

Foreword

Many years ago, Bill Bonnstetter and his son David developed a revolutionary software system based on the DISC method—a way of describing human communication and classifying behavior and the method that is used throughout this book. Sadly, Bill has since passed away, but David continues to run their company—TTI Success Insights—to this day. From its humble origins in rural Iowa, this method of behavior profiling has now been used by businesses and corporations all around the world.

It all began with one question. A simple, specific question: Could an agricultural salesperson sell more seed simply by looking at a farm?

As a child growing up in rural Iowa, I watched my father apply the foundational principles of William Moulton Marston's *Emotions of Normal People*. At the time, my father was focused on Buyer Profile Blending, giving agricultural salespeople the knowledge of Marston's tools to better understand themselves and their farmer customers. I can still recall the earliest days, sitting at a knotty-pine table over meals of hot pork tenderloins and roast corn, when my father was working through his observations. "Pristine driveways and neat groves? Definitely a Blue. New and experimental livestock and buildings? You're looking at a Red."

Although we were close, our paths were incredibly different. My father, a true entrepreneur and Red/Yellow in every sense of the phrase, was driven to build consulting firms and agencies that helped salespeople refine their craft. I sought the collegiate path, attending university at the University of Iowa, leaning into my Red/Blue nature while studying accounting and computer science. I spent my free time in the computer lab, pouring my soul into programs through my fingertips. While I was studying, my father perfected his wizardlike ability to understand people.

My father and I always remained close and spoke to each other most weeks, even though we were at different milestones in our lives. While I was studying at the University of Iowa, my father sat me down and asked me about contributing to his venture. He asked, "What if we could couple your ability to develop software with my ability to analyze human behavior?" I was ambitious, hungry for fun coding work, and proceeded to embark on the most exciting journey of my life. Together, we built a software system that would produce reports about human behavior. This was a multiplying factor; soon we were able to reach more people and reveal a person's potential through 3.5-inch floppy disks and twenty-four-page reports. My father and I built a company, TTI Success Insights, in 1984 in Iowa to do just that.

Over time, we escaped the frigid winters in the Midwest of the United States, relocated ourselves, our families, and our business to sunny and warm Scottsdale, Arizona. In the late nineties, we began using the web for distribution of our famed assessments. Today, we have a thriving business with distributors all over the world.

Up until now, you might have wondered why you are so different. Human behavior is, for the most part, complex and nebulous. In some cases, the people around us are idiotic. Understanding human behavior is a never-ending task, an endless pursuit to know the how, what, and why behind a person's choices. It is both easy and dangerous to categorize someone who behaves differently from you as ignorant, wrong, or even thickheaded. Today's world requires a more sophisticated understanding where you value a person for his or her strengths and weaknesses.

My father has since passed on. But the purpose we invoked, to reveal human potential,

continues to live on. This book is written about the concepts my father applied in sales trainings and applies them to an even more complex situation—understanding the idiots who surround us all.

As you read, I think you will understand the worth of a Red, a Yellow, a Green, and a Blue. I hope you will pull away some practical advice in communicating effectively with each type. But the most important lesson that you can walk away with is that the idiots who surround you are, in fact, not idiots at all. Instead, they are individuals worthy of respect, understanding, and being valued.

Anyone can use the frameworks outlined in this book to get ahead in the game of life. And look at it this way: If you don't understand and use the principles, you'll continue to be surrounded by idiots. And nobody wants that.

—David Bonnstetter
Chief Executive Officer
TTI Success Insights

Introduction

The Man Who Was Surrounded by Idiots

I was in high school when I first noticed that I got along better with certain people rather than others. It was easy to talk to some of my friends; in any conversation, we always found the right words and everything just flowed smoothly. There were never any conflicts, and we liked one another. With other people, however, everything just went wrong. What I said fell on deaf ears, and I couldn't understand why.

Why was speaking to some people so easy, while others were total blockheads? Since I was young, this certainly wasn't something that kept me awake at night. However, I still remember puzzling over why some conversations flowed naturally, while others didn't even start—no matter how I conducted myself. It was just incomprehensible. I began using different methods to test people. I tried to say the same things in similar contexts just to see what reaction I got. Sometimes it actually worked and an interesting discussion developed. On other occasions, nothing happened at all. People just stared at me as if I were from another planet, and sometimes it really felt that way.

When we're young, we tend to think of things very simply. Because some people in my circle of friends reacted in a normal way that meant, of course, that they were automatically the good guys. And so I just assumed there was something wrong with the people who didn't understand me. What other explanation could there possibly be? I was the same all the time! Certain people just had something wrong with them. So I simply began to avoid these weird, difficult people because I didn't understand them. Call it the naïveté of youth if you will, but it did give rise to some amusing consequences. In later years, however, all of this changed.

Life went on with work, family, and career, and I continued to pigeonhole people into two groups—good and sensible people and all the rest, the people who didn't seem to understand anything at all.

When I was twenty-five years old, I met with a man who was self-employed. Now in his sixties, Sture had founded his own business and built it up for many years. I was given the task of interviewing him just before a new project was to be implemented. We started talking about how things were functioning in his organization. One of the very first comments Sture made was that he was surrounded by idiots. I remember laughing at the time because I thought it was a joke. But he truly meant what he said. His face turned crimson as he explained to me that the people working in Department A were complete idiots, every single one of them. In Department B you found only fools who understood nothing at all. And he hadn't even come to Department C yet! They were the worst of all! They were so weird that Sture couldn't fathom how they even made it to work in the mornings.

The more I listened to him, the more I realized that there was something very odd about this story. I asked him if he really believed that he was surrounded by idiots. He glared at me and explained that very few of his employees were worth having.

Sture had no issue letting his employees know how he felt. He didn't hesitate in the least to call anyone an idiot in front of the whole company. This meant that his employees learned to avoid him. No one dared to have one-to-one meetings with him; he never got to hear bad news because he would often shoot the messenger. At one of the offices, a warning light had even been mounted at the entrance to the building. Discreetly placed above the reception desk, the light went red when he was there and turned green when he was away.

Everyone knew about this. Not only staff but even clients would automatically cast a nervous glance at the light to find out what awaited them when they stepped over the threshold. If the light was red, some people would simply turn back at the door, deciding to come back at a more opportune time.

As we all know, when you're young you are full of great ideas. So I asked the only question I could think of: "Who hired all these idiots?" I knew, of course, that he had hired most of them. What was worse was that Sture understood exactly what I had implied. What I implicitly asked was: Who is actually the idiot here?

Sture threw me out. Later on, I was told that what he really wanted to do was fetch a shotgun and shoot me.

This incident got me thinking. Here was a man who would soon retire. He was obviously a proficient entrepreneur, highly respected for his sound knowledge of his particular line of business. But he couldn't handle people. He didn't understand the most critical, complicated resource in an organization—the employees. And anyone he couldn't understand was simply an idiot.

Since I was from outside the company, I could easily see how wrong his thinking was. Sture didn't grasp that he always compared people to himself. His definition of idiocy was simply anyone who didn't think or act like him. He used expressions that I also used to use about certain types of people: "arrogant windbags," "red-tape jackasses," "rude bastards," and "tedious blockheads." Although I never called people idiots, at least not so they could hear me, I had obvious problems with certain types of people.

It was an utterly appalling thought to have to go through life constantly thinking that I was surrounded by people who were impossible to work with. It would make my own potential in life so unbelievably limited.

I tried to see myself in the mirror. The decision was easy to make. I didn't want to be like Sture. After a particularly toxic meeting with him and some of his unfortunate colleagues, I sat in the car with a lump in my stomach. The meeting had been a total disaster. Everyone was furious. There and then I decided to learn what is probably the most important knowledge of all—how people function. I would be encountering people for the rest of my life, no matter what my profession was, and it was easy to see that I would benefit by being able to understand them.

I immediately began to study how to understand the people who initially seem so difficult. Why are some people silent, why do others never stop talking, why do some people always tell the truth while others never do? Why do some of my colleagues always arrive on time, while others rarely manage to? And even why did I like some people more than others? The insights I gained were fascinating, and I've never been the same since I began this journey. The knowledge I acquired has changed me as a person, as a friend, as a colleague, as a son, as a husband, and as the father of my children.

This book is about what is perhaps the world's most widely used method to describe the differences in human communication. This method is called the DISA—an acronym that stands for Dominance, Inducement, Submission, and Analytic ability—system. These four terms are the primary behavior types, which describe how people sees themselves in relationship to their environment. Each of these behavior types is associated with a color—Red, Yellow, Green, and Blue. This system is also commonly called the DISC system, where the final letter of the acronym stands for Compliance instead of Analytic ability. I have used variations of this tool for over twenty years with excellent results.

But how do you become really, truly proficient at handling different types of people?

There are, of course, various methods. The most common method is to research the matter and learn the basics. But learning the theoretical part doesn't make you a world-class communicator. It's only when you begin using this knowledge that you can develop real and functioning competence in the field. Just like learning to ride a bike—you have to get on the bike first. Only then do you realize what you need to do.

Since I began studying how people function and painstakingly strove to understand the differences in the way we communicate, I've never been the same. I'm not as categorical anymore, judging people just because they are not like me. For many years now, my patience with people who are the complete opposite of me has been far greater. I wouldn't go so far as to say that I never get involved in conflicts, just as I wouldn't try to convince you that I never lie, but both these things happen very seldom now.

I have one thing to thank Sture for—he awakened my interest in the subject. Without him, this book would probably never have been written.

What can you do to increase your knowledge about how people relate and communicate? A good start may be to keep reading this book—the whole book, not just the first three chapters. With a little luck, in a few minutes you can begin the same journey I began twenty years ago. I promise you will not regret it.

One thing to note: To simplify reading this book, I have chosen to use “him” and “he” consistently when I refer to examples not associated with any specific person. I know that you have enough imagination to insert a “her” or “she” in your thoughts where this may be appropriate

Communication Happens on the Listener's Terms

Does that sound strange? Let me explain. Everything you say to a person is filtered through his frames of reference, biases, and preconceived ideas. What remains is ultimately the message that he understands. For many different reasons, he can interpret what you want to convey in a totally different way than you intended. What is actually understood will, naturally, vary depending on who you are speaking to, but it is very rare that the entire message gets through exactly as you conceived it in your mind.

