

Instincts, Russ Hudson

Instincts are the foundation of our survival structures that support our body. They represent needs, and our ‘object relations’ grow out of our needs. Our sense of self – and thus our needs – does not exist in a vacuum but in relationship with others. This relationship of self and other, of which there are many, is characterized by particular emotions. [See also the Object Relations Triad of “rejection, frustration and attachment.”]

Instincts dwell in our Body Center, below the waistline. Our physical sensations only happen in the present, in the now. As you relax and become grounded in your body, your heart becomes more available to your emotions. And then there’s naturally less for your mind to do.

There are actually **7 Centers** – The belly, heart and head, but the belly center is 3 centers in itself: SP, SO and SX [heart+head+SP+SX+SO = 5 Centers]. The other 2 centers are the **Higher Emotional Center** which is the source of compassion and real love; not instinctual love. It’s the source of the Virtues (the expressions of our soul). The **Higher Intellectual Center** is the source of the Holy Ideas – which has nothing to do with our regular thinking. That’s two more, for a total of 7 Centers.

SP (self-preservation) is our undercarriage, at the base of the spine, and tells us where danger is and to stay safe. **SX** (sexual) is our reproductive organs. It’s about longing and aliveness. **SX** energy tells to strike out and explore unknown horizons. It’s the drive to evolve and grow, to leave our tribe and go beyond ourselves. **SO** (social) is our solar plexus, and tells us to find and connect with your true tribe. **SO** is *not* about intimacy. It’s about actual connection. It’s the feeling and experience outside yourself of noticing what is going on with others.

All humans have all 3 Instincts which are **always working together** (never independently), colluding to keep us stuck. They can be in conflict with each other but they are *always* all working at the same time even when we are unaware of them.

Our **dominant** Instinct is the fuel of our Type and what we habitually do when we’re in the *lower* level of our Type and in stress. Activating *all* of our Instincts is a sign that we’re in the higher level of our Type. As we become less fixated, through **awareness** and **surrender**, our instinctual intelligence increases. Our blind spot becomes conscious and our overworked dominant Instinct can relax, bringing us more balance.

Our **middle** Instinct is the most ok. It supports our dominant Instinct and can help unstuck or activate the blind spot. The dominant instinct and the second instinct can change positions; the blind spot never changes, but it can be attended to and brought into consciousness. This helps take pressure off our dominant Instinct and helps us stay present. We are the same Instinct in our wings and connection points as we are in your type.

Instincts are fluid and related to our emotions from the past, often from our childhood wounds. Instincts are areas we can actively work on. Types on the other hand are innate, like temperaments.

We leak most of our energy in fear-based, compulsive habits around our Instincts. Through presence, we want to find the energy that we project out onto others. We want to become aware of what our relationship is to each of the Instincts individually and as a whole, and what needs attention. Where am I out of integrity and alignment and feeling defensive? Where am I unconsciously repeating old patterns?

In scoring the Questionnaire, do not judge if you’re good at something or not. Judge **how much of your waking hours you actually spend in the zone.**

- 3 points – our dominant instinct; you think about it, and you actually do it; it’s “*Wow! That’s me!*”
- 2 points – you sometimes think about it and do it; sometimes “Yes,” and sometimes “No.”
- 1 point – you don’t think about it much; it gets neglected; you don’t understand it or what it even means.

You can have a low zone and still be dominant in an Instinct. Also, the same activity can fall under different instincts. **SP** people can cook to be healthy. **SX** people can cook to explore new tastes and get lost in aromas. **SO** people cook to connect with others.

Our weakest Instinct is the **blind spot** – which is the **key to growth**. We usually avoid 2 of the 3 zones in our blind spot. All three of the blind spots come with inner critics and negative self-talk that keep old patterns in place. These can show up as loss of energy, shutting down, feeling anxious, or running away. They can be signs that you’re getting close to your ego defenses that scare and shame us out of trying new behaviors. Shame around an Instinct doesn’t mean it’s your blind spot. Consciously acting from your blind spot can feel grounding, balancing and empowering. When we tamp down our energy due to shame, the energy just goes underground.

When we get triggered and provoked by someone else, it’s about our own emotional reactivity and our Instincts (not our type). If **SP** is our blind spot, seeing people fuss about **SP** issues drives us crazy. If **SX** is our blind spot, we see **SX** dominant people as show-offs and tacky. If **SO** is our blind spot, we see **SO** dominant people as shallow and wasting time socializing with small talk. Our projection is a hidden part of us which wants to be seen and heard but we are afraid so we protect it onto others.

See also Hudson’s Twitter posts from 2020.

