

## Using the SDI Interpretive Guide

SDI empowers you with awareness to make better choices—to use your strengths to improve your interactions with others.

You have received this SDI Interpretive Guide because you completed the online version of the Strength Deployment Inventory. You will be provided with your own SDI results.

Your responses to the online SDI produce six numerical totals. These totals are used to generate an arrow that represents your Motivational Value System and your Conflict Sequence.

### **DOT**

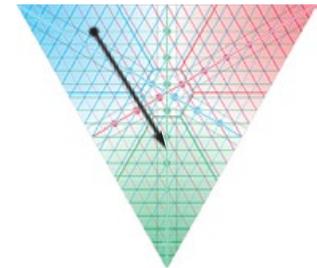
The dot is your Motivational Value System—motives and values that drive your use of strengths when things are going well.

### **ARROWHEAD**

The arrowhead is your Conflict Sequence—changes in motivation during conflict that drive your changes in behavior.

### **ARROW LENGTH**

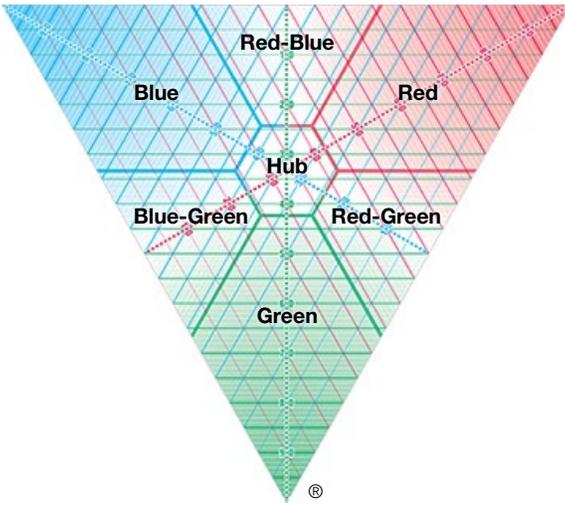
The length of your arrow suggests the degree of change you experience internally when you transition from the “going well” state into conflict. Generally, the longer your line, the greater the degree of motivational change you experience, and the more likely it is that other people will notice your change in behavior.



# strength deployment inventory®

## INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

# Understanding the Motivational Value System



## WHEN THINGS ARE GOING WELL

The Motivational Value System (MVS) is a blend or combination of three primary motives:

- ▼ **BLUE** (nurturing)
- ▼ **RED** (directive)
- ▼ **GREEN** (autonomous).

While all people share a desire to feel good about themselves, different people experience these desires and feelings in different ways. Everyone has some Blue, Red, and Green motives, but these motives are present in different frequencies in different people. The MVS represents peoples' unique blends of these motivations when things are going well.

The location of the dot suggests a person's Motivational Value System (MVS). The triangle is divided into seven distinct regions that characterize seven personality styles. The intent is not to force people to pick only one of seven. For some people the MVS dot is near the border of two or three regions. If the dot is within six points of another region, certain parts of the descriptions from more than one region may describe them.

## MOTIVES, STRENGTHS, AND SKILLS

Behavior is motivated; it has purpose. The MVS describes the motives and purposes that drive behaviors when things are going well. The MVS helps explain the way people perceive things differently. It gives insight into people's values and how they intend to use their strengths productively.

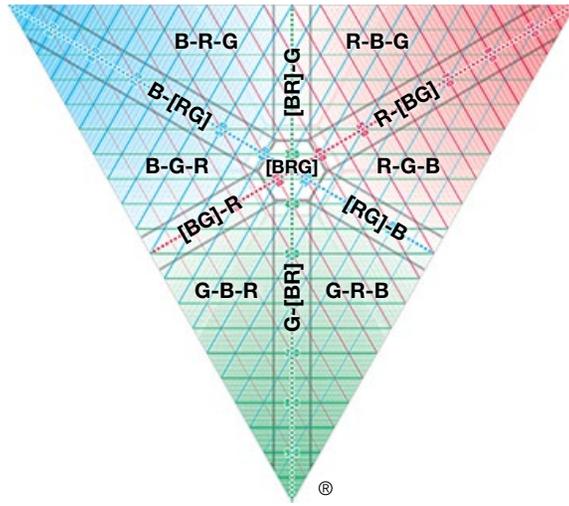
The MVS does not show whether people are effective or not; it does not measure skill. However, people generally want to develop skills in areas that reinforce their personalities. The *Valued Relating Style* represents the strengths commonly associated with an MVS.

