

Chapter 11: Personality And EQ Assessment: Revealing Egopathy with personality tests

We begin by positing that all psychological tests have some capacity to reveal or hint at the presence of egopathy. However, there has been no work done to determine which tests reveal the presence of egopathy best. Just as Goleman did in Emotional Intelligence, we will have to study the research of other constructs which are similar in nature to egopathy which are inherent in each personality test.

For instance, tests of the Big Five (NEO-PI) reveal that some people are high in “Conscientiousness.” At first blush, this appears to be an innocent category which would make the high scorers prime candidates for top positions with a good chance for advancement. But if you’ll look the equivalent according to the good people at IPAT, the publisher of the 16PF, you’ll see that the equivalent is called “Tough-mindedness.” This can be interpreted as “ego strength,” or “Hardiness,” or “resilience,” or “grit.” But there is a high correlation between these constructs and the lack of empathy, especially toward those persons who lack a fair share of “tough-mindedness” in themselves. I believe a person high in “conscientiousness” is at-risk for egopathic acting out. This connection has been researched only a little, and not near enough.

The MMPI-2

The PAI

The CPI

The MSCEIT

The Eqi

The MIPS

The MCMI

The PCL-R

PCL-R

Robert Hare has studied psychopaths and their behavior for 35 years. He has created the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-R) and the screening called the P-SCAN. The P-SCAN is made up of three scales and 90 items that tap into the psychopathic personality and his behavior. A person who knows the test subject well answers questions concerning the subject's emotional and interpersonal style. The total score is divided by 3. There are 90 questions. If the score is 30 or above there is “serious concern” about the subject being parallel a psychopathic personality. If the score is between 11 and 29, Robert Hare says, “there is a highly likely chance that the person bears the traits of a psychopath. This instrument is recommended for persons who work in HR, law enforcement, or education. It is designed to be a screening tool or an assessment in research.”

If the score is below an 11, Hare states that it is “above the purpose of the test.” This is an appropriate statement since the test is designed to discover a personality style which is significantly heinous in its devastation to family and friends (and, eventually, to the psychopath him or herself.) But can we borrow the test for another purpose? Can we utilize the PSCAN to discover if the person is an egopath? Since egopathy lies in the borderland between psychopathy and the normal personality, it would stand to reason that a low score on the PSCAN might reveal a person who has a significant egopathic presentation. We don’t want to over diagnose but we don’t want to allow the continuation of the abuse of egopathy, either.

One way to use the PSCAN to determine if the person in question is an egopath is to simply use the first two constructs of the PSCAN, the Interpersonal Score and the Affective Score. These tap into the inner life of the egopath much more so than the third area: the “Lifestyle.” The questions on the Lifestyle seem to reflect interest into criminal and sub-criminal behavior. This is the domain of the “Anti-Social Personality Disorder” (ASPD) much more so than Egopathic Personality Disorder. There is a great deal

of overlap between the research and scholarship of psychopathy and ASPD, so it would make sense to include these questions on a test such as the PCL-R or the PSCAN. However, egopaths (those who suffer only from egopathy) are seldom in trouble with the law. (see notable exceptions in Chapter XX such as Kenneth Lay, ENRON chief.) Remember, almost all ASPD's are egopaths, but not all egopaths are anti-socials.

If we only add the scores on the Interpersonal and Affective scales of the P-SCAN, we will find a higher score for egopaths than those without egopathy. Divide the two scores by 2 and if the quotient is at 30 or above then there is a significant chance the person is a practicing egopath. Research needs to be done to prove or disprove this hypothesis. This book is designed to give researchers the foundation on which to conduct the research.

Item Analysis

The items listed in the Interpersonal and the Affective scales are not all appropriate to be used to assess for egopathy. See diagram #10 for those items. Furthermore, there are many items that should be included in a test of egopathy which are not included in the PSCAN or even the PCL-R. These can be found in the Diagram #11. A prominent egopathic attitude is egocentricity. Although some items on the PSCAN tap egocentricity there is a need to add several more which tap into

A major part of egopathy is the use of ego defenses. There are no questions on the PSCAN which tap into these unhealthy intrapersonal mental operations. For instance, an egopath often "uses" concepts to bolster his/her side of the argument. This seems like manipulation but it is more developed and more easily understood with the idea of "using" people's words, actions, or concepts to "control, dominate, and direct" the target person. (See PCD section for more information about "openness to experience."

