

# Leadership and Management through Self Exploration: An Inner Awakening

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## Abstract

*Learn about yourself and explore your strengths and weaknesses by surveying your VIPS (Values, Interests, Personality, Skills). When you know your VIPS, you make more informed choices about life/careers. Knowing yourself is the key to a higher understanding of yourself, and the universe. It can also lead you on a path to spiritual development; if that is what you are looking for. Many people go through life putting on masks. That phony smile, or having to pretend to like people, or someone in particular, like your boss, or mother-in-law. By repeatedly having to cover up your true feelings (emotions) throughout your lifetime you are shoving down your emotions -hiding them. By so doing you can lose who you really are and might take on other people feelings as your own because you have stripped away parts of your inner self. It's not just with being false about liking people, places, and things to please others, but by just the process of having to conform to a particular religion, or belief in something full heartedly that you question; but aren't allowed to voice your opinion without receiving the black sheep medal! By closing yourself up and putting on a mask all day, everyday causes many problems for people, failing to stand up and be their true self.*

*What kind of problems can arise? A whole host of problems, with health, and judgments that we will make because we failed to be true to yourself. For one thing our solar plexus chakra will be affected, which can lead to health difficulties in that area, in particular that relate to that chakra point for balance of energies, and wellness of body and mind. How well do we really know ourselves? Addressing this question and exploring the self would be the prime objective of this paper. Many of us are not happy with the current state of functioning as an individual, but how many of us have really taken that extra step to improve this situation. In this paper we will discuss the need, content, self exploration processes for problem solving for leaders, listening to one's inner voice, and experimental validation of self exploration. This paper will help readers develop a better understanding of themselves by working on their strength and weaknesses. And by this way only leadership and management practices can be improved.*

## Introduction

Self exploration implies a careful and critical examination, assessment and analysis of one's own unrealized capacities and potentials. This is done to unravel the true nature of inherent

emotional, intellectual, ethical and spiritual dimensions that manifest in one. Self exploration represents the inward journey into yourself, into your own inner space for understanding you fully and completely. This exercise of holistic inquiry and investigation into your inner realms by you pre-supposes that you would be very objective and unbiased in your approach. This will bring to light your own signature strength in terms of establishing your own identity based on your competencies and creative potentials.

### **Values**

What is important to you? When considering careers, think about which aspects of work you value. Samples of values include:

- Flexible work hours
- Being your own boss
- Salary
- Regular work routine
- Sensitive to family issues
- Work as part of a team
- Contribute to society
- Opportunity to move within organization
- Creativity

### **Interests**

What do you like to do? To begin the process of assessing your interests, ask yourself the following questions:

- If you had no obligations or financial restrictions, how would you spend a week?
- What are your hobbies?
- When you daydream, what do you see yourself doing with your life?
- What did you say, as a child and then as a teenager, when asked what you wanted to be when you grew up?
- In order of most to least interesting, how would you rank these words: data, people, things, ideas?

### **Personality**

Ideally, you would like to identify careers that suit your personality characteristics. Think about these questions:

- With what type of person do you prefer to work?
- In what type of environment do you enjoy working?
- How do you complete an assignment?
- How do you make decisions?
- Do you like schedules?
- Do you enjoy knowing the practicalities of things or imagining the possibilities?

### **Skills**

Review this list below. Identify skills you have and those skills you would like to improve upon:

- Abstracting/Conceptualizing
- Analyzing data and ideas
- Physical activities
- Budgeting
- Consulting
- Creating works of art
- Debating
- Editing
- Expressing feelings
- Entertaining
- Facilitating groups or committees
- Handling complaints
- Investigating
- Listening to others
- Marketing

- Organizing events
- Predicting trends or changes
- Problem solving
- Speaking in public
- Working with numbers
- Writing etc.

### **Problem Solving Through Self Exploration Process**

There are six key steps of self exploration process:

1. **Right Mental Attitude:** only with a right mental attitude any objective, assessment, examination or critical enquiry is possible. It is the fundamental and basic step. We have to observe the difference between various thoughts, sensations, emotions and actions. Keeping an open mind is the starting point. we have to be non judgmental in our approach and not suppose to get bogged down by emotions.

2. **Identification and Examining the Problematic Situations:** we have to identify and recognize the existence of problems and issues. We have to have an objective, unbiased appraisal and examination of these. It is important to get a clear understanding of the surrounding situations. Focus should be on the timing of the events, their sequence and patterns of events.

3. **Pursue the Deeper Emotions:** we have to pursue the deeper emotions by delving into them intrinsically and suppose to analyze and get clear insights into the predominant emotions.

4. **Discern the Connectivity with the Emotions:** Examining the emotions, inquiring from within and arriving at the interrelationship and interconnectivity among the emotions is the main part of it. Spotting ideas, images or words which create the emotions we see in it. We should have a clear focus on the thoughts that precede the emotions. We have to identify associated situations from memory which generated the same type of emotions. We have to equip ourselves by constant practice as how to face the worst fear.