The MVS suggests ways that different people may experience conflict triggers. People experience conflict about things that are important to them. When a motive is threatened or disregarded it can cause conflict.

MOTIVATIONAL VALUE SYSTEM	STRENGTHS / VALUED RELATING STYLE	ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT
<p><b>Blue:</b> Altruistic-Nurturing</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern for the protection, growth, and welfare of others</li> </ul>	<p>Being open and responsive to the needs of others... Seeking ways to bring help to others... Trying to make life easier for others... Trying to avoid being a burden to others... Ensuring others reach their potential... Ensuring others are valued... Defending the rights of others</p>	<p>Open, friendly, helpful, considerate, supportive, enhancing, trusting, socially sensitive, sincere, loyal, compassionate, respectful, humanitarian... Being needed... Being appreciated</p>
<p><b>Red:</b> Assertive-Directing</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern for task accomplishment</li> <li>• Concern for organization of people, time, money, and any other resources to achieve desired results</li> </ul>	<p>Competing for authority, responsibility, and positions of leadership... Exercising persuasion... Being alert to opportunity... Claiming the right to earned rewards... Striving for immediate action... Accepting challenges... Accepting risk-taking as necessary and desirable... Demonstrating competitiveness</p>	<p>Progressive, innovative, evocative, challenging, fast-moving, stimulating, competitive, creative... New levels of opportunity... Potential for personal advancement and development... Personal material rewards available... Potential for winning... Verbally stimulating... Self-projection</p>
<p><b>Green:</b> Analytic-Autonomizing</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern for assurance that things have been properly thought out</li> <li>• Concern for meaningful order being established and maintained</li> </ul>	<p>Being objective... Being correct... Being principled... Being in control of one's emotions... Being practical... Being cautious and thorough... Being fair... Being resolute... Being serious... Being their own "judge and jury"... Being their "own person"... Thinking things through before acting</p>	<p>Clarity, logic, precision, utility, durability, efficiency, reliability, organized... Self-reliance, individualism, self-dependence... Effective use of resources... Individual decision making... Clear, supportable, authentic criteria for decision making... Time to explore options... Opportunity for economy... Researched recommendations</p>
<p><b>Red-Blue:</b> Assertive-Nurturing</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern for the protection, growth, and welfare of others through task accomplishment and leadership</li> </ul>	<p>Actively seeking opportunities to help others... Persuading others to ensure maximum growth and development of others... Being open to proposals for creating welfare and security for others... Creating enthusiasm and support in tackling obstacles to success</p>	<p>Openness, mentoring, enthusiastic, friendliness, sincerity, trust, compassion... Respect for others... Supporting the underdog... Positive, progressive initiatives for the growth and development of others</p>
<p><b>Red-Green:</b> Judicious-Competing</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern for intelligent assertiveness, justice, leadership, order, and fairness in competition</li> </ul>	<p>Providing rational leadership that can assess risks and opportunities... Being decisive and proactive when all the facts are in... Challenging opposition through thoughtful process and strategy</p>	<p>Strategic, determined, planning... Complex, challenging tasks requiring expertise... Environment that offers recognition for achievement... Availability of technical resources... Opportunities to lead and to develop winning strategies</p>
<p><b>Blue-Green:</b> Cautious-Supporting</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern for affirming and developing self-sufficiency in self and others</li> <li>• Concern for thoughtful helpfulness with regard for justice</li> </ul>	<p>Building effective processes and resources to protect or enhance welfare of others... Offering assistance for greater self-sufficiency and independence... Supporting activities that lead to growth... Fighting for principles that are fair</p>	<p>Conscientious, patient, congenial... Environment that respects individuals, fairness, and resources... Opportunities to encourage growth, independence, and bring forth the best in others... Tasks that require thoughtful analysis to aid those in need</p>
<p><b>Hub:</b> Flexible-Cohering</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern for flexibility and adaptability</li> <li>• Concern for the inclusion of people and perspectives in group processes</li> </ul>	<p>Being curious about what others think and feel... Being open minded and willing to adapt... Experiments with different ways of acting... Considers multiple perspectives and options... Likes to know a lot of people... Likes to be known by a lot of people... Likes to be known as flexible</p>	<p>Friendly, involving, sociable, democratic, playful, changing, flexible... Encouraging interaction... Being heard and listening... Sensitivity to feelings... Consensus-building</p>

