The Dark Side of Personality

The Dark-Side of Personality
fighting our demons at work

The Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
27th September 2013

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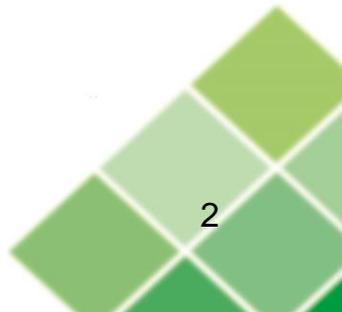
Objectives for Today's Session

- To clarify exactly what we mean by the dark-side of personality, and why, as business leaders, it is important to know about it.

- To elucidate more precisely what the 11 key themes of the Hogan Development Survey are, together with how to recognise typical behaviours associated with each of them.

- How awareness of dark-side issues can be used practically and constructively for business-benefit.

- To provide an initial opportunity for reflection and self-analysis, in order to consciously start managing our dark-side tendencies.

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What Is the Dark Side of Personality?

- That part of our personality which can pre-dispose us to behave less constructively towards others.
  - "Less-constructive inter-personal behaviours". (LCBs).
  - "Less-constructive *intra*-personal behaviours".
  - "Dysfunctional dispositions".
  - "Flawed inter-personal styles".

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A Starter for 10…

- Can you think of either someone famous, or someone with whom you've worked, who was either very difficult to work with, or whose career (spectacularly) derailed?
  - Why was this, do you think?
  - Which aspects of their behaviour can you point to as outward signs of things going wrong?

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A Poor, But Foresseable Local Sporting Managerial Appointment?

- "I'd waited long enough. I hit him hard. Take that you !!!!. And don't ever stand over me again sneering about fake injuries. Even in the dressing room afterwards I had no remorse. My attitude was !!!! him".

  Roy Keane 2002, on his infamous tackle on Alfie-Inge Haaland.

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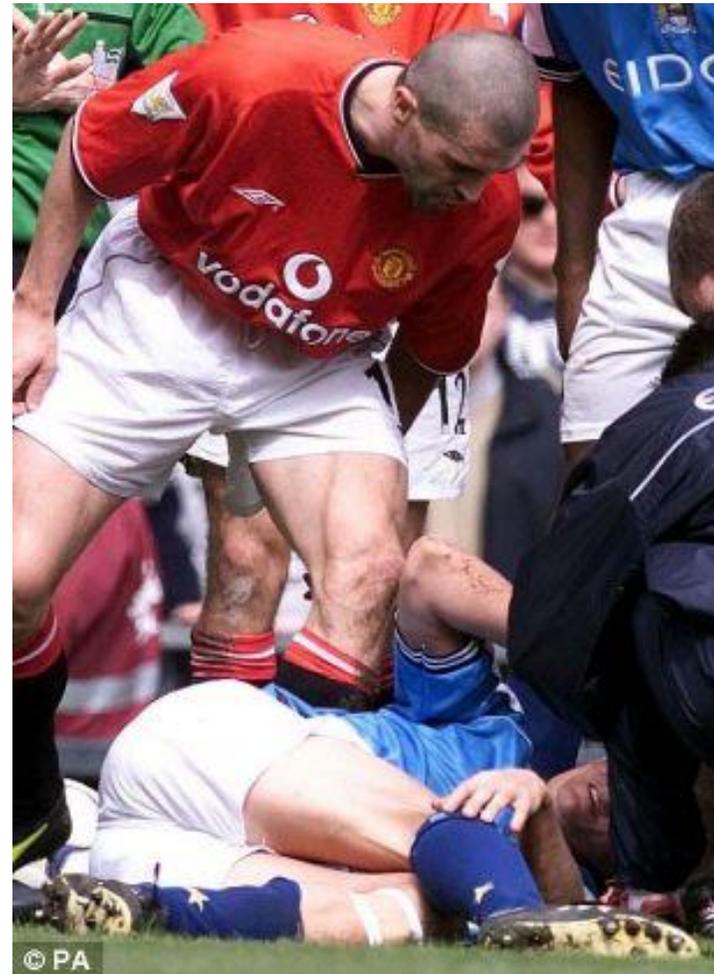
Lance Armstrong – some very pronounced dark-side tendencies? Discuss…

- "…at the heart of the most sophisticated doping programme in the history of sport".

  USADA, Oct 2012

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The Icarus Myth

- King Minos of Crete imprisons Daedalus, a famous inventor, and his son Icarus, possibly for helping Theseus kill the minotaur.

