



Well Suited: A Practical Approach to Understanding Personalities

Here's a way to get a quick read on people – it works like magic!

By Kostya Kimlat

We've been dividing people into personality types, styles, or patterns since the time of Plato. These days, online personality tests are everywhere. After a number of fun questions you can discover which animal, shape, color, or celebrity you're aligned with. Or take a serious personality test to identify your management, leadership, or communication style.

If you really want to get to know yourself, you can take a more scientific assessment that not only tells you who you are but what drives you and how people can best work with you. You'll get 35 pages of autobiographical information that can help you understand yourself.

And that's great, but when you're meeting someone for the first time – as you're exchanging greetings and smiles – it's rather difficult to categorize them as one of 16 personality profiles off the top of your head. And no one ever brings you their 35-page assessment and says, "Here's who I am and how to deal with me."

Luckily, there's a way to pinpoint someone's personality quickly and easily. Just think of the four suits in a deck of playing cards and what images they bring to mind:

- ♦ The Diamonds are shiny and exciting; they yearn to be seen and recognized.
- ♥ The Hearts are compassionate and loving; they wish for everyone to get along.
- ♠ The Spades are quick and strong; they want power and control.
- ♣ The Clubs pay attention to details and want everything to be just right.

The four suits perfectly align with the Myers-Briggs, DiSC, Merrill-Wilson, and Helen Fisher systems of personality assessment:

- ♦ Diamonds are: Expressive, Exploratory Influencers.
- ♥ Hearts are: Amiable, Steady Negotiators.
- ♠ Spades are: Dominant, Driving Directors.
- ♣ Clubs are: Analytical, Conscientious Builders.

Once you know these four personality styles, you'll want an easy system to identify which behaviors match each suit. To do that, you just need to pay attention to a person's speed and temperature.

The Speed & Temperature of Suits & People

What's amazing about the four suits of a deck of playing cards is that their color and shape connect to a person's speed or temperature.

First, think of the color of the suits – red or black. When you meet people for the first time, notice if they're open and engaged. If so, they're most likely a red suit – a Heart or Diamond. If they're reserved or withdrawn, they're a Spade or Club.

Next, think of the shape of the suits. The Diamonds and Spades have sharp, pointy ends and can change their shapes quickly and easily – just as some people move and talk fast. These people go for the straight line of the situation; they get to the sharp end of the point. So if someone you meet is moving and talking fast, they're a Diamond or a Spade.

Hearts and Clubs are round suits. These people can't be rushed or pushed into making a decision. They need time. The best way to remember the Clubs is that this suit is difficult to draw; it requires attention to detail to do it right. So people who are critical, detailed, and disciplined – people who require being right – are Clubs. Hearts are also slow although they're smoother, easier to draw than Clubs.

See how easy it becomes? Just pay attention to how fast/slow and warm/cold someone is. Ask yourself:

- Are they fast or slow?
- Are they warm or cold?

With those two quick questions you'll have a strong sense of which suit best describes the personality.

Warm and Fast?  Diamond

Warm and Slow?  Heart

Cold and Fast?  Spade

Cold and Slow?  Club

If you've studied other personality evaluation systems, you can overlay the four suits over the terms you already know. The four suits make memory recall easier, speeding up the entire identifying process.

Depending on your own personality, you may think:

- This is amazing 
- This is all obvious 
- I'm curious how this will affect others 
- I'm ready to put these ideas into actions 

 **With this magical system, you can help people shine.** 

What Hand Were You Dealt? Reacting to the Unique Traits of Suits

If part of your life involves meeting new people and you want to connect and communicate with them, there's nothing better than paying attention to people's personalities. It provides the groundwork to approach and understand someone. No matter your type, here's how you can give the people you encounter what they need:

If you meet a , provide recognition and attention.

If you meet a , provide support and approval.

If you meet a , provide opportunities for that person to take charge and make decisions.

If you meet a , provide opportunities for that person to be "right."

Once you're aware of what each suit needs, you can provide each person the right opportunities to thrive.

Shuffling It All Together

Many people have taken personality tests to tell them who they are. But very few people can instantly assess the personality style of someone they meet. Thanks to this magical system, you're now equipped to do just that.

You don't have to rack your brain to search for the right word to describe someone. The four-suits method is easy to use in the real world. The goal is for you to eventually be able to identify the personality styles without even thinking about doing it. Mastering this skill will go a long way in helping you build relationships. 

Kostya Kimlat is a keynote speaker, trainer, and magician who fooled Penn & Teller on their hit TV show, "Fool Us." For more information, visit thebusinessmagician.com.

Personality Plus

Understanding people's personalities is an important step in forging bonds and smoothing communication. For more, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

What's Your Color? (Vol. 34, No. 4)

How to Fix Communication Breakdowns (Vol. 29, No. 1)

Beware of These Three Personality Pitfalls (Vol. 31, No. 4)

Increase Work-Group Productivity with Concrecent Conversation (Vol. 26, No. 3)

Assess Your Work Style for Better Communication (Vol. 37, No. 4)