THE MVS IN ACTION	 <b>Blue:</b> Altruistic-Nurturing	 <b>Red:</b> Assertive-Directing	 <b>Green:</b> Analytic-Autonomizing
<b>You feel best about what you are doing when you are . . .</b>	being helpful in some way to others who can genuinely benefit from your help.	in the position of providing leadership and are able to set the goals for and direct the actions of others.	able to pursue your own interests in a self-reliant way without having to take direction or help from those around you.
<b>You feel most rewarded by others when they treat you as a . . .</b>	warm and friendly person who wants to be of help and who is deserving of thanks and appreciation for giving help.	strong and ambitious person, a winner, and one who is deserving of the opportunity to provide leadership and direction.	clear, logical, and analytic person who is deserving of respect for dealing with others fairly and for being a person of principle.
<b>You identify with and feel most at ease with people who . . .</b>	clearly care for the feelings, the needs, and the welfare of others.	clearly understand the productivity behind the exercise of power, control, and competition.	clearly respect the integrity of others and the rights of others to determine their own courses of action.
<b>You are attracted to and intrigued by others who are . . .</b>	strong and know exactly what they want to do and want you to be included in their activities and successes.	generous and responsive to you and who want to help you achieve your ambitions and your successes.	open and explicit about what they want and how they feel, without imposing their wants or feelings on you.
<b>Ideally, you would like to be . . .</b>	more assertive and less fearful of pushing for your own rights and wants; more capable of saying “No” to people who impose on you.	more considerate of other people’s feelings and rights; more given to thinking things through before committing yourself to a course of action.	more trusting of others and more open to them; less reserved about asserting your rights and wishes.
<b>Ideally, you would like to avoid ever being . . .</b>	a selfish person or one who is cold and unfeeling about others.	a gullible person or a person who is indecisive and unable to act.	an overly emotional person or one who is exploitative of others.
<b>You experience a conflict trigger when you perceive that other people . . .</b>	constantly compete with and try to take advantage of others; are cold and unresponsive to gestures of friendliness.	constantly lose out and don’t stand up for themselves; have a shell of reserve around them that you just can’t penetrate.	never seem to take anything seriously; try to push their help on you or try to push you to do things their way.
<b>You experience a conflict trigger when other people . . .</b>	treat you with anger and hostility, tell you to “go mind your own business,” or are slow to recognize your efforts to promote their welfare.	are all-forgiving and never fight back; don’t let you know what they expect as rewards from you and then withdraw their loyalty or betray you.	accuse you of being opportunistic and unprincipled; push their help on you when you don’t want it.

THE MVS IN ACTION	 <b>Red-Blue:</b> Assertive-Nurturing	 <b>Red-Green:</b> Judicious-Competing	 <b>Blue-Green:</b> Cautious-Supporting	 <b>Hub:</b> Flexible-Cohering
<b>You feel best about what you are doing when you are . . .</b>	in a position to be genuinely helpful through your leadership and are able to direct others for their own benefit.	in a position to compete using your own judgment and to direct others in an impartial and efficient manner.	able to nurture the growth of another person's self-reliance through your analysis of their needs.	able to coordinate your efforts with others in some common undertaking that involves closeness, clear lines of authority, and opportunity for self-reliance.
<b>You feel most rewarded by others when they treat you as a . . .</b>	strong and friendly person deserving of recognition, appreciation, and the opportunity to lead others for their betterment.	strong and principled person deserving of recognition, respect, and the opportunity to provide competitive and rational leadership.	warm and principled person who combines compassion and intellect into enlightened guidance for others.	good team member who knows how to be a loyal follower, knows how to exercise authority, and knows when to follow the rules and when to use judgment.
<b>You identify with and feel most at ease with people who . . .</b>	clearly understand the compassionate use of power and the need to act promptly in matters affecting other people's welfare.	clearly understand the rational use of power, and the need to act promptly and judiciously in matters affecting your competitive edge.	clearly understand the employment of both feelings and reason to better the welfare and independence of others.	clearly are flexible in their behavior and readily able to adapt to whatever the situation calls for.
<b>You are attracted to and intrigued by others who are . . .</b>	strong and decisive and know exactly what they want to do, and who ask for your support without imposing on you.	supportive and loyal to you and who will help you, without hesitation or qualification, to attain success.	thoughtful and respectful of you and your goals and who are cautious and thorough in whatever they undertake on your behalf.	generous in their help; who are strong and want you on their team; who are patient and thorough.
<b>Ideally, you would like to be . . .</b>	more contemplative and analytical in your decisions, and more tenacious and prudent in pursuing your goals.	more trusting and helpful with others and more open about your goals.	more assertive about your wants and more decisive about your actions.	more sensitive, more decisive, or more methodical depending on the situation.
<b>Ideally, you would like to avoid ever being . . .</b>	exploitative, inconsiderate of others, or brazen and superficial in your relationships.	an impulsive or emotional person, or one without order and purpose in your life.	isolated from others, or indecisive in matters affecting their welfare.	subservient to others, domineering over others, or isolated from others.
<b>You experience a conflict trigger when you perceive that other people . . .</b>	refuse to get involved; fear making a decision; are concerned with their needs to the exclusion of the needs of others.	constantly lose out; lack self-reliance; are impetuous; are gullible and emotional.	are boastful, intrusive, and who presume upon and compete with others.	are closed-minded and not willing to consider alternatives.
<b>You experience a conflict trigger when other people . . .</b>	treat you with indifference; ignore you; accuse you of exploiting people.	treat you with passivity or with ignorance, or accuse you of mindless aggression.	treat you with anger or disdain, or accuse you of fostering childlike dependence.	insist on only one way of doing things and restrict your ability to change or explore options.



