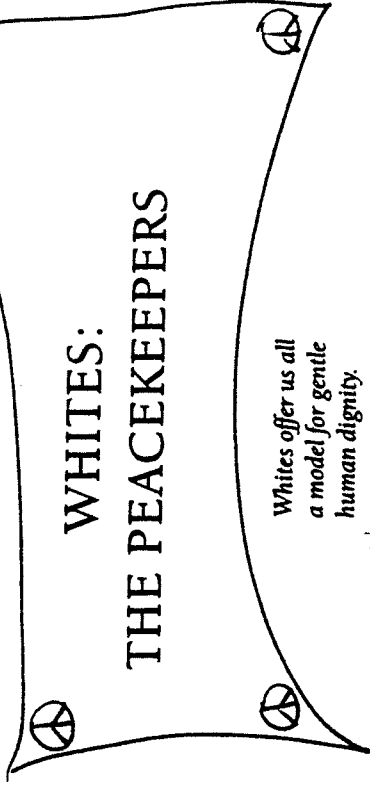


This material is taken from the following book:
Hartman, Taylor. The Color Code. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.

(Lu greens)

Chapter Seven



WHITE - Hartman

PEACEFUL AND DIPLOMATIC

Whites most completely represent the peacemaker. They sincerely believe in the value of diplomacy, and diligently seek to promote cooperation at all cost.

How many times have we all said, "Will everybody just settle down? All I want right now is some PEACE!" At that moment, if we could simply transform everyone into a White personality, our wish for peace would become reality. Every parent prays for a child with a White personality. Every teacher deserves at least one student with a White personality in each class. Everybody is better off for knowing one intimately. Whites offer us all a model for gentle human dignity. They quietly move through life with an easy, unruffled style. Whites appreciate the cooperative nature of mankind, and keep working to achieve a peaceful coexistence among all living things.

Whites are usually difficult to know. They operate on a self-serving power orientation, but so subtly that it often leaves one wondering whether Whites are the manipulated or the manipulator. Whites are often lost, inviting others to rescue and protect them in life. Caught in their own neediness, Whites often find it difficult to grow. They remain victims, often silently traumatized by their anger, rather than honestly acknowledging their feelings. Whites can be very timid and

shy, which keeps them from living life to the fullest. They may depend on others to make their life happen.

INSECURE AND NONASSERTIVE

Whites can be difficult to read. Whites appear to approach life so simply that one may misinterpret them and believe them to be at peace when their real feelings may actually be fear, timidity, laziness, or personal inadequacy. They are such good-natured individuals that people generally prefer not to ruffle Whites' feathers or make waves around them. People typically ignore Whites' limitations and acknowledge their strengths. This is particularly difficult for those who are intimately involved with Whites (parents, spouses, children, teachers, friends). The urge to protect Whites by ignoring their deficiencies and their limitations ultimately sabotages the need for them to stand up for themselves, even though such behavior is contrary to their innate nature.

A deeply regrettable incident recounted by a twenty-year-old female patient illuminates the White self-doubt and unwillingness to confront others. My patient experienced sexual intercourse for the first time at the age of sixteen in the backseat of a car. Immediately following intercourse, her drunk date threw up. He was suddenly furious. She was concerned about the mess in his car and his angry feelings, so she comforted him by saying, "That's okay. I'll help clean it up." Without the slightest concern for her feelings, he remarked, "I'm not worried about that. I'm worried about my girlfriend finding out I've been drinking again." Had they not just experienced an "intimate" sexual encounter? Wasn't she special to him? She continued this absurdity without confrontation by staying involved with him for another year before she could finally let go.

Whites can be very passive. They can follow you through life without assuming any leadership of their own. They often make others the core of their existence, neglecting to develop their own sense of purpose and direction. Some Whites become so attached to one individual that they refuse to develop outside interests or make any commitments that would separate them from their relationship.

A couple in their thirties were dating seriously when the woman (Red) decided to take a weekend cruise with a girlfriend. Her boyfriend (White) was terribly hurt and insecure. She finally got tired of his whining and told him she was going with her girlfriend and

could never consider marrying him if he didn't get his own life together without always waiting for her to include him in her plans. She was thrilled when he announced that he was going to visit a good friend in Montana the same weekend she went on the cruise. However, after careful consideration of what motivated his behavior, it became apparent that he was simply satisfying her request for independence in order not to jeopardize their potential marriage plans. Subsequently, she insisted that he be the one to initiate his independent plan the next time, rather than simply reacting to hers.

