

Mini Workshop What's Your Behavioral Style?

Which of the four behavioral styles best represents you? We'll do this by focusing on two areas -- how direct or indirect you are, and how open or guarded you are.

Indirect people tend to avoid taking bold risks or spontaneous actions. Taken to an extreme, it can be interpreted as indecisive. Indirect people also tend to be less confronting and demanding. They tend to move at a slower pace. For them, "sooner or later" is good enough.

Indirect people tend to consider the pros and cons, and attend to the details. They generally operate according to established formats and rules. You can count on them to show up on time. They tend to communicate by asking instead of telling and they're understated and reserved.

Direct people tend to be faster paced, more assertive, and more competitive. If carried to an extreme they can seem hasty, combative or insensitive to others' needs. They're much freer with their opinions -- and they're extroverted. You could safely say they're "action oriented." They're the ones who'll take the initiative to introduce themselves to others.

They prefer rapid decisions and can become impatient when things don't move fast enough or go their way. Checking for errors is something they'll delegate to others if they can. In fact, they often rush into so many new areas that their time seems to evaporate into thin air.

Direct people enjoy taking risks. They won't back down when they believe what they're saying. In fact, "intensity" could be their middle name. If they feel they need to bend an established rule or policy to accomplish something -- they probably will. Direct people tend to feel that if they throw enough against the wall, something has to stick.

Open people don't mind straying off the subject to discuss personal experiences. As long as it's in the ballpark, it will be acceptable to them. It's also all right with them to exaggerate details a bit. Their time perspective will more likely be organized around the needs of people first, and tasks second. By contrast, someone with more Guarded behavior usually places a higher priority on getting things done. To them, the task itself will be more important than who does it. And if you've got a dream -- or a vision -- or a new direction you want to take-- they're the ones who'll support you and catch that vision. They'll be able to see it even if you don't have any data to back it up.

If people who express more Open behavior seems like open books, then Guarded people tend to exhibit 'poker faces'. They like to keep their distance--- both physically and mentally. They place a high value on reality and facts.

Guarded people like structure, since they expect results within that structured environment. They can be counted on to base their decisions on evidence; stay focused on the issue at hand; and stick to the agenda. As more naturally independent workers, they need to control the conditions around their tasks. They're more disciplined about how other people use their time. You might say that Guarded people focus on thoughts or ideas.

When you combine the two scales, you arrive at four different behavioral styles.

If you chose yourself as both Direct and Open, I call your style the "Socializer." Individuals who chose Direct and Guarded behaviors are called Directors. If your type is Indirect and Guarded, you are a Thinker. Finally, if your description fits Indirect and Open behaviors, your style is called the Relater.

Directors are the ones who want to take control and do things their way. They're accomplishment oriented and often seem to have unlimited energy toward reaching their goals. They've got high ego strength. Inaction and hesitation often quickly erode their patience.

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Socializers' persuasive powers often get others even more excited about their ideas than they are themselves. They're the only style who can talk people into various situations...even if they don't have all the facts. Or any! Their key need is recognition. They need pats on the back and applause.

Relaters are the best team players. They like to keep things constant and 'as is'. They're relationship oriented, active listeners who often use their counseling skills to enhance their relationships. They hate conflict and feel extremely uncomfortable if anyone becomes angry with them.

Thinkers specialize in problem solving and precision. If you want something done right, give it to them. They'll typically finish a project virtually error-free--no checking required by others--because they need to be correct.