

Third Edition

SHOWING OUR TRUE COLORS

A Fun, Easy Guide for Understanding and
Appreciating Yourself and Others

By **Mary Miscisin**



Illustrated by Jeff Haines



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**Dedicated with love
to my daughter
Crescentia.**

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About True Colors

True Colors has been empowering individuals and organizations to succeed for over twenty years. Through workshops, skits, and a variety of training and “edutainment” formats, millions of people have gone through an exciting shift in thinking that has improved their lives and enhanced their professional and personal relationships. Just ask companies like Xerox, Boeing, and Microsoft, who have reaped the benefits of this powerful tool.

True Colors works because it’s simple, enjoyable, and based on true principles. Successful people seem to know who they are, what their True Colors are, and what their values, needs, strengths, and joys are. They know and trust themselves, and behave accordingly. They appreciate the needs and strengths of others, and behave compassionately. Their integrity inspires trust and productivity in everyone around them.

When you know what your core values and needs are, and feel good about them, you can perform at your highest potential in every area of life. And when you share a working, mutual understanding of others’ core values and needs, you have the basis to communicate, motivate, and achieve common goals with utmost dignity, efficacy, and mutual respect.

—Don Lowry
Creator of True Colors

Acknowledgments

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A special appreciation goes to Don Lowry, whose genius developed the True Colors concept.

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I would also like to acknowledge you, the reader, for your willingness to learn and expand your appreciation of human behavior.

Foreword

I once went to a seminar where the instructor presented the components of a “hero” story. This format is used for many popular movies and books:

1. A person or group comes up against a formidable obstacle(s)
2. To get past the obstacle, they must learn a lesson they may not yet be aware they need to learn.
3. They attempt several ways of solving the challenge.
4. After much trial and tribulation, they gain skills, abilities, or insights and learn an unexpected lesson.
5. Using this newfound knowledge, they solve the challenge and emerge triumphant!

It wasn't until later that I realized how those components paralleled my own situation and the role True Colors played in it. I had attended True Colors presentations numerous times at national conferences and saw how people's lives were transformed by the experience. I, myself, had begun to speak in “color” and view the behaviors of people in my life differently. My relationships improved and my communication skills matured.

Later still, while involved in long-range planning at work, I raised the possibility of a few of our staff getting trained to present the True Colors system for our then 33,000 employees. After I was trained as a certified instructor of True Colors and began teaching it to others, my life began to change even more. The True Colors concepts were quickly learned and adopted by my co-workers. This had an immediate effect on staff communication and morale. We now had a common language to speak when we needed to solve conflicts or discuss challenges. It wasn't long before employees were requesting workshops for their family and friends so they too could learn to show their True Colors and appreciate the True Colors of others.

Members of my family, of course, began using True Colors to understand behaviors that they had before found annoying with other family members, or certain people at work.

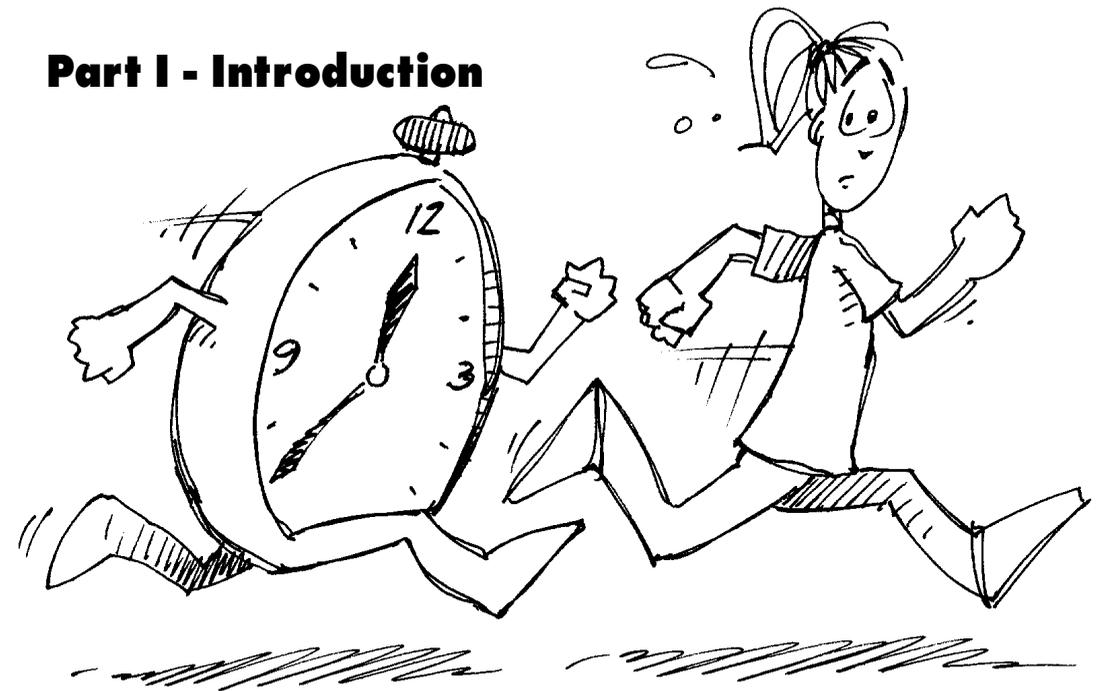
Circumstances were explained in a color context and problems solved at a much faster rate—with feelings spared and values respected in the process.

