

THE PARENTING EDUCATION PROGRAM

BEHAVIORAL STYLES

There are many factors that influence human behavior. Knowing what the factors are and how they influence behavior contributes to our ability to understand and manage behavior. Some of these other influences include personality, mental abilities, physical abilities or health, birth order, situations or events, and the child's environment. People have a high degree of control and power with some of these influences. With others they have very little control. Children in particular are highly susceptible to these influences partially due to their limited degree of power and control over them.

It is obvious that personality has a bearing on behavior. However it is a mistake to simply use personality as an excuse for misbehavior. Even children with strong personalities can and should be expected to behave appropriately. Some personalities are strong, others softer, some flexible and others more rigid. Similar to the many differences in personality, there are differences in behavioral style. The following information about behavioral styles is adapted from the Relationship Strategies Workbook.

There are four main behavioral styles which we will refer to as Controller, Analyst, Supporter, and Promoter. Each of these styles is made up of a combination of various characteristics. By using a behavior matrix and observing a few other features of behavior it is fairly easy to determine a person's behavioral style. Identifying someone's behavioral style can be helpful in understanding and dealing with them. This information can be especially helpful to parents in understanding and dealing with their child, particularly if the child seems to have a different type of personality from their own. Parents can be even more effective in supporting and motivating their children when they understand and adapt their approach to their child's behavioral style.

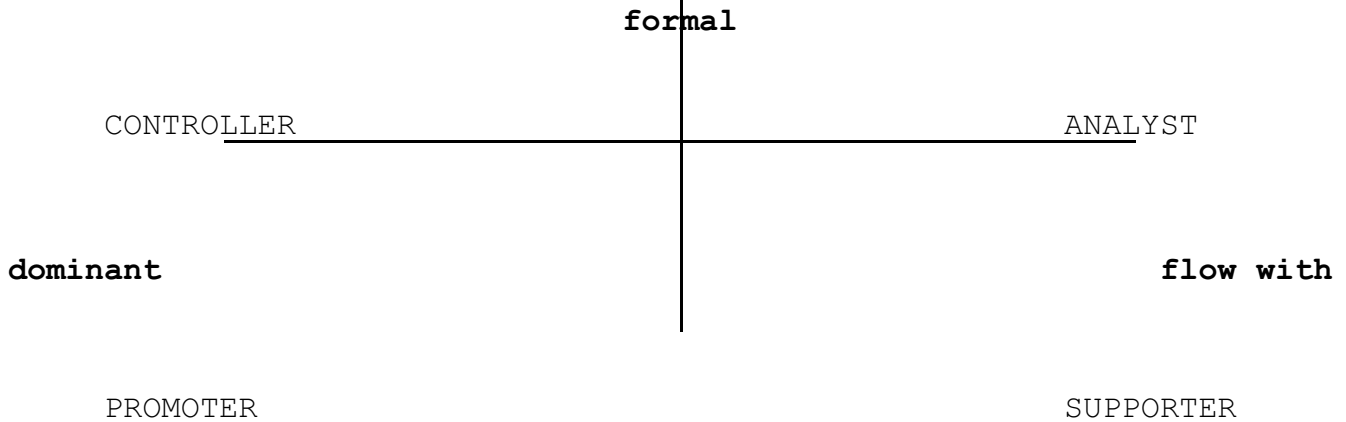
Various characteristics are helpful in determining behavioral style. A few of these characteristics that will be discussed here include formal, informal, dominant, and flow-with behaviors. This will be followed with a drawing of the behavior matrix that is useful in pinpointing behavioral style.

The first step in determining behavioral style is to observe and be aware of behavior and characteristics. For example, does the person seem to be more informal or formal in their mannerisms and conversations? INFORMAL behaviors may include a friendly handshake, relaxed and warm conversation, and initiation of physical contact such as touching the shoulder or arm. Conversation may move away from planned agenda and become opinion oriented. Informal people display a lot of facial expression, and feelings may be freely shown and shared. FORMAL behaviors include a formal handshake, limited facial expression, and lack of physical contact. Feelings are usually kept private and conversation is formal and proper. Conversation follows the agenda closely, with facts rather than opinion being emphasized. Consider your own mannerisms now and determine if you tend to be more informal or formal.