DOUBTFUL AND DEPENDENT

Whites doubt themselves so much that they constantly demand proof of acceptance. "Prove to me," they say, "that you accept me. Stay with me always and be there for me, for I am inadequate and you are strong." The price is high when one tries to accept, protect, and rescue a clingy White. It is much like holding a man by his wrists when he is falling from a cliff. The longer you hold on, the heavier he becomes. Yet he feels he is safer in your grasp than trusting himself and assisting in the rescue by climbing back up. The nobility of the rescue soon loses its shine, and the rescuer becomes the victim. If you "care," you feel obligated to hold on for life, to give up a life of your own in order to save his. If you let go, society rebukes you for giving up and selfishly seeking your own rewards elsewhere. Such dilemmas are commonly experienced by clinging Whites and those they encounter in life.

In order to encourage this unhealthy, although seemingly secure type of relationship, Whites seek to please others. Whites often get the support of others through service. This service typically comes with strings attached. Usually the strings come in the form of protection, security, control, support, and direction.

Jeff had been the perfect child (Whites usually are) and later resisted rocking the boat for any reason when his parents retired. Knowing this, Jeff's parents repeatedly controlled his choices despite the fact that he had been married once, held a very responsible job, and maintained a desirable lifestyle. Then Jeff, who is Caucasian, wanted very much to marry an Asian woman. His mother flatly refused to entertain the idea, and his father supported his "traumatized" wife. Jeff felt abandoned. He had been a wonderful, caring son. When his only brother had turned his back on their parents because of their meddling, Jeff had remained loyal. Now he felt torn

in half. He was devoted and loyal both to his parents and his girlfriend. Notice that I didn't mention loyal to himself. He had not yet developed loyalty to himself. He didn't count, yet. He experienced his value and self-worth through others. Now he needed to find himself and challenge his secure relationship with his parents if he was ever to know self-respect. Through months of therapy and inner struggling, he freed himself of his parents and pursued a life based on his own values and beliefs. Jeff eventually married his fiancée. Jeff will never feel as welcomed or as "loved" by his parents as he did before, but he now recognizes that pleasing himself appropriately is far more gratifying than living his life to please others.

TOLERANT AND PATIENT

Unless other personalities push Whites into a combative stance, they can tolerate an enormous amount of pain. Whites are tolerant of disagreeable behavior regardless of the personal discomfort they may feel. One mother (White) watched her young teenaged son leave home on two separate occasions "just because he felt like it." He simply wanted to live somewhere else. This mother was deeply concerned and maintained positive communication despite her son's inappropriate and selfish behavior.

I recently asked 100 university students to identify the trait they felt was most important for a successful parent to develop. Independently, 95 percent of them ranked *patience* as the most significant virtue for successful parenting. I was amazed at this overwhelming response from these young adults who had only recently been children, and who, for the most part, were not yet parents. What about love, discipline, and leadership? Why hadn't they given the edge to communication or some other attribute? The students offered me a valuable insight into parenting and the White personality. They said that "patience indicates a trust in human dignity—a belief that people can make the right choices in life when given the free agency to act for themselves." What a powerful statement! I have appreciated the White personality with new depth since that educational experience.

Whites most completely represent the peacemaker.

IMPRESSIONABLE

Whites are quite impressionable. They observe everything and keep a watchful eye on the human condition. This can make a negative childhood very traumatic for Whites. One patient tearfully told me of her last encounter with her father when she was only five years old. He had a fight with her mother and was leaving their yard. She asked if she could go with him. She knew her parents were fighting but never considered he was leaving for good. She thought he was going to the store, and she wanted to be with him. He said she couldn't come, and he left. She went inside and saw her mother sobbing, and realized this was more serious than the other times. After this devastating experience, my patient never developed trust or the capacity for sharing her feelings freely with anyone. She still calls her father on special occasions, but nothing has erased the pain she experienced that day as a five-year-old watching her daddy leave and later realizing he'd never come home again.

WITHHOLDS FEELINGS

Whites don't trust freely. They usually hold their true feelings very close to the heart, safely tucked away from others who may not approve of or value them. One intellectually brilliant man offered to tutor his Harvard medical school roommates free of charge. He later realized that it was his way of expressing his warm feelings toward them without having to discuss them openly. He regrets now that he never shared himself. He shared his knowledge because he was secure in that. Looking back, he realizes that he might have been able to establish good friendships if he had been able to trust others with his inner feelings and thoughts.