Participants in my seminars have often shared with me—months or even years later—the dramatic impact True Colors has made on their relationships, both in their personal and work lives. A frequent comment is “I finally understand my husband (or wife) for the first time.” They were really able to hear and embrace the message of True Colors. My life, as well as the lives of those around me, took a leap forward without our even planning it.

Now, you may or may not experience the life changing benefits of True Colors in as quick and permeating a way as I did. But this easy-to-learn, fun-to-use system has the possibility of changing forever the way you view and relate to the world.

As you read through the pages and chapters to come, realize that you too are on a journey. Have fun discovering how True Colors plays a part in your life, and when you're ready, travel to the next page and enjoy your True Colors journey!

Part I - Introduction



EVER WONDER . . . ABOUT HUMAN BEHAVIOR?

I know I do! For instance, have you ever noticed that some people are very punctual? They make it to places on time or even early. Yet others have a tough time being on time. It doesn't seem to matter if they give themselves half an hour or five hours to get ready—they still end up being five minutes late. What is it that

makes someone very uncomfortable if they are running late, while others take it in stride and actually find it stimulating to race the clock?

Or, have you ever observed how some people speak their mind even before they know what is on it, while others are more reserved and think before they speak? Why do some

people speak out spontaneously, and others hold thoughts in?

It is funny to watch the behaviors of people on the highway, too. If someone is driving slower than us, we may think to ourselves, or even out loud, “What a slowpoke!” Or if someone happens to be driving faster than us, we might think they are a “crazy driver.” How do we gauge what is the “right” speed for us and others to drive?

Philosophers have been pondering human behavior for centuries and researchers have been studying it for decades. People definitely have different preferences, communication styles, and ways of behaving. For society, there are certain laws that govern what is “right” and “wrong.” Whether we agree with the laws or not, it would be foolish to ignore them. However, as individuals we often judge the world by what *we* would do in a certain situation. If another person’s way of doing things differs from ours, there is a natural

tendency to regard it as the “wrong” way.

True, we as human beings have an innate tendency to try to understand and regulate the behaviors of others. And—if we admit it—we have all tried to get another person to behave differently. Sometimes we have been successful and other times not. Yet I’ve heard over and over that “one cannot change the behaviors of others, they can only change themselves.” If this is true, then where did we ever get the notion that we could or would even want to change the behaviors of others? Think about it. We’ve been shaped, formed, and sculpted practically since the day we were born. Our parents tried their best to guide us; teachers attempted to educate and train us; relatives, friends, and even society as a whole have an influence on our behaviors and choices almost constantly. No wonder we try, too!

Specific habits or manners can be conditioned into people

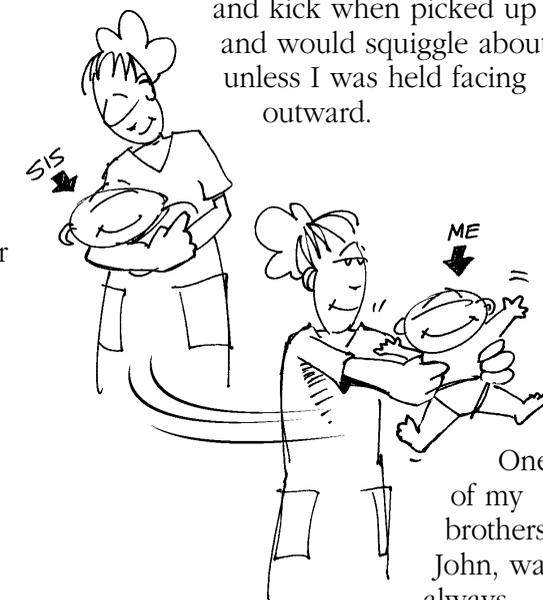
to a certain extent. However, even with all the poking, prodding, and encouraging, some natural behaviors keep emerging. When individuals get around people they are fully comfortable with and let down their guard, or even during times of stress (when it can be difficult to concentrate), they have a tendency to “let their True Colors show.” Their conditioned behavior gives way to what comes more naturally.

