

The FIRO-B
Instrument
Fundamental
Interpersonal
Relationship
Orientation-
Behavior

Claudia Fernandez, DrPH, RD, LDN

Part I:
What is Motivation
in Organizational
and Team Settings?
*Understanding the
FIRO-B Theory*

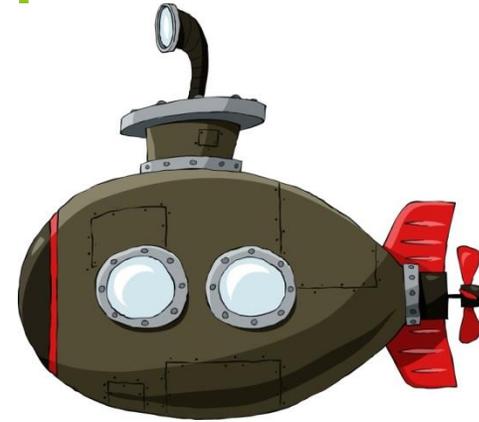
What does the FIRO-B tell me?

- ▶ A practical tool that helps you understand how your behaviors might be interpreted in organizational settings.
- ▶ Interpersonal behaviors are related to the dynamic of what we express towards others and want from others.

Where did it come from?



Supported by US Government during the Korean war.



Who gets the key to the nuclear missiles?

Helped the Navy understand how to put people together into high stress situations.



The FIRO-B addresses 3 aspects of interaction between you & others

Inclusion

Who will you select to interact with?

How does the initial phase of interaction work out?

Control:

Who directs the flow of interaction?

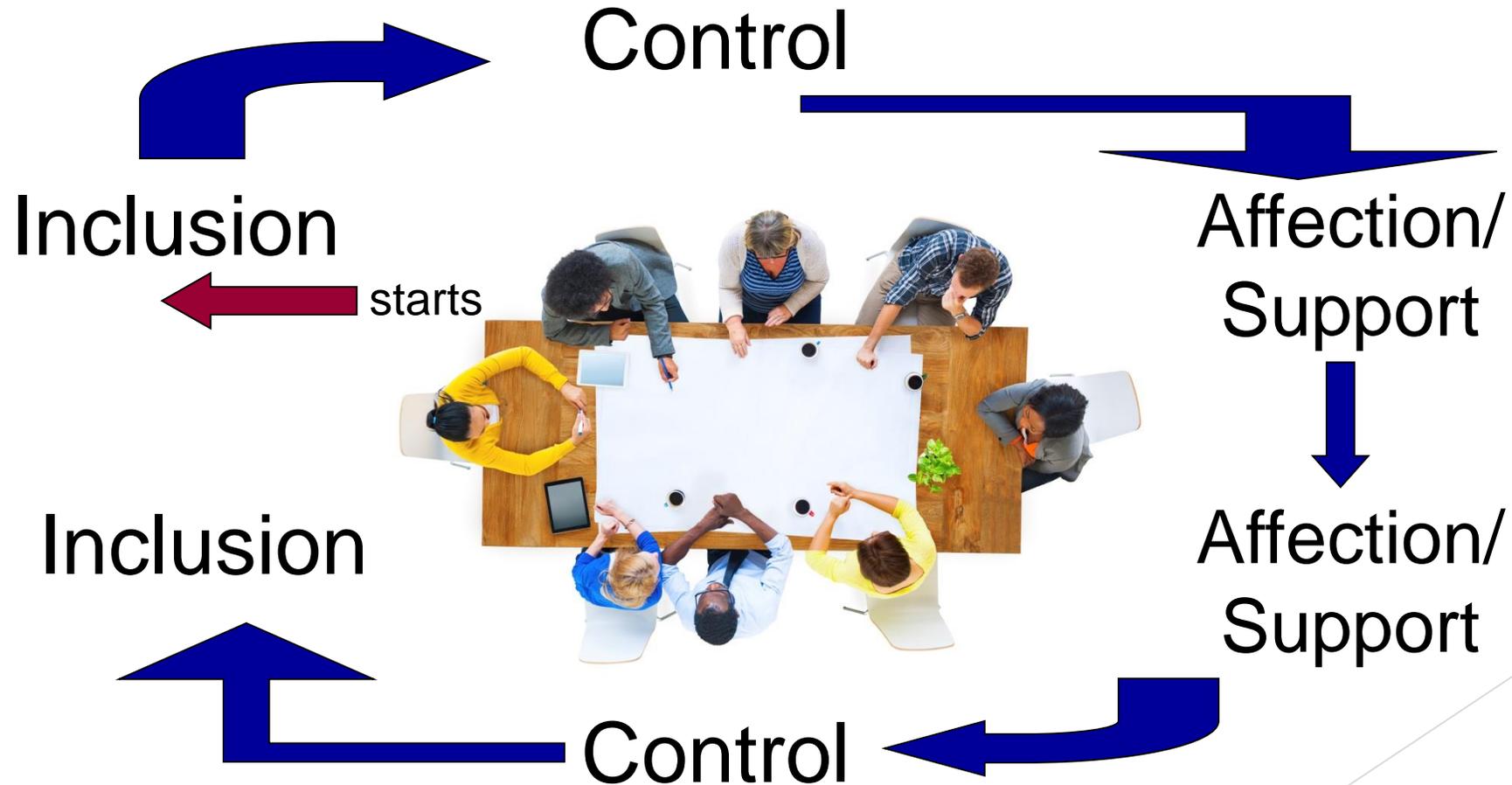
How do the parameters of that interaction get set?

Affection

How OPEN is the interaction with another?

What is the nature of support in that interaction?

There is a cycle to how interactions evolve between people



What is INCLUSION about?

Inclusion



A person walks into the room.
What behaviors do you do to help
that person feel included?

Ignore them



Make eye contact

Motion them over:
“hey, sit here!”

Wave



Introduce them

A story by way of example...



