

“Don’t Use Your Style as an Excuse”

by Markku Kauppinen

“I am a high ‘D-style’ so I don’t want to be bothered with it. Just do it for me now. I don’t have time for it. You know, I am a bottom line kind of guy. Take care of it for me, won’t you?” a man says to his coworker.

“My ‘C-style’ is *really* low. I can’t deal with all of the details and I probably will make lots of mistakes anyway. Can you just make it happen?” says a woman to her team member.

“I am a high ‘I-style’ and I just do not want to try to figure out this system. Why don’t you do it for me? It would really help me out”, a woman says to her assistant.

I frequently hear comments like this. Sometimes, I hear them first hand and other times from our clients who report incidences of such behavior. They are all examples of what *not* to do. These individuals are completely misusing the information and entirely misunderstanding why we use *Extended DISC*® in the first place.

Have you ever heard a similar comment? In essence, the other person is saying: “I cannot – and I will not – do something because of who I am.” He is also implying: “I do not want to modify my behavior so you do it.”

What the recipient of the message often perceives is: “You feel you are more important than I am and you believe you are entitled not to adjust your behavior.” Not exactly the most motivating message.

Be careful you do not communicate similar messages to others. Please understand I do not mean it is not appropriate to delegate tasks and responsibilities to others. Often it is exactly what you should do. It is smart to have a person who is naturally more comfortable with a particular task to do it. For example, assigning an extroverted I-style to be the informal “social director” of the office instead of an introverted C-style can make a lot of sense. Sometimes it is also very smart to intentionally bring in individuals with different behavioral styles into

your team to make it more effective and productive.

However, you should not use your style as an excuse for not modifying your behaviors. It is extremely de-motivating to others and over time very likely to cause deep resentment. Most people do this without being aware they are doing it. They make statements such as: “I am not very good with people. I think it would be better if you were to organize it. You are better at it.” This is an identical situation except in this case the person making the comment probably is not fully aware what they are saying and implying to the other person. Also, the recipient of the message is likely to be more empathetic.

When another person says: “I am a low I-style. I think it would be better if you were to organize it. You are better at it. I do not want to do it”, he is very conscious of what he is doing. He is using his low I-style as a blatant excuse of not taking action. There is not even a slightest attempt to try to influence and motivate the other person to help him. It is very transparent.

There is another variation to using your style as an excuse. It is more damaging. It happens when you make similar statements to *yourself*.

I remember one person told me she could never be a successful entrepreneur because she is not a D-style. Another person told me he could not be an effective facilitator because he is not an I-style. They are both wrong. In fact, they could both be very successful if they stopped believing the excuses they make. Never allow yourself to make comments like these to yourself. Your behavioral style does not limit what you can achieve in any way.

Finally, and most importantly, never make comments about what others “cannot” do because of their behavior style. This is by far the most damaging version of using “the style as an excuse”. The other person just may believe you even though you are very wrong. Just like it is the case for you, his style does not limit him in any way. Do not ever limit others by telling them

they cannot do something because of who they are.

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“Putting Quality on the Line”

by Marshall Goldsmith

I have a unique compensation system in my job as executive coach: I only get paid if my clients get better. "Better" means my clients achieve positive, measurable change in behavior, not as judged by themselves but by their key stakeholders. My coaching process usually takes about 18 months and involves an average of 16 stakeholders.

I have been asked many times where I came up with this "pay only for results" idea. The answer is from Dennis Mudd, who was my boss 43 years ago.

When I was growing up in Valley Station, KY., my family was poor. Dad operated a small, two-pump gas station. The roof on our home was very old and starting to leak badly. We had no choice but to get a new roof. Dad hired a man named Dennis Mudd to put on the roof. To save some money, I worked as his assistant.

Putting on a roof in the middle of the summer in Kentucky is incredibly hard work. No other job I did before or have done since then required this degree of physical exertion. I was amazed at the care that Mr. Mudd put into laying the shingles. He was patient with me as I made mistakes and helped me learn how to do the job right. After a while, my attitude toward this project changed from grudging acceptance to pride. In spite of the heat and pain, I looked forward to working with Mr. Mudd every day.

When the roof was finally finished, I thought it looked great. When Mr. Mudd presented my Dad with the invoice for our work, he said quietly, "Bill, please take your time and inspect our work. If you feel that this roof meets your standards, pay us. If not, there is no charge for our work." It was very obvious he meant what he said.

Dad looked carefully at the roof, thanked both of us for a job well done and paid Mr. Mudd, who then paid me for my help.

I will never forget watching Dennis Mudd when he asked Dad to pay only if he was pleased with the results. I knew he was dead serious and my respect for Mr. Mudd skyrocketed. I was only 14 years old, but the incident made a huge impression on me. I knew the Mudd family. They didn't have any more money than we did. I thought: Mr. Mudd may be poor, but he is not cheap. This guy has class. When I grow up, I want to be like Dennis Mudd.

I've received many honors for my work, but I don't think I will ever match the dedication to quality and the degree of integrity Dennis Mudd showed. In the past 29 years, there have been a few assignments for which I have not been paid, and I have never asked for money I felt was undeserved. Financially, how much has this hurt me? It caused me some temporary pain and embarrassment, but I knew I was still going to have a very prosperous life.

How much would not getting paid have hurt Dennis Mudd? A lot. If my dad hadn't paid him, it would have meant the Mudds wouldn't have eaten very well for the next couple of months. Mr. Mudd's pride and integrity were more important to him than money, and he had enough faith in the quality of his work, and in my father, to make the offer he did.

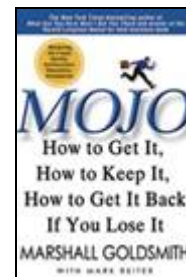
Dennis Mudd never gave any pep talks about quality or values. He didn't use any buzzwords such as "empowerment" or "customer delight." He didn't have to—his actions communicated his values better than any buzzwords he might have used.

We can all learn a lot from this man. The next time you are working on a project, ask yourself, "What would happen to my level of commitment if I knew I was only going to be paid if I achieved results?" How would your behavior change?

Dennis Mudd taught me a lesson I will try to live up to for the rest of my life. What is important is not how much he impressed me. What is much more important is that he could look with pride at the person he saw in the mirror every day.

***Dr. Marshall Goldsmith** recently been named by the American Management Association as one of 50 great thinkers and business leaders who have impacted the field of management. His 18 books include the Business Week best-seller, The Leader of the Future and Global Leadership: The Next Generation. Marshall is a world authority in helping successful leaders achieve positive change in behavior: for themselves, their people and their teams.*

Marshall's latest best-seller, **MOJO**, is now available.



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