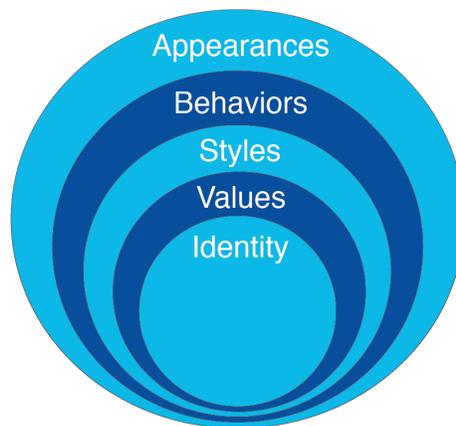


**Circles of Humanness**  
**By**  
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There are many layers to a human being. Initially, we notice their appearance. Very quickly we become aware of their behaviors. Over time we encounter their mental style. If we live or work with them we eventually experience their values. It is as if we are moving towards the person's core.

The layers could be described as "Circles of Humanness." Each circle supersedes the importance of the outside circle. Our impressions and hallucinations of the person as a human being that are based on appearance are replaced with the more sophisticated layer of behaviors...which, in turn, is trumped by style....



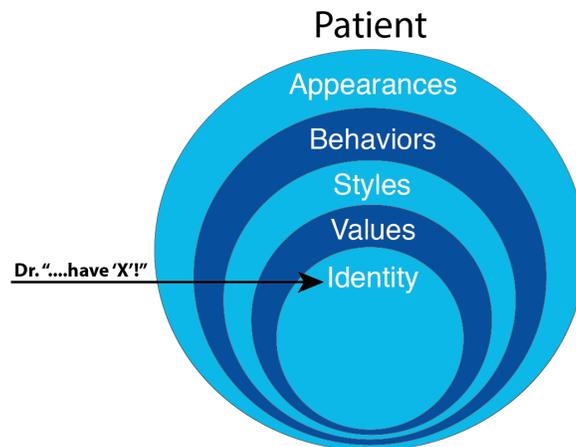
The *Circles* are more than just another way of saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover." The corporate world spends a lot of time using personality profiles to improve communication. The hope is that the more each individual understands others' style, the more effectively they can listen and talk. It is true that *style* sensitivity training produces better communication. At the same time, the differences between *values* between people are more critical than the differences in *style*. Long term I would rather have a co-worker with similar values and different style than a peer with the same style as my style but with different values.

Ultimately, *core* sensitivity training would produce the best communication results. What might such a training look like? Since the majority of what a recipient responds to are the non-verbals of communication, non-verbals are where we will focus.

***Medical example***

We have all experienced a doctor conveying test results with us. One of the important considerations is whether the doctor makes eye-contact when delivering her findings. [In non-verbal language *eye-contact* is referred to as "two-point communication" because there are two parties involved.] Even when the doctor is well-intended, eye-contact sends the results to a different layer of the patient – penetrating to the patient's

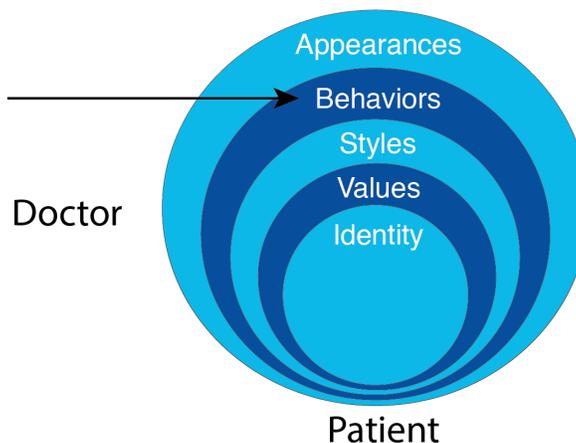
core. "I hate to tell you this, you have 'X,'" however sincerely said tends to be interpreted as "I am X!" Certainly some Xs carry more weight than others. "You have cancer" is a powerful message.



"You have 'X!'" is unconsciously translated by the patient as, "I am X." The patient is not only affected, the doctor, as the *messenger*, is contaminated – the very relationship needed for recovery is jeopardized.

### **Major Shift**

Delivering negative news without eye contact changes the level that the recipient receives the volatility. For instance, after the doctor thanks the patient for coming to the appointment, she then says, while turning to the screen, "Let's look at this x-ray; here is where the 'X' is located. Only a PART of them that has X – which means that the person's core identity can aid in the recovery process.



Additionally, using a "third-point" allows the doctor not to be too closely associated with the negative X - in other words, the patient welcomes the doctor to be part of the recovery process.

Of course, when the message is positive we want to use eye-contact so the person receives the message at their core/identity. That is why we say, "I love you" with eye

contact - we want the message to go to the person's inner sanctuary.

### **Retraining our self-talk**

We want to keep our core identity positive and leave the negative at the behavioral level. The core level is "I am..." the behavioral level is "I have..." I have had to reteach myself.

#### **Old way of self-talk**

"I am dyslexic"

"I am an asthmatic"

"I am ADHD"

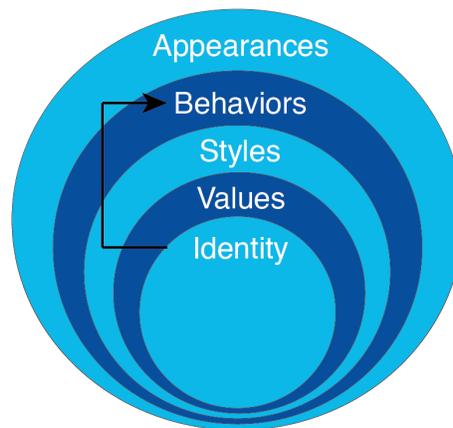
#### **New way of self-talk**

"I have dyslexia"

"I experience asthma"

"I have ADHD symptoms"

Shifting from "I am..." to "I have..." has ME more optimistic and feeling a sense of control.



### **Caution: Cause of Negative**

My partner Gail welcomes my empathetic support when she is sharing the *woes* of her day... "The traffic was bad, the computer crashed..." As long as I am not the *cause* – empathy is appreciated. However, trying to do active listening when I am the *cause* is a disaster, "Honey, it sounds like you are angry because I forgot to pick up the kids and go by the cleaners..."

### **Caution: Ability to Hear**

When the messenger is skilled at delivering the negative news in a third-point manner, sometimes the *content* still overrides the *process*. One wise doctor prefaces the telling of the volatile lab results with, "I will be sharing with you your results...most likely you won't be able to hear very well after you get the findings. Bring a friend for our next appointment as we explore treatment options. Your friend will help you recall what we say."

### **Caution: Some Want Two-point Communication**

Most people operate better when negativity is delivered without eye-contact. This is because both the messenger and recipient breathe better.

However up to 30% of the population would not respect us unless we state the negative information eye-ball to eye-ball. Remember to breathe as relaxed as possible.