

From the Heart. . .

. . . Life Skills for Today

By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Your Career—Circumstances or Conscious Choice?

Have circumstances and people done the same to you over the years?—

“Can’t act. Can’t sing. Balding. Can dance a little.”

Well, Fred Astaire, America’s 20th century beloved dancer, singer, and actor proved the MGM Executive very wrong shortly after his screen test in 1928. In spite of this reaction, it didn’t stop him for one moment pursuing his dreams and life career. From childhood, he knew what he wanted to do with his first performance in 1905 as his older sister’s (Adele) dance partner. His whole family was involved in nurturing his talents and dreams.

One of the most important motivators in every person life starts early in childhood—nurturing curiosity, creativity, and a passion for working hard at achieving even the youngest of goals in life. For E. James Rohn, one of America’s well known motivational speakers, goals are the doorway to your dreams as long as your motivation partners with action and persistence.

“Goals—There’s no telling what you can do when you get inspired by them. There’s no telling what you can do when you believe in them. There’s no telling what will happen when you act upon them.”

Are you letting circumstances and people rob you of your dreams and confidence to reach for them? Do your career dreams seem unreachable right now? No matter if you are fifteen or fifty, here are the first questions you will definitely need to answer to get on the road realizing your life and career goals (modified from *How to Retire Happy, Wild & Free* by Ernie Zelinski):

1. What is most important to me in my life?
2. What makes me happy? What would make me a much happier person?
3. What talent or skills do I know I have?
4. What makes me feel most creative?
5. What field of endeavor challenges me in new and exciting ways?
6. What special talent have I neglected? What would I like to do that I have always wanted to do, but never got around to doing?
7. How would I like to make the world a better place in my own way?
8. What sort of legacy would I like to leave?

Once you genuinely answer these questions, you will then begin to live the life and career you were always meant to live. One final proviso—get to know your personality behavioral style. As a DISC Personality Facilitator for individuals and staff development workshops, I have found that participants more clearly and enjoyably discover how they are put together as well as how they relate to other people at home and workplace. Relationships are always at the core of any career journey. None of us ever reach our dreams without the help of others—those who believe in us and can reach their own dreams along the way too.

You may know what is most important to you, what makes you happy, and how you would like to make the world a better place. Yet, going about seeking, reaching, achieving, and sustaining them directly depends on the way your personality style impacts your attitude, skills, communication, and behavior. So, begin to understand yourself and others before you leap into that new world out there. Make a conscious choice with each step, particularly as circumstances seem to stall the journey. The little and big bumps in the road will be much less painful all around.

Next week's article will help you better understand the DISC personality style and its significant impact on your life and relationships at home and particularly the workplace.

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Personality Style Matters in Your Career & Life Part 1

You just entered the elevator you take every morning to your office on the 4th floor. You quickly set yourself inside right in front of the elevator buttons; you push “4”; then press the *close door* button to insure you get to your office as soon as possible. Why? Because you have important things to do, appointments to set, jobs to delegate today.

Or, you may be the one who can’t wait to get in that 8x8 elevator because you will have a captive audience; and there is surely enough room for one or two more rushing to get inside. You may even ask their name and where’s they are going.

Or, you may be that person who is always willing to patiently wait for the elevator. Upon entering the elevator, you are more than willing to squeeze yourself in with others because you are going up together. You won’t say too much. And if the elevator isn’t working, you will calmly take the stairs but first hold the door for another as you take the stairs together.

Or, you may be the one that places yourself at the back of the elevator just in front of the sign that says, “Maximum weight 2500 lbs.” You will also be analyzing everyone’s weight to insure that the maximum weight is not exceeded.

Dr. Sanford Kulkin, Founder and President of the Institute for Motivational Living, offers this hypothetical scenario to give you a glimpse of four basic personality styles that date back to 400 BC and Hippocrates. From observing his patients, Hippocrates discerned certain similarities and differences in human behavior. He then organized them into four different behaviors. These four so-called “temperaments” were named “Melancholic, Sanguine, Choleric, and Phlegmatic.” These temperaments correlated with various body fluids believed at the time to influence personality. From 1921 to the present, these four original behavioral or temperament styles have been renamed by more than thirty different personality/temperament profile systems—from using the seasons, colors, animals, and more.

