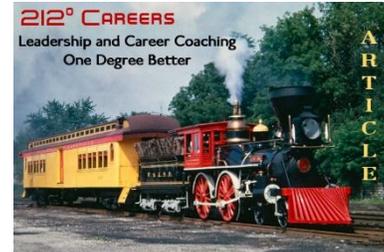


THREE ASSESSMENT THOUGHTS FOR LEADERSHIP + CAREER COACHING

"OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM"



The challenges are endless for almost everyone today. Every profession, industry, and individual faces challenges. Burnout (Resilience – Stress), the Great Resignation, or the opportunities of what often appears to be every organization hiring, plus challenges from just “keeping up” with changing technologies and customer demands. Even this list does not exhaust the challenges of today.

Coaching and assessment are two areas that have expanded in this challenging environment. As an advocate of assessment for career decision-making, leadership, resilience, and the myriad other challenges faced by everyone in today's world, assessment and coaching are worthwhile pursuits. In the spirit of my "212-Careers" philosophy, I have compiled some key points to consider.

But first, a bit of context. I have been involved professionally in the assessment arena for decades. From graduate school courses to conducting full-day "psychological assessments" to introducing assessments into more than 20 different management workshops to making assessments a core element of my coaching practice, I have delivered – **and personally taken** – scores of assessments. Another point of context is the rise and fall and rise of "testing" in career and workplace settings. Assessment has never been without its advocates and critics. Today, while perhaps some criticisms have become even louder, there has still been an explosion of new assessments and "classic" assessments delivered in new ways because of AI and online platforms. The following points are worthy of consideration because of these factors. I would like to present the following three key points for consideration within this context.

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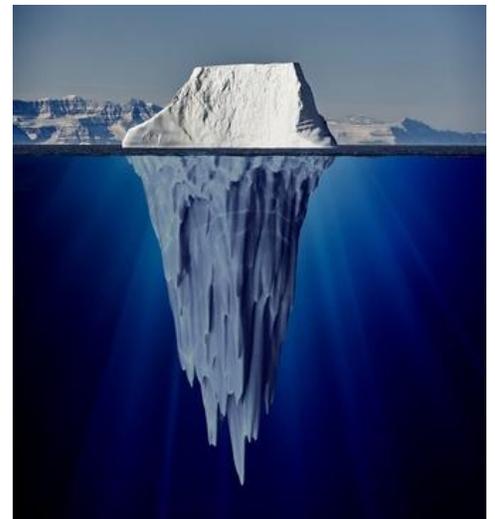
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#1 – Simplicity Rarely Enough

Today's plethora of testing alternatives also includes many assessments with no cost other than the time required to complete them. As noted above, I have taken scores of assessments over the years, including "new" ones in just the last few months. My advice for these options is to "Go for it!" if you have the time and interest. If an assessment provides you with information and insights or provokes some new learning and thinking, the time invested is likely worth it. However, "free" can sometimes indicate value.

One of the most widely assessed elements is "personality," or "style," or, as more carefully defined by the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), "preferences." A recent Military.com article identified the MBTI as its #1 recommended career test. And the ability to identify your "type" is the easiest – and least expensive (including no cost) - option for obtaining your four-letter code, e.g., ENTJ.

However, that leads to this first concern: receiving your four-letter code, even if it accurately represents your preferences, is just the tip of the iceberg if it is a one- or two-page report or a graphic with a two-sentence description on a website. The basic MBTI report is just a fraction of the in-depth information available with the MBTI Intensive, Stress, or Career Report. Working with my coaching clients, I rarely find the key insights coming from the first few "introductory" pages – and ***never from just the four-letter code.***



This point is equally essential for another popular assessment, CliftonStrengths, which over 32 million people have taken. While it is common for people to "know" their Top 5 strengths, maybe even posting them on a cubicle, on a LinkedIn profile, or referencing them on their resume, many do not understand the depth of the full 34 strengths or like the MBTI comment above, the depth of information from their "Balconies and Basements" or the specialized management or leadership interpretations.

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Another example is that more “in-depth” information allows for broader applications. The CliftonStrengths “Team Grid” provides insights for individual and team development.

	EXECUTING										INFLUENCING										RELATIONSHIP BUILDING										STRATEGIC THINKING									
	People with dominant strength in the Executing domain know how to make things happen. When you need someone to implement a solution, these are the people who will work tirelessly to get it done.										Those with Influencing strengths help their team reach a broader audience. . When you need someone to take charge, speak up, and make sure your group is heard, look to someone with the strength to influence.										Those with Relationship Building strengths are the essential glue that holds a team together. Without these strengths on a team, in many cases, the group is simply a composite of individuals.										People with great Strategic Thinking strengths are the ones who keep us all focused on what could be. They are constantly absorbing and analyzing information and helping the team make better decisions.									
	Achiever	Arranger	Belief	Consistency	Deliberative	Discipline	Focus	Responsibility	Restorative	Activator	Command	Communication	Competition	Maximizer	Self-Assurance	Significance	Woo	Adaptability	Connectedness	Developer	Empathy	Harmony	Includer	Individualization	Positivity	Relator	Analytical	Context	Futuristic	Ideation	Input	Intuition	Learner	Strategic						
5	15	13	30	29	28	12	21	33	7	11	23	27	1	10	16	22	25	14	26	34	32	24	4	17	19	20	31	18	6	3	9	2	8							
25	14	7	34	27	25	10	8	18	32	28	30	24	13	17	31	29	21	11	15	23	33	26	9	19	12	22	20	2	4	3	6	1	16							
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16	14	21	31	33	30	23	25	28	12	17	11	26	2	19	29	1	7	10	24	8	32	9	6	3	15	34	27	1	5	13	22	20	18							
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There is another message here. I will argue that numerous assessments are available today because there are multiple ways to evaluate your traits, skills, and other characteristics. If you undergo your annual physical exam, it is highly unlikely that you will only submit to one test. From a “catalog” of options, I select the appropriate tools for the client and the situation. Currently, I am following the “Omne Trium Perfectum” strategy, which involves three assessments: CliftonStrengths, the MBTI, and an emotional intelligence assessment. However, I will also look at adding assessments for Learning Style, Decision-Making Style, or...

