

How to Deal With Annoying People

What to Do When You Can't Avoid Them

**by
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and
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The Mini Media Version

**If you would like to receive the full version of the
book, we can mail one out to you.**

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Everybody Has Annoying People Problems

***Conflict is normal in human relationships.
It arises because we do not understand
the other person's perspective, vision,
decisions, or behaviors.***

"I am so sick of Sue coming in late! She always has some lame excuse." Kelly was venting to Pat over a cup of coffee.

"What's even worse," Pat responded, "is that her boss is too lazy and apathetic to do anything about it."

"Yeah, I noticed!" Kelly jumped in and added some more fuel to the fire. "He's been grating on my nerves, too. He acts like he has a phobia when it comes to making decisions."

"No wonder nothing gets done right around here!" Pat was getting fired up, too.

"Well, when you and I rule the world, things are going to change!" Kelly lifted her coffee cup in a gesture of triumph as she clanged it against Pat's cup. They both laughed as they made their way back to their seats.

I was speaking at a corporate training session when I over-

heard that conversation during a break. It's not an uncommon exchange in the workplace, because everyone has annoying people problems.

When was the last time someone annoyed you? Most likely within the last hour! Different things annoy different people, but everyone gets annoyed. Someone moves too slowly or too quickly, someone is too impatient or too lenient, someone is too loud or too shy ... the list goes on and on.

The differences that exist between individuals are usually the basis for misunderstanding, disagreement, and conflict. All too often, we expect others to think and respond as we do. We do not give consideration to their specific social style or personality. If we make quick decisions and can juggle five things at once, we expect them to do the same. If we are prompt and always on time, we assume that others will also be on time. If we are patient and thoughtful, we become offended by someone who is impatient and less sensitive.

The areas of potential conflict are endless. Until we learn the social styles of others, as well as our own, we will remain in a cycle of frustration, misunderstanding, and conflict.

It is impossible to live without conflict. Getting along with others takes time and effort. The trail of broken relationships and continual conflict lead to frustration and misunderstandings in regard to behavior. There is good news. There are practical tools available to assist you in your efforts to get along with others. This book will equip you with some of the following important tools:

- A program for understanding your own social behavior and the social behavior of others
- A means for understanding how you perceive others and how they perceive you
- Tools for creating and improving work and personal relationships
- Techniques for reducing tension and conflict
- Suggested tips for improving your communication skills

Annoying People

- Help for increasing your tolerance for those who are different from you
- Tools for resolving conflict once it arises

You will never be able to completely avoid conflict when you deal with other people. You can, however, discover why others annoy you and why you annoy them. That is the first step to reducing potential conflict in your life and working your way toward a more peaceful existence.

As you make your way through this book, you will discover that there are four basic social styles that constitute “Annoying People.” Consequently, you will be one of them! As you discover your own style, you will discover the differences and commonalities you share with some of the other styles. This process will pave the way to conflict prevention.

2

What Annoys Us About Others

***Nine-tenths of the serious
controversies which arise in life result
from misunderstanding.***

—Louis Dembiz Brandels

“Randy just rolls over everyone and could care less what they think about it.” John was a fire captain venting his frustrations in a conflict-prevention-and-resolution training class.

“Now that he’s a battalion chief, he thinks he doesn’t have to be nice to anyone,” another captain joined in.

“He just blurts out whatever comes to mind, and usually at inappropriate times—it’s just very annoying!” John wasn’t finished venting.

Another captain in the class came to Randy’s defense. “Hey, come on. He’s just trying to do his job. That’s just how he is.”

Someone in the back of the class made a long kissing sound with his hand to his mouth and proceeded to call Randy’s defender a “kiss-up.” “You’re as annoying as he is!” Everyone began to laugh as I shook my head and got them back on track.

First thing Monday morning, Carl was called into the general manager's office. "Carl, I understand that there are some problems in your department," Mr. Martin began.

"What do you mean, sir?" Carl inquired.

"I hear from the other employees that you are hard to work for. They say that when you come around, you never say anything positive. You just seem to give orders in a matter-of-fact, non-caring way. They feel like you are treating them like machines instead of people."

Carl seemed to be shocked by Mr. Martin's comments. Carl had recently been appointed head of the production department, replacing Joe Swift. Joe was a disorganized, back-slapping kind of leader. He spent most of his time—and the employee's time—just talking. Production was low under Joe's leadership, and Carl was determined to change the department's image. He wanted the company to get a full day's work from every employee. Carl feared that if he got too close to his fellow workers he would end up like Joe. So he determined to maintain a businesslike posture. Carl wanted to do his best. He wanted the manager to be proud of him. Now he was being called on the carpet for trying to do a good job. He was confused, disappointed, and angry at the turn of events.

Misunderstanding the Real You

Like Randy and Carl, each of us has been misunderstood. We have all said or done something—with pure motives and good intentions—which was misinterpreted. We become hurt when others do not understand or accept our comments and actions as we intended them. Misunderstandings between people are one of the main reasons we have trouble getting along with the annoying people in our lives. Like the scenario with Randy and Carl, others have annoyed us in much of the same way.

These common experiences lead us to a question: Which is more important in social interaction and interpersonal relationships—the actual behavior or the motivation behind the behavior? Many would say that the motive and intent are more important because the motive causes the behavior. Others say

that actions are more important—contending that no one sees another’s motives. No one knows what another person’s true intent is—we can only really observe what others say and do.

I tend to agree with the latter position. This is not to say that motives for actions are not important—they are. The problem is that we can only guess another person’s motives. Sometimes we guess correctly, but most of the time we don’t.

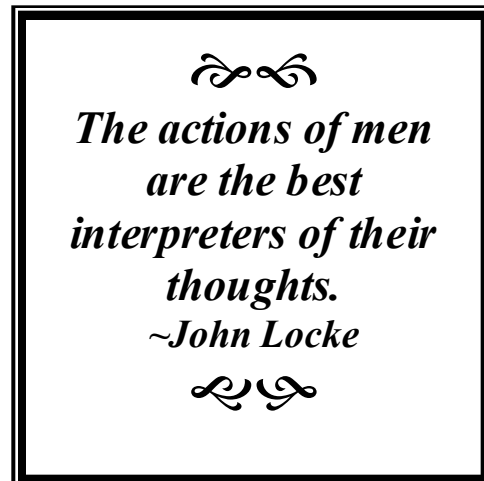
Who, then, is the real you? Is the real you made up of motives and intentions or actions and behaviors? In the eyes of others, the real you is made up solely of what you say and do. No matter how important your motives are, people read you by what they see and hear, not by what you want them to see and hear. That’s why this book focuses on our behavior—not our motives—and how our behavior affects others.

The problem of interpersonal conflict is one of viewpoint. Our actions are very logical and rational to *us*. They make perfect sense in our mind. Since we know the motivation for our behavior (sometimes), we falsely assume that others also know the reasons behind our actions. We seem to forget that others are not always

aware of our intentions—as plain as those intentions may seem to us. Others will often view our actions quite differently than we do because they cannot see our motives. In the minds of others, your behavior—positive or negative—equals the real you. A Business associate shared a story with me that revealed the dangers of interpreting the motives of others:

Back in the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. He hesitated for a moment and then looked up at her and asked his question, "How much is an ice cream sundae?"

"Fifty cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his



hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it.

"How much is a dish of just plain ice cream?" he inquired. Some people were now waiting for a table and the waitress was becoming impatient. She assumed he was just being an annoying ten-year-old.

"Thirty-five cents," she said abruptly. The little boy again counted the coins.

"I'll have the plain ice cream," he said.

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table, and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier, and departed. When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard at what she saw. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies—her tip.

It is not at all uncommon for us to assume the motives behind the behavior of others. If we took the time to really find out what those motives were, we would have less misunderstanding to deal with. If we bypassed many of our assumptions altogether, we would have less conflict to overcome.

