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# Speaking Volumes Without Saying A Word **Using DISC to Analyze Non-Verbals**

# DISC is the universal language that helps us to identify a person's behavioral style

**DISC is the *universal* language that helps us to identify a person's behavioral style.** It's considered to be "universal" because the rules of DISC apply to everyone, regardless of their place of origin. Another great thing about DISC is that it is observable. With minimal training, it's fairly easy to identify a person's main behavioral style just by briefly observing them.

With a little skill and relatively good observation skills, we can identify behavioral styles without a single word being spoken! By observing a person's mannerisms, body language, hand gestures, their stance and walk, the length of their gaze (and many more things like these), we can identify what type of behavioral style this person most likely possesses.

Why does this matter? People have a natural tendency to gravitate toward others who are like them. **Knowing what behavioral style a person possesses can make communication so much easier.** We all adapt our behaviors consciously and subconsciously to some degree, usually depending on where we are at the time. While most people can adapt effectively in the short-term, doing so for an extended period of time becomes uncomfortable and difficult for them. It becomes easier to tell who is adapting to a behavioral style and who really possesses that style.

If we can correctly identify someone's behavioral style and adapt ours to be more like theirs, our communication with that person will be much more effective. Whether we are trying to make a sale or make a friend, good communication is at the heart of either.





# DISC Defined

DISC is an acronym that stands for Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance. **The science of DISC explains the “how” a person does what they do, and can be a strong predictor of future behavior.**

When someone scores higher in one particular area of DISC compared to the others, we say they are “high” in that particular factor. **High-D’s are all about results. High-I’s are about interaction. High-S’s seek stability while the high-C is all about facts.** Having this basic understanding will help illustrate how to identify various behavior styles next time you enter a room with other people.

## Observing Non-Verbals

A person with a high-D behavioral style exudes confidence and has a presence. D’s want to make their presence known upon entering the room and are energized by being the center of attention.

The high-I is all about interaction and engagement. They are willing to consider someone their friend shortly after meeting them. They

are mostly optimistic and have faith in people, therefore exhibiting very little fear toward others.

The S will look for the smoothest approach into any situation. Of the four styles, the S is the most aware of their surroundings, constantly monitoring activity around them. Great listeners, the S is open to communicating with others, but seeks purpose in the communication rather than just communicating for the fun of it.

The C is motivated by remaining within their system of living and avoiding the spotlight. They avoid it due to a fear of being judged in a negative light. The higher the C, the harder they are on themselves, and the more they want to avoid external criticism. Cautious, the C seeks safe zones where they can maintain their guard. When made a focal point, a high-C feels exposed and vulnerable. In search of comfort and lack of conflict, the high-C prefers to focus their time and energy in areas in which they excel and to do so on their terms within their comfort zone.

It’s important to note that regardless of what we observe in others, the physical environment may impact the emotional environment (the true behavior style). Factors such as temperature, number of people and the focal point of the room’s attention, are just a few of the many possible things that can cause a person to give off non-verbal cues that may be misinterpreted. A person may have their arms folded simply because it’s cold, not because they are anti-social.

# Observe Exchanges

A person may be identified by the exchanges they have with other people in a social situation. Look for where this person holds their focus.

A high-D can be identified through their confidence and their drive. Identify an I through their interaction with others. The S usually acts with a purpose while the guarded C can often be seen seeking comfort in a safe place. Let's take a closer look at how each primary style will interact with others.



## DOMINANCE

D's work better when people know exactly who they are. They crave the extroversion because they like being able to shine. D's know how to perform in ego states; they enjoy and know how to be center of the show. They will gladly take center stage as long as they believe it will position them in a positive light. If introducing a D to a group of people, introduce them in the exact same manner they originally introduced themselves. Let them divulge the way they want to do something. D's want to demonstrate who they are through their strength or force of character.

When D's experience anxiety, they may counter fear with aggression. D's face obstacles head on. They are all about knowing where they stand and their internal compass knows when they need to take charge of a situation. Wanting to show strength is the hallmark of a D; sometimes control is simply a byproduct of doing so. A high-D will often attempt take charge unless an established system (and leader) is already in place, then they'll attempt to align themselves within that system. Looking to bond with the current leader, the D will accept a secondary role as "next in line" to the established leader.

