

Dynamic and Defenses – Developmental Explanation

There are three major ways to view the Dynamics and Defenses. The first is the **Developmental** explanation and follows the chronological development of the Dynamics as each pair (i.e., power and support) rises from the previous stage and establishes the base for the development of the next stage (This is found in Why you are You). The second is a **Typological** explanation which recognizes that both the Dynamics and Defenses can be grouped in “classes” on two dimensions which are Focus and Content. The third or **Thematic** explanation is an attempt to group the Dynamics and Defenses into common themes of which there are four. This paper will focus on the Developmental explanation.

There are five stages in the development of the normal personality from a dynamic perspective. Each of the five Stages with the exception of the first stage has a **Power** and a **Support Dynamic** for a total of nine dynamics. The Power dynamics are aggressive and to seek control some entity (the self, another person or an aspect of one’s environment). The Support dynamics balance the power dynamics and seek to bond with, support or in some fashion “relate to” people, organizations or ideologies.

Each dynamic has a particular **Defense** mechanism associated with its use. The purpose of a defense mechanism is to mitigate or remove the stress encountered in everyday life as one strives to satisfy their motivations (i.e., behaviors driven by the dynamics). It accomplishes this by changing one’s perception of their self-concept or the environment with the goal of minimizing the stressful stimulus (e.g., anger at another to make them go away) or directly changing one’s views (e.g., obsessive review of a bothersome issue to reach a new, less stressful position).

The first stage is tied to **Physiology** or one’s temperament and mood. There is no support dynamic because it is a “source of power” and is probably genetic. The next stage is **Psychological** and the goal is the formation of a stable self-concept that is a combination of ones’ self-perception and the perception that others have of you. The **Social** stage follows and moves the person into the social arena where you can influence others and be influenced by them in return as you establish more complex social relationships (to meet some perceived needs). The last stage is the **Cultural** stage and is divided into an External focus (the human or socio-cultural aspects) and an Internal focus (knowledge and aesthetics).

The stages “unfold” in the order listed and the development of the later stages are affected by the unfolding events of the earlier stages. The earlier stages are the “most influential and hardest to modify” (e.g., try to change your intensity level) but are more direct in focus (e.g., a self-concept is easier to grasp than one’s need to fit into society). The latter dynamics are easier to modify but they are very broad (e.g., one’s intellectual interests and drives) and they do “modify and direct” the earlier dynamics as we mature (e.g., what ultimately becomes critical to one’s self-concept or relationships).

There is no reason to expect that any one person will be balanced across all nine dynamics. There is no reason to expect that you will use a particular defense with the “correct dynamic” (e.g., you can turn a social issue into a personal issue). There is no reason to believe that your use of dynamics (e.g., what goes into your self-concept) or defenses (e.g., how you get angry) will be the same as another person who shares your dynamic or defensive structure. All of these potential combinations of dynamics, defenses and interpretations (as well as the content) are what makes us unique.

STAGE I: PHYSIOLOGICAL

The first stage dynamic is the **PERFORMER** which is a power dynamic that focuses on raw “activity and doing” and there is no offsetting support dynamic. The primary issue of the first stage is one of energy and tempo, which is related to physiology. Some people have a high degree of innate energy where they are “always up and ready for the challenge.” The advantage is they can accomplish a great deal but the downside is they may have difficulty remaining focused since they are more easily distracted or bored. Others seem more mellow or casual where they “go with the flow” and their energy expenditure is “more normal and consistent.” Still others have a low level of innate energy where they tire easy, are

prone to energy depletion and may seem to lack any interest in much of anything. The energy associated with this stage is not to be confused with the "negative intensity" that results from a low frustration tolerance where one is easily irritated or angered (e.g., a heightened state relative to a noxious stimulus).

The defense is **Impulsive**, and is related to sheer energy. That is, as you become "revved up" and want to do something, you give into the stimulus and act impulsively. This is not the same as being stupid and not thinking about consequences (it may look the same) but you actually becomes anxious (e.g., oh God, should I buy the...) act impulsively and buy the item. Now the deed is done and you are no longer anxious. The defense eliminated the stress of "I want it but can I afford it or do I really need it?"

