

Who I Am Pyramid

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www.ArleneTaylor.org www.LLM.life



Who am I?

Individuals must have been asking that question for eons or philosophers such as Socrates may not have said *the unexamined life is not worth living*.

There may be as many different ways to respond to the question *Who am I?* in relation to brain function as there are individuals on this planet. The process is essential, however, for those who want to thrive by design.

The discovery process required to answer that question can be mercurial and challenging for a myriad of reasons, including:

- Genetic and epigenetic inheritance
- Family-of-origin issues
- Past personal experiences
- The tendency to learn (or not learn) from life experiences
- Expectations (yours and those of others)
- Perceived available opportunities and rewards
- Societal, cultural, and religious mores
- The ability to evaluate options
- And so on

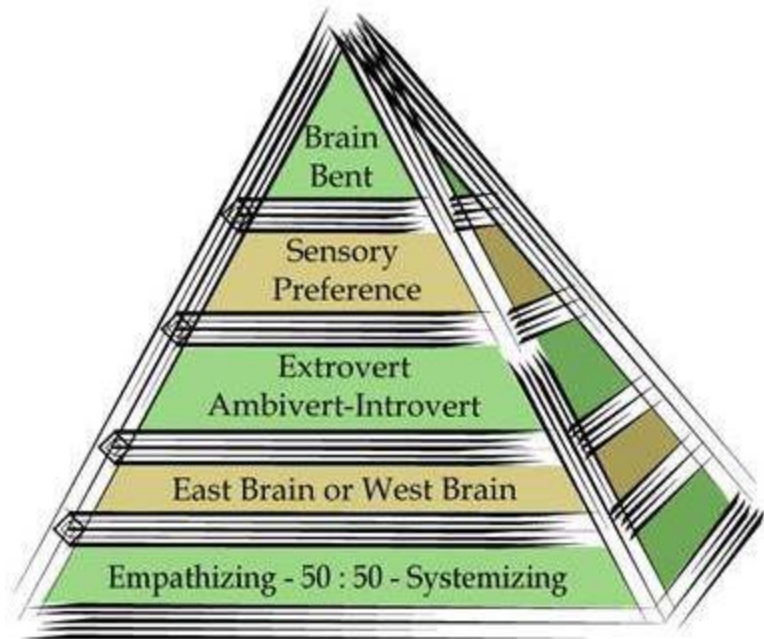
Society has a tendency toward a one-size-fits-all mentality. This became even more entrenched after the industrial revolution. Does one size really fit all? Of course not! It is definitely different strokes for different folks. To be effective with a cross-section of different folks, you need a cross-section of different strokes.

Very little (if anything) in life is free—you usually give up something to get something—you cannot do everything. Therefore, success requires careful choosing.

But what is it that you are really choosing? I think it's 'energy' and the way in which your brain gets it, expends it, and recovers from the expenditure.

The basic medium of exchange is energy (life force), not time or money or talent. The bottom line: you pay in energy! Evaluate how much a specific something (e.g., tasks, activities, relationships) costs your brain in energy. Then decide whether you want to give up that amount of energy in exchange for that something.

Living authentically is more energy efficient. In order to accomplish this, you need to identify how your brain functions most effectively. The Who-I-Am Pyramid illustration portrays five key aspects of brain function. If you can identify how each relates to your brain, at least at some level, you may be able to better manage your energy by design. That information, turned into knowledge and practically applied, can enhance your success both personally and professionally. Of necessity it is a work in progress as additional information is discovered.



Foundational layer: Empathizing, 50:50, Systemizing

All brains are believed to have empathizing and systemizing functions but they occur in different amounts. Is your brain primarily systemizing, typically associated with the male brain, or primarily empathizing, typically associated with the female brain, or a 50:50 blend of both? Dr. Simon Baron Cohan estimated that perhaps 95% of the general population may be identified in one of those three general groupings; the remaining 5% falling outside these three designations.

2nd layer up: East Brain or West Brain

Was your brain born and raised in Eastern or Western parts of this planet? Emerging research from a relatively new branch of science, Cultural Neuroscience, is discovering that potential differences may exist in both brain structure and function based on where you were born and grew up. T

3rd layer up: Extrovert, Ambivert, Introvert

The middle layer refers to your comfort level within a given environment. Does your brain function most energy-efficiently in an environment that offers relatively high levels of stimulation (Extrovert), moderate levels of stimulation (Ambivert), or low levels of external stimulation (Introvert)? You can exhibit behaviors across this continuum. Your comfort level, the amount of energy obtained or expended, and the recovery time required differs.

2nd layer from the top: Sensory Preference

Sensory preference can be defined as the type of sensory stimuli that registers most quickly and intensely in your brain. Unimpaired you can use all the senses but which one tends to get your attention fastest: visual, auditory, or kinesthetic? Sensory preference impacts the way you take in and process new information most easily and the way in which you tend to interact with others.

Peak of the Pyramid: Brain *Bent*

The term brain *bent* is also known as dominance, brain lead, giftedness, talents, or preference, to name just a few. Your brain *bent* impacts the way you pay attention to and manage data. Figure that out and you can better manage your brain's energy by design. At some level, human beings probably use all the brain all the time. Based on PET Scans by Dr. Richard Haier, however, there appear differences in the way the brain pays attention to and manages data in differing portions of the brain. This is thought to involve the relative speed at which information moves across synapses and the amount of energy that process requires in one portion of your brain over another.