One contemporary system is the DISC system—making it easy to understand and remember. The DISC Personality System has been one of the most widely utilized profiles throughout the years for personal and professional development around the globe. The DISC system is based on the four personality/temperaments of Hippocrates and upon the work of Dr. William Marston, one of the foremost psychologists of the twentieth century. Dr. Marston extensively studied the characteristics, patterns and responses of thousands of individuals. From this research, Marston wrote “The Emotions of Normal People.” He then developed an assessment to measure these four important behavioral factors. Kulkin and others have built on Marston’s work throughout the 20th century.

Marston’s acronym, DISC, represent these four personality/behavioral styles—**Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Compliance**. Just based on these words themselves right now, how do you see yourself? What word would you choose for each of the people entering the elevator?

Do you know you are not just one personality style, but a combination depending on your values, genetic, and childhood through adult life role models & experiences? One style may be primary and another secondary. In addition, your style will be altered somewhat by your focus or setting—personal or professional, workplace, home, school, social. Your style can be altered by your public self or mask, your instinctive self under pressure, or your own perception/self-identity. When asked to complete a DISC style profile, you will first decide the focus/setting and choose the phrase that *most* and *least* expresses how you see yourself in your chosen setting.

No response or style is right or wrong, good or bad. It is simply your internal assessment of your own strengths and weaknesses in your personality style. These profile systems are in the context of normal behavior and are not a clinical tool for diagnosis. The DISC profile simply helps you more clearly see and enhance your character strengths and assists you in managing and improving areas of weakness. We all have them, so join us all!

As Kulkin emphasizes, *“People are different; but they are predictably different.”* Personality style influences how you process information; how you communicate; whether you are more active or passive in your behavior; whether you are product/project oriented or process oriented; and what types of motivators you have for every day decisions and actions. Can you see how incredibly important it is at home and on the job to know your personality style?

As a professional life coach, I have seen clients experience a greater measure of focus, purpose, and success in life from completing a DISC personality profile. Here are some possible benefits for you as well:

- Discover personal motivators

- Better understand how to motivate others
- Compare yourself to historical figures and leaders
- Learn to maximize your personal strengths
- Build self-esteem
- Identify qualities and gifts
- Identify stressors
- Manage responsibilities more effectively
- Reduce conflict and stress
- Improve job satisfaction & performance
- Find career options to best fit your personality style
- Appreciate the differences in others
- Become a better communicator/Improve relationships with family, friends, co-workers

If you decide to take a DISC personality profile, I encourage you to ask your family members to do the same. Then have a round table conversation about your results. Yet, don't use this discovery as a whip to tell people off. Believe me, it won't help.

Remember, this is all about you, and how you relate to others. With the right attitude, go ahead and ask your employer to sponsor a staff development workshop on DISC personality. Yet, seek a trained facilitator to make sure it all goes smoothly and have fun with it. I am confident you will discover more about yourself and others people no other way!

The next article will offer you a more detail glimpse into the DISC personality system with your relationships at home and on the job. Do you know your relational strengths and

limitations? What are your occupational characteristics and limitations? What areas of personal growth are reflected in your personality style that need improvement? Begin to find out next week.

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From the Heart...

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Personality Style Matters in Your Career & Life Part 2

Your boss has come into your office for the third time today asking whether you have finished the report he wants yesterday. He looks over your shoulder to see what you are working on and checks your desk for the data he needs. By then, you are ready to tell him off. You often repeat to yourself, “Why doesn’t he just leave me alone so I can get the report done!” His interruptions are an unwanted daily routine. Wonder which personality style he may be—or for that matter, yours? Which ever style you both may have, your working relationship isn’t going very well. Your morale and productivity is slowly going down the tubes. You once liked your job, but it’s a different story now.

