

Chapter 2

Knowing Yourself and Your Style

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Dr. Lane is a hospitalist at a busy tertiary care center in a large city. She is in her fifth year of practice. She has always received praise for her ability to work quickly and effectively and her attention to detail. Her partners appreciate that she gets her work done and provides clean, thoughtful signouts. Some nurses and house staff members view her as no-nonsense, and she likes things to be done “her way.” She acknowledges the importance of her hospital’s mission but tends to avoid committee work at her hospital because she gets frustrated that she cannot just do the work herself, and she feels she could use her time more productively.

Whether working on a busy inpatient service or in a corporate boardroom, knowing yourself and your working style can reap a wide variety of personal and professional benefits, including increased efficiency and productivity and more fruitful collaborations with your colleagues. Introspection into the types of obstacles that impede your personal success the most, whether systems inefficiencies or communication difficulties, can allow you to identify strategies to prevent such barriers or to cope with them more productively. Knowing yourself and your style can pave the way for you to develop leadership skills to advance your career, align personal goals with senior leadership goals, become a more successful educator, and even deal more effectively with burnout.

In this chapter, we propose four domains of self-assessment to help you better understand yourself and your working style in order to excel in hospitalist medicine. These four domains are:

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1. Personality
2. Communication
3. Emotional intelligence and leadership
4. Time management

As you walk through each of these four domains, we encourage you to consider not just your own style but the styles of close colleagues and collaborators, and to envision how common workplace scenarios may go more smoothly if every health care worker truly knew themselves and their working styles.

First Domain of Self-assessment: Personality

The director of Dr. Lane's hospitalist group asks Dr. Lane to join a committee tasked with reducing the incidence of central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) in their hospital. Dr. Lane agrees; she is not particularly excited about committee work, but she knows she needs to increase her visibility in the workplace in order to advance her career. As Dr. Lane attends this committee's monthly meetings, she becomes frustrated by how much time is wasted. She has very concrete, reasonable suggestions to decrease the hospital's cases of CLABSI, and yet every month other committee members seem more interested in socializing with each other than in actually completing work. At one meeting, she snaps at a fellow committee member for questioning one of her ideas. If the group will not move forward with one of her suggestions, then Dr. Lane wonders why she serves on this committee in the first place.

According to the American Psychological Association, personality is defined as “individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving” [1]. It has also been defined as “the set of emotional qualities and ways of behaving that make a person different from other people” [2]. Our personalities make us unique, and they tend to remain remarkably consistent over time, resisting change even as our life circumstances shift and evolve. At our core, personality determines how we respond to the world around us; it influences how we behave, make decisions, and interact with other human beings.

Through the years, a variety of personality inventories have been validated and used in a wide range of settings, from clinical practice to the business world. Two personality inventories lend themselves well to the hospitalist. The first is the five-factor model [3, 4] that espouses five major categories of personality traits, each with its own dichotomy of personality types:

- I. Openness—inventive/curious versus consistent/cautious
- II. Conscientiousness—efficient/organized versus easygoing/careless
- III. Extraversion—outgoing/energetic versus solitary/reserved
- IV. Agreeableness—friendly/compassionate versus analytical/detached
- V. Neuroticism, or emotional stability—sensitive/nervous versus secure/confident

Any thorough discussion of personality assessment must include the five-factor model, given its prevalence of use in non-medical sectors and its predominance in the sociological literature on personality. The inventory itself has multiple sections and is far more detailed than the summary above, but it is worth considering these five factors and reflecting on which ends of these spectra you may fall.

The second personality inventory with wide commercial use is the color code personality profile [5]. In this assessment model, a person completes a 45-item self-rating instrument and is categorized into one of four personality types: red, blue, white, or yellow. Each of these colors is associated with specific characteristics, motivations, strengths, and weaknesses. Moreover, different dynamics emerge when a person of one color type collaborates with a colleague of a different color type. A free version of the color code personality test is found at https://www.colorcode.com/choose_personality_test/. In order to best understand the motives that drive your individual behavior in different scenarios, we encourage you to take the basic test and determine your specific color type.