Next, consider dominant or flow-with styles. The dominant approach includes emphatic statements like "This is so." The dominant person will frequently speak during a conversation and usually has a confident voice tone. They are more likely to introduce themselves to others using a firm handshake, and making and maintaining eye contact. They often express their ideas readily and tend to be less patient and more competitive. The flow-with approach is, however, more patient and cooperative, with reserved opinions and expression of ideas. Those with this approach, engage in less eye contact, use a gentle handshake and often wait for others to introduce themselves when in a group. They may qualify their statements and be less emphatic by saying, "According to ..., or my sources say...", and they tend to talk less. Again, reflect back to your own approach and determine if you tend to be more dominant or flow-with. Making these two

determinations about your own behavior you can use the matrix below to determine your behavior style or that of someone else.

It is often more easy to accurately determine someone else's style rather than your own because it is difficult to see yourself objectively. You may want to consider the rest of the information provided and ask others how they see you to determine your own style.



informal

The matrix above can help pinpoint our behavioral style/s based upon the characteristics discussed. For example, if a person seems to behave in a formal manner, then their style will either be Controller or Analyst. To pick between those two styles, decide if they tend to be dominant or flow-with. If they are formal and dominant, their style is CONTROLLER. If they are formal and flow-with, they are ANALYTICAL. Informal and flow-with characteristics indicate a SUPPORTER style. The informal and dominant characteristics indicate a PROMOTER style.

We will now explore more characteristics of each behavioral style and how they can be useful to parents.

The controller works fast, is decisive and seeks to be productive. Controllers are irritated by inefficiency and indecision. They achieve acceptance through leadership and competition and value the results of their tasks. They gain security through control, and fear loss of control. To support or motivate the controller child, parents can support the child's goals and compliment them on their

results or measurable progress. To motivate, parents need to give the child some power or authority and give direct, to the point instructions or answers. Controllers need challenging assignments and to receive credit for their achievements.

They need new and varied activities and like to be first. The controlling child may want their room to be more formal, efficient, and structured and they also like to keep busy.

The analyst prefers to be compliant and works at a slow systematic pace. They value the process of working on a task more than the results. They seek to be accurate and gain security through preparation. They achieve acceptance through correctness and thoroughness and they fear embarrassment. Parents can support their thoughts and be precise with requests or instructions. They want others to be precise and are irritated by surprises, inaccuracy, and unpredictability. Parents can motivate them by giving them high standards with tactful instructions. They may need an explanation of why things need to be done or what the purpose is. They want to have privacy, quality, and accuracy. They may want their room or space to be formal, organized, and functional and they like to have their time structured.

The supporter works at a slow easy pace and likes steadiness. They place higher value on maintaining relationships than in doing tasks. They like to have attention, but they fear confrontation. They gain security through close relationships and achieve acceptance through conformity and loyalty. They want to be liked and are irritated by insensitivity and impatience. Parents can support them by supporting their feelings. They can be motivated by sincerity, and they need explanations of how to do things. They like others to be pleasant. They need family approval, reassurance and appreciation. They may want their space to be relaxed, friendly and informal and they enjoy close personal relationships.

The Promoter needs a stimulating environment and works at a fast and spontaneous pace. They enjoy interacting with other people and are interested in maintaining their status. They seek recognition and

fear loss of prestige. They achieve acceptance by their playfulness and by creating a stimulating environment. They want to be admired and are irritated by boredom and routine. Parents can support them by supporting their ideas. They can be motivated by being given the freedom to speak, an opportunity to help, and recognition. They need social approval and to be convincing to others. They like their own space to be personal, friendly, and stimulating however, it may be cluttered.