We all tend to listen to others and watch their behavior half-heartedly. We move quickly from a casual observation of their behavior to a subjective interpretation and judgment. Many times these hasty judgments can result in emotional turmoil and relationship conflicts.

A man and his four-year-old son boarded a train, and the man seated himself next to the window as the train pulled out of the station. As the man stared quietly out the window, his son became restless. The boy began to wander up and down the aisle. Soon he was climbing on the empty seats, yelling and singing loudly, bothering the other passengers. All the while, his father sat motionless, staring out the window.

An elderly woman had been observing all of this and was fuming inside. *This man probably never disciplines his son! He doesn't even care if he runs wild. I can't believe he's just sitting there daydreaming while his son terrorizes the rest of us.* She could not tolerate the annoyance any longer. She got up from

her seat and approached the man. Her angry words stirred him from his deep thought.

“Sir, you should be ashamed of yourself,” she began indignantly. “Your son is running loose on this train and bothering everyone. You should control him better.”

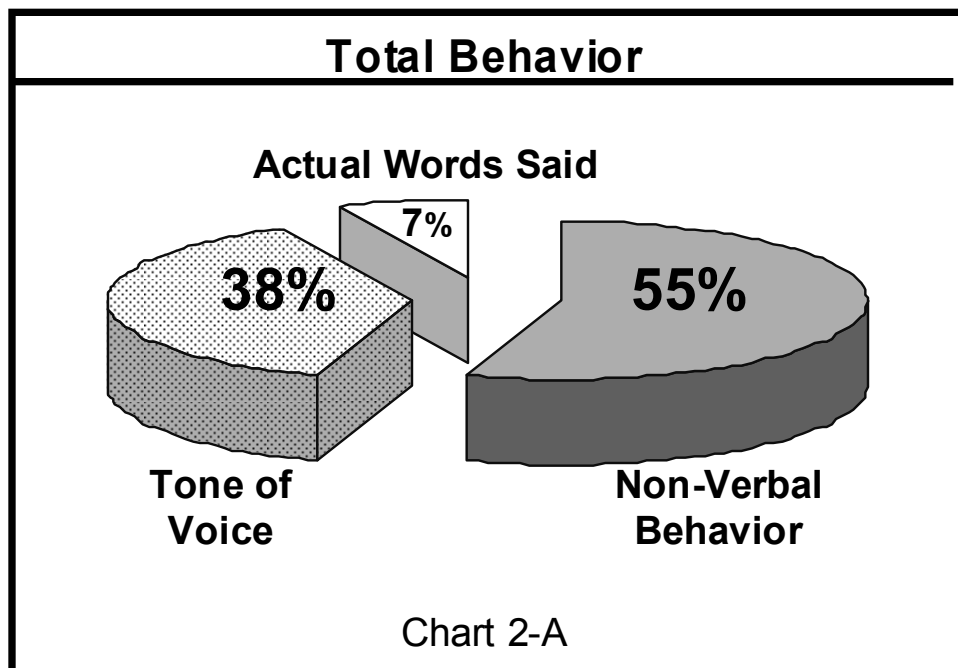
“I’m sorry, I’ll go get him,” the man replied. “I wasn’t paying attention to him. I was thinking about my wife. She died yesterday and we are bringing her body home on the train.”

No doubt the woman felt foolish and embarrassed when she discovered that her hasty judgment of the man’s motives was wrong. Subjective labeling and judgment leads to unnecessary conflict and emotional turmoil. Learning to respond objectively to behavior will pave the way to cohesive relationships.

The more we become aware of the behavior of others and ourselves, the more we will be able to control our responses. Learning to control our responses and reactions in our work and personal relationships will reduce tension and keep us from annoying each other so much.

Behavior Speaks Louder than Words

Since we are going to focus on behavior, it might be helpful to explain the term. Behavior includes what we say, how we say it, and all our accompanying actions. Of these three elements of behavior, the most powerful communicator is nonverbal behavior—our actions (55%). This is commonly called body language. It includes facial expressions, arm and body movement, and body position. Next in line, is tone of voice (38%). This involves how we say things. And the least powerful element is our spoken message—the actual words (7%). Notice how the Total Behavior diagram in Chart 2-A illustrates the proportional breakdown.



It is important to learn to listen to what people say, but also to listen to tonal inflection. Where the speaker places his/her emphasis, makes all the difference in the world. For example, take the phrase, "I love you."

- ***I*** love you. Separating myself from all others.
- I ***love*** you. I love you as compared to simply liking you.
- I love ***you***. Singling you out from everyone else.
- I love ***you?*** Now the tonal inflection goes up at the end of the sentence and forms a question... it says that it is not possible to love you.

Another example of tonal inflection would be in the following sentence: "Bill was caught lying to his supervisor."

- ***Bill*** It was Bill, not someone else.
- ***Was*** Indicates that the event was in the past when emphasized.
- ***Caught*** Lets you know he was actually caught and not suspected.

- ***Lying*** This suggests that this was not Bill's normal behavior when emphasized.
- ***His*** Emphasis is on Bill's supervisor versus another supervisor.
- ***Supervisor*** Emphasizes that Bill had the nerve to lie to his *supervisor*, and not just anyone.

If we want to learn to get along with the annoying people in our life, we must become more aware of how people act, rather than what they say or how they say it. Learning how others behave will help us clearly identify our own behavior. We hope this knowledge will help us become more sensitive and caring toward others. Furthermore, becoming aware of how others perceive us will motivate us to change negative behaviors into positive ones. Changing behavior will help us build healthy relationships with our family, friends, and fellow workers.

A Matter of Perspective

Did you hear about the four professors who went on a jungle safari? They got lost. They had no idea where they were or how to return to the campsite. You might think that four learned men could solve such a problem. But these four men could not, because they were blind.

The professors were holding hands and slowly walking along when they bumped into something. The four men had just found an old docile elephant leisurely munching on some grass. The first professor reached out his hands and grabbed the elephant's tail. "It feels like some kind of bush," he announced.

The second man bumped his nose on the elephant's side. "It feels like a wall to me," he said.

The third professor wrapped his arms around the elephant's front leg. "No, I think you're both wrong," he argued. "It must be a tree trunk."

The last man groped in the air and his hands touched the elephant's trunk, which quickly encircled the professor's arm. "Egads!" he cried, "I've grabbed a snake!"

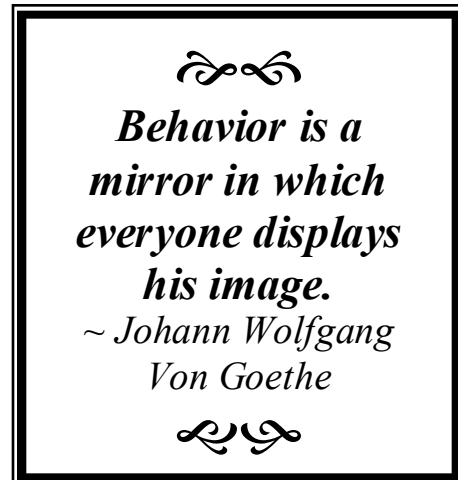
When trying to understand people, we always run the risk of misunderstanding them. This is because, like the four professors, we each have a limited personal vantage point. We assess people from our narrow perspective and hastily slap labels on them. They can be the labels of personality, culture, religion, vocation, or race. But like the blind professors, our labels only describe partial truths about people, representing our clouded viewpoints. Our misunderstanding of others, when we mislabel them, is based on incomplete information.

Our descriptions of people basically fall into three areas. First, we describe people based on our view of their actual behavior. For example, we say: "He talks too loudly. Look how slowly she walks. His face looks sad, and he speaks softly. She looks right at you and stands very rigidly, and he turned his back on me and would not speak."

Second, we describe people based on our thoughts about their inner qualities, traits, characteristics, or motives. We say: "He sure seems ambitious. She appears interested and sincere. I think he is a hypocrite," or "She is very intelligent and honest."

Third, we describe people based on our emotional reaction to their behavior. We say things like: "He is definitely very strange. I don't like her. She really drives me crazy. I would like to get to know him better. She seems like a nice person," or "I hate him."

