

## The Dimensions of Value

Over fifty years of scientific research has revealed that there are three very distinct ways of valuing anything. These different ways of valuing are the “dimensions of value.” We use them in every judgment or decision we make. The official name for the science that examines this phenomenon is Formal Axiology. It was this same mathematical science that helped shape Abraham Maslow’s work on “The Hierarchy of Needs,” measured Emotional Intelligence long before the term was coined and earned its creator a nomination for the Nobel Prize.

### THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF VALUE DEFINED BY AXIOLOGY ARE:

- **The People Dimension (P):** Intrinsic.  
This is the dimension of uniqueness and singularity. This is the dimension of people, emotions and feelings. When someone values people using this dimension, they become personally involved with them. There is a self-giving which is not present in the other two dimensions. The person is being valued and recognized as irreplaceable because it is seen as unique. Some valuations using this dimension would be: "You're the ONLY girl in the world!" "I LOVE you, just as you are.", "That heirloom is PRICELESS."
- **The Tasks Dimension (T):** Extrinsic.  
This is the dimension of abstracting properties, comparing things to each other. This is the dimension of comparisons, relative and practical thinking. It includes the elements of the real, material world, comparisons of good/better/best, and seeing people, tasks or things as they compare with other people or things in their class. Some valuations using this dimension would be: "That chair is MORE comfortable than mine", "You need to sell MORE product," "You belong in a BETTER job".

- **The Systems dimension (S):** Systemic.

This is the dimension of formal concepts. Ideas of how things should be. This dimension is the one of definitions or ideals, goals, structured thinking, policies, procedures, rules and laws. It is also one of perfection to an ideal or concept. If a person values something or someone exclusively by the Systems dimension, then that person has to fulfill the idea perfectly. There is no middle ground or partial fulfillment. You either fulfill the concept (ideal, definition, law, policy, etc.) or you do not fulfill the concept. The results of systems valuations would be: "That is not the RIGHT way to do it"; "you MUST COMPLY with the regulations", "sales people are ALWAYS extroverted".

Each one of these different ways of valuing examines a concept in its own unique way. Whereas one dimension (the Systems dimension) is primarily concerned with making qualifying judgments (e.g., "that is or is not a chair"), another is tasked with making comparative judgments (e.g., "it is a better chair or more expensive chair"). The final dimension of value is tasked with making emotional judgments (e.g., "I love, or hate that chair").

Each of these three dimensions are applied in two different areas; externally and internally. We use them to make decisions about the world around us (externally) and we use them to make judgments about ourselves (internally). This application of three dimensions in two different areas creates six core dimensions ( $3 \times 2 = 6$ ). We use all six of these whenever we make any of the tens of thousands of nearly subconscious decisions we make each and every day. Although all of us have the same core six dimensions, it is the ratio with which we apply them that makes us different. These dimensions, and how we use them, are at the core of who we are. They are behind our preferences, our strengths and our weaknesses.

### People Dimension:

- **Externally (*empathy*)** – over valuation of other people can lead to over delegation, being overly trusting of others, or taking the problems of others on in such a personal way that any interference said problems may be causing them interfere with your performance likewise. A person may become too excepting of others, missing important faults or shortcomings and avoid confrontation at the expense of doing their job.
- **Internally (*Self Esteem*)** – over focus on the internal people dimension can cause people to place too much importance on themselves. Often such people feel that they do not get enough credit and have to work harder than everyone else just to get the same level of recognition. They can develop a Jesus complex wherein nothing can happen without their involvement. In their absence everything would surely fall apart!

### Task Dimension:

- **Externally (*Practical Thinking*)** - people who over value this dimension of value can become too fixated on material worth and status. They can become very critical of others and may even be described by others as “snobbish,” or “opinionated,” They can be distrusting of others and even value other people as a thing rather than an individual.
- **Internally (*Role Awareness*)** – people who overvalue this dimension value their own self worth based on the job they hold or work they do. They can have a false sense of pride and lack ambition or even initiative due to feeling they have already accomplished so much. They can become preoccupied with looking good and place too much value on their image. In extreme situations, they can even view themselves as better than others.

### **Systems Dimension:**

- **Externally (*Systems Judgment*)** - people who overvalue this dimension may place too much control in the hands of authority, giving themselves over to them completely without challenge...even if warranted. They are by the rules and miss-out on any creative answer. They can attempt to push their beliefs and ideas on others and in extreme cases can become compulsive and unable to see any alternative but the one following the existing rules.
- **Internally (*Self Direction*)** – people who overvalue this dimension tenaciously adhere to the goals they set for themselves and have extremely strong self-discipline. They are likely to be very conscientious, reliable and punctual, but almost to a fault. They can be very inflexible concerning their beliefs about the way they should be or act.

### **People Dimension:**

- **Externally (*Empathy*)** – undervaluing others can cause people to distrust others inherently. Doing so can lead a person to be reluctant to establish personal relationships and are perceived by others as cold, unfeeling or even hostile.
- **Internally (*Self Esteem*)** – undervaluation of one's own self causes you to feel generally dissatisfied with yourself. People often attempt to compensate for this by overvaluing their work or discipline in life. They tend to be overly hard on themselves and often look to others to validate their self worth.

### **Task Dimension:**

- **Externally (Practical Thinking)** – people who undervalue this dimension care little for status or recognition. They may even shy away from such public recognition and they could look at others who have such status with some disdain.
- **Internally (Role Awareness)** – undervaluation of this dimension causes someone to care little for material possessions or the work they do. They will usually not feel rewarded by their work and have doubts that their contributions are meaningful.

### **Systems Dimension:**

- **Externally (Systems Judgment)** - undervaluation of this dimension can lead to lack of respect for authority and even rebellion. Based on the severity of the undervaluation and level of development the acting out could range from simple rule infractions, to violation of basic institutional policies to outright attempts to reform the organization or delinquency.
- **Internally (Self Direction)** – undervaluation of this dimension can lead to lack of discipline, difficulty-meeting schedules, keeping appointments or sticking to personal goals. Such people can be very impulsive or irrational. This kind of person gets easily confused and is often unable to follow through.