So what are our True Colors? Are they something innate? Something that exists deeper or before any training begins?

Showing Our True Colors

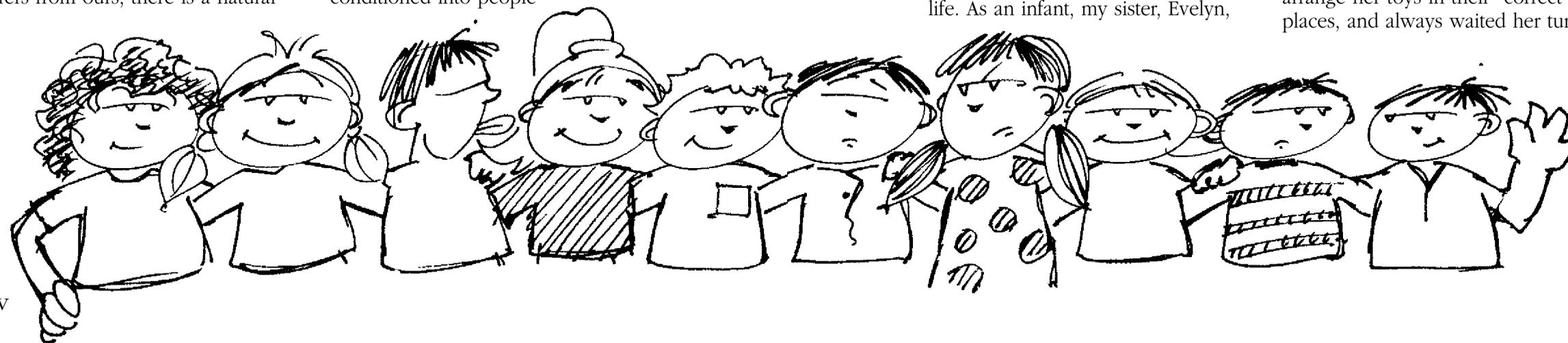
As the second oldest child in a family of ten children, I was often intrigued that although the same parents raised us, we all seemed to have distinct personalities early on in life. As an infant, my sister, Evelyn,

loved to be held, cuddled, and rocked. I, on the other hand (my mother reports), would buck and kick when picked up and would squiggle about unless I was held facing outward.



One of my brothers, John, was always

quite fascinated with money. He found ways to earn it, count it, and save it. My sister, Therese, was quite proper and neat. She would sort her sock drawer according to colors, arrange her toys in their “correct” places, and always waited her turn.



Then and Now

Nearly forty years later, times have changed, but some things have not. Evelyn still loves to be held, I squiggle and kick if I am in one place too long, John is a successful banker, and Therese is a homemaker with everything in its place.

Our True Colors were obvious in childhood and still shine as adults. Being able to recognize our True Colors enables all of us to realize that other people are not “wrong” for having different preferences or doing what comes naturally, they are simply different.

Knowing our True Colors, and how to discover the True Colors of others, helps us recognize differences and similarities in communication styles, behaviors, and preferences and how to use this information to solve conflicts, increase respect, and bring out the best in everyone.

When I was a little girl, we used to sing this song in Girl Scouts. It eloquently sums up the concept behind True Colors:

*I'm proud to be me,
but I also see
you're just as proud to be you.
We may look at things
a bit differently,
but lots of good people do.
It's just human nature,
so why should I hate you
for being as human as I?
We'll live and let live.
And, we'll get as we give.
And, we'll all get along
if we try!
I'm proud to be me,
but I also see
you're just as proud to be you.
We may look at things
a bit differently,
but lots of good people do.*

Chapter 1

THE HISTORY OF TRUE COLORS

Melancholic Sanguine
Phlegmatic Choleric



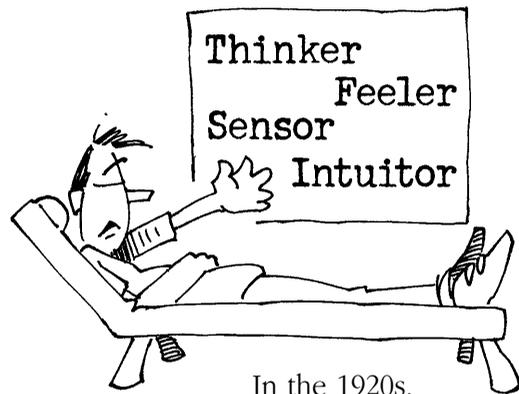
In the Beginning...

