

ASSESSING YOUR BEHAVIOR PATTERN

As managers, one of our objectives is to promote desirable behaviors, both in ourselves and in others. The goal of this objective is to enhance the overall effectiveness of the organization and the productivity, satisfaction, and well-being of organizational members. Researchers have identified certain behavior patterns that are significant in predicting these important individual and organizational outcomes. The purpose of this note is to help you identify a behavior pattern that may have important implications for your personal and professional life. Please answer the questions on the following page **before** you read the rest of this note. There are no right or wrong answers; we simply want you to indicate how well each of the questions describes *you*.

Your Behavior Pattern

Please circle the number that you feel most closely represents your own behavior.

Never late	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Casual about appointments
Not competitive	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Very competitive
Anticipates what others are going to say (nods, interrupts, finishes for them)	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Good listener
Always rushed	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Never feels rushed (even under pressure)
Can wait patiently	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Impatient while waiting
Goes all out	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Casual
Takes things one at a time	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Tries to do many things at once; thinks what he is about to do next
Emphatic in speech (may pound the desk)	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Slow, deliberate talker
Wants good job recognized by others	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Cares about satisfying self no matter what others may think
Fast (eating, walking, etc.)	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Slow doing things
Easy going	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Hard driving
Hides feelings	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Expresses feelings
Many outside interests	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Few outside interests
Unambitious	5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5	Ambitious

Scoring and Interpreting the Behavior Pattern Scale

Theoretical Background

The scale you just completed was designed to measure Type-A behavior pattern. Type-A behavior pattern (also called coronary prone behavior pattern) was originally identified by two cardiologists, Drs. Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman. They noticed that patients with more severe coronary heart disease were often characterized by (1) a competitive need for achievement, (2) a sense of time urgency, (3) aggressiveness, and (4) hostility (Friedman and Rosenman, 1959). Based on these observations, Friedman and Rosenman (1974) defined Type-A behavior as “an action-emotion complex that can be observed in any person who is aggressively involved in a chronic, incessant struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time, and if required to do so, against the opposing efforts of other things or other persons” (p. 67).

Examples of Type-A behavior include explosive, accelerated speech, interrupting others, a fast-paced approach to life, impatience when waiting, doing more than one activity at once, dissatisfaction with life, evaluating one's self-worth based on external achievements, a tendency to compete with and challenge others even in non-competitive situations, and free-floating hostility (Matthews, 1982). Type-A behavior pattern may be contrasted with Type-B behavior pattern, which is characterized by a relaxed, unhurried, mellow, satisfied style. This is not to say that Type-Bs are not motivated to achieve; they simply approach their goals in a slower, less aggressive, and more methodical manner.

Studies concerning the role of Type-A behavior pattern in the development of coronary heart disease suggest that extreme Type-As are two to six times more likely to develop the disease than extreme Type-Bs (Haynes, Feinleib, and Kannel, 1980; Rosenman et al., 1975). This ratio persist after controlling for other risk factors, including diet, exercise, smoking, and serum cholesterol levels. While these findings may seem ominous, recent research also indicates that, as with many other risk factors, individuals can modify their Type-A behavior pattern to reduce their risk of coronary heart disease (Friedman and Ulmer, 1984).

This note will present guidelines concerning how **you** might modify your behavior to move away from Type-A and toward Type-B. Before presenting these guidelines, we would like you to score your own Type-A behavior (see instructions on the following page).

Scoring Instructions

The answers you gave on page 2 may be scored by circling the numbers **in the same positions** on the scale below. Thus, if you circled a 5 on the left for the first item on page 2, you would circle the 11 on the first item below; if you circled a 5 on the right side for the first item on page 2, you would circle a 1 on the scale below (note that the scoring on some items is reversed). After circling these numbers, sum them for your overall score.

