

# Cash or Coordinate? Understanding Personality Styles

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“Why does she do that?”

“We were best friends from the moment we met.”

Do you ever wonder why you react the way you do? Or why you hit it off with one person and not another? This lesson is about personality styles and one system for categorizing them. You will understand the characteristics of the four styles in the Matrixx System as well as what builds up and what tears down the esteem of each style.

## What are personality styles?

Philosophers and psychologists have studied human behavior for centuries. We seem to have a natural interest in understanding why people behave differently from each other. This study of individual differences (and similarities) in behavior is the study of personality. Personality is defined by Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary as “the totality of an individual’s behavioral and emotional characteristics.” Personality styles are the categories developed by students of human behavior in order to break down the complexity of human behavior.

Personality styles can refer to scientifically developed assessments of personality such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) or to funny tests in magazines or on the World Wide Web (see [www.Emode.com](http://www.Emode.com) for examples). These tests have value in that they help us understand our own patterns of behavior and those of others. Increasing our understanding of others’ patterns of behavior helps us to be less judgmental of patterns that differ from our own. Knowing our own natural preferences can help us to make more rewarding choices in careers and relationships.

## “Real Colors” or the Matrixx System

The Matrixx, or “Real Colors,” System is an easily remembered system for categorizing personality styles. While it is based on the theories of Carl Jung, it is simpler to administer and the results are easier

to remember than other assessments based on Jung’s work, such as the MBTI.

Real Colors separates personality traits into four categories: Blue, Gold, Green, and Orange. Each of us has at least some of each color in our personality but in a different order. Most of us have a primary, or dominant, color. All of these colors have positive and negative aspects. Any color taken to an extreme or any personality expressing just one color without being balanced by the others is problematic.

Assessments of personality style are best done by a trained facilitator who can help you understand the results and lead your group through exercises to foster understanding of different styles. By reading and discussing these descriptions of the colors, you will be able to recognize yourself as well as your friends and family members.

### *Blue*

Blues are feelings-oriented. They value people and harmony among people. Blues need relationships that are authentic and opportunities to nurture others. Strengths for Blues include empathy, acceptance, and the ability to “read” others’ feelings accurately. Blues find joy in helping others, romance, and harmony.

### *Gold*

Golds are accomplishment-oriented. They value dependability and hard work. Golds need stability and order. Strengths for Golds are organizational skills, detailed planning, and follow-through. Golds find joy in traditional values, security, and order.

### *Green*

Greens are idea-oriented. They value rational thought and curiosity. Greens need independence and intellectual challenges. Strengths for Greens include problem solving, analyzing information, and objectivity. Greens find joy in discovery and understanding things.

## Orange

Oranges are action-oriented. They need to be active and to be at the center of attention, at least some of the time. Oranges value taking risks and competition. Strengths for Oranges include energy and persuasiveness. Oranges find joy in trying new activities and competing.

### Adjusting your colors

Recognize anyone in these descriptions? For some people, the primary color really stands out from the rest. Others display a blend of the colors and may have a hard time identifying one primary color. At different times in our lives and to meet the responsibilities of different roles, we need to be able to adjust our colors. With practice, you can learn to visualize each color as having a slide control and a display like a stereo tuner. Your natural “settings” will be the most comfortable for you. If Blue is your primary color and you are facing a deadline, you will need to tap into your Gold and “turn it up.”

### Clash or coordinate?

Similarities and differences can be drawn between all of the colors. The next time you find yourself irritated by someone else’s action, consider the colors involved. Understanding what another person values may help to unruffle the feathers.

### Breaking down

When you’re feeling good about yourself, it’s easy to adjust your “color tuner.” But, when you’re feeling down, you may retreat to your most comfortable settings. Some negative events will make any of the colors feel down, such as the loss of a loved one, a personal health crisis, or serious financial trouble. Lesser events can affect the colors differently, though, and when they’re down, the colors react differently and need different things to recover.

Blues can take the troubles of others to heart, so much so that the pain of friends and family members is their own. Golds can become frustrated when others do not show the same level of organization or attention to detail that they do. Greens are hurt when their competence is questioned. Oranges will react negatively when confronted with rigid structures or lack of activity.

## Building up

Do you know what you need to feel better after a bad day or when you’re down? How we recover differs by color, also. These differences can be misunderstood, especially following the loss of a loved one.

Basically, we recover by reverting to our primary color and the associated comfort zone of activities. Blues will need people—to listen to them as they listen to others, without solving or judging. Golds often need to restore order or accomplish something—big or small. Greens will need to turn inward and spend time alone sorting out their feelings. Oranges will need to be active, preferably with others.

With your greater understanding of personality styles, you can help to build others up and allow them to recover in the way that best suits them.

### Resources

For additional information about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Temperament Theory based on Jung:

Baron, R. (1998). *What type am I? Discover who you really are*. New York: Penguin Books.

Keirse, D. and Bates, M. (1984). *Please understand me: Character and temperament types, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company.

Tieger, P. and Barron-Tieger, B. (1997). *Nurture by nature: Understand your child’s personality type—and become a better parent*. Boston: Little, Brown.

For fun “personality” assessments visit ([www.Emode.com](http://www.Emode.com)).

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