Watching human behavior and trying to understand the basis of personality can be traced at least as far back as 460 B.C. It is interesting to

note that the discernment of four groupings is a common theme that connects many of the most predominant personality theories. Although there are numerous systems for explaining our behaviors

and the origin of our personalities, for brevity only the ones most influential in the creation of the True Colors system will be mentioned here.

One of the most widely known philosophers in history, Hippocrates, observed that people in general seemed to have one of four humors, or approaches to life: Phlegmatic, Choleric, Melancholic, or Sanguine.

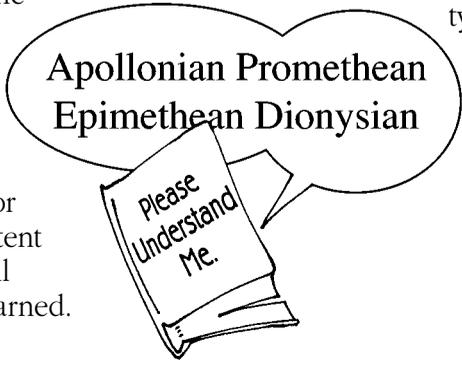


In the 1920s, noted psychologist Carl Jung offered his findings from years of observation and research. He noted that people displayed “functions” that also fell into one of four areas: Feeling, Thinking, Sensation, or Intuition. He theorized that for the most part, these functions were innate. Yet, the culture and environment in which a person is raised will also influence his or her behavior and choices. We can develop our nondominant, or least natural functions, to the extent that it can become difficult to tell which is natural and which is learned.

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTF

Katherine Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Myers, studied the research of Jung, and in the 1950s expanded his work to include sixteen personality types. They developed the famous Myers/Briggs Type Indicator, which is used extensively in business, education, and counseling for personal as well as professional growth.

David Keirse, based on his continued research in the field of psychology, returned to classifying personality and temperament into four types: Apollonian, Promethean, Epimethean, and Dionysian. In 1967, David Keirse and Marilyn Bates published *Please Understand Me*, which has become another cornerstone in personality typing.



Along Came Don!

Studying the work of Keirse, Don Lowry was astounded by the benefits that resulted from recognizing personality types. Since his own natural temperament compelled him to derive fun from every experience, explore the endless possibilities in ideas, and contribute to others, he used the temperament model to develop the metaphor “True Colors.”

He studied the various meanings associated with colors such as “good as gold” and “true blue friend.” He also explored existing research on the effects of colors, such as the calming properties of green and the stimulating effects of orange. He carefully chose the colors that resembled the characteristics they would be representing.



In 1978, Don introduced the world to the True Colors concept. Initially, Don selected theater as a fun, entertaining way to acquaint people with the incredibly powerful insights of temperament typing.

He developed four playing cards illustrating the characteristics of the four different temperament types or “personality styles.” The cards offered participants a gratifying, hands-on experience in discovering their personality traits. Individuals placed the cards in order from the one most like them to the one least like them. This method of self-determining type avoids the forced-choice questions of the written tests that many other personality typing systems employ.

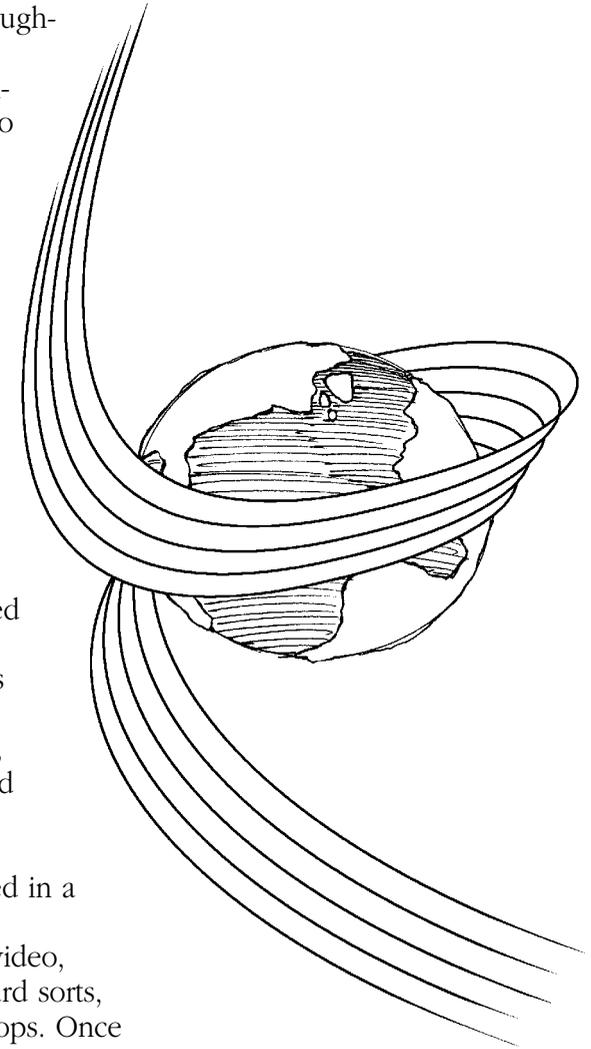
After determining their own color type, participants then watched a humorous and entertaining theater production designed to portray extremes of the temperament types. Not only did people have fun watching the show, they laughed as they learned to understand themselves more fully. In addition, it helped them appreciate and support differences among others. The cards and theater production were, and still are, a powerful combination for learning what was once understood only by those who studied it. Now the rewarding benefits of this method are readily available and easily understood by all who experience it.