Self-Preservation Instinct	
	Time, money and energy are our three SP resources. SP energy is the engine of survival and root of the other Instincts. It's about conserving energy and caring for my organism. It manifests in our body as the physical sensations of hunger, warmth, fatigue, etc. It requires the skill of discipline. It's about stability, groundedness and softness. When SP gets mixed up with our type, it tends to produce neurotic habits of rigidity, stuckness, fussiness and 'my way or the highway' attitudes. Too much SP degenerates into closing off our self. When entering a room, SP notices resources.
Zone 1	Self-care and wellbeing (this is not comfort)
	1. Diet; what I consume; (including workaholic, over eating, hoarding, etc.)
	2. Exercise
	3. Rest and sleep
	4. Relaxation; time in solitude, softening our nervous system; self-soothing
	5. Adequate stimulation; reading, music, healthy sex life, watching documentaries
Zone 2	Maintenance of our foundation and resources
	1. Money and finance habits; good stewardship of my money
	2. Time management, which is self-management; being on time; time with others
	3. Practical applications and skills; being able to address practical needs; fixing things or finding people who can; managing my life
	4. Work habits; persistence; ability to follow through and finish tasks; discipline; ways I am handy or finding others who are handy
	5. Energy management; how I use your energy and deal with stress; balancing silence with activities
Zone 3	Domesticity, home and security
	1. Comfort and domesticity; cook and maintain my home as a sacred space
	2. Safety & security; includes what kind of car I buy
	3. Domestic structure that supports life; home management; home as my launchpad; inviting guests into my home
	4. Beauty & holding; my home and work space enrich and support my creativity; I have supplies; I feel held by my space
	5. Recharging and restoration; my home supports my restoration and wellbeing
SP Blind	We're resistant and lack structure, discipline and regularity. We lack focus and hope others will handle things instead of us. We fear getting trapped by domestic life and just get by. Life is random. We may not be bad at handling practical matters; we just don't think about them. We tell ourselves that we don't know how the world works or how to establish ourself in life.

Sexual Instinct	
	SX energy is the engine of evolution. It's the desire to grow and go beyond ourselves so we can eventually connect. It's the recognition that no one is responsible for me but me. SX is about spending energy; the energy of creation and transformation; giving myself wholeheartedly. It activates, enlivens and charges our battery. It feels like tingling and electricity in our body, which we can be tuned into. When entering a room, SX notices energy and intensity. When SP energy relaxes and SX energy activates, they meet and help each other out – it's sensuality. When SX is mixed with SO, it's bonding. SX by itself is <i>not</i> bonding or connecting. SX zones are the most difficult to understand because they are mostly in the subconscious and we have a lot of shame around it. Gurdjieff said the blockage and misuse of our sexual energy is the greatest detriment to our soul's development. Compulsions can take over our SX energy and lead to self-destructive behaviors. SX is <i>not</i> the 'one-on-one' – which has no basis of being able to work on yourself. SX is <i>not</i> thinking you're deeper or sexier than other people – that's narcissism. SX means 'this is the thing that grabs you and gets you.'
Zone 1	Attraction and attracting others
	1. Broadcasting and charisma/magnetism of energy that commands attention. We are reading the energy and noticing who we are attracted to, who repels us, and also who is attracted to us. When our personality takes over and we're not aware, we stop listening, and we're unconsciously attracted by old patterns. When we're

