

THE HUMAN FABRIC

Unleashing the Power of
Core Energy in Everyone

Bijoy Goswami

with

David K. Wolpert

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FOREWORD

The Story of the Story

by David Wolpert

Bijoy Goswami understands people in a magical way. He has helped countless friends, business acquaintances, family members, corporations, and even complete strangers understand who and what they are in ways that have had profound effects on their lives. His talent lies in bypassing the mazes of psychologist speak, behavioral theory, organizational behavior, personality assessments, and other structures, and cleanly and elegantly cutting to the root of what is truly important. Converse with Bijoy for a scant three minutes and he can give you insights about you that will leave you wondering why you didn't think of that, or think of it in such a simple, poetic way. Bijoy has spent years developing and continuously refining his model of how people *are* and how they interrelate. Not one to rest on the laurels of simply having it mapped, Bijoy evangelizes his message to anyone who will listen. And everyone does.

I met Bijoy through Sara, a mutual friend of ours. Sara is the consummate Relater. She knows everybody and everybody knows her. When Sara says, "You should get to know this person," she's invariably correct. I would venture that Sara could not articulate how she comes to these conclusions. To her, it's intuition. In the case of Bijoy and me, Sara was right again. He and I clicked immediately. In retrospect, we might not have clicked at all if Bijoy

hadn't thoroughly analyzed me within minutes of our first encounter. He had me pegged as an analytical, knowledge-seeking type in no time. Knowing this, he knew that I wouldn't be interested in chitchat. People like me crave ideas. Lucky for both of us, Bijoy had plenty of ideas to share.

Admittedly, at first I found some of Bijoy's ideas dubious. He told me that there are just three types of people—Mavens, Relaters, and Evangelists. What? Just three? Didn't Meyers and Briggs find *sixteen* types of people? Bijoy went on to make a dozen more provocative statements. He claimed, for example, that Mavens working with Evangelists start better companies, and that the roles the three types of people play in society mimics the evolutionary process.

I reckoned that Bijoy was either a quack or was truly on to something. As a Maven, I required some supporting evidence of Bijoy's grand claims. I had a much easier time relating to Bijoy's "Framework" when he pointed out that I was a Maven, Sara was a Relater, and he was an Evangelist. And then I began to think about people like myself, Sara, and Bijoy. I realized there were some compelling consistencies in Bijoy's simple three-tiered categorization. And, indeed, there are numerous examples of how certain combinations of these core types generally do things better.

The more Bijoy talked, the more I ruled him out as a quack. Whatever he was, without a doubt his ideas were intellectually intriguing. I soon came to realize that Bijoy was on a mission. He sincerely wanted to help people however he could, and he clearly believed that his Framework was just the ticket. He told everyone who would listen about it. It did more than help people—it got them excited. It transformed the recipients of Bijoy's ideas into evangelists for his ideas. It didn't take long before people began telling Bijoy to write this stuff down. Until that point, Bijoy had been communicating his ideas in a fragmented form through speeches, white papers, and in one-on-one discussions. What Bijoy needed was a way to capture all the nuances of his Framework in one place, in an organized way. The consensus was that it was time for a book. And that's where I came in. Bijoy thinks best on

his feet, talking. I communicate better through writing. A collaborative effort seemed ideal.

I now understand that there is much more to the Framework than a method of classifying people's core being. The real value of the Framework is that it will help you understand that your core type influences your journey through life—how you interact with others and how they interact with you, how well you perform in certain organizations or on certain tasks, and how and why you make certain personal and professional choices. The Framework will even help you understand social phenomena, political and economic issues, and everyday occurrences you never thought could be modeled in a meaningful way.

The Framework isn't going to solve world hunger or achieve a lasting world peace. I do expect, however, that it will make a difference in your life—perhaps just a small difference, but when it comes to understanding yourself and the world around you, any improvement should be welcome.