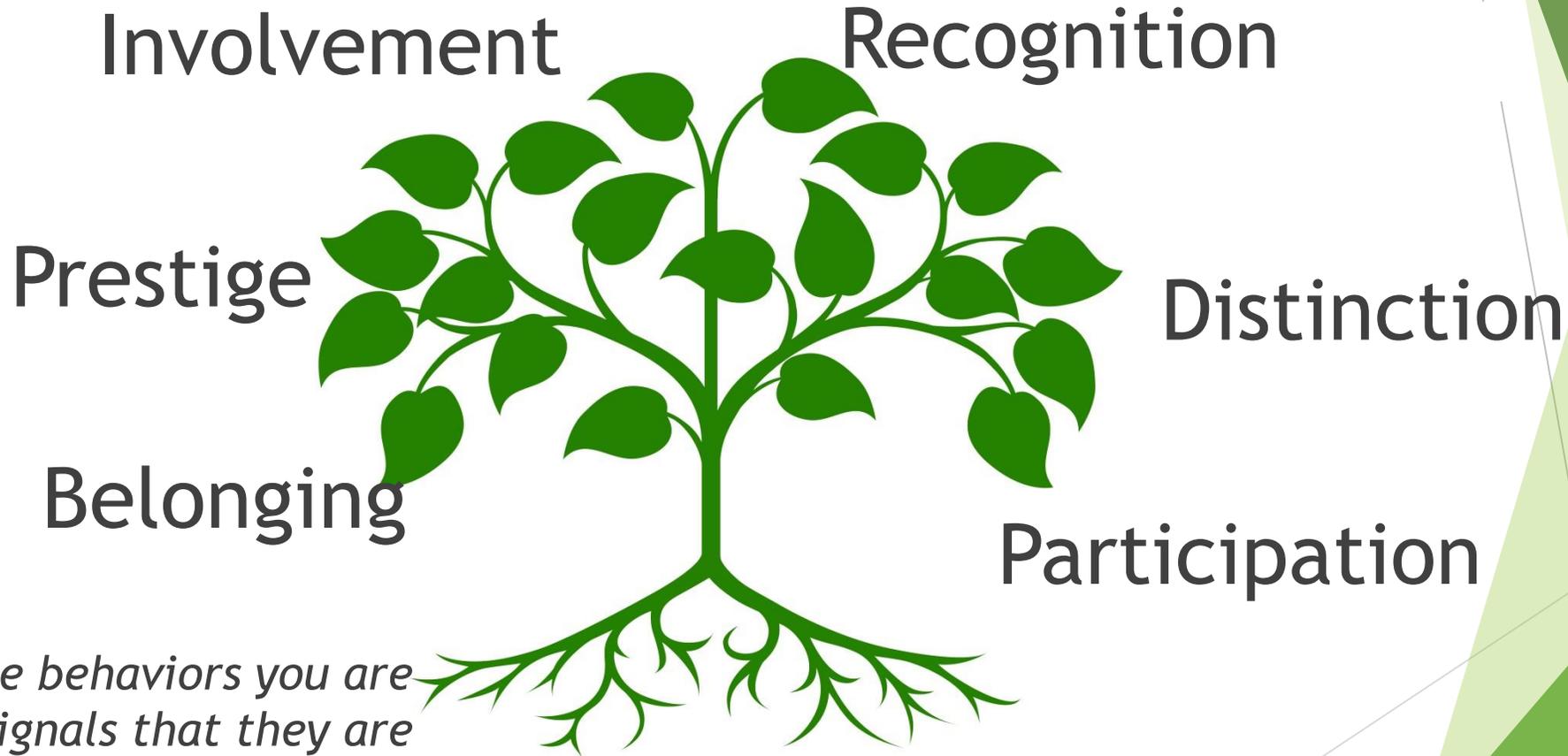
**Understanding
Inclusion Cultures**

**The Impact of
Inclusion Errors**



“HEAR ME”

INCLUSION at its root and
expressed behaviors:



IMPORTANT a.k.a. RESPECTED

The Iceberg Model of Understanding Inclusion

- How do I approach others?
- How do I want them to approach me?

Above the water line

Below the water line

- How significant do I really feel?
- Do I feel involved here? Important?
- Do my ideas matter at all?
- Do I belong?

Inclusion

Expressed

I make an effort to include others in my activities. I try to participate, to join social groups—to be with people as much as possible.

Wanted

I want other people to invite me to belong. I enjoy it when others notice me.

What is CONTROL about?

Share goals and objectives



How does the interaction
FLOW between people?

How is there control over
who speaks and when?

It's about cueing others



Make eye contact

Take notes... or not

Call on someone

Stand up

Raise your hand

Jump in!

A story by way of example...



Understanding Control Cultures

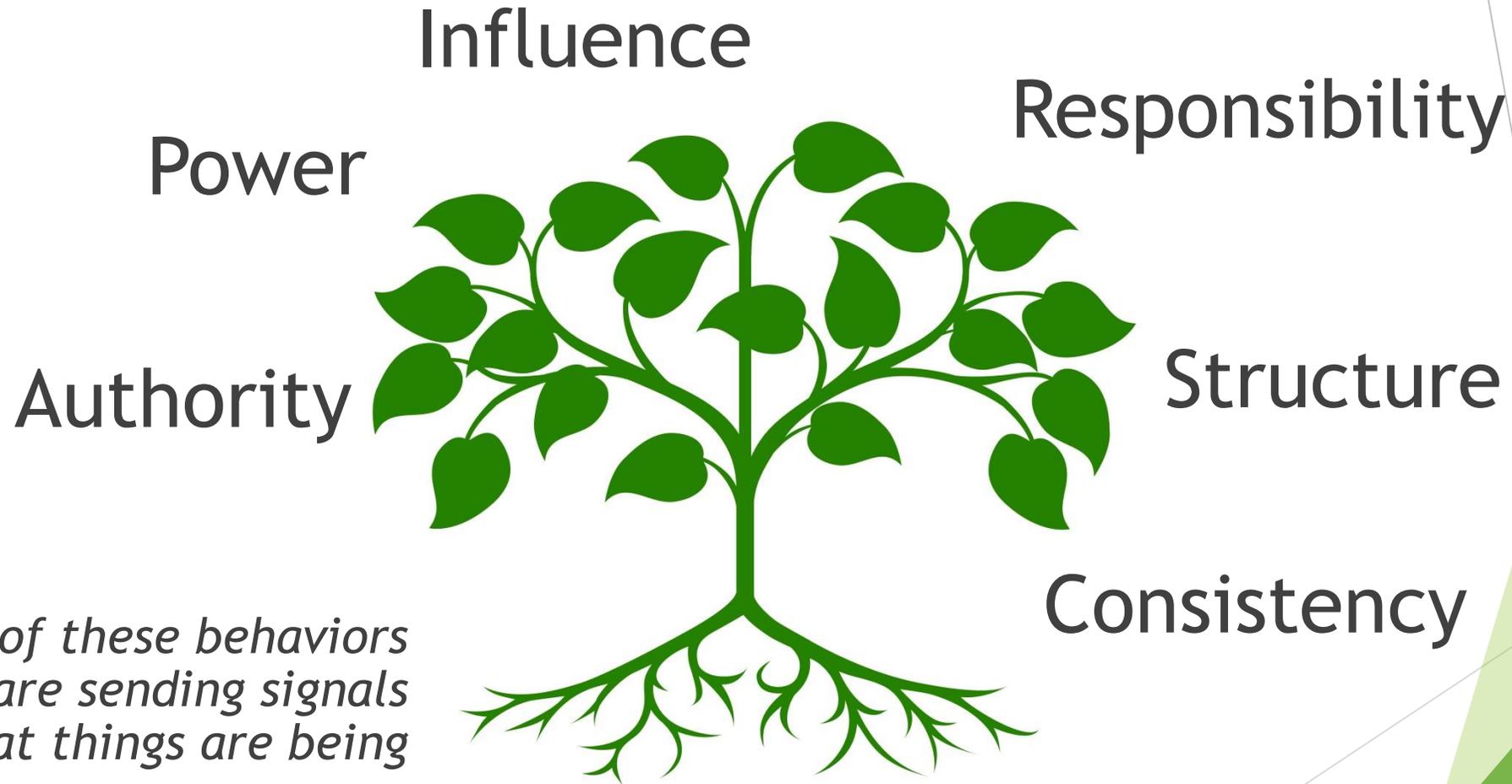
Bill & Dave's not so excellent adventure