STAGE II: PSYCHOLOGICAL

The second stage focuses on the development of a stable self-concept. The power side or **EGOIST** emphasizes "who I am relative to my personal self-assessment" so it is uninterested in what others have to say. This says nothing about the accuracy of ones' self-assessment because it can range from grandiose (Narcissistic) to normal to pathetic (poor or Inadequate self-concept) and you may be right (i.e., it could be externally validated) or wrong. Furthermore, it says nothing about the content of ones' self-assessment because what is valuable to one person (e.g., rich, famous, good parent, moral) may be quite unimportant to another person. This dynamic, values all behaviors in terms of the behavior's impact on ones' self-concept rather than for its intrinsic value (e.g., I read because I want others to know that I am smart versus I read for enjoyment). It has the feel that "I am good at business (not because it is fun), because I want others to see me as powerful". "I am rich, good looking, smart or whatever and people know this about me and this **Image** defines who I am". The mature egoist knows his strengths (tries to hide or improve his weaknesses) and uses them. The immature egoist requires agreement from others regarding his personal self-assessment or attempts to display strengths that don't exist.

The defense is **Suspicion**, which is an "early warning system" that allows you to protect yourself from others. The easiest way to protect ones' self-concept is to become suspicious when others want something from you or have something critical to say about you. If someone wants something from me (e.g., "you mean giving it to them?") it will deplete me. An egoist only gives when the value of what he is assured of getting is greater. The goal is to be admired for who one is (external recognition that one is superior) and is not to give to others (what is the point). If others criticize me, they must have an ulterior motive and I just need to figure out what they are really trying to do (e.g., make themselves look better by tearing me down). By letting admiration in and keeping out all "taking-away behaviors" (i.e., giving to others) it protects and maintains ones' self-concept. The egoist is the ultimate emotional penny-pincher.

The support side or **RELATING** emphasizes, "Who I am relative to how others see me" so it basically believes most everything that everyone (based upon their importance to you) says about me. It builds the self-concept by relating to others and those relationships start to define who one is. One friend says I am warm and caring, another says I am intelligent and thoughtful and a third says I am sensitive. Two people have overlapping views, so those parts must be more accurate. Since this is the source of my self-concept and I want it to be "good" in the sense that I seek certain traits (content is not important) I am willing to "work the audience". That is, I may become "what others want to see" so the reflection is what I want to hear. It is a "self-referential system," since it folds back on itself and the person is never sure who they "really are" but most other people seem to think they know who the person "really is." Taken to extremes the problems are clear since ones' self-concept is the total of what others believe to be true about you. If you are less driven by the relating dynamic, what others say about you may be important but it does not create your total self-concept. Most traits (e.g., warmth, assertion) exist only in a social setting, so external validation makes sense. However, over-emphasis on the opinions of others results in one becoming manipulative in "getting others to like you" (a calculated giving of what others want to see in hopes of a return) since the collective external assessments of others is critical to a sense of wellbeing.

The defense is **Suffocating**, which is an attempt when one is needy to seek out others and make sure that they like/love/respect you or whatever is important to you at that time. When you are up and feeling good, what others have to say about you is less critical. When you are down or feeling dejected

what others have to say is very critical. When you are down, you are less self-assured so you really need to hear good news from others! This takes the form of, "Tell me you love me" or "Aren't I the "greatest whatever person" that you know?" The need can be so great that the person literally suffocates you until they get the answer they want. If it is not forthcoming, they become an incredible sycophant or "brown-noser" to hear those magic words. If this doesn't work, they may slip into **Denial** that you are important to them (who cares what you think) or even that you said what you said (you really didn't mean that).