# Understanding the Conflict Sequence

## WHEN THERE IS CONFLICT

The Conflict Sequence (CS) is a pattern of changes in three motives:

- ▼ **BLUE** (accommodate)
- ▼ **RED** (assert)
- ▼ **GREEN** (analyze)

While all people share a desire to feel good about themselves and to use their strengths productively, all people also experience conflict when their self-worth is threatened. These threats can be real or perceived. Different people experience these threats in different ways.

The location of the arrowhead suggests a person's Conflict Sequence (CS). The SDI triangle is divided into 13 distinct Conflict Sequences. The intent is not to force people to pick only one of the Conflict Sequences. Rather, people may find that their CS arrowhead is near the border of two or three regions. If the arrowhead is within six points of another region, certain parts of the descriptions from more than one region may describe them.

## MOTIVES, STRENGTHS, AND SKILLS

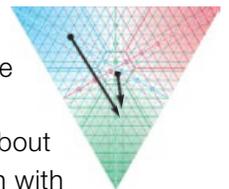
The Conflict Sequence describes the changes in motivation that people experience as they protect or defend their self-worth, and as they attempt to use their strengths more productively. The Conflict Sequence helps to explain changes in behavior when conflict begins and while it progresses. Behaviors that resolve conflict are strengths.

The Conflict Sequence does not show whether people are effective or not; it does not measure skill. However, people generally want to develop skills in their 1st Stage of conflict so they can resolve conflict before it progresses to the 2nd and 3rd Stages.

## PRODUCTIVE RESULTS OF CONFLICT

When in conflict, people want to return to their MVS and their most productive strengths. Because the Conflict Sequence is connected to the MVS, people's behavior in conflict is best understood when the MVS is considered.

As in the example on the right, two people in Stage 1 Green may both be analyzing the situation, but a person with a Blue MVS might be thinking about how to be supportive, while a person with a Hub MVS might be thinking about how to keep his or her options open.



CONFLICT SEQUENCE	DESCRIPTION	CONFLICT SEQUENCE	DESCRIPTION
 <b>B-R-G</b>	a person who tries to maintain peace and harmony first and foremost. If this does not work, they then stand up for their rights. If this does not end the conflict, they then withdraw as a last resort.	 <b>R-B-G</b>	a person who first meets conflict head-on with strong self-assertion and a challenge to others. If this does not work, they then initiate efforts to restore and maintain harmony. If this does not end the conflict, they then withdraw as a last resort.
 <b>B-[RG]</b>	a person who first pursues peace and harmony, and who continues to accommodate others. If pressed far enough, they fall back on logically based or assertive strategies to preserve their integrity and to prevent complete defeat.	 <b>R-[BG]</b>	a person who is quick to assert their rights and to fight for them, but if pressed far enough, they will either give in for the moment or break off contact, whichever is deemed the more advantageous.
 <b>B-G-R</b>	a person who wants most to keep harmony and good will. If this does not work, they try to disengage and save what can be saved. If this does not work, they then come out fighting, probably in an explosive manner.	 <b>R-G-B</b>	a person who meets conflict by competing to prevail. If competition and challenge don't work, they fall back on analysis, logic, reason, and rules. If this doesn't work, they will finally give in as a last resort.
 <b>G-B-R</b>	a person who first meets conflict with caution, examining the situation carefully and logically, waiting for all the facts to come in before making any commitments. If this does not work and there is no important principle involved, they would defer to the other person in the interest of harmony. If the conflict continues, they would come out fighting, but only as a last resort.	 <b>[BR]-G</b>	a person who will press assertively for the maintenance of harmony and good will. If these efforts fail, they will eventually withdraw from the situation.
 <b>G-[BR]</b>	a person who takes an initial stand in conflict on the basis of logic, order, rules, and principles. If pressed far enough, they will take one or the other of two paths: if it is important, they will take up the fight; if it is unimportant, they will give in.	 <b>[RG]-B</b>	a person who meets conflict, not directly, but with a set of strategies for dealing with the situation. They "use their head to get their way." If pressed far enough, however, they finally give in and surrender.
 <b>G-R-B</b>	a person who first tries the analytic, logical, and reserved response to conflict, followed by an assertive, forceful attack based on logic and strategies. If these approaches do not work, they then give in for the sake of harmony, but only as a last resort.	 <b>[BG]-R</b>	a person who will strive to maintain peace and harmony, yet with a careful eye toward the personal cost of doing so. If these efforts fail, they will finally fight for their rights, but only as a last resort and possibly explosively.
		 <b>[BRG]</b>	a person who meets conflict and opposition flexibly with an approach that differs according to the situation and circumstances, rather than by a fixed sequence. If initial approaches to conflict do not work, they keep trying different approaches until one works or all options are exhausted.

