

A Powerful Way to Understand People

An introduction of the DISC concept

By Robert A. Rohm, Ph.D.

Each Person has a Unique Personality

Each person's perspective is built in to who they are. Some people call it personality. Some refer to it as temperament. I am sure that some of your family and friends are VERY different from you. If you are like me, you have often asked yourself, "Why did they do that?" or "What were they thinking?" or "What were they NOT thinking?"

The starting point of understanding people is to realize and accept the fact:

Everyone is not like you!

Have you ever said something to one person, and received a certain response, then said exactly the same thing to another person, and received a **totally different response**? The basic reason they respond differently is that people have different personality styles! You said the same thing, but what they "heard" was not the same. Wow, can that be confusing!

Different is not bad, it's just different! A lack of understanding of ourselves and others can lead to real problems such as tension, disappointment, hurt feelings, unmet expectations and poor communication. As you know, it is hard to work with a problem, especially if you do not understand what is going on inside the mind of another person.

Here is the Good News

There IS a way to understand people – if you know the model of human behavior! There is a simple key to understanding how people behave and how they are motivated. This key will allow you to unlock the mystery of motivation. It will teach you the power of good relationships! It will also show you how to reduce conflict, improve productivity and relate with others in ways that are more effective.


A Little Background


Twenty-four hundred years ago, scientists and philosophers, most notably Hippocrates, began to recognize differences in behavior that seemed to follow a pattern. Many psychologists and scientists have explored behavioral patterns over the years. In 1928 Dr. William Marston wrote *The Emotions of Normal People* after earning his doctorate from Harvard University. Marston theorized that people are motivated by four intrinsic drives that direct behavioral patterns. He then used four descriptive characteristics represented by four letters to describe a person's behavioral tendencies. The letters he used were D, I, S and C. Since that time, the "DISC" concept has been used and applied in many ways.

Building on a "Wellness" Model

Many behavioral models focus on what is wrong with a person to identify "disorders." The DISC model is based on normal behavior, not abnormal behavior. DISC is a "wellness model" that is objective and descriptive rather than subjective and judgmental.

The DISC wellness model is a good starting point for understanding people, but, as you might guess, DISC can easily be used inappropriately to label someone or point out another person's "weaknesses." We approach the DISC model with two perspectives that allow it to be used appropriately as an effective and encouraging tool for understanding others:

 **We use a POSITIVE approach to highlight STRENGTHS.**
(we believe your strengths should "carry you")

 **We use a POSITIVE approach to address BLIND-SPOTS.**
(we believe your blind-spots should "concern you")

The bottom line is that healthy, positive relationships come from having an accurate, healthy, constructive view of yourself and others.

So, now that you know where the DISC concept came from and the importance of having a positive, realistic approach, let's take a look at the Model of Human Behavior using the DISC overview.

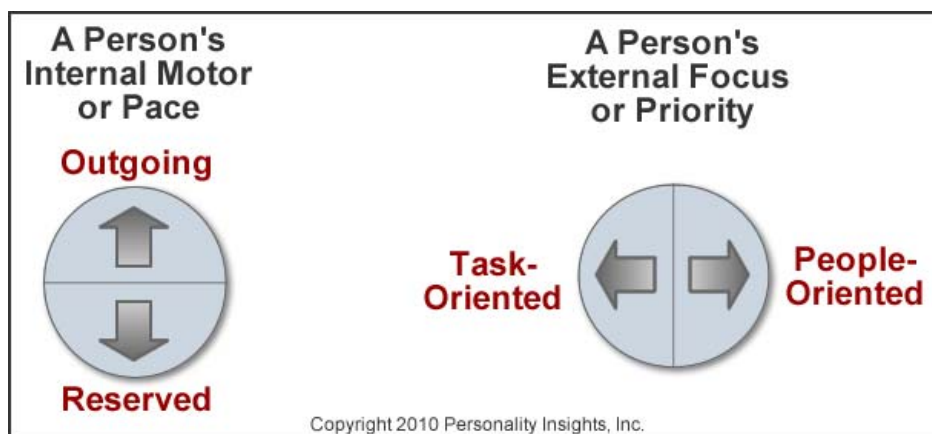
The Model of Human Behavior

The model of human behavior is based on 2 foundational observations about how people normally behave:

Observation #1: Some people are more outgoing, while others are more reserved.
You can think of this as each person's "internal motor." Some people always seem ready to "go" and "dive in." They engage their motor quickly. Others tend to engage their motor more slowly or more cautiously.

Observation # 2: Some people are more task-oriented, while others are more people-oriented.
You can think of this as each person's compass that guides them. Some people are focused on getting something done; others are more tuned-in to the people around them and their feelings.

With both observations, we want to emphasize that these behavioral tendencies are neither right or wrong or good or bad. They are just different. We are simply identifying normal behavior styles. People have different styles, and that is okay. We represent these 2 observations in the diagrams below.



Thus, we have 4 behavioral tendencies to help us characterize people:

- Outgoing
- Reserved
- Task-oriented
- People-oriented

Everyone has some of all 4 of these tendencies at different times and in different situations. However, most people typically have 1 or 2 of these tendencies that seem to fit them well in their everyday behavior. And, on the other hand, 1 or 2 of these tendencies usually do not fit them well, and these tendencies may even seem "foreign" to their approach to life. The balance of these 4 tendencies shapes the way each person "sees" life and those around them.