- Daedalus makes wings of feathers and wax for himself and Icarus, so that they can escape.

- Daedalus warns his son not to fly too high, as the sun could melt his wings.

- Icarus ignores the advice, disaster ensues…

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The "Icarus Syndrome" (Furnham) - *high-flyers and some associated issues*…

- Accident-prone sensation-seeker?
- A disobedient child who liked to rebel?
- Narcissist blinded by his own arrogance?
- Creative innovator?
- Some other explanation?
- Why might we want to find out?
- What might we do then?
- Any parallels with "high-flyers" in your organisation?

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As business leaders, why might we be interested in the "dark side" of personality?

- Or, in what contexts might it be important, interesting or useful to consider it?

Bentz's (1985) Themes of Managerial Incompetence

1. Inability to delegate or prioritise.
2. Being reactive rather than proactive.
3. Inability to maintain relationships with an extended network of contacts.
4. Inability to build a team.
5. Having poor judgement.
6. Being a slow learner.
7. Having an "overriding personality defect".

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Strengths into Derailers

The "Strengths Into Derailers" Paradox #1

- *You can have too much of a good thing!*

- The very strengths that can help people become effective and successful can, in certain circumstances, be the source of the emergence of *dysfunctional interpersonal (dark side) behaviours, e.g.*:
  - When we're stressed.
  - Significant adverse life-events.
  - When we "let down our guard" or let our "social mask" slip.
  - When we're ill.
  - When we're intoxicated.
  - Combinations of the above!!

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The "Strengths Into Derailers" Paradox #2

Possible Strength	Potential Derailer	DSM-IV-TR Axis 2 Personality Disorder
Enthusiastic	Volatile	Borderline
Shrewd	Mistrustful	Paranoid
Careful	Cautious	Avoidant
Independent	Detached	Schizoid
Focused	Passive-Aggressive	Passive-Aggressive
Confident	Arrogant	Narcissistic
Charming	Manipulative	Antisocial
Colourful	Dramatic	Histrionic
Imaginative	Eccentric	Schizotypal
Diligent	Perfectionistic	Obsessive-Compulsive
Dutiful	Dependent	Dependent

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The 11 Scales of the Hogan Development Survey (HDS)

- **Volatile** – moody, easily annoyed, hard to please, short lived enthusiasm for people, projects or things, emotionally volatile.

- **Sceptical** – distrustful, cynical, sensitive to criticism, and focused on the negative.

- **Cautious** – unassertive, resistant to change, risk-averse, and slow to make decisions.

- **Detached** – aloof, indifferent to the feelings of others, and uncommunicative.

- **Passive-Aggressive** – overtly cooperative, but privately irritable, stubborn, and uncooperative.

- **Arrogant** – overly self-confident, with inflated feelings of self-worth.

- **Manipulative** – charming, risk-taking, impulsive, rule-bending/breaking, limit-testing and excitement-seeking.

- **Dramatic** – excessive emotionality, animated, attention-seeking, interruptive.

- **Eccentric** – creative, but thinking and acting in unusual or eccentric ways.

- **Perfectionistic** – meticulous, precise, inflexible about rules & procedures, hard to please, critical of others' performance, micromanaging.

- **Dependent** – eager to please, reluctant to act independently or against popular opinion.

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Karen Horney's Themes (1950) – 3 techniques for managing insecurity

"Moving Against Others"

(Dominating, coercing & manipulating others)

- Arrogant.
- Manipulative.
- Dramatic.
- Eccentric.

"Individuals with high scores on these scales make other people nervous".

"Moving Away From Others"

(Withdrawing from contact with others)

- Volatile.
- Sceptical.
- Cautious.
- Detached.
- Passive-Aggressive

"Other people make individuals with high scores on these scales nervous".

"Moving Towards Others"

(Being critical of others or conforming to their wishes)

- Perfectionistic.
- Dependent.

"Individuals with high scores on these scales make themselves nervous".

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Comparing the UK Public & Private Sectors

- Would you like to guess on which factors the UK public and private sectors have significant differences?