Normal development probably relies on a balance where you have a somewhat stable image (egoist) but what others think is also considered (relating). Balance is necessary for mature reciprocal relationships where you have a stable self-concept and expect that others will like you (for who you are not what they want) but you also enjoy pleasing others and hearing positive feedback. Not because you need confirmation of your self-concept but because you give without being worried about what you get back. Hence, **Power (Egoist) = Image (Self-love). Support (Relating) = Giving to others (Other love).**

STAGE III: SOCIAL

The focus of the third stage is the development of social confidence and trust. Being able to work and function in the social milieu can add to one's self-concept since the goal of being in the social arena is to meet specific social needs. The power side or **LEADER** is having the social confidence to influence others and convince them to meet your needs. This is a take-charge attitude where there is a confidence in your ability to interpret social situations and influence or lead others. This is not directly building your self-concept but is finding a need in the social milieu (e.g., to influence a person to get you a job) and then influencing a person to meet your needs. Being manipulative, charismatic, clever, forceful, self-deprecating or seductive are only ways to influence and lead. The key is confidence in yourself and that others trust your judgment (you can't influence or lead if no one trusts or believes in you).

The defense is **Anger**, which is the best mechanism for social control (Violence is physically acted out anger). If I want something and I can't convince the other person to give it to me, I can become angry, intimidate them and get them to give me what I want out of fear. Once I am successful it confirms my belief that I can exercise social influence. This is a common social maneuver and it is seen in everything from demanding physical compliance to requiring that others accept your views. The display of anger doesn't have to be overt (e.g., screaming or hitting) but can be covert and threatening (e.g., if you don't do... I'll have to... so it's up to you - As if that is a real choice)

The support side or the **LOYALIST** emphasizes "I will follow, be loyal and become part of a group or social entity." I give up some of my autonomy and freedom and in return I feel security and a sense of belongingness. The leader derives satisfaction by having a following but he/she assumes responsibility for protecting/taking care of those who follow. The followers derive personal security and fraternity and become loyal to the leader or group. One naturally begets the other and it is the essence of the basic social contract. This says nothing about balance of leading/following, control or any forms of pathology (e.g., sado-masochistic relations) but defines the two poles and delineates the dynamics.

The defense is **Anxiety**, in the sense of a threatening fear or a feeling that one is not secure. This is a signal emotion that something could happen to you so you had better do something about it. Finding a more powerful person or a group and becoming part of it can lower one's anxiety. Having a spouse (he will help me), being in a company (I am a good employee so they will take care of me), having a group of friends (I can always count on...) are all examples of loyal relations that bind anxiety. This is also in part, why when you are anxious you go to some professional (e.g., doctor or lawyer). You defer to their expertise (i.e., she leads you and tells you what to do), you loyally pay her fee and your anxiety is reduced. You followed their advice (they influenced you) and you get better (less anxious).

Normal development suggests a balance where you lead in some situations (i.e., you have the knowledge or power) and follow in others. Many team situations allow members to switch between leading and following so you participate based upon your knowledge and responsibility. Some firms

define power based on position or status, so power is external to the person even if he/she has no skills/desire to lead others. These "social and relating dynamics" can become very confused in structured settings. That is because you have the natural psychology of your self-esteem and your social inclination which defines "who you are" but then your role tells you how to act. For example, a person who feels inadequate, derives much of his esteem from what others think and has strong loyal tendencies is then put in a major leadership role! There will be a clear conflict between who he is and what he must do.

Additionally, everyone must exist in a social arena to some degree and the major measure of how much time you spend in social situations or seek them is your Extraversion trait score. The Leader and Loyalist are the active components of your personality when you are in structured social settings. The more these dynamics are part of your personality (regardless of your extraversion score) the more you are driven by the social dynamics and defenses when you are in any new social setting. The lower the social dynamics, the more you are situationally driven so your social style is more influenced by your social traits and/or your reading of the situation.

Moreover, all social settings are a combination of the social stage as well as the previous and next stage. For example, if a social setting has a greater sense of personal and emotional relationships (e.g., family), it is strongly influenced by the Psychological stage. If it is an "ongoing structured situation" such as a company or school setting, it is strongly influenced by the Social dynamics and defenses (current stage). If it is a more formal and rule bound setting (e.g., an initial professional contact), it is influenced by the next stage, which is related to social protocol and societal rules. While it is impossible to determine the "actual social mix" (personal feelings, social issues, societal rules/demands) of any setting at any point in time, it is important to consider the influence of all the relevant dynamics and traits.