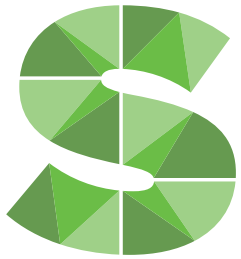




## INFLUENCE

More interaction is better for a high-I. Ask conversation starting questions and engage in small talk before getting to business. Moving around is acceptable and encouraged and usually does not distract the I. More people in the mix is welcomed by the

high-I, unless there is a detractor present which can easily distract them. Providing a forum in which to communicate will stimulate the I. It's ok to get physically closer to an I, especially after rapport has been built. Too much distance feels odd to them.



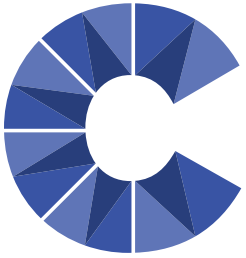
## STEADINESS

The S works better when operating from behind the scenes, sizing up a scenario and instituting a plan. Not a big fan of sudden change or inconsistency, an S tends to be more people-oriented when they are in the presence of their close, inner circle of friends. S's can be similar to I's but with less people and movement. A calm, steady pace puts an S in their comfort zone.

S's are good at adapting and mirroring other behavioral styles. They can create the appearance they fit in, even if they aren't really comfortable. S's often prefer listening more than talking themselves. It's beneficial to use words that convey feelings over facts. Say, "It feels like this is happening." If you're asking for feedback, ask them for their sense of something. "What is your sense of the situation?"







## COMPLIANCE

Most of the C's behaviors come from wanting to remain within their specific system of living. Inherently hard on themselves, they fear negative judgment from others. Regularly aware of how they feel, C's frequently gauge their surroundings with the intent of preserving their level of comfort and safety. The higher the C, the less emotional they'll be and the more of a perfectionist complex they will possess. Many C's dislike physical contact, preferring ample personal space between them and others.

C's prefer "to the point" communication, especially in written form. Some high-C's dread public speaking, since they don't particularly like the attention on them. Because they're usually hard enough on themselves, any additional external criticism makes them uneasy if not altogether uncomfortable. When involved in a conversation

with a C, avoid tangents or their attention may go elsewhere. It's better to get straight to the point, be less animated and have conversations that are more fact, less feelings-based.

To make a C comfortable, fully explain all aspects of an interaction. For example, if conducting an interview with a C, meet them at the front desk, explain what the interview process will look like, then conduct the interview in a designated interview room.





# The Room

Walk into a room and witness the dynamic. A typical room has two “focus” points: the doorway and an area where the action is taking place. An individual will gravitate toward a different focus point depending on their behavioral style. Observing how the people fill the space in the room is an easy way to identify behavioral styles.

The D’s and I’s will head straight to the people while the S’s and C’s will not. The D wants to own the space, asserting control. The I is looking for interaction and is happy to see and be seen. The S looks for the “best” way in, sizing up the room before making a smooth entrance.

The C looks for a position away from attention. Wanting to avoid being observed or judged, the C will seek out guards, such as a table or a pillar in the room that they can stand behind to create space. These natural barriers provide a certain level of comfort.





# The Circle

Now imagine the group of people standing in a circle, conversing with each other. Watching how a new person entering a room interacts with that existing group of people will be a surefire indicator of their likely behavioral style.

The high-I will walk straight up to the group and immediately begin to talk in a friendly, polite, non-controlling manner. People energize the I and provide a natural high. The high-D, seeking to establish his or her place in the room, will also walk straight to the people. The D will be more likely to break the circle of people, seeking to either become the leader or align with the current leader. While neither hesitates approaching people, the directness of the D is the differentiator. The D may even try to create a new circle of which they can be the center. The I will not attempt to assert dominance when they enter the circle, although they will likely be the most talkative.

The D will face the person they are talking with straight on and seek to establish themselves as the leader. If they feel that they are the most competent leader, they will maintain this position. However, if they realize there is a more dominant leader in the room, the D will defer to that leader instead aligning with the stronger leader as the “next in line.”