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Comparing the UK Public & Private Sectors (Trickey & Hyde, PCL, 2009)
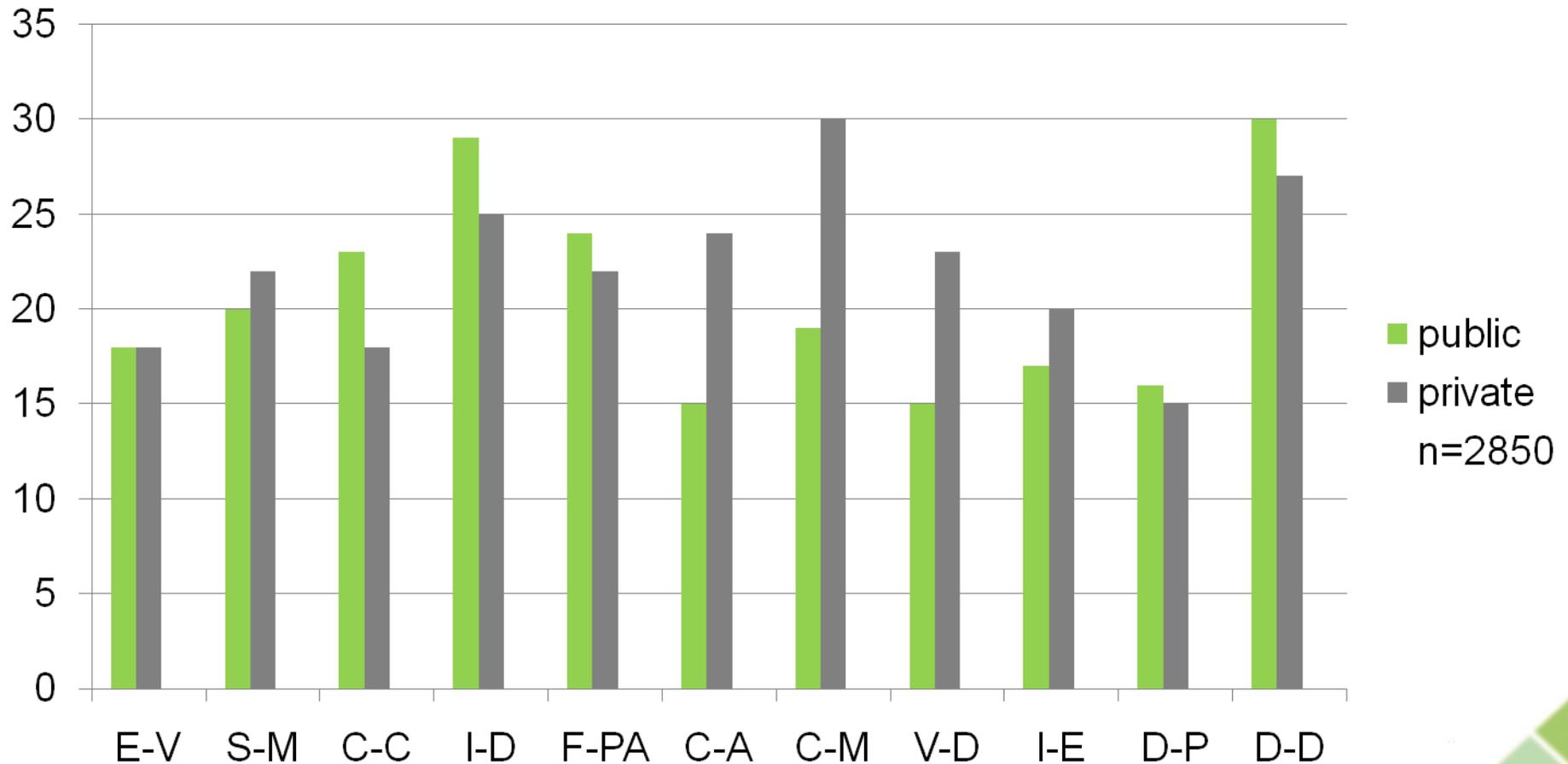
Public and Private Sector Differences

- The public sector has significantly more individuals than the private sector with high-scores on *Careful-Cautious, Independent-Detached & Dutiful-Dependent.*

- Significantly fewer on *Shrewd-Mistrustful, Confident-Arrogant, Charming-Manipulative, Vivacious-Dramatic and Imaginative-Eccentric.*

- On average, the public sector sample are likely to be more cautious and anxious than the private sector.

- Less likely to display the same levels of persuasive, influential, self-confident and innovative styles found in the private sector.

- Public sector risk is more associated with being worried about "rocking the boat" or being responsible for mistakes, and as a consequence, avoiding or delaying decisions.

How will you know if you have *"crossed the line"*?

