Coleman's User Manual:

One of the most challenging things for any team is figuring out how best to work with each other. Most people have dramatically different working styles (or would have different styles if allowed to). That's natural. We have different backgrounds and our own lens of the world. How we see the world?!

Because of culture norms and basic job requirements (to "get stuff done") most workers are forced into taking the same approach with everyone with whom they work. In reality, we have different family backgrounds, different educations, different experiences, different values and tendencies.

Approaching *everyone* in the way _we think_ is appropriate is likely to be only at least 50% correct. At best we're only 50% correct?! That stinks. At worst we're way further off. This cannot be the best way to get the most out of each other, and the most from our teams.

Traditionally, we simply take on job tasks and then battle through personality styles and conflict (and resolve things, or don't) and just keep on trucking along. This works in the short term (sometimes) but never in the long term. How could we shortcut or improve in working together? Or build our teams correctly where our work is an extension of who we really are, and where we really accelerate what we do well?!

In order to optimize our effectiveness with each other, and after being exposed to a few of these concepts over the years, I thought I'd share the process that I thought was novel, fun, and very useful: writing my personal User Manual. We're encouraging you all to do the same and share yours with your team. In fact, we'll spend a little time on this next week at the camp in LA.

You can read the original article describing this process here.

For reference, here's my personal User Manual:

The **first set of questions <u>focuses on you personally</u>**.

- **What are some honest, unfiltered things about you?**
  - I'm an internal processor and think a lot. About lots of things. I'm "in my head" all of the time. Even when I say "I'm thinking out loud" I've really already processed many of my thoughts over time.
  - Reading (and then synthesizing) is my preferred learning style. I like to find the "why" behind things in the world. The cause-and-effect relationships. I'm very curious about the natural, underlying structure of things, both physical and metaphysical. At the same timer, I can be very quick to "pull the trigger" and not afraid of taking chances or giving something "a whirl." This is what Israeli

psychologist Daniel Kahneman calls System 1 (fast, intuitive) and System 2 (slow, rational thinking).
- I'm action oriented...big time. I definitely have a bias-to-action and don't like to stand around waiting for stuff.
- I love complexity theory and systems thinking, and thus believe that "probe-sense-respond" (as described [here by David Snowden's Cynefin Framework](#)) and rapid experimentation is the most effective way to work and experience the world. Most things in the world don't have clear causal links so we need to probe and experiment, and rapidly iterate towards optimal solutions.
- I'm neurotic about my physical fitness and personal health.
- I enjoy sharing new findings or new experiments and will refer to things regularly. I want to know about yours too!
- I think every business should operate with these three things on the top of mind:
  1. Respect: for every human with whom you interact.
  2. Team first: You always do what's best for the team first!
  3. Performance: Seek exceptional performance. I love the motto: *Aien Aristeuein,* "Ever to Excel" (from Homer's Iliad)
- I can be both very patient and very aggressive at times. Maybe call it macro patience but micro aggressive.
- I love reading, learning, thinking, and writing.
- There are six (6) epithets which are on my mirror and I try to remember and reference everyday:
  1. Patience - it reminds me to slow down. My default is to do things "at pace!"
  2. Kindness - it encourages understanding and compassion.
  3. Industriousness - it reminds me to "do the work" (Pressfield) and helps protect me against fear and uncertainty.
  4. Awareness - it keeps me on the ground and mindful of others. My natural tendency is to plow ahead and just get stuff done!
  5. Intentionality - to do things with specificity (and for a reason). It's a warning and protection from reactivity.
  6. Moderation - rest, take care of myself, be mindful of the extremes.

- **What drives you nuts? Irritates you?**
  - When people make excuses and think about why things can't be done rather than *how* to get things done.
  - People who are disrespectful, act like they are better than others, are passive aggressive, or indirect.
  - If a person has to be micromanaged to do their job. Follow-up is one thing but if you have to be constantly managed we won't work well together. Or if you have to constantly manage me then we won't work well together. Again, I welcome follow-up (love follow-up) but micromanagement is dysfunctional.

