THE PERSONESSENCE™ SYSTEM FOR UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE



INTRODUCTION TO THE PERSONESSENCE™ SYSTEM

By José Luis Stevens MSW Ph.D.

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Published Books:

The Shaman's Guide to Extraordinary Practices: 58 Power Tools for Personal Transformation, Hierophant Publishing. 2024

How to Pray the Shaman's Way: Ancient Techniques for Extraordinary Results, Hierophant Publishing. 2021. 192 Pages.

Encounters with Power: Adventures and Misadventures on the Path of Healing, 2016. Sounds True. 237 Pages.

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Tao to Earth, Bear & Company Out of print

Earth to Tao, Bear & Company Out of print

Published E-books:

The Seven Archetypal Roles: Primary Way of Being, 2010. The Nine Needs: Primary Requirements for Balance, 2010.

The Seven Obstacles: Primary Fear Patterns, 2010.

The Seven Centers: Primary Reaction Centers (Communication Styles), 2010.



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The Seven Goals and the Seven Modes: Primary Motivation and Primary Approach, 2010.

The Seven States of Perception: Primary Values, 2010.

The Seven Attitudes: Primary Perspective, 2010.

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This is a challenging, transformative time in history and the world needs tools to help people understand and communicate with one another more than ever before. Our world today is full of unprecedented misunderstanding and judgment. The fact that the core essence of people desires to be understood bodes well for breaking down these seemingly impossible barriers. By and large, people want to be communicated with in a way that shows they are accepted, acknowledged, and recognized for who they are. Given tools and maps to self-knowledge, people can learn to live in harmony and mutual respect despite cultural diversity or other environmentally contrasting realities. The Personessence™ System is a powerful tool to help people meet the challenges of today's realities. It has proven successful for many years in facilitating greater understanding and communication within multinational companies, law firms, school systems, non-profits and in the private lives of countless individuals.

The Personessence™ System to Understanding People has been developed over the last fifty years and has been impacted by numerous fields and traditions. Informing the core of this system is the work of the late Sarah Chambers, a public health administrator, teacher and intuitive who for years researched the findings of George Gurdjieff and Peter Ouspensky. Many of the terms and concepts explored by Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, as delineated by Chambers in the 1970's, influences much of the basic content of Personessence™. However, Personessence™ takes much of this work to a significantly deeper and more contemporary, applicable level.

Personessence™ also draws from the well-known studies of other psychologists, including the anthropological cross-cultural archetypes explored by CG Jung. In his research, Jung noted certain preconscious dispositions that allowed human beings to react in specific



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ways. He ascertained that people were born with instinctive patterns, seemingly unrelated to environmental conditioning or genetic makeup that structure their realities. Jung further found that common archetypal patterns exist in every culture of the world and throughout all phases of human history unifying all peoples over space and time.

Another theoretical system that influences Personessence™ is the work of Abraham Maslow. Through the Hierarchy of Needs, Maslow's theoretical model, he observed that people seek to first fulfill certain basic biological needs before progressing on to increasingly more complex and sophisticated needs. Personessence™ reflects some of these basic truths, but extends far beyond it to incorporate an additional nine needs. This is explored in greater detail in Chapter 8.

Having spent the past several decades on research and exploration of my own, dedicating time and energy to uncovering the truth of what impacts us, then applying that understanding and teaching of the Personessence™ System to thousands of individuals, has been enlightening. My background as a licensed clinical social worker, with a doctorate in counseling psychology, has given me the unique opportunity to apply my understanding of this deeply personal, yet universal system, to helping others in a variety of environments around the world – from corporate settings to individual therapy sessions. This system's great advantage is that it is blind to race, gender, religion, and cultural traditions. People who learn the system and understand how to apply it, find it very helpful in their own lives and use it as a mechanism for understanding their cultural or familial heritage. Personessence™ is a simple system that functions as a mirror: giving people a clear view of themselves and others, that helps deepen their understanding of common intra- and inter-personal communication styles. An understanding of this personal context can help one achieve their full potential in life with deep satisfaction.



