

# Understanding and Applying My HBDI®

## What Parts Are “Native” and What Are “Acquired”? And What Benefits Come from Growing Lean Quadrants?

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Over the years of interpreting Herrmann Brain Dominance Instruments® (HBDI®) with thousands of Clients, a curious and interesting question began to come up frequently. Very often an engineer would have high A & B quadrant scores and those around this person perceived them as high A/B in characteristics. Yet the person would tell me that they felt much more grounded in C and often D characteristics. As we asked more questions, often we discovered that the person believed in early years that to get ahead and earn a good living, they would have to excel at A/B skills. So they worked persistently to “acquire” these skills and work habits even though this was not their “native” way of working or thinking. Because of our four decades of work on hemisphericity and linking energy



to brain dominance, we began to ask, “Which activities give you positive energy and which seem to drain your energy?” From this subjective research we began to determine that when we exercise our native ways of doing and being (those that come naturally and easy to us), we seem to generate positive energy of joy, satisfaction and well being. However, when we practice skills in our non-dominant quadrant or quadrants, this work seems to be less

energizing and is often described to me as draining.

- As a result, we began to coach Clients to simply notice. And based on whether an activity was experienced as consistently energizing or draining, they might then be able to discern which quadrants were native and which were acquired over time from extensive mental engagement and practice.

Another source we were drawing on is our four decades of research on identifying and expanding personal and team genius. We learned that in areas of native giftedness or genius, the person rarely finds it burdensome to challenge and further their skills

associated with their gift. And because these competencies are native, have always been there for them, or felt energizing or “effortless” to acquire, they both discount it as “no big deal” and typically assume if it is easy for them it is also easy for others. Not so! And this gets us in trouble when we try to mentor or coach. We are likely to be impatient and poor teachers in areas of our gifts precisely because we never had to learn this skill set. Therefore we can exercise the attribute but not have a clue how we did it or how to teach others.

## So Why Does This Matter?

The benefits of determining which of your quadrants are native versus acquired links to servant leadership, mentoring and teaming because each of these roles focus on successfully encouraging positive growth in others. It also links to life/work balance.

*If you are in a role or profession that calls primarily on your acquired skills, it is likely to be significantly more energy draining than if you are calling on native traits all day long*

So you will need different strategies to renew and refresh yourself. Also, when recruiting and selecting work partners, and team mates, this nuance

(native or acquired traits) becomes significant.



As we have coached many leaders, we have found that if they can find appropriate ways to stretch into assignments that exercise and challenge native gifts, they begin to experience far more job satisfaction and even a sense of calling or fulfilling a higher purpose that one is uniquely committed to and prepared for. And when one has identified personal calling and consciously expands that part of life, all of life begins to transform into significantly higher levels of meaning, creativity and mutual purpose. When leaders work consciously from calling, those around them sense a shift and are frequently drawn toward that purpose. And when a whole team or organization aligns with a shared calling, the energy, commitment and joy become palpable.

Southwest Airlines is an example of this. Southwest Spirit is defined as warrior spirit, leading with a servant’s heart and fun-loving attitude. Yet what they are doing is providing the freedom to fly at low cost with great Customer service to all those in their communities. This warms their hearts and galvanizes a clear sense of

purpose which helps them find creative ways to transcend all barriers (think of how they came back from 9-11 without laying off a single Employee and without cancelling any flights). Another unique feature of SWA culture is their encouraging each Employee to “be yourself”. One especially jubilant Employee noted that she was constantly being “shhh-ed” in a former job for the same exuberant qualities that are appreciated and encouraged at SWA.

## Native or Acquired...Benefits from Growing Lean Quadrants



So, are there any benefits from growing lean quadrants and if so what are they? We find that the more we work to exercise and grow skills of our lowest quadrants by purposely acquiring and practicing skills from that quadrant and by recruiting balancing coaches and learning partners, the more we reduce our shadow (or “dark side”) traits and increase the benefits from our native and dominant traits. For example, I (Ann) have a very high D quadrant

and my business Partner, Duane, has a very high B quadrant. Over the years he has taught me ways to use my high visual acuity to color code my calendar, play games with lists that open options, plan ahead to discover more creative opportunities and keep records to maximize accurate data for billing and decision-making. By understanding how my consistent participation helps or cripples our earning power, I was quickly convinced that I needed to strengthen my originally very lean B quadrant. And now by growing consistent work habits based on planning ahead and scheduling in the invisible time for preparation that I used to consistently overlook, we have reduced daily crisis from upwards of 80% to below 10%.

*What used to seem like boring paper work, I now experience as a way I can support the productivity and profitability of our team and company.*

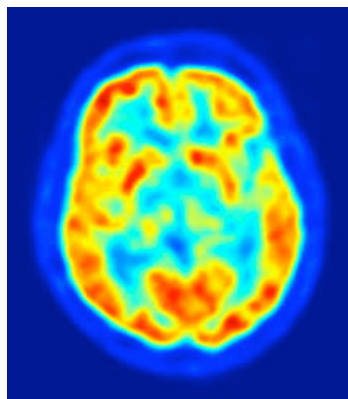
Also what used to be energy draining is now a set of practices I have internalized and do automatically. And by investing in many new B quadrant skills of organization, I have significantly reduced the number of shadow traits from my D quadrant. For example, I'm not starting three new projects when our Clients are expecting closure on three on-going contract deliverables.



*Having the courage to raise self-awareness and taking ownership for growing balancing skills continues to make a significantly positive impact on my life and how I impact others.*

Our Clients and team mates who have worked to expand lean quadrants report the same highly positive results.

There is a synergy from becoming more whole-brained and working from a “both/and” rather than “either/or” mentality. And we are even discovering that we begin to experience positive energy from drawing on non-dominant traits as we



bring them in as balancing partners. The quality of energy we experience seems to be not only linked to

whether the traits are native or acquired, but also with whether the skills are integrated as synergistic with the rest of the work being done or are they separate and unconnected?

There are many nuances to stay curious about. However, appreciating ourselves for who we are, not judging whatever our HBDI® patterning might be, staying curious and open to ways to synergize both externally with others and internally...all these seem to be very beneficial ways to grow and expand the quantity of satisfaction and positive energy in our lives.

We like a quote from a former Client and mentor, Robert J. Gary, (retired EVP, Generation, TXU) who said,

***“It’s what you do now, when you don’t have to do anything, that makes you what you want to be when it’s too late to do anything about it.”***

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