

Chapter Six



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 Hartman, Taylor. The Color Code. New York: Simon &
 Schuster, 1998.

EMOTIONAL AND ADMIRE

The Blues are often the most admired of all the personalities. They represent so many of the virtues we aspire to, such as honesty, empathy, self-sacrifice, loyalty, sincerity, and self-discipline. They seem to come by these virtues naturally, which creates an image of righteousness and respect. They resemble a lighted beacon of goodness and truth—a standard of excellence for the rest of us to aim for. Blues appreciate creativity, committed relationships, and disciplined achievement. With these combined assets, a strong and purposeful individual inevitably evolves. They are deeply committed, fiercely loyal, and well-behaved members of society. They are highly opinionated and tough competitors for any personality to face because they generally base all opinions on emotion and moral principle. Although Blues can be logical, they are more likely to respond to an emotional plea.

For Blues, life is emotionally a double-edged sword. On the positive side, they are giving and sensitive. On the negative end they can be very sensitive. In fact, they can be so sensitive that they melt together. A common statement by my Blue patients is, "I have ruled me all my life." Perhaps their true vulnerability is unbridled emotions. They want so badly to feel understood from others while often refusing to

understand themselves. Blues ride a powerful roller coaster of emotions. Sensitive to all kinds of trivial matters, they constantly find themselves vulnerable to emotional trauma.

Depression is frequently experienced by Blues. Allowing their hearts to rule their minds, they often think and behave irrationally. The following example comes from the journal notes of a Blue patient. It is an extreme case of the "moody Blues." However, it clearly expresses the frustration most Blues experience with accepting others' behavior when it doesn't meet their high standards and often unrealistic expectations. One evening she was reflecting on her recently dissolved marriage and wrote the following entry in her journal:

Happy Anniversary to me. I hate Jason [my husband]. I hate myself. I hate everyone, especially I hate living. I am so angry and bitter it feels like I cannot go on living because it is too uncomfortable. There is no joy—no hope. I feel only bitterness and hatred and anger at life, even at God because things are so awful. I don't even like people who want to help or support me. I wish I could just go away from everyone and everything. Nothing would be better, of course.

There is just no way around this portion of life that I can see. Perhaps if I would humble myself and pray for some relief I might get it, but I'm too mad for that even. I'm mad at God! I'm mad at Jesus! I'm mad at my parents! I'm mad at my kids! I'm mad at myself! And I hate Jason! I would like to see harm come to him I think. But then I'd be mad because he doesn't even have life insurance. They'd probably make me pay for his funeral too.

I just hate everything. I wish I would die, but I can't and that makes me mad too. I'm mad that life is so rotten and there's no way out. So I'll just be mad for a while longer because I don't see any viable options. But I want to be clear about communicating this: LIFE SUCKS AND I HATE ALL OF IT!!!!

I'm so tired of being "RESPONSIBLE" for everything—even the kids. I wish someone would put me in a mental institution so I could be taken care of and have no responsibility. Then I wouldn't have to take care of my kids or anyone—or worry about Jason's bills. I hate him! I hate everything! Life seems so unfair. I don't want any of this. I don't want to grow or progress or get stronger.

I want to be left alone for a while by everyone—God included! I don't want anyone to expect anything from me because I'm tired of being capable. I'm tired of people saying how great I'm doing. I'm tired of the whole bullcrap situation. In fact, I'm even tired of writing this depressing garbage, so goodbye.

When my patient shared this with me, she no longer felt the anger displayed in her journal notes. Instead, she felt rather foolish, at times laughing while she shared her writings with me. Three days later she called me and said, "I can't believe this. I feel exactly the way I felt when I wrote those notes. What's wrong with me? I feel like I'm losing my mind!" Actually, she had never found her mind (logical thinking). She was being victimized by an undisciplined heart.

Blues see the world through positive and healthy emotional eyes as well. They care deeply for those elements of living that tug at their hearts. Weddings, parades, and birthdays are great cause for celebration, but Blues even see beyond the events and take time to reflect on the lives of those involved. They think of their own weddings and what it means to be in love. They consider all the hours it takes to prepare the costumes and mechanics of a parade as it passes by. Blues wonder how their aging grandmother feels on her seventieth birthday, and are mesmerized by a three-year-old blowing out candles on a cake. They "make" time for sharing the important moments of life.