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# Conflict Stages

When people enter conflict, their focus includes *themselves*, the *problem*, and *other people*. As conflict progresses to the second stage, the focus narrows to the self and the problem. In the third stage, the focus is concentrated on self.

Experiences in the early stages of conflict will affect experiences in later stages. Conflicts that are poorly managed in Stage 1 may quickly move into Stage 2 or Stage 3. However, conflicts that are well managed in Stage 1 return people to their MVS and feelings of self-worth. This means that many conflicts never reach Stage 2 or Stage 3.

In each stage of conflict, people share at least one common motivation: to restore feelings of self-worth. Everyone wants to leave their Conflict Sequence and return to their Motivational Value System where they can use their strengths most productively.

CONFLICT EXPERIENCE	Blue: Accommodate	Red: Assert	Green: Analyze
<b>STAGE 1: Responding</b> ( <i>Focus is on Self, Problem, and Other</i> ) Conflict begins with a reaction to something that threatens (or holds the potential to threaten) self-worth. When something important to a person is challenged, disregarded or restricted, they may experience conflict and feel a need to respond.			
<b>Typical Behavior:</b>	Accommodating others and restoring harmony	Asserting oneself and rising to the challenge	Analyzing the situation and being prudently cautious
<b>Typical Experience:</b>	Wanting to accommodate the needs of others	Wanting to rise to the challenge being offered	Wanting to be prudently cautious
<b>STAGE 2: Narrowing</b> ( <i>Focus is on Self and Problem</i> ) If efforts to resolve the conflict fail and the issue is important enough, a person may feel that other people are not cooperating and that their first motive cannot be satisfied. This is followed by a move into their second stage of conflict, which is characterized by a more narrow concern, dropping the other out of focus but carrying the experiences of Stage 1 into a different color in Stage 2.			
<b>Typical Behavior:</b>	Surrendering conditionally	Fighting to win	Pulling back and analyzing
<b>Typical Experience:</b>	Wanting to conditionally give-in or defer to the other person	Wanting to prevail against the issue and/or other person	Wanting to escape from the other person or delay the issue
<b>STAGE 3: Defending</b> ( <i>Focus is on Self</i> ) If efforts to resolve the conflict in the second stage continue to be unsuccessful (or do not, at least, result in a return to Stage 1) and the issue remains important, a person may feel that others are not cooperating and that the problem appears unsolvable, or may feel that their motives cannot be satisfied. This results in a move into the third stage of conflict, which is a last resort and the last remaining color.			
<b>Typical Behavior:</b>	Surrendering completely	Fighting for survival	Withdrawing
<b>Typical Experience:</b>	Driven to give up completely	Driven to fight for one's life	Driven to retreat completely

# Overdone Strengths

*Overdone Strengths* are behaviors intended as strengths that are perceived negatively. Overdone Strengths decrease the probability of productive relationships and can trigger conflicts that might otherwise be preventable.

Strengths tend to become overdone when people believe that the strength should be effective; when they are not effective, they try harder with the same strengths.