It may feel depressing knowing that you have so little control over what your listener understands. No matter how much sense you would like to knock into the other person's head, there's not that much you can do about it. This is one of the many challenges of communication. You simply can't change how the listener functions. However, most people are aware of and sensitive to how they want to be treated. By adjusting yourself to how other people want to be treated, you become more effective in your communication.

Why Is This So Important?

You help other people understand you by creating a secure arena for communication—on their terms. Then the listener can use his energy to understand rather than to consciously or unconsciously react to your manner of communicating.

All of us need to develop our flexibility and so be able to vary our style of communication, adapting it when we speak to people who are different from us. Here we find another truth: No matter what method you choose to communicate with, as an individual, you will always be in the minority. No matter what kind of behavior you have, the majority of people around you will function differently from you. You can't just base your method of communication on your own preferences. Flexibility and the ability to interpret other people's needs is what characterizes a good communicator.

Knowing and understanding another person's style of behavior and method of communication will result in more educated guesses about how a person may possibly react in various situations. This understanding will also dramatically increase your ability to get through to the person in question.

No System Is Perfect

Let me be clear about one important point: This book doesn't claim to be totally comprehensive with respect to how we, as people, communicate with each other. No book can do that, because the number of signals we constantly transmit to those around us wouldn't fit into any book. Even if we could include body language, the differences between male and female dialogue, cultural differences, and all the other ways to define variations in communication, we wouldn't be able to write everything down. We could add psychological aspects, graphology, age, and astrology and still not get a 100 percent complete picture.

According to the *American Journal of Business Education* (July/August 2013), more than 50 million assessments have been made using the DISA tool. And yet even with all this information communication remains a fascinating and puzzling topic. People are not Excel spreadsheets. We can't calculate everything. We're way too intricate to be described in full. Even

the youngest child is far more intricate than anything that could be conveyed in a book. However, we can avoid the most blatant blunders by understanding the basics of human communication.

It's Been Going On for a While

“We see what we do, but we do not see why we do what we do. Thus, we assess and appraise each other through what we see that we do.”

These words come from the psychoanalyst Carl Jung. Different behavior patterns are what creates dynamism in our lives. When I refer to behavior patterns, I don't just mean how a person acts in a single instance (his actions) but rather the whole set of attitudes, beliefs, and approaches that govern how a person acts. We can recognize ourselves in certain behavior patterns, but other forms of behavior we neither recognize nor understand. Besides, each of us acts differently in different situations, which can be a source of either joy or irritation for those around us.

Though individual actions can, of course, be right or wrong, there is really no pattern of behavior that is right or wrong. There is no such thing as proper behavior or incorrect behavior. You are who you are, and there's no point in wondering why. You're fine no matter how you're wired. No matter how you choose to behave, no matter how you are perceived, you are fine. Within reasonable limits, of course.

In a perfect world, it would be easy just to say, “I'm a particular kind of person and it's okay because I read it in a book. That's just how I am and this is how I act.” Sure, wouldn't it be great not to have to mishandle your own behavior? To always be able to act and behave precisely as you feel at the time? You can do that. You can behave exactly as you wish. All you have to do is find the right situation in which to do so.

There are two situations in which you can just be you:

The first situation is when you're alone in a room. Then it doesn't matter how you speak or what you do. It doesn't hurt anyone if you scream and swear or if you just want to sit silently and ponder the great mysteries of life or wonder why fashion models always look so mad. In your solitude, you can behave exactly the way you feel. Simple, isn't it?

The second situation where you can completely be yourself is when all the other people in the room are exactly like you. What did our mothers teach us? Treat others as you want to be treated. Excellent advice and very well intentioned. And it works, too—as long as everyone is just like you. All you need to do is make a list of all the people you know who believe, think, and act exactly like you in all situations. Now just give them a call and start hanging out.

In any other situation, it might be a good idea to understand how you are perceived and to learn how other people function. I don't think I will make headlines by saying that most people you meet aren't like you.

Words can have incredible power, but the words we choose and how we use them vary. As you have seen from the title of this book, there are different interpretations of—yes, you got it—words. And when you use the wrong word, well, maybe then you're an idiot.

Surrounded by Idiots—or Not?

What does this actually mean? As I was writing, the following analogy hit me: Behavior patterns are like a toolbox. All types are needed. Depending on the occasion, a tool can sometimes be right and some times be wrong. A thirty-pound sledgehammer is great for tearing down walls, but it's hardly the thing if you want to hang a picture in the foyer.

Some people are opposed to the idea of sorting people into different behavior types. Maybe you believe that you shouldn't categorize people in that way, that it's wrong to pigeonhole people. However, everyone does it, perhaps in another way than I do in this book, but we all register our differences nonetheless. The fact remains that we are different, and in my opinion, pointing that out can be something positive if you do it in the right way. Improperly used, every tool can be harmful. It's more about the person using it than the tool itself. This book is your introduction to human behavior and dialogue. The rest is up to you.

Parts of what you are going to read I have gathered from TTI Success Insights. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sune Gellberg and Edouard Levit for so generously sharing both their experience and their training materials.

No Matter How Strange It Might Seem, in Theory, Every Kind of Behavior Is Normal

Normal Behavior ...

... is relatively predictable.

Every person reacts in a habitual manner in similar situations. But it's impossible to predict every possible reaction before it happens.

... is part of a pattern.

We often react in consistent patterns. Therefore, we should respect one another's patterns. And understand our own.

... is changeable.

We should learn to listen, act, speak openly, and reflect in order to do what is relevant right now. Everyone can adapt.

... can be observed.

We should be able to observe and consider most forms of behavior without being amateur psychologists. Everyone can take note of the people around them.

... is understandable.

We should be able to understand why people feel and do what they do—right now. Everyone can think about why.

... is unique.

Despite the conditions that we have in common, each person's behavior is unique to him. Succeed in your own conditions.

... is excusable.

Dismiss personal jealousy and complaints. Learn to have tolerance and patience, both with yourself and with others.

Why Are We the Way We Are?

Where does our behavior come from? Why are people so different? Search me! Very briefly, it's a combination of heredity and environment. Even before we're born, the foundations for the behavior patterns we will exhibit in adulthood have been laid. The temperament and character traits we have inherited affect our behavior, a process already begun at the genetic stage. Exactly how this works is still a bone of contention among scientists, but all are in agreement that it does come into play. Not only do we inherit traits from our own parents but also from their parents—also in varying degrees from other relatives. At some point or other, we have all heard that we speak like or look like an uncle or an aunt. As a child, I resembled my uncle Bertil—something to do with my red hair. To explain how this is genetically possible would take a tremendous amount of time. For the moment, let us just establish that this inheritance lays the foundation for our behavioral development.

What happens once we are born? In most cases, children are born impulsive, adventurous, without any barriers whatsoever. A child does exactly what he wants. The child says, “No, I don't want to!” or, “Sure I can!” He is immersed in the thought that he can manage just about anything at all. This kind of spontaneous and sometimes uncontrolled behavior is, of course, not always what his parents wished for. Then, hey presto, what was once an original pattern of behavior begins to transform, in the best/worst-case scenario, into a copy of someone else.

How Are Children Influenced?

Children learn and develop in multiple ways, but the most common is by imitation. A child mimics what he sees around him, the parent of the same sex often becoming the model for imitation. (This is clearly not an exhaustive study on how the process works, as this book is not about how we influence our children.)

Core Values

My core values are found deep within me, values so deeply embedded in my character that it's almost impossible to change them. These are the things I learned from my parents as a child or that I learned in school when I was very young. In my case it was different variations of “study and do well in school” or “fighting is wrong.” The latter, for example, means that I've never laid hands on another person. I haven't fought since third grade, and I seem to recall that I lost then. (She was really strong.)

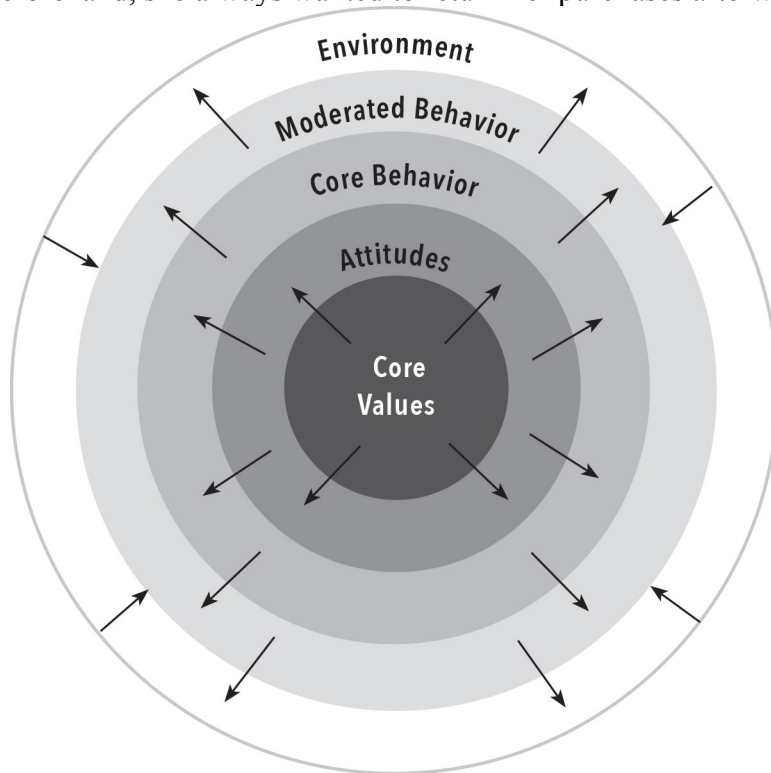
Another important core value is that all people are of equal worth. Because my parents demonstrated this to me during my childhood, I know it is deeply wrong to judge a person based on his or her origin, sex, or color. All of us carry many such core values. We know instinctively what is right and what is not. No one can take these core values away from me.

