

Negative Value Drivers

The five primary drivers (Belonging, Importance, Hope, Security and Life) are considered to be positive drivers. For instance “Hope for Money” represents something that an individual *wants* and will therefore work towards obtaining. It *drives* him to act and take decisions in particular ways. The perceived *value* embodied by these positive drivers is that they represent a desired goal, position or state of being (see *Figure 1* below).

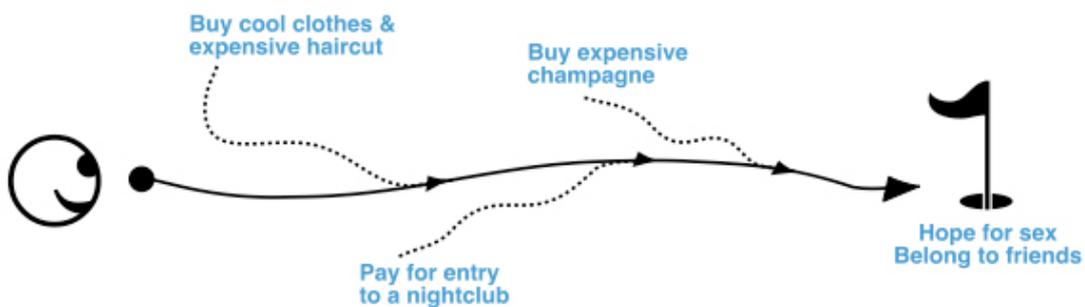


Figure 1: Positive value drivers: achieving a goal.

In a ‘sticks-and-carrots’ analogy these kinds of drivers would take on the role of carrots: a positive force that pulls the individual towards them; a ‘towards driver’. This immediately implies the existence of negative value drivers, or ‘away drivers’, i.e. the sticks. If we’ve been able to identify elements that exert a positive force (“I *want* that”), it is then likely that there are similar elements that exert an opposing negative force (“I *don’t want* that”). The easy way to tackle to this would be to look for drivers that contradict the positive ones. For instance we could say that “Avoiding Poverty” is a negative driver because it opposes the “Enough Money to Live (Security)” driver. However certain flaws immediately become evident in this approach:

1. Too Simplistic

Creating negative drivers by simply finding diametrical opposites to the positive ones is at best an exercise in reframing. Rather than being a negative driver, “Avoiding Poverty” is in reality an obstacle that *owes its existence* to the positive driver “Hope for Money” (see *Figure 2* below). A true negative driver should have intrinsic value

that does not depend on the attainment of a corresponding positive one.

2. Equivalence

The positive drivers, although distinct and intuitively different, are not singular. They do not exist in mutual exclusivity but enjoy interplay between them, creating new complexities and subtleties through their combinations. However, creating diametrically opposed negative drivers would not add to this mix. We would not be able to say “This product targets ‘Hope for Sex’ and ‘Avoidance of Poverty’” with any unprecedented value because the statement is equivalent to saying “This product targets ‘Hope for Sex’ and ‘Hope for Money’”.

Reframing the Positive Drivers

The problem with the approach just described is that it’s not providing us with additional tools - the sticks - but is instead simply showing us what it would be like to *not have the carrots*. However before moving on to another approach for finding negative drivers, it is worth looking briefly at this method for some collateral value. *Figure 2* below shows a simple visualisation of the positive drivers being reframed as obstacles.

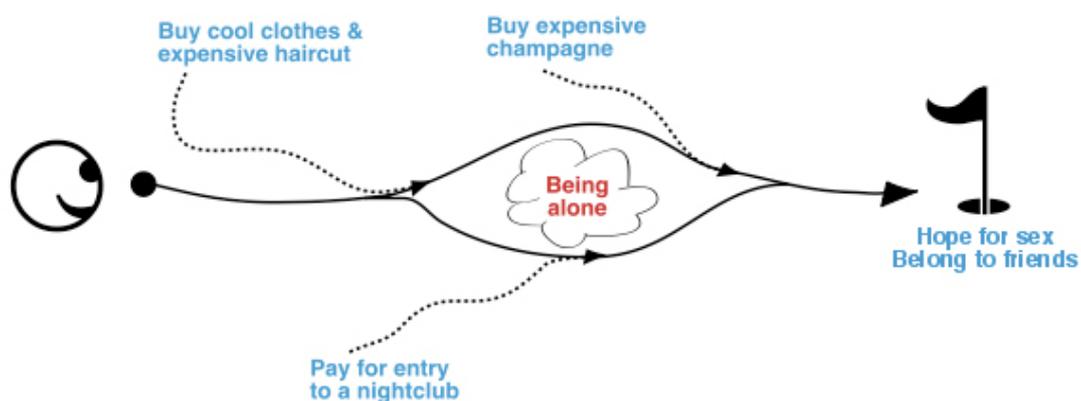


Figure 2: Reframed positive drivers: Avoidance drivers

Although we are not yet seeing a stick, the obstacle does give us some additional information about the positive driver, which may be put to good use in certain

situations. Taking this idea a little further we may be able to deduce the existence of an *avoidance driver* that is associated with each positive driver. The table below lists a few examples of what these may be.