Do you have the same frustration at home with your spouse; or are you constantly checking in your teen’s room to see if he has cleaned it up yet as instructed? Does he say, “Hey, Mom, I’ll get to it soon if you will just leave me alone!” Before any of you say or do anything you will later regret, let’s see how your personality style, relational and occupational characteristics play into building better relationships at work and home.

With part one article, you were given an overview of the DISC Personality Style system of assessing personality characteristics is based upon the origins of Hippocrates dating around 400 BC, and the innovative work of Dr. William Marston, one of the foremost

psychologists of the twentieth century. During the 1920s, Dr. Marston extensively studied the characteristics, patterns and responses of thousands of individuals. As a result Marston wrote "The Emotions of Normal People" and developed an assessment to measure four important behavioral factors. The factors he selected were **Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance**, from which DISC takes its name. Throughout the years, scores of individuals have built upon the works of Dr. Marston. Of these, one of the foremost is Dr. Sanford Kulkin, Founder and President of the Institute for Motivational Living (IML).

DISC is a universal language of behavior that has been validated in over 25 countries since Marston introduced the model in 1928. DISC provides a neutral language to allow the discussion of individual behavioral differences; it is not a "label" that is placed on individuals. DISC identifies how four behavioral factors interact and emphasizes the strengths and uniqueness of each individual. Let's now have a more detail glimpse into what makes up your DISC personality style with your relationships at home and on the job.

Below is a chart offered by IML that offers an overview of the DISC personality styles. Do you know your relational strengths and limitations? What are your occupational characteristics and limitations? As you glimpse at each style, think about how you may see yourself in any particular combination. Yet, again, I encourage you NOT to leap too far until you actually complete a DISC profile and seek a trained facilitator to review the results with you. Prior to the next article, think about what areas of personal growth are reflected in your personality style needing improvement. The next article will review personal growth tips for each personality style.

DISC PERSONALITY STYLES—OVERVIEW

ACTIVE STYLES

TASK ORIENTED STYLES

PEOPLE ORIENTED STYLES

<p>Dominant (Driver) General Characteristics—Direct, Decisive, High Ego Strength, Problem Solver, Risk Taker; Self-Starter Value to the Team—Bottom-line organizer, Places high value on time, Challenges the status quo, Innovative Possible Weaknesses—Oversteps authority, Argumentative attitude, Dislikes routine, Attempts too much at once Greatest Fear—Being taken advantage of</p>	<p>Influencing (Inspiring) General Characteristics—Enthusiastic, Trusting, Optimistic, Persuasive, Talkative, Impulsive, Emotional Value to the Team—Creative problem solver, Great encourager, Motivates others to achieve, Positive sense of humor, Negotiates conflicts, Peacemaker Possible Weaknesses—More concerned with popularity than tangible results, Inattentive to detail, Overuses gestures and facial expressions, Tends to listen only when it is convenient Greatest Fear—Rejection</p>
<p>Compliant (Correct) General Characteristics—Accurate, Analytical, Conscientious, Careful, Fact-Finder, Precise, High Standards, Systematic Value to the Team—Perspective, The anchor of reality, Conscientious and even tempered, Thorough in all activities, Defines situations, gathers, criticizes and tests information Possible Weaknesses—Needs clear-cut boundaries for actions/relationships, Bound by procedures and methods, Gets bogged down in details, Prefers not to verbalize feelings, Will give in rather than argue Greatest Fear—Criticism</p>	<p>Stable (Steady) General Characteristics—Good listener, Team player, Possessive, Steady, Predictable, Understanding, Friendly Value to the Team—Reliable and dependable, Loyal team worker, Compliant toward authority, Good listener, Patient and empathetic, Good at reconciling conflicts Possible Weaknesses—Resists change, Takes a long time to adjust to change, Holds a grudge, sensitive to criticism, Difficulty establishing priorities Greatest Fear—Loss of security</p>

PASSIVE STYLES

Source: Institute for Motivational Living, DISC Insights, *Introduction to Behavioral Analysis*.
www.discinsights.com