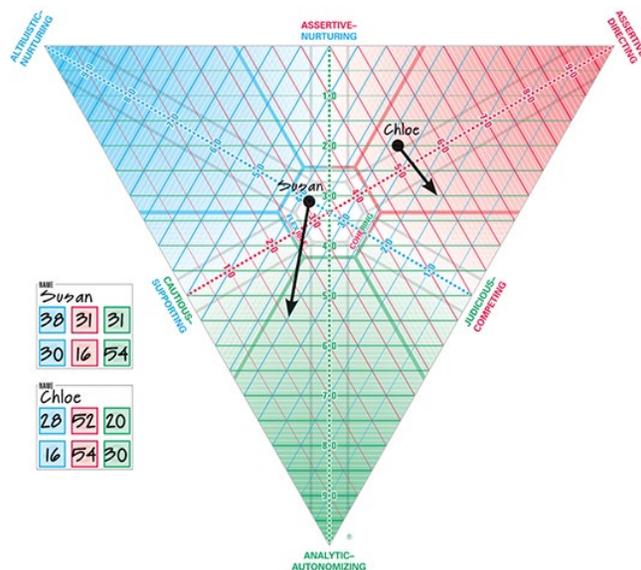
Review the “things to be on guard against” and identify the ones that you believe contribute to turning your strengths into Overdone Strengths. If you can use the strengths effectively or borrow other strengths, you may be able to prevent some conflicts.

OVERDONE STRENGTHS		THINGS TO BE ON GUARD AGAINST
<b>Blue: Altruistic–Nurturing</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wanting so much to maintain harmony that I don't push for what I want</li> <li>2. Being so quick to believe in others that I don't use good judgment</li> <li>3. Being so loyal to others that I let them take advantage of me</li> <li>4. Expecting that everyone will be as concerned about how other people feel as I do</li> <li>5. Wanting to help others so much that I push my help on them and get in their way</li> <li>6. Sharing my thoughts and feelings with people I shouldn't trust with them</li> <li>7. Fearing that if I said what I really feel about others, they would be hurt and not helped</li> <li>8. Struggling to maintain harmony at the expense of facing issues or of facing the facts</li> </ol>
<b>Strength:</b>	<b>If Overdone Can Become...</b>	
Trusting	Gullible	
Loyal	Blind	
Helpful	Smothering	
Modest	Self-effacing	
Devoted	Subservient	
Caring	Submissive	
Supportive	Self-sacrificing	
<b>Red: Assertive–Directing</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wanting so much to win that I step on others to get my own way</li> <li>2. Being in such a hurry to get things done that I disregard how others feel about things</li> <li>3. Being so sure I am right that I don't listen to other people</li> <li>4. Expecting that everyone will enjoy competing with me and pushing for what they want</li> <li>5. Wanting others to do things my way so much I become dictatorial</li> <li>6. Sharing only those thoughts and feelings that help me get my own way</li> <li>7. Fearing that if I said what I really feel, others would know how to take advantage of me</li> <li>8. Struggling to win an issue regardless of what the facts are or what other people might feel</li> </ol>
<b>Strength:</b>	<b>If Overdone Can Become...</b>	
Self-confident	Arrogant	
Ambitious	Ruthless	
Persuasive	Abrasive	
Forceful	Dictatorial	
Quick to act	Rash	
Competitive	Combative	
Risk taker	Gambler	
<b>Green: Analytic–Autonomizing</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wanting so much to be certain that I delay in reaching decisions</li> <li>2. Being so concerned with what is right or wrong that I don't pay attention to people's feelings</li> <li>3. Being so cautious that I find it hard to place trust in others</li> <li>4. Expecting that everyone will be as concerned as I am with details, logic, and matters of principle</li> <li>5. Wanting to be so self-dependent that I cut myself off from people who like me and can be helpful</li> <li>6. Keeping my thoughts and feelings to myself so others don't get to know me</li> <li>7. Fearing that if I said what I really feel, others would see me as illogical and emotional</li> <li>8. Struggling with the facts and issues with such determination that others' feelings are disregarded</li> </ol>
<b>Strength:</b>	<b>If Overdone Can Become...</b>	
Principled	Unbending	
Fair	Unfeeling	
Persevering	Stubborn	
Analytical	Nit picking	
Cautious	Suspicious	
Reserved	Cold	
Methodical	Rigid	
<b>Hub: Flexible–Cohering</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wanting so much to be flexible that I am sometimes inconsistent</li> <li>2. Being so open-minded that I lose sight of what I really think</li> <li>3. Needing to be with others so much that I find it hard to be alone</li> <li>4. Expecting that everyone will be as concerned as I am with being a good team member</li> <li>5. Wanting to “fit in” so much that I impress others as having no real convictions</li> <li>6. Accepting other people's thoughts and feelings in place of my own</li> <li>7. Fearing that if I said what I really feel, others would see me as being rigid</li> <li>8. Struggling so hard to keep my options open that I never take a clear line of action</li> </ol>
<b>Strength:</b>	<b>If Overdone Can Become...</b>	
Flexible	Wishy washy	
Open to change	Inconsistent	
Socializer	Unable to stand alone	
Experimenter	Aimless	
Adaptable	Spineless	
Tolerant	Uncaring	
Looks for options	Without any focus	