With very young children it may be difficult to determine their behavior style since their own personal style may still be developing. It may seem as though all two and three year old children fall into the controller style, however as they pass through those difficult developmental stages, their own sense of self emerges. As children learn to make their own choices about clothing styles, they can reveal a lot about their behavioral style. Promoters want the newest most stylish clothing and are not usually intimidated about wearing something different from the rest of the children. The wilder the better for the promoter. The supporter likes comfortable and casual clothing and will not usually wear an outlandish outfit. The analyst prefers more formal and conservative clothing - not too wild for this one. The controller may also be more formal in their dress and more functional. One of the most striking differences between behavioral styles is in what they tend to want. The controller definitely wants to be in charge while the analyst wants to be correct. The supporter wants to be liked while the promoter wants to be admired.

All children need to be accepted for who they are. It is very important for parents to separate the child from the behavior when correcting children. Children are not bad, however, their behavior may be bad or misdirected. Parents need to recognize that behavioral styles are an integral part of their own and their child's personality and behavior. It is damaging to children to make fun of them because they value something different, or because what makes them tick is different. Whether they are controllers, analysts, promoters, or supporters, they are all special and unique. Parents need to respect

these style differences and honor their children for being different rather than making them wrong for being different. Children need to learn that what they want is important, and that they may not always get what they want. They can learn to deal with disappointment and hurt and parents can help by respecting their hurts and treating them tenderly rather than belittling them or making fun of them when they are hurt.

For the supporter child, not being liked by others is very hurtful; while the analytical child will feel hurt if they are not correct. The promoter is sensitive about being admired by others and it is very hard for them to be shunned, or lose their prestige. The controller may always want to be in charge and find it hard to take the back seat. Parents who can empathize with their children's wants, disappointments and hurts, validate to their children that they are important and that their feelings are important.

People often do not align with only one behavioral style. For example a person may behave like a controller and an analyst at the same time. Likewise, a promoter may also behave like a supporter at the same time. Individuals will also modify their behavioral style depending on the situation they are in. Parents may behave more like controllers with their children or even more like supporters. They may behave differently at work, depending on the job they do and their status at work. When the usual group leader is absent, another child may step forward and behave more like a controller.

Using the behavior matrix previously illustrated, it is easy to determine the other ways in which individuals may behave outside of their usual style. Most commonly, they will try on, and be somewhat comfortable with a style that is next to their own on the matrix diagram. The controller position is next to that of analyst and promoter and opposite from the supporter. The controller may have the most difficulty in trying on the supporter role, while it will usually be easier for them to behave like an analyst or promoter. It is common for those in opposing behavioral styles to have more difficulty understanding and getting along with each other because their

behaviors are most different. The analyst is opposite from the promoter on the matrix and they behave most differently from each other. They have different likes, wants, needs and behaviors.

Many families find a lot of relief when they use the previous information to determine the behavioral style of each family member. This can often answer a lot of questions about disagreements and dislikes between family members. Once they recognize their own style and that of other family members they have more insight as to what some of their problems may be about and how to work on them. A family may have members from each behavioral style. Parents do not necessarily pass their own style on to their children either through genes or learned behavior. Their children are unique and develop with their own style and it may be opposite than that of other children in the family or their parents.

Parents can use this information and teach their children that there is room in the family for each member to be different and yet learn to follow family rules and get along. Parents who can accept the differences between each other and their children teach their children how to accept differences in others and adjust to those differences. Parents can work with their family members to accept and value members from all of the behavioral styles. When there is more than one controller in a family, they can take turns being in charge or be in charge of different things. This teaches children how to be in charge without being domineering and demanding as well as how to follow. Parents, do not confuse this with giving up your right and obligation to be the leaders of your children. As the leaders, you can decide how much you want, as well as what you want, to let others practice being in control of. Families can support more than one analyst by recognizing that one person can be correct without making it necessary for someone else to be wrong. The promoter can be admired for the stimulating, light hearted ways in which they contribute to their families, and there can be room for more than one promoter in a family. The supporter needs to be liked and there is

enough of that to go around to all who want it. Liking one does not mean that others are not liked.

