

Beyond Mars and Venus:

Using DiSC as a Transformational Tool

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The Interplanetary Challenge

Ever had the feeling that you weren't getting through to the man or woman in your life? If he would only listen, if she would only not talk so much! Why does he go into his cave? Why does she not realize how much I do for her and appreciate me more? Do I have to say it all the time? If you're smiling and these laments sound familiar, you are not alone. What are we to do about it? Or as the old song goes, "what's love got to do with it?" Well we can read books, go to therapists, seek out mentors/coaches, friends and/or partners in crime for support. All of these are valid and helpful steps along our journey whether the context is personal or professional.

As a Master Certified Coach who works with "The Secret" and offers life coaching in a business context, I'd like to offer another powerful tool for understanding one's self and others. The brain gurus might call it emotional intelligence, the scientists might call it chemistry, the therapists might call it compatibility, and a people-whisperer like me might call it connection, partnership and intimacy. These qualities are gold for couples. These qualities are lovely in commerce. That's because business is personal and a relationship is a 24/7 job of sorts. I love words. They are my stock and trade and yet true connection goes beyond words and straight to the heart. How do I touch your heart and bring out your gifts and mine even in the "dog eat dog" competitive world of Corporate America, or in an entrepreneurial business, in a school system, a governmental organization, a family unit, or in an intimate relationship as I began with in this article?

The Way Through

My approach has been to understand someone's personality or behavioral style with DiSC. Recognizing there is more to the story such as one's needs, values, thinking and feeling patterns and life history, let's hone in on the value of style.

The original DiSC is a transformational tool to assist people in understanding their inherent strengths and areas for development. By taking the most validated and researched tool available in the field, you can understand why you tend to behave the way you do and how to build on your strengths and work with your growing edges in an effective way. Not only can you better understand yourself, you can learn people read and adapt to connect with someone with a very different style.

Crossing the Bridge

This can help lead us out of the land of blame and into the land of speaking in someone else's language enough to cross the bridge between two separate realities. Separate realities exist within couples, within business and organizational life, within families, and even within ourselves. Ultimately, at some level, we transcend these behaviors and this separation. It's wonderful to be spiritual and yet we live a very human experience day to day.

So what is this DiSC and how can I begin to understand it?

Let me begin with the foundation of self-awareness. An individual takes the assessment knowing that it is not about evaluation or judgment but rather information about their natural selves. From my perspective, it is important to answer the most/least questions in the context of who you are in your whole life looking at your behavior as one integrated whole.

Viewing the Galaxy

Then a scientifically validated, time-tested, customized report is generated to show you your home base or set point in terms of behavioral tendencies. There are three levels of interpretation. The first is a graph showing your comfort zone. The graph can also be considered a mirror of your consciousness in this lifetime. The theory strongly suggests that you are hard-wired from birth with these tendencies with all due respect to the nature vs. nurture controversies. From there, you can consider the intensity of your behavioral tendencies and learn what your natural positive and negative aspects are. We all have our shadow side that must be owned. Yet, in my experience, many people are more challenged by owning their gifts and bringing them to the light whether it is in the corporate boardroom or in the bedroom. The underlying themes keep playing out in all arenas. I see this over and over again in my work as a coach and corporate trainer/facilitator and speaker.

The third level is what is known as your classical pattern for which there are 15 patterns not 16 like the Myers-Briggs assessment. Personally, I don't care about why that is so. For me, that's the magic in the box. And that relates to my DiSC style as well which I have learned to love and accept on a good day with enough sleep. A clear understanding of how to interpret and not just administer this transformational tool is best to assure that it is not used to manipulate, punish, label, or hurt anyone for their own ends. My values are not in alignment with "the end justifying the means." As a coach, I believe in self-fullness and a healthy selfishness. That doesn't mean you get to be unkind or can justify hurting someone intentionally because you think you are right. So enough background, let's cut to the chase so I can share the richness of the D i S C without further ado.

Planet "D" Dominance

A person who naturally expresses a greater tendency for "D"/Dominance behavior tends to be direct, results-oriented, impulsive, domineering, demanding, forceful, aggressive, decisive, adventuresome, quick, competitive, and comfortable with taking risks. They don't respond well to routine work, a slow pace, detailed, lengthy discussions or small talk. Their bottom line is WHAT? This is typically what we associate with Mars and male behavior and yet is predominant in the female of the species particularly in corporate environments where this behavior is rewarded at all costs. This style has positive and negative aspects and can be lovely or harsh. There is a subtle and important distinction between someone possessing high ego strength and someone who is egotistical.

Planet "i" for Influence

A person who naturally expresses a greater tendency for "i"/Influence behavior tends to be friendly, outgoing, spontaneous, enthusiastic, generous, influential, persuasive, confident, trusting, and emotional. The high i person thrives on popularity within a group. They love their freedom and buck against a command and control leadership/management style. The high i individual does not respond well to projects which require research for the sake of research, paced productivity and organization, or dealing with objects rather than people. Their bottom line is WHO? This style has positive and negative aspects and can be playful or flighty. There is a subtle and important distinction between someone possessing the gift of connecting with anyone at anytime and someone who is scattered and insincere.

Planet "S" for Steadiness

Those who naturally express a greater intensity of "S"/Steadiness behavior tend to cooperate with others to get a task completed. They tend to be patient, dependable, relaxed, easy-going, amiable, stable, and

loyal team people. They are often good listeners and often have a calming influence on others. These people can concentrate on tasks for extended periods of time in a contented way. They are more comfortable with planned change which is challenging in today's fast-paced global economy. Their bottom line is HOW? This style has positive and negative aspects and can be solid or stubborn. There is a subtle and important distinction between someone who goes with the flow and someone who digs in their heels.

Planet "C" for Conscientiousness

Last and not least, those who naturally express a greater intensity of "C" behavior tend to be compliant to their own high standards. They are happy to work within existing policies and guidelines and wouldn't be inclined to rock the boat without a push. They are naturally concerned with the quality of a product or service and will enjoy taking care of the details. They tend to exhibit behavior which shows they are precise, systematic, diplomatic, courteous, sensitive, cautious, critical, evasive, conscientious, and competent. Their strength is in their precision and they thrive if they have adequate time for planning. Their bottom line is WHY? This style has positive aspects and negative aspects and can be diplomatic or conflict-averse. There is a subtle and important distinction between someone who is careful and cautious and someone who becomes overly picky.

Alas, you didn't know there were 4 planets in the solar system and not just two now did you? The Universe is infinitely complex and elegantly simple at the same time. The rest of the story is deeper as we often inhabit more than one planet comfortably at a time while others require an adaptive space suit we need to learn to maneuver.

For more information on how to navigate the solar system, you are invited to contact the author of this article at www.lauraadavis.com or call (404) 327-6330. My thanks in advance for the gift of your time and attention.