True Colors Today

Millions of people throughout the world have been taught the True Colors concept. True Colors knows no ethnic or gender boundaries. There are thousands of True Colors certified trainers in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Japan, Costa Rica, Australia, Europe, and the U.K. Materials have been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, French, and Russian.

Over 500,000 people annually are being educated in the benefits of True Colors in the contexts of business, education, healthcare, criminal justice, mental health, personal and career counseling, and communities.

True Colors is presented in a variety of ways, including theater, written materials, video, audio, electronic media, card sorts, presentations, and workshops. Once you’ve learned True Colors, you can use it in virtually every aspect of your life, from personal and workplace relationships to your community and beyond.

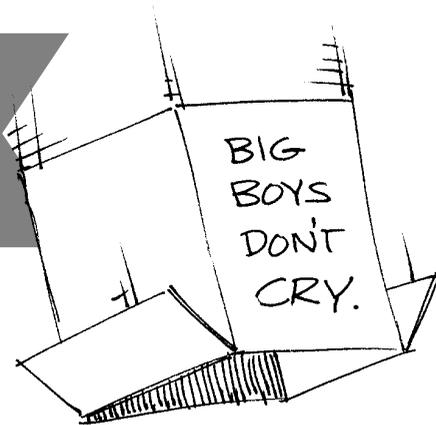


Approximate Comparison of Systems

Hippocrates:	melancholic	choleric	phlegmatic	sanguine
Carl Jung:	feeling	thinking	sensation	intuition
Myers/Briggs:	ENFJ, INFJ	ENTJ, INTJ	ESTJ, ISTJ	ESFP, ISFP
	ENFP, INFP	ENTP, INTP	ESFJ, ISFJ	ESTP, ISTP
Keirsey:	Apollonian (NF)	Promethean (NT)	Epimethean (SJ)	Dionysian (SP)
Lowry:	Blue	Green	Gold	Orange

Chapter 2

DON'T PUT ME IN A BOX



As children, we may or may not have grown up in environments that encouraged us to let our True Colors shine. Some parents may have admired and fostered creativity, imagination, and self-expression. Some supported conventionality, while others promoted risk-taking. Still others taught the cultivation of competence in intellectual pursuits. It is common for parents, teachers, and even communities to attempt to instill their own values in others. If they are not aware of the importance of supporting an individual's own gifts and preferences, these individuals or groups may end up rewarding the behaviors

they label as “good” or “appropriate” and punishing behaviors they do not understand or approve of. When children think they have not lived up to their parents', teachers', or community's expectations they may feel inadequate or even defective.

As adults we can have more control over the behaviors we choose. However, some of us still believe the old labels and behave accordingly.

Many of us have held jobs we hated—just to make a living. Some of us were criticized by our spouses, family members, bosses, or friends for behaving or *not* behaving in manners they deemed appropriate. We may

have even felt we must pursue activities or causes that others considered suitable, enjoyable, or worthwhile. Many of us have lived up to—or



down to—our labels. Fortunately, many people have at least some family or friends that they can “be themselves” with and let their True Colors show. Others are not that lucky. They may never have been validated for their own unique values, abilities, and preferences.

Now it is your opportunity to shine—to be esteemed for being who you are and to foster self-expression in others so they may shine too.