COMMITTED AND LOYAL

Life is a sequence of commitments for Blues. Committing to relationships is perhaps their greatest strength. They enjoy companionship, and willingly sacrifice personal gain in order to share intimate relationships. Blues give freely of themselves in valued relationships.

Because of their willingness to commit to relationships, Blues enter into deep friendships that often last a lifetime. They are highly dependable, and consider a verbal promise to be as binding as any written contract. They pride themselves on maintaining long-term relationships. This admirable trait of loyalty gives credibility to the concept that Blues usually enjoy far richer relationships than any other personality type.

Blues are completely loyal to people. Blues remain committed through the good times and the bad. When one realizes the depth of their commitment, it is easy to understand why fair or foul weather has little impact on a Blue's loyalty. An excellent example of this commitment is the life of one of my Blue patients, Jenny. She had never gotten along with her mother while growing up. In fact, she struggled simply to maintain a civil relationship in the face of her mother's constant attempts to sabotage her. Her mother repeatedly humiliated her by calling her names and mocking her for her lack of popularity with

boys through the dating years. Despite the obvious favoritism her mother had displayed for Jenny's older brothers and sisters, Jenny was the only one of the children willing to undertake the tremendous responsibility of caring for her invalid mother during the final painful days of her life.

Our paths crossed when Jenny sought psychological help in order to sustain the courage necessary to face this woman she had so often struggled with through the years. Jenny stayed close to her mother's bedside, despite her mother's repeated abuse and lack of appreciation, until she died. Would other personalities have been able to commit so completely?

PERFECTIONISTIC

Blues are usually perfectionists. Blues are highly critical of themselves and others. They have such unrealistic expectations that they can never satisfy themselves nor expect others to meet their level of excellence. This is one reason they are difficult employers and parents. I call my Blue daughter "Little Miss Hard-to-Please." They really do want things done right. Unfortunately, right is defined as whatever they want done and however they want it done.

*Blues are the most controlling personality.
They are fiercely connected to the lives they live
and often appear to be emotionally unstoppable,
as though on a mission from God.*

Blues are typically skeptical about their own creative talents. They are such perfectionists that they often hide their skills and abilities because they fear they aren't good enough. It's most unfortunate because Blues are so talented and perhaps the most creative of all the colors. However, Blues are highly insecure, and often fear the possibility of rejection if they display their enviable creativity and talents.

HIGHLY DEMANDING

Blues often struggle with effective verbal communication, and consequently others often have no idea what Blues' real expectations are, nor how to proceed in meeting them. Even knowing their expecta-

tions is not always helpful, because meeting their unrealistic expectations would take more energy than others are willing to give. I'm referring specifically to a parent's expectation of straight A's on a report card, spotless rooms, chores done promptly and properly every day. I wonder if Blues don't represent 80 percent of the parents who scream at their children. We would all scream if we had their perfectionistic expectations. They confuse priorities and fail to realize that a more rational approach to expectations would be healthier and far more productive.

Blue employers demand that their employees make a commitment of time and talent to the company. A report worth doing at all is worth doing well. They expect excellence even on projects that probably shouldn't require it. For example, they often stress the quality of a project as more important than the relationship (e.g., cleaning the house becomes a priority over a child's feeling loved, or an employer is more concerned with being on time than how well an employee treats the customers). (And right now the Blues are thinking, "And what's wrong with that? Why shouldn't I have both?") They don't say what they want but magically believe that everyone thinks the way they do and will produce the results they do.

Blues often don't delegate well. They stand over others like a mother hen in order to avoid error. This protection is construed by Blues to mean nurturing. It is actually distrust. They believe that by maintaining a strong emotional tie with each employee they are being supportive and promoting effective employee relations. Then, they ask, why do so many employees feel they are being strangled or spied on? It's so difficult to convince Blues that their intentions are not clear and their expectations are so demanding that subordinates often wish they would go back to their own offices and leave everyone else alone. However, employees don't often tell their Blue boss this because the boss is overly sensitive and usually means well, so no one wants to hurt his or her feelings. Instead of honest, direct communications, Blues typically get dishonest patronizing from employees.