According to the Color Code personality profile, each color stands for one particularly strong behavioral motive. Each color-based personality has its own strengths, weaknesses, needs, wants, and behavior patterns, and each personality type can achieve great professional success if a person takes the time to understand the motives underlying his or her actions. Reds, for example, seek power in their personal and professional lives. They crave productivity, are often thought of as workaholics, and like to have things their way. They want to look good in front of others, to appear knowledgeable and be respected. They are confident and visionary, and they can be perceived as arrogant, impatient and insensitive. They enjoy leadership opportunities and appreciate working with facts, rather than opinions or emotions.

Blues, on the other hand, are motivated by intimacy. They seek to connect with others and to be understood and appreciated. They are often selfless, looking for opportunities to make others feel valued. They need to love and to be loved. Their work is characterized by integrity and driven by a strong moral code; according to Hartman, a Blue “would rather lose than cheat” [5]. Blues are disciplined, goal-oriented, dependable, and loyal. They thrive on the quality of their work product, often leading to the perception that they are perfectionists; they can also be worry-prone, insecure, and moody.

Whites are driven by peace. They avoid confrontation and seek kindness in interactions with others. They enjoy a quiet independence and value their alone time. They may not share their opinions or thoughts proactively, and they are likely to shut down when working with someone hostile or confrontational. Unlike Reds, they do not wish to control others; rather, they refuse to be controlled themselves. They are often even-tempered and diplomatic. They are open to suggestions to improve or resolve situations, making eager students and open-minded executives. They can be viewed as indecisive, unexpressive, and sometimes stubborn.

Yellows are thought of as the life of the party. They are playful, fun, charismatic, and sociable. They love praise and attention, and they thrive on popularity. Friendships are very important to them. They seek adventure and opportunity for

Table 2.1 Summary of four color code personality types

Color	Red	Blue	White	Yellow
Motive	Power	Intimacy	Peace	Fun
Needs	To look good (academically)	To be good (morally)	To feel good (inside)	To look good (socially)
	To be right	To be understood	To be understood	To be popular
	To be respected	To be appreciated	To be respected	To be praised
Wants	To hide insecurities (tightly)	To reveal insecurities	To reveal insecurities	To hide insecurities (loosely)
	To please self	To please others	To please others	To be noticed
	Leadership	Autonomy	Protection	Freedom
	Challenging adventure	Security	Contentment	Playful adventure

play whenever possible. They can be easily bored and viewed as disorganized, impulsive, or irresponsible, depending on the professional setting. A summary of the four personalities is in the below Table 2.1 [5].

The color code books and web-based materials delve into greater detail regarding each color-based personality type, including strengths, limitations, ideal career types, and how best to develop positive connections with each color. If we return to the example of Dr. Lane and her work on the CLABSI committee, her predominant Color Code personality type is most likely Red. Her confidence, desire to be productive and do things her way, and even her impatience with the more relationship-driven members of her committee all speak to the Red elements of her personality. Reds can work well with other Reds, and this same-color combination can lead to great productivity; however, it can also lead to great competition and impatience. In general, Reds tend to work most harmoniously with White personality types. They share certain traits, such as the need for respect and a desire for power, and their differences even complement one another’s. For example, while a Red likes to lead, a White is happy to follow. Reds tend to be impatient, while Whites are more patient, and this can bode well for productive working partnerships. Reds and Yellows can work together effectively as well, often engaging in dynamic and animated conversations with a certain degree of playfulness to the back-and-forth of their dialogue. Both Reds and Yellows prefer to hide their insecurities and watch out for themselves primarily, and both are comfortable with the idea of change. Reds and Blues, on the other hand, tend to have a harder time striking harmonious working relationships, and their color combination is a relatively incompatible one. Both Reds and Blues are strong and used to enjoying great professional success, but their needs and wants are nearly polar opposite to one another’s. Reds and Blues have difficulty understanding one another’s behavior, given Reds’ tendencies toward self-promotion, adventure, productivity, and logic,

in contrast to Blues' proclivity for pleasing others, stability, perfectionism, and emotion. This may help explain Dr. Lane's frustration with some of her fellow committee members.

