



# True Colors: Exploring Personal & Leadership Style

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## The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

**BWBR Description:** *Bonner Curriculum workshop uses a popular personality and style assessment to help participants discover and share elements of their personality and approach to work, building an appreciation for diversity and reducing conflicts.*

**Overview:** Often, when individuals work together in a team- or project-based setting, differences of leadership and personal style can trigger conflicts. This workshop can be used to prevent or intervene by providing a framework and chance for exploring different leadership styles and personal styles. Using a simple framework called “true colors,” the workshop allows people to identify themselves from four common personal styles. While individual style is much more complex, the simplicity of the framework is useful for helping people assess their environment and colleagues, with a goal of improving peoples’ ability to work effectively together.

There are numerous online “quizzes” that use the true colors type. If you want, integrate these into the session, having participants do one beforehand or at the beginning. See:

<http://www.paisproject.com/truecolors>

You can also use: [http://www.nfty.org/\\_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item\\_id=12954&destination=ShowItem](http://www.nfty.org/_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item_id=12954&destination=ShowItem) which has additional handouts.

**Category:** Leadership skills; personal assessment inventories and self-reflection; management skills



**suitable  
for all  
levels**

**Level:** Suitable for all levels (introductory to mid-level recommended)

### **Recommended**

**Bonner Sequence:** This training is built into the calendar as an activity for the first year (exploration), but it can be done at any level. Choose this or River Stories, depending on what you do in All-Bonner Meetings. This activity is recommended for Bonner students as part of a mid-year or program retreat. It can also be done in All-Bonner Meetings, perhaps involving some mixing of class groups and mentoring (Bonner Buddies or families).

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Provide the structure and opportunity for reflection to learn about individual personal and leadership styles
- Explore some common dimensions and traits of personal and leadership styles and enhance people's abilities to work with people with different personal style styles
- Enhance team or group functioning and performance through deeper understanding and dialogue

### **Materials:**

- "Different Drums and Different Drummers" Poem (attached)
- Handout called "Leadership styles"(attached)
- Name tags (blank for participants to write on)
- Plenty of blue, gold, green, and orange stickers, post-its, sheets of construction paper or tags
- Poster boards or markers in blue, gold, green and orange
- Room large enough for group to move around

### **How to Prepare:**

First prepare materials. If possible, use an overhead projector and copy relevant handouts onto transparencies. If this is not possible, create posters and handouts. Make copies of all the handouts that are attached at the end of this training for distribution. Have stickers ready to distribute.

Prepare yourself to facilitate by reviewing the guide and becoming comfortable with the facilitation process. You may want to try the activity before you have the participants do it.

### **Brief Outline:**

In sum this session is made up of various interactive (mostly small group) activities in which participants reflect on personal style, explore ideas with colleagues, and dialogue about tendencies to work well or have conflict within people with different styles. This activity can be done with a large group of 60+ (using small groups) or as small as six.

You can also have the participants do an online quiz for their color before the session or on their laptops during it (add time accordingly). Here are links:

<http://www.paisproject.com/truecolors>

You can also use: [http://www.nfty.org/\\_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item\\_id=12954&destination=ShowItem](http://www.nfty.org/_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item_id=12954&destination=ShowItem) which has additional handouts.

### **An outline for 90 minutes (good for All-Bonner Meeting or Retreat) has the following parts:**

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1) Brief Introductory Activity                  | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 2) Distribute Materials                         | suggested time 5 minutes  |
| 3) Allow participants to choose personal style  | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 4) Divide using "Glance at the Personal Styles" | suggested time 5 minutes  |
| 5) Small group discussions                      | suggested time 20 minutes |
| 6) Large group presentations                    | suggested time 20 minutes |
| 7) Group work, discussion, and wrap             | suggested time 20 minutes |

### **Here's a suggested outline for 60 minutes (class meeting). Modify accordingly:**

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1) Welcome and distribute Materials             | suggested time 5 minutes  |
| 2) Allow participants to choose personal style  | suggested time 5 minutes  |
| 3) Divide using "Glance at the Personal Styles" | suggested time 5 minutes  |
| 4) Small group discussions                      | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 5) Group presentations                          | suggested time 15 minutes |

### **Part 1) Brief Introductory Activity - if you have only an hour, eliminate this.**

Suggested time: 5-10 minutes

Welcome everyone to the workshop. Introduce yourself and set some context for why the session is happening and why you are facilitating it.