SELF-DISCIPLINED AND STABLE

A Blue must have written the slogan "If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well." Self-discipline comes from deep within the Blues' personality core. Throwing themselves into a project often brings out the best in Blues. They seek opportunities to develop their many talents.

This perpetual exercising of self-discipline brings stability and order to their lives. Many people learn to depend on Blues because of their steady and predictable natures. They provide us with a sense of security. They thrive in environments where security is valued and nourished. With proper support and cooperation, they will bring creative gifts of the highest possible caliber. Their gifts always come from the heart.

SELF-SACRIFICING AND NURTURING

With rare exceptions, Blues think of others before themselves, and bring love to the lives of those they touch. They love to serve. Doing for others gives them tremendous satisfaction. Being productive is important, but producing for people they care about seems to make the contribution mean much more to them. *They always seek purpose in their lives.* They want the sense of having lived for something more than simply earning a wage or changing a diaper.

UNFORGIVING AND RESENTFUL

Ironically, Blues give more than any personality but *forgive* the least. I have encountered many Blues who have yet to forgive their parents for damages done during childhood. It is quite easy to find Blues in an audience. I simply ask for a show of hands from those who can remember all the bad things their kindergarten teacher did to them. Blues always remember. Reds don't remember; they have already taken care of the teacher by putting tacks on her chair. Yellows thought it was funny and enjoyed the attention whether it was good or bad. And Whites aren't sure whether they went to kindergarten, so what's to remember?

One of Blues' most self-destructive weaknesses is grudge-holding. It often goes hand in hand with their excellent memory. One sixty-seven-year-old patient resented her White husband for numerous reasons over a span of fifty years of married life. She was so angry at him once that she secretly took her wedding dress down from her closet and donated it to a charitable organization. Needless to say, her motives were less than charitable. Blues can become so obsessed with "getting even" that they don't instantly see how the lust for begrudgery can be so intense that even self-defeating behavior feels preferable to letting things go unredressed.

This woman was so committed to hurting her husband that she neglected to realize that giving away a wedding dress is far less significant to men than women! The truth is he never noticed. So she kept telling him how much it should have hurt him when, in fact, she only hurt herself. Years later, when their granddaughter wanted to be married in grandmother's wedding dress, you can imagine her immense pain when she realized that she had, in the end, only hurt herself. Furthermore, she kept her husband's limited self-esteem in negative check by constantly undermining him. She exemplifies the Blues' need to get even and their struggle with letting go of resentment.

WORRIED AND GUILTY

Blues also seem to worry about everything. All this excess worry makes it possible to handle only so much excitement in one day. I remember one patient who "thought" she had a major decision to make. Her decision was between leaving for the East Coast on June 11th for two weeks to visit family, or going to an all-expenses-paid three-day church convention with her husband, which ended June 7th. That left her only three days to repack and get ready for her trip back East. But she always enjoyed being with her husband at the church conventions. She didn't know whether to stay home and be ready for her trip to the East or to go to the convention. She was also afraid that her kids would tear the house apart while she was gone (we're talking about twenty-five-year-old twins). Blues do not appreciate being rushed through life, regardless of the quality of events they are being rushed to enjoy. Worry about others, rather than productively engaging in activities of their own, can be a serious problem for Blues.

A thirty-year-old woman experienced worry whenever she drove on the freeway. If a car changed lanes behind her while she was driving in the middle lane, she immediately cross-examined herself by asking, "Am I driving too fast? Too slow? Are my brake lights disturbing other drivers?"

Worry and guilt generally mark the path to most Blues' homes. They can be "guilted" into almost anything. They often neglect to see that their true motives in many circumstances are based on guilt. For wrongs they think they've done, Blues will chastise themselves seemingly forever.

Larry is a talented CEO whose business career is highlighted by tremendous success. He is blessed with a savvy one cannot learn in

academic institutions. Still he is known to pace the floors at night, plagued by second-guessing himself and worrying about decisions he can't do anything about. Despite his uncanny intuition and solid experience, he cannot trust himself and let go once decisions have been made. Instead, he ruminates about possible "worst case scenarios" and whether or not he has carefully considered all the correct options.