Again, normal development relies on a balance where you have the confidence to take charge (lead) in some social settings but can follow others (loyal) when you do not have the requisite skills/knowledge. Balance is usually necessary for mature reciprocal relationships where you can lead and expect others to follow and where you can follow the lead of others. This mutually reciprocal relationship is the basis of the social contract. Hence, **Power (Leader) = Taking control (Self-trust). Support (Loyalist) = Relinquishing control (Other-trust).**

STAGE IV: CULTURAL-Extraverted

The fourth stage focuses on how the individual responds to and is shaped by his immediate culture. Any culture has two basic parts: (1) the EXTERNAL social structure and order and (2) the INTERNAL intellectual and artistic heritage. The external structure defines proper social protocol (rules and mores) as well as the social values/ethics that create social expectations and govern behavior. The external dynamics acculturate one to his society and are extraverted or outward looking. The internal dynamics are the intellectual (i.e., the knowledge base of one's culture) and artistic heritage (i.e., method of expressing transcendent emotions that define the "cultural soul and zeitgeist"). The intellectual seeks knowledge for control and the artistic seeks to "relate to or feel" the world of that given culture. The four dynamics of the cultural stage exhaust the basic content of any culture.

The external cultural power dynamic or **MANAGER** focuses on societal norms, expectations and self-control that lead to appropriate behavior within a given culture. The goal is to inculcate societal norms so you can learn how to control your behavior and become a productive member of society. This is determined by fitting in and feeling a sense of belongingness by adjusting to a set of social expectations. In essence, you learn how to manage your behavior, which also becomes the prototype for managing others (e.g., parent or manager). Just as the content of ones' self concept is not specified in stage 2, the societal content of this stage is not specified. That is, it may be a "middle class American husband", or it may be a foreign culture (e.g., European), a subculture of a recognized culture (e.g., southern gentleman), an aberrant culture (e.g., hippie), a transition culture (e.g., adolescent peer group) or even an anti-culture (e.g., criminal). The key is that any culture is a set of "rules" where initiates are mentored by more experienced members of the culture who sanction or censure behavior and this becomes the "internal guide" and standard by which to judge their behavior. Furthermore, this dynamic is the source of guilt (a

sense that one has transgressed norms) and shame (those in authority recognize that the transgression occurred) that is used to guide, direct and modify all social behaviors. Again, it is unrelated to content since a middle class person may experience shame at breaking the law, a criminal may experience the same degree of shame at not carrying out the "appropriate criminal act."

The defense is **Compulsive**, which is the need to rigidly stick to rules/expectations imparted by some cultural norm set. If you conform to those rules, then you are doing "what is right", you will be respected/loved for your behavior (which creates positive feelings) and you will avoid the painful feelings of guilt and shame. Compulsivity always has external manifestations whereas **Obsessiveness** is always "in your head". The typical observation that someone is compulsive about their (room, tools, desk, car or house) stems from their need to be orderly, in control and on top of things that are important to them because that is what you should/must do when you "value" that area of personal importance. Some behaviors that look compulsive (e.g., knowing where your books are) are more rational than defensive. To be defensive a behavior must be related to a cultural norm set (e.g., always shave when you go out) and you must have feelings about violating the norm (e.g., I would be so embarrassed if I did that). All cultural norm groups require that a person control their own behavior to be a "member in good standing."

The external cultural support dynamic or **MEDIATOR** also "looks to an outside cultural norm set" but simultaneously focuses on the feelings that one has (and by an empathic connection the feelings of others) in adjusting to those societal norms. The key for both external dynamics is the content of the selected culture drives the behavior. The Manager tells you those are the rules, controls your behavior and suggests you "suck it up" and do what you are suppose to do and quit being a wimp. The Mediator acknowledges the rules but looks at what it does to a person or relationship, focuses on the feelings and tries to compromise the rules with the aroused emotion. The manager sees no conflict, only a lack of self-control, which is a weakness. The mediator is aware of the inherent conflict between any individual's desires/needs (e.g., so what, she is 15 minutes late, she has been working a lot of overtime) and those of collective society in controlling each person's behavior. Rather than demanding strict self-compliance (Manager), there is an overt appreciation of the conflict and a desire to seek a compromise between the individual's needs and the cultural rules or society's demands. The intellectual understanding of what is "right" comes from the power dynamic and the emotional empathy toward others (and oneself) trying to exist in society comes from the support dynamic. This dichotomy of the dual demands in the support dynamic is manifest in natural law (not statutes they are "manager or power" issues) and justice.

