



Modern Whig Party of America

Whig Academy

Leadership Course

Lesson 5:

Exploring Personality Traits

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I

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the lesson Exploring Personality Traits. Working with others requires an understanding that we are all different and we all have different ways to get things done. In other words, we all have different personalities. Everything we do requires interaction with others. We need to understand and accept these differences in each other. The foundation of personal and professional success lies in understanding yourself, understanding others, and realizing the impact of personal behavior on others.

In this Lesson

This lesson explains the four parts of the DISC personality model, how to handle challenging Relationships, environmental and self perception, the Platinum and Golden Rules, and behaviors of successful people.

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Identify the primary personality traits.
- Recognize how different personalities impact interpersonal relationships.

DISC Personal Profile

To begin understanding ourselves, it will help to identify different traits that make up the whole personality, which direct our behaviors. Learning about our behavior and knowing about others' behaviors will help us to read situations more accurately, respond to them more appropriately, and enjoy more successful relationships.

DISC is a behavioral or personality assessment and is based on the work of William Moulton Marston. Marston developed the DISC model to examine the behavior of "normal" people and how an individual's interactive behavioral preferences are affected by his/her personality. The DISC Profile describes one's work behavior patterns, style, traits, or "type". DISC gives insight into your behavior as well as the behavior of others.

DISC Behaviors: Dominance

The D from the DISC model stands for Dominance. D's have a tendency to question the status quo. They are motivated to solve problems and to get immediate results. They are very focused on tasks. D's also prefer direct answers, not long, drawn out, wishy-washy statements. They prefer varied activities and their independence. Sample statements you might hear a D say are: "I like being my own boss," "I know what I want and I go after it," or "I like to test myself with new challenges." Emphasizes shaping the environment by overcoming opposition and challenges.

Tendencies:

- Challenge the status quo.

Motivated to:

- Solve problems.
- Get immediate results.

Prefers:

- Direct answers.
- Varied activities.
- Independence.

DISC Behaviors: Influence

The I stands for Influence. I's have a tendency to be very open and talkative. They will frequently verbalize their thoughts and feelings. I's are very social and provide their opinions. They are motivated to persuade and influence others. They are "people-people" and are very energetic. I's prefer to work with other people, rather than working alone. Sample statements you might hear an I say are: "I enjoy telling stories and entertaining people," "I get fired up about things," and "I like freedom from control and detail." Emphasizes shaping the environment by persuading and influencing others.

Tendencies:

- To be open.
- Verbalizes thoughts and feelings.

Motivated to:

- Persuade and influence others.

Prefers:

- Working with other people.

DISC Behaviors: Steadiness

People who have S as their highest score have a tendency to be very patient and good listeners. They are very responsible and excellent team players. They are motivated to create a stable, organized environment. S's prefer to participate in a group rather than directing it, although it doesn't mean that you won't have an S in a position of leadership. It's just that they often prefer to work alongside of group members, rather than take charge. S's also prefer to listen more than they talk. Sample statements you might hear an S say are: "I like working with people who get along," "I enjoy helping people," and "I can be counted on to get the job done." Emphasizes achieving stability, accomplishing tasks by cooperating with others.

Tendencies:

- Patient.
- A good listener.

Motivated to:

- Create a stable and organized environment.

Prefers:

- Participating in a group.
- Listening more than talking.

DISC Behaviors: Conscientiousness

People who have a high C have a tendency to be very diplomatic and very factual. They rely on standards, rules, policies and so forth. They carefully weigh pros and cons. C's are motivated to achieve high personal standards and prefer to work in environments with clearly defined expectations. Sample statements you might hear a C say are: "I enjoy analyzing things," "I am uncomfortable with emotional situations," and "I enjoy working with people who are organized and who have high standards."

Emphasizes achieving stability, accomplishing task by clearly defining expectations.

Tendencies:

- Diplomatic.
- Carefully weighs pros and cons.

Motivated to:

- Achieve high personal standards.

Prefers:

- Clearly defined expectations.

DISC Behaviors

As we go over the meaning of this instrument, don't let your initial perception of the word associated with the letters affect your view of what this behavior means. It's simply the word the researchers chose for this assessment. As you can see, these letters all have very positive traits, and we need all of these personalities on our team. Of course, nothing is black and white, and you have probably found that many of the traits also characterize you at different times.

Challenging Relationships

Because there are differences in these personality traits, working together can sometimes lead to challenges. Understanding personality traits help you with these challenging relationships.

By realizing natural communication styles can cause challenges in the way people interact and by being more aware of your own traits and how they might affect certain relationships, we can work to seek out the productive traits in others. So how do you take your own personality, and learn to work with someone whose personality might be completely different or completely the same as yours? Let's see if you can identify the behaviors that are challenging to you in your interpersonal relationships and why. Having a challenging relationship with at least one person in your life is normal. It is important to be able to relate to others.

Personality Traits

50% of problems in the work place deal with relationships. Why do you think that is true? How do you think knowing about personality traits can help reduce problems?

Research shows that "emotional intelligence" ("EI") matters twice as much as IQ or technical skills in job success. What is emotional intelligence? Emotional Intelligence is a person's ability to manage oneself and relate to other people. Why do you think "EI" is more important?

Studies of close to 500 organizations worldwide indicate those who score highest on interpersonal skills instruments receive more favorable reviews and rise to the top of the organization. Why do you think that happens?