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Perceiving people

There are a variety of maps to the terrain of the human heart. Some are excellent and some are less than adequate, designed by people who know little about themselves and others. A well-crafted map can help you explore the landscape of who people are and why they do the things they do, spotting major landmarks, obstacles and clear pathways.

Maps label things clearly to help people avoid getting lost. It is true that labels can be limiting and self-fulfilling, but without a legend or clearly labeled landmarks a map is useless. Like a map that helps differentiate between a river and a forest, a mountain or a canyon, a map that helps us differentiate between different types of people can be guite useful. Understanding the mannerisms, behaviors and thought patterns of certain types of people can help us better develop techniques for effective communication and form the basis of strong relationships. For example, a cautious person will deliberate for a long time before making a purchase, but a passionate person might make a decision in a matter of seconds. An intellectual person needs time to think about the formula that will provide the solution to a problem, while an emotionally centered person like Einstein often knows the answer before fully comprehending the problem-solving formula. Having a clearer understanding of how people operate can provide adequate context for shaping our own responses to our world and the people around us.

Unfortunately, psychology has provided us with rather inadequate maps to human nature and the net result has been massive confusion. Too often, psychological maps are oriented toward locating and diagnosing dysfunctions, which easily lend themselves to overgeneralizations and misleading levels of simplicity. Dividing everyone into introverts and extroverts, thinking and feeling types, etc. does not provide enough detailed information about a person to be highly useful. These simple maps do not do justice to the tremendous varieties



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of human motivations, perceptions, traits and behaviors, not to mention great ranges of maturity and development. People are complex and have multiple layers to their personalities that require a system with more interlocking parts to fully explore the contours of each individual human being.

Before we understand how we are equal, we need to understand how we are different. Understanding the diversity present within the world is a critical step toward accepting all people as unique contributors and moves us collectively toward a peaceful and cooperative planet. It is important that maps intended to uncover the differences between people and provide a meaningful framework for greater understanding not be misused as a vehicle to judge others negatively.

The Personessence™ System is a map to understanding the complexities and subtleties present within the human experience. This system or map is complex enough to keep you interested for many years if you wish to master its subtleties. To understand the thousands of possible variations requires proper training and a course of study. This introduction and series of books however, describes the basic model and can be effectively understood with a single reading of the text.

Many people using the Personessence™ System have said unequivocally that there is no other map to the human personality that is so accurate or comprehensive in its scope and potential.

Some examples, large and small, of Personessence™ in action:

In thirty years of private practice working with individuals, groups, families, couples, management teams and people in crisis, I have been privy to the healthy and dysfunctional dynamics of human interaction. I have seen the value and benefit of applying even the smallest bits of information from the system. The following examples from



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individual and group sessions, illustrate the power of this information in directing us through education and self-awareness toward greater compatibility. With this goal in mind, I will use some terms from the system that may seem unfamiliar to you. My intention is to give you a taste of how a basic understanding of this system and its application can provide you with greater self-knowledge and be useful in navigating the complexities of the world around us. Subsequently I will fully explain the various terms and components of the Personessence™ System.

Individuals, couples, and families

After three years of law school, a twenty eight year old man was nearly suicidal after failing to pass the bar exam a third time. Following some discussion using the Personessence™ System as a tool for greater self-reflection and understanding, the man realized that he had actually sabotaged his own efforts to pass the bar exam because essentially he did not want to be a lawyer. It became clear that he had been responding to family pressure and would be much more interested in graphic design, something he spent most of his spare time doing. Using this system, the man became increasingly self-aware and realized that he was a pragmatic artisan with a need for expression, not the skeptical warrior with a need for exchange that he had been trying to be.