Attitudes and Approaches

The next layer is my attitudes, which are not exactly the same thing as core values. Attitudes are things I have formed opinions about based on my own experiences or on

conclusions I have drawn from encounters in the latter part of my schooling, high school, college, or my first job. Even experiences later on in life can form attitudes.

A relative once told me that she didn't trust salespeople. She's definitely not alone in having strong feelings about salespeople, but in her case it resulted in comical practices. She couldn't buy anything without returning it. A sweater, a sofa, a car—the buying process was endless. Every fact had to be examined and explored. No matter how much research she did beforehand, she always wanted to return her purchases afterwards.



Once I had observed the pattern, I asked her why she did this, and she explained the reasoning behind her attitude: Eighty-five percent of all salespeople were swindlers. Explaining that I too was a salesperson had little effect. To this day, I don't know if I belong to the 85 percent or if I can count myself among the fortunate 15 percent. The important thing is that an attitude can change. My relative had probably been badly fooled a number of times and therefore learned to distrust salespeople. However, if she had a number of positive experiences her opinion could change.

The Results

Both my core values and my attitudes affect how I choose my behavior. Together they form my core behavior, the real person I want to be. My core behavior is how I act in complete freedom, without the influence of any external factors at all.

You probably already see the issue here: When are we ever completely free from external influences? When I discuss this question with groups of people in different contexts, we all usually agree: only when we're sleeping.

But people are different. Some don't care. They are always themselves because they've never reflected upon how they are perceived. The stronger your self-understanding is, the greater your probability of adapting to the people around you.

How Do Others Really Perceive Me?

The people around you most often see your moderated behavior. You interpret a specific situation and make a choice about how to act based on that evaluation—this is the behavior that others around you experience. It's all about the mask you wear to fit into a given situation. We all have several different masks. Having one at work and one at home isn't that unusual. And another one for visiting the in-laws, perhaps. This book is not an advanced course in psychology—but I am content to establish that we interpret situations differently and act accordingly.

Consciously or subconsciously, surrounding factors cause me to choose a particular course of action.

And this is how we act. Look at this formula:

BEHAVIOR = f (P × Sf)

Behavior is a function of *Personality* and *Surrounding factors*.

Behavior is that which we can observe.

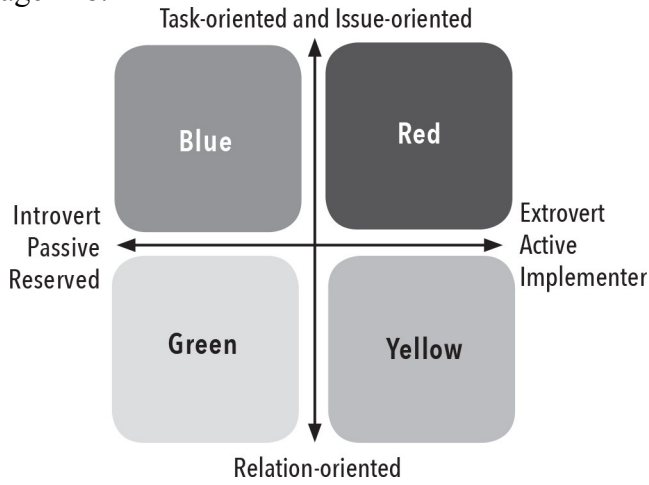
Personality is what we try to figure out.

Surrounding factors are things that we have an influence on.

Conclusion: We continually affect one another in some form or other. The trick is to try to figure out what's there, under the surface. And this book is all about behavior.

An Introduction to the System

At the end of this book you will find a description of the background to how the DISA system emerged, but since you probably want to dive into its most interesting elements—how everything works in practice—you can just read on. Otherwise, you can always go directly to page 228.



ANALYTICAL (blue)

- Slow reaction
- Maximum effort to organize
- Minimal interest in relationships
- Historical time frame
- Cautious action
- Tendency to avoid involvement

DOMINANT

- Quick
- Maxim
- Minir
- relati
- Curre
- Direct
- Tende

STABLE (green)

- Calm reaction
- Maximum effort for connection
- Minimal interest in change
- Current time frame

INSPIRED

- Rapid
- Maxim
- Minir
- Futur

As you can see, there are four main categories of behavior types, each of which is associated with a color. This book is about how you can recognize them. Quite soon, as you start reading about the different colors, various faces will come to mind. Sometimes, maybe, even your own.

About 80 percent of all people have a combination of two colors that dominate their behavior. Approximately 5 percent have only one color that dominates behavior. The others are dominated by three colors. Throughout the book I focus on the single colors individually because they are the fundamental components of a person's behavior. It's like a recipe—we need to understand all the ingredients before we bake the cake. Entirely Green behavior, or Green in combination with one other color, is the most common. The least common is entirely Red behavior, or Red behavior in combination with one other color.

RED	YELLOW	GREEN
Aggressive	Talkative	Passive
Ambitious	Enthusiastic	Reserved
Strong-willed	Persuasive	Self-conscious
Goal-oriented	Creative	Reserved
Pushing	Optimistic	Conformist
Problem-solver	Social	Lonely
Pioneer	Spontaneous	Moderate
Decisive	Expressive	Underachiever
Innovator	Charming	Less
Impatient	Full of vitality	Stagnant
Controlling	Self-centered	Pragmatic
Convincing	Sensitive	Dislike
Performance-oriented	Adaptable	Supportive
Powerful	Inspiring	Good

Many people you meet possess qualities that you sometimes wish you had—you may even feel jealous of these people. They easily master things that you struggle with. Maybe you'd like to be more decisive like Reds, or maybe you wish it were easier for you to interact with strangers, like Yellows. Possibly, you wish that you didn't stress so much, that you could just take it easy like Greens do, and perhaps you wish that you could keep your schedule in better order, something that's natural for Blues.

Naturally, it works the other way as well. You are going to read things that will help you realize that you too boss others around a bit too much, just like Reds tend to do. Or that you talk way too much, something that Yellows do. It might be that you take things way too easy, not getting involved in anything, the Greens' weakness. Or you're always suspicious of everything, seeing risks everywhere, just like Blues. Here you can learn to see your own pitfalls and how you can take appropriate measures to get around them.

No matter what you learn about yourself and others, take notes, underline things, and engage with the material.

Red Behavior

How to Recognize a Real Alpha and Avoid Getting in His Way

What should we do? We'll do it my way. Now!

This is the behavior type that Hippocrates in his theory of human temperament called choleric. Nowadays you might call a Red person bold, ambitious, driven, but also potentially hot-tempered, rash, or dominant. You quickly notice a Red person because he doesn't make the slightest effort to conceal who he is.

A Red person is a dynamic and driven individual. He has goals in life that others may find difficult to even imagine. Since his goals are so highly ambitious, achieving them seems to be impossible. Reds strive forward, always pushing themselves harder, and they almost never give up. Their belief in their own ability is unsurpassed. They carry inside them the firm belief that they can achieve anything—if they just work hard enough.

People who have lots of Red in their behavior are task-oriented extroverts and they enjoy challenges. They make quick decisions and are often comfortable taking the lead and taking risks. A common perception is that Reds are natural leaders. These are people who will ingly take command and go to the fore. They are so driven that they will get through despite any obstacle in their path. Their disposition is ideal in competitive situations. It's not unusual for a CEO or a president to have lots of Red in his behavior.

This form of competition is present in everything Reds do. To say that they constantly want to challenge and compete is probably not entirely true, but if a chance of winning something arises—why not? The exact nature of the competition is unimportant; it's the competitive element that keeps Reds running on all cylinders.

Pelle, one of my former neighbors, liked competing so much that he developed entirely new interests just to compete. I like working in the garden, and so I spend quite some time doing so. Pelle didn't like gardening, but when he had heard people commenting on my beautiful garden often enough he finally had enough. He started one project after another, always with a single but very clear objective: to outdo me. He confounded his wife by digging new flower beds, planting a rainbow of unbelievably fabulous plants, and cultivating the lawn to golf-course standard. The only thing I needed to do to keep him going was to merely suggest that I would purchase more plants. Then he would go to the local garden center quicker than you could say "bad loser."

You can also recognize Reds by other behavior patterns. Who talks the loudest? Reds. Who goes all out when explaining something? Reds. Who's always the first to answer a question? Reds again. Who, during an otherwise pleasant dinner, makes categorical comments on just about any topic? And who will judge an entire country based on something he saw on television? Reds!

Something is always happening in the lives of Red people. They can't sit still. Idle time is wasted time. Life is short; better get going immediately. Do you recognize the type? Always on the go. So step aside; let's get cracking!

“Tell Me What You Really Think—Yes, for Real.”

Reds have no problem being blunt. When asked a specific question, they often say exactly what they think, without any frills. They see no need to wrap things up in a bunch of empty phrases. When a thought pops into their heads, everyone knows it immediately. They have opinions on most things, and they trot their thoughts out quickly and efficiently.

A common remark is that Reds are very honest, because they dare to express their personal truths to people. They don't really understand what the fuss is all about. They've only said things as they are.

If you need someone with extra energy, you may want to invite a Red into the team or project group. They fight tirelessly along when others have already given up—if they are determined to succeed, that is. A task that has become humdrum or meaningless could be totally ignored by a Red.

I call this phenomenon slog or split. If the task is important enough, a Red will go through fire and water to complete it. If he feels it has no purpose, into the trash it goes.

RED people often see themselves as

Driven

Resolute

Decisive

Competitive

Prompt

Determined

Persuasive

Strong-willed

Can I Win Something? In That Case, I'm In.

So Reds like competing. They appreciate the slight antagonism that is part of being competitive and the glorious moment of winning. They even enjoy winning competitions that probably don't even exist, except perhaps in their own mind. It can be passing a slow walker on the street, finding the absolutely best parking spot, or dominating the family game of Monopoly—despite the fact that the purpose of the game is to entertain the kids and none of the other adults are actually competing. For a Red, this is all natural because he sees himself as a winner.

