

## Unit II Podcast Transcript

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CHANTELL COOLEY: Hi, I'm Chantell Cooley, owner and co-founder of Columbia Southern Education Group. Welcome to our second episode on organizational behavior and leadership. Today's topic is individuals, behaviors, personality, and values. And, we have some great guests with us today: Caroline Walters, she's our associate vice-president of outreach and alumni, and Dayna Fuller is the director of Instructional Design and Technology, and she'll be our moderator. Welcome, ladies. It's good to have you.

CAROLINE WALTERS: Thanks, it's great to be here.

DAYNA FULLER: I'm happy to be here, too. All right, well, let's get started. This unit was interesting. The focus was on students learning about personality tests. In your opinion, why is it important for people to take these tests and understand the results? Caroline, can you address that?

CAROLINE WALTERS: Absolutely. First, I just want to say that this is a topic so interesting to me because I'm going to be one of those people persons. So, I like people, and I like, you know, learning more about them, but why I think it's important to really look at these personality tests and to understand, not only yourself, but the people that you're working with is it helps you to communicate better.

(1:04-2:04)

It helps you to negotiate with folks better, handle conflict, and really get a better understanding of where they are coming from. So, you just get a wealth of information by understanding the personality and behaviors of those around you.

DAYNA FULLER: They can be fun, too. It's always fun to take personality tests. It's like a bonding moment for a team, sometimes. Everyone starts comparing notes, and Chantell, you have kind of led some interesting tests within the organization, and you've used those to learn more about personalities. What was an eye-opener for you when you started working on personality tests?

CHANTELL COOLEY: I've been hanging out around with people who did personality tests forever, but I really zoned in on it the last two years. And, I think these personality tests can change lives. Personally, for me, it helped

me figure out who I was. So, as a leader, you better know how you lead and need to know who you are, and you need to have confidence. And, so when you know some of your weaknesses that you need to work on, but you know what part of you can really shine, it makes the world of difference. Do you all agree?

(2:05-3:07)

CAROLINE WALTERS: Absolutely.

DAYNA FULLER: Oh, yeah. Knowing your corks and putting them out there and sort of trying to work through them, and maybe ignore the ones you know you'll never change, but let people be aware of them, so that, you know, everybody can work together and be successful.

CAROLINE WALTERS: Absolutely. In my own experience, I know my strengths. I can get up, and I can talk and generate ideas, but I need that compliment of someone working with me that can get down to the nitty, gritty details and will get those ideas done. So, from a leadership perspective, really knowing the strengths of those around you can help, maybe, when you recognize where you're weak, to lift someone else up to help balance the team.

DAYNA FULLER: What are some concepts that students should understand once they start to understand their own personality tests results? What are some things they really need to be thinking about?

CAROLINE WALTERS: Right, Dayna, and I believe in this unit, they look at the Big Five Personality Test, and one thing to really keep in mind is when you're doing those personality tests, is giving you a range between two extremes.

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You're either a high on your openness, or you're a low on your openness, and neither one of those is right or wrong. Just think of it like you're looking at a map, and if I say, "Hey, I'm in Mississippi," well, "Where in Mississippi am I?" So, you're really drilling down to see exactly where you are with your personality and just to hit those big five. They talk about openness, conscientiousness, extravertism, agreeableness, and neuroticism. And, you know, I think everyone has a little bit of all of that. That's what the theory is saying; that these are the most common personality traits, and you're just looking to see where you're at in the map of traits.

DAYNA FULLER: Great. I mean that's really interesting. I liked your analogy. That was fun. How do personality tests help supervisors understand people on their staff, and therefore, empower their employees? So, as a leader, should we even be looking at our employees' personality tests?

CAROLINE WALTERS: Oh, I think so. I just remember that behavior involves interactions with a person's underlying personality and the situational behaviors around them.

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So, when you're looking, and someone seems to be an extrovert or an introvert, or are they open or are they closed, it tends to have to deal with the situation in which they're working in. So, yeah, I definitely think that we definitely need to be in touch with those traits that they have. But, the other reason I think it's so, too, is that it's kind of like match.com. Right? You're taking this test; you're seeing who these people are, and you're developing a relationship with your employees. Yes, it's a business relationship, but it's a relationship none-the-less, and you're investing time, you're investing energy, sometimes, you're investing money. You know, if it's in the workplace, for sure. You're investing that, so you must work on those relationships, and by analyzing these personality tests, it really just is giving you a better playing field when you're building that team and growing your workplace.

DAYNA FULLER: I know, Chantell, you've used personality tests to kind of match people a little bit. So, I know, for instance, you've used the personality types, and if you see that someone is high in one area, or low in other, sometimes, you'll match them and sort of create a mentoring relationship where you might get involved with that. Do you want to speak to that a little bit and how the personality tests have helped you reach out to people that need to grow in certain areas?