Never late	11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Casual about appointments
Not competitive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Very competitive
Anticipates what others are going to say (nods, interrupts, finishes for them)	11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Good listener
Always rushed	11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Never feels rushed (even under pressure)
Can wait patiently	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Impatient while waiting
Goes all out	11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Casual
Takes things one at a time	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Tries to do many things at once; thinks what he is about to do next
Emphatic in speech (may pound the desk)	11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Slow, deliberate talker
Wants good job recognized by others	11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Cares about satisfying self no matter what others may think
Fast (eating, walking, etc.)	11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Slow doing things
Easy going	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Hard driving
Hides feelings	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Expresses feelings
Many outside interests	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Few outside interests
Unambitious	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Ambitious

Enter your total behavior pattern score here: _____

The Behavior Pattern Scale is a 14-item instrument with scores on each item ranging from 1 to 11. Thus, total scores may range from 14 to 154 and may be placed on a continuum ranging from extreme Type-A to extreme Type-B

Extreme Type-B:	14-63
Moderate Type-B:	64-92
Moderate Type-A:	93-107
Extreme Type-A:	108-154

The distribution of scores in the general population is approximately as follows:

Extreme Type-B:	10%
Moderate Type-B:	40%
Moderate Type-A:	40%
Extreme Type-A:	10%

Studies using this scale indicate that approximately two-thirds of executives may be classified as either moderate or extreme Type-A (Davidson and Cooper, 1980) and that women executives have slightly higher scores than their male counterparts (Davidson, 1983). Using this information, you can determine how your score compares with the general population and with executives in particular.

Having obtained your behavior pattern score, you may want to consider its implications for your personal and professional life. The following short cases will help you uncover these implications and will give you some practice in identifying Type-A (and Type-B) behavior in others.

Recognizing Type-A Behavior Pattern

Read the following short cases and identify the behaviors of each individual as representative of Type-A or Type-B, using the dimensions on the behavior pattern scale.* As you read these cases, consider the impacts of these behaviors on each individual's personal and professional life.

Paul Crimmins

Paul Crimmins is a successful manager of a California brewery. He is 52 years old, married with two children, medium height, and approximately 25 pounds overweight. He is impatient and hurries thinking, speech, and movement in himself and others. Paul becomes furious when planes arrive late, traffic moves slower than he feels is appropriate, or there is a line at a bank, restaurant, or theater. Paul often strives to do several things at once, such as dictating letters and shaving with an electric razor while driving his car to work.

When his wife and children are talking about subjects that don't interest him, Paul automatically says "Hmm, interesting," or "Is that so." On the other hand, Paul's wife discourages him from talking about his business problems at home. Paul sometimes feels inner hostility when at the dinner table his children listen to his wife's chit-chat rather than to him. He sometimes asks himself, "I wonder if any of them would feel deprived if I died?" As a result, Paul blurts out hurtful, cutting remarks to his children, making communication with them increasingly difficult. Paul has tried very hard to be a good husband and father and has always given them anything they wanted, so long as he could afford it. While not unhappy, his family is discontent.

Paul has few hobbies or outside activities, although he likes to take a trade journal to the dining room table or to the bathroom. He likes golf, but "now I just can't find the time for it." Paul will also attend a symphony or ballet to please his wife. Paul occasionally manages to squeeze in a poker game, and he prefers that the stakes be relatively high. Other than that, he spends his leisure time primarily resting up for his struggles at work. He has very few friends.

Although Paul donates generously to his church, he has never sought solace from God because he really doesn't believe that He exists. Yet sometimes on Sunday morning when he sees radiant young couples leaving the church, he wistfully wishes that he, too, could be as naive as he suspects they are and also believe in a Divine Protector.

*These cases were adapted from Friedman and Rosenman (1974, ch. 8). An excellent full-length case for the discussion of the determinants and consequences of Type-A behavior pattern is John Wolford (A) (UVA-OB-167).

Paul drinks coffee with every meal, most of which include a large serving of meat, vegetable, and bread with butter. He sometimes has a drink at lunch and invariably drinks two martinis before dinner. Sometimes he snacks to relieve tension. Paul smokes two packs of cigarettes a day but is ashamed of it and has promised himself that he will quit. He tried smoking a pipe, but "the damned thing made me nervous because I always had to fool with it, lighting it over and over, tamping it, cleaning it. To hell with the pipe!" When Paul was examined by his physician a few weeks ago, he had a normal electrocardiogram, but his blood pressure was elevated (155/100), and his cholesterol level was much higher than normal (304 mg/100 ml). He had no sign of diabetes.