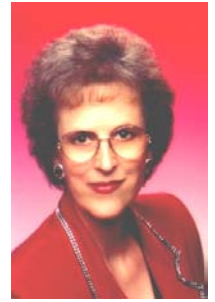
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Personality & Personal Growth—A Winning Combination

Personality characteristics, as covered in last week's article, involve active as well as passive styles. According to DISC Insights (ref: *Introduction to Behavioral Analysis*. www.discinsights.com) they may also be more task oriented or people oriented. Utilizing the DISC Personality model, **D=Dominant (Driver)**, **I=Influencing (Inspiring)**, **S=Stable (Steady)**, **C=Compliant (Correct)** personal growth challenges are quite often connected to which style or primary/secondary combination you may express in most relationships.

Successful relationships and effective team work require each person to modify, to some degree, their behavioral style. Openness, safety, and adaptability significantly reduce conflict and stress and enhance communication on many levels. Let's look at some areas of personal growth in your personality style that may need improvement.

The general characteristics of a **Dominant** personality are *Direct, Decisive, High Ego Strength, Problem Solver, Risk Taker, Self-Starter*. Their value to a relationship or team is they are a *bottom-line organizer; places high value on time; challenges the status quo; and is often innovative*. Possible weaknesses are they *overstep authority, have an argumentative attitude, dislike routine, and attempt too much at once*. **Their greatest fear is being taken advantage of.**

Compliant personalities are *Accurate, Analytical, Conscientious, Careful, are Fact-Finders, Precise, seek High Standards, and are Systematic*. Their value to a relationship or team is their *perspective and being are an anchor of reality; are conscientious; even tempered; thorough in all activities; define situations; and gathers, criticize and tests information*. Their possible weaknesses are they *need clear-cut boundaries for actions/relationships, are bound by procedures and methods, get bogged down in details, prefer not to verbalize feelings, and will give in rather than argue*. **Their greatest fear is criticism.**

Both “D” & “C” styles are task-oriented. Yet, “D” is an active style while “C” is a passive style. This is an important distinction when relating and working with each other.

Influencing personalities are *Enthusiastic, Trusting, Optimistic, Persuasive, Talkative, Impulsive, and Emotional*. Their value to a relationship or team is they are *creative problem solvers; great encouragers, motivate others to achieve, positive senses of humor, negotiate conflicts, and are peacemakers*. Their possible weaknesses are they may be *more concerned with popularity than tangible results, are inattentive to detail, overuse gestures and facial expressions, and tend to listen only when it is convenient*. **Their greatest fear is rejection.**

Stable personalities are *Good listener, Team player, Possessive, Steady, Predictable, Understanding, and Friendly*. Their value to a relationship or team is they are *reliable and dependable, loyal team workers, compliant toward authority, good listeners, patient and empathetic, good at reconciling conflicts*. Their possible weaknesses are they *resist change, take a long time to adjust to change, hold a grudge, are sensitive to criticism, and have difficulty establishing priorities*. **Their greatest fear is loss of security.**

Both Influencing & Stable styles are people-oriented. Yet, Influencing is an active style whereas Stable is a passive style. Again, this distinction is essential to understand and embrace in order to successfully relate with each other. Remember, with any of these styles, winning over your greatest fear is a significant challenge *and* opportunity in all relationships. For the “**D**”, your greatest fear to overcome is ***being taken advantage of***. For an “**I**”, your fear to overcome is ***rejection***. For an “**S**”, it is ***loss of security***. For a “**C**”, your greatest fear is ***criticism***. So, keep these in mind as you consider how to improve on your relationships at home and on-the-job.

Which ever your primary personality style is, here are some tips to enhance personal growth in your relationships, whether at home or at work.

If you are a “D” (Dominant) style:

- Strive to be an “active” listener.
- Be attentive to other people’s ideas until everyone reaches a consensus.
- Be less controlling and domineering.
- Develop a great appreciation for the opinions, feelings and desires of others.
- Put more energy into personal relationships and courtesy.
- Show your support for other people and team members.
- Take time to explain the “whys” or your statements and proposals.
- Be friendlier and more approachable.