Let me give you an example. I once worked for a company where the CEO was Red. He was energetic and efficient—and consequently incredibly dynamic. No meetings were as short

and sweet as those run by this CEO. But his weak spot was the competitive element. As a young man he had played soccer, and every spring at this particular workplace they held a soccer tournament. It was very popular, even before he joined the company.

Naturally, he had to take part. No other CEO before him had ever done so, but that wasn't the problem. The problem was that as soon as he got out on the field he became a different person. On fire with his competitive drive, he flattened anyone who stood in his way.

This continued for a few years until someone had the guts to tell him that he played just a little bit too rough—the game wasn't supposed to be that serious. The CEO didn't understand. He grabbed the latest flyer for the game and pointed out that it was called a soccer “tournament.” Tournaments are competitions, and if you compete you are in it to win. Simple!

He competed in traffic, on the soccer field, in business. No area was too insignificant not to become a competition. He even raced to see how quickly he could finish reading a book. What others do for relaxation he transformed into a competition. One hundred pages an hour was a reasonable pace.

His wife had even banned him from playing a memory card game with his children, who were five and six years old. Since they had better memories than he did, they won most of the time, and in his frustration he intimidated them.

Before you conclude that this guy sounds rather unsympathetic, we need to look at his intentions. This kind of intensive and competitive behavior often upsets other people because they think it is all about dominating and suppressing others. Nothing could be further from the truth. His intentions were almost never malicious. He just wanted to win.

This is one of the greatest challenges for Reds. It's not uncommon that other people feel irritated or intimidated by them because they're such powerful personalities. Later on in this book, I will share some simple ways that you can deal with these individuals.

Time Is Money

“Quick” is synonymous with “good” for Reds. If you are in a meeting and suddenly notice that one of the other participants is devoting his time to something completely different, it may well be a Red who has lost interest. If you look closer, you will realize that his thoughts are elsewhere—on the next step in the process being discussed, for example. Because Reds are quick thinkers, they move on long before everyone else.

Few things annoy Reds more than sluggishness. If a meeting or a discussion drags on, he may interrupt and ask if it's really necessary to prolong the issue. “We've already discussed this for twenty minutes. Get it together! It's only a few million in investments. How hard can it be?”

If you think about it, they're often right. When other people may find it difficult to make a decision, Reds are prepared to make quick decisions in order to keep things moving. With a Red on the team, nothing will be discussed ad infinitum. After all, it's always better to do something rather than nothing, right?

The advantage is obvious. We're talking about people who never waste time on anything that doesn't move forward. As soon as a task becomes unclear or is taking too long, a Red will ensure that the momentum is maintained and spur things along. Chop-chop, done in double time.

About fifteen years ago I began working for a small consulting company with about a dozen employees. It was a polished organization with a great spirit of entrepreneurship and excellent momentum in business dealings. One of the reasons why they were so efficient was because the founder of the company was a Red. Nothing could move too quickly for Björn. No meeting took longer than was absolutely necessary.

In my second or third week in the new job, I was sitting in a traffic jam when my cell phone rang. I looked at the display and saw that it was Björn. I answered the way I'd been instructed to when I started at the company—with a greeting, my name, and the company name. Impatiently he interrupted me and spit out his question.

“Were you looking for me?”

“No,” I replied, and took a deep breath, ready to say something else. I didn't get the chance.

“Okay,” he said, and hung up.

Eight seconds.

Unpleasant? Well, at the time we didn't really know each other. However, I must admit that the whole episode had me worried a little—at least on that occasion. Only three weeks at the company and the big chief himself calls, and sounding irritated!

When we'd gotten to know each other—and I learned that Björn was Red—I asked him why he was so abrupt on the phone. Of course he didn't even remember the call, but he said he was probably just trying to find out if I was looking for him. When he learned I wasn't, there was no further need to talk. Wasting time on polite flowery phrases or drawn-out farewells wasn't for him.

But at the same time, here was a person with a capacity to work far more than normal. Björn managed to do more in an average working day than most people. He still has an exceptional ability to make the most of any free time. If he has a gap of five minutes in his schedule he manages to squeeze in an email, a phone call, and go through some meeting minutes. From the outside, this may seem like an unnecessary pursuit of efficiency. But a Red detests inactivity. Things must happen. Add to this a sense of constant urgency, and a great deal will get done.

The Sky's the Limit. Or Is It?

For a Red, a realistic budget is a budget for cowards. If we don't push ourselves to the breaking point, we haven't tried hard enough. Reds love difficult tasks, so their level of ambition is usually boundless. The ability to manage difficult situations and challenges is the defining attribute of Red behavior.

When a person with Red traits sets his goals, several things happen. First, he wants to know how well a specific task under the most favorable conditions could be performed. If all nineteen parameters were met and we all gave it a little extra effort the results would be phenomenal. This means that anything below that impossible level of excellence is boring, because there's at least a remote possibility of that result being achieved.

Nothing is impossible. The impossible just takes a little longer. More than likely it was a Red who came up with that expression.

Naturally, it's also about the type of project. It's not enough just to set an impossible sales budget. If a Red doesn't like sales, he'll ignore the budget. Since he prefers to make all the decisions himself, he probably won't be fooled into doing something he doesn't feel like doing. Reds set higher demands on themselves than any of the other colors would. And they are always prepared to work hard. I wouldn't go so far as to say that no other color works as hard as Reds do, but I would venture to say that a Red would give anyone a run for his money.

Ambition, which is intrinsic to Reds, shouldn't be confused with a lust for power. Reds have no problem taking positions of power, since they are fearless. Expressions like “It's lonely and windy at the top” don't scare them. But for a Red power is not an end in itself. It does,

however, come in handy for those who like to make their own decisions and avoid having to wait for others.

A Red can, in fact, be quite unassuming. It's true that he has a strong ego, but status and prestige don't have the same importance as with other colors. The reason is simple: A Red usually doesn't care what others think. He's not here for their sake—he's here for his own.

Let Me Tell You How Things Really Are

A Red gives everything he's got. When he has an opinion about something or if he wants the rest of us to agree with him, he pulls out all the stops.

Once, I was in a meeting with a large number of people who didn't know one another that well. It was a gathering of consultants who were meeting to discuss a potential collaboration. It was in the middle of a recession, and we were all concerned about the lack of direction. While we were waiting for the chairperson to arrive, we chatted a little about everything.

At one end of the table sat Elisabeth, who had strong opinions about everything. In an unequivocal voice, she suddenly stated that the company was still expected to earn over \$50 million a week, despite the recession. About fifteen consultants, all highly trained, reflective, and intelligent people, nodded in agreement. Just imagine—\$50 million! Per week!

While Elisabeth expanded on how the situation ought to be resolved in the consulting world, I began thinking about the figures a little bit. Not knowing where these figures came from, I remained silent. It could be true; it could also be farfetched. I honestly didn't know. While waiting for the meeting to begin officially, I started calculating how much \$50 million per week would be per year. I didn't have enough paper.

After the meeting, I got the answer to my speculations. I was in a taxi on my way to my next meeting when the driver turned on the radio. In the news, it was announced that the company in question was expected to earn between \$2 and 2.5 million per week. I realized that Elisabeth had gotten the information from the news. I also understood that \$2 or \$2.5 million per week was far more realistic than the \$50 million that she had referred to.

But wait a minute. A little reconciliation with reality is needed here. Why didn't anyone react? No one in the room lifted a finger or called her information into question. Why?

Because she sounded so convincing! Her facial expression was definite; her countenance was determined, and her voice did not quiver in the least when she presented her figures.

That's the way Reds function. When they believe something, they let people know that this is the only truth that exists. Now maybe there are some sticklers for detail who might claim that this is deceptive, since we now know that the company earned \$2.5 million a week and not roughly \$50 million. But I'm convinced that Elisabeth really believed what she said. She had things turned around, no doubt about that, and she was certainly not interested in details. But my point is that by sounding utterly confident when she declared that the company was earning six months' revenue—per week—we all fell for it.

Or, in the words of a good friend of mine: There are two ways to do this—my way and the wrong way.

Only Dead Fish Go with the Flow

Reds are both groundbreaking and strong willed. Why not also add “results oriented” and “decisive” when we're at it? For Reds, it's not sufficient to do things like everyone else does. And just because it's tough doesn't mean we should avoid doing it.

Reds aren't afraid to make decisions. When everyone else hesitates, thinking and

weighing the risks, a Red makes the controversial decision. A Red's determination is usually unyielding. Once he's decided, then it's full steam ahead.

Their fearlessness dares them to tackle things that make others hesitate. This is usually evident when things get rough, and they are undaunted by tough choices or tricky decisions. It is no coincidence that many entrepreneurs are Reds. Setting up new businesses—especially if they are based on completely new business concepts—is, in our current economy, not for the faint of heart. It's not a bad thing to have a force of nature in the driver's seat. It takes a strong mind to move things forward, someone who understands that risks that are part of everyday life and that everything boils down to hard work from morning to night—for many years. Reds understand this from the beginning and are in no way intimidated by it.

Do you need someone to pursue a problem in your apartment complex? Maybe you've gotten on the wrong side of your landlord, who says that there is absolutely nothing wrong with your heat. Or maybe the contractor who repaired the roof and installed the new elevators was negligent and won't take responsibility for it. Any time you try to get things straightened out, you've been brought to standstill by a barricade of unanswered calls and info@ addresses. You're just about to give up when you suddenly remember the guy on the second floor living above you. Isn't he kind of Red? Wasn't he the one who dared to go against the super at the last meeting and get the trash policy changed? Yes, that's the guy!

Throw the guy from the second floor into the process, and then you'll see things begin to happen. You might have to motivate him a little, explaining that he has a lot to gain from it himself. But he will make things happen—he'll subdue the landlord and get the contractor in line. And he won't lose any sleep just because someone got angry with him in the process.

