

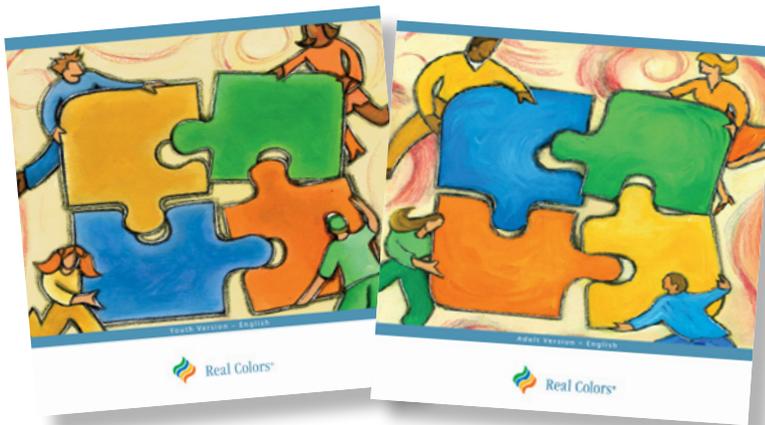
Understanding One Another with Real Colors

By: Rob Walford, Certified Real Colors Facillitator



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"Why can't everyone be or think like I do?" Have you ever thought this about people in the workplace, in social settings or in personal interactions? Conflict would be reduced and things would get accomplished much easier, right? General George S. Patton said "If everyone is thinking alike then someone is not thinking." This profound statement is true in so many ways. We need different perspectives to see the totality of circumstances and to explore new solutions. The bottom line is that we are not alike, yet we still need to cooperate with one another in the workplace and at home. No matter what the situation, we are always going to run into others who have a difference of opinion. As a result, conflict occurs and it becomes more difficult to reach the solutions necessary to move forward. It is especially difficult in group settings.

We all have different personalities and see things in different ways. We use specific filters to communicate and if we do not understand those differences, communication breaks down and conflict occurs.

Each one of us is born and develops a temperament that is natural to our own personality. Think of the day you first picked up that crayon and began to color or write your first word. Did someone tell you to write with a particular hand, forcing

you to be right handed or left handed? You became right or left handed because of some innate natural ability.

Let's take this a step further.

Different temperaments in certain situations may cause us to feel uncomfortable. So what can we do? Real Colors enables us to understand one another and work alongside those with different temperaments. Understanding others and then thinking how to work better with them is a model for success. Certain temperaments are natural to us, like writing with our dominant hand.

As a government employee for the past 35 years, I have dealt with a myriad of red tape and have experienced administrators who want everything done their way and their way only. Since my introduction to Real Colors in 2005, I have developed a greater understanding of temperament difference and have been able to communicate more easily with those around me. As a certified trainer in Real Colors, I have spent the past 8 years facilitating programs for government agencies, working alongside administrators, managers, line staff and support staff.

I have facilitated both small and large groups of people (from 20 to over 100), helping these groups to better understand one another through Real Colors. The majority of my work was done with first line managers. Most managers expressed gratitude for learning about temperament. They expressed the fact that they had difficulties with certain people, especially those with quite contrasting temperaments. In the larger groups, my experience was that many of the line staff were either Blue (*people of compassion and helping*) or Gold (*people who upheld the rules of the agency and who understood the history surrounding those rules*). The difficulty was that many of the first line managers had different temperaments than their direct reports. Most managers were either Green (*true thinkers, persons whose strengths involve research and policy development, but whose weaknesses might include interpersonal relationships*). Very few managers were Orange (*the risk takers and problem solvers*), yet at least 10% of line staff in these groups were Orange and were often misunderstood. The majority of the support staff I had contact with were Blue, yet their direct managers were mostly Gold. All IT staff I dealt with were Green, and many were assigned to problem-solve technical issues at a help desk with little insight into their own temperament and the importance of interpersonal skills.

