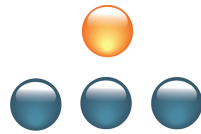




Shownotes

The “S” in DiSC®



[Blog Post]

Today's show is the third of four shows giving a high level overview of how to communicate with different behavioral styles at work. Over the last two months, Mark covered both the "D" (Dominance) and the "I" (Influence) in DiSC®; in this show he'll walk us through the "S" (Steadiness) profile in detail.

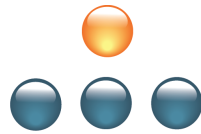
Although it isn't necessary that you have listened to the previous High I and High D podcasts, you'll want to have a listen to our show about the DiSC model on February 17, 2006. Without the high-level overview, this podcast won't be nearly as effective for you.

Second, if you've been following these DiSC podcasts, you'll be aware of the How To Use The DiSC To Be More Effective Every Day Cheat Sheet. That's available in the Member Section on the website. For those of you trying to get the most out of this cast, it wouldn't be a bad idea to have printed the cheat sheet and have it next to you for reference during the podcast.

[Cast]

We've developed quite an inventory of great information on the DiSC stuff. This is powerful, powerful stuff.

Many listeners have not had the opportunity to understand human behavior in a way that allows them to more intellectually parse a conversation or relationship so that they can be more effective in that relationship. This is an area where you can immediately try some of the concepts you've learned. And you can immediately get better feedback.



We originally covered DiSC at a high level, and now we've been going over the specifics. We have talked about high D's, we've talked about high I's, and today we're going to talk about high S's.

1. How To Spot A High S

- a. Verbal Clues**
- b. Vocal Clues**
- c. Visual Clues**

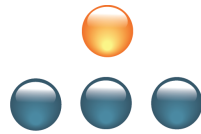
2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High S

- a. Delegating**
- b. Feedback**
- c. Coaching**
- d. Reporting To A High S**

1. How To Spot A High S. Some famous high S's include Mother Teresa, Mr. Rogers, John Denver, the singer, not because everybody knows his personality, but that sort of gentle, relaxed, not necessarily country boy, but easygoing. His character in "Oh, God" with George Burns, that kind of warm and personable, friendly, caring about other people personality. Walter Cronkite, not belligerent, not loud, just steady, reliable, resourceful.

These are the team builders of the world. They care about everyone else, in some cases, to the extent of their own expense. Whereas, the high D comment is it's a case of mind over matter. "I don't mind and you don't matter." The high S would say mind of over matter, "I hope you don't mind, I don't matter. I'm so concerned for you." They tend to be the warm and caring leaders of families.

Families tend to show up more so in the way they interact with the world than somebody, let's say, a high D.

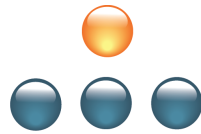


They tend to be quiet. They tend to be reserved. They tend to not speak. They tend to be not the one speaking the most in a group situation. Oftentimes, they get the label "strong and silent" because they don't chime in, even though they care about and are willing to extend themselves to benefit other people. They tend to gravitate toward people who are relaxed, people who tend to be agreeable. They love people who cooperate, and they're a cooperative person.

They're the person who, when we're getting ready to go out to a movie, the high D's can take advantage of because the high S says, "Oh, sure, wherever you guys want to go." Now, here's one of the differences between high S's and high C's. Both of them tend to be reserved and will say, "Wherever you want go is fine." Then, when they don't end up going where they like, the high C has issues with it, the high S doesn't. "Well, the team wanted to go there and that's what I want. I want as many people to be happy as possible." Even if the high S didn't want to go to the movie, they're going to enjoy it because they know everybody else in the group wanted to go to that movie.