Karen didn't take her usual morning coffee break because she was behind in entering customer orders into her computer. She didn't like having a cluttered desk, and she hoped that the extra fifteen minutes would help her get her desk cleared. She was intently glued to the monitor to be sure that she would make no errors.



Sue, the office supervisor, noticed Karen working during the coffee break. She thought to herself, "It's great to have an employee who is alert and motivated to the importance of filling orders so quickly."

Jane, one of the other computer operators, turned to Betty and said, "Who does Karen think she is? She's trying to make us look bad for taking a coffee break. She's just trying to impress Sue."

Bill, the sales representative, walked by Karen's desk and said, "You're sure busy this morning."

Each co-worker had a different interpretation of Karen's actions. Sue evaluated Karen's hard work positively. Jane expressed a negative reaction to her hard work, while Bill simply observed her behavior without judgment.

Subjective and Objective Labels

Descriptions and labels that refer to a person's inner qualities, traits, and characteristics are subjective. So, also, are the descriptions of our reactions to the behavior of others. Subjectivity is simply the formation of conclusions and mental beliefs without verification. The descriptions by Sue and Jane were subjective. They were based on what they thought or felt Karen was doing. They were both wrong.

Objective description, on the other hand, is based on real facts and observable actions. It is not based on emotion, surmise, or personal prejudice. Bill's observation of Karen's work was objective and correct. She was busy and working hard. Objective description, or labeling, occurs only when we talk about a person's actual behavior without trying to apply a reason or motivation for the behavior.

In order to get along with the annoying people in our life, we need to learn how to observe actual behavior without attempting to judge motives. When we react negatively to a person's behavior or try to subjectively understand another's motivations, we tend to destroy the possibility of healthy and productive relationships. Sue's description of Karen, though complimentary, was false. What Sue thought was dedicated service was only Karen's

obsession with a neat desk. In her subjective description, Sue was setting up Karen—and herself—for potential future misunderstandings about her work habits.

Labeling others is not bad if our descriptions apply to actual behavior. These kinds of descriptions are not put-downs, they are merely clarifications of actions. We need this kind of labeling. Without it, effective communication would cease. When I walk into the supermarket, I want labels on all the cans and boxes on the shelves. Without labels, grocery shopping—and the meals that follow—would be a disaster. Similarly, without effective, objective labels for behavior, there will be interpersonal conflict and tension.

Social-style labeling will help us to identify and categorize behavior. As we learn the social styles of others, we can learn to predict future behavior and adapt to meet the needs of others. Inevitably, conflict will arise, no matter how familiar we become with each other's social styles. Sometimes minor annoyances escalate into volatile conflict. Part II addresses practical conflict-resolution tools. Regardless of your social style and the social style of others, there are specific techniques that can be used to resolve conflict before it intensifies.

As you begin to evaluate the information in this book, you will gain a deeper understanding of why you get annoyed by others. You will also begin to see why some of your particular behaviors annoy certain people and not others. Once you are equipped with the knowledge and tools of the four social styles, you will be in a much better position to create harmony in the workplace and at home.

3

Determining Your Social Style

***Nothing in life is to be feared,
it is only to be understood.***

—Marie Curie

“Stephen is so uptight about having everything in perfect order. He’s driving me nuts! Then when we get in a fight, he just walks out of the room and refuses to talk to me.”

“Yeah, well what are you complaining about? Brian takes the carefree extreme that nothing should matter that much ... who cares if you’re late? Who cares if clothes are on the floor? Stephen sounds like a dream! When Brian and I fight, he unloads on me and really let’s me know what he thinks. I try to leave the room, and he follows me and keeps on talking!”

I had to chuckle to myself as I sat listening from a distance as a group of women were engaging in a husband-bashing ceremony. I was thinking, *Stephen sounds like an Analytical and Brian sounds like an Expressive.*

I’ve heard men doing the same thing. “Cathy is so strict with the kids. She’s always focused on what needs to get done and doesn’t want to let anyone relax. I keep telling her to lighten up!”

“Sandy just seems to go with the flow all the time. I wish she

would take a stand once in a while and stop avoiding conflict everywhere she goes. She lets people walk all over her.”

I’ve heard similar complaints when parents are comparing notes on their kids. “Annie is so disciplined about her homework and never needs to be pushed, but she can be insensitive to everyone. Kelly is the life of the party, but she’s always putting things off until the last minute and just wants to socialize all the time.”

“Well, Matt and I keep butting heads. He just doesn’t have any goals and seems apathetic about everything. He’s lazy and I feel like I have to ride him constantly to get anything done. He is so stubborn!”

I’ve heard kids who have plenty to say about their parents, too. “Dad expects me to have my life all mapped out with huge goals and aspirations. I’m just not like him. He’s so controlling and I feel like he’s smothering me all the time.”

“My mom is always following me around the house picking up after me. She expects me to get straight A’s and won’t let up on me. I feel like I can never meet her expectations.”

Everyone has certain areas where they struggle with others. These areas are often attributable to social-style differences. Each social style places a different emphasis on different areas of importance. This is where priorities come in. Each social style has a general response to conflict and certain behavior traits that can be observed.

There are four basic social styles: Analytical, Driver, Amiable, and Expressive. As you learn to identify these styles, you can predict certain behavior and understand various responses to conflict. The first and most important step in conflict-prevention is identifying your own social style. This section will guide you through that simple process.

Let’s begin by determining if you are an asker or a teller. There are two lists in Chart 3-A describing the characteristics of an asker and a teller. Which list describes you more—asker or teller? You may find that there are some characteristics in both

lists that describe you, but one will usually describe you more than the other. Select either *ask* or *tell* and write it down.

ASK CHARACTERISTICS	TELL CHARACTERISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Less assertive, more introverted <input type="checkbox"/> Outward response under stress: flight <input type="checkbox"/> Driving emotion and motivation under stress: fear <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates hesitantly <input type="checkbox"/> Lower quantity of talk <input type="checkbox"/> Pace of speech: slower <input type="checkbox"/> Speech volume: soft <input type="checkbox"/> Body movements: slow and deliberate <input type="checkbox"/> More tentative and less forceful <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves opinions <input type="checkbox"/> Less confrontive <input type="checkbox"/> Nonaggressive <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Will not pressure others for decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Patient <input type="checkbox"/> Not a huge risk-taker <input type="checkbox"/> Avoids the use of power if at all possible <input type="checkbox"/> Attentive listener 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> More assertive, more extroverted <input type="checkbox"/> Outward response under stress: fight <input type="checkbox"/> Driving emotion and motivation under stress: anger <input type="checkbox"/> Readily communicative <input type="checkbox"/> Higher quantity of talk <input type="checkbox"/> Pace of speech: faster <input type="checkbox"/> Speech volume: louder <input type="checkbox"/> Body movements: fast and rapid <input type="checkbox"/> Less tentative and more forceful <input type="checkbox"/> Shares opinions easily <input type="checkbox"/> More confrontational <input type="checkbox"/> More aggressive <input type="checkbox"/> More decisive <input type="checkbox"/> Will pressure others for decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient <input type="checkbox"/> More of a risk-taker <input type="checkbox"/> Will use personal and positional power <input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty listening

Merrill and Reid, *Personal Styles and Effective Performance*; Robert Bolton and Dorothy G. Bolton, *Social Style/Management Style* (New York, NY: AMACOM, 1984) adapted.

Chart 3-A

- I see myself as more asking
- I see myself as more telling

Askers are generally more introverted, less aggressive, and less assertive. Tellers are generally more extraverted, aggressive, and assertive. While the traits of an asker or teller are neither good nor bad, extremes in either case can cause serious

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conflict. If askers never share their feelings, they will be rolled over by others. If tellers do not keep their assertiveness in check, they will overpower others. Each of us will display a degree of asking or telling, preferably in a balanced range.

The next step is to determine if you are task-oriented or relationship-oriented. There are two lists in Chart 3-B describing the characteristics of a task-oriented individual and a relationship-oriented individual. Which list describes you more—task or relationship? You may find that there are some characteristics in both lists that describe you, but one will usually describe you more than the other. Select either *task* or *relationship* and write it down.

TASK CHARACTERISTICS	REALTIONSHIP CHARACTERISTICS
<input type="checkbox"/> Dress: more formal <input type="checkbox"/> Topics of speech: current issues and tasks at hand <input type="checkbox"/> Body posture: more rigid <input type="checkbox"/> Facial expressions: more controlled <input type="checkbox"/> General attitude: more towards the serious side <input type="checkbox"/> More reserved <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled and guarded emotions <input type="checkbox"/> Filled with facts and data <input type="checkbox"/> Less interested in small talk <input type="checkbox"/> Decisions are fact-based <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplined about time <input type="checkbox"/> Strict and disciplined about rules <input type="checkbox"/> Restrained and guarded when sharing opinions <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to get to know, keeps distance from others <input type="checkbox"/> Preoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Dress: more informal <input type="checkbox"/> Topics of speech: people, stories and anecdotes <input type="checkbox"/> Body posture: more relaxed <input type="checkbox"/> Facial expressions: more animated <input type="checkbox"/> General attitude: more towards the playful side <input type="checkbox"/> More outgoing <input type="checkbox"/> Free to share emotions <input type="checkbox"/> Filled with opinions and stories <input type="checkbox"/> More interested in small talk <input type="checkbox"/> Decisions are feeling- or “gut-” based <input type="checkbox"/> Less disciplined about time <input type="checkbox"/> More permissive and lenient about rules <input type="checkbox"/> More impulsive and forceful when sharing opinions <input type="checkbox"/> Easy to get to know, does not keep distance from others <input type="checkbox"/> More carefree

Merrill and Reid, *Personal Styles and Effective Performance*; Robert Bolton and Dorothy G. Bolton, *Social Style/Management Style*, adapted.

Chart 3-B

- I see myself as more task-oriented
- I see myself as more relationship-oriented

Task-oriented individuals are ruled more by their thinking, with their emotions well under control. Their self-image is developed as a result of the tasks they accomplish. They usually feel their best when they are getting something done, whether at work or at home.

Relationship-oriented individuals are ruled more by their feelings, with more responsive emotions. Their self-image is developed by the acceptance of others. They feel best when they are involved in positive relationships, whether at work or at home.

As with the “ask and tell” traits, neither the task nor relationship trait is better than the other; each is merely descriptive of two generally different behaviors. Again, either trait, taken to an extreme, can lead to conflict. If you are so overwhelmingly task-focused, other people may not get to know you or like you. An environment of tension, mistrust, and conflict may develop. If you are so involved with people that you do not accomplish any tasks, you will be viewed as flippant, lazy, and shallow. Each of us will display a degree of task or relationship traits, preferably in a balanced range.

At this point you should have written down either *ask* or *tell* and either *task* or *relationship*. Chart 3-C displays the four basic social styles based on the ask/tell and task/relationship concept.

Ask/Task ANALYTICAL	Tell/Task DRIVER
Ask/Relationship AMIABLE	Tell/Relationship EXPRESSIVE

Chart 3-C

If you selected *ask* and *task*, your social style would be *Analytical*. If you selected *tell* and *task*, your social style would be *Driver*. If you selected *ask* and *relationship*, your social style would be *Amiable*. If you selected *tell* and *relationship*, your social style would be *Expressive*. No specific social style is better than the other (although you are most likely thinking that yours rules!). Each style differs in emphasis and priorities.

The next section will describe the basic strengths and weakness of each style. As we progress through this book, we will examine how each social-style responds under stress and we will determine where the biggest conflicts exist between the various styles. Additionally, you will discover which social styles you are the most compatible with. Further sections will reveal the secrets to working with each style, responding to conflict, leading a particular style, following a particular style, and a variety of other insights that will make your life easier!

4

The Strengths of Each Social Style

With different persons, we may be quite different individuals. We cling, however, to the illusion that we remain identical for all persons and every situation.

—Luigi Pirandello

Jerry was sharing his thoughts with one of the other managers. “I love how spontaneous and outgoing Josh is. He’s fun and full of charisma. He gets people in the team spirit and can really arouse enthusiasm in the organization. I just wish he would show up on time and follow through more on his projects.”

Mary was sharing her own experiences with Jerry as they compared notes, “Well, Wendy is just the opposite. She is always early, dependable, and follows through. She is outstanding at planning projects and seeing them to completion. However, she drives people like Josh nuts at times with her negative input. She can spend way too much time planning and not getting enough done.”

As you will soon discover, each social style possesses a list of strengths and weaknesses. Some of the strengths of a par-

ticular style can serve as a point of annoyance to another style. Some of the weakness of the social styles can be annoying to every style. That's why we end up with four annoying people, and that's also why you end up being one of them!

The good news is that there are traits in every style we can admire and appreciate. Additionally, we can each learn what our negative tendencies are and we can learn to display our positive traits more than our negative ones. We can also learn to modify our behavior to get along better with others.

Each social style has a particular area of specialty in addition to general strengths and weaknesses. As you become aware of the different styles, you may find some of your traits in another social-style besides your primary style. Everyone has a secondary social style in addition to his or her primary style, and we will examine this concept more closely in the next section of the book.

ANALYTICALS—The Technique Specialists

Analyticals are precise, and experts in the area of technique. Analyticals have a strong sense of duty and obligation. They are driven by a forceful work ethic, and play does not come naturally to them. They are natural givers and often take on the role of parent or guardian for other people and organizations.

Analyticals have a tendency to take on too much responsibility. They see themselves as conservators and tend to worry. They will save and store for the future, believing they cannot save too much. They are steadfast, reliable, and dependable. Listed below are some of the greatest strengths of the Analytical.

Snapshot of the Analytical:

- Deep and thoughtful
- Serious and purposeful
- Genius-prone
- Talented and creative
- Artistic or musical
- Philosophical and poetic

- Appreciative of beauty
- Sensitive to others
- Self-sacrificing
- Conscientious
- Idealistic
- Seeks ideal mate

The Analytical at Work:

- Sacrifices own will for others
- Schedule-oriented
- Encourages scholarship and talent
- Detail-conscious
- Economical
- Perfectionist, high standards
- Persistent and thorough
- Orderly and organized
- Conscientious
- Idealistic
- Neat and tidy
- Sees the problem
- Finds creative solutions
- Likes charts, graphs, figures, and lists
- Finishes what he/she starts

The Analytical as a Parent:

- Sets high standards
- Keeps home in good order
- Wants everything done right
- Picks up after children

The Analytical as a Friend:

- Makes friends cautiously
- Avoids seeking attention
- Content to stay in background
- Faithful and devoted

- Can solve other's problems
- Will listen to complaints
- Deep concern for others

DRIVERS—The Control Specialists

Drivers are obsessed by a strong compulsion to perform and be in control. They take pleasure in almost any kind of work because it involves activity. Idleness will destroy Drivers. They desire to control and master everything they do. They speak with precision and little redundancy.

Drivers like new ideas, challenges, and competition. They have a passion for knowledge. They are constantly searching to answer the “whys” of life. They can be overly forceful and may require too much from themselves and others. Drivers are haunted by the possibility of failure. They are self-controlled, persistent, and logical. Listed below are some of the greatest strengths of the Driver.

Snapshot of the Driver:

- Born leader
- Dynamic and active
- Compulsive need for change
- Must correct wrongs
- Strong-willed and decisive
- Not easily discouraged
- Unemotional
- Exudes confidence
- Can run anything
- Independent and self-sufficient

The Driver at Work:

- Goal-oriented
- Organizes well
- Sees the whole picture
- Seeks practical solutions
- Delegates work

- Moves quickly to action
- Insists on production
- Stimulates activity
- Thrives on opposition

The Driver as a Parent:

- Exerts sound leadership
- Establishes goals
- Motivates family to action
- Organizes household
- Knows the right answers

The Driver as a Friend:

- Has little need for friends
- Will work for group activity
- Will lead and organize
- Is usually right
- Excels in emergencies

AMIABLES—The Support Specialists

Amiables are very likeable people who support others. They work well with others and promote harmony. They are found wrapped up in causes. They like to work with words and often influence large groups through writing. They sometimes place unrealistic expectations on themselves and others. They will often romanticize experiences and relationships.

Amiables like to have direction. They often observe others and seek deep meaning in relationships and experiences. They prefer interaction to action. Amiables are very compassionate with those who may be hurting. They are patient, good listeners, and are filled with integrity. Listed below are some of the greatest strengths of the Amiable.

Snapshot of the Amiable:

- Low-key personality
- Easygoing and relaxed
- Calm, cool, and collected
- Patient and well-balanced
- Consistent life
- Quiet but witty
- Sympathetic and kind
- Keeps emotions hidden
- Happily reconciled to life

The Amiable at Work:

- Competent and steady
- Peaceful and agreeable
- Has administrative ability
- Mediates problems
- Avoids conflict
- Good under pressure
- Finds the easy way out

The Amiable as a Parent:

- Makes a good parent
- Peaceful and agreeable
- Not in a hurry
- Takes time for children
- Can take the good with the bad

The Amiable as a Friend:

- Easy to get along with
- Pleasant and enjoyable
- Inoffensive
- Good listener
- Dry sense of humor
- Enjoys watching people
- Has many friends

EXPRESSIVES—The Social Specialists

Expressives are very impulsive people who love to socialize. They like to try the new and different. They enjoy wandering and it's easy for them to break social ties. They like to live for the here-and-now. Expressives struggle with commitment and follow-through.

Expressives have happy and charismatic spirits and can endure hardships and trials easier than the other social styles. Discomfort is just a new experience that they know will pass. They love to reminisce and enjoy belonging to social organizations. They are friendly, giving, and easygoing. Listed below are some of the greatest strengths of the Expressive.

Snapshot of the Expressive:

- Appealing personality
- Talkative, storyteller
- Life of the party
- Good sense of humor
- Memory for color
- Holds on to listeners physically
- Emotional and demonstrative
- Enthusiastic and expressive
- Cheerful and bubbly
- Curious
- Good on stage
- Wide-eyed and innocent
- Lives in the present
- Changeable disposition
- Sincere heart
- Always a child

The Expressive at Work:

- Volunteers for jobs
- Thinks up new activities
- Looks great on the surface

- Creative and colorful
- Has energy and enthusiasm
- Starts in a flashy way
- Inspires others to join
- Charms others to work

The Expressive as a Parent:

- Make home fun
- Is liked by children's friends
- Turns disaster into humor
- Is the ring master

The Expressive as a Friend:

- Makes friends easily
- Loves people
- Thrives on compliments
- Seems excited
- Envied by others
- Doesn't hold grudges
- Apologizes quickly
- Prevents dull moments
- Likes spontaneous activities

Chart 4-A gives a general overview of each of the styles. Note that each social style has a different and unique way of responding to the specific areas listed on the left hand side of the chart.

General Overview of the Four Social Styles

AREA	Analyticals	Drivers	Amiables	Expressives
Reaction	Slow	Swift	Unhurried	Rapid
Orientation	Thinking and fact	Action and goal	Relationship and peace	Involvement and intuition
Likes	Organization	To be in charge	Close Relationships	Much interaction
Dislikes	Involvement	Inaction	Conflict	To be alone
Maximum effort	To organize	To control	To relate	To involve
Minimum concern	For relationships	For caution in relationships	For affecting change	For routine
Behavior directed toward achievement	Works carefully and alone— <i>primary effort</i>	Works quickly and alone— <i>primary effort</i>	Works slowly and with others— <i>secondary effort</i>	Works quickly and with team— <i>secondary effort</i>
Behavior directed towards acceptance	Impresses others with precision and knowledge— <i>secondary effort</i>	Impresses others with individual effort— <i>secondary effort</i>	Gets along as integral member of group— <i>primary effort</i>	Gets along as exciting member of group— <i>primary effort</i>
Actions	Cautious	Decisive	Slow	Impulsive

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Skills	Good problem-solving skills	Good administrative skills	Good counseling skills	Good persuasive skills
Decision-making	Avoids risks, based on facts	Takes risks, based on intuition	Avoids risks, based on opinion	Takes risks, based on hunches
Use of time	Slow, deliberate, disciplined	Swift, efficient, impatient	Slow, calm, undisciplined	Rapid, quick, undisciplined

Merrill and Reid, *Personal Styles and Effective Performance*; Robert Bolton and Dorothy G. Bolton, *Social Style/Management Style*, adapted.

Chart 4-A



The Weaknesses of Each Social Style

If thou wouldst conquer thy weakness thou must never gratify it. No man is compelled to evil; only his consent makes it his. It is no sin to be tempted; it is to yield and be overcome.

—William Penn

“Well, look who woke up on the wrong side of the bed! Andy is nit-picking every aspect of that report we did. He is so critical sometimes! You’d think he could just make a decision and get on with it.” Amanda was peeking through the blinds at the office across the hall while complaining to Joe.

“Stop spying! He’ll see you!” Joe pulled Amanda away from the window. “Look, we did the best we could. Andy will always play the devil’s advocate and make sure no stone goes unturned. Personally, I just think he needs to get a life!”

Andy sighed heavily in frustration as he went through the report. *This isn’t even what I asked for. If Amanda would just slow down and take her time, she would get it right the first time. She’s just too eager to get on with the next project to care about this one. I’m always the one stuck cleaning up everyone’s messes around here.*

Every social style has its weaknesses. We all display our weakness in different ways. Analytical styles like Andy are very thorough and exacting, but can be viewed by other styles as negative and obsessive. Driver styles like Amanda get things done quickly, but do not like paying attention to detail. As you begin to learn more about your negative tendencies, you can examine ways to change your behavior so you can display more of your positive traits and less of your negative ones. Review the lists below of each social style and their weaknesses.

THE ANALYTICAL'S WEAKNESSES

Snapshot of the Analytical:

- Remembers the negative
- Moody and depressed
- Enjoys being hurt
- False humility
- Off in another world
- Low self-image
- Selective hearing
- Self-centered
- Too introspective
- Guilt feelings
- Persecution complex
- Tends to hypochondria

The Analytical at Work:

- Not people-oriented
- Depressed over imperfections
- Chooses difficult work
- Hesitant to start projects
- Spends too much time planning
- Prefers analysis to actual work
- Hard to please
- Standards often too high
- Deep need for approval

The Analytical as a Parent:

- Puts goals beyond reach
- May discourage children
- May be too meticulous
- Becomes a martyr
- Sulks over disagreements
- Puts guilt on children

The Analytical as a Friend:

- Lives through others
- Withdrawn and remote
- Socially insecure
- Critical of others
- Holds back affection
- Dislikes those in opposition
- Suspicious of people
- Antagonistic and vengeful
- Unforgiving
- Full of contradictions
- Skeptical of compliments

THE DRIVER'S WEAKNESSES

Snapshot of the Driver:

- Bossy
- Impatient
- Quick-tempered
- Can't relax
- Enjoys controversy and arguments
- Won't give up when losing
- Comes on too strong
- Inflexible
- Not complimentary
- Dislikes tears and emotions
- Is unsympathetic

The Driver at Work:

- Little tolerance for mistakes
- Demands loyalty in ranks
- Doesn't analyze details
- Bored by trivia
- May make rash decisions
- May be rude or tactless
- Manipulates people
- Demanding of others
- End justifies means
- Work may become God

The Driver as a Parent:

- Tends to over-dominate
- Too busy for family
- Gives answers too quickly
- Impatient with poor performance
- Won't let children relax
- May send them into depression

The Driver as a Friend:

- Tends to use people
- Dominates others
- Decides for others
- Knows everything
- Can do everything better
- Is too independent
- Possessive of friends and mate
- Can't say "I'm sorry"

THE AMIABLE'S WEAKNESSES

Snapshot of the Amiable:

- Unenthusiastic
- Fearful and worried
- Indecisive

- Avoids responsibility
- Quiet will of iron
- Selfish
- Too shy and reticent
- Too compromising
- Self-righteous

The Amiable at Work:

- Not goal-oriented
- Lacks self-motivation
- Hard to get moving
- Resents being pushed
- Lazy and careless
- Discourages others
- Would rather watch

The Amiable as a Parent:

- Lax on discipline
- Doesn't organize the home
- Takes life too easily
- Will ignore family conflict

The Amiable as a Friend:

- Dampens enthusiasm
- Stays uninvolved
- Is not exciting
- Indifferent to plans
- Judges others
- Sarcastic and teasing
- Resists change

THE EXPRESSIVE'S WEAKNESSES

Snapshot of the Expressive:

- Compulsive talker
- Exaggerates and elaborates
- Dwells in trivia

- Can't remember names
- Scares others off
- "Too" happy for some people
- Restless energy
- Egotistical
- Blusters and complains
- Naïve and gullible
- Loud voice and laugh
- Controlled by circumstances
- Angers easily
- Seems phony to some people
- Never grows up

The Expressive at Work:

- Would rather talk
- Forgets obligations
- Doesn't follow through
- Confidence fades fast
- Undisciplined
- Priorities out of order
- Decides by feelings
- Easily distracted
- Wastes time talking

The Expressive as a Parent:

- Keeps home in a frenzy
- Forgets children's appointments
- Disorganized
- Doesn't listen to the whole story

The Expressive as a Friend:

- Hates to be alone
- Needs to be center-stage
- Wants to be popular
- Looks for credit
- Dominates conversations

- Interrupts and doesn't listen
- Answers for others
- Fickle and forgetful
- Makes excuses
- Repeats stories

Chart 5-A and 5-B gives a general overview of the positive and negative traits of each social style. These are useful charts for examining the natural strengths and weaknesses of your social style. Once you become familiar with those, you can start to concentrate on minimizing your weaknesses and maximizing your strengths. Additionally, you can pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of those you work and live with. You can begin to understand just why some people annoy you and how to cope with them.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Analyticals and Drivers

ANALYTICALS		DRIVERS	
NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
Moody	Industrious	Unsympathetic	Determined
Critical	Gifted	Pushy	Independent
Negative	Perfectionist	Insensitive	Productive
Rigid	Conscientious	Inconsiderate	Strong-willed
Persistent	Loyal	Severe	Visionary
Indecisive	Aesthetic	Hostile	Optimistic
Legalistic	Idealistic	Sarcastic	Active
Self-centered	Exacting	Tough	Practical
Stuffy	Sensitive	Unforgiving	Courageous
Touchy	Self-sacrificing	Domineering	Decisive
Vengeful	Orderly	Opinionated	Self-confident
Picky	Self-disciplined	Prejudiced	Efficient
Unsociable		Harsh	Leader
Moralistic		Proud	

Chart 5-A

Strengths and Weaknesses of Amiables and Expressives

AMIABLES		EXPRESSIVES	
NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
Unbothered	Calm	Weak-willed	Outgoing
Conforming	Supportive	Manipulative	Ambitious
Blasé	Easygoing	Restless	Charismatic
Indolent	Likeable	Disorganized	Warm
Unsure	Respectful	Unproductive	Stimulating
Spectator	Diplomatic	Excitable	Responsive
Selfish	Efficient	Undependable	Talkative
Stingy	Willing	Undisciplined	Enthusiastic
Stubborn	Organized	Obnoxious	Carefree
Dependent	Conservative	Loud	Compassionate
Self-protective	Practical	Reactive	Dramatic
Indecisive	Dependable	Exaggerates	Generous
Awkward	Reluctant	Egotistical	Friendly
Fearful	leader		
	Agreeable		
	Dry humor		

Chart 5-B



What Annoying People Value and What *Really* Annoys Them

***He that wrestles with us, strengthens
our nerves, and sharpens our skill.***

Our antagonist is our helper.

—Edmund Burke

We were mid-way through the leadership training in a corporation. I asked everyone to write down what they valued most. Then I asked them to make a list of some of the things that annoyed them the most.

After the exercise was completed, we had a time of discussion where we shared some of our answers. While some things were valued by everyone (like honesty, love, etc.), other things were a higher priority to some people than others. What annoyed everyone was different as well.

The Analyticals valued accuracy, competence, and organization. They appreciated facts, efficiency, quality, and structure. On the top of their annoyance list were things like disorganization, hastiness, and aggressiveness. They are especially annoyed by shouting, invasiveness, and exaggeration.

The Drivers seemed to value achievement, goals, responsibility, and independence. Productivity was important to them, as was speed and control. Drivers were easily annoyed by indecisiveness, procrastination, and laziness. They also did not appreciate excuses, hypersensitivity, or too many details.

The Amiables valued contribution, compassion, and loyalty. Trust, kindness, and peacefulness made the top of their priority lists. They also valued cooperation and friendliness. As nice as Amiables can be, they still have a list of things that annoy them. Conflict, pressure, and harshness all made the top of the list. They were also annoyed by rudeness, pushiness, and disharmony.

Expressives seemed to value excitement, adventure, and spontaneity. They also placed innovation, vision, and creativity at the top of their lists. They also had plenty of items that caused them to become annoyed. Formality, rules, and structure seemed to be big annoyances. Routine, boredom, details, and ritual, all made the list as well.

As we all compared notes, everyone began to see the links between the social styles and the common threads of what they valued. The attendees were able to make a connection between each social style and what seemed to be the biggest annoyances. The light bulbs started to go on. People were beginning to realize where some of the conflict and misunderstandings were coming from. They didn't all value the same things, and they didn't all appreciate the same behaviors. While one social style may welcome someone who really "tells it like it is," that can be a point of contention for another social style.

Each social style values different things, and different things annoy each social style. There's a well-known saying, "Treat others as you would want to be treated." In theory, this is a great idea, however, when it comes to the four social styles, it would be much better to treat others how THEY want to be treated, not how YOU want to be treated. Until you discover what each style values and despises, it is very difficult to create a cohesive working or personal relationship with each social style. Review the

Annoying People

charts below for an overview of what each style values and what annoys each style.

ANALYTICALS

WHAT THEY VALUE	WHAT ANNOYS THEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Security• Accuracy• Stability• Rules and regulations• Quality• Structure• Efficiency• Facts• Competence• Details• Tradition• Critical thinking• Organization• Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inaccuracy• Incompetence• Change• Aggressiveness• Shouting• Evasiveness• Mediocrity• Inadequacy• Exaggeration• Invasiveness• Clutter• Disorganization• Clamor• Hastiness

DRIVERS

WHAT THEY VALUE	WHAT ANNOYS THEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achievement• Challenge• Success• Power• Speed• Control• Responsibility• Goals• Debates• Competition• Leadership• Independence• Decisiveness• Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indecisiveness• Boredom• Small Talk• Details• Hypersensitivity• Over-emotional• Dependency• Excuses• Irresponsibility• Lethargy• Laziness• Procrastination• Taking Orders• Over-analyzing

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AMIABLES

WHAT THEY VALUE	WHAT ANNOYS THEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribution• Comfort• Compassion• Cooperation• Friendliness• Peacefulness• Loyalty• Approval• Cohesiveness• Trust• Kindness• Relationships• Benevolence• Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict• Impatience• Disrespect• Discourteousness• Insensitivity• Harshness• Rushing• Pressure• Tension• Controversy• Disharmony• Yelling• Pushiness• Rudeness

EXPRESSIVES

WHAT THEY VALUE	WHAT ANNOYS THEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freedom• Excitement• Adventure• Flexibility• Spontaneity• Vision• Enthusiasm• Change• Unpredictability• Uniqueness• Creativity• Innovation• Versatility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rules• Structure• Schedules• Routine• Tedium• Stagnation• Slowness• Boredom• Ritual• Unoriginal• Uncreative• Details• Formality

As you examine the values and annoyances of each style, you can begin to see where each style has the potential to rub the others the wrong way. This is also why everyone has the potential to be annoying! The very thing you value may be an annoyance to another style.

The Driver values decisiveness and the Analytical is annoyed when pushed to make a decision. The Expressive values a fast pace and the Amiable gets annoyed with impatience and likes to take things in stride. Every social style exhibits some form of behavior that has the potential to annoy all three other styles.

If you know what annoys the other styles, you can modify your behavior to stop annoying them. If you know what the other styles value, you can modify your behavior to get along better and make them happy. Part II will address more specifically how to adapt to meet the specific needs of each style to prevent and resolve conflict.



Annoying People With Their Backs Against the Wall

When you precipitate a crisis, you have to be prepared for the ramifications of that crisis.

Erin tried to listen patiently, but Bob was beginning to become irrational. He was attacking her and chewing her out with gusto. She tried to get up and leave the room, but he only followed her. “Don’t try to run away from this problem like you always do!” Bob continued to yell, as she walked out of the room. This seemed to be the constant cycle they both fell into when conflict would arise.

Erin would normally retreat and Bob would blow up. Bob wanted to confront the issues head-on and Erin wanted time to think it through and not be pushed to make a decision. Erin felt that Bob came on way too strong and Bob felt that Erin should take a stand. Neither one of them appreciated the way the other one responded to conflict.

Each social style has a specific response to conflict. The Analyticals will withdraw in an attempt to save face and think through the problem. They avoid and dodge the undesirable situation and are annoyed by people who come on too strong.

The Drivers will attempt to control the person or situation. They tend to impose their thoughts and opinions on others in the

midst of conflict. If they feel they are losing control, they tend to over-control to compensate. They are very strong-willed individuals and can become demanding during conflict.

The Amiables will give in to avoid the confrontation. They do not feel the conflict is worth it. They would rather save the relationship, even if it hurts them. Amiables appear to be in agreement on the outside, but may be resentful on the inside.

Expressives will attack in the midst of conflict. They may use condemnations and putdowns to discredit others. They have very strong emotions and feelings and will let others know exactly what they think. Expressives can chew others out and have a tendency to raise their voices when conflict escalates.

Chart 10-A shows the four different responses to conflict by each social style.

<p>Analyticals: Withdraw They tend to become less assertive, more controlled, hold in feelings, and not share ideas. Basically, they avoid, dodge, escape, and retreat from other people and/or undesirable situations.</p>	<p>Drivers: Dominate They tend to become over-assertive, unbending, over-controlling and demanding. They are strong-willed and attempt to impose their thoughts and feelings on others.</p>
<p>Amiables: Give In They tend to give in to keep the peace and reduce conflict. They appear to agree with others when inside they disagree. They strongly desire to save the relationship even if it hurts them.</p>	<p>Expressives: Attack They tend to emotionally attack others and their ideas, using condemnations and put-downs to discredit them. They have strong emotions and will tell people how they feel about things.</p>

Chart 10-A

Back Against the Wall Behavior

Each social style has a set of positive and negative behaviors. When the pressures of interpersonal conflict arise, we tend to feel like our backs are against the wall. Once this happens, we tend to shift from the positive side of our traits, over to the negative. We become more extreme and rigid and less flexible as we move into non-negotiable stances. As a result, our interaction with others becomes counterproductive.

Analyticals, who are characteristically precise and systematic, become inflexible and nit-picky, choosing to withdraw or evade the problems. Determined and objective Drivers turn into domineering, unfeeling dictators. Amiables, who are usually supportive and easygoing, become permissive and conforming as they just give in to others in the midst of conflict. Expressives, who are generally enthusiastic and imaginative, become overbearing and unrealistic, resorting to explosive attacks on others.

As we focus on our own needs and seek relief from tension by manifesting our negative behaviors, tension rises in those around us. As a result, others become defensive and switch to their own back-against-the-wall behaviors. This domino effect of setting each other off, leads to more disagreements, arguments, fights, and even wars.

As we discussed earlier, every social style will have an initial back-against-the-wall response to conflict. If that response does not relieve the tension or solve the conflict, each social style will resort to a second choice. If that doesn't work, a third choice will be employed, and then a fourth. Each social style has an ordered pattern for moving through a series of back-against-the-wall responses. For example, when a Driver experiences conflict, his first response would be to try and dominate the situation or persons involved. If that doesn't work, he will likely withdraw from the situation. If that doesn't solve the conflict, he may attack those he blames for the problem. The last resort for a Driver is to give in. If he cannot win the confrontation, the Driver will finally give up and

give in. Chart 10-B lists the common order of negative responses for each social style.

<p>Analyticals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Withdraw2. Dominate3. Give In4. Attack	<p>Drivers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dominate2. Withdraw3. Attack4. Give In
<p>Amiables</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Give In2. Attack3. Withdraw4. Dominate	<p>Expressives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attack2. Give In3. Dominate4. Withdraw

Robert Bolton and Dorothy G. Bolton, *Social Style/Management Style*
(New York, NY: AMACOM, 1984) adapted from p. 48.

Chart 10-B

Responding to Each Social Style in Conflict

As you can see, each social-style responds differently to conflict when pushed. You will have your own response as well, which may only serve to escalate the conflict. Learning to respond to each social style in conflict will reduce tension and go a long way towards resolving the conflict.

Responding to the Withdrawing-Analytical

As we observed earlier, Analyticals tend to withdraw from conflict to save face. They want to deal with the problem alone, with a minimum amount of interaction with others. They need time to think about the problem, situation, or relationship. They need as

much information as possible in order to deal effectively with their distress.

Don't keep pushing Analyticals for a response or insist on their increased participation before they have adequate time to think. They need time and space, so give it to them. Since Analyticals are systematic by nature, make sure you approach their problem with a step-by-step solution. Help them set up a plan to gather more problem-solving data to consider. Ask them for a special time to discuss the matter after they have had time to think through it.

If you are an Expressive or a Driver, your natural tendency is to "tell," not "ask." If you want to reduce conflict with the Analytical, practice patience. Learn to speak softer, slower, and ask questions. "What ideas do you have for a solution? How do you feel about doing A, B, and C?" When you approach them with a step-by-step solution for review, you are talking their language.

Responding to the Dominating Driver

Drivers feel like they have lost control in conflict situations, leaving them with no personal choices. The tension they feel drives them to get something accomplished, and they may attempt to regain control by over-controlling.

Don't try to compete with Drivers or match force-with-force, because competition is their specialty. Don't argue or debate with them. They can verbally shred you to pieces in a matter of seconds. But don't back down from them either, even when they come on strong. Drivers respect people who hold their ground, even if that person disagrees with their position. They just don't want you attempting to persuade them to abandon their own position.

When in the midst of conflict with Drivers, don't inundate them with too much detail or take too long to get to the point. They will get very irritated and even cut you off to get something accomplished. Try to redirect the strong energies of the Driver towards positive goals, achievements, or actions that you can support. Drivers appreciate goals and the freedom to choose their own methods of reaching them. Help them decide on a goal and a

path for it. Attempting to control Drivers will only cause more conflict and cause them to over-control.

Responding to the Acquiescing Amiable

During conflict, Amiables will always appear to be in agreement. They will try to maintain relationships at all costs, even at the cost of personal hurt. A gentleman approached me after a seminar and said, “I realize now that my former wife was an Amiable. We never really fought, because as soon as we would get into conflict she would always agree with me. It always seemed like everything was fine. She saw things my way and we got along great. At least, that is what I thought. After eleven years, I came home one day and all her stuff was packed and she was gone. She left a note saying she couldn’t take it anymore. All along I thought we were doing just fine, but she was miserable and didn’t want to rock the boat. I wish I knew then what I know now.”

