

# Is My Kid OK? – Insights to Better Understand Your Child

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Maybe you're the type of person who wants a nice, quiet evening with the family sitting together and watching a movie. You notice that half way through every movie, your nine-year old starts dancing around the living room. You ask yourself – Is this normal? Is my kid OK?

Or maybe you really like to do things and have fun with your family. Your idea of a good time is playing basketball in the driveway, but your twelve year old would rather read a book in the living room. You ask yourself – Is this normal? Is my kid OK?

The answer in both situations is – yes. It is possible that there is some major behavioral problem, but probably not. It's more likely that their personality style is different from yours.

To some extent, we all interpret other people's words and actions through our own perspective. But other people, including your kids, act on their perspective, not yours. The problem comes when we assume that our perspective is right...and theirs is wrong.

Fortunately, there is hope. Even though most of us have different perspectives, there is a way to get past the differences and understand your child (or your spouse) better.

People tend to approach everything they do -- from what they enjoy doing to how they do it -- based on their personality style. Their personality style forms the basis for their view of what is "right" or "wrong" with people, procedures, situations, etc.

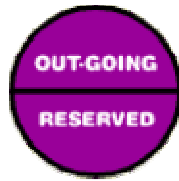
We can explain these different perspectives with the DISC Personality Style Model.

Years ago, a Harvard psychologist, Dr. William Moulton Marston, developed a theory that people tend to develop their self-concept based on one of four factors – Dominance, Inducement, Steadiness, or Compliance. This theory forms the basis of the DISC Model. Through the years, psychologists and behavioral analysts have developed many practical tools to apply his theory.

One of my mentors, Dr. Robert Rohm ([Personality Insights, Inc.](#)) has developed, I believe, the best practical application tools based on the DISC model. Through his work, his publications, and a network of Human Behavioral consultants, he has helped millions of people around the world.

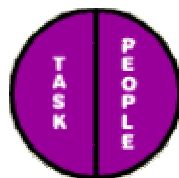
Let's briefly explore the model.

Consider a circle. The circle represents the full range of possible perspectives people might have. To get an insight into different personalities, divide the circle in half horizontally like the one below.



The upper-half represents outgoing or fast-paced individuals. The lower half represents reserved or slower-paced people. Outgoing people move faster, talk faster, are more expressive, and speak more loudly than reserved people do. Neither style is right or wrong -- just different.

Now divide the circle in half vertically, like the circle below.



The left half represents task-oriented people. The right half represents people-oriented people. Task-oriented people focus on doing things while people-oriented people focus on interacting with or caring for other people. Again, neither style is right or wrong -- just different.

When you combine the two circles, you get one circle with four quadrants. The four quadrants represent four basic personality styles. **All of us - you, me, and your kids - are a blend of these four styles.** However, we tend to have predominant traits from only one or two quadrants. These predominant traits reflect our primary drives and needs.

**“D” type** individuals are outgoing and task-oriented. They are dominant, determined, decisive, and diligent. They need choice, challenge, and control.

**“I” type** individuals are outgoing and people-oriented. They are inspiring, interesting, interested in people, and influencing. They need popularity, approval, and recognition.

**“S” type** individuals are reserved and people-oriented. They are supportive, steady, stable, and shy. They need appreciation, affirmation, and security.

**“C” type** individuals are reserved and task-oriented. They are cautious, calculating, contemplative, and careful. They need quality answers, value, and excellence.



If you develop the ability to look past your child’s behaviors to their needs and drives, you will improve communication, enhance understanding, and build stronger relationships with them.

For example, I am reserved and task-oriented (High-C or Cautious). I am the parent who would rather sit quietly and watch a movie with my family. I have a daughter who is outgoing and task-oriented (High-D or Dominant) . She would rather be “doing something.”

I could look at her behaviors (bottom-line focus, direct and abrupt conversational style, and action-oriented thinking) and call her “rude” or “hyper.” Or, I can recognize that she prefers doing things and moving around to sitting still. When I take the second perspective and she jumps up in the middle of a movie to dance, I ask her to dance in the kitchen where it won’t bother anyone rather than tell her to sit down and be still. I understand her, give her options, and value her quick wit rather than try to change her so that she will “calm down and act right.”

When I see her for who she is, rather than attempt to make her like me, she knows that I love her and care for her. I recognize that some behaviors are simply not appropriate. On those issues, we don’t negotiate. However, when I attempt to understand her perspective on issues that are a matter of style and not a matter of right or wrong - she receives discipline better on issues that are clearly right or wrong.

Back to the question – Is my kid OK? Odds are they are just fine. Carefully consider both your personality style and your child’s. It’s very likely that some of the conflict and confusion in your relationship comes from a clash of styles.

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We recommend the following resources to help you learn how to adapt to your child’s personality style:

[Charles Boyd – \*Different Children, Different Needs\*](#)

[Robert Rohm – \*Positive Personality Profiles\*](#)

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About the Author:

Guy Harris is an author, speaker, trainer, and consultant on human behavior at home and in the workplace. He has helped thousands of people across the country learn to practically apply the principles of human behavior. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Sandra, and two daughters.

Guy co-authored "The Behavior Bucks System™" to help parents apply behavioral principles in the home to reduce stress and conflict with their children. Learn more about this book at <http://www.behaviorbucks.com>

Learn more about Guy at <http://www.principledriven.com>

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