- **What are your quirks?**
    - I have a tendency to drive really hard for results. It's not necessarily a workaholic attitude but once I have the "bit in my teeth" about something I stay pretty focused on it. This sometimes serves me well and sometimes not so well.
    - I don't like to *tell* people *what* to do.
    - I'm not sure it's a quirk but I would nap every day if I could fit it in my schedule.

- **How can people earn an extra gold star with you?**
    - Lean forward into solutions with a great attitude. Get excited about doing things others won't do. Bring innovative, clear solutions. Be flexible and aggressive.
    - Think multidimensionally and laterally. Be looking for 2nd and 3rd order vertical, and horizontal effects to your actions and decisions.

- **What qualities do you particularly value in people who work with you?**
    - A "Yes, and…" mentality. The person who has that "let's roll" attitude about getting up every morning and contributing to their team to their best ability. Not being right all of the time, or even worried about being right. But rather working towards getting better everyday.
    - Finding truth. Discovering factual accuracy. A purely emotional decision is almost always our human tendency (this is called amygdala response and is attached to System 1 thinking) and a function of evolution. System 2 (neocortex, rational thinking) is what makes us the most dominant species on the planet. We should use this as effectively as possible and try to recognize when we're reacting to something from the place of System 1, intuitive reaction.

- **What are some things that people might misunderstand about you that you should clarify?**
    - I'm massively introverted. Consistent extroversion wears me out.
    - My bias to action "control-oriented" is "progress-oriented." I'm not as interested in control as I am in being able to answer the following questions about things in general:
        1. Ask myself "why" three times?
        2. Ask myself "how do I know?"
        3. Ask myself "who/how is this helping?"
    - I try to hold my opinions on things until I could argue both sides of a perspective. Warren Buffet's partner, Charlie Munger, says that he doesn't express an *opinion* on something if he can't articulate the opposing opinion better than the opposition. Said differently, the filter through which he judges the validity of his own opinions is if he could fully and completely argue from the opposing side.

The **second set of questions focuses on _how_ you interact with others**:

● **How do you coach people to do their best work and develop their talents?**
  ○ I prefer to hear the direction people want to go in their own lives and in the team/business we share, and then help them get there with additional resources, training, and education. I love helping. However, you have to ask me. One of my quirks is I don't like to tell people what to do or suggest my way is the right way. Thus, if you want my attention on something, please just ask. I'm never going to insert myself in someone's life if they don't want the help. Be proactive in your development and let me know how I can help you. I'm excited to do so.
  ○ For those who work for/with me, I'll give you as much rope as you want and can handle. When you're ready to do more just ask and we'll move that direction. If it's too much rope, we'll back up and reattack.

● **What's the best way to communicate with you?**
  ○ Tactically speaking, I'm very efficient via email and text message. I don't typically answer the phone if you call me directly. To get a call let's just set a predetermined time. For my phone to ringing randomly drives me nuts.
  ○ I'm fastest to respond via text!
  ○ Strategically speaking, communicate directly and to the point. When there's time, I enjoy the "three cups of tea" approach but primarily just get to the point. In fact, tell me the BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front) whenever possible and then fill in the details using the following general approach:
    ■ **Frame** (the problem/situation from a macro perspective). This shows me how much research you've done and/or how much context you understand. Or don't understand.
    ■ **Scope** (what you believe your scope - and my scope - of influence is). This helps me see, and you explain, how you think you might have an effect on the situation we're discussing. And what part you'd like for me to play.
    ■ **Align** (what you believe the next steps are). Presumably, you think there is something important to be done or not done and in this step we're getting aligned on where you think we should go. Or you're requesting perspective from me on what direction you'd like to go.
    ■ **Research** (any additional background and context)
    ■ **Resources** (people/time/money)
  ○ **Context is everything to me.** I do much better when I fully understand how much you understand. Are you a vertical or horizontal thinker? Or both? Preferably both.