The Impact of Control Errors

“No surprises”

CONTROL at its root and
expressed behaviors:



DIRECTED a.k.a. NO CHAOS

The Iceberg Model of Understanding Control

- What kind of direction/cueing do I want to give others?
- What kind of direction/cueing do I want others to give to me?

Above the water line

Below the water line

- How competent do I really feel?
- Do others see me as competent?
- Do I think others are competent?
- Do I over control the situation because of my feelings about the competence of myself or others?

Inclusion

Expressed

I make an effort to include others in my activities. I try to participate, to join social groups—to be with people as much as possible.

Wanted

I want other people to invite me to belong. I enjoy it when others notice me.

Control

Expressed

I try to exert control and influence over things. I enjoy organizing things and directing others.

Wanted

I feel most comfortable working in well-defined situations. I try to get clear expectations and instructions.

What is AFFECTION about?



How do you express support, encouragement, or appreciation for others?

How do you acknowledge the contribution of another?

Thank them

Your work is heartfelt and touching!

How was your weekend?

Employee of the Month

Hug or handshake

Dove Bars!

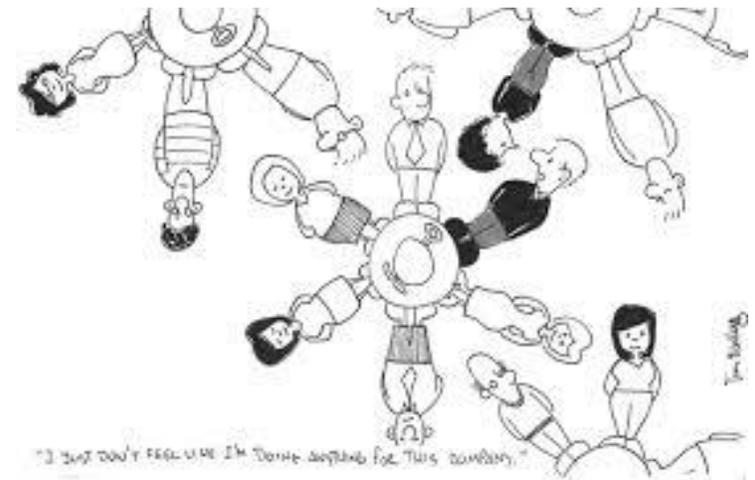
Applaud!

A story by way of example...



Understanding
Affection Cultures

The Impact of Affection Errors



“CARE about me” /
”Hug me”

AFFECTION at its root and expressed behaviors:

Sensitivity

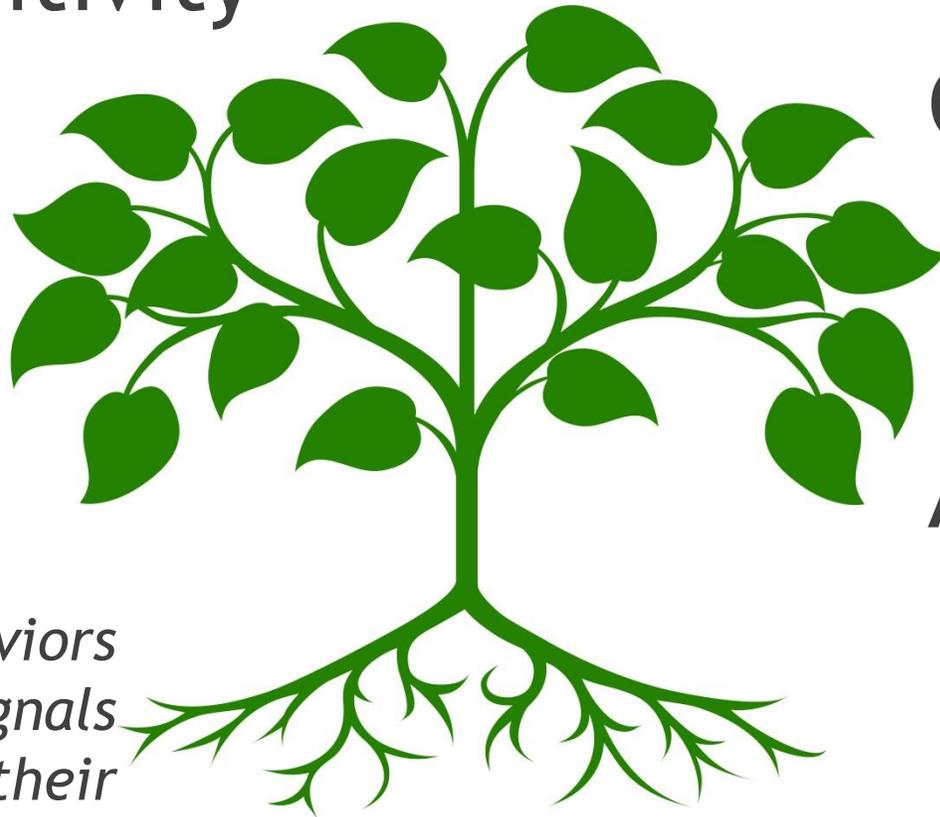
Personalities

Support

Openness
& Warmth

Consensus

Appreciation



*With all of these behaviors
you are sending signals
indicating their*

PERSONAL WORTH a.k.a. “Lovability”