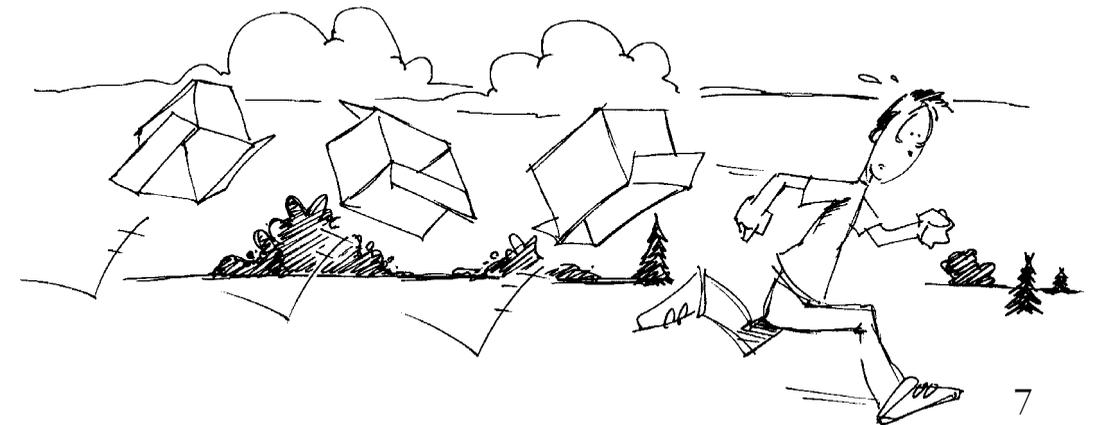
What? More Boxes?

It is important to discern the difference between stereotyping people,

which is restrictive, and identifying commonalities and differences, which expands possibilities for more understanding and appreciation.

Sometimes people misuse personality typing as a way of labeling others or putting people into boxes. Because the benefits of knowing and using True Colors are so tremendous, it is tempting to try and use True Colors to explain or “fix” challenges by constantly putting people or situations into neat little labeled boxes.

This is both the beauty and the shortcoming of type watching. It is easy, fun, and revealing to identify people's personality types, yet, if taken to the extreme, it can become restrictive. Attractive as it may be, take care not to oversimplify your entire world by boxing it all up into four rigid stereotypes. Contrary to stereotyping, which is a “fixed conventional representation,” True Colors recognizes that all people are a unique blend of characteristics. There are four categories in True Colors—Blue, Gold, Orange, and Green—but



these four colors blend in a variety of ways to form endless combinations.

We do generally refer to people as being dominant in one of the four colors for ease of identification. However, this is not stereotyping. It is just identification. What category people are identified with is determined by the characteristics they have in common. Think in terms of automobiles. A Chevrolet Corvette and a Toyota Corolla are not the same, yet both are put into the category of “cars.” Similarly, dogs and elephants are both “animals,” but nobody would mistake one for the other. Every noun in the English language is essentially a label—a way of identifying what we are talking about.

Knowing a Little Can Tell You a Lot

Just as with being able to identify certain characteristics of animals or cars, the benefits of identifying certain characteristics of people are endless. For example, if you know someone is a vegetarian, how is this information of benefit to you? What do you know about this “category” of people? The number one thing you could be sure of is that they do not eat meat!

Simply knowing this one thing—someone does not eat meat—provides you with a variety of information. However, take heed to make

sure you are not simply stereotyping. Would it be safe to assume that vegetarians would choose whole wheat bread over white bread or that they enjoy eating sprouts? Could you conclude that they own a comfortable pair of blue jeans? Would you expect to find that they recycle? Although the probability is higher that these things are also true, one could not assume so with 100% accuracy.

All vegetarians are not “sprout-eatin’, blue jeans wearin’ recyclers.” This is stereotyping. However, just knowing that a person is vegetarian does give you specific information about that person. For instance, if you are inviting vegetarians over for dinner and really want to impress them and make them feel welcome, would you cook a roast for dinner? During conversation, how interested would they be about the butcher sale at the local grocery store? How much rapport will be built if you talk about the “delicious” taste of a good steak or the “scrumptious” recipe you have for



meatballs or lamb chops? How much would they be able to contribute to the conversation? How much do you think they would want to contribute?

Now, if you are one of those people who really enjoy making your guests as uncomfortable as possible, you could still choose to serve meat and make it your topic of conversation throughout the evening. Although your guests will have to forego the roast at dinner, and may be polite enough to listen to the conversation about meat, they will probably not have much of a chance to be themselves.

Just knowing your dinner guests are vegetarian gives you plenty of information to assist you in knowing how to make them feel as comfortable and welcome as possible. You can either ignore this information because you feel calling someone a vegetarian is labeling them, or choose to use it because you know it can assist you in building rapport, opening lines of

communication, and increasing self-expression.