The defense is **Passive-Aggressive**, which is a natural dichotomy. The culture aggressively demands you to rigidly stick to rules and is not interested in exceptions - it is the rule of law or the letter of the law. A more passive approach would be to "let oneself (or others) get by" because I usually do what is right or my intentions were noble. It is not the rule of law but the spirit of the law, which is an "emotional interpretation", based upon the situation. Compulsive is strict control of your behavior with no exceptions and by extrapolation strict and rigid control of the behavior of others (i.e., just ask any teenager about his parent's rules and enforcement). This can create a dictatorial feeling because it is non-negotiable. That is, there can be conflict between what a "manager" wants to do and what a "mediator" feels is okay (they interpret a situation, value compromise) but the power driven manager seldom sees any conflict.

Passive-aggressive takes the very same conflict but looks at the emotional impact and makes a compromise decision to reduce the conflict rather than concentrate on what causes the conflict. For example, my boss wants me to stay until 5:00 and I want to go to my kid's ballgame at 4:30. He says it's my job and I cannot leave early (rules or cultural norms). I have two conflicting rule sets of my obligation to my kid and my job and he is unwilling to recognize the conflict (i.e., doesn't care about my feelings). He has a flight at 3:00 so I decide to leave anyway, I don't tell him (passive) and tell myself it is the best way to resolve the conflict (I didn't resolve anything but emotionally removed the conflict). No problem if I don't get caught because I justified the behavior to myself and emotionally there is no conflict. If I get caught, I come up with all kinds of excuses (e.g., I came in a half-hour earlier this morning) to justify the behavior. A closely allied defense is **Somatic** problems which is even more complicated. I can take a conflict like the one above, it stresses me because I feel caught and silently angry about what to do and I start to get

physical symptoms (e.g., headache). I then go home early and my headache may clear early enough to go to my kid's game. If I get caught I really did have a headache and that is why I left.

STAGE IV: CULTURAL-Introverted

The internal cultural dynamics focus on the intellectual and artistic heritage that is of interest in one's culture. The external dynamics focus on the external/social connection so they look at society as a source of order/rules where one fits in and finds a sense of personal structure, a direction and a meaning to one's life. The internal dynamics are individualistic so they are "anti-fitting in" and feel that each person (really means "I am ...") is the source of his own meaning and fitting in is something that you do to "make money, have shelter, avoid being arrested or whatever." For example, suppose engineer A gets involved in a professional society, likes his job and peers at CyberTech and strives to fit in and be respected by following professional expectations (Culture-extraverted - Manager). Engineer B graduates, works on his own to develop a cyber switch, never joins anything and only works at CyberTech because they have the equipment that he needs (Culture-introverted - Theoretician). The first is externally driven (norms of being a good engineer) and the second internally driven. The key is the dynamic doing the driving

The goal of the internal cultural power dynamic or **THEORETICIAN** is to understand some aspect of one's intellectual heritage (that you personally value) with an emphasis on control. By delving into a knowledge area and developing an expertise, you can use this knowledge to control some aspect of the world that is important to you. The key point is deriving intrinsic satisfaction from the activity alone and not looking externally what it means (e.g., others will see me as a great scholar; I will make a lot of money - Egoist). This dynamic can be the basis of intellectual professional pursuits (i.e., medicine, engineering) but you must be driven by the material or process of learning (the goal is mastery and control) and not what it will get you in the social world (e.g., money, prestige). This dynamic can be thought of as being like the "scientific model" where Science seeks to understand and then produces technology which is applied science used to control. The scientist loves the fact that he can control something but the manager (if his norm is engineering) sees it as a necessary aspect of "good engineering practices" (an ideal to aspire to) and the egoist sees it as a source of power and esteem (they worship my expertise).