Generally speaking, a Red's strengths are very powerful. They are extremely clear in their communication, and you don't have to look far to identify Red behavior. Of course, over the years many Reds learn to restrain themselves somewhat, but it doesn't usually last very long. They'll be back to full throttle—and all that that entails.

It Wasn't Better Before. Onward and Upward.

A Red doesn't try to stick to his original point of view when he realizes that a better solution exists. He is a quick thinker and has no problem shifting his ground at short notice. One of the advantages of this is that he doesn't reject other people's ideas if he has none himself. It's worth looking into anything that can propel development forward.

Sometimes decisions can come a little bit too quickly, but the will to constantly change creates a strong dynamism and flexibility. If anything has been static for a long time—maybe a few weeks—he will turn things up a notch. Some people may find this stressful, but when you ask a Red why he changed something that was actually working the answer could well be “Because I could.”

Naturally, there are also downsides. Reds get bored with the status quo quickly and so they change it—the people around them have no idea what will happen next. When Greens and Blues have just gotten used to the new organization and think they have finally grasped how things are supposed to work, well, a Red will have already outlined the next step.

Conclusions on Red Behavior

So what do you think? Do you know any Reds? Do you have any around you? If you want to get to know some famous Red people, consider Steve Jobs, FDR, Venus Williams, or Margaret Thatcher. There's also Barack Obama and Mother Teresa.

Oh yes, it's true. If you consider Mother Teresa's deeds, the strength she needed and whom she had to deal with—the world's foremost leaders—to achieve what she did, then you'll realize that she was extremely determined and forceful. A typical Red profile.

Yellow Behavior

How to Recognize Someone Whose Head Is in the Clouds and Get Him Back to Reality Again

“That Sounds Fun! Let Me Do It!”

In the Hippocratic world, we have now come to the sanguine person. What other words can be used to describe him? Optimistic and cheerful, a person with a bright outlook on life. The thesaurus even suggests the epithet a man of possibilities ... how about that? It is, in fact, an excellent description of Yellow behavior. These are people who live to live, always finding opportunities for enjoyment. Life is a banquet, and Yellows will see to it that they savor every bite. They are driven by merriment and laughter. And why not? The sun is always shining somewhere.

Do you know anyone who sees sunshine where others see dark clouds? Have you met anyone who can laugh even though he hasn't had any good news for months? Then you've met a Yellow. Have you been at a party and wondered why everyone flocks around a particular person, man or woman? Well, in the center of the circle there's a Yellow, entertaining anyone who wants to laugh. Yellows make sure that the atmosphere is at its zenith so that every event becomes a marvelous party. When something is no longer fun, they move on to another place where the atmosphere is better.

Recognizing a Yellow is easy. He's the one who's talking all the time. He's the one who gives answers rather than asking questions—often answering questions that no one has even asked. He answers a question by telling a story that may or may not have anything to do with the issue. But it really doesn't matter, because he will put you in a cheerful mood. Besides, his unshakably positive attitude also makes it impossible for you to feel upset for long.

I would even go so far as to argue that Yellows are more popular than other colors. How can I say that? Look for yourself. They entertain, put people in a good mood, and fun things always happen around them. They know how to capture everyone's attention and how to keep it. They make us feel important. They are just nice to be around.

They are also very typically touchy-feely people. Like Reds, Yellows are very willing to make quick decisions, but they can rarely explain why using rational reasoning. A more likely response would be, “It just felt right.” And sure, gut feelings shouldn't be underestimated. Studies have shown that gut feelings are right more often than we think. But that's not the kind of gut feeling we're talking about here. Yellows often make decisions that are based on feeling simply because no thought was ever involved.

I have a sister who is Yellow. Marita is so easygoing in her manner that I have never heard anyone utter a single negative word about her. Never. I may be biased, but I have never met anyone who doesn't immediately like her. She has an entirely unique ability to connect with every person she meets.

Marita always has something entertaining to say. However, some of these things are so peculiar that I sometimes have to ask her what she was thinking when she said them. With a burst of laughter, she usually replies, “Thinking? I wasn't!”

In many ways, it's liberating when I visit her and her husband, Leif. Their almost incomprehensible ability to see bright spots in everything around them is so delightful that it frees my own easygoing disposition. I am never as happy and exhilarated as when I visit them. For years, I wondered why this was, and have reached the conclusion that Yellow behavior is simply contagious.

If I say to my sister, "It looks like it is going to rain," she simply replies, "I can't imagine that." Pointing to the window, I say to her, "But look, it's actually raining. It is quite dark out there; we could have thunder before this is over." "Sure," she says, "but after that the sun will come out! Just wait and see." Then she laughs. Again. While the rain pours outside, she sits on the sofa, unabashedly having fun. And I, along with everyone else, laugh along because it's impossible to resist.

"The More the Merrier! Your Friends Are My Friends...."

People with lots of Yellow in their behavior are focused on creating relationships. They are outgoing and can be extremely persuasive. They're enthusiastic, excited, and happy to talk about their feelings for others and, not infrequently, for complete strangers.

Yellows can talk to anyone. They are not at all shy, perceiving most people they meet as pleasant. They even see strangers in a positive light—they're just friends you haven't met yet.

Many people notice that Yellows are always smiling and laughing. That's undoubtedly one of a Yellow's strengths. Their optimism is invincible. Comments about how everything is going to hell are often met by remarks about "What a beautiful view we have!"

Just like Reds, Yellows have lots of energy. They find most things interesting, and Yellow individuals are the most curious people you'll ever meet. Everything new is enjoyable, and a great deal of Yellow energy is spent finding new ways of doing things.

Who gets the most holiday cards, do you think? Yellows. Most contacts in their cell phone? That's right—Yellows. Most friends on Facebook? You're getting the idea—Yellows. They have friends absolutely everywhere, and they are excellent at keeping in touch with everyone in order to keep up-to-date. Yellows want to know what's going on. They want to be where it's all happening, and they will make sure to be at every party.

YELLOW people often see the

Enthusiastic

Charming

Inspiring

Optimistic

Open

Creative

Convincing

Easygoing

“Isn’t It Amazing? I Just Looove It to Bits!”

If there is anything that characterizes Yellow behavior, it’s unlimited optimism and enthusiasm. Few things can keep their good mood away for long. The Yellows’ entire being is concentrated on one thing—finding opportunities and solutions.

In his day, Hippocrates called Yellows the sanguine ones. This simply means optimists. Nothing is really a problem. It will all sort itself out. It’s neither here nor there that the world just happens to be full of worries and hardships. With their incurably positive outlook on life, Yellow individuals give joy to the people around them with their cheerful acclamations and entertaining jokes.

I don't know where Yellows get their tremendous energy, but it's focused on having fun and devoting themselves to social togetherness. Everyone must be involved, and a Yellow will not allow anyone to be gloomy.

Micke, a good friend of mine, is Yellow, and his life has included more than his fair share of challenges. His wife left him, his children have had problems at school, and on various occasions his employers have gone bankrupt and he has lost his job. I can't even count how many times he's had a car accident, his home has been burgled, or he has been robbed of expensive items. Sometimes I hardly dare to answer the phone when I see that Micke is calling. To tell the truth, Micke is the most jinxed man I have ever met.

But what's so curious about him is that none of this ever seems to bother him. Naturally, he's upset when accidents happen, but he can't stay upset for long periods of time. Inside, he just bubbles along most of the time.

I remember one occasion when we were both quite young. He had just bought an old Alfa Romeo. It was a two-seater with two doors. Painfully rusty, it was nothing short of a miracle that it even held together. Micke had the car for about a week when he hit a lamppost and couldn't get out on the driver's side. When I heard about the accident, I was worried and called to see if he was okay. His answer? "It was fine! I just got out the other door!"

The Optimistic Consultant Strikes Again

Since Yellow individuals are so positive and cheerful, they spread joy and warmth to those around them. With their uncontrollable optimism, they demolish all opposition quite effectively.

Who can be upset when there's someone pointing out the good things all the time?

How could anyone fail to be inspired by a person who refuses to see half-empty glasses? Who always sees the positive?

One of my customers is a sales director for a pharmaceutical company. Marianne worked her way up in the company via what we call the long route. Her managers and coworkers all agree that she's been so successful simply due to one thing: her amazing ability to inspire those around her.

On a number of occasions, I've watched her conduct sales meetings. I consider myself a decent motivator, but when Marianne gets going you just have to take your hat off to her. Within a couple of minutes, the room is so inspired if she were to ask the sellers to jump out the window they'd do it, even though they are on the fifth floor. She makes everything sound so simple.

"It's a great idea to jump out the window! We can do this. Let's jump!"

And the group jumps after her. With her optimism and bright outlook on life, she is phenomenal at getting people to achieve great feats—just by closing their eyes to anything negative. With sheer inspiration, she can inflate people's confidence to incredible levels.

I once saw her dealing with an irate customer who felt mistreated by her organization. Not a situation most people dream about! It turned out it wasn't a problem for Marianne. By just smiling steadfastly at the customer and refusing to listen to his negative comments, she moved him from an angry face to a gentle smile and finally to boisterous laughter. How could that happen? I don't think that even she could explain the underlying process. It simply came naturally to her.

What Happens If We Turn Everything Upside Down?

You won't find anyone more resourceful than a Yellow. If there is anything Yellows have

an aptitude for, it's seeing solutions where others do not. Yellows have the unique ability to twist and turn things. To put it simply, they turn everything upside down and think outside the box. Call it what you want, but their thinking doesn't always follow any set pattern.

They move quickly: The Yellow's intellect is very fast, which means that it can be difficult to keep up. Sometimes they can even find it difficult to explain their wild ideas.

A good friend of mine likes to work on his home. Everything relating to interior design and garden design fascinates him. I suspect that Robban would secretly rather work in design on a full-time basis instead of his actual job.

I've seen this for myself, but I've also heard from his wife how he goes about things. He walks around the garden, and she starts counting backwards from ten. On seven, Robban says, "Honey, I have an idea."