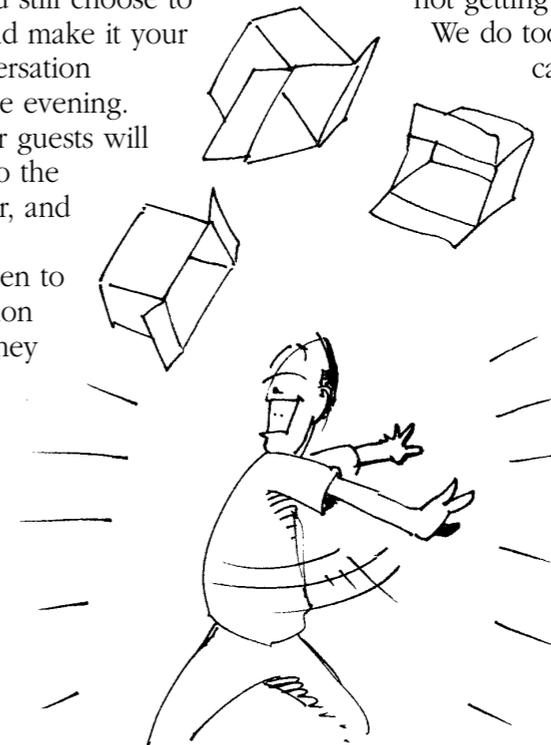
So, when people are not comfortable with the use of systems like True Colors because they don't want to be labeled, it is for a good reason. They just want to be sure that people are not getting unfairly stereotyped.

We do too. Just like any tool, it can be used to destroy or build.

True Colors is a way for you to break out of boxes,

self-imposed or otherwise. It's a way of recognizing your gifts as just that—gifts! It's also a way of acknowledging that others are distinctive individuals with different gifts to contribute; and different does not mean wrong.

True Colors is one of the easiest, most convenient methods for understanding and appreciating human behavior. Don't miss out on the benefits because you might not understand it yet. You will. Use it to build self-esteem, enhance relationships, and bring out the best in everyone.



Chapter 3

DISCOVERING YOUR TRUE COLORS



On with the Show...

In the following chapters, I will use the terms Blue, Gold, Orange, and Green. These are the colors that make up the True Colors concept. As you will learn, people usually have various characteristics from all four of

the color styles in their personality. However, one color is typically more dominant. So when we speak of a “Gold,” we are referring to a person who has many of the character traits associated with the Gold temperament. They wouldn’t necessarily have

all of the Gold traits to be considered a “Gold,” just more Gold traits than Blue, Orange, or Green.

As you learn more about and embrace the True Colors concept, you will begin to experience people, places, and events in relationship to their “color.” You may notice the “colors” becoming integrated into your vocabulary. You’ll find this awareness empowers you to avoid conflicts you would have otherwise run into head-on. You will be able to perceive behaviors as Blue, Gold, Orange, or Green automatically. And, instead of trying to change others’ behaviors, you easily can find ways to value their methods as right for them.

Are you excited to find out more about yourself and others? At the back of the book you’ll find cards with characteristics of the four different color types that make up the True Colors concept.

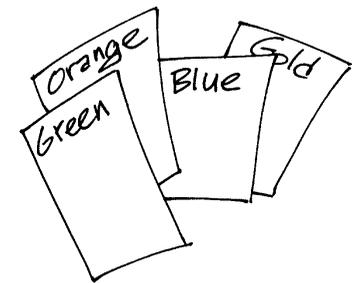
Notice that the cards are made to be removed so you can do your own “hands-on” sort for yourself or others. Carefully remove the cards and place them in front of you, picture side up.

Color Card Sort...

Once you have your cards in front of you, look at the pictures. Which ones do you relate to the most? Notice which one(s) remind you most of yourself and your own interests or motivations. Next, turn the cards over

and read through the information on each one. Rank them in order from most like you to least like you. For instance, you might decide that Green is most like you, Orange is second, Blue is third, and Gold is last or least like you. So, your color order or *spectrum* would be:

Green–Orange–Blue–Gold.



What Is Your Spectrum?

As mentioned, most of us are a combination of color style characteristics. If you read the cards and feel that you are equally strong in two or more styles, this is natural. We each have the capacity to excel in various areas exhibited by the different color characteristics. If after reading this section you still want further clarification of your color order, turn to Part II, “Color Watching,” and read through the characteristics of each color style. If you follow your gut, you’ll be able to recognize your colors more easily than if you try to scrutinize each one too closely.

First: Your Primary, Most Dominant...

The characteristics listed for this number one spot on your color spectrum indicate the ones you feel most comfortable operating with. They are the attributes most like you; the ones you use when you are being your most natural self, the ones that happen automatically.