The Iceberg Model of Understanding Affection

- What kind of connection do I want to have with others?
- What kind of support and encouragement do I show and do I want?

Above the water line

Below the water line

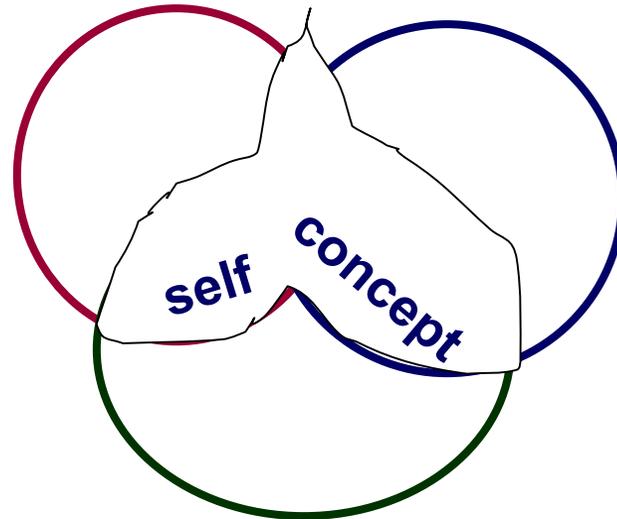
- Do I fail to show emotional support towards others because I don't feel a strong sense of my own worth?
- Do I seek a lot of connection with others to bolster my sense of self-worth?

| Inclusion | Control | Affection |
|---|--|--|
| <p>(High) Expressed</p> <p>I make an effort to include others in my activities. I try to participate, to join social groups—to be with people as much as possible.</p> | <p>(High) Expressed</p> <p>I try to exert control and influence over things. I enjoy organizing things and directing others.</p> | <p>(High) Expressed</p> <p>I make an effort to get close to people. I am comfortable expressing personal feelings and I try to be supportive of others.</p> |
| <p>(High) Wanted</p> <p>I want other people to invite me to belong. I enjoy it when others notice me.</p> | <p>(High) Wanted</p> <p>I feel most comfortable working in well-defined situations. I try to get clear expectations and instructions.</p> | <p>(High) Wanted</p> <p>I want others to act warmly towards me. I enjoy it when people share their feelings with me and when they encourage my efforts.</p> |

FIRO-B is based on Self Concept

Significance (Inclusion)

A sense of belonging to the world, that one's presence matters leading to behaviors related to inclusion



Lovability (Affection)

A sense that we are lovable, deserving of love and being loved, seeking connection with others, leading to behaviors related to affection and openness.

Competence (Control)

A sense that we can act, decide and direct our actions successfully, leading to behaviors of control.

What happens when it's too much, or too little, of the behaviors?

| | Too little | Too much |
|------------------|--|---|
| Inclusion | People might perceive you as a cold fish, “prickly” or abrupt | Get stuck, don't progress, lose credibility |
| Control | Chaos reigns or your agenda goes by the wayside | Others feel left out, lectured to, their ideas aren't invited |
| Affection | People feel their work or contribution is unappreciated, they are a cog in the wheel | People are uncomfortable, at the extreme—sexual harassment lawsuits |

Insights from the FIRO-B: If you have...

| | HIGH Wanted Then you may perceive | LOW Wanted Then you may perceive |
|------------------|--|--|
| Inclusion | Lack of acknowledgement as negative, rejections as devastating, being away as “missing the action” | Most invitations as obligatory, group time as wasteful |
| Control | Any structuring as inadequate, standard procedures as comforting | Any control as too much; plans and structures as pressure, competitive behavior as annoying |
| Affection | Lack of expressed concern as insensitive, infrequent feedback frustrating | Reassurances as superficial, personal questions as intrusive, emotions as distracting/trying |

What does it mean to have a high expressed affection score?



The FIRO-B

Part II: Understanding your results



Claudia Fernandez, DrPH, RD, LDN

What you will see

| | Inclusion | Control | Affection | |
|-----------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Expressed | (0-9) | (0-9) | (0-9) | Total Expressed (0-27) |
| Wanted | (0-9) | (0-9) | (0-9) | Total Wanted (0-27) |
| | Total Inclusion (0-18) | Total Control (0-18) | Total Affection (0-18) | OVERALL TOTAL (0-54) |

What you will see

| | Inclusion | Control | Affection | |
|--|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | Total Inclusion | Total Control | Total Affection | |

“HEAR ME”

“No surprises”

“CARE about me”

How does the instrument assess all of this?

**2 aspects of interpersonal interaction:
wanted and expressed**

Of including, controlling and
expressing encouragement in
interaction with others

FREQUENCY

**NUMBER OF
PEOPLE**

With whom you express or
want these behaviors

What you will see

| Expressed | | | | Total Expressed |
|-----------|--|--|--|-----------------|
| Wanted | | | | Total Wanted |
| | | | | |

>4 point
difference
is
meaningful

What you will see

| | | | | OVERALL TOTAL |
|--|--|--|--|--------------------------|

This is the amount of energy you put into interpersonal interactions

What you will see

| | Inclusion | Control | Affection | |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Expressed | | | | Total Expressed |
| Wanted | | | | Total Wanted |
| | Total Inclusion | Total Control | Total Affection | OVERALL TOTAL |

What you will see

| | Inclusion | Control | Affection | |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Expressed | x | x | X | Total Expressed |
| Wanted | x | x | x | Total Wanted |
| | Total Inclusion | Total Control | Total Affection | OVERALL TOTAL |

What do the scores mean?

