

From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



Oh-Hum Housekeeping

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, June 6, 2014)

Happy Summertime! Kids are out of school. Vacation plans are already set or at least planned. So, who is thinking of the housekeeping chores, oh-hum, always staring you in the face? Can't we just take a break, maybe the whole summer from those oh-hums?

For those cleanies out there, that is definitely impossible. Cleanies have either already taken care of what needs to be done and when. They may have already set up a summer chore schedule, posted it on the refrigerator, and had a family intervention as to who does what. Does this sound like you? Or just the opposite like most of us messies? If you are a cleanie ala perfectionist, you are welcome to come over to my place and demonstrate your cleaning talents anytime!

For us "recovering" messies, we have the best of intentions and actually try quite hard to show that we have it together. Yet, don't go into the closets or look under the beds. Not fair to peek! Us recovering messies promise to get to it, tomorrow for sure, right? So, how do we get past the "oh-hum" part of housekeeping? Cleanies most of the time are so determined and disciplined, like a sound-off sergeant commanding the troops. They rarely look for the "fun" in housekeeping. Most of the time housecleaning is already fun for them. On occasion, when it's not, most just say, "It just needs to get done, so do it." And they do. Did you know that both cleanies and messies are both perfectionists at heart. Yet, we messies need to have a cleanie friend always who is ready and willing to graciously come along side and teach us some pointers.

Although we really, truly want to have a clean, orderly home, we tend to need extra motivation and find the "fun" in it somehow. Then the job gets done. That means, though, every day we have to find something that gets us dancing about "getting the job done." Have any ideas or special tips for us?

Here are a few I have learned from others and on my own to start grooving with the grime. By all means send me an email to share your housekeeping grooving techniques.

- Never let an hour or day go by without putting on some music as you clean the crud. But make sure it's the kind of music that gets you moving.
- Envision yourself while scrubbing the toilet, or washing those dirty "hardly can see through" windows & screens, that you are lounging on a white sandy beach in the Bahamas, under a sunshade canopy sipping your favorite tropical beverage. It is amazing what imagination can do to speed up the more dirty jobs.
- Never feel like you are the only one who has to do all the work. Pass a list to your spouse and kids. And if you are the only person in the household, have a "clean my castle" party with your friends. But keep in mind, that your friends will do a turnaround and invite you to their clean my castle party too. You better show up too, or your friendship may get a little messy.
- If your budget can handle it, hire out. Why not? And if you feel a little guilty about this, with the time you saved volunteer for some worthy group or organization.
- Spread the trash cleaning over time. Even cleanies don't try to do everything in one day. Spread out the chores over the week, even months for those more seasonal jobs.
- Grab the latest, greatest gadget to more efficiently and effectively clean your castle. Don't break your budget though and make sure that gadget will last a very long time. There are all kinds of gadgets out there, but many break in your hands the first few times you use it.
- If the latest, greatest gadget is not your style, go simple with products and tools.

Well, I hope these tips offer some motivation and maybe a few chuckles to get the oh-hum housekeeping chores done with a smile. To learn more about the wonderful qualities and characteristics of both a cleanie and messie, go to <http://messies.com>. You will also find tips for eliminating clutter, organizing your home, and simplifying your life. Doesn't that sound simply stupendous!

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From the Heart...

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Housekeeping with Personality, part 1

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I hope you were able to take a peek at the Messies website I left you with last article to get a feel for what you consider yourself to be, a Messie like me or Cleanie. Being the messie that I am with the most noble of intentions, even as a writer, I decided to take a break and resurrect one of my 2007 articles for the next couple rounds. For newbies to *From the Heart*, enjoy. For those most loyal followers, I hope you too will enjoy the opportunity to review how doing housekeeping with personality can make all the difference in the way you actual clean your castle.

Is it only procrastination, disorganization or both that causes clutter? Is there another reason for being a *Messie* or a *Cleanie*? Might your personality style influence your housekeeping “want to?” I think so; and so does Sandra Felton, the master maven of housekeeping for *Messies* (<http://www.messies.com/>).

Remember those DISC personality styles covered in an previous articles? Well, both *Cleanies* and *Messies* can have any combination of personality styles—one primary and another more secondary. Whatever combination, we all have certain behavioral strengths and weaknesses depending on our values, genetics, and childhood through adult life role models & experiences. In addition, your style will be altered somewhat by your focus or setting—personal or professional, workplace, home, school, social. Yet, the strength and weakness with each style for the *Cleanie* and *Messie* are played out differently. *Messies* have to work harder at encouraging their strengths and working with or around their weaknesses.

