

Got Gut?

By Kim Dannies

It's no secret that opportunity favors the prepared mind, but what if we could go for the gusto faster and with more accuracy? When our action patterns are powered by gut instinct we are doing just that. Last month's BrainStorm discussed relationships and the Myers—Briggs inventory. This month I want to discuss the Kolbe Index. Whereas Myers—Briggs is the software of our personal operating system, Kolbe is the hardware for our motivations. Deeply rooted, basic, and not subject to change, the Kolbe Index reveals, via four modes, how we are hardwired to react in any given situation.

What I love about the 10 point scale Kolbe Index is how simply it explains the different ways that people go about problem solving utilizing the three parts of the human mind:

4 Action Modes:

Fact Finder: Analytical. Uses facts before starting — think questions and research.

Follow Thru: Systematic. Uses systems and plans to take action—think orderly.

Quick Start: Experiential. Jumps in and starts going at it— think trail and error.

Implementor: Tangible. Uses physical objects to conceptualize ideas—think models.

3 Equal Minds:

Cognitive: intelligence, thoughts, skills, and memory.

Affective: emotions, personality, attitudes, and values.

Conative: urges, purposeful action, innate talents, and MO (method of operation).

I could never understand why I dreaded group meetings and committee commitments until I took the Kolbe Index. The result measured my basic “hard wiring” and how I naturally approach and respond to tasks and situations. I found out that the reason I fidget through meetings is I measure very high on the “Quick Start” mode (8). For the “Fact Finder” mode all I want or need is about 50% of the information available to make a decision so I can get started on a solution (5). The results had better happen quickly though, because I won't stick around for any kind of long term “Follow Thru” (3) or bother to indulge the “Implementor” to create tangibles for problem solving (3). What a relief! All this time I thought I had a friendly case of ADHD. Ask any parent or teacher and they'll tell you “the kid came hard wired that way.” What they are confirming is the instinctive patterns that shape human actions are pure power that we don't trust or utilize as much as we should.

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The high numbers on the inventory match you with your MO — your natural inclination for action— the low numbers tell you what to avoid as well. My natural aversion to being trapped in meetings was my gut telling me to work with my strengths. But the corporate system, like the school system, was designed for the Follow Thru mode which I scored a very low preference for (3). Teachers, bosses, and administrators want to see people flow through the system. If you can't sit still, or don't follow directions well, or like to question things in depth, then you are labeled a problem. Your natural strengths are not being utilized for optimal performance. This was a huge "AHA!" moment for me. Now, when I am asked to sit on a Board or a Committee, I don't feel bad about declining an offer that my gut shouts, "Utter hell ahead." Instead, I offer alternative contributions utilizing my skill set like conducting a pro bono business brainstorming session for a non-profit; or, I take on a committee task that nobody relishes and I get it done, usually by myself— quickly! This way I am saying "Yes" and contributing, but in a way that honors my natural default, the Quick Start mode.

If you'd like to know more about your own hardware, go to www.Kolbe.com and take the Index— it might be the best \$50 bucks you ever spend. Talk about a time management tool. They also offer a children's indicator that I wish I knew about a long time ago. You'll instantly get a 13 page custom assessment with audio feedback. In my What's New? quarterly, at www.braintrustconsulting.net I talk more about Kathy Kolbe and her book Powered by Instinct. If you do decide to take the Kolbe, send me your thoughts— and your numbers. Mine are 5383.

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