Regardless of the specific color combination and the dynamics to follow, understanding your own personality type and considering the personality types of your colleagues will lead to greater ease and productivity in the hospital work place. You can play up your strengths more successfully and then cope more effectively with frustration as you reflect on what is actually bothering you and why. You can prioritize partnerships with personality types that mesh melodiously with your own; conversely, if you must collaborate closely with a personality type that tends to clash with yours, being mindful of each other's underlying motivations will hopefully reduce the amount of friction you encounter on a daily basis. Acknowledging what a different personality type may need, such as being respected as a Red versus appreciated as a Blue or praised as a Yellow, will allow you to provide that colleague with the type of feedback they are able to hear best, and even to meet in the middle in situations that could be otherwise contentious. Being in touch with your personality type's needs and wants, as well as what drives your behavior, will allow you to lead a more examined professional life in hospitalist medicine.

Second Domain of Self-assessment: Communication

At a CLABSI committee meeting, Dr. Lane suggests incorporating a central line check box in the electronic medical record so that nurses must document each day whether or not a patient has an indwelling central line. One of her fellow committee members, Dr. Stevens, responds that they will need to form a joint task force with nursing leadership and obtain nursing input before exploring and then implementing such a change. Dr. Lane becomes frustrated and angry that yet another reasonable suggestion of hers is met with resistance. She is on this committee to decrease the rate of CLABSI at his hospital, not to hear about the need for additional task forces.

The ability to communicate effectively with one's colleagues is crucial to success in the workplace, especially in a patient care setting when a seemingly simple miscommunication can lead to medical errors and even adverse outcomes. In any professional setting, a single message has the power to either inspire or deflate its audience, depending on its delivery; similarly, professional partnerships can flourish amidst excellent communication or crumble in its absence.

Communication, which is defined formally as "the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express information or your ideas, thoughts, or feelings to someone else" [6]. It is tied heavily to both personality type and leadership skills. Numerous studies in the business literature highlight the importance of communication to both individual and organizational success [7–10], including one

which found that the quality of a manager's communication skills was the greatest predictor of employee job satisfaction [11].

As with personality, there are several communication style inventories that have been used in the business world since the 1970s. Paul Mok's landmark communication style survey [12] was updated and modified by Jackie L. Hartman and Jim McCambridge in 2010 [13], and this more modern survey has been used in communication courses and executive development programs across the country. It provides a framework in which most people have one dominant style, everyone uses a combination of different styles, and the majority of people tend to respond most readily to communication that matches their dominant style. One area in which our communication styles differ from our personalities is that the former are far more malleable and adaptable; in fact, Hartman and McCambridge discuss an important notion of communication style-flexing, which we will explain further in a moment.

We encourage you to complete this communication style survey (see Table 2.2) and determine which one of four main communication styles is your dominant style: Analytical, Driver, Amiable, or Expressive [13]. Moreover, each of these four styles can be modified by four different dimensions: assertiveness (controlling a situation, working quickly, talking more than listening), responsiveness (expressing one's emotions, listening more than talking), priority (focusing on people versus tasks, or vice versa), and pace (communicating quickly versus slowly).

People with an Analytical communication style are content to remain in the background and are often industrious and serious. They are comfortable working with facts and figures, and they are most likely to ask "why" questions. Their goal is to work within the system. Drivers, on the other hand, are more assertive, decisive, and demanding. They are more control specialists, and they ask "what" questions. Their goal is to obtain results. Amiables are different from both Analyticals and Drivers in that they are very responsive and supportive. They are respectful, personable, and potentially emotional. Their goal is to cooperate. Expressives are similar to Amiables in that both styles' priority is people, but Expressives are both assertive and responsive and communicate at a faster pace. They can be enthusiastic and stimulating, but also excitable and undisciplined. Their goal is to create alliances. A summary of the four main communication styles is found in Table 2.3.