Then:

1. Read the poem called "Different Drums and Different Drummers" attached to the training. Have a transparency made and project it on a screen using the overhead projector. If you don't have an overhead projector, have the poem written clearly on flip chart paper.
2. When you are done, ask your participants two questions below:
  - What would life be like if there were only one color?
  - What would communication, leadership and teamwork look like if there were only one way?
1. Once you receive a couple of answers, transition into a name tag writing activity, saying "you all have name tags placed in front of you before you walked in. I want you to take that name tag and write your name on it using your non-dominant hand—the one you do not normally write with. Try to write your name with that hand." Make sure everyone has a pen/pencil and a name tag. Give a couple of minutes for the participants to write the names. After they are done, ask, "How did it feel to write with a hand that you are not use to?" You will most likely receive answers that they didn't feel comfortable.
2. You can ask the audience these questions to make sure the audience is thinking about how it feels to be uncomfortable. Ask the participants why wasn't it comfortable to write with their non-dominant hand? What other types of things do we do everyday that make us feel uncomfortable? Mention how most of the tables and chairs in any setting are made for right hand writers. What about shaking hands? Don't most people shake with their right hand? Why is shaking with your left hand not appropriate?
3. Close this part by sharing your own reflections on what life would be like with only one color.

### **Part 2) Distribute first set of handouts**

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Transition into the framework, just explaining that in this session, a framework with four common personal and leadership styles will be used. Explain that, "Many people will identify strongly with one style and others may feel this is too reductionist. Set some ground rules. Ask people to trust the process and "try on" the exercises in the workshop. No one will be bound by these definitions; rather they function to encourage real dialogue."

- Pass out the packet that includes the "Leadership Style" and "Personal styles" handouts (attached to the training).
- Then pass out the stickers (blue, gold, orange and green). Each individual should have one of each color.

### **Part 3) Allow Participants to Choose Personal Style**

Suggested time: 5-10 minutes

The focus of this part is to allow people to self-select the personal style *most like me* to *least like me*. You should explain the activity by:

- Asking the participants to read over the handouts called "Leadership Styles" and "Personal styles."
- Each person should have a description of each color and a sticker of each color.
- Have them take their first choice color, the one that they think can best describe their personality style. Tell them to place that color sticker on the left-hand side of their name tag. The first color also represents the color of your personal style.
- Then have them select the second-best color that fits their personal style put that sticker next after the first one.
- So do the same with the third and the fourth.
- Give 5 minutes for the participants to read and put the colors on their tags.
- Now, you and your audience should have four stickers, displayed one after another on their name tags, from style *most like me* to *least like me*.

### **Part 4) Move into groups based on the "Glance at the Personal Styles"**

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Now use the "colors at a glance" handouts on transparencies or slides. Or have them written on flip chart paper. Present this information.

- After you are done with reading have everyone split into groups based on their most like me choices. This means moving into a group based on the first color on the left-hand side of their name tag.
- So, once you divide you have four colors and four groups. For example, if twenty people choose orange as their first colors then they are part of one group. If a group is large, you can sub-divide it into small groups of 5-8, for the purposes of discussion (Orange A, B, C).
- Have four color poster boards ready for four group or rolled flip chart paper with four different color markers.
- There are example sheets in the end of the training for the facilitator to glance at each personal style. You can make copies to give out at the end, but don't distribute them now (as that will deter thinking in the following small group settings).

### **Part 5) Small Group Discussion**

Suggested time: 15-20 minutes

You have the group divided into four groups.

There are two questions that you are to tell the groups to answer, which allow participants to more deeply explore their personal styles. Questions are:

- 1) Tell us more about your personal style. What are its strengths? What makes you feel successful or satisfied?
- 2) Again, tell us more about your personal style. What are its weaknesses? What makes you feel challenged or stressed?

Give them 15 minutes to answer the questions. They should put their answers on the poster board. Each group should designate a spokesperson.