# Arrow Dynamics

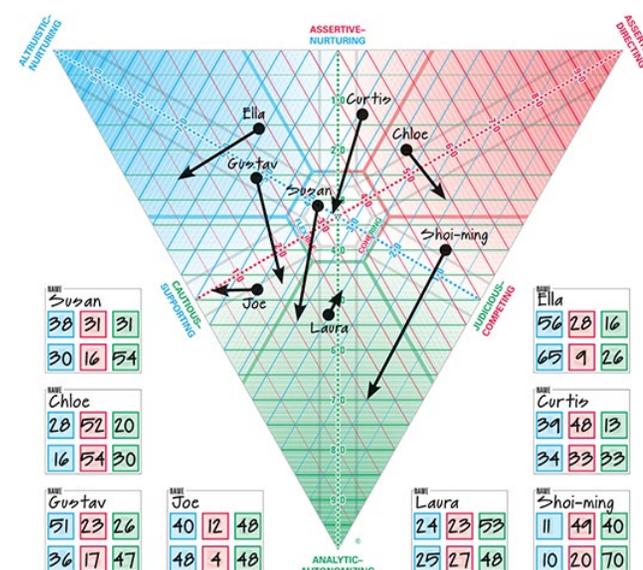
SDI arrows show the Motivational Value Systems and Conflict Sequences of people. A full understanding of the SDI includes the connection between these two points. The seven Motivational Value Systems and thirteen Conflict Sequences produce 91 combinations of MVS and CS. These enable the simple language of the three colors of motives under two conditions to provide descriptions of the true complexity of real relationships.

## TWO-PERSON RELATIONSHIP EXAMPLE



In this example, Susan and Chloe may work well together or they may be in conflict, but more likely, there is some of each condition in their relationship. In good times, Susan may appreciate Chloe's desire to get things done, and Chloe may appreciate Susan's desire to include people and consider multiple perspectives. When things are not going well, Chloe may perceive Susan's option-seeking as a lack of focus or even a lack of loyalty. Similarly, Susan may perceive Chloe's competitiveness as fighting or an unwillingness to consider others' ideas. If these perceptions cause conflict, Susan will likely want to slow things down and analyze the situation, while Chloe will likely want to speed things up and take action quickly. Awareness of each others' motivations when things are going well and during conflict can help Susan and Chloe understand and appreciate each other and become more effective together.

## GROUP RELATIONSHIP EXAMPLE



In this example, there are many relationships including the one between Susan and Chloe described on the left. Just as with individuals, teams may work well together or they may be in conflict, but more likely, there is some of each condition in the group. When things are going well, this group has at least one person in each MVS. This does not necessarily mean the group is well-balanced. Their diversity in motivation may be viewed as a source of productivity, but it may also be the basis for conflict. When there is conflict, four of the members (Chloe, Gustav, Laura, and Shoi-ming) have Stage 1 Green, and there is one member each in Stage 1 Blue, Red, [BG], and [BRG]. Their diverse conflict sequences may contribute to making things worse or the group may discover effective methods of identifying and managing conflict, and restoring the self-worth of all the group members.

## **PERSONAL STRENGTH**

a behavior or trait that affirms the self-worth of people in relationships. A personal strength does not affirm one person's self-worth at the expense of another. That is classified as an overdone strength. Personal strengths are productively motivated and effective.

## **OVERDONE STRENGTH**

a behavior or trait that may be intended as a strength, but is perceived negatively by one or more persons. Strengths may be overdone (or perceived as overdone) in frequency, duration, or intensity. They may also be misapplied or perceived as misapplied, depending on the context.

## **MOTIVATIONAL VALUE SYSTEM**

a fairly constant set of motives and values that serve as a basis for:

- choosing and giving purpose to personal strengths.
- focusing attention on certain things while ignoring others.
- perceiving and judging self and others.

Every MVS is a blend of three primary motives: Blue (nurturing), Red (directive), and Green (autonomous).

## **VALUED RELATING STYLE**

a style of relating in which a person feels free to use strengths that affirm self-worth and the intended results affirm self-worth. A Valued Relating Style is a mix of values and personal strengths that have consistent connections with the Motivational Value System.