APPROPRIATE AND SINCERE

Blues value culture and appropriate behavior. They understand the value of manners and propriety in society. Blues deem it their personal responsibility to serve as the moral watchdogs for society. They are comfortably obedient to laws and authority. Blues think society requires structure and discipline in order to function properly. They always seek to preserve the dignity and quality of human life.

No other strength labels the Blues as uniquely as their sincerity. One of life's great experiences is to earn and experience their trust. Life cannot bestow on anyone a more gratifying reward than the sincere appreciation and trust of a Blue friend, employer, or family member.

PURPOSEFUL AND DEDICATED

Blues have a strong work ethic, and often find their lives cluttered with "necessary responsibilities" that leave them little or no time for spontaneous play. Play is often seen as frivolous and unproductive. It's not uncommon to see a Blue mother productively knitting or reading at a park while her children climb, swing, run, and devour their free time with no concern for anything but momentary pleasure. Blues envy the peace of mind and carefree attitude Yelloww gliders through life with. They often cry "unfair" and wish either the other personalities would enjoy life less, or at least reward the Blues for their dedication to the more noble concept of purposeful work. Unfortunately, neither wish is likely to come true.

Blues deem it their personal responsibility to serve as the moral watchdogs for society.

MOODY AND COMPLEX

Another telltale sign of Blues is their mood swings. They never wake up happy or sad. They have to think about it first. If they are happy or sad during the day, it is because they choose to be. They can't seem simply to accept an emotion without taking full responsibility for selecting it.

Blues are highly complex individuals with many extremes. They have such powerful strengths and debilitating limitations. They are sensitive, tense, caring, critical, giving, and unforgiving at the same time. Their focus is on emotional rather than rational connections. Despite this, they are often guilty of emotional rigidity. In other words, they get stuck in emotional ruts. They lose perspective and find themselves misunderstood. Unable to express their feelings effectively, the Blues struggle to pump more energy into frustrating relationships to experience the intimacy that is essential for them in order to feel their life has purpose. Sometimes the energy they pump is healthy, and sometimes it is destructive. The complexity of the Blue personality frustrates Blues as much as it does the other personalities who have to interact with them. Perhaps this explains why Blues are so critical of themselves as well as of others.

SELF-RIGHTEOUS AND INSECURE

Each personality color has its own share of insecurity. However, no personality displays it as publicly as Blues. Blues have a powerful personality. They feel driven to participate in life. They voice their opinions, albeit sometimes only within the safe walls of their homes. They have strong values and belief systems. However, they are torn by guilt feelings, the unrealistic expectations caused by their perfectionistic attitude and skepticism. They are often caught between wanting to be involved and fearing their ability to be successful.

This insecurity is made more complicated by their unique self-righteous attitude. Perhaps no statement describes this attitude better than the bumper sticker slogan "Those of us who think they know everything [referring to the Reds] annoy those of us who really do." Unlike the vocal, arrogant Reds, Blues silently remind themselves how unfortunate it is that others must remain so ignorant. There is a certain smugness connected with Blues. They piously view the world with a suspicious eye. This tends to give Blues a pessimistic nature. They wish

others would care enough to adopt the Blues' attitude of perfection. They are frustrated with the realization that many people prefer to accept life rather than to modify it. Self-righteousness does not breed intimacy. Rather, it promotes emotional distance and deception.

BLUE LIMITATIONS

Probably the greatest enemy of Blues is themselves. Their self-righteous attitudes are merely cover for deep insecurity. They are often too emotional and judgmental to enjoy intimacy. They continually depress themselves and others with unrealistic expectations of perfection. Lacking trust, they find themselves skeptical and suspicious of others. Blues often find themselves bitter, resentful, and unforgiving of those who have crossed them in life. Overwhelming guilt and worry continue to drive them inward, seeking solace from the only one who truly understands them—themselves. Blues are hard to please and tense about schedules. They are moody and find leadership a difficult dilemma. Blues aren't generally playful or spontaneous. In anger, they are the personality most likely to believe "Life's a bitch and then you die." They often fail to see the positive side to life. Blues become angry when others find them to be irrational and emotionally rigid in relationships. Blues exemplify Pogo's famous line, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

BLUE STRENGTHS

Like the earth that sustained and nurtured our earliest ancestors, Blues are also steady, ordered, and enduring. They offer culture, beauty, and emotional security. Blues love with a passion. They see intimate relationships and creative accomplishments rather than material possessions as the finer things in life. They bring culture and decency to home and society. They appreciate uplifting experiences, and feel most comfortable in creative and productive environments. They want a sense of purpose in their lives, and willingly sacrifice personal luxuries for more meaningful accomplishments.