### **Part 6) Large Group Presentations.**

Suggested time: 15-20 minutes

Give each group's spokesperson 3-5 minutes to present. Guide small group sharing so that participants understand:

- Characteristics of the different colors/styles,
- Strengths and weaknesses of different styles.
- How each style relates to them (how they perceive others, conflicts, etc.)

### **Part 7) Group Work, Discussion, and Wrap**

Suggested time: 15-20 minutes

In this next part, transition the groups to focus on how they can work together in spite of differences.

- By now, everyone should have all of the handouts, including “Strengths and Weaknesses” and “Succeeding with Different Colors.”
- Ask the group to partner up with people from three other colors, including one of their own. All four colors should be represented in each group.
- Have them answer the following questions?
  - 1) How can you work with each other?
  - 2) What can you do to eliminate the conflict that might occur between personal styles?
  - 3) How can you overcome your own strengths and weaknesses to work with each other?
  - 4) What did you learn from each color/style?

Have the large group come back together and have an open discussion.

- What you have learned from reflecting on your own personal style and that of others in the group?
- What observations have people made about the type of personal styles that we have as a group?
- What are ways we can take this information into our work and how else do we learn to work across differences?

# Leadership Styles

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Orange</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expects quick action</li> <li>• Assumes flexibility</li> <li>• Works in the here and now</li> <li>• Performance oriented</li> <li>• Flexible approach</li> <li>• Welcomes change</li> <li>• Institutes change quickly</li> <li>• Expects people to “make it fun”</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Blue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expects others to express views</li> <li>• Assumes “family spirit”</li> <li>• Works to develop other’s potential</li> <li>• Individual oriented</li> <li>• Democratic, unstructured approach</li> <li>• Encourages change via human potential</li> <li>• Change time allows for sense of security</li> <li>• Expects people to develop their potential</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gold</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expects punctuality, order, loyalty</li> <li>• Assumes “right” way to do things</li> <li>• Seldom questions tradition</li> <li>• Rules oriented</li> <li>• Detailed/thorough approach</li> <li>• Finds change difficult</li> <li>• Prolonged time to initiate change</li> <li>• Expects people to play their roles</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Green</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expects intelligence and competence</li> <li>• Assumes task relevance</li> <li>• Seeks way to improve systems</li> <li>• Visionary</li> <li>• Analytical</li> <li>• Encourages change for improvement</li> <li>• Constantly in process of change</li> <li>• Expects people to follow through</li> </ul>



# Personality Styles

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Orange</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New and varied activities</li> <li>• Provides power and authority</li> <li>• Provides prestige and challenge</li> <li>• Opportunities for individual accomplishment</li> <li>• Wide scope of operations</li> <li>• Gives direct answers</li> <li>• Opportunity for advancement</li> <li>• Freedom from controls and supervision</li> <li>• Unstructured</li> <li>• Exciting</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Blue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive</li> <li>• Action oriented</li> <li>• Personal</li> <li>• Friendly and social</li> <li>• Relaxed and unstructured</li> <li>• Freedom of expression</li> <li>• Democratic relationships</li> <li>• Freedom from control and detail</li> <li>• Opportunity to verbalize proposal</li> <li>• Opportunity for social recognition</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gold</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured</li> <li>• Permanent</li> <li>• Efficient</li> <li>• Cooperative</li> <li>• Secure</li> <li>• Maintenance of status quo</li> <li>• Predictable routines</li> <li>• Credit for work accomplished</li> <li>• Sincere appreciation</li> <li>• Identification with a group</li> <li>• Standard operating procedures</li> <li>• Minimal conflict</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Green</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus</li> <li>• Conceptual</li> <li>• Doesn't like change</li> <li>• Organized</li> <li>• Intelligent</li> <li>• Efficient</li> <li>• New Ideas</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Competence</li> <li>• Accurate</li> <li>• Truthful</li> </ul>

## **Different Drums and Different Drummers**

If I do not want what you want, please try not to tell me that my want is wrong.

Or if I believe other than you, at least pause before you correct my view.

Or if my emotion is less than yours, or more, given the same circumstances, try not to ask me to feel more strongly or weakly.

Or yet if I act, or fail to act, in the manner of your design for action, let me be.

I do not, for the moment at least, ask you to understand me. That will come only when you are willing to give up changing me into a copy of you.

