

# Identification – the essence of education

Jeremy HORNE

Newland University  
San Felipe, Baja California 21850, Mexico  
mindsurgeon@hotmail.com

## ABSTRACT

We use the word "education", often confabulated with "training" when both more accurately fall under the rubric "schooling". Education exists because of training and, conversely, obeying the most fundamental law, the unity of opposites. Yet, an "educated" person is often set apart from the perceived "unwashed masses", their being not so distantly removed from our primate ancestors, dragging their knuckles across the terrain. Trainees are supposed to obey the commands of the educated. Without social context, "education" is a mere word devoid of content. An apparent paradox in the US is the state of its school system, which produces graduates, only half of whom can read past the eighth grade. Our "education" and hubris have managed to bring the much-vaunted Homo sapiens sapiens to the brink of extinction. Effects have caused and impelling our current dilemma is disordered personal identity. The absence of real education is responsible, despite the "sapiens" designation.

Schooling exists under the rubric of "formalizing awareness", this is a process as well as an object, resulting in one's becoming, an organic phenomenon. Supervening the hedonistically-characterized path of human development are the mandates of the transcendental realm, represented by the words of Buddha, Christ, Mahoma, Aristotle, and Plato, among others. The "trans" in "transdisciplinary" means "across", with truth (its object and method of seeking it) existing in all domains permeating the Universe and our search for it necessitating our exploring all regions. So, "trans", in this regard, mirrors the "trans" in "transcendental". Truth characterizes the Creator, and so is the object of search in education. Training validates it, evidenced by virtue (internalizing maximal behavior). Truth bespeaks one's identity, its integrity a function of order. A disordered identity compromises a person's being, and conversely. Two methods of identity location are neurocorrelation and deep personal questioning (as with the Voris method).

For one with a transcendental ethos, s/he not only lives education; s/he is education.

**Keywords:** Personal Identity, Voris Method, Identity and Order, Personality, Authentic Systems, Core Values, Virtue Ethics, Values Clarification

## 1. INTRODUCTION

"Identity" and "education" are axial in our lives. An identity emergency is ongoing in contemporary society, evidenced by mounting social conflict, sexual dysphoria, identity politics, gangs, depression, and alienation. People seek to "educate" themselves, but many often fail to know what education is or what it is supposed to do. I emphasize this immediately by my choice of "schooling" to incorporate both education and

training", a detailed rendition of which will appear here shortly. Knowledge quality is compromised, where numerous peer-reviewed papers are retracted [Retraction Watch, 2024], due to poor research design, inadequate peer review, and even data fraud or manipulation. Peer review itself is in trouble, the number of low-quality and fake journals on the rise. It is not unreasonable to think this would catapult us back to the Middle Ages, where rumor and superstition held equal sway with demonstrable (and today, scientific) facts. One explanation is poor schooling and not prioritizing learning.

In the US, at least, schools are failing, 50% of the adult US population unable to read past the eighth grade (OECD figure), 25% believing the Sun orbits the Earth (US National Science Foundation), and many unable to locate countries on an outline map where the US regime is promoting war, sources of these facts easily obtained by an Internet search. In 1983, the Carnegie Commission issued "A Nation at Risk", explaining that persistently low-quality schooling is a security risk. For the 2024 budget for the US Department of Education, "In FY (fiscal year) 2024, the Department of Education (ED) had \$238.04 Billion distributed among its 10 subcomponents." [DOE Spending, 2024], contrasted with "In FY 2024, the Department of Defense (DOD) had \$1.94 Trillion distributed among its 6 subcomponents. [DoD Spending, 2024]. Both are taken from a total of \$8.7 trillion [Budget Function, 2024]. The figures speak for themselves about priorities. As a footnote, I refer to Plato's famous dialogue in his Republic between Socrates and Thrasymachus, the former arguing that education and philosophy are more expeditious than the latter's "might makes right" in the pursuit of justice. Modern prison violence reduction programs are based on the assumption that critical thinking is a far superior problem-resolution method. Such applies to all situations, including nation-states.

Events do not occur by themselves; people generate them, begging questions about values and character. Christopher Lasche wrote in 1976 in *The Culture of Narcissism* (the excess of loving oneself), suggesting that individuals implicitly saw themselves as not valued or even under threat by others. Here, we observe signs of persons alienated from themselves, narcissism a sign of personal insecurity, and the need to augment the self through material self-indulgence. Here, I refer to Russell W. Belk's works.

