

This excerpt is taken from the book  
*Square Peg, Square Hole, Keys to find your Niche in Life*

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## **Moving My Square Peg into a Square Hole Job**

### **INSTINCTUAL KEYS**

**My Square Peg Has an Aptitude**

**Importance of Instinctual Drive**

**The Conative Index Measure of Action Modes**

**How the Index Describes Instinctual Drives**

**A Look at Others Through Conative Understanding**

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**Instinctual Lesson Keys**

***Self-empowerment: Fitting my square peg into the right employment***

### **INSTINCTUAL KEY**

*"All your problems, discouragements, and heartaches are in truth opportunities in disguise."*

Og Mandino

Sadly, many years went by while I worked in a variety of unfulfilling sales positions only to finally learn I had worked against my natural drives and tendencies. A simple test that measures the distribution and intensity of my Action Modes®, formerly called the Kolbe Conative Index, (now renamed and updated called the Kolbe A™ Index), showed me I would be much happier working in harmony with my in- born natural drives. When test results indicated I'd be more suited to a management role, I changed my job from real estate sales to property management. My new management role fit like a glove. I so enjoyed my work I even delayed retirement for five years until I turned seventy years of age.

### **MY SQUARE PEG HAS AN APTITUDE**

*"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and go and do that because what the world needs is people who come alive."*

John Eldredge

Aptitudes are natural or acquired abilities or the natural proclivity to be apt or fitting for a specialized function. They indicate categories of interest, either natural or learned, and thus the type of activity or employment a person would find pleasurable. However, aptitudes are different from instinctual drives, which are inherited inborn drives that cause a person to take action in certain ways. Working in harmony with these drives in the realm of employment led to much more success in my life.

Aptitude testing used to be performed in school at the junior and senior high level and could sometimes be arranged by unemployment offices. The tests would score an individual's ability and interest levels in a variety of topics. One test showed I would not relish being a sewing machine operator, while public speaking was a high interest on another test, and yet another said I could become an accountant. In later years, I recognized the tests given to all Realtors in my area did not measure the right qualities and could not predict who would make a good salesperson. Most of the aptitude tests I took, although interesting, did not really assist me in finding the right employment for my square peg. However, the Kolbe A™ Index, which is described in more detail below, provided different information that truly guided me.

## **IMPORTANCE OF INSTINCTUAL DRIVE**

*"Without passion, an individual gets caught in the trap of making a living instead of designing a life."*

Anthony Robbins

In-born natural abilities provide each person with combinations of instinctive methods of operating, providing ways in which they will perform. Since these innate proclivities do not change over time they will influence how a person naturally takes action. Without having discovered and then harmonized my work activities with my Conative or inborn doing nature, I would never have created the enjoyable working role and lifestyle I enjoyed. Kathy Kolbe said "Conation is our knack for getting things done. It is separate from a person's intelligence or personality type." Successful and contented people in every type of work or endeavor are those that are working in concert with their inborn drives. Working in harmony with their inner nature enables them to outperform others. If you find yourself in a work situation that you are not happy in you may be working against your own true nature. Identifying and aligning with your innate Action Modes can dramatically change your life as it did mine.

## **THE CONATIVE INDEX MEASURE OF ACTION MODES**

*"If we don't change our direction we are likely to end up where we are headed."*

Chinese Proverb

I owe Kathy Kolbe, the author of *The Conative Connection, Acting on Instinct* a huge debt of gratitude. Her work confirmed my most harmonious Action Modes. Until I took her simple test I had not realized the importance of being in tune with my basic drives. Nor had I realized their unchanging nature would affect me throughout my life. Her test

results confirmed that I worked in an area that was not natural for my preferred instinctive modes of operating. Changing my employment field, I became in harmony with my natural tendencies. My realization helped me to understand myself and others.

Unknowingly, I spent more than twenty years bucking my inborn modes to action qualities while I worked in a variety of sales positions. Over the years, I sold stationery, Avon cosmetics, jewelry, supplements, Tupperware, kitchen cabinets, and computer software, eventually progressing into selling real estate. Using my natural entrepreneurial skills, I was the top salesperson on occasion, but something kept me from truly succeeding in sales.

Indeed, I was even fired from one sales position where I had to sell low-end homes built with cheaper materials. I found it difficult to market poorer-quality structures. They did not measure up to the higher-quality standards of houses I had been selling for a previous homebuilder. I also could not ask people to sign on the dotted line until I ensured every detail was right. People wanted to buy their dream home. But I was so mired in details I confused them, letting them slip away to buy their dream from the builders down the street, where the salesperson signed them up and then worked out the details.