There have been people who posted on the blog and the discussion forums about, "Well, this is my style." They say it as if, "Well, that's my defense." That's exactly the wrong approach to have. It's not enough to know your own style and to say, "Therefore, that's why I do what I do." The point of it is to know why you do what you do and to say, "OK, is my natural response to this situation necessarily the most effective one?" High S's work better in some situations than high D's and high I's and C's and so on. The question is not "What's your natural style? What would work best? Then, if what works best is different than my style, how do I change it?"

The only way you can get better and to be noticeably better, is to practice it so much that the time between the moment you recognize a style is different than your style and you act on that becomes shorter and shorter and shorter. In the end, it will appear to people at some point that you do it effortlessly.

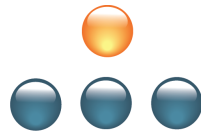


High S's avoid conflict. They're uncomfortable with conflict, as do high C's. They tend to be reserved about it. High S's generally don't like abrupt and significant change. We like to say that high S's like advanced notice and the way they would position the advanced notice. Their first response to something new might not be positive. They're probably thinking what the impact will be on the team.

A lot of times, we think the high D leader misunderstands the high S that doesn't buy into the change. It's not that they disagree with the change, it's they need time to process it in a way different than the high D. By the same token, if there is a high S leader and the high D subordinate, and the high S is taking half an hour in a meeting to position it so that everybody in the team feels good about the change, the D will just want to get on with it.

a. Verbal Clues. Verbal clues, these are words, statements and so on that people will make that will identify them to you as high S's. Now, one of these alone does not make somebody a high S, two of them probably doesn't. There are times when a high D will use some of these. But we feel that if we identify those verbal, vocal, and visual, and you start looking for them, which is a really clever idea.

High S's, much like high C's, tend to ask questions rather than making statements. Psychologists tell us that asking questions versus making statements is a dichotomy that exists in people. People who tend to ask questions rather than making statements are saying, "I'm less confident about the truthfulness or the value of what I'm saying and so I'm going to ask questions to gather more data before I make an actual statement." Whereas, D's and I's tend to just make statement after statement after statement. A question tends to be more reserved. It tends to come across as more subservient. D's say, "Hey, here's how



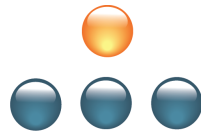
I feel and, by the way, I expect you to feel this way, too." The S says, "Well, how do you feel about that?"

A classic example of an S is that when you interrupt them, they stop talking because they see two people talking at the same time and interruption as conflict. They'll stop talking, they'll take a reserved approach. When the D or the I interrupts them, they quickly go quiet.

Now, some D's and I's mistakenly see that as a lack of confidence or subservient. It's not. It's a different way of interacting with other people. There are plenty of high S's who absolutely have way more self-esteem than some of the other D's or I's that we know. They believe that when you interrupt them, you've introduced conflict. They can reduce conflict by stepping back, by stopping talking. They'll pick up their point later, and they may, in fact, chuckle mentally that you interrupted them with something that was so inane that you didn't add any value to the conversation, and if you had just let me finish, we'd have gotten where we needed to go. It's not a matter of subservience at all for the D's and I's in our community. It tends to be just a choice you're making about how you interact and what you believe is most effective, so they stop talking when they get interrupted.

They tend to reserve their opinion. In other words, they won't immediately say, "Here's what I think." You'll have to ask an S their opinion, rather than just letting them state it. Whereas, again, D's and I's will tend to state right upfront, "Here's what I think. If you guys don't want to go that way that's fine, I don't care,"

They tend to talk a little bit slower. This is one of the clues that's easy to tell. If you're an S and somebody else is talking noticeably faster than you, then they're



probably a D or an I, rather than a C. If you're a D and somebody is talking about the same speed as you, then they might be an I or they might be a D.

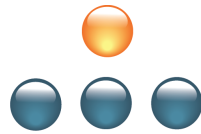
When they ask questions, they like to ask "how" questions. They like a process for things. They want to know what the next steps are so they can take a new change or a different way of doing things or an existing way of doing things, and break it down into small little bits so they don't have to deal with the whole all together.