Parents can work with their children more successfully by understanding and accepting what is important to their child. By helping the child to feel acceptance and security, and by allowing the child to work at their own pace, they can win the cooperation of their children. Families can grow to love and respect each other through more understanding. They can learn to appreciate their differences and how those difference add more color to their lives.

STUDY QUESTIONS - STUDY GUIDE EIGHT
BEHAVIORAL STYLES

1. Using personality as an excuse for misbehavior is:
 - a) usually acceptable
 - b) an effective way to deal with misbehavior
 - c) a mistake
 - d) illogical

2. Which is not one of the four main behavioral styles?
 - a) Controller
 - b) Analyst
 - c) Supporter
 - d) Outgoing

3. Parents can be even more effective in supporting and motivating their children when they understand and _____ to the behavioral style of their child.
 - a) adapt their approach
 - b) change their child's attitude
 - c) use the style opposite
 - d) refuse to adapt

4. _____ may include a friendly handshake, relaxed and warm conversation, and initiation of physical contact such as touching the arm.
 - a) formal behaviors
 - b) informal behaviors
 - c) controlling behaviors
 - d) a dominant person

5. _____ include a formal handshake, limited facial expression, and lack of physical contact.
 - a) formal behaviors
 - b) informal behaviors
 - c) controlling behaviors
 - d) dominant behaviors

6. Informal people display a lot of facial expressions, and feelings:
- a) are never shown
 - b) may be freely shown and shared
 - c) are always hidden
 - d) are well protected
7. The _____ will frequently speak during a conversation and usually has a confident voice tone.
- a) flow-with person
 - b) dominant person
 - c) formal person
 - d) informal person
8. A person who uses a gentle handshake and waits for others to introduce themselves when in a group probably has a more _____ style.
- a) flow-with
 - b) dominant
 - c) formal
 - d) informal
9. It is often more easy to accurately determine our own style rather than someone else's.
- a) true
 - b) false
10. If a person seems to behave in a formal manner then their behavioral style will be either:
- a) analyst or supporter
 - b) controller or supporter
 - c) promoter or analyst
 - d) controller or analyst
11. If a persons style is formal and dominant, their behavioral style is:
- a) controller
 - b) analyst
 - c) promoter
 - d) supporter
12. If a person's style is formal and flow-with, their behavioral style is:
- a) controller
 - b) analyst
 - c) promoter
 - d) supporter

- c) to make close friends
 - d) to overcome the controller
21. The supporter wants to be liked while the promoter wants:
- a) to be correct
 - b) to be admired
 - c) to support the supporter
 - d) to make close friends
24. When correcting behavior, it is very important for parents to separate:
- a) the child's behavior from their style
 - b) personality from style
 - c) the child from the behavior
 - d) themselves from the child's behavior
25. Parents need to respect behavioral style differences and honor their children for being different and:
- a) try to help them change their style
 - b) insist that they conform to others' style
 - c) not make them feel wrong for being different
 - d) help them to understand the importance of conforming
26. For the supporter child, not being liked by others:
- a) doesn't matter much
 - b) is very hurtful
 - c) is very common
 - d) is very unusual
27. Parents who can _____ their children's wants, disappointments and hurts, validate their children and show them they are important.
- a) control
 - b) conform to
 - c) empathize with
 - d) agree with
28. It is common for those with _____ behavioral styles to have more difficulty understanding and getting along with each other.
- a) complimentary
 - b) adjacent
 - c) similar
 - d) opposing
29. Parents who can accept their own differences, and their children's differences, teach:
- a) their children how to control others
 - b) their children how to accept difference in others and to adjust to those differences
 - c) their children a great injustice
 - d) nothing about getting along with others

30. Parents can work with their children more successfully by:
- a) understanding and accepting what is important to their child
 - b) understanding that their child may not be able to follow the rules because of their behavioral style
 - c) focusing on the child rather than their behavior
 - d) controlling factors that influence the child's behavioral style