Usually, we enter this world through a family, that being the first encounter with otherness, that there are other Homo sapiens sapiens (the anatomically correct designation of our subspecies) aside from us. Such is the nascence of our socialization. Outside the family are layers of others – family, friends, public and private organizations, political units, etc. The quality of an organization is shaped by the individuals within it, and vice versa. We may effect social change top-down or bottom-up. Change the institutions or the individuals generating them. Here,

I look at the individuals. (My book, *Managing Complexity Through Social Intelligence* [Horne, 2023] addresses matters at the social level.) That the integrity of the individual is dependent upon her/his education is a minimalist statement.

To arrive at this end, I lay a philosophical foundation to orient you to how we might think about identity. Then, I explain "identity", education versus training, some axiology (study of values), values internalization (virtue), and knowledge acquisition. I explore an identity probe – the Authentic System, emphasizing knowing something by its effects (one's actions/behavior revealing their core, not simply their mentation). Validation issues follow.

I am hoping you will come to realize how and why education is the essence of identity, that a truly educated individual is one with transcendent values, one loving truth and pursuing it, including, making it contagious. First, however, we need a philosophical underpinning for learning and education [Horne, 2015].

**NB:** To the detractors complaining about self-citations, these are used to avoid extensive and detailed recounting of ideas, particularly to save space. As long as I am citing correctly, there is no plagiarism.

## 2. SOME PHILOSOPHY

### 2.1 The most fundamental law

Throughout this and other of my works, I begin with a reminder that we apprehend in terms of what something is not, the most fundamental law, popularly, the unity of opposites. Heraclitus (c. 535 BCE to c. 480 BCE) is credited in the Western world with formalizing this idea. Daoist Chinese philosopher Laozi (6th century BCE) posited the same idea, symbolized by the familiar yin-yang symbol. That the unity of opposites is observed presumably independently from opposite sides of the planet suggests its veracity. For us modern scholars, we in the Western world look to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (27 August 1770 – 14 November 1831), in particular, his book *Logic*(the "ground"), to explicate the complexities.

We cannot apprehend anything alone, a common sense realization. If everything is the same, how can you perceive difference? Evacuating our minds of thought, as Eastern philosophers in meditation do, cannot qualify, as one is not apprehending anything.

The significance arises in motivating our awareness of process, particularly that impelling learning. Sameness arrests our thinking, ideology (a set of ideas not subject to question) the result, not philosophy. If there is a "yes", a "no" exists. If there is a left, there is a right, and so forth. Consider a more sophisticated rendition of this law's results:

Table 1. The left exists because of the right and conversely.

set	element
teoria	praxis
singularity	heat death
chaos (physics)	entropy
potential	actual
infinite	infinitesimal
science	technology

episteme	techne
synthesis	analysis
motion	stasis
alive	dead
abstract	concrete
education	training
order	randomness (inability to predict). anarchy
build	destroy
environment	system
edge	center
general	specific
induction	deduction
wave	particle
superposition	collapse
wisdom	data
interdisciplinary	discipline
complex	simple
potential	kinetic
Authopoiesis	autodestruction

### 2.2 The nature of philosophy

While philosophy is the love and pursuit of truth, it is essential to realize that its foundations are not certain. Philosophy has two pillars: ontology, the study of what exists, and epistemology, or justified belief. For us, ontology is the handmaiden of epistemology, and contrariwise.

Since we are not gods (even though many think they are), we encounter metaphysical barriers. From where did the Universe originate? What is our purpose (if any)? What happens after we die, with the companion question, "What is life?". Does infinity exist? Is order innate in the Universe? Is there free will? There appears to be no end to questions like these.

We cannot escape ourselves. We see ourselves (and our environment) through ourselves. Therefore, our communication and its content are inherently biased, bearing our perspective. Even if an entity were to confront us with "the truth", we would still see it through ourselves.

Accordingly, we do as mathematicians and logicians do when faced with dilemmas like these: bootstrap with assumptions, such as definitions, rules, axioms, postulates, and so forth. I, therefore, bootstrap by adopting the most fundamental law, that unity of opposites forming a singularity, the essence of what exists (ontology), and its justification being its historical development. Elsewhere, I have elaborated on these things [Horne, 2022]. Space prevents me from doing so in this paper. Now, let's see what we are talking about.

