



A Guide to Kahler's Five Drivers

www.totem-consulting.com

hello@totem-consulting.com

0845 548 6836

Studio 36
88-90 Hatton Garden
London EC1N 8PG





About this guide

What are Drivers?

Way back in 1975 Taibi Kahler identified five common drivers that motivate us, these drivers are born in our unconsciousness and can lead to some very positive, as well as destructive behaviours. By identifying which drivers an individual exhibits most, it becomes possible to recognise and develop the potential of these positive behaviours. And to respond constructively to the negative.

Below is an outline on each of these drivers:

- Be Perfect
- Be Strong
- Hurry Up
- Please Others
- Try Hard

In reasonable quantities, these drivers are effective in creating functioning and successful individuals. But when an individual is subject to too much pressure, destructive behaviour will surface causing stress and consequently further destructive behaviour. In Jungian terms, these are known as our shadow aspects.

"Everyone carries a shadow," Jung wrote, "and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is." – Carl Jung

If you are unaware of the drivers that motivate you most, there are several freely available and simple questionnaires available for you to fill out. It may be helpful for you to know your driver preferences before reading further.

Below we will discuss the individual driver types, the behaviour you are likely to encounter and some useful tips for understanding and working with an individual who has a preference for a specific driver type, or more commonly a blend of several driver types.



Be Perfect

Be Perfect people draw energy from doing the 'right' things. They aim for perfection in everything, check carefully, produce accurate work and set high standards. The drawback to this driver is sometimes they miss deadlines because they are still checking their work. They tend to insist everything is done perfectly, so they can come across as overly critical.

Their major strength as an example, is their reputation for producing accurate, reliable work. They check the facts carefully, prepare thoroughly and pay attention to the details. This working style means they are well organised, look ahead and plan how to deal with potential problems. In this way, they are not taken by surprise but have contingency plans ready to put into effect.

[A Be Perfect personality works well in jobs where detail and setting standards are important.](#)

Individuals with this driver preference are identifiable by:

- Using exact language, including qualification when they are not sure, such as 'probably', and absolutes when they are, such as 'absolutely'.
- Always neat and well-groomed.
- Never completely satisfied with what they do.

There are many benefits to this way of working, individuals are often extremely hardworking and the quality of that work is exceptionally high.

The drawbacks often come in the form of a fear of failure and losing control, and subsequent over-compensation. They can occasionally not finish tasks for fear of criticism, and are overly critical of others who are less than 'perfect'.

The best way to interact and support individuals with this tendency is:

- Encourage them to laugh at any mistakes they may make.
- Praise them, especially for less-than-perfect work.
- Reframe what 'perfect' really means to 'enough'.
- Be very specific with criticism (and praise).



Be Strong

Be Strong individuals have the ability to stay calm in any circumstance. They are driven by the need to cope with crises, difficult people, and will work steadily through any workload. They happily take control of situations and people will often feel safe around them knowing that someone so directive is in charge. However, their desire to have everything under control means they can often come across as aloof.

People with Be Strong drivers do not often see themselves as fully responsible for their thoughts and - especially - for their feelings. They are also reluctant to ask for help, even when they should, and their lack of awareness of emotions may make them insensitive to the feelings of others.

The internal message that they give themselves is that they should not let others think that they are weak. For example, they may stand apart from playful activities fearing they may look childish.

A Be Strong personality is very good at accommodating poor working conditions or putting up with things that many would find unreasonable.

Individuals with this driver preference are identifiable by:

- Aggressive or assertive attitude, demonstrating strength in attitude.
- Objective language and distancing themselves from their feelings.

There are several benefits to the Be Strong trait, individuals are good at getting things done, especially in a crisis. They tend not to take criticism personally and are always willing to help others.

The drawbacks often appear as a frustration with any 'weakness' they perceive either in a team or the work they are doing. They also bottle up their emotions, and those emotions will occasionally explode towards others.

The best way to interact and support individuals with this tendency is:

- Help them see where their strength appears as a threat to others.
- Show them that they are not to blame for things, including their own internal issues.
- Show that you recognise them and that it is ok for them to have feelings.
- Praise them for the consideration of other people's feelings.



Hurry Up

People with Hurry Up styles like to do everything as quickly as they can, which means they get a lot done. They are energised by having deadlines to meet, and always seem able to fit in extra tasks. However, give them time to spare and they might delay starting until the job becomes urgent. This can backfire because in their haste they make mistakes.

Their underlying motivation is to do things quickly, they feel good if they can complete tasks in the shortest possible time. Like organisation and methods specialists, they look for the most efficient way to do work in the hope of shaving even a few minutes off each task.

Their urge to save time may be inappropriately applied to everything they do, instead of being reserved for those tasks where it will make a real difference. And their ability to think fast will lead them to appear impatient and frustrated with others.

Hurry Up individuals are great in situations where there are deadlines to meet, or the nature of a task is likely to evolve over time, they always seem to be able fit more work in.

Individuals with this driver preference are identifiable by:

- Enthusiastic and action-oriented.
- Many things on the go at once. Often juggling several quite different activities.
- Talking quickly and checking the clock frequently.

Hurry Up individuals are extremely output focused, and can deliver surprising volumes of work. However, if given too much work, their accuracy will drop and they'll become increasingly agitated with fellow workers for not 'going quick enough'.

Some useful ways to support individuals with this tendency are:

- Thank them for their time.
- Ensure they think before they act.
- Help them to 'be' without 'doing'. Get them to sit quietly and appreciate a single moment!