Ron Lindsey

Ron Lindsey is the president of a California bank. He is 54 years old, tall, married with three children, and weighs no more now than when he played on his university baseball team. Ron is a very patient man and speaks in an unhurried manner. Sometimes he may even break off in the middle of a sentence to think before continuing. When his plane is late, Ron browses through the gift shop or newsstand at the airport. When he drives, he may occasionally scan the countryside, but he mostly focuses on his driving.

Ron has tried very hard to be a good father and husband, although his family still has elements of discontent. Ron has tried to give his family everything they desire. He listens to his wife's account of her day's events with interest and amusement. He rarely talks about work but instead tells her about various persons that have interested him that day. While Ron sometimes disagrees with his children, he reminds himself that, as long as their views are not selfish or evil, it is best to let time correct them.

When Ron talks with others, he finds it almost impossible to think of anything else. He believes he has five real friends, and he freely admits that he would go far out of his way to preserve and enhance those friendships.

Ron has several hobbies, including book printing with an antique press, collecting books, and attending the theater. Ron finds time almost every evening to spend 15 or 30 minutes listening to classical music.

Ron contributes to his church, and although he doubts the existence of a God to whom he can appeal for personal guidance, he ponders the source of the design and purpose of the universe. Ron believes that hard work of any kind forms the basic core of a satisfying existence and that honesty, humility, and altruism carry their own rewards.

Ron likes to eat but restrains himself from eating foods high in fat and cholesterol. He usually eats a salad at lunch and avoids drinks because, "I become too drowsy in the afternoon if I do." He will, however, have an occasional cocktail at home. Ron smokes a pipe, but limits himself to three pipefuls a day. Every

morning he does 15 minutes of calisthenics in his bedroom, and he plays a leisurely game of doubles tennis twice a week. He also walks 40 minutes a day and never takes the elevator to ascend a single floor in a building. When Ron was examined by his physician a few months ago, he had a normal electrocardiogram, normal blood pressure, a serum cholesterol level of 208 mg/100 ml, and no sign of diabetes.

Guidelines for Managing Type-A Behavior**

As illustrated by these examples, Type-A behavior can be detrimental to your personal and professional life. Even Type-B individuals may score high on certain behavior pattern dimensions. Therefore, unless your score is extremely low, you can benefit by attempting to manage, and ultimately eliminate, behaviors that are characteristic of Type-A. Moreover, if you need to manage a Type-A individual, the following guidelines may help smooth the process.

You may object to attempts to change your behavior, believing that it is impossible to change or that it has contributed to your success. However, recent research indicates that behavior patterns, including Type-A, **can** be changed (Friedman and Ulmer, 1984). Furthermore, upon close consideration, you may find that your success may not be because of your Type-A behavior, but **in spite** of it! For example, the characteristic Type-A sense of urgency interferes with creative thinking and opens avenues for oversights and mistakes. Remember, very few failures are attributable to doing things too slowly and too well.

Here are some guidelines that can help you change Type-A behavior for the better. Carefully consider these guidelines and try to incorporate them into your daily life. If some of these changes seem hopeless or doomed to failure, remember that it took years to develop your Type-A behavior pattern, and it will take some time to alter this pattern. Be patient with yourself, and you will find the rewards are well worth the effort.

- \$ Do you find yourself constantly struggling and striving for things you regard worth having, things that can be expressed in numerical or monetary form? If so, consider attempting to achieve things worth **being**. Ask yourself what personal attributes you consider most desirable for yourself. These attributes might include honesty, integrity, kindness, and happiness. Let the attributes you select and their achievement serve as the guide for your behavior.