## 3. IDENTITY

Since I started this paper with, "identification" I will proceed to it straight away my favorite source, *Online Etymology Dictionary* .

### identification (n.)

1640s, "treating of a thing as the same as another; act of making or proving to be the same," from French *identification*, probably from *identifier* (see *identify*). Psychological sense of "becoming or feeling oneself one with another" is from 1857. Meaning "act or

process of determining the identity of something" is from 1859. Meaning "object or document which marks identity" is from 1947 (short for identification tag, card, etc.). also from 1640s

Entries linking to identification

### identify (v.)

1640s, "regard as the same," from French identifier, from identité (see identity). Sense of "determine the identity of, recognize as or prove to be the same" first recorded 1769. Meaning "make one (with), associate (oneself), regard oneself as being the essence of" is from 1780. Sense of "serve as means of identification" is attested by 1886. Related: Identified; identifying.

Now, to the root word, "identity",

### identity (n.)

c. 1600, "sameness, oneness, state of being the same," from French identité (14c.), from Medieval Latin identitatem (nominative identitas) "sameness," ultimately from Latin idem (neuter) "the same" (see idem).

An earlier form of the word in English was idemptitie (1560s), from Medieval Latin idemptitas. The term identity crisis is recorded by 1954. Identity theft is attested from 1995. Identity politics is attested by 1985, the phrase said to have been brought to attention by the Black feminist Combahee River Collective Statement (1977).

Collins Dictionary says:

Word forms: plural i'dentities

1. the condition or fact of being the same or exactly alike; sameness; oneness

groups united by identity of interests

2. a. the condition or fact of being a specific person or thing; individuality

b. the characteristics and qualities of a person, considered collectively and regarded as essential to that person's self-awareness

c. the condition of being the same as a person or thing described or claimed

3. Ancient Mathematics

an equation which is true for all permissible sets of values of the variables which appear in it: Ex.:  $x^2 - y^2 = (x + y)(x - y)$

Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition. Copyright © 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All rights reserved.

### Word origin

Fr identité < LL identitas, coined (prob. infl. by LL essentitas, essence) < L idem, the same, akin to Sans idám, the same < IE base \*e-, \*ei-, he, that > Sans ayám, OIr ē, Goth is, he

Draw your attention to "same" and its derivatives. Ask, "Same with respect to what?". Something as itself means identical to itself. Compared to another entity, logicians and mathematicians correctly refer to "equivalence". That is, we ignore the popular confusion between the two for analytical accuracy. As an aside, given Heraclitus, everything is in a state of flux; we can only talk of equivalences, there being no stasis, hence equality, save for an instant in spacetime. To have equivalence, we come to comparison, and such requires our notion of order.

Order, in its simplest rendition, is arrangement [Horne, 2018], allowing for prediction. A compromised ordering compromises prediction ability. To compare an entity, we need to know its properties. For us, these are values, elaborated by axiology (the study of value), describing what is meaningful to us, thus reflecting the nature of our core. Virtue (following the Classical Greeks) is the degree to which we internalize purported values, resulting in virtue ethics, as in honesty, courage, kindness, compassion, etc.

More specifically, identity refers to Homo sapiens sapiens.

Etymology:

From translingual Homo sapiens, from Latin sapiēns, present active participle of sapiō ("discern, be capable of discerning"). Present active participle of sapiō ("I discern"). [Sapiens, 2024]

**NB:** Anthropologists discard the second sapiens, because the other subspecies no longer exist. I keep it to emphasize that mere discernment the first sapiens) does not imply wisdom (second sapiens).

## 4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 4.1 Education

Education in this broader sense is (again, my favorite source) from:

### educate (v.)

mid-15c., educaten, "bring up (children), to train," from Latin educatus, past participle of educare "bring up, rear, educate" (source also of Italian educare, Spanish educar, French éduquer), which is a frequentative of or otherwise related to educere "bring out, lead forth," from ex- "out" (see ex-) + ducere "to lead," from PIE root \*deuk- "to lead." Meaning "provide schooling" is first attested 1580s. Related: Educated; educating.

According to "Century Dictionary," educere, of a child, is "usually with reference to bodily nurture or support, while educare refers more frequently to the mind," and, "There is no authority for the common statement that the primary sense of education is to 'draw out or unfold the powers of the mind.'"

Education is synthetic (inductive), expansive, and probabilistic, reaching outward to the unknown. Knowledge is probable, not certain.

