

DOMINANCE

PRIORITIES

Displaying drive, taking action, challenging self and others

MOTIVATED BY

Power and authority, competition, winning, success

FEARS

Loss of control, being taken advantage of, vulnerability

YOU WILL NOTICE

Self-confidence, directness, forcefulness, risk-taking

LIMITATIONS

Lack of concern for others, impatience, insensitivity

ACTIVE
FAST - PACED
ASSERTIVE
DYNAMIC
BOLD

INFLUENCE

PRIORITIES

Providing encouragement, taking action, fostering collaboration

MOTIVATED BY

Social recognition, group activities, friendly relationships

FEARS

Social rejection, disapproval, loss of influence, being ignored

YOU WILL NOTICE

Charm, enthusiasm, sociability, optimism, talkativeness

LIMITATIONS

Impulsiveness, disorganisation, lack of follow-through

QUESTIONING
LOGIC-FOCUSED
OBJECTIVE
SCEPTICAL
CHALLENGING

ACCEPTING
PEOPLE-FOCUSED
EMPATHISING
RECEPTIVE
AGREEABLE

D I
C S

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

PRIORITIES

Ensuring objectivity, achieving reliability, challenging assumptions

MOTIVATED BY

Opportunities to use expertise or gain knowledge, attention to quality

FEARS

Criticism, slipshod methods, being wrong

YOU WILL NOTICE

Precision, analysis, scepticism, reserve, quiet

LIMITATIONS

Overly critical, tendency to overanalyse, isolates self

THOUGHTFUL
MODERATE-PACED
CALM
METHODICAL
CAREFUL

STEADINESS

PRIORITIES

Giving support, achieving reliability, enjoying collaboration

MOTIVATED BY

Stable environments, sincere appreciation, co-operation, opportunities to help

FEARS

Loss of stability, change, loss of harmony, offending others

YOU WILL NOTICE

Patience, team player, calm approach, good listener, humility

LIMITATIONS

Overly accommodating, tendency to avoid change, indecisiveness

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE DISC BEHAVIOURAL STYLES

DOMINANCE: HIGH NEED FOR CONTROL/LOW NEED FOR AFFILIATION

You will recognise people who are high in Dominance by their high self- confidence, assertiveness, goal orientation, competitiveness, and high sense of urgency. This is not to say other styles aren't competitive, just that people high in the D dimension tend to show their competitiveness outwardly, to the extent of being verbally competitive, and enjoying getting into debates or arguments.

ENVIRONMENT - People high in Dominance prefer fast-paced, busy, formal, task-oriented environments where they can get things done without the distraction of small talk or socializing.

SECURE - People high in the Dominance dimension feel secure when they are in control and, of course, they don't feel secure when someone else is in control. Being in control of their time is particularly important and, as a result, they tend to work on a tight schedule. Everything is planned!

NEEDS - The outstanding need for people high in Dominance is achievement. They're more task-oriented. They set goals, and then achieve them. If they play a sport, they compete to win. What do they do in their leisure time on weekends? Set goals and achieve them. What do they do on vacation? They achieve things! Relaxation for this style is achieving things, even in their leisure time. It may appear to others that their real motivation is to have power and control, but the underlying reason for that is that they believe more power and control will help them achieve more.

PROGRESS - People high in Dominance measure their progress by the results they achieve. They seek acknowledgement of their achievements in tangible terms (outcomes, the bottom line, etc.), not by the praise or credit they get from other people. Once they see results, it's "been there, done that" and on to the next project. This style is easily frustrated, and may appear to be a troublemaker if they cannot see the results of their own efforts. They are often resistant to participating in teams for this reason. It is important for this style to be able to measure the results of what they do. If they can't see results from their own efforts, they will turn their attention to projects where they can, even if that is outside the workplace.

MAJOR FEARS - Although their outstanding need is for achievement, a person high in Dominance does not fear failure: their major fear is the loss of control. As risk- takers, they don't see mistakes as failures; mistakes are not that big of a deal. They learn from their mistakes and set another goal. However, if they're not in control or others are trying to take advantage of them, their ability to achieve their goals is threatened. They may see those in control as the enemy, trying to undermine their achievements. This is a primary reason why many managers over-control or micro-manage others. They believe that if they don't control everything and are not watching people all the time, they be will be taken advantage of and they won't get results.

