



How Do You Come Across to Others?

To produce great outcomes, know yourself and those with whom you work.

By Jim Cathcart

What's your personality type? Do you know your strengths and weaknesses and how you can best contribute to your organization and to other groups?

To answer these questions, you need to understand the four basic personality types. Throughout history, people who study human behavior have given these four types different names. The well-known Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, for example, is based on the work of Carl Jung, who boiled personality down to the intuitor, the thinker, the feeler, and the sensor.

But it doesn't matter what you call the four types. Call them A, B, C, and D if you want, but these four types exist in everyone. And one of those four is your dominant type.

What's Your Style?

To determine your behavioral style, first rate yourself from 1 to 4 in terms of *openness* – the degree to which you readily share feelings, thoughts, and responses. If you choose 3 or 4, you're highly open. You share your information and feelings readily. If you choose 1 or 2, you're more self-contained. You

What are you best at doing – taking care of details, taking charge, seeing that everyone's ideas are heard, or making sure everyone feels part of the group?

usually don't speak without a great deal of consideration.

Next, rate yourself from A to D in terms of *directness*. On the C and D end of the scale are people who are so direct they're almost blunt. To make a point, they'll say exactly what's on their mind. They let you know where they stand on an issue and aren't at all reluctant to take a position. On the opposite side of the scale are indirect people, who are a little more tactful. They're more cautious, waiting to see what develops before acting. They appear passive rather than active.

Now see where you are on the grid in Figure 1 (on page 22). If you chose a 1 or 2 with an A or B, you're a *thinker*. Thinkers are logical, systematic, detail-oriented.

If you chose a 1 or 2 and a C or D, you're a *doer*. Doers are usually direct and take action. *continued on page 22*

When they adapt to one another, the four types can make a wonderful team.

D, you're a **director**. Directors are take-charge types. They measure things by outcomes, like to get things done, and hate to waste time. They move quickly and decisively.

If you chose A or B and 3 or 4, you're a **relater**. You're the kind of person who tends to be soft-spoken, easy-going, and people-oriented. You love to be involved in discussions, like to build one-to-one relationships, and tend to be the center of your work and home life.

If you chose a 3 or 4 and a C or D, you're a **socializer**. Socializers are always talking; they always have something to say. They're the life of the party, thriving on connections with people and moving at a lively pace.

Remember, you have all four patterns in you, but one of those patterns is the most dominant. That's the pattern by which people know you.

How Does Your Style Blend with Others?

Any time you understand someone else's behavioral style, you'll know how you can best relate to them initially. It's like the tip of the iceberg of personality. Underneath the surface, there's a lot more to personality — values, intellect, and so on. But on the surface we see the behavioral style, and we can

learn to quickly identify someone's style by noticing their level of openness and directness. Then we can figure out how to get into alignment with them early in the relationship.

For example, it's useful to know what might irritate a person with whom you're working. Here are some common irritants for the four behavioral styles:

- **Thinkers are irritated by disorganization** and lack of thoroughness. Being asked to "share something about yourself" in a group would alarm a thinker.

Which irritates you most — disorganization, confrontation, lack of results, or being ignored?

- **Relaters are upset by confrontations.** They hate getting into awkward situations that might threaten their relationship with someone else. They like to avoid conflict. If you want to stay on their good side, keep things as smooth and pleasant as possible.

- **Directors are annoyed by indecisiveness** and lack of results. Anything that slows them down will annoy them. On the road, for instance, they can't stand to be behind a slow driver.

- **Socializers are most bothered by being left out or ignored.** To get along with socializers, bring them into the loop, and keep them

informed. Send them update memos, and leave them frequent messages.

Keep in mind the following strengths and weaknesses of both your own behavioral style and that of others:

- **Thinkers** tend to be orderly, precise, neat, conscientious, and careful. They can also be a bit fearful, defensive, dependent, traditional, restrained, and non-expressive.

- **Relaters** are loyal, attentive, patient, mellow, cooperative, and pleasant. On the negative side, they can be indecisive, possessive, hesitant, and poor delegators.

- **Socializers** tend to be open and trusting, enthusiastic, compelling, optimistic, and charming. But they can also be overly emotional, gullible, superficial, highly talkative, imprecise, and unfocused.

- **Directors** tend to be leaders. They're good at initiating. They're competitive, powerful, assertive, confident. On the other hand, they can be impulsive, forceful, pushy, inattentive, demanding, and impatient.

When the four types aren't flexible, they can be the greatest possible irritation to each other. But when they adapt to one another, they can make a wonderful team. A director takes charge. A socializer sees to it that everyone's ideas are heard. A relater makes sure each person feels part of the group. The thinker handles the details.

When you pay attention to these different personalities, you and others can align yourself so that you work together in concert. Alignment produces harmony, and harmony produces great outcomes. ■

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