There are a few reasons for Robban's creativity. It's easy for him to think in images. He can simply "see" things in front of him long before they even exist. And he has courage; he's not afraid to try new things. Or to talk about them. Usually, his mouth works parallel to his mind as he discovers these ideas.

I've worked with a Yellow who couldn't even cross the street without coming up with a few really thought-provoking business ideas—just by looking around. How does this work? I don't really know. For a long time, we asked him to write down his proposals. You'll learn more about how a Yellow would react to that kind of structure when we start talking about weaknesses.

Yellows are also helped by the fact that they rarely have any limitations. A Yellow dares to go beyond the usual conventions when he's in a creative mode. Normally, of course, structure and hierarchy in a business are a kind of limitation, but Yellows are rarely concerned about such things. In fact, they often don't seem to know that such limitations are there.

Need help with new suggestions or ideas? Hunt out the most Yellow person you know. Are you stuck in the same way of thinking? Do you need a new perspective on an old problem? Speak to a Yellow. You might not be able to use whatever idea scheme they come up with—in fact, realism isn't a factor for a Yellow—but one thing can lead to another and then all of a sudden you have something that works.

Selling Snow to a Penguin

With all their energy and optimism, Yellows are very persuasive. It's easy for them to get carried away, seeing opportunities and solutions where others might only see a dead end.

It's often said that there is a difference between convincing and persuading, and many Yellows cross these boundaries. But what they say sounds so good. With the help of language, they really are masters at winning over people to their side.

Regarding language: As I describe in the chapter on body language (page 106), most Yellows have a rich and varied way of gesticulating, so that they can convince you not just with their words, but with their entire bodies.

But it's not just energy and will. Yellows have a unique way of expressing themselves that sways their listeners. They often use vivid and colorful imagery when they speak, which appeals to all five senses and creates an impression that is felt by the whole body.

Without even knowing it, many Yellows are skilled rhetoricians. They know instinctively that their ethos, the bearer of the message, is just as important as the message itself. Therefore, they are mindful of getting through to you as an individual—usually by being friendly and shaking your hand; making small personal comments; making you feel important.

Many politicians are phenomenal at this—think of Bill Clinton, for instance. He has the

kind of charisma that is naturally present in many Yellows—a noticeable interest in another person, the ability to ask exactly the right questions so that others feel that they are important.

“I Know Lots of People. All of Them, in Fact.”

If Yellows aren't allowed to cultivate their relationships, they will slowly wither and die. Okay, this may be somewhat exaggerated, but the very definition of Yellow behavior revolves around their ability to build relationships.

The Yellow traits are inspirational. They inspire those around them, and the best way to achieve this is through building relationships. A Yellow knows that by far the most important factor in business, for example, is relationships. If your customer doesn't feel positively about you, it will be difficult to make any headway.

Yellows know everyone. They have more acquaintances than everyone else. They like everyone. A Yellow doesn't need to know a person very well before calling him his friend. Anyone who doesn't actively dislike them they consider to be a pal. Remember that when Reds ask *what* is going to be done, Yellows want to know immediately *who* will do it. This question is crucial for Yellows. If the team or group does not function smoothly, a Yellow will not feel well. He needs functioning relationships for him to come into his own.

Conclusions on Yellow Behavior

What do you think? Have you ever met a real Yellow? Famous people who exhibit clear yellow traits include Oprah Winfrey, Robin Williams, Ellen DeGeneres, and, to take some fictional examples, Pippin from *The Lord of the Rings* and Han Solo from *Star Wars*.

Green Behavior

Why Change Is So Difficult and How to Get Around It

“How Are We Going to Do This? It’s Not Urgent, Right?”

The Green person is the most common. You’ll meet him virtually everywhere. What’s the easiest way to explain who he is? Well, I would like to describe him as being the average of all the other colors. Please don’t interpret that as something negative; keep in mind what this truly implies. While Reds are stressed performance seekers, Yellows are creative bon vivant guys, and Blues are perfectionist Knights of Excel Spreadsheets (see pages 13 and 14), Greens are the most balanced. They counterbalance the other more extreme behavioral traits in an elegant way. Hippocrates called them phlegmatic people. The Aztecs called them earth people. Calm, leisurely, and easygoing are some words that could also describe them.

It’s just a matter of stating the facts—not everyone can or should be extreme; otherwise, we would never get anything done. If everyone were a driven leader, there would be no one left to be led. If everyone were an enthusiastic entertainer, there would be no one to amuse. And if everyone were a detail-oriented perfectionist, there wouldn’t be anything to keep in order.

This means that Greens don’t stick out in the same way as others do and they often lend serenity to a situation. Where Reds and Yellows start off in top gear, Greens are significantly calmer. And where Blues get caught up in details, Greens try to feel their way to what is right.

If you have a friend who is Green, he’ll never forget your birthday. He won’t begrudge you your successes, and he won’t try to take the spotlight off you by reeling off his own stories. He won’t try to outdo you, and he will never pester you with new and drastic demands. Nor will he see you as a competitor if you were ever placed in that situation. He won’t take command unless he has been told to do so. And he won’t—

Just a minute please, you might be thinking. That’s just a lot of things he *doesn’t* do. So what *does* he do?

You can’t ignore the fact that Greens are more passive than others. They’re not as driven as Reds, not as resourceful as Yellows, and not as orderly as Blues. This describes most of the population.

For this very reason, they are easy to deal with. They let you be yourself. They don’t demand much, and they never kick up a fuss unnecessarily. Children with Green features are usually described as being little angels. They eat when they’re supposed to; they sleep when they’re supposed to; they do their homework when they’re supposed to.

But it’s not just that. Greens will not offend people if they can avoid it. They’d rather not offend anyone at all, and they won’t talk back if the boss makes a strange decision. (At least not to his face, that is. During the coffee break it may be somewhat different, but more on that later.) They usually strive to fit in, which makes them more balanced people. They’re ideal for calming down confused Yellows, for example. And they’re excellent at warming up Blues, who, on occasion, can indeed be a tad too cold.

We often hang out with a family where the husband is Yellow and loves to horse around and take center stage—he comes up with amusing games and is more than happy to answer any

questions himself. Everyone else is his audience, and he never steps out of the spotlight. His wife is Green. Calm, composed, and as laid back as can be. When he jumps around and frolics (these are middle-aged people), she sits quietly on the sofa and smiles. She's just as entertained as everyone else by his antics. When I ask her if she ever gets tired of her comical husband, she sometimes replies quietly, "But he's having so much fun."

This is a typical Green trait. They are very tolerant towards other people's more singular behavior. Is the picture becoming clearer? Greens are the people you might not think about—most of us, that is.

Some Simple Basics

Green people are kindness personified. You can expect a helping hand whenever you need it. They are pronounced relational people who will do everything within their power to save your relationship. And they will invest lifelong. They will keep track of when your birthday is, when your partner's birthday is, when your children's birthdays are, et cetera. It wouldn't surprise me if they even know when your cat first saw the light of day.

It's often said that Greens are the best listeners, and this is true. A Green will always be more interested in you than in himself, and if perchance he should be interested in himself he would never dream of showing it. You often find Greens in the public sector, where they help others, with no concern for personal gain.

They are also pronounced team players. The team, the group, the family, always comes before the individual, and I would even say that societies consisting of Greens will always take care of the sick and the weak. They will not leave a friend in need; you can call them at any time. They always offer a shoulder to cry on.

Change isn't their greatest strength, even though change isn't completely foreign to them. If you can simply justify the change and give him enough time, even a Green will be prepared to try new things. But a Green will remind you that you always know what you have, but you never know what you might end up with. The grass is not automatically greener on the other side, so to speak.

GREEN people often see themselves as

Friendly

Calm

Considerate

Pleasant

Predictable

Stable

Discreet

Thoughtful

The Best Pal in the World

As I've already said, these are naturally friendly people. When they tell you that they sincerely care about how you're doing, you can trust that they lie awake sleepless for your sake. Just like Yellows, Greens are relationship people and their interest in others is genuine and authentic.

If you ask a group of people if anyone is prepared to lend a hand and no one steps up to help, a Green will jump in and shout, "Choose me!" Why? Because he didn't want to leave you in the lurch. He knows that if you don't get any help you'll feel bad, and even though he can be passive, he's always prepared to help a friend.

I still remember a young woman I worked with at a consulting firm years ago. Admittedly, Maja was certainly Blue as well, but above all, she was Green. Her problem was obvious: When someone asked for help, she always said yes. Every time.

It was difficult to find her desk due to her workload, but she organized everything in the end. We could always rely on her assistance, handling all the things the rest of us had simply forgotten about. She had a warm and friendly smile, so we asked her to work in reception and have the first contact with new clients. She never failed to serve coffee, fix the cushions, or keep track of how long clients had been waiting.

Maja never forgot anyone's birthday or anniversary (or their wives' or children's, for that matter). She frequently sent short emails to all of us stressed-out consultants reminding us that we had families who also needed to be looked after. Sure, we could take care of our own lives, but in her kindness and thoughtfulness Maja went out of her way to help. It was natural for her, and whenever we asked her to take it easy and take care of herself for a change she almost felt offended. She wanted to take care of us—it simply made her feel good. Of course, there were limits, and Maja constantly ran the risk of someone taking advantage of her huge heart. But when properly balanced, this selflessness is a beautiful quality.

Greens do this naturally. When having coffee, it's quite normal for you to ask the people with you if they would like a refill. When other colors would likely take their empty cups to the coffeemaker, Greens would simply fetch the coffee carafe and refill everyone's cup.

A Green wants to stay on good terms with everyone, so he'll even help people he doesn't really like that much. Otherwise, there might be some kind of hullabaloo.

He thinks well of most people and is confident in others' abilities. Sometimes he does this so intensely that it ends badly, but normally that's the fault of the other person, not the Green himself. He is so good-hearted that now and then others can take advantage of him.

Lasse, a good friend of mine, is a truly genuine friend. It makes no difference how much he has to do; if anyone needs a helping hand, Lasse is there, ready to support him. Sometimes, in Lasse's eagerness to help with other people's work, he even forgets to do his own.

