

DISC and The Platinum Rule®

By Dr. Tony Alessandra

We have all heard of the Golden Rule-and many people aspire to live by it. The Golden Rule is not a panacea. Think about it: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The Golden Rule implies the basic assumption that other people would like to be treated the way that you would like to be treated.

The alternative to the Golden Rule is the Platinum Rule:

"Treat others the way they want to be treated."

Ah hah! What a difference. The Platinum Rule accommodates the feelings of others. The focus of relationships shifts from "this is what I want, so I'll give everyone the same thing" to "let me first understand what they want and then I'll give it to them."

A Modern Model for Chemistry

The goal of The Platinum Rule is personal chemistry and productive relationships. You do not have to change your personality. You do not have to roll over and submit to others. You simply have to understand what drives people and recognize your options for dealing with them.

The Platinum Rule divides behavioral preferences into four basic styles:

- **Dominance Style**
- **Interactive Style**
- **Steadiness Style**
- **Cautious Style**

Everyone possesses the qualities of each style to various degrees and everyone has a dominant style. For the sake of simplicity, this article will focus only on dominant styles.

Dominance Styles

Dominance Styles are driven by two governing needs: to control and achieve. Dominance Styles are goal-oriented go-getters who are most comfortable when they are in charge of people and situations. They want to accomplish many things-now-so they focus on no-nonsense approaches to bottom-line results.

Dominance Styles seek expedience and are not afraid to bend the rules. They figure it is easier to beg forgiveness than to ask permission. Dominance Styles accept challenges, take authority, and plunge head first into solving problems. They are fast-paced, task-oriented, and work quickly and impressively by themselves, which means they become annoyed with delays. They are driven and dominating, which can make them stubborn, impatient, and insensitive to others. Dominance Styles are so focused that they forget to take the time to smell the roses.

Interactive Styles

Interactive Styles are friendly, enthusiastic "party-animals" who like to be where the action is.

They thrive on the admiration, acknowledgment, and compliments that come with being in the lime-light. Their primary strengths are enthusiasm, charm, persuasiveness, and warmth. They are idea-people and dreamers who excel at getting others excited about their vision. They are eternal optimists with an abundance of charisma. These qualities help them influence people and build alliances to accomplish their goals.

Interactive Styles do have their weaknesses: impatience, an aversion to being alone, and a short attention span. Interactive Styles are risk-takers who base many of their decisions on intuition, which is not inherently bad. Interactive Styles are not inclined to verify information; they are more likely to assume someone else will do it.

Steadiness Styles

Steadiness Styles are warm and nurturing individuals. They are the most people-oriented of the four styles. Steadiness Styles are excellent listeners, devoted friends, and loyal employees. Their relaxed disposition makes them approachable and warm. They develop strong networks of people who are willing to be mutually supportive and reliable. Steadiness Styles are excellent team players.

Steadiness Styles are risk-averse. In fact, Steadiness Styles may tolerate unpleasant environments rather than risk change. They like the status quo and become distressed when disruptions are severe. When faced with change, they think it through, plan, and accept it into their world. Steadiness Styles-more than the other types-strive to maintain personal composure, stability, and balance.

In the office, Steadiness Styles are courteous, friendly, and willing to share responsibilities. They are good planners, persistent workers, and good with follow-through. They go along with others even when they do not agree because they do not want to rock the boat. They are slower decision-makers because of their need for security; their need to avoid risk; and their desire to include others in the decision-making process.

Cautious Styles

Cautious Styles are analytical, persistent, systematic people who enjoy problem-solving. Cautious Styles are detail-oriented, which makes them more concerned with content than style. Cautious Styles are task-oriented people who enjoy perfecting processes and working toward tangible results. They're always in control of their emotions and may become uncomfortable around people who are very outgoing, e.g., Interactive Styles.

Cautious Styles have high expectations of themselves and others, which can make them over-critical. Their tendency toward perfectionism-taken to an extreme-can cause "paralysis by over-analysis." Cautious Styles are slow and deliberate decision-makers. They do research, make comparisons, determine risks, calculate margins of error, and then take action. Cautious Styles become irritated by surprises and glitches, hence their cautious decision-making. Cautious Styles are also skeptical, so they like to see promises in writing.

Adapting To Dominance Styles

Dominance Styles are very time-sensitive, so never waste their time. Be organized and get to the point. Give them bottom-line information and options, with probabilities of success, if relevant. Give them written details to read at their leisure.

Dominance Styles are goal-oriented, so appeal to their sense of accomplishment. Stroke their egos by supporting their ideas, and acknowledge their power and prestige. Let Dominance Styles call the shots. If you disagree, argue with facts, not feelings. In groups, allow them to have their say because they are not the type who will take a back-seat to others.

With Dominance Styles, in general, be efficient and competent.

Adapting To Interactive Styles

Interactive Styles thrive on personal recognition, so pour it on sincerely. Support their ideas, goals, opinions, and dreams. Try not to argue with their pie-in-the-sky visions; get excited about them.

Interactive Styles are social-butterflies, so be ready to flutter around with them. A strong presence, stimulating and entertaining conversation, jokes, and liveliness will win them over. They are people-oriented, so give them time to socialize. Avoid rushing into tasks.

With Interactive Styles, in general, be interested in them.

Adapting To Steadiness Styles

Steadiness Styles are relationship-oriented, want warm and fuzzy relationships, so take things slow, earn their trust, support their feelings, and show sincere interest. Talk in terms of feelings, not facts, which is the opposite of the strategy for Cautious Styles. Steadiness Styles don't want to ruffle feathers. They want to be assured that everyone will approve of them and their decisions. Give them time to solicit co-workers' opinions. Never back a Steadiness Style into a corner. It is far more effective to apply warmth to get this chicken out of its egg than to crack the shell with a hammer.

With Steadiness Styles, in general, be non threatening and sincere.

Adapting To Cautious Styles

Cautious Styles are time-disciplined, so be sensitive to their time. They need details, so give them data. Support Cautious Styles in their organized, thoughtful approach to problem-solving. Be systematic, logical, well-prepared, and exact with them. Give them time to make decisions and work independently. Allow them to talk in detail.

In work groups, do not expect Cautious Styles to be leaders or outspoken contributors, but do rely on them to conduct research, crunch numbers, and perform detailed foot-work for the group. If appropriate, set guidelines and exact deadlines. Cautious Styles like to be complimented on their brain-power, so recognize their contributions accordingly.

With Cautious Styles, in general, be thorough, well-prepared, detail-oriented, business-like, and patient.

The Platinum Rule provides powerful life-skills that will serve you well in all your relationships: business, friends, family, spouse, and children. Improved relationships create infinite possibilities.