The explosion of the PSCAN
Psychopathic Descriptor

Egopathic Descriptor

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presence makes some feel strangely uncomfortable 2. Looks for weak spots, buttons to push 3. Very opinionated, seldom admits being wrong 4. Attempts to portray self in a good light 5. Lies easily while looking you in the eye 6. Chameleon-like, (will real person stand up) 8. Has gift of gab or is a very smooth talker. 10. Condescending, puts others down 11. Must be center of attention 12. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (His or her) Presence makes you feel uncomfortable 2. Looks for weaknesses and focuses on them with judgmental dismay 3. Has an opinion and a directive. Has difficulty admitting he/she could be wrong 4. It becomes apparent they are very uncomfortable with being seen in a bad light 5. Is willing to be deceptive and deceitful when they have the need to conceal some sensitive information. 6. They have one or more “personalities” that come out when stressed or unhappy. 8. An egopath can vary from being very articulate and loquacious to being almost mute. They have an uncanny ability to turn the conversation around so that you become the victimizer, not them. 10. An egopath carries around a clandestine attitude of watching others and noticing when they are screwing up. 11. A narcissistic egopath must be the center of attention but a POC egopath can blend in nicely. The “snake” part comes out later. 18. Has difficulty being open to the others' needs and BCRs. 19. Has difficulty "matching" the other person who is remonstrating with him. 20. Has a tendency to cherish power over others. 21. Has a tendency to desire to control others. 22. Has a tendency to direct others to do or not to do rather than gently leading with questions. 23. Has a tendency to (see my TA list

The Sixteen PF

The 16PF is a venerable personality test that was developed by Raymond Cattell, a giant in the field of personality assessment and factor analysis. The sixteen personality factors that his statistical analysis revealed have been very useful to millions of users. The IPAT has many personality tests most of which are grounded in the original research and analyses that Cattell performed.

"Why don't they give these people personality tests and prevent them from being on the TV show and from being hired in business, school, and agency in the country? That is a good question! The problem is

that we are not out of the woods yet with personality assessment. The Cult of Personality by Annie Paul reveals the many foibles inherent in personality tests. This is unfortunate because personality tests could be very useful if they were used correctly. Nowadays it seems even the "enneagram" is catching on. It is difficult to be overly concerned about the reliability of a test when it is used in a circumscribed manner. Almost any test can be used to help the person get a feel for their strengths and yet be made aware of their shortcomings, as well.

Costa and McCrae have done fantastic work on the Big 5 personality constructs. One of the "Big 5" constructs is called "Openness to experience." This construct has been explicated in research as the ability to be interested in many forms of entertainment, in many fields of scientific inquiry, in traveling, and in having novel experiences. Why is it important to be "open to experience?" In relationships, it is important to be open to the points of view of others. Do people who score high on "openness to experience" also exhibit the ability to be open to their partner's needs, feelings, and BCRs (behavior change requests)?

When a partner is in the B Position (See diagram #xx) and makes a request to the A Person to make a change in behavior, does the A Person snap back with a judgment about the B person which throws the remonstrance off track? Does the A Person make a quickie judgment about the B Person's personality, intentions, or character? If so, then the A Person is moving into egopathic acting out. Let's take a look at a typical conversation between a husband and a wife.

Bob: Honey, last night when I called you and my phone malfunctioned, you didn't stay on long enough to allow me to fix the phone so we could say a proper good-bye. You just hung up in 2 seconds.

Bettie: I didn't hear anything so I hung up.

Bob: Okay, that makes sense. But next time could you just stay with me for 6 or 7 seconds so I can figure out the problem?

Bettie: I was in a hurry and have lots of stuff to do.

Bob: I know, but I'm asking if you might stay on the phone for a few more seconds and just say, "I don't hear you. 1, 2, 3, I still don't hear you. 1,2,3 okay I am going to hang up now because I can't hear you."

Bettie: Bob, I am very busy these days. I have this major project I am working on and I really need to start preparing for the kids camp coming up next week. You really shouldn't be so sensitive.

Bob: I know that you are very busy. You have a lot to get done. (at this point he gives up and decides it's not worth the trouble to get his point across.)