A brief scan of Table 2.3 will show that some communication styles have certain traits in common with one another, such as pace, priority, or level of assertiveness. People with different communication styles will tend to connect effectively if their styles share some similar characteristics. As a general rule, people with two communication styles that have no basic traits in common will have difficulty engaging in effective dialogue. In the case of Dr. Lane, we can imagine that she is a Driver, working at a quick pace, prioritizing task completion, and focusing on the results of her efforts. Dr. Stevens may be more of an Expressive, focusing on creating alliances with nursing and prioritizing the people in the process, rather than the tasks at hand. Both Dr. Lane and Dr. Stevens prefer a fast pace of communication, but otherwise their styles of communication are likely to be quite different.

This brings us to Hartman and McCambridge's notion of style-flexing [13]. Once a person understands his or her own communication style as described above,

Table 2.2 Communication style survey by Hartman and McCambridge [13] (Put a number 1 (one) by each statement you feel describes you)

1	I am an aggressive person
2	I change my mind often. I zigzag through life rather than plodding down one monotonous path
3	I don't worry about the past or the future. I live for today
4	I am not very spontaneous or emotional. I believe the head should guide the heart
5	I have been called impractical
6	I don't like people who live for today without regard to the future. I look ahead and prepare for the rainy days
7	My workspace looks very orderly and fairly stark
8	I rather like to be different: to dress differently from other people, to go to strange and exciting places, to do the unusual
9	I do not mind having people do sloppy work over as many times as necessary until they do it right
10	I sometimes go to extremes. My "highs" are very high, and my "lows" are very low
11	I am very sociable
12	I believe that the best technique for achieving results is through thorough, objective analysis
13	I like being in charge
14	I think that I would succeed as an accountant
15	I am sensitive to the feelings of others
16	I believe that the best technique for achieving results is through freedom and individual motivation
17	I value relationships. Getting along well with others is very important to me
18	My workspace looks somewhat messy but it does have a "homey" charm
19	It is important to me to feel that I "belong." I want very much to be accepted by the people with whom I work, my friends, and my family
20	I like to compete
21	I believe the majority is right. I usually go along with the group. Whatever they think and do usually suits me
22	I am a dynamic, high-drive person
23	When people begin to get upset, I try to calm them down. I don't like for people to be upset with each other
24	I have a vivid imagination. I can see all sorts of possibilities that others don't see
25	I love to be complimented and recognized
26	I am neat. I'm bothered by messy people
27	I play hard to win and I hate losing
28	I enjoy meeting new people
29	I am very practical. I believe in and value "what works"

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

30	My workspace is a showcase for awards, plaques, posters
31	Sometimes I overlook details in implementing my big ideas and sometimes my ideas seem ahead of their time
32	Sometimes people say I am a perfectionist. I guess I am because I believe that anything that is worth doing is worth doing well
33	I like to learn by experience, by actually doing it rather than reading books about it
34	I think that I could be a social worker
35	I like people like Vince Lombardi, Clint Eastwood, and Oprah Winfrey
36	I think through and try to do everything on a logical basis
37	I have a “take charge” attitude
38	I feel that I have great destiny. I know I am going to amount to something
39	I am very goal or task oriented. I like to have specific goals or tasks to accomplish
40	My favorite colors include black, white, and silver
41	Sometimes people say I’m visionary, that I am a dreamer, and maybe I am
42	I believe in myself, particularly my physical strength and ability
43	I believe in doing things because of principles – hard work, efficiency, morality, justice. I believe the world would be a much better place if everyone would live by the great principles of religion and justice
44	My favorite color is red
45	I am very orderly. I believe “there is a place for everything, and everything belongs in its place”
46	I am very excitable
47	My workspace is precisely organized and displays diplomas and other signs of achievement
48	I believe that the best technique for achieving results is through deadlines and managed schedules
49	My life is well organized. There is an appropriate time and place for everything, which is important
50	I like to deal with people and be dealt with in a very direct manner. I “tell it like it is,” and I expect others to do the same
51	I love to go to parties
52	I am very creative
53	I have many friends
54	I admire people like judges and religious leaders who put principle above everything else
55	Sometimes I am extravagant
56	I believe in rules—in the home, at work, and in society. I am for law and order
57	I like to read about great explorers and inventors. People who accomplished great feats against seemingly insurmountable odds

