

Preview: HES — Human Elements System: The Periodic Table of Human Self

Selected passages from the book by Areg Hovan

From the Introduction: Telescopes Without Mirrors

On April 10, 2019, a team of over two hundred scientists released the first-ever photograph of a black hole. To get it, they had turned the entire planet into a camera. Eight radio telescopes — scattered across volcanoes, deserts, mountaintops, and Antarctic ice — had synchronized their atomic clocks to within a trillionth of a second, then aimed, together, at a point fifty-five million light-years away.

That same year, the board of directors at a Fortune 500 company fired its chief executive. The stated cause was “a deficit of emotional intelligence.” Reporters asked what the phrase meant. The answers were vapor: “communication dynamics,” “cultural fit,” “leadership style.” Nobody could define the term. Nobody could say whether the ousted CEO had more or less of this mysterious substance than the next candidate — or than the janitor. There was no test. There was no scale. There was a feeling, and someone had pinned a fancy label to it.

Set these two scenes side by side and something uncomfortable comes into focus. The same species that can synchronize atomic clocks across twelve thousand kilometers to photograph the edge of a black hole cannot agree on what it means to understand another human being. We can weigh a galaxy. We cannot weigh a mood.

We measure ultraviolet light — radiation no human eye has ever seen — and sort it by wavelength to the nanometer. We detect ripples in spacetime caused by collisions that happened before our solar system existed. And yet: ask a seemingly simpler question — *How depleted is this person, right now? How close to breaking? How capable, today, of listening, of keeping a promise, of telling the truth to themselves?* — and the precision evaporates.

It is as though our species spent centuries building telescopes of ever-greater power and never once thought to build a mirror.

From Chapter 1: One Word, Six Machines

Consider the word “lazy.”

It is one of the most common labels in every language I know. Parents use it on children. Managers use it on employees. People use it on themselves, usually late at night, staring at a to-do list that hasn’t budged. The word carries a clear moral verdict: this person could do more but won’t.

Now look at what the single word “lazy” might actually be covering.

Low energy. The system is depleted. Not enough sleep, not enough recovery. The person is not refusing to work. They are running on fumes. You would not call a car with an empty tank “lazy.” You would fill it up.

Low meaning. The task feels pointless. Motivation is not a substance you either have or lack. It is a signal that says *this matters*. When the signal goes quiet, starting feels like pushing a boulder uphill in the dark.

Low structure. The person cannot decompose the task into a starting move. The problem isn’t unwillingness — it’s an absence of entry points. Install a checklist, a first step, a five-minute rule, and the “laziness” evaporates.

Low effort battery. Some people’s capacity for sustained effort genuinely runs shorter than others. Not because they are morally inferior — but because effort sustainment, like lung capacity, varies across the population.

Active avoidance. The person is avoiding something — failure, judgment, exposure. What looks like laziness is often a protection system running at full power: the energy is being spent on *not doing* the thing.

Mismatched environment. The person performs brilliantly in a different setting — different team, different task type, different time of day. The “laziness” is context-specific, not character-deep.

Six different mechanisms. Six different interventions. One word buries them all.

[The chapter continues with more decompositions — and introduces HES as the systematic alternative to the single-word verdict...]

From Chapter 3: The Man Who Heard Everything

Nikola Tesla could hear a fly land on a table in the next room. A ticking watch three rooms away was, to his nervous system, a percussive assault. Sunlight on a surface could be physically painful.

These are not metaphors. Tesla’s sensory architecture — what modern psychology would call his sensory processing sensitivity — was documented by contemporaries and by Tesla himself with unusual precision. He described it not as a gift or a curse but as a fact about his system: the world arrived at higher volume, higher resolution, and with less filtering than it did for most people.

This is Core at its most vivid. Sensory sensitivity is not a mood. It is not a choice. It is not anxiety in disguise, though it can produce anxiety as a downstream consequence. It is the gain setting on the input channels — how much signal the system lets through before processing begins.

His inventiveness was not separate from his sensory architecture. It was partly a product of it. The same system that made a ticking watch unbearable also made electromagnetic fields almost tangible to him. He described visualizing his inventions in complete, functioning detail before he built them — seeing the moving parts, hearing the sounds they would make, feeling the vibrations.

But the costs were equally real and equally architectural. Tesla could not easily share meals in noisy restaurants. Crowds were physiologically draining. Close relationships were difficult — not because he lacked warmth, but because sustained proximity to

another person's sensory output was, for his system, a form of continuous noise. He lived alone. He worked alone. He died alone in a hotel room.

The standard labels — “eccentric,” “reclusive,” “obsessive” — compress this into character. The map shows something different: a particular Core configuration, running at extreme settings, producing both extraordinary capacity and extraordinary constraint. The eccentricity was not a personality quirk. It was infrastructure management.

[The chapter continues with the moralization problem — why we treat hardware as character — and what it costs...]

From Chapter 6: The Periodic Table Logic

In an earlier version of the framework, Charisma appeared as Derived element D075. During the canonicalization process, it became clear that “charisma” compressed at least five distinct mechanisms: social signal sensitivity, audience calibration, confidence projection, physical presence management, and context-dependent impression formation.

Each of these can be present or absent independently. A person can have extraordinary audience calibration and zero confidence projection. Another can project confidence with no audience awareness at all. Collapsing them into “charisma” hid the very distinctions the framework exists to reveal.

So D075 was replaced with Audience Calibration Skill — one of the decomposed components — and the compound term was moved to the Parking Lot. The word survives in everyday language. The axis was replaced by precision.

This is the periodic table logic. Chemistry does not have an element called “rust.” It has iron, and oxygen, and the understanding of how they combine. The compound is real. The explanation lives in the components.

From Chapter 8: The Measurement Frontier

A framework that cannot be measured is a vocabulary. A vocabulary is useful — naming mechanisms instead of applying labels changes how people think about each other, and that change has value even without a single questionnaire. But a framework that *can* be measured is something more: it is a testable structure, a set of predictions that can be confirmed or refuted, a system that learns from its own errors.

The HES measurement protocol begins with a carefully chosen starter set — elements selected because they have the highest measurement readiness and because they form cross-layer chains. A chain is a hypothesized sequence: if a specific Core capacity is low, a specific Derived skill should show a characteristic pattern. If that Derived skill is compromised, a specific Quantum threshold should be lower. And if that threshold is lower, a specific Emotional weather pattern should appear more frequently.

Each link is a testable prediction. A chain where the predicted correlations hold gives evidence that the layer structure captures something real. A chain where they fail teaches the framework where its architecture needs revision.

This is how a framework matures: not by claiming completeness but by exposing itself to the possibility of being wrong in specific, traceable ways.

This preview contains selected passages from four of the book's eight chapters. The full book includes the complete four-layer architecture, the passport system for all 343 elements, real-world cases (Tesla, Jordan, Lincoln, Agassi, Biles, Van Gogh), the translation problem across languages, the boundary rules that govern what HES excludes, and the full measurement protocol with five testable cross-layer chains.

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