

A NEW TOOL FOR BUSINESS COACHING

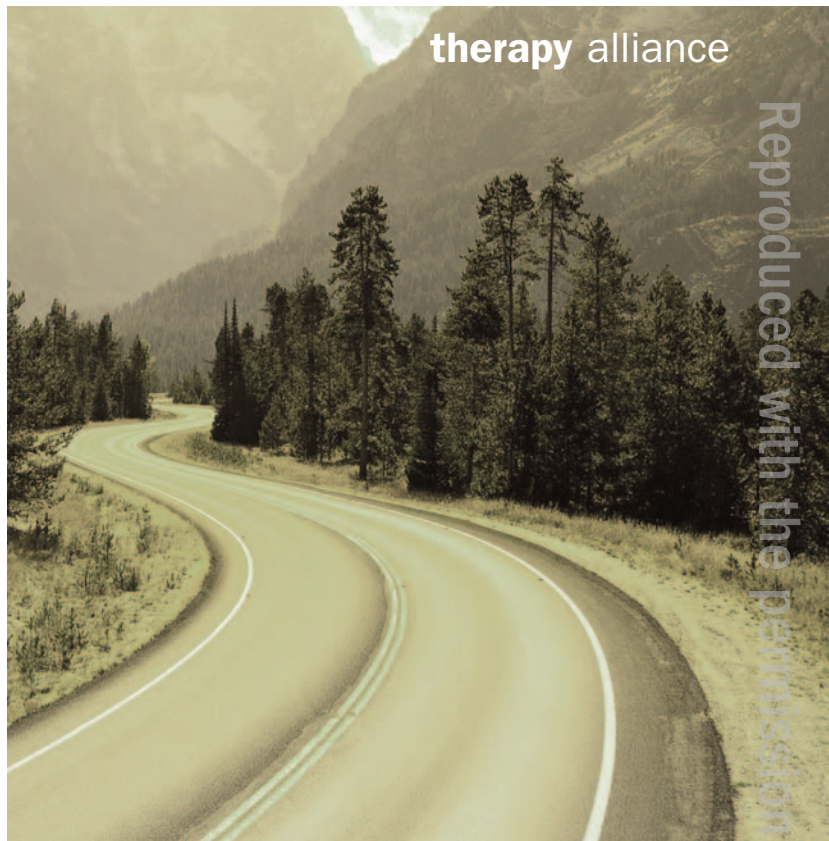
Helping managers and teams understand personality differences

By Patrick Williams, EdD, MCC

As a psychologist who has fully transitioned into life coaching, I work with people who are more interested in designing a future rather than getting over a past. Clients who want to live their life more fully, both personally and professionally, value having a personal coach. Because of this, many coaches are hired by corporate clients, professionals, and entrepreneurial small business owners who want to be more purposeful in living their life in balance, and who want their job to reflect their values.

In the corporate or professional business life, there is always the need to improve upon communication with staff and customers. There is also a growing recognition that relationships within the workplace are important to the overall success of the company or business. The emphasis on 'emotional intelligence' (from Daniel Goleman) in the work environment shows how the bottom line of a company or business is improved if the employees communicate and function as a team that works well together and resolves conflict early.

A large part of working well together requires working with different personalities and styles within the work place. These different styles often lead to conflict rather than an appreciation of the unique gifts and skills that each personality might bring to a collaborative work environment. Psychologists and counselors have for



decades used various personality assessments to give them added information on the general tendencies and communication strategies of the clients they worked with. I have especially enjoyed utilizing the more positive and less clinical assessments such as the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior™ (FIRO-B®), Meyers-Briggs, and the Personal DISCernment Inventory (DISC) behavioral assessment.

Why personality matters

Dr. Mike Lillibridge has developed an even more user friendly and powerful personality assessment in the Peoplemap™ Personality Type Program. The Peoplemap™ System of Training and Development is an integrated series of interpersonal effectiveness tools designed to develop people at every level of an organization. The personality tool is quick and easy to complete (only 14 questions!). For that reason alone, it offers less opportunity for confusion with jargon and labels than the aforementioned assessments.

This instrument allows the client to comprehend and recognize their general personality type and how it reveals itself in work, family, and social environments. Imagine how useful it would be to quickly assess your personality tendencies, and your 'Achilles heels' as well as gathering the same information for those you work and live with?

The tool lets you quickly understand yourself and others and how each personality style or tendency has its unique strengths and necessary attributes. When we become aware of both our strengths and areas of potential conflict, then we can be more sensitive to the ways that other people view and respond to the environment. And we can use the understanding of the different personality tendencies to create harmony and understanding with the people in our work and personal lives.

The Peoplemap™ is a very useful and powerful tool for helping individuals and companies understand the various personalities that comprise their company or business. It is also a fun way to understand your own strengths and areas for improvement, in both your professional and personal lives.

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Helping teams succeed

Here is an example of how I used the Peoplemap™ with an executive coaching client. Carol came to me for coaching to improve in her role as vice president of a department with a major international bank. She was very happy with her work but was having difficulty with her team. Specifically she was getting word that they often saw her as a tyrant and that at times she appeared aloof. That was not her intention, so she wanted some coaching that would help her be a better manager.

I, of course, told her to be a better manager she would also need to learn to coach her employees more than supervise or manage them. A good manager brings out the best in the individual members so that the team works efficiently and smoothly. I suggested Carol try the Peoplemap™. She was very willing and had already completed the Myers-Briggs assessment recently as well as a 360-degree assessment with her staff. I sent her the questionnaire and she was amazed at the report generated from her data. Carol's profile showed her

general tendencies to be Leader-Task, the most common combination for managers. As we reviewed the strengths and the Achilles heels of her personality type, she was amazed at how accurate it was and how similar to her Myers-Briggs profile.

As a Leader-Task, Carol had many strengths that made her a great manager. However, to improve on her stated goals, she had to learn how to more effectively communicate with the other types on her team. She also had to learn to appreciate each of their unique contributions to the team as well as potential conflicts. As for her own style, she affirmed that she was results oriented and worked with an attitude of 'get the job done.' Because of this tendency, she sometimes could appear overly driven and resistant to change or unwilling to let go of control. She also learned that one of the weaknesses of a strong Leader-Task personality is that she might have difficulty relaxing and loosening up. This struck her as a core understanding and we began using our coaching in the weeks to come to focus on:

- Delegating more responsibility to her staff.
- Coaching her team rather than managing them.
- Finding opportunities for her to lighten up and be more fun while maintaining her vision on the results she wanted the team to achieve.

Carol had also recently taken some training on emotional intelligence in the workplace and she was beginning to believe that managers today do need to care about the humanity of their team. With the Peoplemap™ results she became aware that she tends to overlook the feelings of others. As a manager/coach, she could treat her staff as responsible adults who also have some emotional needs in the workplace. An effective team is like a family and relationships can sometimes manifest personality conflicts. The results can help her whole team understand everyone's unique strengths, Achilles heels, and how to communicate and interact with that understanding. Carol eventually gave the assessment to her whole team and we had two conference calls to go over the results. They all felt acknowledged and empowered to work more effectively as a team, and they all appreciated Carol for her openness and her willingness to change. •

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