— David Wolpert

PREFACE

I resisted writing this book despite ample encouragement from my friends. In my mind, the ideas they wanted me to evangelize in a book were not new, and therefore I was not in a position to write about them. Instead, I referred my friends to the many works upon which my “big idea”—the MRE (Maven, Relater, Evangelist) Framework—is based. Some of my friends actually read those works and came back to me with a startling revelation: they felt that I articulated the ideas in a way that made the most sense to them and had the most impact on their lives. In short, they said I explained it better. Jeff Cox, the author of *Selling the Wheel* (one of those books I pointed people to), noted something else. He said that I had a knack for synthesizing many different concepts into an integrated one, articulating patterns and connections that none of those other works identified. My resistance to writing this book thus began to fade.

These factors were the catalyst for my decision to create this book, but another factor gave me momentum. It struck me that while everyone wants to understand themselves better, few people know how. I thought that what people really needed was a simple tool to help them do it. The Framework, I thought, was the solution. Every person I told about the Framework said that it helped them, even if just to a small extent, to understand themselves and those around them better. And that’s important, because whether you are building a friendship, a marriage, a team, a company, or *anything* else, people are involved. There is enormous power in be-

ing able to relate to people better, and if I had an effective way to do it, I needed to capture it on paper.

But why me? What makes me the right person to pen this book? I believe that the variety and quality of life experiences I have had gives me a unique perspective. In every aspect of my life—spiritual, academic, cultural, and professional—I have found myself crossing boundaries, defying conventional approaches, and combining and integrating dualities, opposites, and extremes. My father is a Hindu Bengali from northern India, my mother an English-speaking Catholic from southern India. After completing third grade in India, I lived in Taiwan for four years and then moved to Hong Kong. In Taiwan and Hong Kong, I attended American schools. As an undergraduate at Stanford, I studied Computer Science, Economics, and History (the mix of which made sense, if only to me). I pursued an honors program in Science, Technology and Society, which helped me weave together the different threads of my academic pursuits. After graduating, I took a job with a software company and tried my hand at product development, technical sales, and business development. I later launched my own software company. And composed music. And wrote a play. And so much more. This combination of diverse experiences in multiculturalism, education, work and play has given me a broad, interdisciplinary perspective on the world. No background could be more appropriate for a book like this.

Perhaps more fundamentally, I'm well suited to write this book because I am passionate about people. I have been called a psychologist, a coach, a guru, a life consultant, and simply a good friend. I possess no formal credentials in these areas, but these are all apt descriptions. For as long as I can remember I have been involved in helping people reflect on their lives. And in all my conversations through the years, one thing repeatedly stands out: without self-knowledge, life is painful and unfulfilling. Individuals must understand themselves in order to find satisfaction and to enjoy and succeed in life. Ancient Greeks visited the Oracle at Delphi to get their fortune told. Inscribed at the gates were the words, "know thyself." The wise Oracle understood that your des-

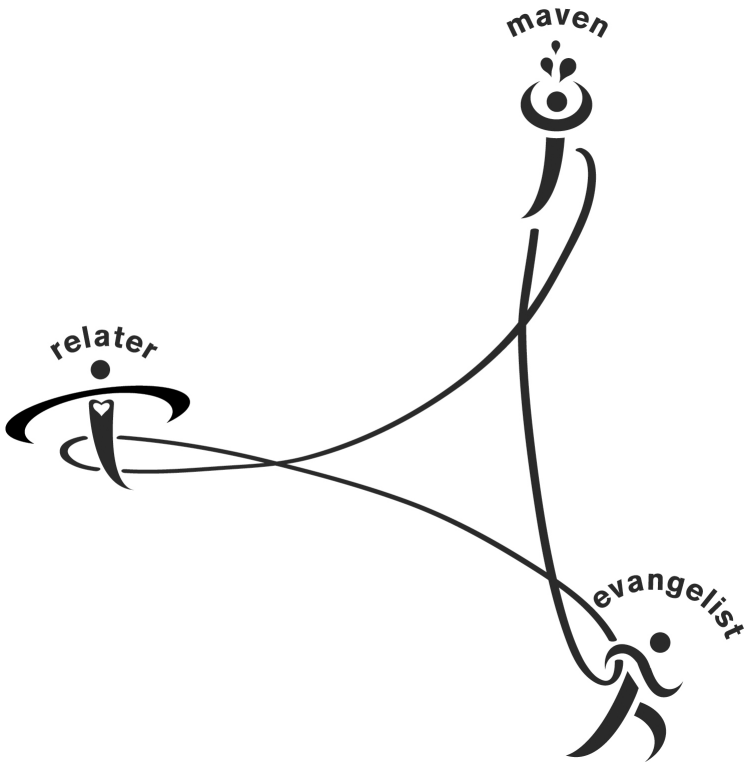
tiny is inextricably linked to who you are, and knowing who you are would help you meet your destiny. I couldn't agree more.

