

## What Are Your Drivers?

Drivers (Taibi Kahler, 1975) are ways that we have learned to adapt to our environment when we were young. They are developed at an age when we can understand what is approved of and disapproved of by the grownups around us and we attempt to adapt to them to feel ok about ourselves. Some of the messages we would have picked up from verbal response and some from non-verbal responses to us.

Self-awareness has been found to help us increase our self-esteem, improve relationships, manage stress and increase the quality of our lives. Understanding our own and others' Drivers can give us insight into our own and others' processes that can be useful in every area of our life. It is a concept that is easy to understand and to use.

Kahler, who developed this theory, noticed in his research that there were five distinctive sets of behaviours that people consistently displayed. These were divided up into five categories which he called Drivers.

In organisations these are sometimes referred to as **Working Styles** because they can be used in a positive manner. However, when used to excess, people can be driven by them.

They all have positives and negatives about them.

We can spot peoples drivers through the many ways in which they behave. These include words, tones, speech patterns, gestures, posture, facial expressions, the way people dress and the way they keep their home or office. We tend to have two main Drivers and understanding these can help us to understand ourselves and others. See if you can identify your own (you do not have to fulfil all the criteria to have that Driver.)

### BE STRONG

#### Characteristics

Erect, stoical posture; body defended; still; rigid; face expressionless; few wrinkles; monotone; long pauses; short sentences; fine – absence of feeling words; uses one, it, and distancing pronouns.

#### Benefits

Stays calm under pressure. Feels energised when having to cope. Good in a crisis. Thinks logically when others panic. Stays emotionally detached, problem solves, deals with stressed people. Can make unpleasant decisions without torturing soul. Seen as reliable and steady. Handles others, firmly and fairly. Gives honest feedback, and constructive criticism. Even tempered.

#### Difficulties

Hates admitting weakness: failure to cope is weakness. Gets overlooked rather than ask for help. Hides work away – tidy appearance. Highly self-critical. Others uncomfortable about lack of emotional responses – hard to get to know robots or masked people who smile does not extend to eyes. Fears being unlovable, so doesn't ask for anything, lest it's refused. May become absent minded. May withdraw. Mind flits in circular motion.

## **BE PERFECT**

### **Characteristics**

Upright erect posture. Precise. Look up to right frequently. Mouth goes slightly out. Counts on fingers. Even, steady tone. Words attempt accuracy. Often over-detail and use parentheses. Qualifies such as exactly, roughly. Steepling hands.

### **Benefits**

Accurate, reliable work. Checks facts thoroughly. Prepares well. Attention to detail. Good at layout. Well organised. Looks ahead. Plans well with contingency plans. Smooth, efficient well-co-ordinated projects with progress monitored. Cares about how things look.

### **Difficulties**

Cannot be relied upon to produce work to deadlines, as may check too carefully and often for mistakes – keeps asking for minor changes and does drafts rather than final versions, finding it difficult to incorporate others input. Misjudges level of detail. Applies high standards, always to self and others, failing to recognise when good enough is good enough. Demotivates through criticism. Problems delegating. May feel worthless and dissatisfied.

## **TRY HARD**

### **Characteristics**

Hand on side of cheek or behind ear; peering – lines on forehead and around eyes as a result of screwed up face. Tone strangled, tense, muffled, choked back. Incomplete sentences. Words such as try, hard, difficult, can't think. Body moves forward.

### **Benefits**

Tackles things enthusiastically. Energy peaks with something new to do. Others value motivation and ability to get things off the ground. Popular. Problem solving. Volunteers for new tasks. Follows up all possibilities. Finds out the implications of everything. Pays attention to all aspects of a task, including what others overlook.

### **Difficulties**

Yes but...More committed to trying than succeeding. Initial interest wears off before task is finished. Others may resent not doing the interesting bits when they are left with the mundane bits. Makes task impossibly large. Creates havoc with time schedule. Written work full of irrelevant details. Communication may be pained, strained and frowning – listeners

become confused. Too many questions given – answers don't relate to questions asked. Gripes. Sabotages.

## **HURRY UP**

### **Characteristics**

Agitated gestures; looks at watch; fidgety. Screwed up face, eyes moving around. Rapid staccato tone. Words such as quick, got to and time words.

### **Benefits**

Works quickly and gets a lot done in a short time. Responds well to short deadlines – energy peaks under pressure. Enjoys having too many things to do: if you want something done give it to a busy person. Prepares quickly, saves time on tasks to spend with people. Juggles.

### **Difficulties**

Delays until deadline is near. Makes mistakes in haste; corrections can take time and thus misses deadline. Quality of work may be poor. May come across as impatient. Rushes with crammed diary, forget papers, not get to know people, feel an outsider.

## **PLEASE PEOPLE**

### **Characteristics**

Widened eyes; raised eyebrows; nodding; toothy smile; horizontal forehead lines; look up with head down; information up at the end of a sentence; qualifying words (sorta, kinda, ok); gestures of palms up; reaching forwards; body moves forwards.

### **Benefits**

Good team members, enjoying being with others and aiming to please without asking. Understanding and empathic. Use intuition. Notice body language and other signals. Encourage harmony in groups/teams. Invite quieter members into discussion. Considerate of others feelings.

### **Difficulties**

Avoids any risk of upsetting someone and therefore not to challenge ideas (even if wrong). Cautious with criticism and then ignored. Appears to lack commitment. Presents own views as questions; appears to lack assertiveness, critical faculties and courage of convictions. Takes criticism personally even if constructive. Allows others to interrupt. Reading minds can lead to not asking for necessary information and feeling misunderstood when others don't like results.