I may be your spouse, your parent, your offspring, your friend, or your colleague. If you will allow me any of my own wants, or emotions, or beliefs, or actions, then you open yourself, so that some day these ways of mine might not seem so wrong, and might finally appear to you as right-for me. To put up with me is the first step to understanding me. Not that you embrace my ways as right for you, but that you are no longer irritated or disappointed with me for my seeming waywardness. And in understanding me you might come to prize my difference from you, and, far from seeking to change me, preserve and even nurture those differences.

Expected from: [Please Understand Me](#) by David Keirse and Marilyn Bates.

# Colors at a Glance

## Orange

### Characteristics

- Free
- Spontaneous
- Impetuous

### Values

- Freedom
- Action
- Performing

### Regard

- Opportunity
- Competition
- Options

### Dislikes

- Rigidity
- Authority
- Rules

### Expresses

- Optimism
- Confidence
- Openness

### Fosters

- Recreation
- Enjoyment
- Fun

### Respects

- Skills
- Expression

# Colors at a Glance

## Gold

### Characteristics

- Influence
- Security
- Status

### Values

- Responsibility
- Dependability
- Stability

### Regard

- Dedication
- Service
- Order

### Dislikes

- Non-conformity
- Ambiguity
- Waste

### Expresses

- Purpose
- Stability
- Concern

### Fosters

- Institutions
- Traditions
- Rules

### Respects

- Loyalty
- Obligation

# Colors at a Glance

## Blue

### Characteristics

- Authenticity
- Affection
- Love

### Values

- Compassion
- Sympathy
- Rapport

### Regard

- Significance
- Meaning
- Identity

### Dislikes

- Insincerity
- Hypocrisy
- Deception

### Expresses

- Enthusiasm
- Inspiration
- Vivacity

### Fosters

- Harmony
- Community
- Growth

### Respects

- Nurturing
- Empathy

# Colors at a Glance

## Green

### Characteristics

- Competence
- Accuracy
- Truth

### Values

- Intelligence
- Explanations
- Answers

### Regard

- Efficiency
- Output
- Ideas

### Dislikes

- Incompetence
- Unfairness
- Injustice

### Expresses

- Coolness
- Reservation
- New Ideas

### Fosters

- Inventions
- Technology
- Growth

### Respects

- Knowledge
- Capability

# The **STRENGTHS** and **WEAKNESSES** of Styles in **ORGANIZATIONS**

## Blues...

Their strengths include their ability to persuade and cooperate. These are the team builders. Their weaknesses include an over-personalization of organizational problems and their tendency to carry grudges.

## Greens...

Their strengths include their ability to think systematically and strategically. These are the natural analysts. Their weaknesses include their tendency to make things more complex than necessary and their impatience with incompetence.

## Golds...

Their strengths include their strong sense of responsibility and duty to the organization. These are the organization's backbone. Their weaknesses include their rigidity and narrow focus on meeting rules and regulations.

## Oranges...

Their strengths include their ability to do a variety of tasks with ease and their sense of urgency when the situation demands it. These are the organizational troubleshooters. Their weaknesses include their disinterest in routine and being too present-oriented, at the expense of long-term thinking.

# Succeeding with Different Types

## Succeeding with the Orange Individual:

- A direct right-to-the-point approach gets their attention
- Respect their lack of structure and need for spontaneity
- Get involved in physical activities with them
- Compliment their generosity and sense of humor

## Succeeding with the Blue Individual:

- Respect their need to know about you
- Take a creative approach to problem solving
- Be truthful and sincere
- Cooperate with other team members
- Show that you value and appreciate them through thoughtfulness
- Be helpful, open, and communicative

## Succeeding with the Gold Individual:

- Be organized and neat in work and appearance
- Be truthful
- Plan ahead of them
- Don't beat around the bush; be up front
- Respect their need for tradition and stability
- Be loyal and dependable
- Support their need for structure and security

## Succeeding with the Green Individual:

- Respect their preoccupation with ideas and logic
- Know that they care but may not express feelings freely
- Respect their wisdom and knowledge
- Think ahead; Greens appreciate future-orientation
- Help them with day-to-day details
- Praise their ingenuity and intelligence