#### 4.2 Training

I cannot help thinking all the vehicles behind and dependent upon the engine in a

##### train (v.)

"to discipline, teach, bring to a desired state or condition by means of instruction," 1540s, which probably is extended from the earlier sense of "draw out and manipulate in order to bring to a desired form" (Middle English *trainen*, attested c. 1400 as "delay, tarry" on a journey, etc.); from *train* (n.). For the notion of "educate" from that of "draw," compare *educate*. In reference to the growth of branches, vines, etc. from mid-15c.

The intransitive sense of "exercise, drill, discipline" oneself is attested from c. 1600; specifically as "fit oneself for a performance by a regimen of exercise" is attested by 1832. In reference to animals, "rendered docile and educated to perform certain tasks or tricks."

Training is deductive, contracting, and certain -directed inward to what already is known. The engine (making traveling in a direction) pulls all its cars as instances. Knowledge is certain, as it already has been established within the domain of discourse. That is, one operates in a closed system with defined boundaries. Note, here, that these are boundaries that are set by a person/persons, not because of a metaphysical "absolute".

#### 4.3 Relationship between education and training

That induction and deduction are entirely separate processes is problematic, at best. Deduction is the most controversial, simply because deductive methods are grounded in assumptions (axioms, postulates, rules, definitions, etc.), and we need to ask where these come from. A deductive system is incomplete, another example of Gödel's incompleteness theorem. Because of the metaphysical barriers against our knowing absolutes [Horne, 2022], we bootstrap, that is, set forth those assumptions. John Stuart Mill argued that all inference is inductive; the source of knowledge is derived from experience [Skorupski, 1998].

Training is an aspect of education – using established methods of knowledge acquisition (as in epistemology). While it is beyond the scope of this paper, those methods change, Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* is a paradigmatic exposition of how this happens. A more radical view is Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method*, the title of this book referring to an academic anarchist's view of discovery, the "aha" method in bumping into knowledge. An educative aspect of training is learning new ways of permuting knowns, including methods. Think of a kaleidoscope, never before seen arrangements appearing. Such raises our questioning if our world is deterministic, an already defined/enclosed space, requiring a synthetic exploration, itself.

Because education exists because of training and conversely, I incorporate this singularity into the term "schooling", and it is convenient, because "school system" is well known with little controversy.

Elsewhere [Horne, 2015] I have elaborated on the distinction between education and training, as well as the relationship between the two in terms of the most fundamental law, but the following will suffice to grasp how and why these shape one's identity. It all has to do with the substance of values.

### 5. HIERARCHIES OF VALUES

What are we inferring substantively? To simplify matters, the DIKW Pyramid displays the granularity of mentation. Reading from bottom to top (DIKW), we have:



Figure 1. DIKW Pyramid [2024]

“Scholars argue about the meanings of each of these tiers, so to avoid descending into a rabbit hole of opinion, I will give a compilation of views. Using a computer science metaphor, datum are the bits (zeros and ones), assembled into words as information, in turn, strung together as knowledge, and our using the computer as wisdom. Put another way, data are symbols or signs representing meaning, stimuli, signals, observations, or purported facts. Information is meaning imparted to the data, fictional or otherwise. Knowledge emanates from epistemology, or justified belief. Major epistemologies are tradition, history, rationalism (logic and mathematics), empiricism (senses and experience), scientific methods, intuition, and faith. Each or a combination of these judges the information. That the information is indeterminate or false is a judgement, hence, knowledge. Wisdom is how we use that knowledge, for constructive or destructive ends, benefit or detriment, and so forth. The teleology (purpose) or knowledge is shaped by values, a person being wise or not.

Parallel to the DIKW pyramid are two accounts of values hierarchies, depicted here and speaking for themselves, thus inviting further inquiry.

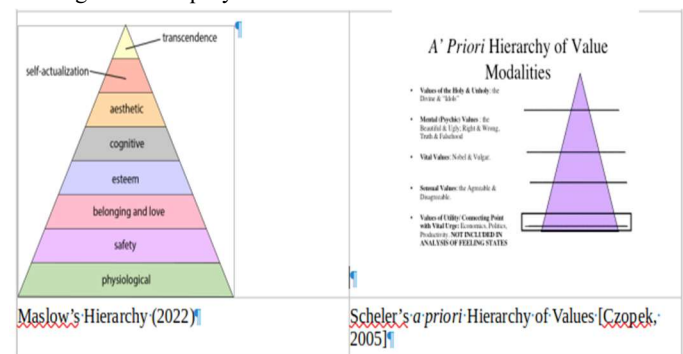


Figure 2. – As captioned above

Our is not the task to cull through the rat's nest of literature on axiology, the study of values and ethics, as it is sufficient to call attention to these generated by one's identity, that identity shaped by the school system.