In acute distress, a couple reported that they were ambivalent about getting married after being engaged for a year. He was upset because he felt she wanted to talk about everything and he simply wanted to be guiet together. She accused him of never wanting to talk. Each thought the other dysfunctional. Their personalities revealed that he was a rule oriented stoical warrior with reserve mode, while she was a relationship oriented, idealistic, intellectual sage with a need for exchange. With this understanding, they were able to observe their differences without judgment, but with a greater degree of



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acceptance. Realizing the challenge posed by such different personalities, they decided not to get married and found great solace in the decision.

In another case, two parents, committed to making the right decision regarding their eight-year-old son, argued about whether he was old enough to attend a two-week summer camp in the mountains. Dad felt he wasn't ready and should perhaps wait until next year. Mom felt that it would do him a world of good and that he should go. Their son Danny was caught in the middle wanting to please dad but wanting very badly to go. Danny's personality revealed that he was naturally growth oriented with a moving center, and power mode. This suggested that he was an excellent candidate for camp. Dad had caution mode and was nervous about Danny going. Mom was in observation mode and had seen that he was ready. After acknowledging his own fears and personality make-up, Danny's father cautiously agreed to let him go if he agreed to call every other day. Danny went to camp.

Partners, companies, and organizations

A wealthy, accomplished doctor who specialized in hearing loss set up a number of clinics with several partners with whom he was having great conflict. His partners were success oriented and pushed for unlimited, rapid expansion. Being relationship-oriented, the doctor was concerned that service was being compromised. Because he realized the incompatibility of the two approaches to the business, he decided to buy his partners out and establish policies more in line with his own true values of customer service.

A law firm set up teams of three to prepare and litigate small cases. However, the teams were not working harmoniously and the bickering was taking a toll on productivity. Each staff member was interviewed, tested and informed about their particular value set, needs, roles, goals etc. Each team studied the results and it became evident why they were not getting along. They were able to personally suggest

INTRODUCTION TO THE PERSONESSENCE™ SYSTEM: **Primary Values**

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AXIS	EXPRESSI	NOIS	INSPIRATION	ATION	ACTION	NO	ASSIMILATION
FOCUS	Narrow	Wide	Narrow	Wide	Narrow	Wide	Neutral
ROLE (Archetype)	- creation ARTISAN - self-deception	+ dissemination - SAGE - verbosity	+ service SERVER- - Londage	- compassion - PRIEST - zéál	+ persuasion WARRIOR coercion	- mastery KING - tyranny	+ krawledge SCHOLAR - Uteky
GOAL	+ sopnistication DISCRIMINATION - rejection	- agape ACCEPTANCE - Ingratation	+ Simplicity ABBREVIATION - withdrawal	+ evolution - GROWTH - confusion	+ devotion SUBMISSION — - exploited	+ leadership	+ free-flowing RELAXATION - Fredta
MODE	- deligeration CAUTION - probla	+ authority - POWER - oppression	+ restraint RESERVED — — innothen	+ self-actualization - PASSION - dentification	+ pelsistence PERSEVERANCE — — unchanging	+ dynamism — AGGRESSION - beligerence	+ clanty OBSERVATION - surveillance
ATTITUDE	+ Investigation SKEPTIC - suspicon	+ ogalescence - IDEALIST - naveté	+ franquility STOIC - resignation	+ verification SPIRITUALIST - Deliets	+ contradiction CYNIC - dengration	+ objectivity - REALIST - subjectivity	+ efficiency PRAGMATIST - obgma
OBSTACLE (Dragon)	- Sacrifice SELF-DESTRUCTION — - Suraide	+ appette GREED - voracity	+ humility SELF-DEPRECATION — - abasement	+ pride 	+ selflessness. MARTYRDOM — inctmization	+ daring + daring - intolerance	+ determination STUBBORINESS - abstinacy
CENTER (Primary Communication) Style	+ Insight INTELLECTUAL - rationalize	Higher	+ perception EMOTIONAL	Hgher Emononal	+ productive MovING - frenefic	Higher Vioving	+ automatic INSTINCTIVE - impulse.