By combining the 2 previous diagrams, we can show 4 basic quadrants of the circle as shown below:

The Model of Human Behavior



Thus, 4 basic personality traits emerge from our diagram corresponding to the 4 quadrants of the circle (In clockwise order):

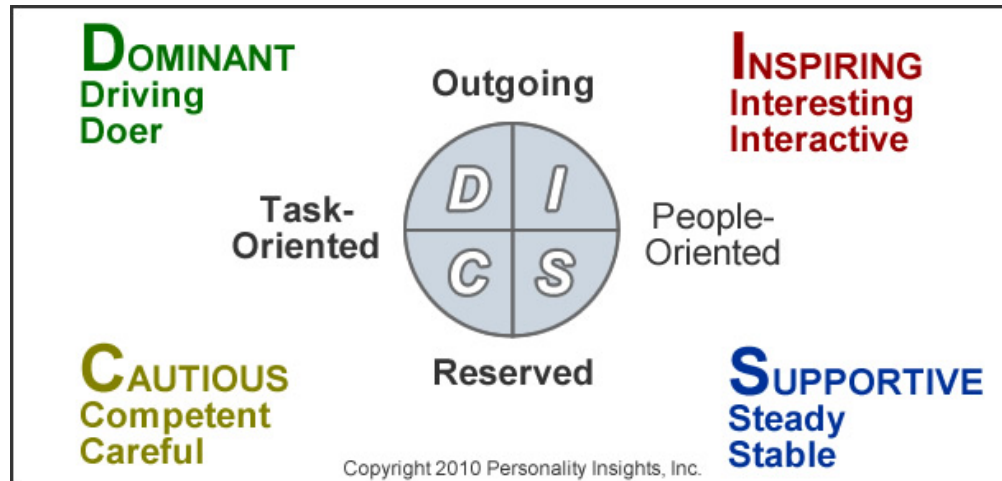
- Outgoing and Task-oriented (upper left)
- Outgoing and People-oriented (upper right)
- Reserved and People-oriented (lower right)
- Reserved and Task-oriented (lower left)

Next, we will add descriptive terms for each of the four main personality types that emerge in the diagram. The descriptive terms will begin with D, I, S and C.

Describing Each Personality Style

(4 Different Types - 4 Different Priorities)

As mentioned before, we will add the descriptive terms to the diagram. Notice the letters D, I, S and C appear in the 4 quadrants of the circle in the diagram below. You will also notice that descriptive terms have been added in each of the 4 corners of the diagram.



Now we can further describe each of the four main personality styles:

The Dominant "D" type - An outgoing, task-oriented individual will be focused on getting things done, accomplishing tasks, getting to the bottom line as quickly as possible and MAKING IT HAPPEN! (The key insight in developing a relationship with this type person is RESPECT and RESULTS.)

The Inspiring "I" type - An outgoing, people-oriented individual loves to interact, socialize and have fun. This person is focused on what others may think of him or her. (The key insight in developing a relationship with this type person is ADMIRATION and RECOGNITION.)

The Supportive "S" type - A reserved, people-oriented individual will enjoy relationships, helping or supporting other people and working together as a team. (The key insight in developing a relationship with this person is FRIENDLINESS and SINCERE APPRECIATION.)

The Cautious "C" type - A reserved, task-oriented individual will seek value, consistency and quality information. This person focuses on being correct and accurate. (The key insight in developing a relationship with this individual is TRUST and INTEGRITY.)

To summarize the DISC Model of Human Behavior (in clockwise order) :

- **D** stands for the **DOMINANT** Type which is OUTGOING and TASK-ORIENTED.
- **I** stands for the **INSPIRING** Type which is OUTGOING and PEOPLE-ORIENTED.
- **S** stands for the **SUPPORTIVE** Type which is RESERVED and PEOPLE-ORIENTED.
- **C** stands for the **CAUTIOUS** Type which is RESERVED and TASK-ORIENTED.

What Is Your PQ?

We spend years in school developing our intelligence to effectively use our mind. Developing our unique personality to effectively use our behavior is just as vital to successful living. Your Intelligence Quotient, or IQ, measures your intelligence. Your Personality Quotient, or PQ, refers to your ability to understand yourself and others for effective communication and teamwork. Studies have shown that technical skill, beginning with intelligence and developed through education and experience, accounts for only 15% of success in the workplace. The other 85% of workplace success comes from people skills! These skills are developed through learning better ways to behave and interact.

As Dr. Robert Rohm likes to say, *"If I understand you, and you understand me, doesn't it make sense that we can work more effectively together?"*

The Elevator Test: Which Type Are You?

The elevator doors are about to close on an eager rider who is trying to get on the elevator. Four people are already inside the elevator. One of the people in the crowded box is in a hurry and does not want to wait (outgoing and task-oriented). There is also a bubbly, energetic passenger who holds the door open while greeting the newcomer (outgoing and people-oriented). A third rider is happy either way and smiles while waiting patiently (reserved and people-oriented). The final passenger is concerned as she calculates the weight to see if the elevator can handle another person (reserved and task-oriented).

While not perfectly scientific, this scenario depicts in broad brush strokes the Dominant (outgoing/task-oriented) person who is focused on getting somewhere fast; the Inspiring (outgoing and people-oriented) person who is energized by all the interaction; the Supportive (reserved/people-oriented) person who reacts calmly and tries to get along regardless; and the Cautious (reserved/task-oriented) person who wants to make sure the added person doesn't exceed the weight limit!

As you can see, there were four different people who responded to the same event in four very different ways!

You Are Off To A Good Start!

One of the dangers of learning about DISC is that you may think you already understand all there is to know about it now. Did you know there are not just 4 personality styles? We identify 41 specific personality blends that they are all very different. Even within the 41 blends, there can be a wide variety of nuances.

The Next Step Is ...

There are 4 basic steps in learning how to work with other people. Learn about the

1. Learn about the Model of Human Behavior
2. Take a personality profile assessment to learn about yourself.
3. Study material that teaches you how to read the personality of another person
4. Study material that teaches you how to adapt YOURSELF to work better with others.

To learn more, please visit us online at <http://www.personalityinsights.com/>