This is not a book of answers. It's a book of guidance and direction. I am trying to cast you off on a journey of self-discovery. The path of self-discovery is not difficult to follow, but you first have to *find* your path, and it will continuously change. I hope you interpret the ideas in this book not as a rigid and static model, but as a dynamic and organic one. This book is a meditation. It will engage your intellect and your emotion. I will not attempt to exhaustively prove all the claims I make, and the book does have limitations. There's a wonderful adage from George E.P. Box: "All models are wrong, but some are useful." I do hope you will find the Framework useful. But only you can judge if it works for you.

Peace,

Bijoy Goswami

CHAPTER
1



REVISITING THE
GOLDEN RULE

The Golden Rule is one of the oldest human social guidelines. Its simple message of kind reciprocity—to treat others as you would like to be treated—can be found in one form or another in the scriptures upon which virtually every major religion is based, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Zoroastrian.

Living by the Golden Rule seems like a sensible heuristic for getting along with others. It provides a simple moral standard by which to evaluate everything we do that affects other people. As such, it's a great starting point for framing moral and ethical decisions. However, the Golden Rule should not be interpreted too literally. Treating everyone as you want to be treated implies that all people are fundamentally similar and therefore want to be treated identically, which we know is not always true. The real essence of the Golden Rule is not so much that we should treat others *precisely* as we want to be treated, but rather that we should try to put ourselves in other people's shoes and appreciate their perspectives. When we do that, we comprehend that individuals are unique and should be treated as *they* want to be treated, which is not necessarily how *we* want to be treated.

The interesting thing is, the Golden Rule's literal interpretation that people are fundamentally similar and would want to be treated just like you is *sometimes* true. You will occasionally encounter individuals who—despite their unique personalities, interests, and talents—resemble you in some fundamental way. Such people are motivated the same way you are and perceive the world around them in a similar fashion. You just “click” with these people. When interacting with them, the Golden Rule applies perfectly. With everyone else, you'll need to try on their shoes. In fact, on average, you'll click with about one person in three.

Getting to the Core

The reason the Golden Rule works so well one-third of the time is that there are fundamentally three types of people, in roughly pro-

portionate counts in the population.¹ The Golden Rule works when *your* type matches that of the other person in question.

By “type,” I do not mean personality. Personality is a means of describing outward-facing behaviors—how we interact with others, or act in the presence of others. Tools such as the well-known Myers-Briggs test that assess personalities along multiple dimensions—extroverted versus introverted, for instance—do a good job at describing what you *do* and how you *act*. This is useful knowledge. But such tests fall short in describing what you *are*. This is the definition of a core type: one of three basic human natures, or ways of being. Your core is the underlying *driver* of everything you do. It’s the fabric you’re made of.