personessence profile system

NEEDS	+ 203 SECURITY - feat	+ presence ADVENTURE - drama	+ independence FREEDOM - lear of commitment	+ gwe & receve EXCHANGE - slander, gossip	+ authority Power - authoritatian	- prospertiy EXPANSION - Indistrimate growth	+ open, frendly ACCEPTANCE - frantoulative	COMMUNION - Indeximitals - Indeximitals	+ creation EXPRESSION - nardssism, lies
PERCEPTION (Values)	+ SURVIVE SURVIVAL ORIENTED - destroy	ORIENTED	+ structured RULE ORIENTED - inflexible		+ competitive SUCCESS ORIENTED - seitisn		+ Insigntful RELATIONSHIP ORIENTED - conflused		+ WIGE PHILOSOPHICALLY ORIENTED - ununyelved

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changes and after careful consideration, management implemented some of them along with their own. The teams were changed according to a better balance of personalities. The problem was solved.

A large food processing corporation was mystified why they experienced such a high turnover rate with employees After a study of staff members was done, it became clear that there was a disconnect between their hiring practices and the positions needing to be filled. The company was inadvertently hiring for leaders who were then put into positions where they could not exercise their leadership abilities. Frustrated, they would leave shortly after the company had invested in an expensive training program. This left the corporation two options: change interviewing practices to hire different personality types or offer employees more outlets to exhibit leadership skills. After a review the corporation made some changes in both areas and retention improved dramatically.

A multinational corporation noticed that morale was low in one of their divisions and chose to address the problem. In that division there were people of various nationalities with a wide range of dispositions that resulted in some tension. There was some racial intolerance especially among management. They decided to introduce to management a set of training seminars with a focus on diversity and the personality system. Managers were exposed to information about differing values, attitudes, needs, reaction centers and so on. Following the training, there were 2 significant results. First, the managers had a new appreciation for similarities and differences that extended beyond stereotypes of race, culture and religion that enabled them to communicate more effectively with their staff. They experienced an expanded worldview. Secondly, the managers realized the need to realign staff with managers of similar values. In this way tolerance for diversity increased and tension was reduced.



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The system

These examples illustrate that the Personessence™ System is not an arbitrary collection of personality traits grouped together haphazardly. The traits and characteristics are arranged according to a deeply meaningful pattern with profound intent in their arrangement. As you become acquainted with the chart and the way it works, you may begin to appreciate its solid foundation in the natural world. It is not within the scope of this book to explain the relationship of the system to mathematical and physical laws of nature yet they do underlay the entire structure of the chart.

This map of personality is based on the number seven. Each aspect of the map is divided into three sets of pairs and a neutral category, making seven in all. When clear light shines through a prism, the light breaks into seven colors of the color spectrum. All seven are derived from the same source, white light, however they have different frequencies that make them appear distinct. In the same way, humans come from the same source yet they manifest in distinctly different ways as exhibited by their varying specialties, talents, and styles of behavior.

There are seven categories, each with seven choices.

They are as follows:

Archetypal Roles: the seven primary character types.

Goals: the seven primary motivations that lead people to seek certain experiences.

Modes: the seven primary methods or styles of approaching a task.

Attitudes: the seven primary perspectives.

Dragons or Obstacles: the seven primary obstacles or fear patterns.

Centers: the seven primary ways of reacting or processing informa-

Values: the seven primary ways of perceiving what is important in Life.



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In addition to these seven layers, there is one additional dimension that adds depth to our already comprehensive map of personality: the nine needs. This is the only category that has nine instead of seven aspects.

There is a child's game called Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head. The box comes with many little hats, eyes, eyebrows, noses, lips, and ears, each with a little attachment so that it can be inserted into a plastic potato to make hundreds of funny characters. Our personalities are very much made up like this. The overleaves or traits are like the lips, noses, and ears that can be put together in an infinite number of combinations to make up the diversity of the human race.

