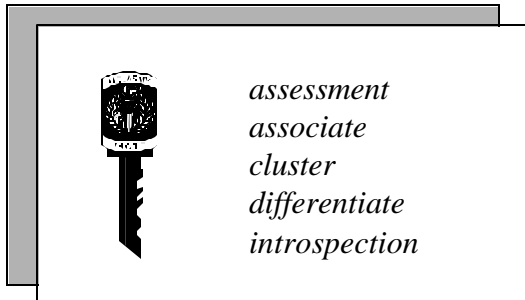


## KNOW YOURSELF — SOCRATES

### LESSON 1: SELF-AWARENESS



#### INTRODUCTION

You may notice that some people behave or conduct themselves like you and others behave quite differently. For example, one person may be very quiet and doing contemplative while another may be the life of the party. Identifying your own preferences and the preferences of others can be an important building block in the foundation for your success. This knowledge can help you to understand situations as they unfold, improve your communication with others, and influence people and situations to get the results you desire.

#### NATURAL TENDENCIES

Everyone has preferences. How these are developed in each of us is a complex combination of things. Whether you are born with them or learn them — nature or nurture — can be an interesting question to explore. It is also interesting to think about how much preferences guide our behavior.

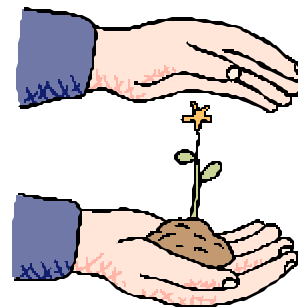
Behaviors that feel comfortable, that you do without thinking, that just seem natural, that you resort to when under stress, or that you simply identify as “the way you do things” can all be considered to be natural tendencies, or your personal preferences.

Being aware of personal preferences is an important step. Understanding others, being aware of what makes them tick, is another important interpersonal skill. You will learn more about that in the following lesson, *Appreciating Diversity through Winning Colors*.

#### LEARNING TO GROW

Self-awareness is just the beginning of a lifetime of growth and learning. Once you understand what you prefer, what is comfortable for you, it is much easier to branch out of your comfort zone to learn new behaviors. Having options, about how to behave, rather than just responding in whatever way feels natural, gives you the freedom to act in a sensible way, given the situation.

It is in these moments when you choose to be a bit uncomfortable, that you have the most potential to learn and grow. This is especially true if you select the areas for development, because you have a personal reason to do so. Motivation is a powerful influence on our success.



#### THE PROCESS OF SELF-DISCOVERY

How do you discover more about your own natural tendencies, or preferences? Here

are some ways you can enhance your self-knowledge:

- Introspection
- Observation
- Feedback (giving and receiving)
- Assessment Tools

### *INTROSPECTION*

You can pay attention and take note of your own experiences, actions, and reactions. Your own observations are invaluable sources of information about who you are and what makes you tick. Paying attention to how you feel inside while you participate in a variety of activities can give you some insight into your own behavioral preferences.

- Do you feel happier when working in a group, or alone?
- Do you feel satisfaction when you accomplish a difficult task?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to tell others what to do?

Your body language can also offer helpful clues. Paying attention to what is going on when you start to feel bored and tired — or lively and interested is an indicator. If your body is responding positively to the situation, it is likely there are elements there that agree with your personal preferences.

### *OBSERVATION*

In addition to what you see in yourself, the observations of others can also be helpful. Sometimes others see behaviors in us that we don't see, especially when we are too involved in activities to pay attention.

There are several key concepts to keep in mind if observation is to be a truly valuable self-discovery process.

### **Situation — What is going on?**

In terms of the situation, get a sense of the environment in which a behavior occurred. What are the significant factors? Who is involved? This context information offers additional perspective about the behavior.

### **Specific Behavior — What happened?**

For an observation to offer objective information rather than subjective, or merely an opinion, it needs to be specific. Vague comments are not as helpful as a concrete example.

Since behavior arises from complex factors, this protects us from being offensive or narrow in our interpretation, and allows for the processes of communicating our thoughts and asking questions to understand even more about others and ourselves. Jumping to conclusions often leads to errors or an incomplete picture.

### **Impact — What is the result?**

The impact also needs to be described in concrete terms when making an observation. Some results that could be observed include:

- Change in body language
- Increased energy or animation
- Decreased energy or animation
- Focus changes

Including impacts observed in reaction to specific behavior gives people a lot of information about not only what they are

doing but how that influences people and situations.

### *GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK*

Sharing observations with others is a responsibility and a privilege. This kind of information can be given in a helpful or a harmful way. Sharing an observation is an interpretation of reality. This is true whether you are observing your own behavior or that of others. So, be kind — and real — to yourself and to others when sharing your observations.

Feedback from others is simply their impression or opinion, particularly when a belief or value judgment is included. Try asking for specific examples when getting feedback from others, since observations are more reliable when they are based on fact. An opinion is more understandable when backed up with specific examples.