IRRITATED BY - People high in Dominance are irritated by inefficiency, indecisiveness, and slowness. Who would these people see as being most inefficient, indecisive, and slow? A good first guess would be those people high on Steadiness—the style directly opposite the D. It makes sense because of their differences in styles, but, in reality, people high in Dominance may see anyone else who is not high in Dominance as inefficient, indecisive, and slow. If this describes you, the reason these things irritate you is because of your outstanding need for achievement, and your natural sense of urgency. You want results quickly! When you perceive others as inefficient, indecisive, or slow, at an unconscious level you believe these behaviours will limit your ability to achieve results. The fear of losing control kicks in, and you react. The key to dealing with these situations more appropriately is to first recognize them when they arise as teachable moments. It is an opportunity for you to learn to be more effective. Second, you need to think about why this person behaves the way they do. The DISC model puts you in a better position to understand why people are behaving the way they are, and you will be able to respond more appropriately.

DECISION MAKING - People high in the Dominance dimension tend to make quick decisions because of their high sense of urgency. They are results-oriented, so if there is a decision to be made, they will quickly sum up the facts, decide, and act. As a result, some of their decisions don't work out well for them because they make mistakes! But they see these mistakes as experiments rather than anything fatal. OK, so that didn't work, let's try something else! It is not necessarily reckless, but they are, by nature, risk-takers and are action-oriented. They learn from their mistakes and make another Decision—quickly.

LIMITATIONS - The major limitation for people who are high in Dominance is impatience. In fact, they view their impatience as a strength. They have a high sense of urgency, make quick decisions, and they get things done. However, because of their impatience, they tend not to listen to what others have to say, especially others whom they see as inefficient, indecisive, and slow. Because of their strengths in taking charge, high self-confidence, and results-orientation, it is not hard to see how they could come to the conclusion that they are superior to others, and therefore be somewhat dismissive of others' ideas. This can be counterproductive in the long term as people stop giving them ideas and information that would help them achieve even greater success. They can come across as arrogant and lacking humility, further reinforcing others' belief that it's futile talking to them because they just won't listen.

ADAPT BEHAVIOURS - People high in the Dominance dimension must learn humility if they are going to overcome their limitation of impatience. Part of the reason people with this style often find themselves in leadership positions is that they like to take charge, they are quick decision-makers, and have high self-confidence. Therefore, they are good at achieving results. One of the reasons they tend not to listen to other people is that they don't think their input will be worthwhile. Seeing oneself as superior to others means judging others as inferior or lacking acceptance of them. This erodes trust and extinguishes any desire for others to work with this person. The final result is diminished team performance. Humility means recognizing that

different equals different. Different does not equal better or worse: just different. All people have strengths and weaknesses, and everyone has a different perspective from my own, therefore I benefit from listening to other people's input. That is the behaviour that the Dominance dimension needs to learn: to actually listen. This requires patience and it lets the other person know their input is worthwhile.

INFLUENCE: HIGH NEED FOR CONTROL/HIGH NEED FOR AFFILIATION

People high in the Influence dimension can be identified as talkative; filled with enthusiasm, optimism, energy; and as having vivid imaginations. They have many ideas and feel a need to share those ideas with as many people as possible in order to garner support. They neither hide nor spare their feelings and tend to be very expressive with their tone of voice, their facial expressions, and in their mannerisms.

ENVIRONMENT – People high on the Influence dimension of DISC prefer a fast-paced work environment (like those high on D), however, they also expect it to be stimulating, personal, and friendly, where there are many opportunities for interaction with others.

SECURITY - Security for people high in the Influence dimension is created when there is a high level of flexibility: when they don't feel boxed in, and where there is an opportunity for variety. As a result, they tend to resist working to a fixed schedule, so time management can be quite a challenge for them. The key is to schedule responding time in their day, in addition to the tasks that must be done. They are going to respond to people spontaneously, so why not allow for it?

NEEDS - People high in the Influence dimension have an outstanding need for social recognition, to be highly visible, respected, and well-regarded by others. Their high need for both control and affiliation drive them to be in leadership roles, but with a focus on gaining the support of others rather than controlling them. They have a need to use their ideas to influence people and enjoy the respect they get from others as a result.

PROGRESS - Because of their need for recognition, the Influencing style measures their progress by the amount of praise or applause they get. Getting an email that they have done a great job is nice, but for this style, being told in front of the whole team is significantly more inspiring. In the work environment, this style understands that they don't get much recognition unless they achieve something, so they are usually very focused on achieving results as well. But unlike those high in Dominance, once they achieve the goal they will be looking for the applause or praise. If it doesn't come, they feel unappreciated. If they fail to get the credit they deserve, the fire within them will be extinguished.