They're very comfortable with small talk. If you go to a high S's desk on a Monday, unless you want to roll over them, those of you who are high D's and I's in our listener-audience, then you better be prepared for, "Hi, Mike. How are you? How was your weekend? How's your wife? Gosh, did you get that leak fixed? That's good to hear." If you want to have a better relationship with S's, you need to slow down and allow the small talk to happen in a way that doesn't appear that you're rushing them through it, because you're going to get to what's important to you.

They use first names. D's and C's don't tend to do that. I's and S's tend to do that. The I's and S's are on the people side of the chart. On the right side, the right hemisphere, the D's and C's are on the task side, on the left side of the upper chart.

b. Vocal Clues. These are not the words people say, but how they say those words. You tend to find that there are less ups and downs, highs and lows in an S. They tend to have a steady rate of speech.

They tend to be lower, quieter volume. Sometimes S's will get talked over in a meeting because they're not willing to raise their voice to be heard. If you have a



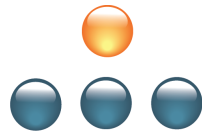
sales meeting with a high S, that high S's ideas are not going to be heard. If you have five high D's and five high I's on a sales team with a high I sales manager, the one high S might very well at the end of the year be told, "I don't get a sense that you're contributing to some of our debates." The high S just probably rolls their eyes and says, "You're just such an insensitive manager." They would say this privately, of course. They'd keep it to themselves that "You can't realize that I did speak up and just got rolled over, and it's not my weakness. It's your weakness. You're talking so loud you can't hear other people. You think that loudness or that walking over somebody else in a conversation, in other words, to dismiss everyone else to assert your primacy is actually an effective tool. It's not if we're brainstorming. Everybody's voice has got to be heard."

A high S is the kind of manager who would say, "What do you all think about this?" or, "Let's brainstorm it for a minute." Whereas, a high D or a high I would just say, "OK, we're going in this direction."

Again, slower rate of speech, more pauses. It's a weakness of D's and I's, assuming that, because people don't have the rapidity of speech, somehow the S or the C is not intelligent or not engaged, or not interested, or not up here in terms of the idea or in terms of making things happen.

The S says, "If you'd take a few seconds after I give you an idea and roll it around in your head, you'd probably respond back with something more powerful than just your first emotional response to the first five words before you stop listening to me." Both styles work. It's just a matter of respecting each different style.

They tend to be patient. Again, to me, the vocal clue is when a high D or I or even a high C is talking, the S is comfortable with them building a case and taking five minutes to prove a point or to tell a story. The S is comfortable waiting for that

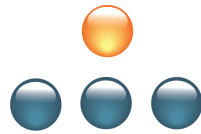


because they're being respectful of the other person, that's how they're showing their focus on people. Whereas, the D or I says, "Please, get to the point. What's the point you're trying to make? I'm two minutes into this and I don't know where you're going."

S's tend to be a little bit less good in interviewing, interestingly enough, because they want to take those two or three minutes to build a case. Interviews are so time-compressed, recruiters have learned, even if they weren't natural D's or I's, they tend to move in that direction because of the behavior that needs to be compressed in a 30-minute interview. S's tend to not do as well, all things being equal, because they need to speed up their speech and make their point sooner and they don't have the time to tell a story, if you will.

c. Visual Clues. They tend to wear subdued clothing. They're not going to wear the bright pinks, the bright yellows in springtime. They're going to tend to wear fall colors, provided that they're interested in fall colors. We're not suggesting that you can tell somebody just by the colors of their wardrobe. But they might wear brown and then tan and then brown shoes, and so they tend to be monochromatic.