They are highly committed individuals. Loyalty to people and sincerity in relationships (at home and work) are their trademarks. They believe in all causes that bring a higher quality to the human experience. They listen with endearing empathy and speak with emotional

zeal. Blues truly value their connections to people and enjoy the accomplishments of others. With perfection as their guide, they strive to be the best they can be. They expect the same in their fellow beings. Obediently, they accept the need for authority, and put their energy into supporting law and order. They are essentially the glue that binds society together. Blues give us positive examples in the way they organize their lives, giving preference to personal relationships and quality achievements. They add that special touch of excellence as they freely commit their hearts and souls to the betterment of us all in our shared journey through life.

BLUE STRENGTHS

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- sees life as a serious endeavor
- appreciates beauty and detail
- has a strong aesthetic sense
- stable and dependable (plowhorse versus racehorse)
- sincere and emotionally deep
- analytically oriented (concerned with why one behaves as he/she does)
- high achiever
- deep sense of purpose

AS A COMMUNICATOR

- able to enjoy sensitive and deep conversation
- strong skills in empathizing with others
- remembers feelings and thoughts shared in conversation
- willing to give conversations time to run their course
- prefers small groups

AS A GOAL SETTER

- highly disciplined
- receptive to other suggestions
- strong goal orientation
- plans well and follows through superbly

THE COLOR CODE

AS A CAREER PERSON

- excellent behind-the-scenes worker
- respectful of employer because of employer's position
- enjoys detail and schedules
- receptive of creative thinking in others
- gives more of self than required or expected

AS A PARENT

- encourages academics and/or trade development in children
- excellent trainer of skills (e.g., manners, study habits)
- very observant
- empathic and sensitive
- sincerely loyal to children
- excellent in long-term commitments
- keeps home clean and cozy
- sincerely seeks to understand children's behavior
- self-sacrificing

AS A CHILD

- proper and behaved
- easily disciplined verbally
- concerned about being a good family member
- sensitive and concerned about other family members
- loyal to parents and siblings regardless of quality of relationship
- seeks learning opportunities

AS A FRIEND

- loyal forever once friendship is established
- genuine concern for other person's well-being
- remembers special holidays and promotes celebrations
- encouraging in times of trouble
- willing to commit time to the relationship

AS A COMMITTED COMPANION

- gives the relationship priority over other activities
- values intimacy and places high priority on it

THE COLORS

- considers spouse first in decision making
- responsible for making ongoing contribution to relationship
- enjoys sharing intimacy and places high priority on it

CAREERS MOST LIKELY TO ATTRACT BLUES

Teacher	Banker	Nurse
Homemaker	Clergy/Minister	Engineer
Psychotherapist	Accountant	Librarian
Computer programmer	Politician	Journalist
Musician	Architect	Carpenter

Note: Blues are most capable of adapting in the career world.

PERSONALITIES WHO APPEAR TO BE BLUES

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: Renowned for his trademark of fairness, he always sought the most noble path that would benefit all parties, if possible. He sought truth as a guiding principle in his personal and professional relationships.

PRINCESS DIANA: Always dressed appropriately, she carried herself with dignity and class. Emotions ruled her life, and she rendered herself vulnerable to the general public, continually gaining sympathy and support for herself and her causes.

WALT DISNEY: A creative genius, he loved the process more than the bottom line and relished design and details.

