

Excerpt from “Four People You Should Know”

About Personality and Personality Styles

Everyone is different

Exactly what is personality? Psychologists tell us that the foundation of personality is with us from birth. It is part of how we were uniquely made. However it is also colored by all the experiences we have had. No one else has exactly the same personality and no one else matches our exact perspective on how we view life and respond to its events. Our nature is uniquely made up. Each of us has a different view of life, and each of us responds differently to events and circumstances.

While each of us is unique, we also share distinct similarities with some others. People’s personalities can be categorized in broad groupings - personality styles. Understanding those personality styles provides us with insights into the differences and similarities in attitude, preferences and behavior displayed by the people we encounter.

Different personality types tend to communicate differently; to have different values and to make decisions in different ways; to respond in different ways to risk, stress, conflict and change; to learn and teach in subtly different ways; to choose different ways to relax; and to have different preferences for their working environment.

Think for a minute about your own attitudes and preferences, and how they are the same as those of some people you know, and yet quite different from others.

Different people **communicate** differently. Are your conversations filled with small talk and socializing or are they right to the point? Is there a logical flow to your conversation aimed at communicating a specific purpose, or do you express what is on your mind at the moment? Do you tend to debate, fielding and delivering tough questions, or do you just take the conversation in? Do you prefer discussions and meetings with a clear agenda or meetings called at the spur of the moment as needed? Do you prefer to do the talking or the listening?

Critical to making sales and building winning teams, consider how personality reflects what each person **values**. Do you look for the best bang for the buck, or for quality at any price? Is integrity more or less important than results? Is winning the most important thing in life? Or, is having lots of deep friendships the thing to aim for?

Do you **make decisions** impulsively or with deliberation? Do you prefer to make a decision based on logic and judgment or do you make the decision from your heart and emotions? Perhaps you make the decision from the gut on the spur of the

moment? Do you consider all the data at hand and continue to ask questions to gather more information while others are perfectly satisfied with the facts before them?

Different personalities also view **risk** differently. Are you extremely cautious or inclined to take a chance? Do you avoid situations where you will face challenges, or seek them out?

People of different personality types vary in how they handle **conflict**. Do you retreat from conflict, avoiding friction? Or do you try to resolve conflict by attacking it head on? Do you find conflict a stimulus to dialog and relationship-building or something that destroys relationships? Or perhaps you just don't see why there is a conflict in the first place. Perhaps you don't know how to handle conflict, and are totally frustrated by it.

Stress can adversely affect health, and how we deal with it has much to do with personality. Do you feel stress when you take on too much responsibility, or when you don't have enough power to control the situation? What makes you more anxious: too much information, or lack of data? Is it more stressful to miss your sales quota or to let down a customer? More stressful to have an argument or bottle up your emotions?

Each personality views **change** differently. Do you find change invigorating and exciting? Or bothersome, inconvenient and upsetting? Do you like to keep things stable and predictable, or do you enjoy the excitement and stimulus of the new?

When **learning** do you prefer a lecture environment with traditional testing or do you prefer experiential learning where you advance through trial and error? Do you learn more effectively through hands-on activity or reading about it? When you instruct others what is your preferred method of instruction? Do you lead with theory and process, or simply show them how it's done?

When you **relax**, do you prefer time alone to charge up and re-energize or do you prefer the company of friends and family? Perhaps you have a competitive nature and love games and sports? Or do you prefer working in the garden, watching movies with friends, or quietly reading a book? When you take a vacation, do you organize each day with scheduled events or do you just take each day as it comes, enjoying the excitement of the moment, the spontaneity?

What kind of **working environment** is best for you? Do you prefer to work alone or around others? Do you enjoy interaction? Do you seek a fast paced environment or one that is quiet and orderly? Are you more task-oriented or more relationship focused? What type of **job** attracts you? Do you look for excitement, intellectual stimulus, warm working relationships or satisfaction in achievement? Something else? Do you need a job that demands neatness and order, or do you flourish when you have to handle the unexpected all the time and make spur of the moment decisions?

Answers to these questions tell you a lot about your personality.