They're embarrassed by recognition. The high I who leads a team who says, "Jerry, come on up. We want to tell you how great you are." Jerry gets this look of panic on his face because he's a high S. You've ended up trying to recognize somebody and, in fact, embarrassing them because they don't want to be in front, they don't want the spotlight on them. Far better to say "Hey, I'd just like to say, Jerry did a great job last week. It meant a lot to me and the team, what Jerry did. Jerry, no need to come up. I just want you to know how much I appreciate what you did," then going on to say, perhaps, "I'd appreciate if you all go by Jerry's desk today and just say thanks because it meant a lot." Those

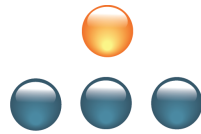


one-on-one "thank you," "appreciate you," and so on, that will make their week. Bringing them up in front and having confetti and so on, what a high D or high I might want, is not going to be effective for a high S.

They tend to walk a little bit slower. A high S goes a little slower, might stop along the way for a conversation, might take some five minutes to get a cup of coffee because along the way they run into people. They say, "Hey, I'm going to get a cup of coffee. Want to come with me? How's it going?" The high D and I might find this irritating. Rather than getting irritated about it, use that and say, "OK, that's a new data point. Let me spend a minute paying attention to them, understanding how they're going to approach this. Then, if I modify my behavior, I might get an enormously better outcome.

They tend not to have a crushing grip in a handshake. They tend to have a relaxed face, their eyebrows are not going up. They're not big smiles, they're not leaning forward. They're not raising one eyebrow. They're probably not as comfortable with a lot of direct eye contact. If you make a lot of eye contact with them, they're going to look away because they might see that eye contact is creating some conflict.

They tend to move a little slower and they make smaller gestures, above the waist, below the shoulders, below the neck and inside the shoulders. If you're going to be effective with them, if you're a high D or I and you tend to make big gestures, you need to tend to mitigate that, make them smaller to keep them from feeling like you're invading their space every time you make a big wild gesture with your hands.

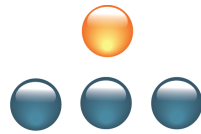


2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High S. Now that we've identified them, what are the things that we can do to be more effective in our communications with high S's?

In general, show them how that any new idea you're bringing to them reduces their risk. Show them how, even though it's something new and different, it'll actually make things work better, smoother, more effectively, less risk, less upside, less downside, those kinds of things. Show how an idea is beneficial to people, not just a bottom line. What you say is, "Look, if we can improve our margins by two percent, we're going to have better bonuses. There will actually be a bigger pool available to us. Your Christmas bonuses actually could be better this year and it's a wonderful thing to be able to provide for your family and have an even better Christmas than you did last year." That's a way to turn a profit margin discussion into a team building.

They like data, they like proof, so they want a case to be made. Don't just say, "We don't have a lot of time to do this but we just got to do it on the fly." Take your time, make a case. Again, if you're a leader and you know you have two or three S's on your team, you may want to spend more time with them after the meeting. But don't just walk into the meeting and say, "OK, this is what we're going to do and this is how we're going to do it. You guys go implement it" because the S's are going to sit there stunned, like, "How can you be so insensitive, you clod?" Giving them time, actually asking their thoughts about it will be a way to engage them better.

Brief them early on change. If you're going to announce something on Thursday, take your two high S's aside Wednesday afternoon and say "Look, I know you like to think about things a little bit, I want to give some advanced notice, I'm doing this with clear understanding that you won't share this with anybody and you're going to hear it again on Thursday." You could win some big converts to a new idea and to your way of leading

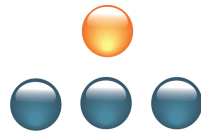


by giving some of the high S's a little bit more advanced notice, briefing them early on change, if you will.