The point is simple: a good assessment will have a depth of information beyond the “first page” and a single assessment. Of course, the cost will be different, but the investment is almost guaranteed to be worthwhile, IF...

#2 – Depth with Coaching

A corresponding growth has matched the testing explosion in the personal, leadership, or career coaching world. There are various reasons for this, and a lengthy list of benefits that can be cited for coaching, including the argument posed by some that “**everyone needs a coach!**” For the purposes of this article, however, the argument for coaching is limited to its value in interpreting and understanding assessment results.

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One of the major assessments I facilitated to over 3,000 managers was promoted by its author with the Robert Burns quote (in the original Scottish): *"O wad some Power the giftie gie us, to see oursels as ithers see us!"* In modern English, *"Oh would some power the gift give us, to see ourselves as others see us."*

Like the comment on depth, rarely is an individual going to see everything in the results from an assessment with the same "eyes" as someone familiar with the finer points of an assessment. "I didn't see that," and "I never thought about that" are just two of the common, frequent responses during a thorough review of results.

There is also a tendency for a superficial acceptance of the results. "I'm an INTJ," or even simpler, "I'm an Introvert," ignores more than just the depth of the information. It is likely to overlook actionable information that extends beyond comprehension. Many assessments, I will argue, are the better ones, as they include information that guides understanding of the results and action planning to apply this understanding to improved behaviors for leaders, better decision-making for career issues, and so on.

A good coach is guaranteed to improve your understanding of the assessment results and motivate (push—challenge) you to a better future, but only IF...

#3 – Acceptance Is Key

Real acceptance is key. The problem with most assessments, or more accurately, many individuals' responses to them, is that the simple results, even the "first-page" results of the better assessments, are easily accepted by the person completing the assessment. "That's me!" "That fits!" "It nailed me!" are just a few of the common first reactions. This can be more common with quick (and often free) assessments.

But it cannot stop there. The acceptance needs to include agreement, disagreement, thinking, questions – AND ANSWERS! When I introduce the results, the full results, from the CliftonStrengths, MBTI, or any of the other assessments I use in a particular case, I recommend the recipient first skim the report, almost scanning it for the highlights, which will include those "that's me" type reactions.

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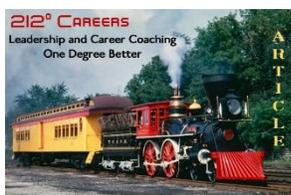
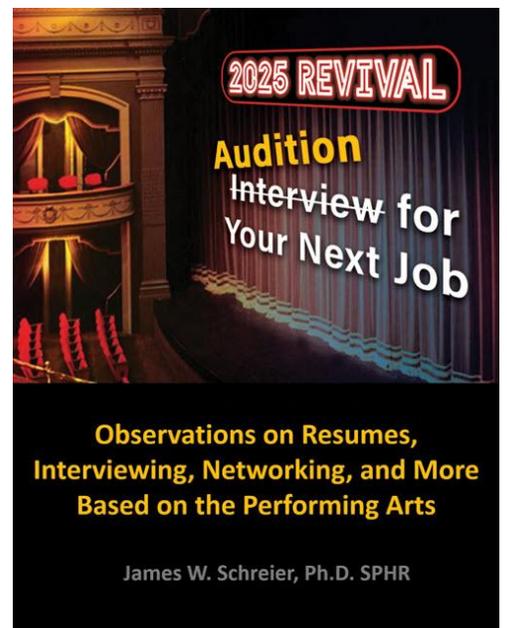
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Then, I recommend letting time pass and allowing the results to “sink in.” The next step: “*a careful perusal of the text,*” highlighting agreements, disagreements, and questions. That leads to discussion and understanding.

A final thought: In the training world, an oft-repeated argument, indeed easily posed today, is “What if we train them and they leave?” The response, of course, is: “What if we don’t train them, and they stay?” In this challenge of assessment and coaching, “I do not have the time to take tests and work with a coach! I’m too stressed!” The response is again clear: “What if you don’t?”

James W. Schreier, Ph.D., SPHR, has assessed and trained 1000’s of individuals. His assessment “tool kit” includes multiple options for customized assessments, as well as coaching programs for individuals and organizations. His current “*omne trium perfectum*” (‘everything that comes in threes is perfect’) is a combination of the MBTI, CliftonStrengths, and the EIQ-2 Emotional Intelligence Assessment. However, the toolkit includes assessments for learning style, leadership effectiveness, decision-making style, personality, career traits, etc.

In the career coaching world, Jim brings the unique perspective from his book, “Interview Audition for Your Next Job,” to coach clients on their resumes, interviews, LinkedIn profiles, and... His [212-Careers](#) site offers complimentary resources and learning opportunities.



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