### *ASSESSMENT TOOLS*

Putting some structure around observations, inner thoughts, feedback and specific examples helps to make sense out of all this information. That's where **assessment** tools come in. They are valuable instruments that you can use in your quest for self-knowledge.

One set of extremely applicable tools is Winning Colors®. The Winning Colors® process supports self-discovery in a positive and affirming way. Winning Colors® is about what you can do, not what you can't.

You actually have more behavior options than you ever imagined, and the four categories make new behaviors easy to comprehend and put into practice.

Since people understand the categories and processes so quickly, you can expect to

make some interesting self-discoveries using the Winning Colors® assessment tool. Then, you can use the information to make a positive difference in your communication and in your life.

### **WINNING COLORS®**

Like other assessment tools, Winning Colors® groups human behavior into categories. Categories help us to understand complex information, by associating related data. To **associate** means to group things together when they have common characteristics. To **differentiate** means to make a distinction or state a difference between things so we can tell them apart.

### *PURPOSE AND PROCESS*

Winning Colors® is a present time behavior indicator. It can be used to:

- Improve understanding of how to cooperate and communicate with others
- Provide clues to motivation
- Clarify learning styles
- Offer insight to conflict resolution style
- Uncover essential aspects of communication

### *BEHAVIOR CLUSTERS*

Winning Colors® focuses on present behavior, a unique and very valuable characteristic of this tool. Four categories have been identified. Each of the four categories include behaviors that have enough characteristics in common to form a group (**cluster**).

Each category is labeled in a way that helps you remember the behaviors that go in that group.

***Builder Behaviors (brown, decide)***

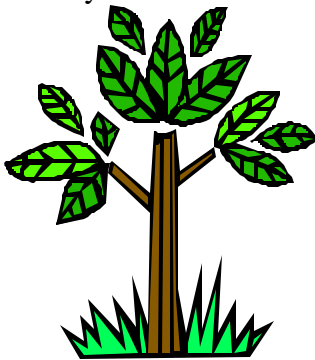
Do you have behaviors that tend toward taking over and being in charge? Do you like to know the “bottom-line” and be in control of people or things? Do you like giving orders and being “top dog?”



If you have developed these behaviors, you are a strong BUILDER. You might use the color BROWN, or compare these behaviors to the brown of the earth, in order to describe this part of you.

***Planner Behaviors (green, think)***

Do you have behaviors that tend toward being quiet and contemplative? You like to devise and develop strategies. You act only after you have considered all the details, and you have many creative ideas.

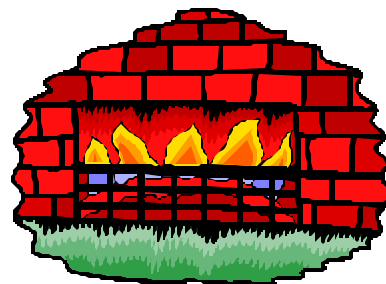


If you have developed these behaviors, you are a strong PLANNER. You

might use the color GREEN, or compare these behaviors to the growing grass or leaves, in order to describe this part of you.

***Adventurer Behaviors (red, act)***

Do you have behaviors that tend towards action? You are always on the go. You like to be on stage and take risks and chances whenever possible. You act on the spur of the moment. You know what to do in an emergency before anyone else.



If you have developed these behaviors, you are a strong ADVENTURER. You might use the color RED, or compare these behaviors to fire, in order to describe this part of you.

***Relater Behaviors (blue, feel)***

Do you have behaviors that tend toward showing feelings? You like to share your feelings with others and have them share theirs with you. You enjoy talking a lot.



If you have developed these behaviors, you are a strong RELATER. You might use the color BLUE, or compare these behaviors to the wide expanse and depth of the ocean, in order to describe this part of you.

## YOUR KEY TO SUCESSS

The key to success is to be balanced. Think when it is time to think (planner — green), decide and “bottom-line it” (builder — brown), feel when it is time to feel (relater — blue), and take action when it is time to take action (adventurer — red).

It is crucial that you understand that you are capable of developing all four clusters, but you may presently be emotionally attached or locked into one cluster more than another. For whatever reason, certain behaviors have worked for you or felt more natural, so naturally you developed those more than the others.

Be forewarned, a single strength can get you into trouble. For example, if you favor acting quickly (adventurer), you may act without thinking (planner) or considering the feelings of others (relater). Or, if you have

strong planner (green) but no adventurer behaviors (red), you may be unable to get up in front of a group of people and speak out clearly and confidently, without being embarrassed. Everyone benefits from the ability to shift between behavioral styles as needed, depending on the situation.

## CONCLUSION

It’s true that you can significantly improve your life by acquiring new behaviors to attain your goals. Making decisions, particularly effective ones, and making them quickly, is a complex set of behaviors. Since behavior is learned and can be reinforced until it becomes a habit, you have the power to choose new behaviors, even if they feel unfamiliar and alien to you today.

Taking an active approach in discovering your strengths and enhancing behaviors you find desirable is a healthy lifestyle choice. This lesson presented some information to help guide you on the path to self-discovery. As Socrates said, “Know thyself.” It is the beginning of wisdom.