- 0-2** You are pretty selective and display these behaviors on rare occasions to a few people
- 3-6** You are pretty situational in these behaviors, displaying them with some people
- 7-9** You express these behaviors with many people, much of the time

What you will see

| | Inclusion | Control | Affection | |
|-----------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Expressed | (0-9) | (0-9) | (0-9) | Total Expressed (0-27) |
| Wanted | (0-9) | (0-9) | (0-9) | Total Wanted (0-27) |
| | Total Inclusion (0-18) | Total Control (0-18) | Total Affection (0-18) | OVERALL TOTAL (0-54) |

What does it mean to have high vs. low scores?



**But either way
you have a
pond with fish
in it!**

Example insights from the FIRO-B I

This person might be a do-it-yourself

>4 pt difference: aware that you either initiate/want more interaction from others

| | I | C | A | |
|-----------|----|---|----|----|
| Expressed | 6 | 7 | 6 | 19 |
| Wanted | 6 | 1 | 5 | 12 |
| | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| | 12 | 8 | 11 | 31 |

Sometimes they invite you to lunch, sometimes they want to be invited

31—that's a moderate amount of energy put into relationships, the higher the score the more likely they are to be gregarious

Example insights from the FIRO-B II

When warm and close it's with family members and close friends

Probably pretty satisfied with their wants and gets in interpersonal actions

| | I | C | A | |
|-----------|---|---|---|--------|
| Expressed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 8 |
| Wanted | 5 | 2 | 1 | |
| | 6 | 4 | 4 | 14 |

This person might feel left out—they want to be included but who knows?

14-a selectively social person who is probably an MBTI introvert

What if you worked with this person?

Will this person feel comfortable talking to you? Feel important? As though you think they are competent?

How can you express behaviors to connect, motivate, influence and lead this person?

| | I | C | A | |
|-----------|----|---|----|----|
| Expressed | 9 | 4 | 9 | 22 |
| Wanted | 9 | 2 | 8 | 19 |
| | 18 | 6 | 17 | 41 |

This person wants everyone to come along and doesn't want to miss out

41—a very social person who is probably an extravert and very gregarious: the Julie McCoy-Love Boat Cruise Director type

FSLI Cohort 17
Average FIRO-B Score

| | I | C | A | |
|-----------|-----|-----|------|------|
| Expressed | 4.3 | 3.2 | 5.0 | 12.5 |
| Wanted | 4.1 | 3.1 | 5.5 | 12.7 |
| | 8.4 | 6.3 | 10.5 | 25.1 |

Your groups highest
source of motivation



So what can I do with this information?

Use this insight into your behaviors with others

How do your behaviors potentially MEET the needs of others?



How do they MISS the needs of others?

What are the intended consequences of your behaviors?



What are the unintended consequences of your behaviors?

What kind of feedback do you get from others?



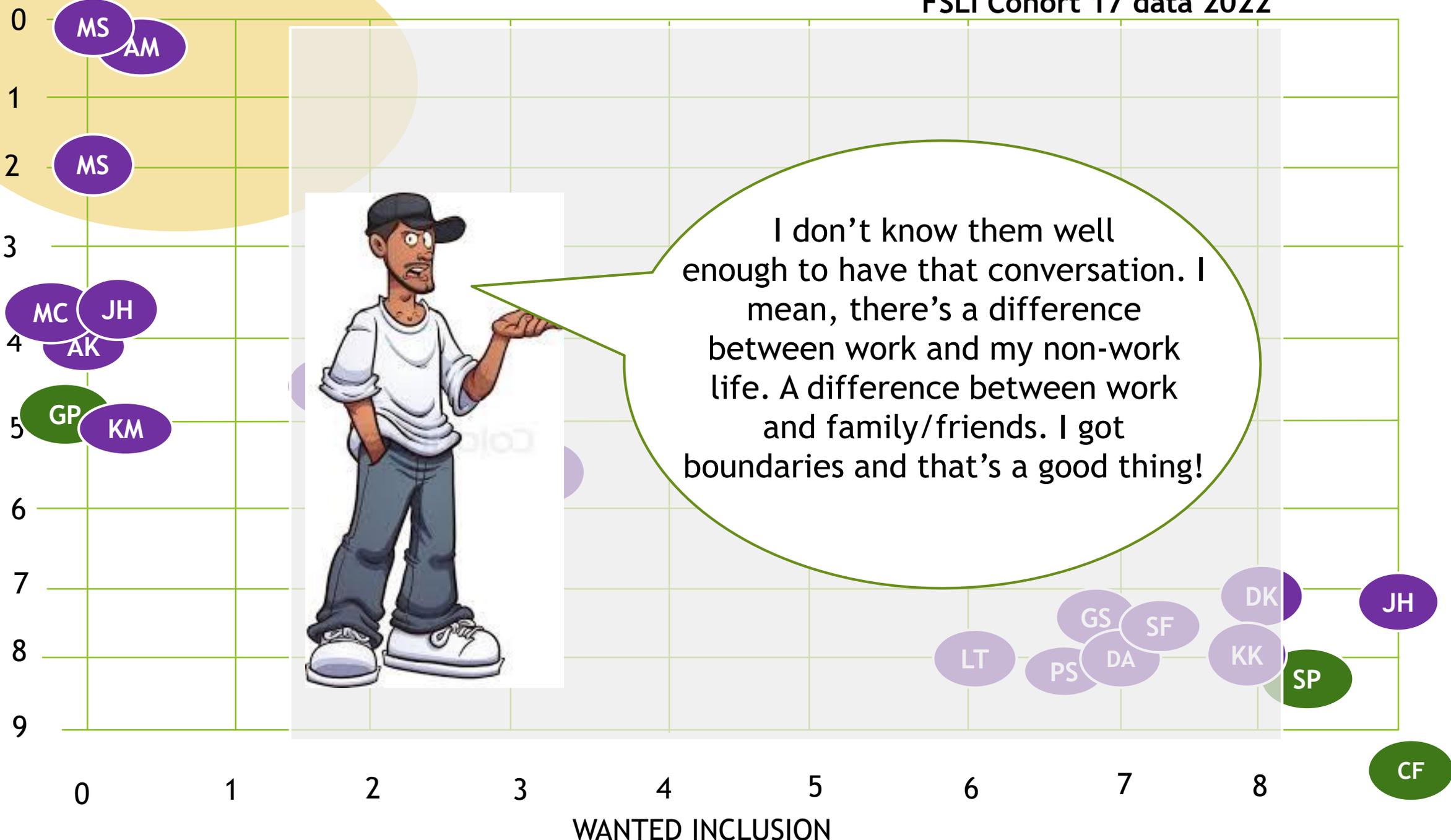
But there is SO much more....