Positive Driver	Avoidance Driver
Belonging	Loneliness
Feeling important	Anonymity
Hope for Money	Poverty
Security	Illness / Loss
Getting the most out of life	Mediocrity
...	...

Finding Negative Drivers

The key to finding negative drivers lies not in looking for things different to the individual positive drivers, but for something different to what is fundamentally common in the way the positive drivers work. One such common element is *time*. We've already described the positive drivers as 'towards' drivers and one interpretation of this is that they are forward-looking in relation to the present moment, i.e. planning the future (e.g. obtaining money, leaving a legacy, finding a partner, etc.) Therefore we can set about looking for negative drivers by turning our point of view a 180 degrees and exploring the past rather than the future. Rather than drivers that "plan for the future", we look for drivers that "learn from experience" or that "try to change the past". *Figure 3* below depicts this concept in diagrammatic form.

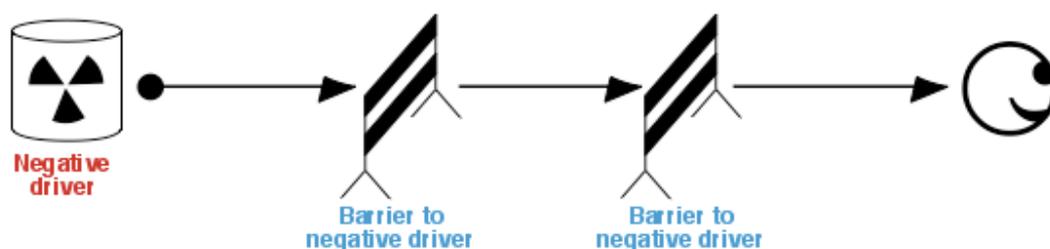


Figure 3: Structure for finding negative drivers

A negative driver is the inverse of a goal; something an individual has experience of and wants to avoid experiencing or happening again; something the person wants to

keep away from. Therefore the objects that have *value* for the individual in relation to these kinds of drivers are ones that help him erect barriers between him and the unwanted state of experiencing it again. The following sections describe some potential candidates in this group.

1. Guilt

Guilt has worked excellently for the Catholic Church in the form of 'original sin' whereby people are inspired to follow the church based on the premise that they are guilty of something and must redeem themselves. Atonement, redemption, facing the music, making up for 'it', all represent ways of erecting barriers between an individual and a sense of guilt for something done in the past. Guilt may be personal, societal or cultural. White Americans have been guilt-tripped into respecting Native Americans in apology for past misdemeanours, Europeans into helping 'third world' countries in atonement for the colonisers' plunders and so on. On a personal and micro level guilt might be present in how a parent treated a child in the past or how a boss mistreated a sub-ordinate.

Charities and environmental organisations base a lot of their strategy (unknowingly?) on building barriers against the Guilt Driver by proposing ways in which individuals can alleviate guilt feelings with respect to those 'less fortunate than us' or the 'harm done to Mother Nature'.

2. Procrastination

Procrastination – or waste of time – is probably a widely experienced negative feeling. Students procrastinate and don't study; salespersons waste time and don't sell; unfit people laze about and put off exercising; CEOs vacillate and miss partnership opportunities. A business may be created on building barriers to the Procrastination Driver by prodding, reminding, providing information or out-sourcing time-consuming tasks...

3. Failure

The lack of success when attempting to do something: start a venture; pick up a date; find a job; get a research grant; win a game; understand a concept; complete a project. Problems associated with failure involve such things as stigma, lack of self-confidence (even for unrelated activities), lack of self-esteem, financial debt, loss of time and rejection. Barriers against the Failure Driver might include things that mitigate the losses resulting from failure, help avoid repeating the same mistakes or acquiring knowledge to understand the reason for past failures.

4. Embarrassment

Embarrassment typically results from inappropriate or inadequate behaviour in specific social situations resulting in awkwardness, self-consciousness, shame, (and even death from mortification; an archaic illness, now obsolete). It could actually be thought of as a particular form of failure although I list it here as a separate driver. The biggest barrier against the Embarrassment Driver is knowledge: how to behave; what to say; what to buy; how to dress and so on.

Terminology

Finally these thoughts lead me to a slight shift in terminology. Rather than referring to *positive/negative* drivers it seems more accurate to refer to *towards/away* drivers. Furthermore it is likely that there are more kinds of primary drivers than these two sets and referring to them as positive/negative may tie us down to a limiting binary model.