

Foreword

I became aware of Dr. Taibi Kahler in the mid 1970s, as a result of innovative work he was doing in the field of communication. In 1978, when astronaut selection was resumed in preparation for NASA's shuttle program, Dr. Kahler was invited to participate with me as a consultant in a selection cycle. As I conversed with the individual applicants, Dr. Kahler sat quietly and listened, only rarely asking a pertinent question. Ten to fifteen minutes into each two hour interview, he would make a few notes on a piece of paper and place it on the floor. When each interview was completed, we would share our findings. To my amazement, he had been able to extract and commit to paper at least an equal amount of meaningful data about the applicant's personality structure in a fraction of the time it had taken me. My response was, "I must learn how he does that." Thus began a long and very satisfying personal and professional relationship that continues to grow and be enriched with the passage of time.

First, regarding his professional accomplishments, I have had the pleasure of watching the Kahler Process Model continue to evolve into a truly remarkable technique that presents a veritable cascade of pragmatically useful information. An important by-product of his investigations has been the Personality Pattern Inventory. This is not a "test," since there are no right or wrong answers, but rather an invaluable instrument meant to delineate a roster of personality characteristics, communication preferences, defenses, and the like. Even the pathways of greater vulnerability for the individual to "mess up" are identified.

The Kahler Process Model has been so very useful that it has now become part of my day-to-day interaction with others. This is not in a one-ups-manship sense, but rather as a communication tool and a facilitator of empathic understanding. If clean communication is really the name of the game, the more rapidly I can assess the strengths, needs, vulnerabilities, communication skills and preferred communication channels of the individual with whom I am dealing, the more effectively we together can deal with life's problems... or play, or nurture, or love, or any of those other functions that are ultimately as important as work.

I have had the opportunity in my walk of life to have known a number of "professional giants" in the fields of behavioral science and medicine. Individuals of well-deserved national or international reputation. I have had some remarkable teachers, but I am the most grateful for what I have learned from my continued contact with Taibi Kahler.

Let me tell you something of the man, for I believe this will explain in part why he has been able to accomplish so much. In life's journey, most of us meet only a handful of those very complete individuals who seem to have it all together. They have a remarkable empathic awareness of the position from which others operate, are at peace with themselves, are benignly oriented toward the rest of the world, and know how to smile at the absurdities of life. Dr. Kahler is such a man.

Perhaps the most important of the pivotal needs for close relationships is trust. Literally, I would trust Taibi Kahler with my life or my wife. I have never seen him use his prodigious intellect to put someone down or to impress at someone else's expense. He is interesting to watch in any situation where his leverage is high, for I have never seen him use the power of the moment to put another person at disadvantage. He is truly into the win-win proposition. His honesty, his remarkable intellect, his irrepressible good humor, his wide range of interests, his compassion, his non-defensiveness, and his disinterest in playing manipulative psychologic games mark him as the most remarkable—the most complete—man it has been my privilege to know.

As I read back over what I have written, it sounds more like a eulogy than an objective appraisal of the man and his work. But fear not; he is alive and well, and the descriptions are accurate. Much of my professional life has been involved with the objective assessment of men and women and their tolerance to the insults and joys of life. I believe Dr. Kahler to be the premier expert in process communication in our country and well beyond. I, for one, intend to continue to learn from him and to enjoy the pleasure of his company.

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