Now, if you're a jerk and the idea is bad, briefing the S's in advance is not going to cause them to agree. Data on stupid ideas to get their buy-in. But, they absolutely behave differently. When S's are quiet, they're not disagreeing with the change; they're simply not ready to make a statement about it. Briefing them in advance gives them a chance to wrap their heads around it, wrap their arms around an idea, and they're more willing to say, "Well, here's what I like," or, "Here's what I don't like." Then you can brainstorm and modify your idea. Giving an S a chance to think about it in advance allows them to contribute to the discussion that might help you end up with a better course of action. But if you spring something on them in a meeting, their first response is to be "I'd like to think about this first before I share." Because they don't want to share negativity in front of the team, that would be fundamentally the converse of what they're all about. They're all about team unity and getting along with other people.

A high S will move the ball forward. They won't be your cheerleader. Asking them personally to support an effort is very powerful. In other words, rather than expecting them to go along with everybody else in a meeting, taking time separately to say, "Look, I'd really appreciate your support on this. Here's why I think this will be helpful to you. Here are the things I think you're looking for. Hopefully, you'll be able to support me," that kind of individual appeal, recognizing their value, and asking them to support you, very, very powerful. High I's don't need that. They're just like, "OK, I get it. Tell me what you need to do." High D's, asking them to support you, they see that as a sign of weakness.

When a high S comes to see you, stop doing everything else and focus on them. That email you're doing, the Blackberry prayer you're hunched over your desk doing, the shuffling of papers, the moving things around, "Hey, sure. No, I'm going to a meeting



but let me just get ready and you can talk." Slow down, listen attentively. Whatever you do, don't interrupt them. That's in general. Those are some things you can do right away.

a. Delegating. If you're delegating to a high S, take your time. Know that delegating to a high S might be a longer meeting than delegating to a D. The D just says, "Is that the sheaf of papers you want me to work on?" They rip it out of your hands and say, "I'll get back to you when I'm done."

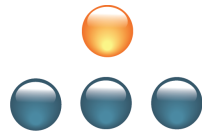
The high I wants you to sing to them a little bit and say how wonderful they are, and they'll forget the paperwork because they just want to go tell people, "I just got delegated to."

The high S, you need to spend a few extra minutes and say, "Look, here's why this is important, here's why I'm choosing you. Here are the things I need from you." Going over everything a couple of times, allowing them time to process because their first response is "This is something new, I don't want to let it into my inner circle until I understand what its ramifications are for me and for those people around me whom I care about."

When you tell someone the value of this or the benefit to this, talk about how it helps the team. Talking about how it helps them. Focus on benefits for the team and for the people in the organization because S's are all about people.

Whereas, with a high D, tell them how to get them promoted. With a high C, you'd be talking about how things will run more efficiently. With a high I, tell them how it'll look really good when you win.

Again, allow them plenty of time, they'll probably come back with questions. Don't think that that means they didn't get it. It means they thought about it and



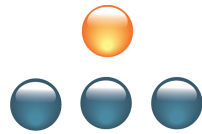
they continue to think about it. They take their time and the first steps they made would obviously prove to you that they knew what they were doing. Rather than the high I who just does a scatter shot and you have a mess to clean up afterward. High S's don't make messes.

It may very well be that they need to aggregate two or three of the people. They might ask you, "Hey, can I get some help with this?" It may not be that they can't do it themselves; it's that they like working with other people and they know there are things that other people are good at and they'd like to be sort of a quasi-team leader or quasi-project manager.

Again, expect frequent visits. They're going to be very comfortable reporting to you, telling you how they're doing. They're going to want to get feedback, "How am I doing in return?" They may say, "Once a week is not enough. I'd like to do twice a week updates." Now, a high D says, "Just send me a mail saying everything is fine. That's all I care about." A high S might want to sit down and say, "Here's what I did. Here's how she felt about that. Here's what we did in hindsight. I want to replay this conversation for you."

b. Feedback. Obviously, you'd want to be gentle. Take a little bit longer. We're talking about adjusting feedback here. Obviously, do it privately. You can give a high D feedback in front of the team, but do it privately with high S's. Show how the change that you're going to ask them to consider will benefit the team. Expect them to accept it quietly, maybe think about it, and maybe be a little bit muted in terms of "OK, yeah, I'm on board with this."