The defense is **Obsessive**, which is the process of being worried/anxious about something so you work it over and over in your mind until you have a solution that solves the problem and eliminates the stress. All decisions must be a set of options (2 or more) where there is no clear choice and only advantages and disadvantages. The problem with any decision is the subjectivity and objectivity of both the outcome criteria (a "good or better" decision) and the input criteria (what is relevant and how should I measure it). All decisions must cause some degree of anxiety based upon your subjective assessment of the input and consequences. Obsessive behavior is the "working and reworking of options" in an effort to find the best solution. The advantage is a "better decision" but the disadvantage is no decision at all (you wait so long the environment decides). It is most visible in "paralysis by analysis."

The internal cultural support dynamic or **AESTHETE** has no interest in control but is driven by emotion rather than intellect. It does not want to control anything but wants to experience, relate to and develop a feeling that one is part of something larger (not a social entity - Stage 3) or part of the world. This is the source of spiritual feelings where one transcends the common and ordinary bounds and feels "at one with the Godhead." One does not have to be religious in the "anthropomorphic God sense" but this is the feeling of awe when looking at a sunset. It may take the desire to express oneself through an artistic medium that captures emotions and generates a feeling that one is "relating to and connecting to the world" through some medium (i.e., art, dance, writing) and expressing some aspect of that culture. Those who use this dynamic immediately understand the words above. Those who don't have little idea what the words mean. Hence, the support dynamic is an emotional sense of connecting with the world and feeling part of it, rather than controlling some aspect of the world. The introverted dynamics are creative expressions of one's connection to some aspect of their culture or the world. One is through control and intellect, the other is through "resonating with", connecting to and feeling.

The defense is **Withdrawal**, which is a lack of connection where there is no meaning in ones' life and one feels loss and despair. The more normal aspect of withdrawal is a "blow to one's self esteem", a

failure or a concrete loss (e.g., job, girlfriend) which results in withdrawing from the environment (in order to protect one's feelings) a "being down" and feeling sadness or ennui. More severe withdrawal is a loss of connection (the introverted person does not derive their primary satisfaction from social connections anyway) to the world or what is important. You withdraw and try to pull it together by finding meaning or reconnecting to what is personally important. This emotion is to be distinguished from grief, which is a loss of some loved object (e.g., parent) or hostility which is anger that cannot be acted upon but can lead to withdrawal or depression (e.g., angry at your boss, feel unable to do anything about it, come to hate your job, withdraw and feel depressed). Depressive feelings allow one to withdraw or "leave the draining situation", perhaps renew to renew one's spirits (or worse case, spiral down) and then have the emotional energy to reconnect and to find meaning, enjoyment and start living again.

Major Issues related to Dynamics

I. Personality Structure: People with reasonable insight can identify with all of the dynamics even though any person will preferentially use some over others. Overall you may emphasize the power over the support dynamics or vice versa. Within any stage you may be more power driven or support driven or even balanced. You may reinterpret any issue relative to your own dynamic usage. One person may see a relationship as being an important basis for their self-concept (Stage 2 - If she likes me, others will think I am a stud), another sees it as strictly social (Stage 3 - We get along so well, we just enjoy each other) and a third person sees it as a combination of both stages. The important point is that just because you interpret an event as being driven by a particular dynamic, you cannot expect others to see it that way (This is often a source of interpersonal conflict).

Traits, which are included in the **Digital Couch**, are behavioral measures relative to a norm set. For instance, a person may have a dominance score of 87%, which makes them aggressive relative to most people. There is a good chance he uses the power dynamics of the social stage but this does not have to be the case. He may be introverted and is only aggressive in social situations where he has an interest (e.g., an engineer asking for additional funding). He may feel that as a male he should be aggressive in a social setting when women are present (e.g., cultural norm). With the **Traits and Dynamics** you have a better understanding of any behavior. You not only know what the behavior is (aggressive) but you understand why (dynamics) a person is that way.