- ▶ The FIRO-B can be a great tool to help you work together better in an environment of tolerance support, where people are different and working on a common goal.
- ▶ BUT it can also help you understand some of the deeper aspects of WHY you interact with others in the way you do...

FSLI Cohort 17 data 2022

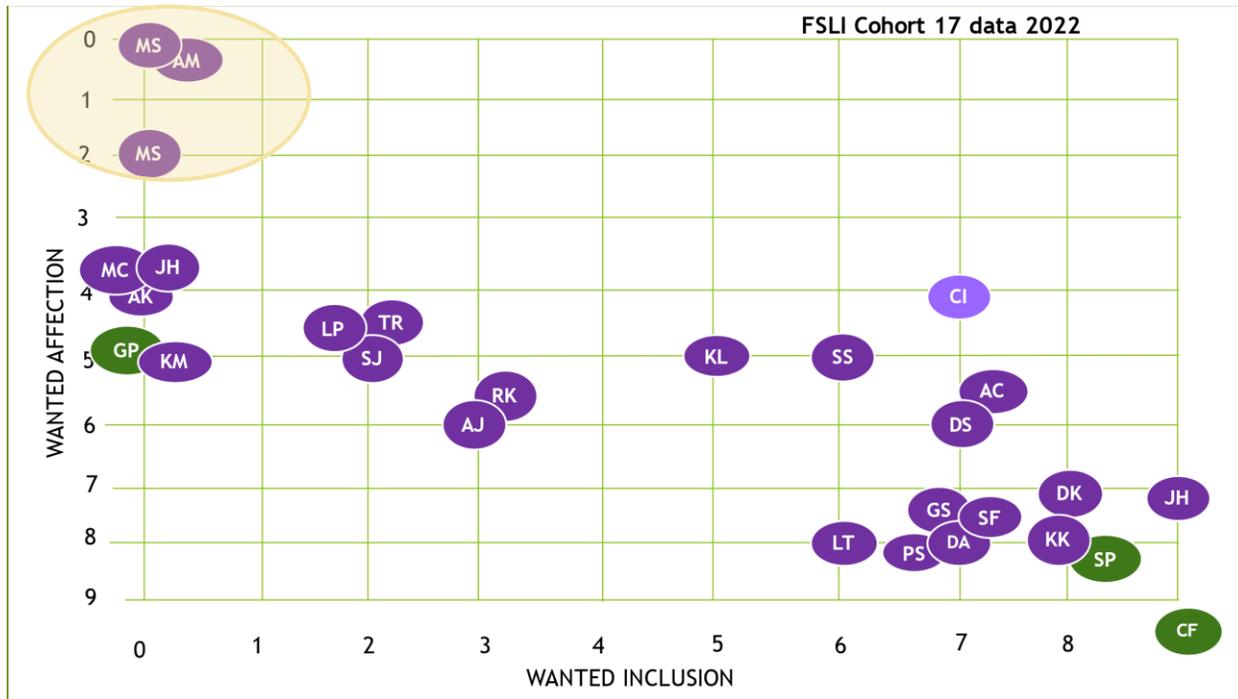


WANTED AFFECTION



I don't know them well enough to have that conversation. I mean, there's a difference between work and my non-work life. A difference between work and family/friends. I got boundaries and that's a good thing!

FSLI Cohort 17 data 2022



Q: How often do you check in with the folks you are working with?

Umm... never. I mean, why, would I do that?
If they need me, they'll come to me. Otherwise I would just be nagging them...



I hire really smart people for this job. I trust that they can work independently, just like I do. I mean, if they can't do that then, well, why would they be here?



I read that in a leadership book and it's a GREAT idea! I had my secretary put it on my calendar to do a walk around and check in with people every three weeks!

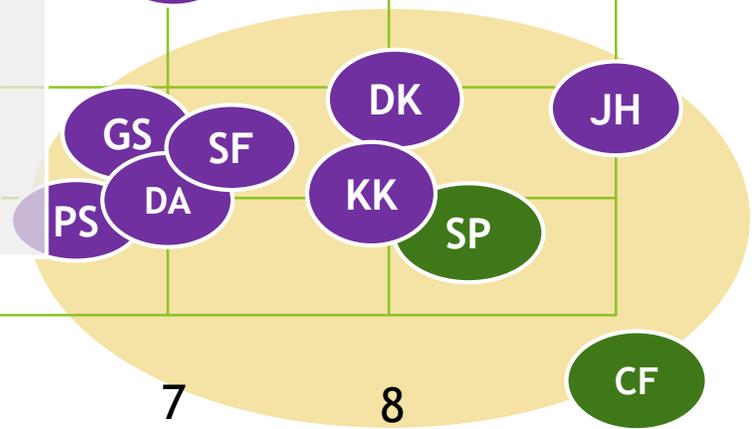
WANTED AFFECTION

0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

WANTED INCLUSION

A new committee? That sounds really interesting. Hey, here is Juan, he'd be an excellent addition to that group as well. Sure! Sign me up. Wait a minute...this is how I end up on a million committees!



MS AM

MS

MC

A

GP

KN

AJ RK

CI

AC

DS

GS

SF

DK

JH

PS

DA

KK

SP

CF

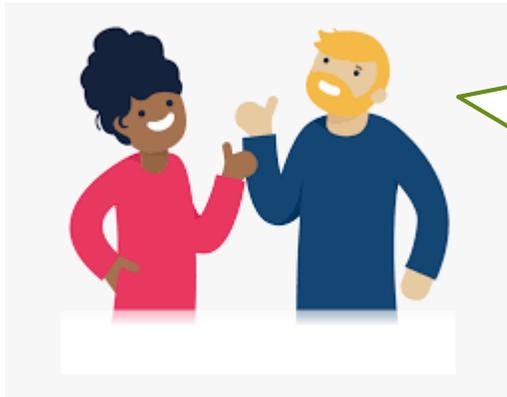
LI

Q: How often do you check in with the folks you are working with?