As a short review, DISC is an acronym for the four personality styles created by Hippocrates around 400BC (Choleric, Sanguine, Phlegmatic, Melancholy); then developed by 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. Marston's acronym, DISC, represent these four personality/behavioral styles—**Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Compliance.**

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; and helps us to more successfully navigate relationships and life.

For the primary **Dominant personality style**, they are direct, decisive, problem solver, risk taker; self-starter, innovator, and excellent organizer. They challenge the status quo. They, however, may overstep authority, display an argumentative attitude, dislike routine, and attempt too much at once.

For the **Influential style**, they are enthusiastic, trusting, optimistic, persuasive, talkative, impulsive, and emotional. They are also creative problem solvers, great encouragers, motivate others to achieve, have a positive sense of humor, negotiate conflicts, and are peacemakers at heart. Yet, 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.

For the **Steadiness style**, they very good listeners, team players, possessive, steady, predictable, understanding, and friendly. They are also reliable and dependable, a loyal team worker, compliant toward authority, patient and empathetic, and good at hold a grudge, sensitive to criticism, and have difficulty establishing priorities.

For the **Compliance style**, they are accurate, analytical, conscientious, careful, fact-finders, creative, precise, have high standards, and are systematic. They also contribute perspective, are an anchor of reality, conscientious and even tempered, thorough in all activities, define situations, & gather, criticize and test information. However, they may 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.

So, how do these styles fit for a *Cleanie & Messie*? In order for us messies to more clearly understand the messie's dilemma and the road toward becoming more of a cleanie, let's look at those personality characteristics of a cleanie. Most *Cleanies* express a combination of Dominant, Influential, Steadiness, and/or Compliance. For these cleanies, they are generally focused, on task to get the job done. Now that I have hopefully caught your curiosity, *Housekeeping with Personality* will continue with part 2 about Dominant cleanies, Influential cleanies, Steady cleanies, and Compliant cleanies.

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From the Heart...

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Housekeeping with Personality, part 2

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In the previous article the focus was on the personality behavioral styles developed in 1928 as described by Dr. William Martson, one of the foremost psychologists of the twentieth century. Borrowing from Hippocrates' personality styles from around 400BC (Choleric, Sanguine, Phlegmatic, Melancholy), Dr. Marston extensively studied the characteristics, patterns and responses of thousands of individuals. Martson then developed an assessment to measure these four important behavioral factors. His acronym, DISC, represent these four personality/behavioral styles—**Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Compliance**.

When it relates to whether we find ourselves to be a Cleanie or Messie, is it only procrastination, disorganization or both that causes clutter? Is there another reason for being a *Messie* or a *Cleanie*? Might your personality style influence your housekeeping "want to?" I think so; and so does Sandra Felton, the master maven of housekeeping for *Messies* (<http://www.messies.com/>). Let's see from Cleanies' personality style perspectives how us Messies with our frustrating but noble intentions can overcome the crisis of clutter and cleaning.

For **Dominant cleanies**, they are generally optimistic, take-charge, goal-oriented people. Yet, they tend to be dictatorial and impatient with others if the job isn't done their way and on time; and do not want to be taken advantage of. As you can probably imagine, they may be a "do it myself in order to do it right" kind of person or job it out with clear, required outcomes. They are hard to change. So, if you live or work with Dominants, and they are interfering with your life by their abrasive approach, you need to let them know about it. On the other hand, *Messies* really need the organizational abilities of Dominants

once the tension between them is resolved. As long as the *Messie* asks for help, then Dominants can be a real asset.

For the **Influential cleanie**—is there any such a person out there? I'm not certain. Although Influentials have so many great qualities, they are often inattentive to detail. While they love people and genuinely live in the moment, they also tend to forget things that need to be done, particularly when not convenient.

In other words, most *Messies* are basically Influentials. This is usually the case unless the person with any other primary personality style is in the middle of a major life challenge or is simply burned out for whatever reason. Yet, these other styles seem to gravitate to taking the time to clean and remove clutter as active therapy. For most influential messies, they would rather go to a party, shop, drop in on a friend for some fun the rest of the day. The stress and strain seem to simply fade away with the fun.

All the perfection the other personality styles live and breathe by drive Influentials crazy and even discourage them from trying. Yet, they need to balance their own primary behavioral characteristics with the others to stay on task. One solution for Influentials is to hire out to get the job done and enjoy the interactive relationship all at the same time. Hopefully, the budget can handle it. Either way, Influentials are creative thinkers and will figure out what works for them.