Time and time again, during the course of sessions you could see the light go on as people began to understand not only their own temperament but how it influenced



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the way they provided and received communication. They learned to appreciate temperament differences and learned skills on how to bring out the hidden Real Colors inside of them.

Many of the groups I met and facilitated programs for commented that they even went so far as to allow the different temperaments to put a colored dot on their name plates so that their colleagues would immediately understand their temperament preference. I have returned to many of these agencies to provide them with advanced training offered by NCTI, Real Teams and Real Issues (*dealing with being upset/angry in the work place*).

Below are some comments about the Real Colors programs that I have facilitated these past eight years:

A manager in the U.S. Probation Office/Eastern District of New York commented, *“As a manager, understanding people, personally and professionally, allows me to create a greater working environment. Real Colors was interesting and informative. It helped me understand more about my own issues and how to deal with them. It is a program that everyone should partake in, to better understand all people we come in contact with.”*

A Division Manager of the U.S. Probation Office/Southern District of California mentioned, *“Since completing the Real Colors training, our staff continues to use and discuss their ‘Colors’ in conversations with their colleagues, which has helped in continued collaboration.”*

The Chief of U.S. Pretrial Services in the District of Arizona stated, *“The Real Colors program was interactive, entertaining and humorous. It helped us see the value in everyone. It was very relevant to our work model. It was great to be able to understand others, and a fun way to learn about coworkers and yourself. I did not know what to expect, but was pleasantly surprised. I have had similar training in the past, but this was so much better. It focused on the positive and how to make communication work.”*

A U.S. Bankruptcy Clerk in the Southern District of Indiana noted, *“The follow up Real Issues program helped me to be alert of others differences and needs. Interacting with coworkers on this level is always helpful. It was great to learn how others process being upset in the workplace in order to effectively deal with them. This was a great refresher course to the original “Real Colors” program.”*



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Chief of U.S. Pretrial Services,
District of Arizona

Finally, a supervisor from the U.S. Probation Office in the District of Wyoming mentioned, *"We can use the skills from the "Real Teams" program when tackling issues in a group setting. It really helped me understand the personality differences in my co-workers. It was a great expansion from the "Real Colors" program from last year and how to utilize "Colors" in a team setting. It was great to understand everyone's strengths and weaknesses. The program provided insights about personality differences and how to create greater teamwork. Seeing how others perceived me in a group setting was eye-opening."*

Lessons and understandings

Personally, I continue to learn about temperament through my facilitation of these programs. In the past 8 years I have drawn away lessons and understandings that I can utilize in my personal life. Real Colors works. It provides insights into those around us, as well as ourselves. It helps us to develop skills so we are better prepared to communicate with those who are so very different from us, and with improved communication comes better cooperation and ultimately long-lasting success.

Real Colors is a simple, easy to administer system for identifying four personality temperaments. It provides users with an effective tool for understanding human behavior, for uncovering motivators specific to each temperament and for improving communication skills. Most importantly, it is easy to incorporate into all areas of daily life. It is the key to achieving higher levels of success, personally and professionally.

Rob Walford is a Certified Real Colors Facilitator.

After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice Administration, he began a career as both a juvenile and adult probation officer, working for the County of San Diego and later for the United States District Court in the Southern District of CA. During the course of his 35 year career, he has served as a trainer for newly-appointed and experienced officers, as well as supervisors, administrators and support staff. He has a limited service teaching credential from the California Community Colleges, and has worked directly with the Federal Judicial Center's Education Division training new and experienced managers throughout the United States. In addition to utilizing Real Colors, he also utilizes the advanced programs, Real Issues, Real Teams, and Real Leadership.



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U.S. Probation Office Supervisor,
District of Wypoming

Additional team building activities include *Human Synergistics International's Desert Survival Situation™*. These workshops will help your teams improve their problem-solving skills and decision-making effectiveness, while strengthening cooperation and communication.

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