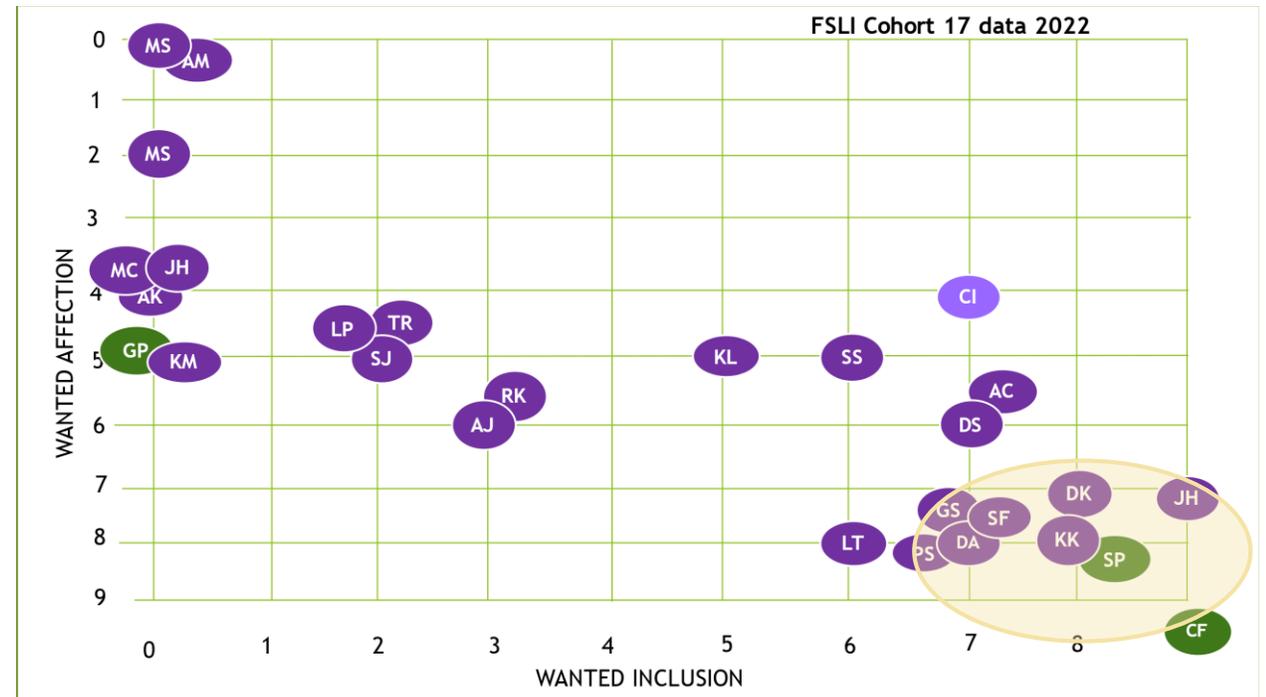


Several times a day! We do great work because we are really tightly connected. We have regular short huddles all the time

I believe in a whole-person approach to work and life. You can't artificially separate life into "work" and "home". You have to accept that everyone has real lives.



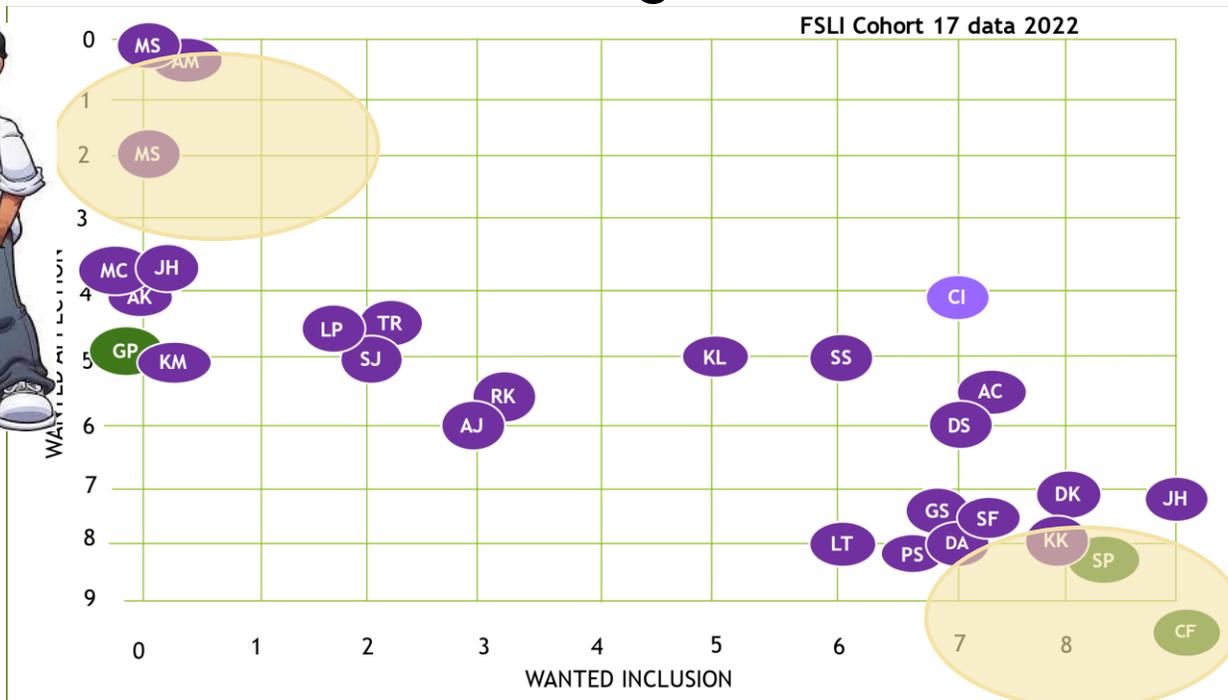
I see the people I work with more than I see my own family. It's important that we get along. They're my work-family!



Mismatches: One of the Great Insights from the FIRO-B

Q: How does it feel to be managed by someone from the corner opposite from you, particularly when they are managing you like they might like to be managed?