Sometimes people may order their cards incorrectly because they choose the skills they *must* use on a daily basis, instead of the ones they *prefer* to use. For example, one woman I remember quite vividly was a principal for an elementary school. During a True Colors training at her school, she chose Gold as her primary, most dominant color. When she announced this to her staff, they roared with laughter and insisted she belonged in the Orange group instead. She argued that all she did all day was enforce rules, maintain schedules, and keep the school organized. Although this was true for the most part, her staff had a different point of view. They suggested that although it was her job to do so, she went about it in a strained, haphazard way. A bit taken aback by this information, she begrudgingly (at first) joined the Orange group. Throughout the rest of the session it was obvious to all that she was enjoying herself. By the end of the session she testified to her staff that she had never felt such a rapport

and freedom to be herself as she did with that Orange group. She realized that just because she had to enforce rules all day did not mean it was natural for her.

Second: As Meaningful as Your First...

Your second color will have a major influence on your first. Many times, it shines just as brightly as your most dominant color. In fact, for those whose colors shine inward (introvert) it may be hard to tell which is their first color and which is their second. (See Chapter 4 for more on introverts.) This is because they may use their most dominant color to process internally. The rest of the world may experience their second color as their most dominant, because that is the one they may use to operate in the external world. Take this into consideration if you are confused about your own or another person's behaviors. Some consider their second color as being almost interchangeable with their first.

Third...

You may or may not recognize some of the characteristics of your third color as being part of your temperament. Many times these traits will not be as obvious as the more dominant ones but will come in handy when needed. Sometimes when an individual's first color is extremely

dominant, the second and third colors can be closely related to each other.

Fourth...

The last color in your spectrum is significant too. Because these characteristics are the least natural to you, you may admire them in others. Or, on the contrary, because they are the least natural, chances are that they are also the least understood, and therefore they are the characteristics that cause the most conflict with others.

This lack of understanding can cause us to criticize instead of appreciate others that have characteristics that are the least natural for us and vice versa. For example, a person who is very organized may have a tendency to criticize those who are not. And, those individuals for whom organization is not a priority may criticize those for whom it is.

People often condemn what they have not had much experience with or lack most in themselves.

Are You a Rainbow?

All of us, at one time or another, can recognize characteristics we have that are from any one of the four color styles. *Everyone* has all four of the color styles in their spectrum in differing amounts. On occasion some people feel their traits are evenly

spread—one color not be any more dominant than another. This very well could be true. Some people who have had a lot of life experiences have had the opportunity to develop many aspects of their varying temperaments and therefore may appear to be quite balanced in characteristics. Others have conscientiously gone about developing their non-dominant traits so they feel comfortable with virtually all of them.

Many times however, if individuals are having a difficult time deciding their True Colors, it's because they are in a transition period in their life and are trying to figure out what's happening to them. Or, they may have seldom been able to truly be themselves and therefore only vaguely have a sense of what comes naturally for them. They may have lost touch with their True Colors. In addition, Greens are prone to thinking they do not have a dominant color because of their tendency to extensively analyze things.

Nonetheless, years of research have shown that people are born with one temperament that is stronger than the others. It's just a matter of recognizing which one it truly is.

For now, rank the colors from most like you to least like you below:

My Color Spectrum:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Chapter 4

DO YOUR COLORS SHINE

OUTWARD
or
INWARD?

A Note about Extroversion and Introversion...

Some people's most dominant color shines brightly for everyone to see. Others may not show their domi-

nant color readily. For this reason, we might not recognize our True Colors immediately or may sometimes misinterpret the True Colors of others. For instance, many Oranges are very loud and straightforward. You definitely know when they are in the room.

But some Oranges are quiet, passive, and don't call attention to themselves. That is what is usually expected for Greens. Typically a Green doesn't like to be in the limelight. However, some Greens are energetic, enthusiastic, and take the initiative to motivate others to action. So why the difference? The difference is whether their Colors are shining outward or inward.

Shining Outward— Extroverted...

Extroverts are generally fairly easy to spot. They are usually very approachable—if they haven't approached you first. They typically are comfortable meeting new people and will readily talk to strangers. They enjoy interaction with others and gain energy from it. The more they talk and share, the more energetic they become. Extroverts will ask others for their opinions and take pleasure in sharing their own. They have a tendency to get bored if they are not contributing to the conversation. In fact, if some extroverts don't self-regulate they may end up dominating the entire conversation. Given the opportunity, extroverts will speak before or as they think. They can blurt things out without much thought.

Some extroverts can have an entire conversation with themselves while you are in the room and thank you for your input, when in reality you said nothing!

Another way to look at extroverts is to say that their colors shine outward for the world to experience. Their attention is focused on the external environment of people, activities, and things.

