



Case Name: Weird John

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The challenge: A father and son situation in which the father had given up on the son ever becoming a member of the family and amounting to something.

Purpose:

Provide a basis for the father to understand the son and through that understanding, make the necessary changes so that a good parental relationship can be established.

Existing conditions:

The father approached me to see if I could apply the HBDI to diagnose a family problem. The father was concerned about his son, John, and expressed an interest in finding out more about him to discover what was wrong. He described John as a really different kid, weird. He said that he and his wife sometimes joked that maybe the hospital made a mistake and they took home the wrong baby. "He is so different from us and the rest of the family that we really wonder about him." "We don't understand him and have trouble communicating with him." The father states that he "is really concerned about John's future." He says, "I don't like his friends. I can't stand his hobbies. He doesn't seem to be able to develop a career path that fits in with our family background." As a father, he really didn't feel he could help him very much. He asked if I would do John's profile along with the rest of the family.

Desired outcome:

Establish a favorable father/son relationship and in the process emancipate John from being the victim of a dysfunctional father.

Short term:

Provide a basis for correcting the father's inappropriate and incorrect view of John.

Long term:

Provide a basis for the family, consisting of father, mother, two brothers, and a sister to understand themselves and to understand John. To provide John with a basis for understanding himself that could lead toward building his self-esteem and confidence on a time-line consistent with John's need to graduate from high school, choose a college and an educational path for the future.

Whole Brain intervention methods, processes and strategies:

Administer the HBDI to the entire family, counsel the father on how to accomplish this, and provide him with the necessary participant survey forms.

Once the data has been gathered, score the instruments, and provide the father with an interpretation of the family data in general, and John specifically. Coach the father on how to gather the family together and process the completed profiles.

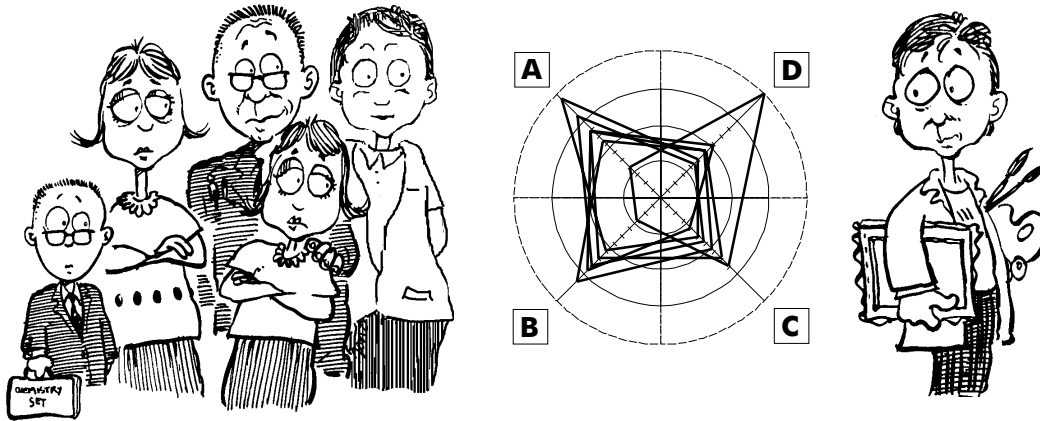
Summary of outcomes:

The mother, father and three siblings taken together represented a homogeneous tribe of five people. In contrast, John represented a mirror image switch of the family average. John's most preferred quadrant was the family's least preferred. John's second most preferred quadrant was the family's second least preferred. John's least preferred quadrants represented the family's most preferred. John was, in most respects, a mental opposite from his family. As often occurs with tribes, the family members had, over the course of years, dug a moat, built a wall, and invented an "anti-John weapon." The word 'weird', successfully kept John at a distance for most of his young adult years.

Optimizing the results:

Short term: The father looked at the composite family profile and said, "My God, what have I done?" I asked the father if John ever went out with his friends and he said, "Oh, yes. Very often." I said, "In that case, fantasize John talking to his friends about his weird family." For the father, this was a new idea. As the family gathered around the dining room table to share the profiles, they were both expectant and apprehensive. I provided the father with personal profiles for each individual in the family and also a family composite. There was silence as the father distributed a personal profile to each family member. As he did so, he provided an overview of the Whole Brain concept and the basis of the four quadrant profile. Silence prevailed throughout this process. The father distributed the family composite which revealed the tribal nature of the parents and the three siblings, and the strikingly different nature of John's profile. Although silence continued, the father reported a stunned expression on the faces of the mother and the children. After another moment had gone by, one of the brothers looked at John and said, quite tentatively, "Hello, John," as if seeing John's uniqueness for the first time. The rest of the family, each in their own way, joined in welcoming John back to the family group from which they had previously excluded him.

There was, of course, nothing wrong with John. He was, and is, simply different from the rest of the family. His preferred mode of knowing is mostly non-verbal, non-linear, and soft, which renders him vulnerable to rejection and criticism from those of the opposing preferences. John's visible behaviors accentuate the differences. His hair, his dress, his hobbies, his music, his school program, his leisure activities all differ from the tribal culture of his family. Viewed from the tribal perspective of the family, John was a misfit. Viewed from John's perspective, he was an outcast.



Long term:





Over the weeks and months that followed, John began to claim his personal space which, while different, was nevertheless that of a member of the family. As his self-esteem increased and his confidence grew he asserted his authentic difference, which, while still somewhat of an irritant to his father, gradually gained an acceptance of his siblings and his mother. John's interest in art gained the support of his parents and they encouraged him to develop his skills and exhibit his work. When John won a blue ribbon at a local art show, his father was ecstatic. The fact that the people approved of John's work and even awarded him a prize helped to legitimize John's artistic interests, skills, and competencies. The father gradually became proud of his son, and told him so. John gradually became a happy child and worked hard at relating to his parents and his siblings.

John pursued a career in art. After a while he developed a relationship with a young woman and married her. Of all John's friends, she was the family favorite. Her HBDI profile was almost an exact duplicate of John's mother. Even though John had allowed himself to become victimized by his non-understanding and disapproving parents, he still needed to seek a relationship with his mental opposite. Together, John and his bride represented a good composite whole brain.

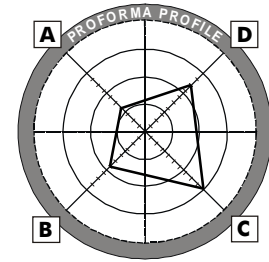
Measurement criteria applied:

The success measurement process provides for up to 100 points to indicate the level of success attained in each of the four different aspects of the project. The "success measurement results" are as follows:

- A quadrant: Some new facts about John and the family were revealed and accepted.
- B quadrant: Family structure and traditions were attended to.
- C quadrant: A breakthrough in family relationships was achieved.
- D quadrant: John's creativity was acknowledged and accepted by the family.

Metaphors		Success measurement points	
A 	D 	A 40	D 80
B 	C 	B 60	C 100

Proforma of success measurement



Other outcomes:

The “Weird John” story served as a catalyst for the resolution of many other father/son, mother/daughter, boss/subordinate situations. People hearing the story discovered situations in their own family or work life that were similar to Weird John. To my knowledge, every one has been successfully pursued, with the result that many difficult relationships have been significantly improved.