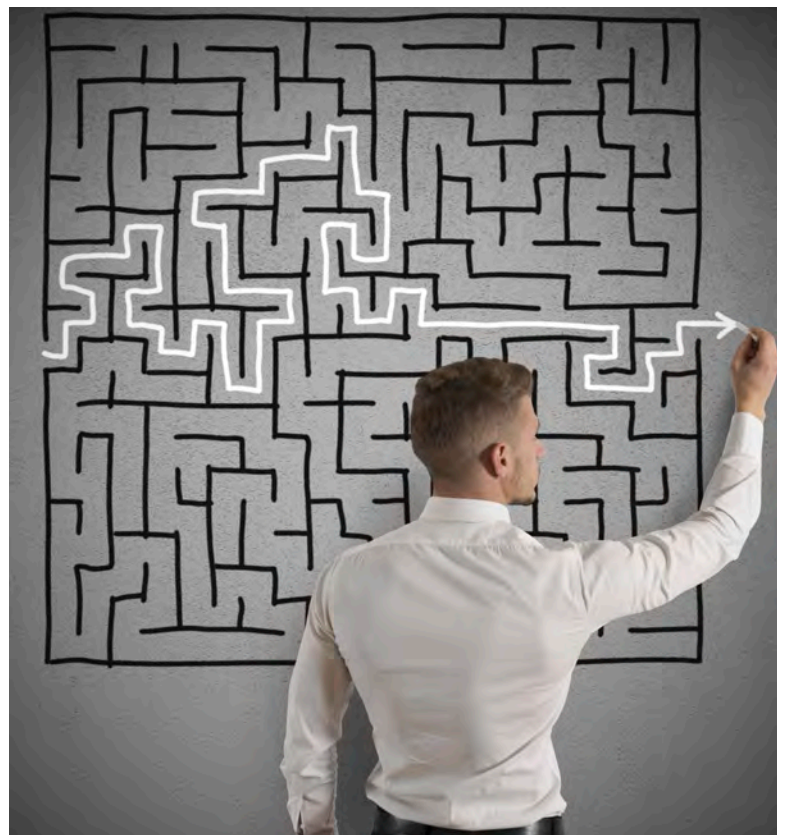
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