On weekends, he drives his own and others' children everywhere they want to go. He helps people move; he lends out his tools without people even needing to ask. He listens if you call and complain about something. This all takes a huge amount of time, but he enjoys it.

Once They've Said They'll Do Something, You Can Rest Assured That It Will Be Done

If a Green says that he will do something, you can be confident that he'll do it. If it's in his power to deliver, he will. It won't be done in the shortest amount of time possible, but it will show up in your in-box roughly within the expected time frame. Greens don't want to be caught failing to deliver, as this might cause trouble for others. And because they're good team players, they don't want to do anything that can cause problems for the team. Team comes before self, the team being the company, crew, football team, or family. For the Green, it's natural to look after everyone else around them.

The reason why everyone works so well with Greens is a topic for debate. In some situations, it's simply because they don't like conflict. Mostly, however, it's because they're controlled by their desire to make those around them happy and satisfied. If they can please you with a job well done, they'll do it. The desire to please others verges on being a driving force for Greens. It comes naturally and requires no effort. And this selflessness is accompanied by an exalted serenity that lowers the stress level of those around them.

“We Don’t Want Any Unpleasant Surprises. It’s Good to Know What’s Going to Happen. Every Time.”

You can always count on a Green person. In some organizations, it’s a requirement to have reliable employees. Creativity and ingenuity are not at the top of the wish list: In short, you simply need people who understand the job and get it done without a lot of fuss or drama.

Then you hire Greens. They constitute the stable core who will do the job well. They don’t have problems taking orders—as long as the orders are formulated in an appealing fashion. Greens enjoy stability and a certain predictability in the workplace. Or in the home. Or with the family. Just about everywhere.

Whenever trouble is brewing—maybe due to a recession or when new managers take over—we’ll see all kinds of interesting behavior in a group. Reds, who never listen to the whole message, just rush off to do what they believe needs to be done. Unless, of course, they’re busy yelling at the management because they don’t agree with their decisions. Yellows start wild discussions and inform absolutely everyone about their take on what happened. Instead of working, they’ll debate the news until it’s time to leave the office. Blues will sit at their desks and begin the bureaucratic paperwork, formulating half a million questions that no one knows the answers to yet.

Greens? They just murmur. If the management has avoided seriously sabotaging their sense of security, they’ll trundle on without complaining. There’s no point in making a lot of fuss and bother about it. Might as well keep doing what you were before. This, in fact, makes things much easier. We’ll get to how we help Greens to change direction, but they’re great at keeping calm and carrying on.

You’ll always know how a Green will respond to some questions because he doesn’t change his opinion very often.

A few years ago, I coached Greger. He had been a CEO for several years, and his management team consisted solely of Green middle managers. He used to enjoy playing a little game when launching new ideas. He wrote little notes with the answers he thought he would get from each person. “No” from Anna. “Yes” from Stefan. “Maybe” from Bertil. Right every time! Greger knew them very well and knew how they would react to his proposals.

This wouldn’t have been the case with Yellows. They don’t even know how they’re going to respond when opportunities arise. Exciting—sure, but it’s exhausting for those around them. With Green associates, however, you don’t need to worry.

“Who? Me? I’m Not Important. Forget That You Even Saw Me.”

For every Green, the group will always come first. Team before self. Remember that. This is a fundamental truth for a Green, and it shouldn’t be challenged too strongly. The working group, the team, the club, and the family—all these different groups are important for a Green. He often disregards his own needs if the group gets what it needs.

You may think that groups consist of people and if each individual is satisfied the group as a whole will be content. This might happen, but then the focus would be individual rather than collective. The way a Green sees it, if the group feels good every individual also feels good.

Here the Green’s thoughtfulness becomes apparent—he has infinite regard for those around him. This is partly the reason why it’s difficult to get a straight answer from a Green. He’s always trying to satisfy everyone else.

Let me tell you a rather striking story. One Sunday a few years ago, a colleague whom I

didn't know that well called me. I had only been working with Kristoffer for a few months, but I hadn't really figured the guy out yet.

So when he called me one Sunday morning I was surprised. I saw who it was, but I had no idea what he wanted from me. He greeted me pleasantly and asked what I was doing. I had just bought a new house at that time and was busy renovating. Kristoffer asked what was on the agenda this particular Sunday, and I remember that I said I was worried about the boiler. It was early winter. The temperature was just below freezing, and one of the circulation pumps didn't really work as it should. Because colder weather was definitely on the way, I wondered if the pump could cope with a major cold snap.

Being a Green, Kristoffer asked a number of questions and gave me lots of good advice. He'd once had a similar boiler, and besides, he knew a plumber whom he might be able to ask to come by and have a look—if I was interested, of course. Kristoffer and I chatted for a while, and I became increasingly puzzled about why he had actually called me.

He asked me where I lived. I gave him the address, and he promised to write it down and give it to his plumber friend. Then, as a kind of “by the way,” he asked me if I had any plans to go into town that day. I lived about twenty-five miles from the office and hadn't intended to go to work that Sunday. I explained this to Kristoffer.

We chatted a little while longer, and in the end I finally asked him straight out what he really wanted. Then he revealed that he was standing outside the office in his T-shirt because he had accidentally locked himself out when he had popped out to fetch some lunch. I looked at the thermometer. Thirty degrees with light snow. We'd been talking for about fifteen minutes! I got into the car and saved him from freezing to the bone.

Everyone else is more important. A Green never asks for anything.

“I Know Exactly What You Mean.”

They say Greens are introverts, that is, that they're active in their inner world. This means that they don't talk just for the sake of talking. When you are quieter than those around you, it's natural that you listen. And Greens will listen. They are interested in you and your ideas.

Unlike Reds, who only listen when there is something to be gained from it, or Yellows, who usually don't listen at all (although they will normally deny this fact), Greens hear what you're actually saying. They have a genuine ear for human problems. They might not offer any suggestions or solutions, but they understand what you've told them. Don't assume that means that they agree with you—but they are good listeners.

So far, you have probably tried to puzzle all the pieces together. Where do the different colors fit in? What kind of job would be best for each of them? These are good questions, even if there are no simple answers. One observation that often arises when I work with these issues in different organizations is that Reds, and Yellows in particular, must be good at retail and selling. This is true for sure. But Greens are often overlooked. We always teach salespeople to talk less and listen more, something Greens already do quite naturally.

Helena was a seller I coached a few years ago. She was Green and very gentle in her ways. Most people didn't understand how she survived in that daunting industry. But I have a theory. She once told me about a time when she met a tough chief executive everyone had tremendous respect for. No one in the entire company had managed to sell anything to him, but after a little coaching from me Helena was determined to have a go. So she arranged a meeting.

They ran into each other in the parking lot at the restaurant where they were to meet for lunch. The stern executive cruised into the lot in a vintage car from the late sixties. Beautiful,

shiny, and obviously very special. Helena said the only thing she could think of: Wow!

“Do you like cars?” asked the executive, before they had even greeted each other. Helena nodded. Then he told her about the car, how much he had spent to restore it, the paintwork and alloys, the engine. He showed her what it looked like under the hood. Helena nodded and murmured approval and hoped he wouldn’t ask her any questions, since she couldn’t tell the difference between a Ford and a Chevrolet. But she didn’t interrupt; she just listened. After that it was easy. They sat down, and he asked to see the sales agreement. How did she do it? By doing nothing at all except for one thing—listening. He signed before the food was even served.

Conclusions on Green Behavior

Okay. Do you have any Greens in your family? Highly likely.

Mr. Rogers, Gandhi, Michelle Obama, and Jimmy Carter are some well-known people with elements of Green. And, yes, Jesus. There’s a guy who knew how to help others.

Blue Behavior

In Pursuit of Perfection

“Why Are We Doing This? What’s the Science Behind It?”

The last of the four colors is an interesting fellow. You’ve probably met him. He doesn’t make a fuss about himself, but he does keep tabs on what is happening around him. While a Green will just go with the flow, a Blue has all the right answers. In the background, he analyzes: classifies, evaluates, assesses.

You know you’ve met a Blue if you visit someone’s home and everything is organized in a particular way. Clear labels and names on each hook so that the children will know exactly where to hang up their jackets. Dinner menus, divided into six-week intervals to ensure a balanced diet, stuck on the refrigerator door. If you look at his tools, you’ll find that everything has its own spot and nothing is out of place. Why? A Blue DIY guy always puts things back where they belong.

He is also a pessimist, sorry: a realist. He sees errors, and he sees risks. He’s the melancholic who closes the circle of behavior. Reserved, analytical, and detail-oriented are some words you might associate with a Blue.

“Excuse Me, but That’s Not Quite Accurate.”

We all have a friend like that. Think about it: You’re sitting in a restaurant with your friends. You’re discussing cats, football, or space rockets. Someone throws out a random comment. It may be your Red friend who claims that the Patriots have been to the Super Bowl eleven times; it can be the Yellow who cheerfully claims that as a child he lived in the same block as Will Smith in West Philly.

Your Blue buddy clears his throat and in a gentle voice says that the Patriots have actually only been to the Super Bowl ten times—with their first appearance after the 1985 season and eight times since 2001—and that Will Smith actually grew up in Wynnefield, which is well north of the block in question and a half-hour walk from the lovely Centennial Arboretum. In addition, without blinking an eye, the good friend adds, “It’s interesting to note that in the Super Bowl pregame coin toss, of the past fifty-one games, the outcome has been tails twenty-seven times and heads twenty-four times. And based on past statistics, the winner of the coin toss is slightly less likely to win the game overall.”

You just have to give up, boys. This guy simply knows everything. He doesn’t make a big deal about it, but his way of presenting facts makes it difficult for you to call them into question. He knows where he found the info and can go fetch the book to prove it.

That’s the way it is with Blues. They know how things stand before they open their mouth. They’ve Googled, read the owner’s manual, and checked the dictionary—and afterwards they present a report in full.