There are three core types: Mavens (M), Relaters (R), and Evangelists (E). That’s it—just three! We’ll explore each of these core types in detail in the next three chapters. For now, here are the high-level descriptions of the types:

- *Mavens* are knowledge driven. They seek to discover and create knowledge. A quintessential example: Albert Einstein.
- *Relaters* are relationship driven. They continuously strive to create new relationships and deepen the ones they have. For example: Princess Diana.
- *Evangelists* are action driven. They energize others to take action in the world, and also take action on their own. Example: Martin Luther King.

A simple anecdote nicely illustrates how the three core types perceive the world differently. You have probably heard the adage, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” Relaters would agree with that statement. From their perspective, it really is about *who* you know. Mavens, conversely, do believe it’s all about *what*

¹ Throughout this book I make many bold, unsubstantiated claims. This book is not derived from a rigorous sociological study. Rather, it is based on my own experiences, observations about people, the study of various religions, and the readings of several authors. I encourage you to challenge my statements. The Appendix lists many of the works on which my thinking is based.

you know. Evangelists need their own saying, because for them it's about what they can make happen.

Before I go any further, I need to make a confession: I didn't invent this notion of a three-tiered classification system for describing people. The concept that there are three core types is not new. In fact, it's *really* old. The ancient Indian spiritual text *Bhagavad Gita* explains that people take three paths, or *yogas*, in life: Jnana, Bhakti, and Karma. Respectively, these are the yogas of intellect (Maven), devotion (Relater), and action (Evangelist).

Much more recently, Malcolm Gladwell's book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, identifies three types of actors involved in the spread of what he calls "social epidemics:" the Maven, the Connector, and the Salesman. Gladwell defines Mavens more narrowly than I do because he discusses them in a very specific context, though I give him full credit for naming Mavens so appropriately. "Connector" is an appropriate term, but I feel Connectors must *relate* to people before they can connect them together. The term "Salesman" is not quite right for my purposes because, as I will explore in Chapter 4, Evangelists aren't always about selling things.

In her book, *"I Wish I'd Said That!": How to Talk Your Way Out of Trouble and Into Success*, Linda McCallister outlines six communication styles, three of which she calls "dominant": Noble, Reflective, and Socratic. She explains that people with different communication styles use communication for different purposes. The Noble (Maven) uses communication to convey truth, the Reflective (Relater) uses it to deepen relationships, and the Socratic (Evangelist) uses it to persuade.

First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently, Marcus Buckingham's book, explores the differences between talents, skills, and knowledge. He asserts that while skills and knowledge can be acquired over time, talents are innate and cannot be learned. And guess what? Buckingham discovers three categories of talent: thinking (the Maven), relating (the Relater), and striving (the Evangelist).

When you put these models together, the overlap is apparent (Figure 1). McCallister focuses on communication styles; Gladwell

focuses on affecting widespread social change; and Buckingham focuses on the relationship between talents and effectiveness in a business environment. None of these authors generalize their observations to reflect a person's *total way of being*—your fabric. This fabric encompasses how you communicate and how you shape change, how you learn and become motivated, and indeed how you live life itself. McCallister, Gladwell, and others describe individual strands of this fabric. My intent is to weave those strands together and present it in a way that has tangible value to understanding yourself and others. To phrase it ambitiously, I aim to construct a grand unified model for understanding human nature. I call this the MRE (Maven, Relater, Evangelist) Framework.

	Bhagavad Gita	The Tipping Point	I Wish I'd Said That	First, Break All the Rules
Maven	Intellect	Maven	Noble	Thinking
Relater	Emotion	Connector	Reflective	Relating
Evangelist	Action	Salesman	Socratic	Striving

Figure 1:
Different Elements of the Core Types

The Framework consists of two components. First, it contains a model for classifying people into one of three types, and for understanding the relationships between people of different types. Second, it contains a four-step prescription for how to understand and analyze the core types, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. In short, the Framework is a model of how people are, plus a recipe for what to do.

My attempt to classify ways of being is not a purely academic pursuit, nor is it part of a religious or philosophical quest. On the contrary, I want to help you understand yourself and others better so that you can realize very practical benefits. My goal here is not to answer all your questions about people and life. All the answers

you need are within you; I simply want to help you find those answers. It all begins with understanding people's core nature.