II. Forms of Conflict: Getting along and working with others, developing positive relationships and leading and managing others are all improved if you understand what people usually do (their traits) and why they do what they do (their dynamics). The opposite of teamwork (e.g., collaboration) is the creation of conflict, which comes from three major sources:

1. **Intrapsychic Conflict:** It is not hard to imagine that the content of any person's dynamics is seldom free from conflict. This type of conflict is within each person and it is when the dynamics find themselves in a position of wanting to do something different. For example you may want to tell your superior what you really think of him (Stage 2 - your Egoist states that you will stand up for your opinions and you are not afraid) but you don't. Your need for security (Stage 3 - Loyalist states that you gave up freedom for security) makes you very anxious when you consider this option. Your Manager (Stage 4 - lets you know you should respect authority figures) suggests that if you say nasty things you will feel guilty. There is no way to please all your dynamics because of this conflict in your head.
2. **Interpersonal Content Conflict:** We are both Egoists and your self-concept is based on helping others be successful because you feel this makes you a better person. My self-concept is based on winning and being victorious so why would I help another person who is my competitor? We are both managers at a company and your value system is to help others and then meet your needs or you feel ashamed for being selfish. My value system is to get ahead and provide the most for my family or I am ashamed that I let them down. This is probably the easiest conflict to resolve (if people are truthful about the content)

- because it can be discussed. That is, people can admit that they have different needs, values or aspirations; so what is important or takes priority for one doesn't for all people.
3. **Interpersonal Dynamic Conflict:** For me, I want to get ahead by being the best design engineer which is part of my self-esteem (Egoist). For you working with other engineers is consistent with the norms you live by (Manager). Our superior tells us that it is critical for us to work together with two other engineers on this project (we both believe we should respect and be loyal to our superior). You have no problem adjusting because there is no conflict since this is consistent with your norm set (e.g., working with other professionals) and is what you should do to be a good engineer. However, since it is an "ego thing" I see it as critical for my esteem not to lose my contribution to a group process since I am the best designer. We are friends so we debate the point. You state that the problem is our boss wants us to work together so what is the big deal. I say that I know that but I still feel uncomfortable working with those other people. The real problem is that you frame it with the Manager dynamic (just another rule) and I frame it as an Egoist issue.

III. Correspondence versus Congruence: If you believe there is a single content for each of the dynamics, than you believe in the correspondence theory where there is only one reality. That is, there exists clear universal (ideal) content that is key to ones' self-esteem, there are clear middle class rules and there are clear intellectual pursuits and a clear balance. This sounds like it may be ridiculous when it is stated like this but many people use their own dynamic content to judge others (e.g., egocentrism). They feel there is one reality (what is important, emphasis on relations, values, ambitions) and they use this to judge others. The real key is congruence drives people not what you think corresponds to reality.

Congruence is that whatever a content happens to be, it hangs together and makes sense in that each part supports and is consistent with each other part. There is no one real value, goal, self-concept, important social issue or whatever. It flat out depends because there are no absolutes. Perhaps the easiest way to envision this concept is to consider people who have grown up in different cultures or subcultures (e.g., socioeconomic groups, religious groups or ethnic or racial groups). People who have more of these factors in common tend to feel that their cohorts make more sense than others who have less in common. Each group uses their standards to judge all other groups, which is ethnocentrism. You can immediately guess that each person/group feels that their collective standards are the benchmark by which to judge all others.

For example, your dynamic structure is congruent if your self-concept is to help others, your social need is to build mutually loyal relations and your cultural norms are to work cooperatively. It is equally congruent when your self-concept is based on crushing the weak because it makes you strong, your social need is to dominate and terrorize and your norms are to be respected and feared because you are the meanest son-of-a-bitch in the valley. A major error is to look at content and think it comes from the same dynamic as yours. A much bigger error is to assume that if you have a similar dynamic structure as someone else, than you are similar! If you believe either of these mistakes, you are in for a big surprise.

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