

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

"My studies definitely helped in finding a job at Deloitte, in a role that is related to the field which I studied."

Nicholas Lin Xunwei
BSc Accounting and Finance 2012

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What Happens in Vegas: The New Psychology of Marketing

Application of intrinsic motivation to marketing
Published on March 22, 2012 by Steven Reiss, Ph.D. in Who We Are

We set out to construct a scientific model of intrinsic motivation. Our model has four unique features. First, we empirically derived a taxonomy of universal motives and demonstrated construct validity, measurement reliability, concurrent validity, and criterion validity. Second, we put forth a conceptual platform for connecting universal motives to personality traits and values. We can teach people how their personality is an expression of their motives and values. Third, we connected universal (intrinsic) motives to dyadic relationships including work and romance. Repeated quarrels in a relationship arise from conflicting values and motives. Fourth, we applied our model broadly to education, business, sports, health care, counseling, and relationships. Today more than 1,000 professionals on three continents work with our model, called the "Reiss Motivation Profile," or RMP.

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Historically, much of what psychologists have said about motivation is invalid. For all practical purposes, Freud had only one motive. He said that libido (sex) motivates most everything but virtually every explanation he gave identified anxiety reduction as the ultimate motive. Freud's model of motivation was so weak even his followers quickly rejected it. Maslow developed his famous pyramid by asking his self-actualized friends what motivates them. He said he would study motivation scientifically but he didn't know how. To their credit, the Deci-Ryan research is based on many studies, but when all is said and done, they recognize only two kinds of motives, which they called intrinsic and extrinsic. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is based on multiple errors in logic. (See my previous blogs.) In reality all motivation arises from intrinsic motives, as Harvard's McDougall understood, and extrinsic motivation doesn't exist. The Deci-Ryan work is more important for what it says about self-determination than about extrinsic motivation.

Four generation of Harvard psychologists (James, McDougall, Murray, McClelland) recognized that universal motives are the organizing themes of who we are. The Harvard psychologists, however, did not put forth a viable model of what a universal motive is. McDougall thought that emotion is the key to understanding universal motives, but it is the goal. The Harvard psychologists proposed many lists of universal motives but did not scientifically validate any list. They did not construct non-projective measures of which motives are strong or weak for any individual. They did not figure out how to project universal motives into practical endeavors such as relationships, education, health care, sports, and so on.

When I want to predict what people might do, I ask them what their values, goals, and purposes are. Incredibly, other psychologists don't do that. Instead they try to predict how people will behave in natural environments by asking them about their childhood. Such information predicts very little. If I tell you I am lonely, you can predict I will seek out company and you would have a decent chance of being right. If I tell you I still remember when my parents wouldn't let me stay up to watch a television program, you can't predict anything about me. Current motives predict behavior much better than remote childhood events.

A new psychology of intrinsic motivation is emerging and it excels in predicting how people will behave in natural environments. In recent

Terri Apter, Ph.D.

Arguing in a broad sense is an activity fundamental to all close relationships.

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Steven Reiss is Emeritus Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at The Ohio State University.
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months interest has emerged in applying the new motivation to marketing. In the remainder of my blog I will outline some general principles I published in my book titled, "Who am I?"

The new marketing permits us to compare the values expressed by a brand and those expressed by advertisements. Consider, for example, the advertisement, "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas." If you look at the 16 universal values, you will learn that a weak need for honor motivates expedience. The value here is not to get caught. Since Vegas is branded as "sin city"—sin falls under low honor—the advertising slogan is a direct hit on the value of the brand. As far as I can tell, most memorable advertising slogans are direct hits on the values of the brand.

My colleagues and I offer a number of training seminars for those interested in learning more. The next seminar I will give will be held in Chicago June 21 and 22. All of my seminars are for small groups. For further information, contact ids@idspublishing.com. Various Reiss Motivation Profile Institutes—soon there will be 11 institutes worldwide—also offer seminars in Europe and Asia.





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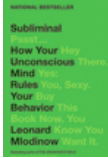
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