The Pattern of Three

There's something intriguing about the use of three terms to describe our core natures. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes the three paths that people walk in life; Malcolm Gladwell describes three types of people involved in spreading social epidemics; Linda McAllister identifies three dominant communications styles; and Marcus Buckingham describes three types of talents. Hinduism provides another example: the notion that there are three God-heads—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—that represent the three human-like manifestations of God: one who creates, one who preserves, and one who destroys.

Thousands of years of history have demonstrated that there's some recurring significance to three when describing human nature. Why three? It helps to think of the many ways to characterize people as a continuum. On one extreme, one could argue that all people are fundamentally the same; as John F. Kennedy eloquently stated, "There is more that unites us than divides us." On the other extreme, one could argue that all people are truly different, giving us six billion types. That's a pretty big range. Between those extremes, you often hear adages that there are just "two types of people in this world." What are those magic two? Perform an Internet search on Google™ for the phrase in quotations, and you'll discover over five thousand pairings. There are also constructs like the Enneagram model, which divides people into one of nine categories, and the Meyers-Briggs test, with sixteen types. Clearly, a smaller number of classifications can be more readily grasped, while too large a number of classifications is too complex to be applicable in a daily context. But again, why does the number three, in particular, work so well? Why not four or five?

The answer might lie in evolution. Charles Darwin (a Maven) observed that the evolutionary process has three general steps. First, there is variety. At some point, there are innumerable,

slightly different versions of the same basic organism. There might be, for instance, a dozen varieties of a specific fish, each with seemingly irrelevant minor differences between them. Next, there is selection. One or two things that once seemed irrelevant ultimately prove to be critical in the game of survival of the fittest. The one variety of fish with a color pattern that turns out to be camouflage to predators flourishes, while the bright red fish that signals “come eat me” to sharks slowly becomes extinct. Finally, we have retention. The superior camouflaged fish reproduces prolifically while the other varieties slowly die out.

These three steps of evolution are analogous to what Mavens, Relaters, and Evangelists do in everyday life. The interactions of Ms, Rs, and Es in some way mimic the evolutionary process (though of course no one becomes extinct). The variety phase of evolution is analogous to what Relaters do. Relaters typically have lots of variety in their personal connections; some connections are shallow, some deep, some are useful, some not, some make sense, and some don't. Relaters revel in the variety of fish that were in the early oceans. Mavens select. They pick and choose their friends and their allies and make every major decision in their life with intent and analysis. A Maven knew before anyone else did which fish was best suited to survive in the long run. Finally, Evangelists run with a good thing when they see it. Their mission is to spread the word that one particular fish is going to thrive. There are Ms, Rs, and Es in the human genetic mix precisely because nature has found that this is the mix that works best.

Understanding the MRE Framework

The Framework is more than the assignment of a category to every person. As you read through this book, the complexities of the Framework will become apparent. A few points are worth making up front.

No one is an absolute M, R, or E. That is, nobody fits perfectly into one of these core types. This is one of the differences between the Framework and the other three-tiered classification systems mentioned earlier, all of which place people exclusively

into one type. However, every person is *predominantly* one of the three types. Think of the Framework as a triangle, and the core classification as a sliding scale between two points on the triangle, as shown in Figure 2. The scale moves along only one edge of the triangle. You will often encounter people who are combinations of types along one edge, such as M-R, R-E, or M-E.

The balance between these two types varies by person, but every person is grounded as only one type. For example, you might be 60% Maven and 40% Evangelist, but this means you are a Maven. It is difficult to precisely assess the composition of an individual's fabric, and it is not important to do so. Whether someone is 60/40 or 70/30 or 55/45, the point is that the predominant type wins out. Can someone have a perfect 50/50 mix of two types? The answer is no. The Framework is based on a premise that all people are primarily driven by one of three things: knowledge, relationships, or actions. To have a 50/50 between core types would imply that someone is equally driven by two of those three things. This would be one severely conflicted individual.