**These guidelines were adapted from those presented in a classic book by Friedman and Rosenman (1974) and tested in an empirical study focusing on changing Type-A behavior (Friedman and Ulmer, 1984). Participants who followed these guidelines, combined with a program concerning standard risk factors, demonstrated a significantly greater reduction in their Type-A scores and subsequent recurrence of coronary heart disease than participants who received no counseling or only a program concerning standard risk factors.

- \$ Is your life cluttered with strivings that do not contribute directly to your overall, long-term sense of fulfillment? Ask yourself, "Will striving for this goal contribute to my sense of fulfillment to the extent that I will consider it important five years from now?" If not, eliminate striving for the goal from your activities.
- \$ Do you wake up with just enough time to prepare to leave for work? If so, wake up 15 minutes earlier than is absolutely necessary, thereby allowing time for a second cup of coffee, reading a newspaper, deciding on your high-priority activities for the day, or taking care of any unforeseen mishaps (car won't start, etc.).
- \$ Do you find yourself constantly interrupted while at work? If so, do not allow personal or telephone interruptions unless they represent a pressing emergency. And avoid meetings with those who you find waste your time.
- \$ Is your desk cluttered with letters, memos, and other paperwork requiring your response? If so, you are constantly reminded how hurried and pressed for time you are. Incoming work either requires an immediate response, allows for a delayed response, or requires no response at all. Complete work that requires an immediate response, delegate work that allows for a delayed response, and file or throw away work that requires no response.
- \$ Is there a particular time of day when you operate at peak efficiency? If so, be sure to do high-priority tasks during this time, and allocate less important tasks to other times.
- \$ Do you find yourself working through your lunch hour? If so, try using this time to relax, re-energize, and take stock of your progress toward your high-priority goals. Set a manageable goal that will allow you to finish the day with a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.
- \$ Do you find yourself scrambling to finish your work by 5:00? If so, you probably finish your day feeling tense, harried, and exhausted. If your late-afternoon projects are high-priority, allow yourself some extra time to finish them, perhaps leaving work at 5:30 or 6:00. If there is no absolutely pressing need to complete the project, recognize this and leave the project until the next day. Remind yourself that life is, by its very nature, a series of unfinished projects, and striving for closure on all your projects is both futile and unrealistic.
- \$ Do you find yourself becoming angry when forced to wait? If so, try using waiting time as productive time. Consider your progress toward your high-priority goals. Pat yourself on the back for your successes and consider how to improve your progress. Or perhaps take a few deep breaths and engage in some muscle-relaxation techniques. If you are with a companion, remember that you have enjoyed passing time with this companion in other situations and can enjoy the

waiting. Above all, avoid both futile attempts to rush those making you wait and hostile thoughts directed toward them or the situation.

- \$ Do you see every situation as a challenge or a competition? If so, your self-esteem is probably wrapped up in achieving relatively trivial goals and in demonstrating your superiority over others. Remember that you are an important and worthwhile individual simply by virtue of your unique existence. This basic fact is not changed by your success or failures or your superiority or inferiority relative to others.
- \$ Do you find yourself feeling impatient and annoyed when someone is performing a task you think you can do better or offering an opinion you think is wrong? Do you want to interrupt such a person to "show them the error in their ways"? If so, remember that most people have an inherent desire to demonstrate their competence and knowledge. Unless the task they are performing or the opinion they are offering is critical to your high-priority goals, allow them the freedom to do and say as they will, right or wrong. If this approach fails, simply avoid repeated contact with such individuals.
- \$ Do you find yourself expressing free-floating hostility toward others? If so, force yourself to think of at least one positive and admirable feature of each person you meet. Compliment these people on the features you admire, and express sincere appreciation when they do things for you (even if it's "their job"). And do all of these with a smile.
- \$ Finally, given your own self-assessment, you will be relatively skilled in identifying **Type-B** individuals. Seek these individuals and share their company, both to promote your own tranquility and to obtain a model for your own behavior.

Through patient and persistent use of these guidelines, you **can** modify Type-A behavior, both in yourself and in others. Our hope is that these guidelines will help you attain a healthy, rewarding, and satisfying lifestyle.

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