

THE EDITOR'S CORNER

The Lasso of Truth

The comic book superhero Wonder Woman was created in 1941 by Harvard psychologist William Moulton Marston, under the pseudonym Charles Moulton. Interestingly, Marston is also recognized for two earlier inventions: the polygraph (lie-detector test) and DISC behavioral theory. The latter—perhaps his most noted achievement—is a system that categorizes individuals by their behavior or personality. According to Marston, there are four primary personality types: D (dominant), I (influential), S (steady), and C (conscientious).

Dominant personalities are motivated by results. The “D” could also stand for driven, decisive, or determined. These individuals are highly confident, and they prioritize taking immediate action. D-types value competition, success, and task completion. Their focus is on the big picture and not the minutiae. They make great entrepreneurs, business owners, and CEOs. When stressed, however, they can become abrasive, lack empathy, and take inappropriate risks.

Influential personalities are motivated by relationships. The “I” could also stand for inspiring or intuitive. These individuals are enthusiastic and optimistic. Like D-types, they are faster-paced. They value people and social acceptance: I-types are typically active on social media and have large circles of friends. They make good spokespersons for products because they achieve their goals by influencing others. When stressed, they will act impulsively—heart over mind.

Steady personalities are also motivated by relationships, but prefer to have smaller circles of close friends. The “S” could also stand for stable, sympathetic, or status quo. These individuals are reticent and introspective. Unlike D- and I-types, they are slower-paced. S-types value fairness, and their focus is on cooperation. They make great counselors and executive assistants. When they are under stress, however, they may internalize their feelings and become overly cautious.

Conscientious personalities are motivated by

results, but only if they are 100% perfect. The “C” could also stand for compliant, correct, critical, or maybe even a little “*cray-cray*.” Like S-types, these individuals are slower-paced. C-types are pragmatic and fastidious; they value following the rules, and their focus is on accuracy. They excel as academics, researchers, attorneys, and analysts. Under stress, they will become neurotic, which may be why they also have a higher incidence of cancer.

These four classifications are not rigid boxes. For example, a gregarious orthodontist who owns a large private practice most likely has both dominant and influential characteristics (D-I type). Such a person would be independent, assertive, and focused on the bottom line, but also enthusiastic, talkative, and persuasive. This sounds like me. On the other hand, a more reserved orthodontist who operates a smaller practice, or who works as a long-term associate or faculty member, may have steady or conscientious characteristics.

More important, an orthodontist can use DISC theory as a powerful assessment tool for hiring staff and managing patients. D-type orthodontists tend to build teams of effervescent I-type technicians—but be warned, their loyalty lies with their staff friends. Instead, practitioners should consider hiring S-types, who are dependable and respectful. Moreover, D-type orthodontists often become exasperated with C-type patients, who may do better in quieter settings where their concerns can be addressed.

Marston developed the idea for Wonder Woman from his research on DISC. His Amazonian princess was not just dominant, but also influential, steady, and conscientious. What made her so endearing was that she brought a unique human complexity to the superhero world. And her weapon of choice? The *Lasso of Truth*—a lie-detector test. If we can develop a better understanding of these personality types, then perhaps we will learn the truth about our behavior toward others, and vice versa.

NDK