It's tempting to affix overly simplistic labels to the types, such as Mavens are "smart," Relaters are "social," and Evangelists are "persuasive." Likewise, it's tempting to conclude the inverse: that Relaters and Evangelists are not smart, that Mavens and Evangelists can't relate to people, and that Mavens and Relaters can't convince anyone to do anything. This is not the case. Being smart, being social, or being able to persuade really have nothing to do with the core. It's a subtle but important distinction: the core is not about *what* you do, it's about *why* you do it. We all do the same basic things, but people of each of the core types do them for different reasons.

Let's revisit the issue of how a core type is different from personality. It might help to think of a core type in terms of what you would be if there were no people with whom to interact. As a thought exercise, consider a situation in which you suddenly find yourself on a deserted island. In this situation, characteristics of your personality really wouldn't matter; it's hard to "act" extroverted, for example, when you're the only person around. If you're

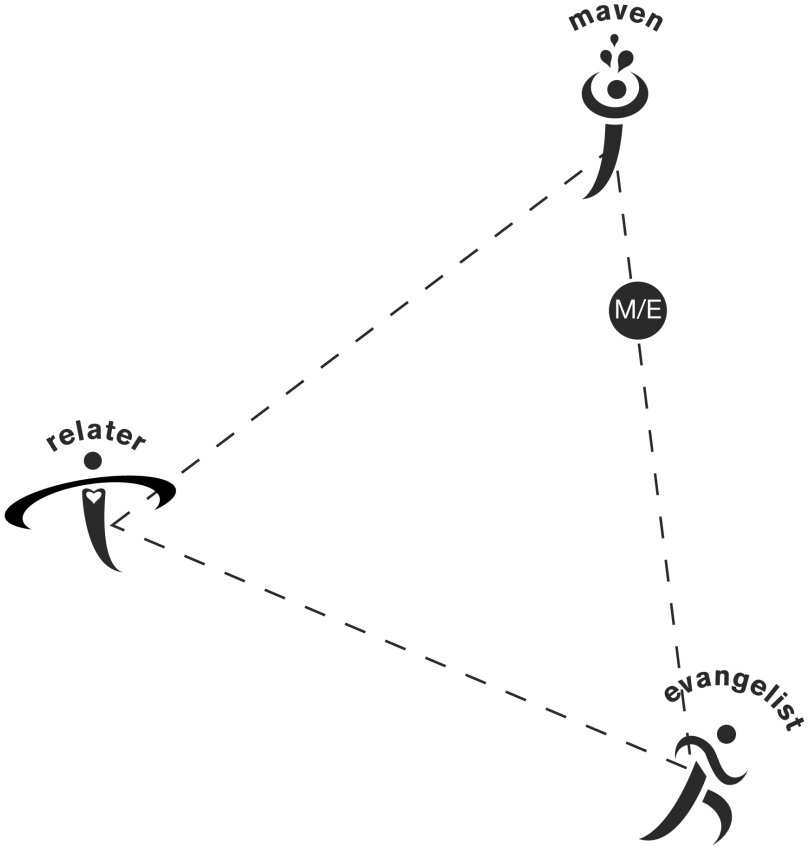


Figure 2:
The MRE Triangle

a Maven, you will try to make rational sense of what's happened to you and attempt to think yourself out of this mess. The extreme Maven might actually enjoy the intellectual challenge of making sense of this. Evangelists, in contrast, will skip the analysis and take action. While the Maven will be reflecting on what to do here, the Evangelist will be off looking for people and building a shelter. He's not inclined to sit and reflect, even when there's time. The lone Relater will be pretty unhappy in this situation. He might seek companionship from other animals or give a "human" face to inanimate things, just as Tom Hanks' character did with Wilson the volleyball in the movie *Cast Away*. The point is that one's personality varies depending on who is around you, whereas your core type is static. It does not change whether you're with one person, a hundred people, or no people at all.