The conversation above happens in one form or another in households across the country millions of times a day. The problem here is the A person (Bettie) does not have enough "openness to experience" to simply hear what Bob is saying and then "match" what he is needing. Instead, she moves into "explanation" and then "labeling" which is a "Parent" ego state word. She fails to "match" Bob's behavior change request (BCR) with a confirmatory Adult ego state response such as, "Oh, I see. Sure, I can try to do that next time." Her wounded inner Child has been "hooked" by his BCR and she is unable to control her need to "defend" and "fight back." She even went so far as to make a comment about Bob's character; it's "sensitive" and she finds fault with it. Once again, the wounded inner Child employed the "Parent" to do her talking for her.

There are pros and cons to be considered with personality assessment. There are a number of journal articles and books that effectively reveal the shortcomings of personality tests. The abuses that have been perpetrated on innocent, undeserving human beings is astounding. Having said that, there is also a great deal of good that has been generated due to the appropriate use of personality tests. So the problem, just as it is with guns, is not in the instrument or tool themselves, but in the way incompetent people use the personality tests. Let's examine all three: the good, the bad, and the ugly.

The problem with personality assessments is that they seem to peg a person's whole personality. That is unfortunate because people (a.) can have more personality fluidity than assessed by the test, (b.) can change their behavior with sincere effort; and (c.) can change behavior styles depending on the environment such as the people and conditions in the moment. Is it possible that the real danger of personality tests is how they are being used by egopaths; those people who want to do harm and enact harsh judgment on unsuspecting foes or powerless job applicants?

It is true that, much of the time, people will behave the same way over and over again in most of their frequented environments. And this may be in a prosocial and highly functional way. However, when it comes to times of stress or deprivation many people can exhibit unpleasant behaviors. This sets up a dichotomy of behaviors that are opposites of each other. So, which is it? Are they this way or that? The fact of the matter is that they are BOTH ways depending on the "context," that, is, the environment. We are influenced by our environment just as the social constructionists say. However, they get it wrong when they say personality is created by the social context and nothing more (Gergen). There is too much permanence in some behaviors. "Temperament" has been shown by Jerome Kagan to be a life long set of behaviors starting in early childhood.

The various personality manifestations of people are "brought out" by the various contexts, not "created by" the contexts. Saying that personality is created by the social interaction is the same as saying the steam over a stove is "caused by" the lifting of the lid of the kettle. The context simply "reveals" what is lurking and lying silent below the beneficent surface.

So how do we design personality tests so the tests can reveal this inherent potential? By asking participants in the research to name two situations in which they behaved in a certain way. Ask them to reveal their warm and caring behavior. This is referred to as their "the bright side" (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). But, also, ask them to reveal when they are not warm and caring; that's more difficult. This is called the "dark side" (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005) or their shadow side (Ford, Briggs, Myers; Handling the Shadow; Jung) But if they've been given the chance to reveal their altruistic side they will be more likely to open up about their egocentric, retributive side, as well.

What do current tests reveal about the subjects' egopathic tendencies? Almost all personality tests reveal something about them although none assess "egopathy" directly. This is a shame. It is egopathy that causes 90% of the heartache in the workplace. Don't quote that figure, I don't think there is research which can assess exactly how much Hell and Heartache is created by the self-focused, insensitive acting out of CEO's, board members, parents, managers, and coworkers. I have spoken to Les Morey about which of the subjects on his PAI tap into egopathy.

Let's shift the subject from egopathy to emotional intelligence.

Standard Tests Which Reveal Level of Emotional Intelligence and Egopathy

1. Rorschach: the sickness
2. MMPI: psychopathy
3. Emotional Intelligence test
4. 16PF:
5. CPI: The Dominance scale, Empathy scale, and Tolerance scale.
6. Myers Briggs Type Indicator
7. PAI

8. The MIPS

9. MCFI

10. EQi

Egopathy is the acting out of unresolved issues from the past on to a victim in the present. It is a tricky concept because of its dual nature. It is both part and parcel of sadistic and psychopathic personality and it is inherent in non-psychopathic personalities as well. I believe the answer lies in Widiger's work with dimensions in the field of personality disorders. However, his propositions are slow to be embraced. Laymen won't be able to accept the concept of "dimensions" if psychologists can't accept them. The proposal is to do away with a cut-off criterion for deciding if a person has a personality disorder or not. Instead, each of the observed dimensions will simply be listed as "present."