Have you discovered where you see yourself yet? If not, in part 3 of *Housekeeping with Personality*, the other two personality styles, Steady and Compliant cleanies, will be covered. Stay tuned you awesome cleanies and messies.

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Housekeeping with Personality, part 3

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Have you discovered where you see your DISC personality style behavior yet with Dominant or Influential characteristics for a cleanie or messie? If not, here are two other personality styles for Steady and Compliant cleanies that may get your attention. Sandra Felton master housekeeping and organization maven (www.messies.com) defined Messies in a variety of styles—Perfectionist, Rebellious, Relaxed, Sentimental, Spartan, Clean, Safe, Old-Fashioned, and Idealistic. These styles basically combine the four basic DISC styles, dominant, influential, steady, and compliant in various combinations.

Remember, William Marston coined the term DISC in the 1920s after his comprehensive research on human behavior that culminated in the terms Dominant, Influential, Steady, and Compliant. For ease of discussing this topic, I have focused throughout this article series on these four main personality behavioral styles with the understanding that each person has a unique combination of these styles related to being a cleanie or messie. For us messies, we learn a great deal from getting a glimpse into the behavioral style of cleanies.

For **Steady cleanies**, as long as they are affirmed and secure, they do a great job in housekeeping and stick to the schedule. Remember, Steadies are easygoing people, low-keyed, patient, and accommodating. Yet, they may not be easily motivated and do not have much get-up-and-go; and can easily become a *Messie*. They tend to have a low-energy level and are indecisive at times. Planning major projects or marathon cleaning is not in their vocabulary; and may, at times, border on laziness. They just don't want to commit to something that will require more work than they really want to do. Sometimes, they really don't care if it's neat or not. They prefer to *think about things* rather than actually do the job. So, clear, continuous affirmation and encouragement with any task, taken one step at a time,

is on the top of the list for working with a Steady as a cleanie or messie. Otherwise, they will feel overwhelmed; and that only amplifies their stubborn streak that may surface.

For the **Compliant cleanie**, the order that things are done and the details to get them done are paramount. Their focus is “how do I specifically get this job done and is the time line realistic?” If so, they are on task and on schedule to the very last detail. They live their best in a home that is orderly and serene. When it comes to housekeeping, they are perfectionists, and nothing a *messie* does may be good enough for them. They may also be more critical and hurtful, which is the very same thing they are sensitive about. That sensitivity only amplifies their self-criticism as a perfectionist. They will then tend to procrastinate and slip into being a *messie* themselves. Again, affirmation and clarity are the keys to getting Compliant back on task and secure.

I hope reviewing these DISC personality style behaviors for cleanies helped you learn more about yourself and ways to get the jobs done while sharing the tasks with other cleanies and messies. Although, I have rarely hired out, I consider myself a reformed Influential *Messie* now *Cleanie*, who occasionally regresses with other empathic messies. Over the years, my secondary Compliant with a little Steady style has kicked in to keep me on task! There is no telling what I would be today without this blend—probably thoroughly enjoying people while having clutter and chaos when I walk into my home.

Another reason for my willingness to change over the years is my Compliant/Steady and at time Dominant style hubby who helped maintain a standard I would never be able to sustain alone. That’s for sure! While he worked on “the way” he communicated with me, I worked on actually “getting the job done!—and sharing the load with him, of course!” Now that we are living the retired life but still oh so busy with life, hubby has half the house to clean, and I have the other half to maintain. Yet, as the years go by we tend to let the mess stay around a little longer, like an old friend!

Felton has actually added her own fifth temperament or personality style, *Messies Temperament Personality* combining many of the behavior characteristics of the other four. You can learn more at Felton’s messies.com website. Felton generally defined her *Messies Personality* style as frequently confused and frustrated by their own temperament, encompassing a “combination of conflicting characteristics of the other groups in varying combinations.” Yet, they are basically Influential or Sanguine.

These *Messies* can utilize their positive qualities for self-encouragement, sensitivity, and desire for true values of life such as art, beauty, and learning held by those styles. We *Messies* can then more fully experience the joy and rewards of becoming a genuine *Cleanie*.

And may all you cleanies out there become just a little more compassionate about us messies. Know that you have a lot to share when offered with understanding and compassion for your “messie” friends. Your friends are in awe of your incredibly organized way of doing things and only need to know you appreciate their dilemma and are available to help them become the cleanie they dream about.

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