It is important to keep in mind that the M, R, and E designations are not inherently good or bad. However, there is a darker side to each one. Mavens can become hopelessly self-centered and make terrible collaborators. Relaters can befriend the wrong people and be manipulated. Evangelists can become so focused on advancing their ideology that they lose touch with the truth. We'll explore the dark sides of the core types in the next three chapters.

It bears repeating: your core is not about what you say or do—it's about why you do it. I am an Evangelist (20% Maven), yet most people assume I am a Relater because I have a vast network of friends and business acquaintances. Those who perceive me as a Relater misunderstand the Framework. I don't have a large network because I'm driven at my core to connect to people just for the sake of it; rather, I have a large network because I have found a way to catalyze the people in that network into agents of action for me. Mavens, Relaters, and Evangelists all leverage what they have or can obtain to get the outcomes they desire. Remember, the issue to explore is *why* people do what they do, not *what* they do.

Now, even though a core type has nothing to do with how we act, we can get some clues about our core type by observing behavior. To understand how this is possible, consider dogs. Have

you ever thought of a dog as smart? Don't some dogs just seem to be able to figure things out or remember things better than others? And then there are the ultra-empathetic dogs, which possess an uncanny ability to "tune in" to human emotions and convey concern and compassion. We also have the alpha dog—determined, stubborn, the leader of the pack. It's remarkable that not only do dogs possess the same core types as people, but that we can discern their type without language-based communication or demonstrations of specific skills. The Maven dog can't analyze data, the Relater dog can't introduce us to other dogs, and the Evangelist dog can't persuade us to do *anything*, but nonetheless we can usually figure out their type by noticing, for example, which dog leads the pack. Behavioral evidence alone is not necessarily conclusive, but it can be a useful tool to assessing core types.

What's Next

I've thrown out a lot of ideas in this chapter to lay the groundwork for further exploration of the Framework. At this point, I suspect that you have some combination of emotions: excitement, curiosity, confusion, skepticism...maybe you want your money back. What you feel will depend largely on your core type. Here's a perfect opportunity to highlight some differences among them.

If you are a Maven, you won't be completely satisfied at this point because I haven't addressed every imaginable issue. You want data, proof, examples, and a thorough rebuttal of all potential counter-examples. You already have a list of questions percolating in your mind. You most likely have objections to my discussion of the Golden Rule, which was intended merely to be thought-provoking. I hate to say this, but you probably won't find this book completely satisfying because I can't prove every assertion I make. However, the Appendix includes a list of readings which can provide some background to help you form your own opinions.

Relaters, you should be pumped. At last, those crazy Mavens and Evangelists will understand your actions and intentions. At last, they'll comprehend why you call them all the time to say

nothing in particular. They'll understand why you are a walking directory of people and just how valuable that is. It's finally making sense to them, right? Well, almost. They'll have to finish the book first. Encourage them to do so.

You Evangelists are my new best friends, because you're going to tell all your friends to read this book. (Thanks!) Now, of course, you will want to transform the messages in this book into actions. You're going to take notes as you read this and make little reminders to yourself to try this and that. I won't discourage you, but be patient. You will be applying some of these ideas tomorrow, but be careful, because as Evangelists come to learn, a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing.

Whatever your core type, you'll get something useful out of this book. The next three chapters will discuss Mavens, Relaters, and Evangelists in depth, with lots of examples for our Maven friends. Chapter 5 will provide some tools to help you identify your core type. Our exploration of the Framework is not limited to individuals. Corporations have core types, too, which are detailed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 shows how to use the Framework for setting better political, economic, social, and educational policies.

My ultimate goal here is to equip you with the skill to apply the true meaning of the Golden Rule—to treat others as *they* would want to be treated. The first step is understanding the three core types in detail.

Enjoy the ride.

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