● **What's the best way to convince you to do something?**
  ○ Bring me a problem/opportunity, explain your research, share your thoughts and your proposed direction, tell me what risks you think exist, propose some concrete next steps.

- ○ If you can present three (3) arguments FOR a thing and three (3) arguments AGAINST the same thing, this is the best for me.

- **How do you like to give feedback?**
    - ○ Episodically and when it is necessary. But regularly! I hate biannual or annual performance reviews. Most standard performance reviews stink and are ineffective.
    - ○ Tactically, I prefer to give very direct feedback. My intention with feedback is for it to be helpful to you and I'm always well-intentioned. I don't think anyone is perfect or should be but I do expect teammates to be getting 1% better everyday. If I'm not getting 1% better - please tell me.
    - ○ I also realize that my feedback comes strictly from my unique viewpoint and terribly biased (as all perspectives are). There's always more to any story than my perspective so I always welcome hearing more context.

- **How do you like to receive feedback?**
    - ○ Same as above. Directly and to the point. And with context. (For example, "this is how it shows up from my perspective.")

This entire exercise really made me think about the tactics attached to the reality of these questions. Is what I say and think in my mind what I actually do? And what I actually want to do? The exercise gives a tremendous feeling of liberty, autonomy, and control because once your teammates know more about you and your style, the entire team is working from a place of much more understanding.

_____
Other things that have informed my thinking around this:

Character VIA (Identifying your **dominant values**). I took the Character VIA and discovered that my top values are Judgment, Self-Regulation, Love of Learning, and Curiosity.

- **Judgment**: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides are important aspects of who you are. You do not jump to conclusions, and you rely only on solid evidence to make your decisions. You are able to change your mind.
- **Self-Regulation**: You self-consciously regulate what you feel and what you do. You are a disciplined person. You are in control of your appetites and your emotions, not vice versa.
- **Love of Learning**: You love learning new things, whether in a class or on your own. You have always loved school, reading, and museums; anywhere and everywhere you see an opportunity to learn.
- **Curiosity**: You are curious about everything. You are always asking questions, and you find all subjects fascinating. You like exploration and discovery.

SVSS (Identifying your **dominant archetype**). I've done the SVSS and discovered that my primary archetypes in order are *Sage,* **Rebel/Explorer, Regular Guy**. See 12 common archetypes description here. When I did the SVSS I was quite surprised I came in as a Sage but measure against my Character VIA, etc. it all started to make sense. See Sage description here: (by the way, this is not to say I'm effective at this but this is my dominant tendency)

Sage Archetype:
Motto: The truth will set you free
Core desire: to find the truth.
Goal: to use intelligence and analysis to understand the world.
Biggest fear: being duped, misled—or ignorance.
Strategy: seeking out information and knowledge; self-reflection and understanding thought processes.
Weakness: can study details forever and never act.
Talent: wisdom, intelligence.
The Sage is also known as: The expert, scholar, detective, advisor, thinker, philosopher, academic, researcher, thinker, planner, professional, mentor, teacher, contemplative.

PDP (Identifying your **professional dynametric style** across Dominance, Extroversion, Pace, Conformity). I've done the PDP twice and learning a lot about myself. Here's a macro view of what the PDP helped with.

- Under *dominance*, I'm generally control-oriented, creative, and demanding. I'm conceptually analytical and technically oriented. Respect people who display an ability to get things done. I'm most productive w/out close supervision.
- Under Extroversion, I'm participative, sincere, friendly, congenial and genuine. I enjoy the team atmosphere but also value private time.
- Under Pace, I'm fast paced thinker and doer, action oriented, and impatient. I like and seek change.
- Under Conformity, I'm non-traditional, informal and generally a big-picture person. I'm known for being independent and a free thinker and prefer to delegate matters of technical/detailed nature.