Any one of the seven roles can go with any of the seven attitudes, or seven modes, or seven goals, or seven obstacles and so on, so the possibilities are practically endless. Yet the different categories are so simple and intuitive that just by reading the different options you can often see yourself clearly.

A word about percentages

Throughout this book you will find percentages listed for each personality trait. They represent an approximate distribution in the world population based on groups I have worked with all over the world. Bear in mind that select populations will have different percentages that reflect cultural and career differences. For example, we would expect to find a higher percentage of artisans in a fashion design setting and a higher percentage of warriors in the law profession but overall their percentages in the population are about the same.

The chart

The chart you see between pages 10 and 11 (you may print this out) is a concise summary of all the different possibilities in this system telescoped onto one page. The traits are called overleaves because the personality is built similarly to the way



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the human body is built, in layers. Human biology books often utilized transparent pages, each with a different physiological system overlaid on the one before it to build a complete human body. One page had the skeleton; the next page had the muscular system, then the nervous system, vascular system, lymph and glandular systems, major organs, and finally the skin to complete the whole body. These days this is done digitally.

While the chart may look daunting at first because of all the words, it is in actuality very simple to read. Here is how:

1. There are horizontal rows consisting of seven words in each row. Each row is a category with its title on the left. So, the top row is roles, the seven different major character types. This is the foundation of the personality similar to the way bones are the foundation of the physical body. The second row is goals, the seven different possible motivations or themes in life. The third row has the seven different modes, the way the goal can be approached, and the fourth row has the seven attitudes and so on down the page. Each is a different set of overleaves.

For example:

1. Archetypal Role:

Artisan Sage Server Priest Warrior King Scholar

2. There is one word that describes an aspect of someone's personality in each row. When a word is marked or checked in each row a profile of the personality emerges.

Archetypal Role:

Artisan Sage Server Priest Warrior King Scholar

Attitude:

Skeptic Idealist Stoic Spiritualist Cynic Realist Pragmatist



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- 3. Just because there are vertical columns does not mean that a person has all the traits in that column. They are grouped that way because each vertical column has traits that have something in common.
- 4. All the overleaves or traits are grouped into four big boxes, actually three big boxes and one thin one. These are called the major axis and have the words Expression, Inspiration, Action, and Assimilation written over them. All traits grouped under Expression are demonstrative in nature. All traits grouped under Inspiration are somehow inspiring in nature. All traits under Action are action oriented and all traits grouped under Assimilation are assimilative or sponge-like in nature. The obstacles in each axis obstruct or block all the traits under that axis.
- 5. Do not worry if you cannot immediately understand how each word fits under each axis. That becomes clearer with deeper study.
- 6. The needs and values do not fall under the four axis because they apply to other aspects of the personality.
- 7. All words have a positive and a negative pole. The positive pole represents adaptive and satisfying expressions of the word and the negative pole represents maladaptive or dysfunctional expressions of it. Positive poles lead to happiness and negative poles lead to unhappiness or misery for both self and others.

Archetypal Role:

+ service + compassion

PRIEST SERVER bondage zeal

8. The overleaves come in pairs that are like opposites and yet have something in common with one another. In each set of overleaves there are six that are paired and one that is neutral. If you have a paired one you slide to the other one from time to time. If you have a



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neutral attitude, then you may slide to any of the other six 10% to 20% of the time. Example: A realist when disappointed may slide to cynic for a short time. A spiritualist in contemplation may become stoical for the time being.

Pairs

SKEPTIC	IDEALIST
IDEALIST	SKEPTIC
STOIC	SPIRITUALIST
SPIRITUALIST	STOIC
CYNIC	REALIST
REALIST	CYNIC
	SKEPTIC
	IDEALIST
PRAGMATIST	STOIC
	SPIRITUALIST

9. In each set all the paired overleaves are divided into narrow-focused (detail oriented) and wide-focused (big picture oriented). The designations do not mean better or worse. They are absolutely equal with different focuses. The seventh trait in each set is neutral, meaning that it may be used in either a narrow focused way or wide focused way depending on circumstances.