## **BORROWED RELATING STYLE**

a style of relating in which a person feels free to choose strengths that do not affirm self-worth, but the intended results do. A Borrowed Relating Style is the result of a choice to temporarily set aside preferred behaviors in exchange for desirable outcomes that are expected to result from the use of non-preferred behaviors. In many cases, borrowed strengths are a different "color" than the preferred strengths.

## **MASK RELATING STYLE**

a style of relating in which a person does not feel free to choose behavior, but feels forced to behave in a certain way. The lack of choice may be experienced because the mask behaviors help to avoid negative outcomes, or the consequences of using preferred behaviors may be unacceptable. In many cases, mask behaviors are a different "color" than the preferred behaviors. Masks may be short-term or long-term; they may be conscious or unconscious.

## **CONFLICT SEQUENCE**

a series of changes in motivation during conflict that typically result in a related series of changes in behavior. There are three stages in a Conflict Sequence. These stages are characterized by a concentration of energy and a diminishing focus as follows:

**Stage 1:** *focus on self, problem, and other*

**Stage 2:** *focus on self and problem*

**Stage 3:** *focus on self*

A conflict can be resolved or left unresolved in any stage.

## **OPPOSITION**

a disagreement, contrast, difference, resistance or dissent. Opposition is not necessarily conflict, but it can grow into conflict when it gets personal. Most conflicts have elements of opposition in them. Opposition can be productively engaged when things are going well.

## **CONFLICT**

the experience or perception of a threat to self-worth. Conflict is generally more personal and emotional than opposition. The word conflict can also be used in everyday language to describe opposition; however, the SDI separates the two ideas and uses the terms as defined here.

## **CONFLICT TRIGGER**

an event, behavior, situation, or perception that threatens or has the potential to threaten a person's self-worth. People only experience conflict about things that are important to them; therefore, conflict triggers include the opportunity to learn about what matters to people. Conflict triggers also present an implied choice:

- to enter conflict based on the perceived triggers, or
- to reframe the situation so that threats are no longer perceived.

In 1971, Elias Porter introduced the SDI and Relationship Awareness Theory to the world. His theory focuses on personal strengths and their underlying motivations as the key to understanding people and improving relationships. The SDI is the practical application of the theory and was the first personality assessment to use colors. The SDI has been used on every continent and is available in over 25 languages.

The theory behind the SDI first began to take shape in the 1950s when Elias Porter was part of the team that introduced client-centered therapy and the human potential movement. Porter worked closely with Carl Rogers at the University of Chicago, where he began working with personality assessments and was a contributor to Rogers' client-centered concepts. Porter's earliest assessments were based on Erich Fromm's descriptions of non-productive personalities, which were an advancement of Sigmund Freud's concepts.

# Learning in Relationships

You may want to apply the things you learned with people who have not yet experienced the SDI. Recognizing the Motivational Value Systems and Conflict Sequences of other people is a skill that you can build through inquiry and observation—asking and listening. This learning can lead to more effective action. Following are some ideas:

## ASK QUESTIONS THAT TARGET MOTIVES

- ▼ Ask what they really want from an interaction or situation.
- ▼ Ask what is important to them about an issue or situation or approach.
- ▼ Ask what triggers conflict for them in a situation or relationship.
- ▼ Ask what they intend to accomplish by using a specific strength.
- ▼ Ask how they go about making an important personal decision.

## LISTEN, OBSERVE, AND IDENTIFY MOTIVES

- ▼ Listen for values, purposes, and reasons; determine what MVS they sound most like.
- ▼ Observe how they approach a new or unexpected situation.
- ▼ Observe what causes them concern or discomfort.
- ▼ Listen for priorities, intended outcomes, and interests.

## ACT

- ▼ State your motivation, purpose, or intent when working with others.
- ▼ Consider borrowing strengths when working with others who have different Motivational Value Systems than you.
- ▼ Adjust the frequency, duration, or intensity of strengths used in different contexts to prevent them from becoming overdone.
- ▼ Focus on outcomes and how everyone involved will value these outcomes differently.

# Strengths in Action

WHEN THINGS ARE GOING WELL	WHEN THERE IS CONFLICT
What I learned about myself:	What I learned about myself:
Things I'd like to start doing:	Things I'd like to start doing:
Things I'd like to stop doing or do less:	Things I'd like to stop doing or do less:
Things I'd like to continue doing or do more:	Things I'd like to continue doing or do more:

