

# PERSONALITY STYLES

Successful personal trainers adapt their communication and teaching techniques to the personality style of the clients with whom they work. Personality style can be defined as an individual’s characteristics, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and coping mechanisms. It is the distinctive pattern of an individual’s psychological functioning—the way a person thinks, feels, and behaves.

Psychologists have devised many interesting theories of personality as well as scales for analyzing and categorizing personality styles. One of the most applicable is that of Daves and Holland (1981), who categorize people based on two important scales. The “dominance scale” measures how strongly a person is driven to influence the thinking and actions of others. The “sociability scale” is a measure of a person’s tendency to express feelings openly, and to be extroverted and outgoing with others. People can be classified based on whether they score low or high on these two scales.

Personal trainers can benefit from assessing their own personality styles. The most helpful approach is for personal trainers to complete the survey describing themselves, have three close friends or colleagues complete the survey describing the personal trainer, and then compare these results.

Personal trainers may also find it helpful to use the scales to categorize the personality styles of their clients. As personal trainers spend time with clients and observe clients answering questions, interacting, and exercising, personality styles begin to emerge. Identifying personality styles can help personal trainers understand how their clients communicate, behave, and want to be treated. A personal trainer should never assume that people should all be treated the same, or that what works with one client always works for everyone. The table below provides guidelines for adapting rapport-building strategies to a client’s personality style.



GENERAL PERSONALITY STYLE TRAITS	
Personality Style	General Traits
<b>Deliberators</b> Low sociability Low dominance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More cognitive (thinking), less affective (emotion)</li> <li>• Ask-oriented (collect information before making decisions)</li> <li>• Methodical, favoring logic, objectivity, analysis, and accuracy</li> <li>• Problem-solvers, working alone or in small groups</li> <li>• Careful planners, interested in reducing the risk of the unknown</li> <li>• Appear rigid, formal, and cautious</li> <li>• Highly creative, but thorough and detail-oriented</li> <li>• Emotionally reserved initially, opening up once strong relationships are forged</li> <li>• Appear distant (less trusting) and uninterested in social interaction</li> </ul>
<b>Directors</b> Low sociability High dominance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More cognitive (thinking), less affective (emotion)</li> <li>• Action-oriented, competitive, take-charge, dominant personalities</li> <li>• Resourceful and tell-oriented, favoring teamwork where they can define problems, identify solutions, formulate plans and goals, and delegate to others to achieve results</li> <li>• Appear insensitive, impatient, direct, and unafraid to voice opinions</li> <li>• Poor listeners, as they proactively think ahead to problem solving</li> <li>• Appear unapproachable, unyielding, inflexible, and blunt</li> <li>• Emotionally reserved, valuing time over relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborators</b> High sociability Low dominance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More affective (emotion), less cognitive (thinking)</li> <li>• Emotionally open, relationship-oriented, favor relationships over results</li> <li>• Amiable, warm, trusting and honest, sociable, easy-going, supportive, and non-dominant</li> <li>• Avoid unnecessary risks, slow to decide, non-confrontational, and sometimes exploited</li> <li>• Team- and ask-oriented, gather information to reach consensus over conflict</li> </ul>
<b>Expressors</b> High sociability High dominance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More affective (emotion), less cognitive (thinking)</li> <li>• Strong communicators, highly motivational and persuasive, but impatient</li> <li>• Overly ambitious, more risk-driven, favor incentives and rewards</li> <li>• Impulsive and lack discipline in completing projects</li> <li>• Dominant, tell-orientated visionaries who thrive on excitement, challenge, and creativity</li> </ul>

# IDENTIFYING PERSONALITY STYLES

1. Complete the surveys assessing dominance and sociability by circling an appropriate score for each word that best reflects the person's personality.
2. A score of 1 is "not descriptive of the person" while a score of 7 is "very descriptive of the person."
3. Sum the scored numbers to reach a total for each dimension.

Dominance Scale							
Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Challenging and confronting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Forceful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Outspoken	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Takes charge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Assertive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Competitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Straightforward	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Blunt	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Total Score:</b>							

Sociability Scale							
Accepting and supporting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Easy to know	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendly and outgoing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People-orientated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Agreeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cares how others feel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Flexible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fun-loving	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Total Score:</b>							

4. Score the dimensions of dominance and sociability scale according to the table presented below.

DOMINANCE SCALE		SOCIALITY SCALE	
51–70	High	53–70	High
10–50	Low	10–52	Low



GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITY STYLES	
<b>Deliberators</b>	<b>Directors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply information to support their need for detail</li> <li>• Appeal to their need to be right, believing that actions were clearly planned in detail</li> <li>• Establish credibility with research and supporting facts</li> <li>• Help secure clients' decisions by illustrating successful outcomes</li> <li>• Provide consistent, accurate follow-ups</li> <li>• Be well-prepared, detail-oriented, and organized</li> <li>• Avoid being too casual or informal, being vague or too general, and relying on intuition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize social aspects and desire to foster relationships</li> <li>• Appeal to clients' need for action and problem-solving</li> <li>• When planning, focus on facts, exploring solutions and possible outcomes</li> <li>• Be clear, concise, and business-like, and results- and goal-oriented</li> <li>• Avoid being overly personal or casual, vague or too general, and careless with facts</li> <li>• Avoid being too directive or forceful, as clients might become argumentative</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborators</b>	<b>Expressors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build trust and confidence through personal support and concern</li> <li>• Move carefully into the planning and action stages, informing clients that all possible options have been explored and risks minimized</li> <li>• Be candid, open and patient, personally interested and supportive, and goal-directed</li> <li>• Avoid being impatient, forceful and pressing for rapid decisions, aloof or too formal, or disengaged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer incentives and rewards</li> <li>• Share clients' visions and enthusiasm and show support for their goals by stressing the exciting facets of their visions</li> <li>• Be stimulating and positive and provide adequate information; support ideas without overwhelming these clients with details, as they are not detail-oriented</li> <li>• Try to appear supportive of clients' ideas</li> <li>• Stimulate clients' thoughts and provoke ideas</li> <li>• Demonstrate commitment</li> <li>• Avoid being directive, unyielding, inflexible or too structured, too restrained or conservative, and indecisive or wavering</li> </ul>

Daves, W.F. & Holland, C.L. (1981). Interpersonal style: Reliability and validity. Research and development of the interpersonal style profile. In: Dodd, J. & Corbett, J. *Managing Relationships for Productivity*. Atlanta, Ga.: International Learning, Inc.