MAJOR FEARS - For the Influence dimension, the primary fear is the loss of influence. Their need for recognition can only be met when they have influence. This fear can result in someone who is strong in the "I" dimension wanting to lead all the time because they feel as soon as they stop being the leader, their influence will cease. Being ignored or not listening to their ideas will also stimulate this fear.

IRRITATED BY - People high in the Influence dimension are irritated by routine and formality. They love variety and like to do things differently. They'll take a different route on the way to work, or catch a different train just for a change. They'll experiment with doing their work differently because they loathe boredom and tediousness. Because this style tends to be a casual, informal kind of person, formal protocol like filling out unnecessary paperwork to get approval for something irritates them. They prefer to deal with people on a first name basis. They unconsciously see formality as limiting their freedom and spontaneity—as unnecessary rules others have created to control them. It is not uncommon to see people high in Influence resent routine, even rebel against it and do their own thing. If this describes you, you need to learn to recognize the situations when you do tend to resent or resist, and choose the self-directed course of action. This means you need to agree to do it, or disagree, if that is appropriate. If you disagree, you need to let others involved know what you are doing, and the reason why you don't agree. Then you need to be prepared to accept the consequences of your decision.

DECISION MAKING - People strong in the Influence dimension are also fast-paced, but they tend to trust their feelings and intuition more, so their decisions are more spontaneous. They can be compulsive shoppers when they see something and their gut feeling says: I have to have it. Although it is feeling that drives their decisions, they are very good at retroactively justifying that decision with logic. Like those who are high in Dominance, they are less concerned with making a wrong decision. It felt right at the time and if it didn't work out, they can always make another decision.

LIMITATIONS - The major limitation of the Influence dimension is a lack of follow-through. Again, we can best understand this limitation by looking at their strengths of enthusiasm, optimism, and energy. If you have these strengths, you will be good at getting things started. If you want to get a project moving, you need someone with enthusiasm, optimism, and energy from the outset. But, when the project gets into maintenance mode, you need strengths of persistence, patience, and attention to detail to follow through and finish the project. Their strengths don't apply at that stage of the project, so what they typically do is lose interest and start another project. After all, that's what they are good at. Another challenge for people high in the "I" dimension is their tendency to over-commit themselves, and run out of time to do everything. Again, it is their strengths that lead to them over-committing. They just have so much enthusiasm and energy, thinking of course I can do it. Unfortunately, far too often they fall short of what they committed to do.

ADAPT BEHAVIOURS - The attitude the Influence dimension needs to learn to overcome their lack of follow-through is self-discipline. Because they get carried away with their enthusiasm, optimism, and energy, they can lose touch with reality. When they are involved in an interesting conversation or when they are doing something about which they are passionate, they can be oblivious of the time. The behaviour they need to learn is to stop and think, perhaps count to ten, before making a commitment to do something or leaving a task to go on to another one. Because they are so spontaneous, they need to ask themselves: "What are the consequences of doing this?" before they do it! I've found that setting alarms works well for those high in the "I" dimension to

remind them of their commitments—but set these alarms to allow enough time for preparation or unforeseen challenges. For example, because of their optimism, people with this style expect that all the traffic lights will be green on their way to a meeting. That may happen one in a hundred times, so allow for some red lights. If a meeting starts at 10:00 a.m. and it takes you five minutes to get there, then start preparing for what you need to take to the meeting at 9:30, not at 9:55 while you are walking to the meeting. In fact, you better leave for the meeting at 9:45 because you are sure to run into someone you know on the way. You'll just have to stop for a chat! Every computer and personal organizer has an alarm system. Learn to use it.

STEADINESS: LOW NEED FOR CONTROL/HIGH NEED FOR AFFILIATION

You'll notice calmness and patience with people high in the Steadiness dimension. They are cooperative and friendly, although because they are more subdued, their friendliness is more low-key than the effervescence of the "I" dimension. You may need to pay closer attention to their mannerisms to see their friendliness, until you get to know them. Persistence is another one of their strengths.

ENVIRONMENT - People high in Steadiness prefer a slower-paced environment that is team-oriented and friendly. They want to be busy, but without the pressure and sense of urgency those high on Dominance tend to create. Harmony is also important to them.