BLUE NATIONS

United States
England
Denmark

*"If you love someone, set them free.
If they come back, they're yours;
if not, hunt them down and kill them!"*

THE COLOR CODE

BLUE LIMITATIONS

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- highly emotional
- smug and self-righteous
- controlling and/or envious of others' success when too easily obtained
- strong perfecting and performance orientation
- verbally self-abusive

AS A COMMUNICATOR

- has intensely held opinions on many issues
- tends to lecture and overdiscuss issues
- rigid with principles and unwilling to negotiate
- fears risking self in conversation
- argues primarily from emotional perspective
- strong expectations for others to be sensitive and deep
- expects others to read his or her mind and know his or her feelings

AS A GOAL SETTER

- sets unrealistically high goals
- easily discouraged when unsuccessful in accomplishments
- easily frustrated by lack of team cooperation
- expects others to understand his or her goals and make them a priority

AS A CAREER PERSON

- feels others are not capable of doing things as well as he or she
- craves security in career
- feels inadequate with natural talents and creativity
- shies away from public exposure and performance
- establishes high and often unrealistic expectations for self and others
- tends to overplan and overprepare
- critical of others' work and of self
- overextends self

THE COLORS

AS A PARENT

- blames children for being unappreciative of parenting efforts
- can be moody and unpredictable
- easily irritated by mistakes and shortcomings of others
- usually loves with strings attached
- tends to give heavy doses of guilt to children
- lacks ability to relax
- requires a purpose in order to play
- controlling and overprotective of children
- too precise and exact with expectations
- feels a clean home is a high priority
- accepts guilt feelings too easily and readily
- not spontaneous with activities
- frustrates children with unrealistic expectations
- strong sense of right and wrong—badgers children if convinced they may be wrong

AS A CHILD

- easily frustrated
- feels guilty over minor concerns
- moody and emotional (cries instead of facing issues rationally)
- feelings are easily hurt
- martyr-like and complains about life
- self-esteem is dependent on outside influences
- has difficulty relaxing and often feels uncomfortable
- withholds affection if angered (pouts)
- waits for parent to initiate ideas and then criticizes unacceptable suggestions

AS A FRIEND

- highly insecure about other's acceptance and approval
- feels rejected easily
- when depressed or depressive, feels it is friend's job to understand
- can be revengeful and bitter if crossed or scarred emotionally
- critical of friends' principles or activities if not similar
- expects friends to maintain strong loyalty
- wishes friends would communicate more often
- rarely playful and spontaneous

AS A COMMITTED COMPANION

- blames others for his or her unhappiness ("if only you were more . . .")
- demands affection and intimacy
- demands time and attention of partner
- highly manipulative in seeking support or understanding
- suspicious of others' motives (distrustful)
- unforgiving of past misunderstandings and wrongdoings
- clings to companion too much
- withholds feelings when frightened he or she may be rejected

How to Develop a Positive Connection with Blues

Do:

1. Emphasize their security in the relationship
2. Be sensitive and soft-spoken in your approach
3. Be sincere and genuine
4. Behave appropriately and well mannered
5. Limit their risk level
6. Promote their creativity
7. Appreciate them
8. Allow ample time for them to gather their thoughts before expressing themselves
9. Be loyal
10. Do thorough analysis before making presentations

Don't:

1. Make them feel guilty
2. Be rude or abrupt
3. Promote too much change
4. Expect spontaneity
5. Abandon them
6. Expect them to bounce back easily or quickly from depression
7. Demand perfection (they already expect too much from themselves)
8. Push them too quickly into making decisions

9. Expect them to forgive quickly when crossed
10. Demand immediate action or quick verbal bantering

Recommended Time-Management Tips for Blues

1. Think rationally rather than reactively when pressured. Emotionalism can create chaos and unnecessary distress.
2. Clearly state your limits when others impose deadlines on you.
3. Settle for less. Perfectionism often narrows your focus, causing you to ignore other important aspects of your life.
4. Don't set unrealistic expectations for yourself or others to the extent that everyone feels overwhelmed. Simply see goals as road markers rather than criteria for success.
5. Don't personalize your interactions with other people. Blues often suffer from feeling let down by others or from quitting because they let others down. Concentrate on the task at hand rather than becoming emotionally discouraged or critical.
6. See time management as a compromise rather than "all or nothing." If you fail to meet a deadline, learn to punt. It will free you to be more creative and less self-critical.
7. Realize that there are limits to what you can control. You cannot control other people.
8. Set a ten-minute time limit to worry about any topic in the day. When your time is up, so is your worrying. Get on with living in the present moment and doing what you can do rather than focusing on what is out of your control.

"Leave me alone, I'm having a crisis."

Grandi
Gandhi