BLENDABLE AND KIND

The gentle nature of Whites typically shines through regardless of their level of trust. They remain kind and agreeable with almost everyone they meet. Whites are so blendable. A sure sign of a White personality is the individual who genuinely feels like a rainbow of colors. Whites can find themselves in all personalities because they are so capable of blending in.

UNPRODUCTIVE DREAMERS

Whites often remain unproductive dreamers. They have tremendous plans and can often imagine themselves to be elsewhere, but their dreams remain just that—dreams, unless they can focus and make them concrete. These flaws leave Whites and those intimately connected with them unsettled and disappointed. Whites are the least effective of all the personalities at implementing changes. (Yellows run a close second.)

I remember one White accountant who could never decide what he really wanted to do professionally. Several firms he worked for had folded, and each time, even with the realization that his current job would be terminated, he had remained until the end rather than seeking other employment. His wife was terribly distressed by his ambivalence and yet remained highly supportive. Finally, he shared how his real dream in life was to own a small food franchise. He had the necessary business skills, and his wife had terrific people skills. Years passed and nothing ever came of the man's dream. His wife remained supportive and successfully pursued her own career. However, he was never able to commit to his dream of owning his own business.

UNMOTIVATED

This lack of direction breeds a lack of motivation. Until Whites establish goals and commit to accomplishing those goals, they are highly unmotivated. One White friend of mine would experience moments of brilliance when he would "see the light" and commit to a particular goal. Within a short time span, as with a shooting star, this brilliance and excitement would be explained away and lost until another momentary flash of encouragement arrived. Setting and accomplishing his goals didn't come easily. However, goals are the only hope for unmotivated Whites. Until they are able to establish direction in their lives, Whites often remain unsettled and discouraged.

*If you ever want to witness quiet human majesty,
simply observe a healthy White personality
bless another's life with random acts of kindness.
But you must watch closely, because
they will never announce their own heroics.*

ACCEPTING

Whites are conceivably capable of being the best friends to all personalities. They find accepting others rather simple. They have such tolerant expectations of others that people value their companionship and seek their nonjudgmental relationships. Whites enjoy doing almost anything with anyone, anywhere. They can enjoy a wide variety of people and experiences, and consequently often find themselves in unusual relationships or life situations.

BORING AND LAZY

Whites miss many potentially wonderful moments in life because they look to others rather than to themselves for excitement and relevance in life. Perhaps the word that Whites least like to accept responsibility for is *boring*. Yet Whites can be just that—boring. Perhaps the example that best depicts this dependency is the following typical directionless relationship between two Whites.

Two Whites dated for years before deciding to marry. Their courtship consisted primarily of shared television viewing and quiet moments together. They married, and after five years they decided they were wrong for each other. Neither was happy or finding life particularly fulfilling. During the next five years this couple remained married but separate in their dreams and aspirations. He pursued a college degree and she moved to another city to become a police officer. Neither committed to sharing decision making. Neither made the decision to leave. After seven more wasted years of living apart but not choosing truly separate lives, they divorced. Why did it take so long? Both admitted they couldn't agree on who should file the papers!

Whites are vulnerable to wasting time. They may give it away to boredom, laziness, or dull reluctance to change. I have seen wives leave husbands, husbands leave wives, employees leave employers, kids and parents leave each other, friendships dissolve, and a myriad of other potentially wonderful relationships end primarily because of boredom. The worst part is that the person leaving often feels very guilty because the grounds for separation aren't dramatic ones such as infidelity, distrust, or abuse. Life with a boring White can be devastating and draining.

Lazy (just try and get one moving in the early morning) and reluctant, the White personality often moves sluggishly through life. They

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are in no hurry to experience life. They feel certain life will wait for them. Their motto could be "Everything comes to he who waits." Everything (good and bad) does come to he who waits. However, what he gets when it finally comes may be a far cry from what he would have chosen.

TIMID AND EMOTIONALLY UNSURE

Whites remind me of the cowardly lion in *The Wizard of Oz*. They can be a frightened group of individuals. This should not imply that they are necessarily afraid of physical danger, but rather emotional trauma. One young woman feared rejection so much that she developed seizures. She was taunted by the kids in elementary school, and when she could no longer handle it, she developed a method for diverting the attention from her emotional insecurities to a physical handicap (seizures). This eventually resulted in coddling by adults and peer avoidance. Unfortunately, adult adulation wasn't her need, and peer avoidance had almost the same effect as taunting when other kids ran off to slumber parties and ate lunch together at school.