My “ah hah” moment came when I discovered the Kolbe A™ Index described in Kathy Kolbe’s book *The Conative Connection, Acting on Instinct*. I completed the simple thirty-six-question quiz in the book (updated quiz now available online) and sent it away to the Kolbe Institute, (now Kolbe Corp.) to be analyzed by their computer. I received a report, graph, and cassette tape that made me realize I was a square peg trying to operate in a round hole!

## **HOW THE INDEX DESCRIBES INSTINCTUAL DRIVES**

*"Everything you do is with your inner motivation and is motivated from your inner state of Beingness that you have attained."*

Lester Levenson

The Conative Index is based on information that all individuals are born with. Each person has a combination of four basic patterns that do not change throughout their lifetime. These conative patterns indicate the style of doing (or mode) that drives a person’s actions to strive toward a goal. When working in harmony with these patterns, the person leads a happier more fulfilling life. Importantly, the patterns form basic drives that cannot be learned. The Conative Index says each person is born with strengths in each Action Mode.

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**What is conation?** Conation is the mental faculty that causes an individual to act, react and interact according to an innate pattern of behaviors. As one of the three elements of human behavior, its function is to convert the affective faculties,

which are emotions, preferences or beliefs, and the cognitive faculties, which are learned knowledge and skills, into visible and purposeful performance. It drives us to actually *do* what the other parts of the mind either make us *want* to do or *know* have to be done.

Kolbe Action Modes are behaviors driven by your *instinct*- not your personality or IQ.

**Four Action Modes® are universal methods of striving**

All conative strengths fall into one of four Action Modes used in problem solving.

Kolbe Action Mode      Striving Behaviors

**Fact Finder**                      Gathering and sharing information

**Follow Thru**                      Organizing, arranging and designing

**Quick Start**                      Dealing with unknowns, uncertainties and risks

**Implementor:**                      Handling tangibles, mechanics and space

Every person takes action in each Action Mode. We all gather information, organize, deal with unknowns and handle tangibles. But the way we approach each of those tasks is naturally different, and that's what makes up a person's conative talents. Look at a person's talents in each Action Mode and you will see the basis of the methods that will work best for them when they are striving to reach a goal.



# Kolbe A™ Index Result

*Gifted Conative*

## Helen Hamilton



Kolbe Action Modes are behaviors driven by your *instinct* – not your personality or IQ.

**Fact Finder:** is how you gather and share information.

**Follow Thru:** is how you arrange and design.

**QuickStart:** is how you deal with risks and uncertainty.

**Implementor:** is how you handle space and tangibles.

Your way of doing it is to **Specify**.

Your way of doing it is to **Maintain**.

Your way of doing it is to **Improve**.

Your way of doing it is to **Imagine**.

*Every ring on a Kolbe Continuum represents an equally positive trait*

Kolbe A Result - Listen online to Kathy Kolbe, the creator of the Kolbe Index.  
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I discovered my particular Action Mode combination combines strong drives in both **Fact Finder** qualities (7) and **Quick Start** qualities (7) called initiating with average amounts of **Follow Thru** (5) and little **Implementor** (2.) called preventive. My **Fact Finder** qualities provided abilities to be detailed, and to research. My **Follow Thru** qualities provided abilities to organize, to create systems, and to complete tasks. My

**Quick Start** qualities gave me the abilities to initiate, to sell, and to be entrepreneurial. My qualities in **Implementor** meant that while I could picture how things would work I would find that working in the other aspects of **Implementor** abilities such as maintaining mechanical equipment, or building and repairing things would cause me stress. I don't naturally take on that type of activity. While my combination of strengths were those of a perfect manager, they were a poor combination for the sales role I was in. My strong drive to be detail oriented held me back from closing sales until everything was perfect. My combination pattern meant I would be a much better fit as a manager than a salesperson.

When the opportunity presented itself, I changed jobs to become a property manager, and I have never been happier at work. I enjoyed it and as a result performed well. (But don't give me a screw driver or a hammer. I am useless when it comes to doing anything requiring mechanical dexterity, since I find it so stressful and unnatural.