But an important thing to note: If the question doesn’t come up, it’s unlikely that your Blue buddy will say anything on the subject. He has no need to tell everyone about what he knows. Of course, a Blue doesn’t know everything; no one can. But you can usually bank on the

fact that what he says is correct.

BLUE people often see them

Accurate

Cautious

Detail-oriented

Logical

Orderly

Quality-oriented

Systematic

Thorough

Did you notice anything about the art above? Of course you did. This time I listed the different characteristics in alphabetical order—something a Blue would certainly appreciate. However, I might get in trouble because I don't discuss each and every one of these characteristics individually on the subsequent pages. To all Blue individuals who are reading this—who have probably jotted down a little note in the margin to go to my website to look for possible explanations for this blunder—I just want to say that I didn't mean to cause any strife.

“It's Not a Big Deal—I Was Just Doing My Job.”

How can a know-it-all be unassuming? It's impressively modest to avoid making a fuss,

even if you know everything.

It's rare that a wholly Blue person would feel the need to stand on the rooftops or to toot his own horn in order to make it clear to the world who the real expert is. It's usually sufficient that you, the Blue, are clear about who knows best.

There are downsides to this modesty. More than once I've stood in the middle of a crowd of people as we all tried to puzzle through a problem together. On one such occasion, a Blue came forward after two hours and casually pointed out the answer. For him, it was never really a problem at all. He knew a thing or two, but because Blues often miss the big picture, they don't always act immediately. I asked him why he didn't say anything two hours earlier. And, like a typical Blue, he said, "Well, you never asked."

It would be easy to feel aggravated by such a comment. But at the same time, I understood him. It's more my problem than his that he wasn't invited to join the discussion. He knew that he knew the answer, and that was good enough.

There's also no need to cheer, applaud, or call a Blue up to the podium when he's done something tremendous in an amazing way. Sure, it doesn't really do any harm to cheer. He'll just nod, accept the praise and the prize check, and then return to his desk, where he'll continue working on the next project. But he may well wonder what the fuss was really all about—he was only doing his job.

"Excuse Me, but Where Did You Read That? And What Edition Was It?"

A Blue can rarely get too many facts or have too many pages of fine print. People say that God is in the details, and I can imagine that it was a Blue who first said that.

No detail is too small to be noticed. Cutting corners is simply not an option for a Blue.

"Hold up," you might say. "Not keeping track of every single tiny detail isn't really the same thing as cutting corners." But if you ask a Blue it is. "Not having full control is the same thing as not having any control at all. What do we get by cutting corners? How can you possibly justify it?"

It doesn't work like that. Tell a Blue that he can ignore the details of the new contract and skip the last thirty paragraphs—there's nothing important in that bit—and he'll stare at you very attentively and wonder about your mental capabilities. As usual, he won't necessarily say anything. He'll just completely ignore what you said. He would rather burn the midnight oil checking all the facts of the case than miss the slightest detail.

A few years ago, I tried to sell a leadership program to the CEO of a company in the packaging industry. He was Blue; there was no doubting that. His emails were long-winded and a little dry, and for our first meeting he had set aside fifty minutes. Not an hour, not three-quarters of an hour, but fifty minutes. (There was a reason for this: After the meeting he would have lunch, and the dining room was eight minutes away. Plus a visit to the gents for about two minutes. A fifty-minute meeting would get him there right in time.)

The first time we met, he deposited me in a specific chair by a specific corner at the visitors' desk. He didn't ask if I had any difficulty getting there—which I did; the address was totally impossible—he offered neither coffee nor tea. He didn't smile when he greeted me. He examined my business card very carefully.

After going through the company's needs, I explained that I would go back to my office to put a quote together. Once back at my desk, I brooded about how I should go about it. Normally, my proposals were ten to twelve pages long, but I knew that wouldn't be sufficient in this case. Instead, I put my nose to the grindstone and wrote over thirty-five pages.

I mailed a hard copy of the quote to him, since for a Blue the written and printed word means much more than the spoken—or digital. After a week or so, I followed the whole thing up with a phone call. They were interesting ideas, the CEO said, but he was ready to go further. Could he now get the full quote? What he actually said was:

“IS THERE ANY MORE MATERIAL?”

I remember scratching my head. In my opinion, I had described the program rather well in the proposal. Each stage had an agenda, a clear goal, and a defined purpose. I’d given some background information, references, and citations.

As a seller, you can’t give up, so I was back at it, adding every detail I could think of. The second time, I put together at least eighty-five pages: each item broken down into two-hour intervals, even more background, sample exercises, analysis tools, templates, the works. Details on a level that would have made a Yellow throw up.

Pleased with myself, I sent over the whole caboodle.

It took several weeks before I heard from the CEO. I asked if he was ready to make a decision and he asked:

“IS THERE MORE MATERIAL?”

Well, this time he wanted to come to my office. For ninety minutes, we sat on the same side of the table in the conference room at my office and went through ... the table of contents in the proposal. He had drawn up the general terms and conditions (read: the fine print) on legal paper, and each section was full of questions and notes. Afterwards, he said with a totally expressionless face that it was the best meeting he had been at for a long time. But what he really wondered was:

“IS THERE ANY MORE MATERIAL?”

I sent him off and sat down for a while and pondered. More material? No problem. I shared the whole training folder (this was before e-learning and virtual classrooms), at least three hundred pages covering every fifteen-minute session during the fifteen days of training in five different stages of leadership.

This was all the material there was, even with information about when coffee breaks should be slotted in, exactly what questions should be asked of the individuals during training, how the room should be furnished, the works. I can certify—there were no gaps.

I thought that if I took all this and rammed it down his throat he would be satisfied at last.

After a month, he asked if there was any more material.

There was not.

A common misconception is that Blues are unable to make decisions, but that’s not the case. It wasn’t that this CEO was pushing the decision into sometime in the future or that he couldn’t decide. He simply had no need to decide. For him, the process leading up to the decision was significantly more interesting. And he just wondered if there was any more material.

Why Some People Have to Sleep on Things for So Long You Wonder If They’ve Gone into Hibernation

The preceding example also illustrates another important characteristic Blue behavior. They’re generally very cautious. They often think safety first. Where a Red or Yellow would take a wild chance, a Blue will hold off and consider everything one more time. There may be more

factors to take into account, right? You need to get to the bottom of things before you act.

This can manifest itself in various ways. It's a fact that for the Blue, the trip is more important than the destination, exactly the opposite of a Red. Obviously, this amount of caution can result in no decisions being made at all, and it also means that Blues rarely take any major risks. Never taking any risks ensures a predictable life; we can probably agree on that. I'm not saying anything about how exciting and inspiring it would be; I'm just stating the facts.

Sometimes a Blue can even completely refrain from starting something because he can't assess the risks. I once met a Blue seller who had trained as an engineer. His motto was that the best deal is often the one you didn't make. Risk assessment is a complex thing, and who knows what dangers are lurking out there? A Blue generally solves everything by creating advanced systems that manage the possible risks that may arise. They set three alarm clocks. They leave two hours early when one would be enough. They check and recheck the children's backpacks before school in the morning, even though they packed them the night before and no one has touched the backpacks during the night. They triple-check that the keys are in their pocket and, of course, they are. Where else would they be?

The benefits of this are evident. Blues won't be taken aback by unexpected events in the same way others would be. And in the long run, they save a lot of time.

"It Doesn't Matter If It's Easier. It's Still Not Right."

Things can't be allowed to go wrong. That's all there is to it. Quality is all that matters. When a Blue individual thinks his work runs the risk of being shoddy or low quality, things come to a standstill. Everything must be checked out. Why has the quality declined?

Running the risk of generalizing, I would say that a fair number of engineers have distinct Blue traits. Accurate, systematic, fact oriented, and quality conscious. I can't know for certain, but I would imagine that Toyota, the Japanese car manufacturer, probably has a good proportion of Blue engineers among its employees. They have a policy that you must always ask "why" five times to ensure quality and get to the heart of the issue. I would say that this is a typical Blue approach (in addition to the Japanese mentality, which is very long term and rather Blue in expression).

So let's say someone discovers an oil stain on the floor. A Red approach might be to lambast the person closest to him and then order him to mop up the stain. A Yellow sees the stain and then forgets it but two days later is surprised when he slips on it. The Green also sees the stain and feels a little bit of guilt because it poses a problem and everyone is ignoring it.

A Blue would ask, "Why is there an oil spill?" The answer may be that a gasket is leaking. This answer, of course, is unsatisfactory for a Blue. "Why is the gasket leaking?" "Because it's poor quality." "Why do we have poor-quality gaskets in our factory?" "Because the purchasing department was told to save money. We bought cheap gaskets instead of tight-sealed gaskets." "But who asked us to save money and compromise on quality?" This is the way he goes on. Maybe the problem will resolve itself. Maybe we'll get a report of what went wrong, but nothing is done to fix the problem.

In the end, the Blue solution might be to review our purchasing strategies instead of just mopping up the oil on the floor.

My point is this: A Blue is prepared to dive deep to get everything exactly 100 percent correct.

Blues argue that if they're going to do something, they must do it correctly. And vice versa—if a task isn't worth being done properly, then it's not worth doing at all. Furthermore,

because Blues usually find it difficult to lie, they will always point out the defects they uncover—even defects that may reflect poorly on them.

I clearly remember discussions my parents had when I was a child. We moved from time to time, and usually our house had to be sold, with everything that entailed. Dad—the engineer—would, of course, do all the work himself, and he managed the viewings personally.

My mum was always upset that he began each viewing by pointing out all the flaws and shortcomings of the house. It leaked here and there, and some paint had flaked off behind the sofa. “Why are you telling them that?” my mother wondered. “Because this and that is wrong,” Dad replied. “Sure, but do you have to tell that to the prospective buyers? Now they may never want to buy the house!”

He didn’t understand the problem. As a very honorable and honest person, he couldn’t hide the faults he knew were there. He could live with the fact that we rarely made a huge profit on those deals. He’d been honest about the house, because that’s how it should be done.

“If the Trail Doesn’t Match the Map, There’s Something Wrong with the Trail.”

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