A sign of compliance and agreement by the Amiable is not a sign of commitment. They often have inner turmoil that they do not want to share. They fear backlash or continued conflict if they share what they really think. Consequently, they simply agree with the person they are in conflict with and give in.

If you are in conflict with an Amiable, don’t push them for a response. Amiables do not appreciate people who come on too strong. Do not express anger or raise your voice. Do not argue with them or insist on your way. This will only push them deeper into their pattern of acquiescence as they struggle to save the relationship. Instead, encourage them to share their feelings. Ask them for constructive criticism regarding the conflict. If they get the courage to actually tell you, don’t make them sorry they did! Don’t belittle them or negate their input—you may never get it again.

Amiables like to feel that they are needed and can help others out. Tell them that you would like to work on the conflict situation, but you need some concrete suggestions from them. Work side-

by-side with them through the problem-solving steps they suggest. Establish some form of evaluation process. They will respond cautiously, so move slowly and be patient.

Responding to the Attacking Expressive

Expressives become very selfish, emotional, and assertive when their backs are against the wall. They will vent their feelings by attacking the situation and the people involved. They will not hesitate in telling you what they really think and they will do it with gusto!

Do not try to evaluate the emotional outburst of an Expressive. It won't help to defend yourself intellectually either. Don't let Expressives draw you into their tantrums. Don't try to out-shout an Expressive because you will most likely lose. Instead, try to listen sympathetically and accept their emotions without getting emotionally involved.

Let them get their emotions out of their system. If you block the venting of the Expressives, you may provoke an even greater explosion. Once they get their emotions off their chest, you can help them focus on creative alternatives for handling problems in the future. You might try something like, "Now that you have shared your feelings about it, how are we going to handle this problem the next time it comes up?" Expressives are creative individuals. Once they move out of the negative behaviors they exhibit when their backs are against the wall, they will return to their positive dispositions.

Adapting to Meet the Needs of Each Social Style to Reduce Conflict

The best way to avoid having to deal with back-against-the-wall behavior is to prevent it as much as possible. The best way to prevent most negative conflict is to adapt to meet the needs of others. If you want to get along better with the people you live and work with, you will employ this technique. Each social style thinks and operates differently. If you want to create a cohesive relationship, you can adapt to each style:

Adapting to Meet the Needs of the Analyticals

1. Analyticals are *askers* and do not appreciate people who come on too strong or are pushy. Speak softly and slowly to Analyticals.
2. Analyticals are more task-oriented and appreciate discussions about achievements. Talk to them about reachable goals.
3. Analyticals are deductive thinkers. Be sure to meet their needs for facts, timelines, and step-by-step procedures.
4. Don't expect quick decisions from Analyticals. Give them time to reflect and evaluate information before they decide.
5. Analyticals have a strong need to be correct and make the right decisions. They would rather make no decision than a wrong one. Help them realize that it is impossible to make perfect decisions all the time. Help them relax and encourage them in the decision-making process.
6. Analyticals want to know how things work. They appreciate getting detailed instructions and they like to give them.
7. Analyticals sometimes feel awkward in relationships. Help them save face by not putting too much pressure on them in social settings.
8. Exercise patience when dealing with Analyticals. When they talk, they often give out more information than necessary. They will explain their position with great detail. Their presentations of material may be so loaded with facts and detail that it becomes difficult to follow. You may need to listen to more material than you would like in order to assure Analyticals that you are listening and you care.
9. Don't try to oversell your ideas or overstate your positions to the Analyticals. They have a strong sense of

logic and can quickly identify reasonable facts. Be sure you provide facts when making your case. Be clear and specific.

10. Encourage and praise Analyticals for their wise planning, efficient techniques, and conservative nature.

Adapting to Meet the Needs of the Drivers

1. Drivers are tellers and appreciate people who make their points clearly and concisely. Try not to bore them with a lot of detail. Get to your bottom line quickly.
2. Drivers are intuitive thinkers and will trust their hunches. Don't give them a big sales pitch. If your ideas or suggestions seem valid, Drivers will immediately accept them. However, they may not admit the validity of your ideas or give you credit because they like to remain in control.
3. Since Drivers like to feel in control, let them choose their methods or paths of response. Tell them the goal you would like to achieve and give them options or alternatives for reaching that goal. Let them use the information to chart their own course and do not try to control them.
4. Drivers want to know what is going on, what needs to be accomplished, and what your ideas are. They are interested in the answers to how, who, why, and when questions. Be sure to let them know what your expectations are. They will tell you if they can or will reach those expectations.
5. Drivers struggle with impatience. Since they process information and accomplish tasks quickly, they do not have much patience for those who think or work slowly. Try to increase your pace around Drivers. They appreciate saving time because they want to get on to their many tasks.
6. Since Drivers move at such a quick pace, try to keep your relationships with them businesslike. If Drivers seem a little cold and matter-of-fact, try not to take it personally. They tend to be much more concerned with accomplish-

ments and achievements than relationships. They look for results.

7. Encourage and praise Drivers for all the jobs and tasks they get done. But don't overdo the encouragement—they will be off and running to accomplish something else before you finish your statement of appreciation.

Adapting to Meet the Needs of the Amiables

1. Amiables are *askers* and they appreciate people who are gentle and not brash.
2. Amiables do not offer hasty opinions or make quick decisions. They don't want to do or say something that might hamper their relationships. Help them realize that sharing their thoughts will not affect their relationship with you.
3. Amiables ask, "Why?" They need information that will explain why they should do something. Explain to them what effort they need to put forth on a particular task or project. Help them see how they will benefit from it and how their participation will help others.
4. Amiables have a hard time really relaxing in social situations. They don't want to say or do anything that might cause tension between others. Encourage them that a disagreement with someone is not the end of the world. Help them realize that it is possible for people to hold different opinions and yet still remain friends.
5. Amiables do not like to work alone. They need a good deal of encouragement and assurance. Amiables need to feel like they are part of a team and that their input matters. Let them work with you.
6. Amiables like to know that they are accepted. Take the time to show personal interest in their lives.
7. Amiables are hesitant to share their opinion. Learn to be patient in communicating with them. Try not to disagree with them in public or when you suspect a disagreement will hurt their feelings. Otherwise, they will clam up and not share anything with you.

8. If you hope to get Amiables to participate, clearly define what you expect from them. Communicate to them what you plan to do to contribute to the relationship or the task at hand.
9. Encourage and praise Amiables with warm personal thanks for their contributions and participation.

Adapting to Meet the Needs of the Expressives

1. Expressives are *tellers* and they appreciate people who will listen to them and share with them. Become involved with their interests as much as possible.
2. Expressives are intuitive thinkers. They process information and form judgments and opinions quickly. They will also share their opinions openly. Have patience with their quick decisions. They will operate at a feeling level and may not always be able to give you a rational explanation for their behavior.
3. Expressives have a tendency to “tell it like it is.” Try not to take their comments personally. Many times, they are simply letting off steam, and you may just happen to be in the path.
4. Expressives are relationship-oriented and they want to know who is going to be involved. Try to meet their needs for excitement and interaction with people.
5. Expressives tend to start many jobs and not complete them. Try to work with them to accomplish tasks and see things through. They like to visit with other people while they are working and do not perform at their best level if working alone.
6. Expressives tend to exaggerate and over-generalize. Be alert to, and patient with, their overstatements.
7. Expressives become easily sidetracked. Try to help them complete the task they start. They like to anticipate the future. Share in their excitement for what lies ahead.

8. Encourage and praise Expressives for their enthusiasm. Publicly recognize them and appreciate them for jobs well done.

Learning to adapt our own styles to meet the needs of the other styles will only benefit everyone. As we learn to modify our behavior to get along better with others, we will see the conflict dissipating in our lives. We all have the ability to annoy others with our behavior. We also have the ability to adapt to the tendencies of others. When we make a habit of doing just that, we can begin to live in harmony with those we work and live with.

If you would like to receive the full version of the book, we can mail one out to you.

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