Ken Lay's Personality and Character

Ken Lay was an egopath. He didn't think he was doing anything wrong. A better way to put it is this: "I know I am doing something wrong according to "society" but they have to understand that I am above those common laws for common people. I can borrow from Peter to pay Paul and I can orchestrate creative deals by using shady bookkeeping techniques and everything will be okay. It will all work out in the end and everyone will have their pensions and their stock investments and everything will be just fine." To really understand how this could come about, the laws of "relative ethics" must be understood. Let's imagine that there are 3 levels of "relative ethics."

Level Number One: In this level there are perfectly legal ways of maneuvering loans and bank accounts and pension funds in such a way that helps out a temporary financial shortfall within a company or even a personal portfolio. Most wealthy people do this kind of maneuvering to maximize savings and minimize taxes.

Level Number Two: This level is ventured into when businessmen or wealthy individuals do not have a successful outcome of the maneuverings mentioned in Level Number One. They are now in some sort of crisis mode and they decide to push the envelope in order to save face, save money, avoid foreclosure, avoid a stock tumble or bankruptcy. In other words, they go into Level Number Two to keep everyone happy, as far as that's possible. The problem with Level Number Two is that the account shifting and bookkeeping techniques become suspect. They border on, or may even be, illegal. But mostly moral accountants allow it or even encourage it because the plan for the future is that conditions will right themselves and then everything will go back to being on the up and up. That's the plan.

Level Number Three

In Level Number Three things have not righted themselves. In fact, things may be worse than ever before. Now comes a tremendously difficult decision for the principal players. Do they come clean and admit to the wife, the children, the stockholders, the board of directors, and the federal government what they did in Level Number Two? It would most likely lead to divorce, family alienation, a loss of power and position and, worst of all, federal prosecution. After years of "success" and living a life of luxury, this step is an extremely difficult step to take. You, the player, are initiating steps that you know will end in disaster when you decide to be honest. Every system in our human body is geared to avoid taking steps that lead to danger. It's like holding your hand down on a hot kitchen stove burner. Every fiber inside says "Take it off. Avoid the pain!!"

Is it any wonder Ken Lay could not bring himself to take the step of disclosure when Level Number Two did not work to solve and undo Enron's financial shenanigans? So Ken Lay did the easiest thing.

He began to engage in Level Number Three. In Level Number Three all the stops of morality are pulled out. Lying, stealing, self-protecting, illegal maneuvering all are utilized in a last-ditch effort to keep things going the way they were. It takes a hugely moral, responsible, and conscientious man to avoid the behaviors that are "Level Number Three." Ken Lay was not that "man of character." While he was 100 million dollars in debt he rented (or bought?) a yacht for \$200,000. When asked about that expense he said, "it was difficult to turn off that lifestyle like a spigot." Yes, Ken Lay, it is. Only men of great character can do it. As Amey Stone said in her blog: "For any other corporate leaders who are about to slide down a slippery slope of fraud and corruption, his early demise provides a chilling lesson: Life's too short to be a crook."

Ken Lay more than likely engaged in a common ego defense called "repression." As he made shady decisions that he knew were not right, he utilized a technique he'd used many times since his childhood. He simply repressed the guilt and remorse, knowing that in time he would no longer feel the guilt and he would return to feeling good again. What exactly happened with Ken Lay? Only he could have filled in the details of this process. Did he feel that repressing these feelings was the sign and the test of a strong man? Did he feel he was showing he was strong or even a "man of character?" Every person has their own system of values and self-maneuvers. This system is called the "self-system." In our society, there is very little value placed on getting to know your self-system. Much more value is placed on "carrying on," "not making waves," and "not being a victim." There will be more Ken Lays if our society does not switch from "resilience at all cost" to "character comes with the pain of being honest." Which will you choose?

Which one of the tests on page XX would be the best at revealing Ken Lay's egopathy? Did he take one of the tests while he was alive? This is the great value of personality tests. If we will allow ourselves to take one or two, we will be able to see who we really are. A trained psychological professional can help interpret the test so that the test-taker can get the most out of it. Socrates uttered some of the most famous words in all of history: "Know thyself." Two words and the meaning is so profound. The man or woman who stumbles through life without being able to examine their personal shortcomings, foibles, and character defects will be living a life "unexamined."