5. **Determine the Intrinsic Beliefs and Values:** By careful contemplation and reflection, determine the intrinsic beliefs and values associated with the predominant emotions. We have to make a careful assessment of all underlying assumption including the associated environment.

**6. Draw the Boundaries of Responsibility:** Though normally we may begin with the assumption, it is caused by external problems, many a time, on further exploration, we may find ourselves responsible for the same.

Through the process of Self Exploration, a person can control his emotions and attain inner peace, harmony and happiness.

**7. Natural Acceptance:** It represents listening to one's inner voice or consciousness after an in depth self enquiry, insightful contemplation and reflection. One has to dwell deep into the inner space and find appropriate answers to the followings key questions which engage the attention of people all the time:

Whether I want to be happy all the time?

Whether I want to be loved, trusted and respected by others?

Whether I need physical comfort all the time?

Whether I have mental and emotional need also which have to be fulfilled?

Whether I wish to be cordially related to people or fiercely compete with them?

Whether I need the feeling of prosperity?

Whether I want to be fearless?

Whether I want equality?

Whether I want to make others happy?

Whether I want to know the cosmic and natural order?

Whether I want to compete with nature or be in sync with it?

Whether I want to know more, grow evolve?

Whether I can feel total and fulfilled?

In essence, one has to answer the questions “**who am I?** and what am I upto?”

Based on a careful and considered examination and understanding of the real “me” one has to accept his true self and his strengths and weaknesses. He should work towards strengthening his weaknesses and build a holistic personality.

But the moot point here is that the answer to these key questions is not so simple. This is

because different people have varying perception about the same thing due to their conditioned mind and clouded vision.

Natural acceptance extends beyond the self to the people around you and the environment in which you are operating. People always have one limitation or the other. If we train ourselves to look at the good qualities of the people that you interact with, you can bring the best out of your relationship. If on the other hand, you always criticize people, you may lose out on relationship sooner or later. By appreciating the goodness in other you motivate them to do still better. This is known as '**Natural Acceptance**' of people around you.

Irrespective of the pressure that may be imposed by the people around you, if you are true to yourself, you can scale greater heights and traverse in the pursuit of excellence.

In addition, you need to take cognizance of the limitations and constraints of the environments in which you are placed. These could be in relation to the resources available to you or the operational circumstances at a given point of time.

Natural Acceptance implies unconditional and total acceptance of the self, people and environment. It also refers to absence of any expectation from others. This concept of natural acceptance is termed as "SAHAJ SVIKRITI". Once you fully and truly commit yourself on the basis of natural acceptance, you feel a holistic sense of inner harmony, tranquility and fulfillment.

**8. Experiential Validation:** It refers to assessment, acceptance and affirmation of truth from out of one's own experience. This represents the attestation reality based on practical and pragmatic exposure. The value experience emerges out of altered state of consciousness which transcends the material plane and ventures into the transcendental realms. These values are powerful, relevant and meaningful as they relate to key concepts like unity of life and ecological ethics. Direct experience is the springboard for the manifestation of some of the most profound and deepest values.

Though values are learnt mainly as part of the cultural process based on personal experience, one accepts or rejects them.

The direct experience of a person is known as his ANIUBHAVA. People learn many things in life through experience. This experiential learning is a great eye opener for many.

Values are normally taught based on the cultural moorings and as a part of religious and spiritual requirements. Each person either accepts or rejects and finally determines his core and intrinsic values. Most people easily recognize that self welfare is first and foremost. In order to distinguish from others and to survive and make a mark in the world, a person

develops his own values, which are distinct from others.

Certain values find new followers as in many cases one's personal experience may not aptly be in tune with the professed values.

Values have originated from the direct experience of so many great men. Through deep inquiry, contemplation and reflection they get consolidated. Profound and insightful values emanate.

**9. Inner connectivity Experience:** Under this one directly connects easily with other beings in the world including plants, animals and birds. They develop a sense of love, care and compassion for all the beings as an experiential phenomenon.

**10. Unity experience:** under this one feels a sense of unity and harmony in the universe inspite of so many apparent diversities and dichotomies in real life.

**11. Out of body experience:** This arises out of the clear understanding that consciousness is all pervading which survives even death of the physical body. The individual ego gets suppressed, as it is understood that consciousness is a long story and the present life only a small chapter there in. One perceives the universe and its constituents not from the bodily perspective but from a total consciousness standpoint.

Psychologists describe that these experience are due to discrete alternate state of consciousness.

The different types of experience, when conceptualized, get crystallized as values. Most of these values find their own social adaptations and transformations over a period of time depending upon the place, time and environment. Thus the final practice after generations may at times be in a distorted manner from the original experience of the conceiver of a particular value system.

### **Conclusion**

Anyone in this world who want to grow in real sense then they have to explore themselves. The whole universe is lying within us. Unless and until we move forward towards that nothing substantial can be achieved. Self discovery (self exploration) is the only way to move towards success in life. Without discovering ourselves we cannot achieve something substantial .So, we must explore ourselves to reach a height in life.