If you are an “I” (Influencing) style:

- Weigh the pros and cons before making a decision; be less impulsive.
- Be more results oriented.
- Exercise control over your actions, words, and emotions.
- Focus more on details and facts.
- Remember to slow down your pace for other people and team members.
- Talk less; listen more.
- Consider and evaluate ideas from other people and team members.
- Concentrate on following through with tasks.

If you are an “S” (Stable) style:

- Be more open to change.
- Be more direct in your interactions.
- Focus on overall goals of relationships or team rather than specific procedures.
- Deal with confrontation constructively.
- Develop more flexibility.
- Increase pace to accomplish goals.
- Show more initiative.
- Work at expressing your thoughts, opinions, and feelings.

If you are a “C” (Compliant) style:

- Concentrate on doing the right things, not just doing things right.
- Be less critical of others’ ideas, approaches, and methods.
- Respond more quickly to accomplish team goals.
- Strive to build relationships with each other and team members.
- Be more decisive.
- Focus less on facts and more on people.
- Take risks along with other team members.

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Money & Personality—How are you investing your cash?

How we treat our money often is determined by our money relationships early in life—with parents, your children, yourself. According to Suze Orman, well-known financial advisor, “When it comes to money, freedom starts to happen when what you *do*, *think*, and *say* are one.” This is also where personality styles have significant impact on your attitudes and the way you earn, spend, save, and invest money.

Investors Advantage Now (<http://www.investorsadvantagenow.com>) is one among several groups who have co-developed with the Institute for Motivational Living the DISC personalities styles as they relate to money. They believe your investment style or personality will be one of the leading factors determining your future prosperity.

Although there are many other factors, such as education, available resources, and market opportunities that influence money management, it really still comes down to why you do what you do. How comfortable are you with the way you spend and invest your money? Again, no style is superior over other styles. Each has their own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, knowing these significant factors may make all the difference whether you retire the way you want to—self-sufficient & in control, or end up hoping and waiting for your next government check!

Here is a brief summary of how *Investors Advantage Now* describes a person's "money personality" according to DISC investing styles:

1. **"D" = Daring & Dominant.** Are you the high roller, risk taker style that is exhibited in someone like a Donald Trump? Do you believe risk should be determined by reward and you would rather take risks to have a BIG payday? These investors want hard facts and have an obsession for gaining the edge, which can either work for you or against you depending on whether you recognize this inherent trait of the "D" investor.
2. **"I" = Inspirational & Intuitive.** Are you someone who goes with a gut feeling and are attracted to investments others would consider exciting or fashionable opportunities? Are you easily attracted to 'hot' tips? Do you have a passion and inspirational quality that can attract others to join in your investment strategies?
3. **"S" = Stable & Steadfast.** Are you steady as she goes, a real blue chipper style investor? Are you one who is attracted to long-term proven investments rather than looking for the latest, greatest hot tip? Then put your "S" style to work for you, securing the best investments that have long term profitability and steady growth that doesn't leave your future to chance!
4. **"C" Cautious & Careful.** Are you someone who wants to research the facts and gain all the information about investing before making a decision? Do you seek long term security through minimizing mistakes and risks while studying markets or investment opportunities?

With each investing/personality style there is an attending risk or area of weakness that can surface at any time. As you might guess with the “D”, they tend to push hard and may go too far in risk taking. For the “I”, their creative energy and desire to be “center stage” and less “detail oriented” as can drift them off balance. They also tend to take action on “if it feels good, do it.” For the “S”, their “steady as you go” standard behavior is often tripped up by their need for safety at all cost. For the “C”, great opportunities might be missed because they get bogged down in requiring detail after detail before any decision is made...along with being more negative in their overall outlook.

So, when it comes time for you to decide on buying that dream house, new car, gold mine in Africa, or dividend-producing mutual fund, consider how your personality drives your spending and investing habits. With Spring leaping on the scene and tax time at the door, this coming month’s topic will be about our love/hate relationship with

RECORDKEEPING.

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