SECURE - The Steadiness style feels secure when they're in close relationships. They may be slow to make a friend, but, once they have, they will be loyal to that friendship. Since it does take time to build close relationships, it is important to invest that time with new people on your team who are strong in this dimension.

NEEDS - The outstanding need for the Steadiness dimension is acceptance. They satisfy this need for acceptance by giving support to others. They often unselfishly do things for others without being asked, expecting nothing in return. Stability is also an important need for people high on Steadiness, especially when it comes to relationships.

PROGRESS - People high in Steadiness are a low key, more reserved "people-person" than the Influence dimension so their feedback needs to be low-key. They seek appreciation, not applause, and may feel embarrassed if your feedback is too over-the-top in praise of them. People high on the S dimension do not give help and support because they are consciously thinking about the appreciation they'll get. They sincerely care about people, and want to be helpful. Their fire is stoked when they get genuine, sincere, and appropriate appreciation, but you have to really mean what you say.

MAJOR FEARS - People high on the Steadiness dimension most fear disappointing others. Because of their outstanding need for acceptance, they are concerned about how other people feel about them. Because they genuinely care about people, they fear they will in some way let others down or hurt their feelings. This fear can paralyze a manager. If they base their decisions on consensus because they want everyone to be happy, but only some team members agree on what that decision should be, then they're stuck. Because of this fear, this style can have difficulty giving straight answers to questions because they don't want to disappoint anyone. You need to take these things into consideration when you have people high in Steadiness on your team. Pushing them to make quicker decisions, or asking them to just get to the point, increases their fear, and could result in them being even more indirect and, worse still, less engaged.

IRRITATED BY - The Steadiness dimension is irritated by insensitivity and impatience. Because they care for and are focused on supporting others, they are most irritated by people who are insensitive toward and impatient with people. Patience is among the S dimension's strengths, so they find it troubling to understand how anyone can be so unaware of others' feelings. If this description is you, be careful you don't become guilty of the very things you find irritating in others, insensitivity and impatience. Remember, they don't see the world or the people in it through the same filters you do. Be sensitive to their need to achieve results and patient with them in helping them understand what your needs are. If you judge them as being not OK, you can be sure their insensitivity and impatience towards you will increase.

DECISION MAKING - The Steadiness dimension, like the "I" dimension, relies a lot on feelings in making decisions, but in their case, it is more to do with having empathy for others who may be affected by their decision. They are considerate decision-makers and, as a result, they take more time to make decisions. They need input from others to consider how the decision might impact them. This is a good approach until they get conflicting input. There comes a time when the right decision must be made regardless of how everyone feels about it.

LIMITATIONS - The Steadiness dimension's major limitation is to be overly modest. Their strengths of persistence, patience, and procedure-orientation make them really good at supporting others in achieving their goals. They can be so focused on other people's goals that they see their own strengths as having less value than the strengths of others. They also tend to be concerned about how others perceive them because of their outstanding need for acceptance. This can lead to them being very self-conscious, even self-effacing, which makes accepting compliments difficult.

ADAPT BEHAVIOURS - People high in the Steadiness dimension need to learn the attitude of self-determination: to be determined to take care of their own needs and develop a stronger belief in themselves. Behavioural style is not an indication of a person's worth. Everyone, regardless of their behavioural style has strengths and limitations. People who are strong in the Steadiness dimension need to pay even more attention to acknowledging their strengths, and recognize that they have as much to contribute to the organization as anyone else does. Their strengths in getting things done, building and maintaining relationships, and increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty are indispensable to any organization. These strengths are often not valued as much by some people, but that does not mean they are not equal in value to the strengths of others. The behaviour people who are high in the S dimension must learn is to set and achieve their own goals. They can be so focused on meeting their need for acceptance by helping others to achieve goals that they neglect to establish goals for themselves. Their goal becomes helping others, and unfortunately, some people will take advantage of that.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS: LOW NEED FOR CONTROL/LOW NEED FOR AFFILIATION

What you may notice first about people high in the Conscientiousness dimension is their concern for accuracy and high standards. They have an analytical mind, an eye for detail, and typically enjoy solving problems. They usually keep their feelings to themselves, which can make it more difficult to get to know them. They are more cautious in answering questions and communicating information because they need to think through what they say and make sure it is accurate before they say it.

ENVIRONMENT - The Conscientiousness style prefers a structured, organized, functional work environment. They want a quiet, formal workplace, where there are no distractions, allowing them to focus on achieving their high standards of quality and accuracy.