- Invariably, it's difficult to know when we may have "crossed the line" from demonstrating a strength to exhibiting a "less constructive behaviour" (LCB).

- Asking ourselves some good questions can help!

- Even better, we can ask other people some well-directed questions about our potential dark-side tendencies and behaviours, e.g…

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Crossing the Line: careful – cautious
The next decision you make may be your first!

- This scale reflects a tendency to be over-concerned about making mistakes, and to be reluctant to take the initiative for fear of being criticised or embarrassed. Although such people are usually good corporate citizens, others may find them hard to work with because of their need to stick to the rules and their unwillingness to take chances or express controversial opinions.

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Crossing the Line: careful – cautious #2

You carefully analyse a situation before you make a decision.

You consider worst-case scenarios before moving forward.

You go slowly before deciding because the wrong decision can have serious consequences.

You turn down requests for projects and resources when you have *hard evidence* that flaws exist.

You require second and third opinions before making any decision.

You obsess about what might go wrong and eventually get stuck.

You go slowly before deciding because you believe *every* decision can have serious consequences.

You don't give people the go-ahead because of your *fears* that a proposed project is flawed.
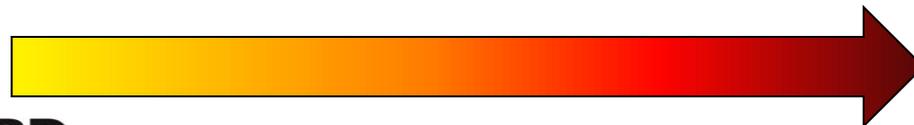
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Crossing the Line: careful – cautious #3
Remaining cautious to the point of indecisiveness...

- *Prioritise and commit to a date to decide* – and hold yourself to it!
- *Consciously do things differently* – not just at work!
- *Focus on past successes* – and try to replicate.
- *Confront your worst fears* – clearly articulate to yourself and others the real reason for your fear, procrastination and indecisiveness.

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Some Ideas for Managing Your Dark-Side

- *Adversity Analysis* – seriously reflect on your top 5 failures…any recurrent themes? How can you make sure they don't recur again?

- *Take the HDS and get some feedback!*

- Pro-actively ask your direct reports about:
  - How can I be a better leader?
  - Which facets of my dark-side are you aware of? How do I irritate/annoy/upset/frighten you? What advice would you give me?

- Find a confidant/coach/mentor and discuss dark-side issues as part of your regular agenda.

- Discuss with your boss, peers, family, appropriate others.

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An Opportunity for Reflection & Self-Analysis…

- Which of these factors do you think might apply to you? Do you have any other "less constructive behaviours" not mentioned in this list?
  - What situations provoke them for you?
  - How do you manifest them?
  - What consequences might they be having for you & others?
  - What ideas do you have for developing some coping strategies?
- What about the possibility of one or two "blind spots"?
  - How might you investigate?
- As a product of this self-analysis, would you like to commit yourself to a few action points?

