

## How Jesus adjusted his own Personality Style



Dr. Robert A. Rohm, president of Personality Insights, is teaching business leaders how to build better teams and have better relationships.



**“Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.” Romans 15:2**

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**PEOPLE ARE  
~~FUNNY!~~  
PREDICTABLE!**

In our first article, I explained the basic concept of personality styles: all of us have predictable patterns of behavior that are based on the way we are “wired”. Some of us are outgoing and fast-paced, while others are reserved and slower-paced. Some of us tend to be people-oriented, while others tend to be more task-oriented.

Together, these four tendencies create the “**DISC Model of Human Behavior**” which we can use to identify, predict and understand the behavior patterns of ourselves and others. (See model, left.)

People who are outgoing and task-oriented have a “**D**” type behavioral style. They exercise a lot of dominance in their approach to life, and they tend to be direct, driving and determined.

People who are outgoing and people-oriented have an “**I**” type behavioral style. They exercise influencing skills in life, tending to be inspiring, impulsive and impressionable.

People who have reserved and people-oriented traits have an “**S**” type behavioral style. They find satisfaction in a supportive role. Frequently, they are described as sweet, steady and shy.

Lastly, people who are reserved and task-oriented have a “**C**” type

behavioral style. They tend to be cautious in life: critical-thinking, correct and competent.

Our purpose in assigning these adjectives to people is not to “label” them or force them into a “box”. Rather, our desire is to understand the factors that motivate each individual to succeed in his professional life and personal relationships.

In our second article, we explained that no one is purely just a “**D**”, “**I**”, “**S**”, or “**C**”. Each of us has a distinct and measurable “blend” of all four traits, to a greater or lesser degree. Hardly anyone fits neatly into just one type, which means no one is “stuck” with the way he is “wired”. We can learn to grow and change in the ways we respond to people and situations. We can all demonstrate appropriate attitudes and take appropriate actions that honor God and provide a positive witness to others.

Understanding how to do this will take on added importance when we see how the Lord Jesus did this in His relationships. Let me provide you with some “food for thought”, so you can see that Jesus did not treat people as if He had cut all of them from the same “cookie cutter” pattern. Rather, He responded to each one in ways that “spoke their

language”, and we find that His actions were always appropriate to the occasion...

We can see Jesus as a “take-action ‘D’” when He drove the moneychangers from the Temple. We may be tempted to think He lost control of Himself when we read the accounts in the first three Gospels. But in John 2, we see that He “sat down and braided a whip” before going back into the Temple court. Evicting the moneychangers was not an emotional outburst; rather, it was strength under control. Demanding, dramatic, driving, dynamic action was required, and with that whip and a voice of command He said, “This is a house of prayer, and you have turned it into a den of thieves – get out!”

Again, this wasn’t His standard method of dealing with people or problems. However, Jesus was capable of “raising His ‘D’” when issues required a bold, firm stand.

In Luke 9:10-17, you can see Him in front of 5,000 men, plus women and children. He welcomed crowds enthusiastically most of the time and was sensitive to their needs. He had spent much time with them, being effectively inspiring, influencing, interactive and interesting. His ability to “raise His ‘I’” is evidenced here: When He saw the hungry people and that all His disciples could “scrounge up” were a few loaves of bread and even fewer small, smoked fish, He thought, “Everybody sit down – this is My treat! We can talk and eat!”

One of my team member’s wives commented, “All the ‘I’s I have ever met are so flamboyant in front of a crowd. I just can’t imagine Jesus being out of control as an ‘I.’” What great insight! His behavior in this setting demonstrated controlled “I” traits. Exhibiting these characteris-

tics in balance demonstrates a Spirit-controlled personality!

Can you see Jesus as an “S” when He washed His disciples feet – and again, when He welcomed the little children? The disciples had

we didn’t believe...” So, they came back to Jesus and said, “We cannot answer that question.” Jesus replied, “Then I cannot answer the question that you have asked me.” And the Bible says “from that day forward,

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pushed them aside to make room for more important adults. They didn’t want the Master troubled by incessant small talk from dirty little faces with dirty little hands. But what drew the children to Him was His steady, stable, secure, servant’s heart. He took them in His arms and blessed them. He knew “the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”, and He conformed His personality to the situation. The children felt He was approachable – and they came to sit on His lap.

In Luke 20, I love seeing Jesus’ “personality insights” in dealing with the scribes and Pharisees. They asked Him, “Where do you get your authority to do these things?” “C” type people love questions! So, Jesus turned the tables on them: “Before I answer, let me ask you a question: Where did John (the Baptist) get his authority?” The men huddled together, wondering how to answer Him. “If we say John spoke as a man, the crowd will stone us to death... But if we say his authority came from God, Jesus will ask why

no one asked Him any more questions.”

Jesus displayed His competent, consistent, critical-thinking skills in dealing with these calculating, controlling conformists. You see, Jesus knew how to deal with people!

Personally, my favorite demonstration of how Jesus “adjusted” His behavioral or personality style is found in John 11. His close friend Lazarus had died and Jesus went to call on the family. Before He reached the house, Lazarus’ sister Martha met Him on the road, and said, “Master, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Jesus replied, “Martha, your brother will live again!” She said, “I know he will live again at the resurrection on the last day.” Then Jesus told her, “I am the Resurrection. He who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Do you believe this, Martha?” And Martha responded, “I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

Several verses later, we see that

the other sister, Mary, was waiting inside the house when Jesus entered. She said to Him: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She spoke exactly the same words as Martha had previously. But in response, Scripture tells us, “Jesus wept.”

When Martha came to Jesus, He gave her explanations. When Mary came to Him, He gave her tears – why? I was praying about this and the Lord showed me clues about these two women – in the account of Jesus’ visit to their home on another occasion, we can see that Martha and Mary had two very different personality styles (John 12 and Luke 10).

I saw that He responded differently to them concerning the death of their brother because He saw that they had different needs! Martha

(task-oriented) came to Jesus with a broken mind, so He gave her quality answers. Mary (people-oriented) came to Jesus with a broken heart, and so, He gave her compassion.

If, like Jesus, we can adjust the way we relate to people, it will make all the difference in the world!

Swiss physician and psychologist Paul Tournier once wrote, “He who feels understood feels loved. And he who feels loved, feels understood.” This is how I see Jesus responding to Mary and Martha – and to others, like the two men on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-32. He spoke to their needs and concerns according to their styles, and they responded: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us...?”

Romans 15:2 (NIV) tells us, “Each of us should please his

neighbor for his good, to build him up.” Hebrews 10:24 (NIV) says, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on to love and good deeds.”

In our next article, we will look at four Apostles, and how Jesus dealt with them according to their strengths and struggles – and how you can improve your business and personal relationships the same way! ■

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