SECURE - People high in the "C" dimension need preparation to feel secure. They can't ensure accuracy and high standards without time to prepare, especially when required to do a formal presentation. They need to have enough time to make sure everything will go perfectly.

NEEDS - People high in Conscientiousness have an outstanding need for correctness. Especially important to them are the high standards they must achieve when they take sole responsibility for a task. People high in this dimension also have a strong need for privacy. They need to be able to concentrate on their project, so don't invade their personal space.

PROGRESS - The Conscientiousness dimension measures their progress by being right. Not only getting things right, but also doing the right thing. They not only want to meet their high standards for quality and accuracy, they also want to make sure they are playing by the rules. They want to know what the policies and procedures are so they can stick to them. Like those who are high in Dominance, the feedback this style looks for comes from the task itself. The Influence and Steadiness dimensions, by contrast, look for feedback from other people, due to their high need for affiliation.

MAJOR FEARS - The greatest fear for the Conscientiousness dimension is to be criticized for what they do. They put so much effort into doing the task right the first time. They do all the research and analysis thoroughly because they need to be right. Yes, they also fear making mistakes, but to be criticized for it is, to them, the worst thing that could happen. If this is your style as a team member, beware of the temptation to believe that you are always right. You may have the evidence to prove that you are right, but so did the church leaders have evidence that the sun revolved around the earth. There is more than one way to do things. Experiment with new solutions to improve performance or customer satisfaction, knowing that in the process of experimenting you may make mistakes. But don't let your fear of making mistakes kill creativity and innovation.

IRRITATED BY – People high in Conscientiousness are irritated by surprises and unpredictability. Remember the saying: I can take good news, I can take bad news, but I cannot take surprises. You cannot predict accurate results or produce high quality output when you are uncertain about your facts or when people are not predictable. Being surprised by new information, especially after the completion of work, is extremely irritating to this style. If this describes you, remind yourself when you start to get irritated that some people really thrive on a lack of structure and predictability and don't share your core needs. Striving for total certainty and predictability could kill innovation and bog people down in a mire of rules, policies, and procedures that will have customers and maybe employees leaving in droves. Don't let a lack of certainty or predictability hijack your emotions or behaviour. When you feel yourself getting anxious, ask yourself: Do I really have to be certain in this situation? If you do, choose the appropriate course of action, and explain to others why you feel it is essential. If you don't have to be, then learn to let it go!

DECISION MAKING - Like the Dominance dimension, those high in Conscientiousness base their decisions on facts and logic, but they are more deliberate than quick in their decision-making style. They do their research, gather and analyse information, and deliberate over it so they can come to the right decision. This style is much more concerned about making mistakes because of their outstanding need for correctness, so they tend to put off making a decision until they are certain it is right. This can lead to paralysis by analysis and, in some cases, the decision not being made. People with this style must learn to work through the fear of making mistakes when making decisions.

LIMITATIONS - Because they have such high standards, the Conscientiousness dimension's major limitation is to be overly critical of themselves. They can also be highly critical of others. However, it is their own self-criticism and self-doubt that limits them from performing at their best. They expect perfection in everything they do and their eye is well tuned to notice flaws. When they critique what they have done, they tend to look for what is wrong, not what is right. They tend to critique other people's work the same way. If you have ever worked for a manager who was strong in Conscientiousness or had a parent with this style, you know what I am talking about. You may have scored 97 percent on the test, but they will be focused on the 3 percent you got wrong. Focusing on the negative produces negative feelings. Criticism, even if it is called constructive criticism, is still criticism that results in negative feelings.

ADAPT BEHAVIOURS - The attitude people high in the Conscientiousness dimension need to learn is self-acceptance. Their strengths in accuracy, attention to detail and producing high quality are needed in every organization, but when these strengths are taken to extreme, this style becomes overly critical. Often, even though they have done a great job, they tear it down because it isn't quite perfect. One example would be of an artist tearing up a canvas—that someone would quite happily have bought and put on the wall—just because there were a couple of imperfect brush strokes. Once people with this style have learned to be more accepting of themselves, they will be more accepting of other people. The behaviour this style must learn is to experiment

with taking risks. Their needs for certainty and predictability limit them from achieving their true potential. If this is you, then give yourself permission to make a mistake. Try something different in an area of your work where you can recover from a mistake. If it doesn't work out, learn from it, and move on. Don't start beating yourself up!

THIS TEXT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK DEMYSTIFYING DISC BY KEITH AYERS