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# Proportion of Sample Respondents Achieving High Scores on the HDS Scales (90th %ile plus)
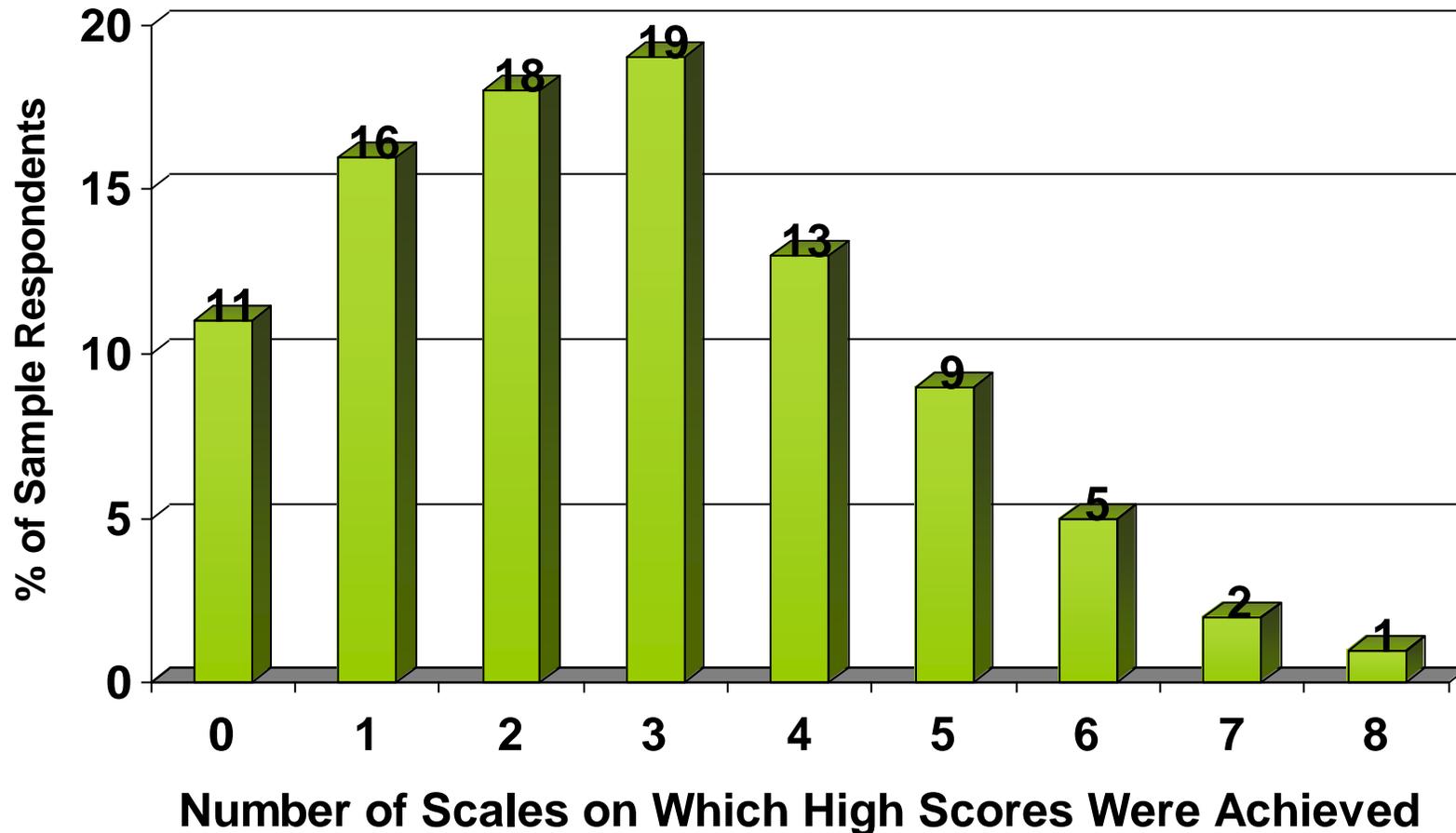
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A Model for High-Potential Talent Development (Yapp)

Typical focus of high-potential talent assessment

Lower
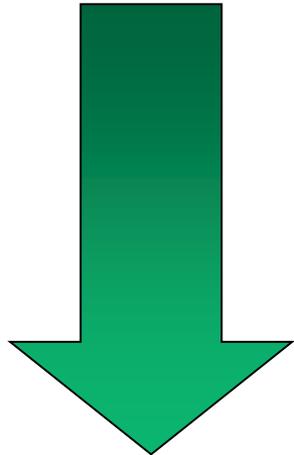
Higher

Value in Predicting Potential

Higher

Lower

Key Predictors
Emotional Agility
Strategic Agility
Learning Agility

Enablers & Blockers
Motives & Values
Strengths
"Derailment" or "Dark Side" factors

Necessary but not sufficient
Past performance & track record
Conventionally assessed intelligence