Suffocating, like I'm being micro-managed, it's like they don't trust me to do the work well enough on my own.



I feel so neglected, abandoned. Where's the collaboration? I feel like I'm just a cog in their wheel... why would I want to work someplace where I'm am just a cog in a wheel?

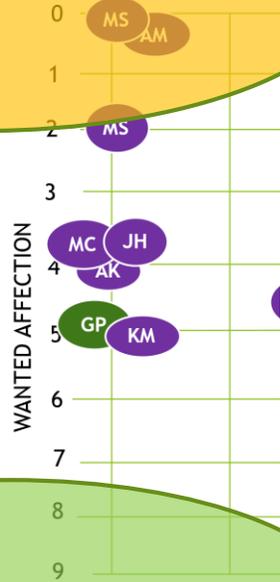


Mapping out some meaning...



The "Individual Contributor"

"I'll get it done and get it back to you!"



"It all depends..."

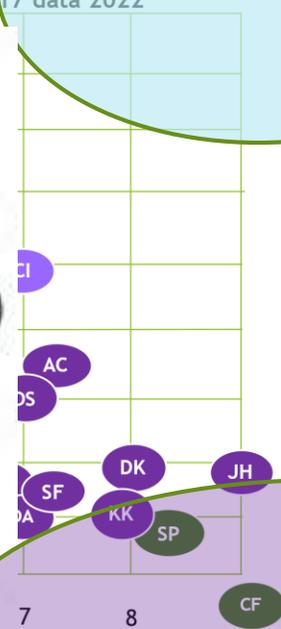


The Situational Decider

The "Face Of..."

"Go get things done!"

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The "Highly Connected Team Mate"

"We'll get it done...together!"

The "Anonymous Donor"

"Behind-the-scenes people really get things done!"



Part III

Applying these Results



What is the Golden Rule?





How do you
know if your
cat loves
you?



The Golden Rule



What a cat wants from you to know that it is loved...



The moral of the story:

Treat people the way they need to be treated so **THEY** can thrive

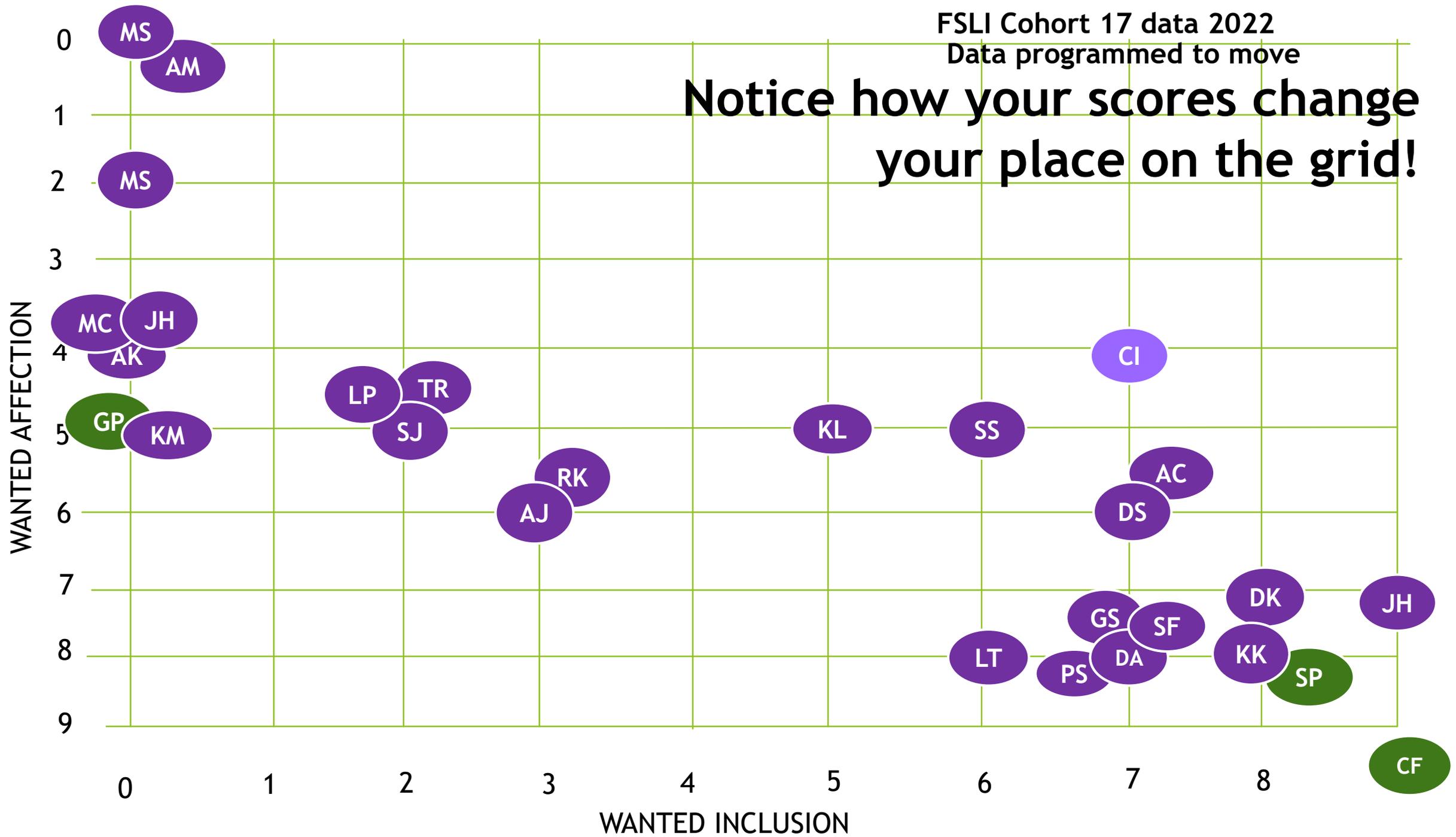
Serving as a leader means it's not about you...



FSLI Cohort 17 data 2022



Notice how your scores change
your place on the grid!



People need people—but the psychological research around how much and what kind of interaction people need shows:

What you
want vs.
What you
say...

- “Wants” are often different from what we tell or show others
- It’s easy to jump to conclusion about what people *want* based on the behaviors you see from them—behaviors which might be required by their jobs