### **A LOOK AT OTHERS THROUGH CONATIVE UNDERSTANDING**

*"Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that work has been put into his heart."  
Djalal ad-Din Rumi*

The information enabled me to better understand instinctual striving patterns of my family and others around me. This made me much more tolerant and accepting of each one's unique ability combination patterns. I could understand, at last, the problems my ex-husband had in running his businesses. The businesses would eventually fail. He had great **Quick Start** abilities that helped him to start a number of business ventures, but his **Follow Thru** drive was preventive so he had trouble finishing jobs he started or doing invoicing and pursuing collections. He is much happier now in a job situation where he receives entrepreneurial stimulation, but someone else completes the **Follow Thru** steps.

I arranged for my children to be tested and found out two of my sons had a similar pattern to their father. My eldest son, Bill, enjoyed teaching school but had great difficulty marking the students' papers. He loved languages, having majored in French and Spanish at McGill University. His entrepreneurial abilities enabled him to teach at a variety of schools. He taught on an Indian reserve, then in Nigeria for several years, followed by an elite boarding school, and finally a maximum-security prison. He enjoyed renovating his home. His scores were initiative in **Fact Finder** and **Quick Start**, mid-zone in **Implementor**, but preventive in **Follow Thru**. These qualities made him an inspirational teacher. The entrepreneurial **Quick Start** qualities enabled him to work in a variety of jobs. But his instinctual drives did not stretch to doing the necessary **Follow Thru** work. His desk was piled high with unfiled papers. I coached him and my second son, who has a similar conative pattern, telling them they would need to have a strong **Follow Thru** person assist them in completing work.

## FINDING THE RIGHT EMPLOYMENT FOR DIFFERENT PEGS

*"Your talent is God's gift to you"*

Leo Buscaglia

I began to appreciate why certain people excelled or struggled in their jobs. As a condominium property manager, I had my own company. I used to shake my head at the inability of some of my best painters or landscapers to provide a decent job quotation. They were, however, very good at performing their particular line of work. Now I realized in the same way I was low in mechanical drive (**Implementor**), they were likely preventive in **Fact Finder** language skills. Their basic instinctual drives were stronger in different areas and patterns from my own. So I began to type out their proposals for them for presentation to my boards of directors.

In my management business, one secretary excelled at organizing everything (**Follow Thru**); she was so strong in **Follow Thru** that her memos even had cover pages. I could count on her to keep up the filing and have everything prepared for meetings. However, the interruption of taking telephone messages was a source of major stress for her. She was likely preventive in **Quick Start**.

Another secretary tried for months to do our typing work, but we had to eventually let her go. She seemed unable to master the language skills necessary to write and proofread letters. Later another staff member told me this secretary began looking for her next job as soon as we hired her. She knew eventually she would be let go. Apparently being fired was a pattern she repeated about every nine months with each new employer. When I also had to fire her because she was not able to improve her work, my Conative understanding enabled me to suggest she consider trying a different line of employment. Perhaps a role requiring the skillful use of her hands (**Implementor**) would have been a better choice. She kept trying for positions requiring **Fact Finder** details she did not possess.

We also made the mistake of trying to fit round pegs into square holes. We attempted to put several entrepreneurial (**Quick Start**) types into positions where they had to do a lot of deadline clerical work. We thought once they learned the basics, they could eventually become good property managers. They likely lacked the instinctual strength in **Follow Thru** and **Implementor** skills. These skills are necessary to survive in such clerical roles. They both eventually resigned. In one case, we had the employee take the Conative Index, but the results indicated his answers had not been consistent and honest, and therefore no test result was possible. He recently contacted me through Facebook and told me how happy he was with his present employment where he has a lot of contact with people.

Another person whose test scores were 5 in **Fact Finder**, 6 in **Follow Thru**, and 4 in **Quick Start** and 5 in **Implementor** found her best role as a facilitator. She is able to work in all ability areas but found it stressful to be pushed into the forefront in any one area. When she happily became a support person to others she experienced far less stress than when she worked as a manager of a small business.

## CHANGE NEEDED FOR TRAINING DIFFERENT PEG TYPES

Not expressed by Kathy Kolbe or the Kolbe Corporation, but in my opinion, the Conative Index shed light on the major problem of our educational system. In addition to improving my understanding of people I gained insight about how our children are educated. Have you ever thought about why so many youngsters come out of school and have trouble finding employment they enjoy? I feel they are failed by our educational system, which does not recognize the different "peg" types. The real problem with our educational system is it does not take conative drive differences into account when educating children. This could now be remedied by the uniform testing of children using one of the Kolbe IF™ Index tests designed for children as young as age two or the youth test called Kolbe Y™ Index.