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

	58	I like people like Tina Fey, Ellen DeGeneres, and Jay Leno—friendly, nice people who laugh a lot
	59	I think that I would enjoy being a creative designer
	60	My favorite colors are earth tone
	61	My favorite colors are vibrant/mixed combinations
	62	I am punctual. I get my work done on time. I am never late for appointments. I expect others to do the same
	63	In my work and social life, I try to be very cooperative. I like to get along
	64	I hate weakness in myself and others
	65	I believe that the best technique for achieving results is through nonthreatening encouragement
	66	Things to me are right or wrong, “black or white,” never gray
	67	I never spend time thinking about the past. I think very little about the present. My thoughts are on the future—the great things that are going to happen to me!

Scoring: count one point for each of the items associated with the different communication styles as listed below and enter the total for each style in the space provided

Total	Style	
	Driver	Items: 1, 3, 7, 13, 20, 22, 27, 29, 33, 35, 37, 39, 42, 44, 48, 50, 64
	Amiable	Items: 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, 34, 43, 51, 53, 58, 60, 63, 65
	Analytical	Items: 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 26, 32, 36, 40, 43, 45, 47, 49, 54, 56, 62, 66
	Expressive	Items: 2, 5, 8, 10, 16, 18, 24, 31, 38, 41, 46, 52, 55, 57, 59, 61, 67

Table 2.3 Summary of four main communication styles (Hartman and McCambridge [13])

Communication style	Analytical	Driver	Amiable	Expressive
Assertiveness	Low	High	Low	High
Responsiveness	Low	Low	High	High
Priority	Tasks	Tasks	People	People
Pace	Slow	Fast	Slow	Fast
Type of specialist	Systems	Control	Support	Social
Question most likely to ask	“Why?”	“What?”	“Who?”	“How?”
Goal	Work within the system	Obtain results	Cooperate	Create alliances
When stressed	Retreats to comfort zone	Dictates	Conforms	Attacks

he or she can begin to understand the communication styles of those around them and then modify his or her dominant communication style to better interact with others. If you realize that the person you are working with has a different communication style from your own, you can “flex” your style to collaborate more effectively. For example, if you are partnering with an Analytical, you can make an

effort to ask more “why” questions and provide more objective facts and figures in your discussions with this person. If you are working closely with a Driver, such as Dr. Lane, you may ask more “what” questions and show a greater focus on net results, such as a decrease in CLABSI rates or improvements in length of stay. If you are in a team with an Expressive, you may show more of a focus on team-building and alliances, maintaining an emphasis on people.

Each of us employs different styles of communication throughout the day, depending on the circumstance or conversation at hand; it is our dominant communication style that is most worthy of analysis as we get to know ourselves and our working styles. Much like personality types, each communication style has its benefits and drawbacks. Much like your personality type, knowing your particular communication style and reflecting on the styles of your colleagues can help you communicate more effectively and be more productive in the hospital, whether in patient care, teaching endeavors, or on committees.

Third Domain of Self-assessment: Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

Emotional intelligence (EI), the ability to understand and recognize emotional states and use that understanding to manage yourself and other individuals or teams [14], is central to the concept of knowing yourself and your working style. It speaks to the notion that being in touch with both your own and others’ emotions can allow you to manage people more effectively, elicit your colleagues’ best performance, and run a successful business unit, which can include anything from an inpatient team to a hospitalist practice to a health system. It is a crucial addition to standard intelligence and technical skills in defining great leaders. According to the Harvard Business Review, “emotional intelligence, it turns out, isn’t so soft. If emotional obliviousness jeopardizes your ability to perform, fend off aggressors, or be compassionate in a crisis, no amount of attention to the bottom line will protect your career. It’s a basic tool that, deployed with finesse, is key to professional success” [15]. EI training has already taken off in the business sector and is being incorporated ever more frequently into health care management and even medical school curricula [16, 17].