Maybe you'll sense that you're getting their feelings hurt and you're like, "Oh, my gosh, am I troll here?" Not necessarily. They're just going to internalize it and they might be a little embarrassed by it. Yet, when they get it, they'll make the



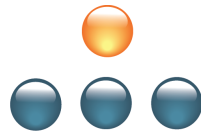
change and they'll stick with the change much better than the D's or I's will. They will internalize it and make it a part of how they are so they respond very well to feedback delivered in a professional, private, quiet, sensitive way.

c. Coaching. In terms of the coaching model, you may have to give them a couple of more weeks to make some of the changes that you want. When you're thinking about a deadline, perhaps give them some more time, not because they're slower, but because they tend to think things through more carefully. Now, if you give them longer lead times in the beginning, the project will go so well, but you'll end up actually with the same in-time, but they'll go slower in the beginning as they're processing through how this is going to be different.

Expect them to want to collaborate. When you pick out resources that a high S is going to be using in her training, in her coaching, use resources that involve other people. Talking to someone in HR. It's not a book online. That will appeal to them, working with other people, rather than, "I'd like you to go spend a week in a library studying." That's not something that a high S is going to jump on. A high C, send them to the library, but not a high S.

At times, you're probably going to have to hold them to timelines a little bit. They're going to want to make sure, they're going to want to dot their "Is" and cross their "Ts" and get everything really, really solid before they move on to the next step. You may feel like you're cracking the whip a little bit. Nothing wrong with doing that, as long as you have a justification for why you want to take eight weeks rather than 10, but recognize you may get some push-back there. It's neither right nor wrong.

d. Reporting To A High S. If you report to a high S, don't expect any radical changes to come down. If you have an organization that needs rapid turnaround,



high S's probably not the good choice to put in there. On the other hand, when the high D comes in makes a rapid turnaround and things are better, after you leave him there for two years you might wonder why the team's behavior is deteriorating. It's because the D may very well have lost interest. It may be time to put a high S in that role for steady, repeatable, count-on-able results going forward.

Show them how the team will benefit from any sort of suggestion you might make to them. "Hey, listen, if we do this, here's the benefit to me and my peers," rather than saying, "Here's what I want to do." Say, "Hey, I've talked to my peers. We think this might be a good idea, we'd like you to consider it." That phrasing, "We'd like you to consider it," is important. They're going to process it, so give them permission. Invite them to do what they're going to anyways.

You cannot run roughshod over your peers, you must be willing to engage in behavior that shows collaboration and avoids conflict with your teammates. Going to an S and saying, "I don't like what Bob's done," is absolutely, fundamentally opposed to how they believe things should go. They believe people should work together, that you should swallow your pride; you should swallow your ego. You should take a hit and return for collaborative, effective, naturally smooth, harmonious relationships with your peers.

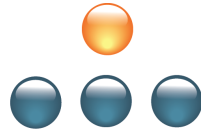
Wrap Up

1. How To Spot A High S

- a. Verbal Clues**
- b. Vocal Clues**
- c. Visual Clues**

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High S

- a. Delegating**



b. Feedback

c. Coaching

d. Reporting To A High S

If you're new to DiSC and you're excited about this, then be aware of it. Just be aware of how people behave differently than you. If you're aware that somebody's a high D, we're giving you the tools here to identify what profile people kind of fit into generally, "He or she's a high D and you're a high S," that's a great start. Just work on it in your life, then take it to the next step. You're going to be the hero over project team because you can communicate with somebody that nobody else can because you have a framework for the communication. Whereas, before, everyone thought it was just two personalities clashing. Use a model and just start paying attention. It gets really easy after that. Don't make it any harder than it needs to be.

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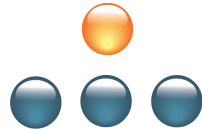
[The "C" in DiSC](#)

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