Perception

Sometimes your thoughts about situations, events, and people that seem challenging to you are based on assumptions or perceptions you have of them.

What is perception?

Perception is the process of gathering sensory information and assigning meaning to it. It does not necessarily provide an accurate representation of the event being perceived.

Although everyone has perceptions about situations, events and people, it is how you react to them that can be most damaging to relationships. How you perceive something will often determine how you will react to it. If you base your responses on what you perceive and your perceptions are flawed; your communication is likely to be ineffective. Therefore, it is important to understand how differences in personalities affect your perception.

Perception

Let's look at perception in terms of how you view your environment and yourself.

Perception: Environment

Your perception about your environment tends to be automatic. Your reaction to what is happening around you occurs automatically; you don't think about your response, you just react. Dominant and Influence types tend to perceive their environment as unfavorable; so they focus on what the challenges, obstacles, and possible pitfalls are in things they undertake. Steady and Conscientious types tend to perceive their environment as favorable; so they look for the opportunities, the warmth among people, and the possible successes in the things they assume.

Perception: Yourself

The perception about yourself comes from the belief of how much impact, control, or effect you believe you have on situations, people, and events. That means you base your reactions on the belief of whether you can or cannot impact, change or act on what already exists. Dominant and Influence types have a tendency to see themselves as more powerful than the environment, which means they believe they can impact or change what already exists. Steady and Conscientious types have a tendency to see themselves as less powerful than the environment which means they tend to choose to work within existing structures.

Personality Types

Think back to your own personality type. Does your personality type match up with the perception of the environment or of yourself?

Have you ever been perceived correctly; where others saw you as you intended?

How did it make you feel?

Why is it important to understand how perceptions become an integral part of how we view our relationships, especially those that are challenging? It encourages us to not make judgments about others as our information may not always be accurate. It reminds us again to focus on the behavior, not the person, and to work to find the facts about the situation and the person.

Environment vs. Self

Environment is an automatic perception.

Self is from the belief of how much impact, control, or effect one has on a situation, people, and events.

Based on whether one can or cannot impact, change, or act on what exists.

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Observation

When observing others' behavior, we can "check" our own perception using the following steps:

Step 1 – Watch the behavior of the other person.

Step 2 – Ask yourself, "What does that behavior represent to me?"

Step 3 – Put your interpretation of the behavior into words. This will help to verify whether or not your perception is accurate. Putting feelings into words can sometimes help us to get a clearer picture of what is really happening.

Golden Rule/Platinum Rule

What is the Golden Rule that we learned as children? Treat others as you would like to be treated or do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

What is the Platinum Rule? Treat others as they would like to be treated or do unto others as they would be done unto.

The key to effective relationships is not about changing someone else's behavior; rather, it is each and every one of us must learn to adapt our behavior in order to meet the other person's needs.

Now that you understand more about the different people's personalities, you can determine the best way to adapt to any situation or person. Being successful with your relationships will help you to have positive and productive working environments.

Successful People

Why are some people successful? Do they have a magic formula?

Let's see what makes some people more successful than others. Those who have successful relationships:

- Understand themselves and how their behavior affects others.
- Understand their reactions to other people.
- Know how to maximize what they do well.
- Have a positive attitude, which causes them to have confidence in themselves.
- Know how to adapt their behavior to meet the needs of other people.

Taking the information learned in this course and finding specific ways to use it in our everyday lives and in our relationships can help us to be "successful people".

Key Points

The key to better relationships and understanding others depends on your understanding and reacting appropriately to behavior. Working to see yourself as you truly are is the first step. Then it is important to work to see others in that same light. Being aware and accepting the differences between the two will help you to relate to others more effectively. It will also help to improve your life, interpersonal relationships, work productivity, teamwork, and interpersonal communication.

Review Exercises

1. Which tendency is more characteristic of the dominant personality type?
 - a. Diplomatic
 - b. Challenges the status quo
 - c. Verbalizes thoughts and feelings
 - d. Patient

2. Which personality type can be illustrated by the ability to create a stable and organized environment?
 - a. Dominant
 - b. Influence
 - c. Conscientious

3. When it comes to their perception of themselves, which DISC types have a tendency to see themselves as more powerful than the environment, which means that they believe they can impact or change what already exists?
 - a. Dominant and Influence
 - b. Dominant and Steady
 - c. Influence and Conscientious
 - d. Steady and Conscientious

4. What personality trait is most likely to lead to favorable reviews, promotions, and general success at work?
 - a. Emotional Intelligence
 - b. IQ
 - c. Technical skill
 - d. DISC

5. What is the first step we can use when observing others' behavior to "check" our own perception?
 - a. Put your interpretation of the behavior into words. This will help to verify whether or not your perception is accurate. Putting feelings into words can sometimes help us to get a clearer picture of what is really happening
 - b. Watch the behavior of the other person
 - c. Ask yourself, "What does that behavior represent to me?"

Summary

Congratulations! This completes the lesson Exploring Personality Traits. In this lesson, you learned about the four parts of the DISC personality model, how to handle challenging relationships, environmental and self perception, the Platinum and Golden Rules, and behaviors of successful people.

You should now be able to:

- Identify the primary personality traits.
- Recognize how different personalities impact interpersonal relationships.

References

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