In Goleman’s approach, there are five main foundational pillars of EI [18]:

1. Self-awareness, or the ability to know yourself, your emotions, moods, and drives and to recognize their impact on others
2. Self-regulation or controlling your disruptive impulses and thinking before acting
3. Social skill, or managing relationships, building networks, and finding common ground with others
4. Empathy or understanding other people’s emotional makeup and treating others according to their emotional reactions

5. Motivation, or pursuing goals with energy and persistence, working for reasons that go beyond money or status

Together, these five skills can be cultivated to lead to greater EI and more effective leadership. And Goleman maintains that EI can be learned and developed, as opposed to standard intelligence or even personality that are largely innate or static.

A variety of emotional quotient (EQ) or EI inventories have been developed, the best known and most highly validated of which is the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i). The EQ-i is not accessible to the general public; it is available for purchase by educators and organization leaders with at least a Master's degree in psychology, counseling, or social work. It is a 125-question survey, and the respondent's answers are analyzed using an algorithm developed by Reuven Bar-On, a clinical psychologist who has been researching EI since 1980 and who developed the EQ-i [19]. It consists of five composite scales, which in the latest version of the EQ-i are: (1) self-perception, (2) self-expression, (3) interpersonal, (4) decision making, and (5) stress management [20]. Each of these has associated subscales, such as stress tolerance and flexibility under the composite scale of stress management, or problem-solving and impulse control under the larger umbrella of decision making.

While a hospitalist may perform well enough without delving into his or her own emotional intelligence, insight into one's EI quotient is a vital component of being a successful leader or even just thriving in the workplace. If Dr. Lane were to take the EQ-i, we can imagine that she would score highly on some composite scales, such as Decision Making, and perhaps not as highly on others, such as Interpersonal, which includes subscales such as Empathy and Social Responsibility.

As we explore the processes by which you can know yourself and your working style, an important step in this journey is to increase your self-awareness of your own emotions as well as your empathy toward your collaborators and their emotions. This heightened EI will allow you to think before you act, diffuse moments of interpersonal tension, treat others in a way to which they will respond best, and find common ground with colleagues, thereby allowing you to manage your professional relationships to mutually beneficial ends.

Fourth Domain of Self-assessment: Time Management

The director of Dr. Lane's hospitalist group is writing a paper on their group's successful efforts to reduce rates of catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs). She assigns sections of the paper to different hospitalists, and she asks Dr. Lane to write the Methods section. Rather than become overwhelmed by her various tasks in addition to patient care, Dr. Lane carves out 5 min of quiet time to create a prioritized to-do list of her endeavors. She sets goals for projects such as writing the Methods section, completing tasks for the CLABSI committee, and

putting together a 45-minute talk on syncope that she has agreed to give the hospitalist group in two weeks' time. She breaks these tasks down into individual steps and then prioritizes the steps, assigning deadlines for each. She builds in some additional time in her schedule to deal with unanticipated interruptions.

Our last domain of self-assessment is a bit different from the others; how we manage our time involves a very personal and individualized set of decisions, whereas our personalities, communication styles, and emotional intelligence have everything to do with our interactions with the world around us. Some of today's business literature examines the alignment of individual with organizational time management goals as a major opportunity to improve an organization's success [21], but first a hospitalist must juggle patient care responsibilities with teaching tasks, committee work, and other tasks and projects for the hospital and health system at large. Focusing on personal time management strategies is a helpful starting point for improving efficiency, streamlining one's work flow, and preventing a sense of "initiative overload" [22] that contributes so frequently to burnout. Moreover, an abundance of literature in the realms of psychology and sociology illustrates that perceived control of time is a meaningful predictor of job satisfaction [23].