Persons who are initiating **Fact Finders** seem to dominate the ranks of teachers. To become teachers, they are required to be university graduates. Our current educational system has taught that a university degree is necessary. Unfortunately it has also taught that doing white-collar office work is the only way to happiness and fulfillment.

Teacher training often rewards initiating **Fact Finder** abilities to obtain a degree and excludes those who initiate with **Implementor** skills. (I wonder how many of them can fix their own taps or repair their automobiles?) Many teachers also come from **Fact-Finder** backgrounds as well, having educated **Fact Finder** parents. The teachers then implement teaching systems in concert with their **Fact Finder** qualities.

But many children do not have initiating **Fact Finder** qualities. Children with instinctive strengths in areas other than **Fact Finder** feel inferior in the school system. Unable to easily master **Fact Finder** language skills upon which the education system seems to be based, they fail. These children are unable to perform well in a language-skills system. They lose their self-esteem in the process of trying and failing to become something that is not natural for them. They often eventually drop out of school. Their lost self-worth sends them out in the world to lead unsatisfactory lives.

In my view, the design of our educational system needs to be changed. Unfortunately, the present system emphasizes matriculation skills (**Fact Finder**) over tradesmen skills (**Implementor**). Thus children are perceived as failures if they attend a vocational school where more emphasis is placed on hands-on skills. Each child should be tested to determine his or her conative drive pattern. Young people should be trained using the best methods for their instinctual patterns. We could then instill equal pride in being a mechanic or a teacher, a carpenter or a salesperson, a plumber or a professor. Unfortunately, we have created an unbalanced employment system. Too many unhappy people try to be square pegs in round holes, working in unnatural ways. For many, this present system will never lead to success. Their failures lower their value to society.

Is it not long overdue that we find a way to use this conative knowledge to change the educational system? We could produce happy well-adjusted workers if each child was



trained in skills most suited to their natural proclivity makeup. Utilizing their particular combination drives in the best ways to reduce stress could make them much happier and successful. They could then enjoy whatever employment field was most natural to them. In suitable roles, each person could provide their best skills to create a harmonious and happy society.

## HOW TO GET YOURSELF TESTED

*"The ability to make decisions according to the purpose and potentiality of one's own Being is the most essential factor in constructive and meaningful growth."*

Haridas Chaudhuri

I found being tested was simple, inexpensive, and very worthwhile. I encourage you to go to the link below for information on the various Kolbe Conative Index tests and their online testing. Another source for information is <http://knol.google.com/k/conation>. (See bibliography for more information).

[Take the Kolbe A™ Index](#)



## INSTINCTUAL LESSON KEYS

1. Your conative instinct moves you to take action.
2. Aptitude testing is different than conative testing. Aptitude tests describe interest and ability levels. Conative testing indicates inborn life-long modes of operating.
3. Each person has a combination of four natural ability drives defined by Kathy Kolbe and Kolbe. Corp. 2001 © as:

Kolbe Action Modes -- Striving Behaviors

- **Fact Finder**                      Gathering and sharing information
- **Follow Thru**                      Organizing, arranging and designing
- **Quick Start**                      Dealing with unknowns, uncertainties and risks
- **Implementor:**                      Handling tangibles, mechanics and space

4. Conative testing can lead to replacing unsatisfying employment with enjoyable fulfilling employment.
5. Conative testing of employees can lead to a better working team.
6. Our educational system could be improved if teacher's educational training requirements were designed to give equal value to different instinctual drives.
7. A better balance in society could be created by acknowledging and training children to act in their own best natural proclivities.
8. A variety of tests are available through [www.kolbe.com](http://www.kolbe.com).

### Bibliography

Kathy Kolbe: Go to [www.kolbe.com](http://www.kolbe.com) for information on the various Kolbe Conative Index tests and their online testing. Another source for information is <http://knol.google.com/k/conation>. In addition to used copies of the book, with the test that helped me understand my Action Modes® called, *The Conative Connection, Uncovering the Link Between Who You Are and How You Perform* (ISBN: 0-201-51795-7), a new revised updated edition is about to be released. I recommend obtaining Kathy Kolbe's current book called [\*The Conative Connection, Acting on Instinct\*](#) which includes updated and improved understandings of the Action Mode® qualities.