GENTLE AND EVEN-TEMPERED

The White child is truly a gift from heaven. They are so simple. They are usually the easiest babies to care for. There is a unique gentleness to these children that promotes family harmony. They are the children who travel through life with an even temper. New experiences can traumatize a White child. However, they typically enjoy a peaceful, casual existence.

AIMLESS AND MISGUIDED

Sometimes Whites, because of their aimless and misguided nature, approach life too casually. Particularly frustrating for the rest of us is the energy we must expend to make up for them: White children forgetting lunches; White friends neglecting to pick up the children for baseball practice; White husbands unable to select a career direction; and White siblings not willing to develop their own friendships. Whites rarely realize how selfish their limitations are. By presenting

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themselves as kind but helpless souls, they often seem to ignore the pressure their inadequacy places on everyone else.

How enjoyable can life be when you have to constantly remind someone to brush his teeth, call the hotel for reservations, what time school or work begins, etc., etc., etc. Whites often respond to these reminders with a casual (albeit disdainful) remark such as "Why do you have to get so huffy about everything?" "Whose life is it anyway?" "Go on and mind your own business and leave me alone." The frustration mounts for the other personalities who have much greater expectations for Whites than Whites have for themselves. Whites are notorious for requiring assistance in planning and processing life. They are less known for accepting, and in fact are capable of resisting, the very assistance they require.

INDECISIVE

Whites rarely seek leadership positions. They are uncomfortable making decisions that may be wrong, and avoid responsibilities that require decision making. They are more comfortable as a follower or in a less involved role, leaving group decision making to others. Whites would rather just accept others' decisions than assert themselves with their own opinions. One patient asked his wife, "Honey, on this test of Dr. Hartman's, it wants to know if I'm decisive. Do you think I am or not?" We all shared a good laugh, recognizing that he never realized what he was asking until she said, "Honey, somehow I think you just answered your own question better than I could ever hope to!"

SILENT AND STUBBORN

Whites can be very strong and stubborn. One of my White patients hated high school. He despised homework and all the demands of education. He was particularly bright but unwilling to engage in conflict with either parents or teachers. How does one satisfy everyone (including oneself) when there is no agreement on what must be done? This was his dilemma. He hated homework, and they demanded that it be done. For one solid semester in eighth grade, this young man, Michael, did every homework assignment and never turned one of them in to his teachers. Every night his parents would

ask him if he had done his homework, and he would answer yes. When his grades slipped dramatically and they requested to see his work, he promptly showed them. By the end of the semester, his parents thought they were going crazy. Were his teachers out to get their son? They had seen his work, but the teachers kept telling them that he had not completed it. This case depicts the silent, strong, stubborn nature of Whites.

*"All things eventually come
to he who patiently waits."*

—*Revised White Chinese Proverb*

Whites prefer to give the silent treatment because they are uncomfortable with confrontation. It is very difficult to live with people who silently resent your behavior. Whites seem to take advantage of others' natural curiosity by refusing to discuss their feelings openly, forcing other personalities to struggle to understand them. Whites often feel very deeply, but it is very difficult for them to express their feelings to others. One White father took an intolerable amount of abuse from his Red stepson for years in order to maintain peace in the home. His wife refused to allow him to discipline the child. He simply suffered in silence. Finally, after multiple problems including molestation, school failures, etc., the mother allowed her husband to take a more active role in disciplining his stepson. He had never released his true anger for all the disruptions this child had brought to his life. With his wife's approval, he massively overcompensated, going on the offensive and physically striking his stepson whenever he could find justification.

WHITE LIMITATIONS

Whites often seem boring and uninvolved. They are often unwilling to set goals. They frequently refuse to pay the price of involvement because they may fear the inevitable consequences of confrontation or rejection. This fear keeps them from experiencing intimacy. Their indecision limits their accomplishments. In order to feel secure, Whites pay great attention to the needs of others and strive at all costs to please those they encounter in life. They express themselves reluctantly, preferring to let others believe as they will. Meanwhile, the

Whites go about their lives as they choose, avoiding conflict and confrontations. Whites silently accept whatever comes their way. What they don't value, they stubbornly discard in time. They often do not allow those desirable experiences that require the effort of risk, leadership, and honest expression into their lives.