	present, our attention attracts us to things and people who are evolutionary and developmental for us. Charisma is a skill that can be cultivated.
	2. Display – actually doing things to get noticed, large or small; which we have shame about admitting. An SX t-shirt says, “check me out!” An SO t-shirt wants someone to relate to it.
	3. Being attracted to someone/something and actually following that energy; SX finds it very difficult to pay attention when there is no attraction present; following SX energy too much can lead to an erratic lifestyle; (SP people go for stability and continuity)
	4. Choosing, evaluating and discriminating the fitness of my choice; does the person or friend have the right stuff for me? This energy is running all the time. We can choose behaviors but we don’t get to choose who we are attracted to.
	5. Competition and winning; this is why SX can be more aggressive.
Zone 2	Exploration and Edge – it gets us out of our lethargy and into the present; when we’re not present, it makes us restless and in search of stimulation
	1. Activation, arousal, turned on by anything/anyone; people low on SX need to do things they haven’t done before in order to feel more energized
	2. Taking risks, having adventures, drawn to the edge; impulsive; the sense of security is out the window for the moment, but there is balance too – there’s sensible risk and reckless risk.
	3. Getting out of habits and leaving my comfort zone. Life changes because we step out of our comfort zones. This is not about taking risks. It’s about doing things we actually like but haven’t tried, and then noticing when we do, it gives us energy and the feeling of aliveness
	4. Stimulation and new experiences – intentionally seeking out what feeds my soul and recharges my batteries. In order to be able to follow our SX ‘stimulation’ and impulses, we need our SP ‘stimulation’ for wellbeing.
	5. Following and honoring impulses and inspirations; we find a way to do it; people who are not SX dominant do not follow their impulses
Zone 3	Merging – this is <i>not</i> one-on-one or connecting. We fuse and lose ourselves in someone/something, and we like the sensation because it feels like a break from our ego self, so it can feel restorative. We focus and are engulfed with another’s energy; or we become preoccupied and have difficulties holding a middle ground; eg, having no tolerance for background music
	1. Focus and intense involvement; only one thing at a time! No distractions!
	2. Losing one’s boundaries and one’s sense of self; surrendering; eg being engrossed in a movie, instead of thinking about something else while watching the movie
	3. Concentration versus distraction. It’s all or nothing; no in-between or middle ground. I need to be locked in on something; otherwise I don’t know what to do, and I end up distracted and restless.
	4. Pouring and spending energy into someone/something, rather than conserving it; no relenting until the job is done, and not even being concerned when it will even be done. Creativity is about spending energy.
	5. Seeking fusion and at-oneness; relaxing and feeling outside my boundaries, eg it can be during sexual activity, religious rituals, or with pets. It can be a feeling of spirituality or energetic union. It is <i>not</i> actual connection.
SX Blind	SX blind doesn’t mean a lack of intensity. The intensity is present but may be ungrounded in our unconscious, in our shadow. We feel powerful energies but procrastinate in taking action. We may feel a heightened sense of responsibility in order to keep things together and avoid taking risks. We tell ourselves that we’re boring and can’t imagine anyone taking much interest in us, and if they do, we suspect there is something wrong with them. Or, sometimes we think we are more adventurous than we really are.

	Social Instinct
	The parent/child bond is the origin of SO. It’s <i>not</i> about relating to a group. It’s the drive to reach out to another, to relate, to know each other, and to stay connected and engaged . It’s the link between the instinctual self and the emotional self. Emotions have to do with the social implications of bonding and connecting with others. SX energy has excitement but it’s <i>not</i> necessarily emotional. In SO, it’s easier to recognize what we do and don’t do than in SX. When entering a room, SO notices power and prestige.
Zone 1	Reading People and Situations – instinctive; not learned
	1. Reading Facial Expressions/Body Language/Tone of Voice/Moods

	2. Reading Between the Lines – people almost never mean what they are saying
	3. Interest in others/Attunement/“Tuning in” – it’s more than just manners
	4. Empathy/Concern about others
	5. Adapting to “Clues”/Adjusting Behavior – people low on SO have difficulty adapting to different situations
Zone 2	Connecting – it’s not about SX energy or sexually “hooking up.” Social small talk helps us communicate non-verbally; the phrase ‘ <i>small talk</i> ’ is a narcissistic term used to judge a conversation that you’re not interested in; small talk is the opportunity to read people in a harmless exchange that both parties can participate in, helping them to decide if they want something deeper
	1. Creating Relationships; engaging others
	2. Sustaining Relationships; maintaining connections, <i>and</i> discriminating and knowing when to end relationships
	3. Communication – speaking <i>and</i> listening; both oral and written; Americans narcissistically talk about ourselves all the time
	4. Cooperation/Reciprocity/give and take – if we don’t look out for each other, we don’t survive. The shadow of cooperation is owing debts in order to pay back. It’s also over-responding to the needs of only our own tribe members.
	5. Play/Shared Enjoyment/Celebration – play relaxes and builds trust; the shadow of play is enjoyment of defeating the other person
Zone 3	Participation – we are called to participate and get involved in Life
	1. Getting involved or not: what do I participate in?
	2. Need to Contribute: something beyond my own needs; people who are suicidal think they have nothing to contribute
	3. Enrolling: getting others interested and involved in what I am passionate about; social media is not effective in this area
	4. “Part of Something Bigger”/Sense of Place – evokes humility and heart that we are part of a living system; the shadow is cults
	5. Belonging and Welcoming – deeper than #4. It’s about feeling part of something bigger. I feel safe, I belong, and I welcome others.
SO Blind	It has nothing to do with not liking groups and parties, and it’s not the same as introversion. SO dominants can be introverts who need a lot of time to recharge. SO blinds think that being with people is going to be a drag and a drain. We resist connecting and emotionally associate connection with previous disappointments and humiliations. Our self-attack is, “There is something deeply defective and shameful about me – especially about my emotions. I feel like I should care about people, but to be honest, often I don’t. I am scared people will see my shortcomings.” It’s easier to avoid contact than risk being humiliated. We justify ourselves by thinking others are boring, shallow and clueless. We have a difficult time seeing our offering and contribution. SO blind creates self-absorption, so to activate the SO energy, we need to do things that we are genuinely interested in.