(5:29-6:22)

CHANTELL COOLEY: Oh, yeah. I like what Caroline was saying. It is so powerful and really does help, especially if you are a leader with how to put your team together. And, I have used it to mentor people, especially with those who want to climb the ladder of success. Maybe, they can't seem to get that promotion, but if they understand who they are and some of the areas they need to work on, they're not maybe someone who kind of drives things forward. Well, they need to work on some of those skills. Maybe, zone in on what you're really good at. Maybe you're not a driver, but maybe you're really analytical, and you want to do some numbers and everything. I

think it just really helps you figure out who you are. And, it really is a joy to help somebody understand who they are. So, I know Caroline does it. I love to take someone aside and mentor them on their personality and then, they walk away being changed. And, it goes into their family life, too. It's such a powerful tool.

(6:22-7:33)

DAYNA FULLER: It absolutely is. Absolutely. One of the things that is interesting about personality tests is that the results can change over time. Can either one of you expand on this aspect of behavior?

CAROLINE WALTERS: Yeah, Dayna. You know studies have shown that as people mature, they tend to become a little less extraverted, maybe not quite as neurotic, going back to the big five traits. Have you heard the phrase, "He's just mellowed out"? You know, and if you think about, maybe they were just way out there, but as they've matured, maybe, they've become more confident in themselves, maybe they don't feel the need to be quite as extraverted. It shifts a little bit, but also, shows that you're agreeableness and consciousness increases. Think about the little, old lady that you hear, "Oh, she's so sweet, now!" You know, what happened? You know, she just became a little bit more thoughtful as she was maturing. So, I think it's important as you're working with a group of folks over time that you go back and re-assess because you can even mature in the workplace as well. And, as your role shifts in the workplace, your personality strengths and those traits may shift as well.

(7:35-8:39)

DAYNA FULLER: That's a really good point. Chantell, you and I talk about this all the time. We are mindfully looking at personality tests. We are mindfully trying to improve by being involved with leadership and self-help books and audio book and things like that. So, if we aren't actually changing, then what's the use? Hopefully, we really are changing, and that's the goal. I certainly don't want anyone to think of me as the same leader that I was five years ago. I certainly hope that I have improved, you know. Just from the experiences I've been through, you learn through those. What do you think about that, Chantell?

CHANTELL COOLEY: I think a lot of it boils down to, are you secure with who you are, because you're always trying to prove yourself and trying to prove stuff to your boss, to others, you may be a leader or come into a new position, how do you handle yourself. And, as you get older and mature, and you say to yourself, "Look, this is who I am. I'm getting better every day."

But you accept yourself, and I think you really portray that as you lead others or you lead yourself. You just, you're comfortable with who you are. What a place to finally be at!

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DAYNA FULLER: It really is a good place. It takes you a long time to get there, but what is the most fulfilling part about that is you become very inspired by the people around you. When you're younger, I think sometimes it's that competitive edge. You feel like, you're so worried, it's like you said. You don't necessarily know who you are, so you're just on that race to get someplace. But, once you take a little bit of time, you start focusing on those around you. There's a saying, you, when you are focused on others, you become really strong yourself. You know, and I think there's so much truth in that. I really do think that.

Well, this concludes the second podcast for this course. Before we go, Caroline or Chantell, do you have any closing comments about the concepts discussed?

CAROLINE WALTERS: You know, I would just say two things. To reiterate the first one is to know your strengths. Know where you can excel. But, also know those weaknesses, know those things you can work on, or like the example I gave, find someone that was stronger in an area where you were weak that you would be compatible working with as a team.

(9:44-10:40)

And, secondly, from a leadership perspective, I would just encourage you not to pigeon-hole someone because of a personality they may have because one job can be done well by many personalities. It's looking at the situation and who is the fit for the moment and in that time.

DAYNA FULLER: I like that. That is really good.

CHANTELL COOLEY: That is good advice. I would say if you're starting a new team, or if you're a new leader, or maybe you've a leader of this team, if you want to move to the next level, get a personality test out there to everyone and take them. And, then, bring someone in that maybe knows a bit more about it and moderate with you guys. And, I think that as a leader, it's good to expose yourself to your team, and they understand who you are and why you act the way you act, and then maybe you want to change some things about yourself. But, also, the other team can laugh about it when they talk about, "Well, that's why you act that way!"

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And, I just did this with a new team, and I believe that it takes about a year for a new team to bond. Maybe even over a year. But, I did this as a team, and we laughed about who we were, and everybody had different strengths and accepted that, and we moved our team and connected together quicker within three-six months were jelling. It's very important that you know to connect. I think that's so valuable. So, that's what I would suggest. Get those personality tests out. It's fun, and it just changes the dynamic of the team.

DAYNA FULLER: Yeah, it just opens the conversation and makes everyone feel more comfortable. It's more transparent way to go about working together. Well, I appreciate all this conversation. I think it will help students, and hopefully, they will have fun with their personality tests as they are taking this course.