Please Others

Please Other individuals are incredibly pleasant to have around because they are so understanding. They use intuition a lot and will notice body language and other signals that others may overlook. They are often the mortar that holds a team together.

Unfortunately, they may worry so much about earning approval that they are reluctant to challenge anyone's ideas even when they know they are wrong. Because they're reluctant to say no, they often let people interrupt them and are likely to accept work from them instead of concentrating on their own priorities.

They are often seen to be lacking assertiveness, critical skills, and often lacking courage in their convictions. When criticised by others, they may take it personally and get upset even when the comments are worded constructively.

A Please Others personality performs the 'maintenance' functions of involving people, checking and summarising, and will be sympathetic, empathetic, tolerant and flexible to others needs.

Individuals with this driver preference are identifiable by:

- Always testing that people are happy and satisfied.
- Smiling and always having a friendly expression.
- Frames everything as a question that invites approval.
- Apologetic. Will say 'sorry' for almost anything and even just to fill space.

Please Others are extremely comfortable working with other people. Are often well-liked and good company, as well as being sympathetic and concerned about others.

Some useful ways to support individuals with this tendency are:

- Make pleasing themselves a criteria for pleasing you. Be happy when they are happy (but beware of getting in a mutual pleasing competition).
- Help them accept criticism without feeling put down or a failure. Do not get angry with them.
- Help them to see when pleasing others turns into dysfunctional subservience.
- Encourage them to become self-sufficient and praise themselves.



Try Hard

Try Hard people are enthusiastic, get involved in lots of different activities, and tend to volunteer for things. They are energised by having something new to try. But sometimes turn small jobs into major projects because they want to chase every possibility. They may even become bored with the detailed work that follows, even to the point of leaving work undone so they can move on to a new, exciting activity.

People value their motivation and the way they have of getting things off the ground. They're often popular with other colleagues, with customers or clients, because of their enthusiastic approach to problem solving.

However, their communication with others may be pained and strained, they tend to frown a lot whilst listening to others. Their own sentences are likely to go off at tangents because they introduce new thoughts just as they come to mind.

Try Hard's are important to have in any team because they give their utmost in all situations. They are incredibly persistent in difficult and time-consuming situations and are very willing to help others.

Individuals with this driver preference are identifiable by:

- Never satisfied with what has been done.
- Using language that uses the verb 'try' rather than 'will'.
- Often appear tense and anxious.

The benefits to the Try Hard trait are individuals are likely to be very enthusiastic, creating plenty of ideas and suggestions. They are the ones who will keep on thinking logically when others may be panicking.

As a drawback, they often crave praise but are never fully satisfied when it is given. They also tend to take critic personally and are more likely to experience burn out than any other driver type.

The best way to interact and support individuals with this tendency is:

- Help them move from 'trying' to 'succeeding'. Start with the language they use.
- Stop them moving to another task before the first is complete.
- Help them distinguish between that which is achievable and that which is not realistically possible.

In Summary

Each Driver type has its strengths. However, strengths when over used often become a weaknesses. Typically we prefer one or two driver types, although people may also recognise aspects of all of them in their work.

There is a lot of truth in the phrase "personality clash". For instance, the Try Hard who is constantly starting new projects by launching into action is likely to clash with the Be Perfect. Someone who will typically want to plan before committing to action.

The important thing to consider throughout all of this, is that understanding people with a different working style and working together can increase productivity considerably. This can be achieved through understanding and also through knowing the preferred channel of communication that each working style has.

References

- Berne E. What Do You Say After You Say Hello? New York: Grove Press, 1973.
- Berne, E. Games People Play. New York: Grove Press, 1964.
- Kahler, T. Process Therapy in Brief. Human Development Publication, 1979.
- Karpman, S.E. Funny tales and script drama analysis. Transactional Analysis Bulletin. AOW. 1968; 7 (26): 38.
- Klein, M. How to be happy though human. Transactional Analysis Journal. 1988; 17 (4).
- Source: Klein, M. Lives People Live: A Textbook of Transactional Analysis. Chichester: John Wiley

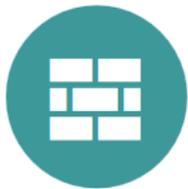
about Totem

People at their Best

build:

We support you in uncovering your vision, mapping talent and developing end to end processes to manage talent within your organisation.

Focusing on profits through people



engage:

We help you to engage individuals and teams—supporting change, gaining commitment to your vision and retaining your highest performers.

Making sure you get the best from your people



assess:

We provide you with tools, techniques and assessors to help you map the talent and potential of individuals in your organisation and/or in selecting new talent.

Helping you recruit people who fit and deliver results



develop:

We design and deliver exceptional, focused and blended development, allowing each individual to grow in their role, capability and motivation.

Maximising potential and personal contribution



What our clients say about us:

We're nimble

"What sets Totem apart? It is their ability to be very thorough in their approach whilst at the same time willing to offer innovative suggestions that can be implemented in a time and cost effective way. Would I recommend them to others? Without question!"

HR Manager, Pulse

We get them

"I'd definitely recommend working in partnership with Totem – I say partnership, as this is exactly how they operate. They seize every opportunity to learn more about your business and by doing so are able to support projects with this insight, often going above and beyond the original scope."

Resourcing Manager Carphone Warehouse

We inspire confidence

"...combining her extensive organizational psychology knowledge with a wealth of insight gained during her years as a professional actor Liz offered our business something that was truly unique."

The result of this is a powerful and thought provoking blend of theory and practice which demystifies the art of communicating and influencing effectively in formal and informal situations."

Talent Manager HML