In contrast to our other domains of self-assessment, there is a relative paucity of validated instruments with which to identify your own time management style, strengths, and weaknesses. Mind Tools®, an online resource that provides numerous self-assessment surveys and tool kits for career skills such as problem solving, decision making, stress management, and communication skills, offers a helpful and brief time management survey. You may access and take the quiz for free at http://mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_88.htm; access to tool kits and other quizzes requires a monthly membership to the site and its services [24]. The Mind Tools® team breaks down effective time management into five main categories, which are also seen consistently in the literature on time management training: (1) goal setting, (2) scheduling, (3) prioritization, (4) managing interruptions, and (5) limiting procrastination. Dr. Lane demonstrates a number of admirable time management skills, as she sets aside time to craft an organized and prioritized to-do list with deadlines associated to different tasks. Building in time to account for interruptions or unanticipated distractions is also an effective strategy; any person who works in patient care knows well that emergencies arise, causing a 30-min task to take closer to 60 or 90 min to complete.

Another business strategy outlined by Peter Bregman is the "management by six-box to-do list," which involves identifying five overarching priorities that should take 95 % of your time [21]. These can include anything from improving your patient care metrics to increasing your scholarly productivity to gaining visibility with executive leadership to developing your teaching skills. Then, take a piece of paper and divide it into six boxes: one for each of the above five priorities, and then a sixth for the items that consume the other 5 % of your time. The next step is to fill those boxes with all of your to-do list items. This will allow you to quickly determine which tasks are not critical or high-yield to any of your top goals. If the "other 5 %" box becomes filled with crucial items, it may be worth

reconsidering your top five priorities. Whether you set more concrete goals for project completion, develop a highly prioritized task list, avoid the temptation to procrastinate, or create the six-box to-do list described above, fine-tuning your time management skills will allow you a sense of control over your daily work life and enhance your satisfaction in your job.

Putting It All Together

Perhaps not surprisingly, your working style consists of a wide variety of personal traits, such as (but not limited to) the four domains discussed in this chapter: personality type, communication style, emotional intelligence, and time management skills. Equally predictably, these dimensions of your working style are intertwined with one another and affect each other in numerous and sometimes imperceptible ways. Your underlying personality determines much of how you share your thoughts with others and perceive information from them in turn; your emotional intelligence involves insight into your own personality; your communication style ties directly into using emotional intelligence to manage others effectively toward common goals; and improving all of the above domains can lead to time saved through prevention of misunderstandings and unnecessary conflict. Some elements of your working style, such as communication style or time management, can be modified readily after basic self-assessment and a modicum of insight and effort. Other elements, such as emotional intelligence, may be developed and honed with a bit more time and energy. The element of personality may be more resistant to change, but deeper knowledge of your specific personality type and how it works with others' personality types can lead to greater interpersonal successes and collaborations, which ultimately lie at the heart of success in the workplace.

In order to increase your knowledge of yourself and your style in a meaningful way, we recommend identifying one goal for self-awareness and improvement within each of the four domains and incorporating progress toward those goals in your daily work. To return to the example of Dr. Lane, a Red Driver with excellent time management skills and perhaps average emotional intelligence, her goals may include:

1. Understand my own personality type (Red) and how I can make the most out of working with other personality types, namely the Blues on my CLABSI committee.
2. Understand my own communication style (Driver) and how to identify other communication styles (Analytical, Amiable, Expressive). This way, I can style-flex as needed to communicate more effectively with others, e.g., slow down my pace of communication and focus on cooperation, support, and "who" questions when working with Amiables.
3. Assess my emotional intelligence and try to improve my empathy in particular.

4. I am already an effective time manager. Perhaps I can minimize procrastination by checking email and social media accounts only at designated times, such as on the hour for 5 min before resuming my work.

For Dr. Lane and for all of us, the pivotal first step toward improving our performance and promoting success in the workplace is attention to who we are and how we work. Without early introspection and honest self-assessment across a variety of professional domains, we cannot identify our strengths and weaknesses, nor can we improve how we work with others. There are no value judgments attached to the facets of oneself or one's working style; no personality type or communication style is better than any other, and even the most emotionally intelligent leader or organized, efficient worker has room for growth. The effort spent on the self-assessment tools described in this chapter and creating realistic, tangible goals in the domains of personality type, communication style, emotional intelligence, and time management can yield tremendous downstream benefits. In a world of bountiful continuing medical education opportunities, learning about yourself and your style may prove to be the most important knowledge you can gain, improving your productivity, relationships with colleagues, and satisfaction with your career.

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