REALIST CYNIC

NARROW	WIDE
Skeptic	Idealist
Stoic	Spiritualist
Cynic	Realist
NEUTRAL	-

Pragmatist

Example: A skeptic is more likely to hone in on a detail while an idealist is more prone to looking at the whole picture.



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10. Even though some overleaves on the chart may strike you as more positive or more negative than others, in reality all of them are absolutely equal in value. They all create value, offer experiences and lessons, and make a contribution to the whole of life. An idealist is no better than a skeptic; a person with aggression mode is not worse than a person with passion. The way a person uses these traits and the choices they make account for whether they are positive or negative.

Example: A skeptic might make an excellent investigator while an idealist may be a highly inspirational public speaker.

The stability and reliability of the Personessence™ System

My experience developing and working with the Personessence™ System over fifty years leads me to the conclusion that the overleaves are surprisingly stable throughout life. If assessed correctly, a person will demonstrate the same overleaves at age twenty-five as at age sixty-five. However, there are a few considerations and exceptions that we should discuss briefly.

You may wonder where the overleaves come from and depending on your philosophy your answers could be quite different. Some would say they are conditioned in childhood. Others might say they are genetically determined. Still others would say they are given to you by God or nature or from our own higher selves. Some scientists might say they are delivered through the quantum field. I would not discount any of these answers because I believe each holds some truth. However, I also believe each person is born with their set of overleaves already intact. This is primarily based on my observations of thousands of people and from many teachings. If you are interested you can read more about this in the e-book about the philosophical underpinnings of this system. Some people find that book the most informative of all.



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One can see the overleaves in children at a very young age. However, these overleaves are still developing and their true nature may be obscured by strong influences of parents, teachers, guardians, or a variety of environmental factors. Therefore, their actual overleaves may lie underneath what they are demonstrating for temporary approval's sake. With children, one must be careful not to jump to conclusions.

Usually, the overleaves are well intact by age twelve, with the obstacles being a notable exception. The obstacles may appear very early in childhood or they may wait until adolescence to reveal themselves. Notably, adolescents demonstrate all the obstacles through these difficult hormonal years. Some people don't settle into one obstacle or another until the late teens.

Occasionally and fortunately, people do overcome their obstacles, although later in life. This is a most welcome change and is possible for anyone who is willing to do the work.

The overleaves seldom change throughout life but there are a very few exceptions. Here are some basic principles:

The roles never change because they are a permanent fixture like your bone structure.

If there is a change in the other overleaves it is almost always in a polarity; for example, the goal of discrimination to the goal of acceptance, or the attitude of idealist to that of the skeptic or vice versa. There can also be a shift from a neutral overleaf like observation mode to perseverance or any other mode. Other shifts can happen but are extremely rare. Usually they are in response to a big life change, an accident, a loss, or intense study, contemplation, and meditation.

The values sets may not always be apparent in children because they usually reflect their parents' values. Nevertheless, sometimes they can be quite obvious. Values become most apparent in the early twenties and are well fixed by age thirty-five.



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For greater understanding

Multiple exposures to information are the most rapid form of learning. Therefore, I have included charts, narratives, examples, lists, bullet points, and photographs so that you may be exposed to the information in a variety of formats. You may find some repetition of concepts and this is purposeful so that you will learn faster.

For more clarity and information, consult the various manuals that focus on each aspect of the chart. These go into more depth about many of the points briefly presented here. Once you are acquainted with the overall system, you will discover some invaluable resources that can help you. No where else will you find such a comprehensive and thorough coverage of the Personessence system. Online there are other sites that refer to this system under various other names. Upon inspection I find that most of them contain numerous errors with misidentification of celebrities and famous historical figures, some egregiously so. You are welcome to check them out.

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