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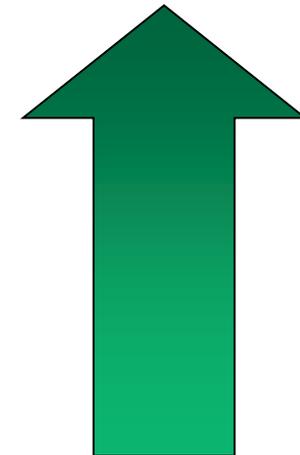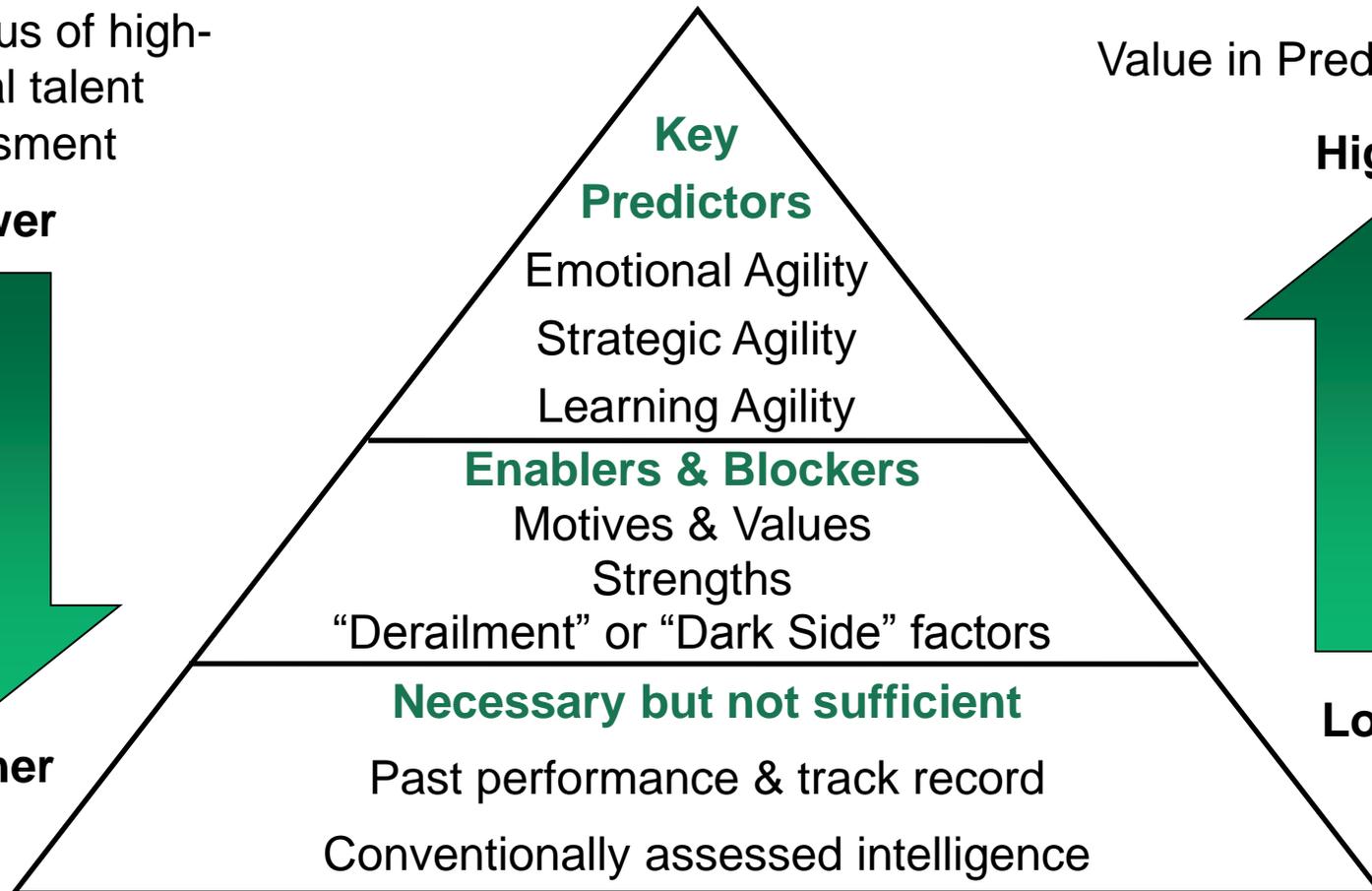
Summary

- Research suggests that there are some common dark-side themes.

- These themes may be related to certain personality disorders.

- The HDS assesses these themes with some fidelity.

- The HDS can be used in both selection and development– *the "bright side" concerns the person you meet at interview: the dark side concerns the person who actually comes to work!*

- The more successful and effective people *learn to manage their dark-side*.

- *Do not neglect dark side factors in people-management processes – the consequences could be significant for both the individual & the wider organisation!!!*

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Remember the Young Greek Dude?

- Don't be too quick to forgive, overlook or discount problems or issues.

- Investigators of individual derailment and corporate misery often say the signs were there from the start, but they were ignored.

- Perhaps Minos was more perceptive than most when he locked Icarus up in the first place…

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Further Information

- Today's presentation and other documents are available for download at www.dwhr.co.uk.

- If you would like to find out more about the "dark side" of personality and how the Hogan Development Survey might be used in your organisation, please contact:

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embrace your dark-side...