## 6. WHO/WHOM IS AN INDIVIDUAL?

I bridle at someone talking about "human capital" and see this phrase in the same genre as one being a cog in a machine. Indeed, the Romantic Period from the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century through the middle of the 1800s, was a reaction to the mechanization of humanity. People have become objects to be used, and they have become alienated not only from society but themselves [Horne, 2023]. Let's take a short linguistic excursion and visit the grammar police to clarify the problem.

Who performs the action of a verb (e.g. "Who sent us this gift?"), while whom receives the action ("We got this gift from whom?"). In grammar terms, that makes who a subject, and whom an object. When following a preposition, whom is the preferred choice ("To whom should we address our thank you note?").

The choice between who and whom can sometimes be confusing, and this has always been the case. But English is extremely flexible, and actual usage doesn't always follow the strict rules of grammar. Our ears are our guides, and there are many constructions (like "Whom did you speak to?" vs. "Who did you speak to?") in which whom may be technically correct but still feel fussy or unnatural. In these cases, it is perfectly standard to use who. [Who-Whom distinction, 2024]

What does "who" signify? If we see the person as an object, it is "whom", a person, "who" – big difference.

We should not confuse "identity" with "persona", the former the core, the latter a mask. Here is one reason why "personality" assessments, values clarification programmes, counseling, or even philosophy courses do not usually accurately characterize one's identity (also known as the "core") [Horne, 2024]. They are self reports of one's thoughts, not a recording and analysis of one's actions.

Recall from above that identity (now, for us, equivalence) refers to a comparison of purported values and virtue, whether or not those values are internalized in one's lived life. This is not new. Says Matthew 7:16 (NMV), "By their deeds you will know them. Does a man gather grapes from thorns or figs from briars?"

## 7. THE AUTHENTIC SYSTEM

To locate and describe one's identity, we need a probe. As mentioned above, personality "tests" fail, mainly because they do not track what the person has actually done, but merely record what a person claims they think or want. Intent is not action.

### 7.1 Life themes

A life theme is a pattern of behavior. Lived (internalized) values translate into a life theme. Extensive discussion of their development are contained in [Horne, 2024]. Authentic Systems (AS) has four classes of life themes:

Love: Advocates of Humanity - "keen awareness of the needs of self and others. empathy, advocates for other peoples, rescues others, is a communitarian, family-oriented, cares for animals (and plants and the

environment), volunteers, is altruistic, shares, and generally puts others above themselves. [Voris, 2019, Discover the Power, p. 35]

Justice: Arbiters of Humanity - "... awareness of what is fair, right and good and can balance between fact and sentiment. ... First, abstractly, as an arbiter and negotiator, guiding others toward the ideas of excellence and integrity. Second, physically, as an artist or engineer seeking symmetry and harmony through the art of creating." [Ibid., p. 47]

Wisdom: Teachers of Humanity - "... possess a natural, deep desire to grasp knowledge" [Ibid. p. 59]. that may be compulsive They are more more objective, as opposed to being emotional. One is "...driven to know what you feel is required" continuing "to learn more and more until you are sufficiently satisfied only to be driven again" [Ibid, p. 60].

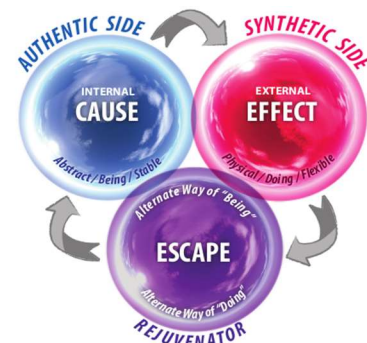
Power: Leaders of Humanity - "... a need to act upon your thoughts and get into action. Empowerment finds its expression and purpose through you as a natural leader and agent of change" [Ibid, p. 69]. "Power people value the alphas and implore others to be so, and are the resource to make this happen, ... advising, consulting and guiding others to achieve their own self-realization and mastery" [Ibid., p. 70].