While a high-S may want to join the circle, they won't head straight for it. Instead they will come up with a plan that provides the best approach into the room. Indirect in their approach, the high-S will be more laid back in their attempt to join the conversation. The S will probably talk less than the high-I and definitely use less hand gestures. The S has the ability to mirror those with whom they are speaking, making it somewhat more difficult to define their true behavioral style. While D's and I's have no issues addressing the group as a whole, the S prefers to pick out an individual or two and have a side conversation with them.

The high-C will neither approach the group nor break the circle. Their preference is to avoid the group of people, especially if the group itself is the focal point of the room where the action is taking place. They will most likely look to position themselves behind a barrier, whether that be a chair, table or even the drink in their hand as they prefer space between themselves and others. If the opportunity presents itself, they will walk behind another person entering the room. This is in stark contrast to the D who seeks attention immediately upon entering the room.



# The Handshake

Once all the people are together, observe how they introduce themselves to each other. The driven style of the D shows itself most in two situations: during conflict and in the presence of people. Confidently stepping forward positioned directly in front of a person, the D will reach out and give a firm handshake. Maintaining full control of the handshake throughout indicates an act of dominance by the D.

The C prefers not to be touched at all, and will keep a safe distance from another person. When a handshake is imminent, the C will prefer to stay back and reach for the other person's hand, keeping some distance in tact. The S will get closer than the C but will still show some restraint. The S has a softer, gentler approach to a handshake, not trying to establish any sort of dominance nor convey any message. The high-I will confidently shake the person's hand and maintain solid eye contact, but the handshake will be straightforward with no attempt to assert dominance.





# Eye Contact

The D will maintain steady eye contact throughout the interaction, but often will look the other person over, top-to-bottom. This differs greatly from the I who will keep their eyes fixed solely on the face of the person with which they are communicating. If the D feels that there is someone in the room more dominant than they are, they will quickly begin to seek the attention of the stronger leader to become aligned with them. If the stronger leader avoids the D, he/she will begin to avoid eye contact, subconsciously deferring to the stronger leader.

The S will pay close attention and maintain eye contact mostly when someone is talking to them, but may shift away when they themselves begin to talk. S is very conscious about how other people are feeling, and if they sense they are pushing someone away, they will avoid eye contact altogether. Of all the behavioral styles, the S is the most in tune with the concept of relieving or exerting pressure, doing what they can to mirror the person they are communicating with as closely as possible.

C makes very limited eye contact but in a roaming gaze. They'll quickly lock eyes then immediately look at something else. C's may avoid eye contact and even shift their body position away from another person if they feel uncomfortable. C's are the quickest to change their position back to a feeling of comfort.



# Environmental Factors

When it comes to body language, not everything is black and white. While a person with crossed-arms may give the appearance of disinterest, it can simply mean it's cold in the room. To make an accurate judgment of a person's behavioral style, environmental factors have to all be taken into consideration.

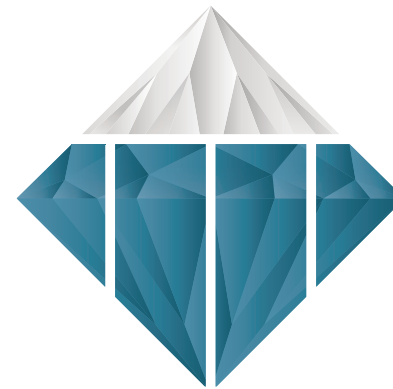
Considerations include: ambient temperature, noise level, surrounding activity and presence of others, to name a few. If there's a lot of activity surrounding your conversation, the other person may be distracted. If the air conditioning is on full blast, they may have their arms folded and be anxiously moving around trying to generate heat. If it's loud, the person may move closer to hear you but it doesn't necessarily mean they are a high-D or I; they just couldn't hear you at their usual, preferred distance.



# Conclusion

You don't need to be an expert in the science of DISC to be able to identify someone's behavior style. If you pay close enough attention, you can figure out their behavioral style before they even speak a word.

Since communication is the cornerstone of virtually all human interaction, understanding a person's natural behavioral style provides advantages. Being able to identify non-verbal cues is an integral part of that understanding. Communicating effectively with people, regardless of their behavioral style, can help a person find success in any endeavor.



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