Authentic Systems uses its Authentic Life Theme Assessment (ALTA) Assessment [ALTA, 2024]

### 7.2 Authentic Assessment Instruments

ALTA is a 25-question multiple-choice "test", with questions like, "Which word-pair best relates you?", followed by "Research – Theory; Deluxe – VIP; Compassion – Hope; Balance – System", the answers to which categorized under one of the four themes of wisdom, love, justice, and power.

A client receives a "Discovery Session Workbook" explicating the theory of the life themes approach. Under three separate headings – "Authentic Side" "internal cause", "Synthetic Side" (external effect", and "Your Rejuvenator", the client provides written answers to "introspection questions".



[Voris, 2024, Discovery Session Workbook, p. 8]

**Figure 3.** A person's core processes

The relation of cause, effect, and escape is recursive, hence self-reinforcing, unless one or more are influenced from the outside. The cause includes values, the effect their display. Escape is the

schooling. Education is the introspection. The training is the ideology, the failing to deviate or learn new knowledge.

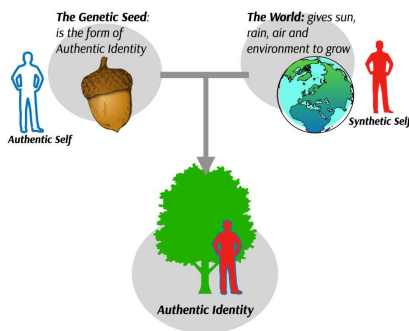
### 7.3 Three Aspects of Identity

Authentic Side provides stability and structure in “being”, evident by all the commitments made in life - the “Real You”. Stable/unchanging with one purpose: To express one’s existence to the world. “I exist, I am unique with purpose and I make a difference.” - responsible for giving a sense of fulfillment and sustainable feelings of happiness.

Synthetic Side (observed by others) provides stability and structure in the way of “doing” and “acting”, evident by life’s commitments. Very adaptable, creative, and spontaneous in its expression of you, and open to all physical possibilities available to completely express yourself and your free-will. This helps you meet the challenges in world.

Rejuvenator is an alternate way of both “being” and “doing” that temporarily escapes both your Authentic and Synthetic sides so that you can take a break and recharge. It is responsible for those times where you seem to behave differently than your usual self. It’s also a key to long lasting, intimate relationships

Authentic (self observation - individual) in terms of Synthetic (others) (most fundamental law). Notice the recursive aspect made possible by Rejuvenator (catalyst). [paraphrased from workbook] Otherwise expressed, we have:



[Wells, 2024]

Figure 4. Sources of authentic identity

Validation in the Authentic System is comparing the person’s actual behavior to expressed values.

## 8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

"Identification" literally means the process of locating and characterizing one’s core being. A key to solving the growing identity emergency, with all the conflict it generates, is locating each person’s identity and making her/him aware of it. That core is characterized by values. How well a person has internalized them (virtue) can best be found by observing what they have done, as opposed to their self-reported thoughts. We now have one reason why personality and other assessment methods are unsatisfactory. The school system is the social institution to facilitate identity formation, but much confusion exists about its

educative and training functions, both often placed falsely under the label "education".

Education is the acquisition of awareness by reaching outward into the unknown. It is synthetic, building upon what is known to create new knowledge. Induction is the inference process. Education generates theory and is oriented more toward wholism. The goal of education is to internalize the love and pursuit of truth. Training is deductive, focusing on what is already known, descending to more detail, i.e., reductionism. It is more applicative, rather than theoretical. Training is about praxis. However, education and training are each other’s handmaiden. Educational methods can be in the training domain, but training methods can evolve (pedagogy) as educative. Working together, they constitute schooling.

Values acquisition occurs within hierarchies, exemplified by the DIKW Pyramid, Maslow, and Scheler, with education at the top and training at the bottom. At the top is transcendentalism, reaching for truth about who we are and why we are here, as well as engendering the spirit of cooperation and community, exemplified by the likes of Buddha, Christ, Mahoma, Aristotle, and Plato, among others. Pausing to reflect a bit, I argue that compromised identity leads to insecurity and partially accounts for selfishness as compensation to re-acquire lost parts due to alienation.

Once we ascertain who a person is (as in the Voris identity probe), we can interact with that person’s core, by emphasizing education or training. Such an outcome will reveal a less conflicted person able to manage herself or himself personally and in society and hopefully make positive contributions.

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