WHITE STRENGTHS

On the positive side, Whites are the satisfied ones. They are contented and agreeable individuals who easily accommodate others through life. They complement every personality regardless of differences in style. Their gentle nature and diplomacy wins them many loyal friends. Their agreeable and peaceful dispositions make them an asset to any family, friendship, or business that is fortunate enough to include them. Whites are typically moderate people without the extremes of other personalities. Like the water they represent, they flow over and around life's difficulties, rather than demanding that obstacles in their path be moved. Their leadership is solid and fair. They tolerate differences and encourage camaraderie with all team members. The chameleon is their mascot and reflects their ability to adapt and blend with everyone. They enjoy the enviable strength of balance. They are receptive to every personality and willingly learn from all of them. Whites are most effective at putting life's crises in proper perspective. Satisfied and even-tempered, they ask little of life. They often enjoy the protection of stronger personalities. Patient and tolerant, they have much to give. And give they do, with gentle approval for those fortunate enough to experience their accepting embrace.

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- quiet, reflective, and peaceful
- sincere and genuine lifestyle
- appears to accept life comfortably
- patient with self and others
- enjoys life's simplicity
- compatible with others
- kind to animals and people
- blends into all situations

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AS A COMMUNICATOR

- receptive to others' input
- negotiator and mediator on issues
- listens superbly
- strong empathy skills

AS A GOAL SETTER

- receptive to suggestions
- appreciates exposure to many possibilities
- recognizes the value of goal setting
- trusts self to succeed in many different environments

AS A CAREER PERSON

- accommodates others easily
- handles bureaucratic environments well
- negotiates well
- calm under pressure
- prefers slower pace and "think" time
- sometimes puts self in dangerous occupations for excitement
- nonconformist

AS A PARENT

- flows well with crises
- takes time to enjoy each child
- agreeable with difficult children
- respected by children for gentle manner and style
- slow to react with anger
- supportive and considerate
- accepts companion's decision—demonstrates unity
- patient with deviant and inappropriate behavior
- accepts differences superbly

*"I finally got it together,
but forgot where to put it."*

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AS A CHILD

- very agreeable to established traditions and boundaries
- nondemanding
- willing to accommodate siblings and parents
- plays well by self
- accepts life with drama

AS A FRIEND

- patient and enduring through good and bad times
- tolerant of unkind behavior
- supportive and accepting
- listens with empathy
- relaxed in most situations
- likes most people
- liked by most people
- compatible with different personalities
- enjoys observing others
- nondemanding of friendship

AS A COMMITTED COMPANION

- tolerant of others' tardiness
- can entertain self easily
- appreciates leadership qualities in others
- loyal and committed to relationship
- willing to accept beliefs and values of companion

CAREERS MOST LIKELY TO ATTRACT WHITES

Forest ranger	Recreation leader	Veterinarian
Dentist	Researcher	Lawyer
Bureaucrat	Homemaker	Engineer
Computer programmer	Police officer	F.B.I. agent
Military service	Preschool teacher	Truck driver

Note: Whites and Yellows are usually the least motivated to succeed in the career world.

PERSONALITIES WHO APPEAR TO BE WHITES

ALBERT EINSTEIN: A genius and highly observant, he let his thinking do his talking. Personally withdrawn, he was most comfortable in the world of ideas and intellectual exchange. He preferred quietly doing the research for his remarkable theories behind the scenes, rather than heralding their importance to the public.

MICHAEL JACKSON: Multitalented professionally and yet personally self-effacing, he listens well but verbalizes very little. Prefers quiet, limited personal connections.

JIMMY CARTER: Better thought of as a world diplomat than a savvy political force, he exudes kindness and quiet dignity. He never displays zealous egotism, but walks softly and carries a big stick.

WHITE NATIONS

Finland
Switzerland
Canada

WHITE LIMITATIONS

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- boring because detached
- takes passive approach to life
- unresponsive or not openly excited about experiences
- has problems becoming intimate
- bashful and unsure of self
- easily manipulated into changing plans
- ambivalent about direction and goals to pursue
- often lazy and unwilling to take responsibility for self
- resists making commitments

AS A COMMUNICATOR

- fearful of confrontation
- unable to respond quickly in conversation
- dishonest with feelings—often agrees only to please others

- hesitant to engage others in conversation
- doesn't contribute openly
- accepts others' decisions without seeking best solution
- gives very little energy to conversation unless forced to
- refuses to take a stand on issues
- prefers to observe others interact

AS A GOAL SETTER

- takes a "wait and see" attitude to life experiences
- waits for a sign or for someone else to make decisions for them
- lacks consistency in goal setting
- sees goals as demanding and therefore restrictive
- waits for others to set his or her goals and then criticizes the goals set for him or her

AS A CAREER PERSON

- low profile
- low energy
- directionless—requires leadership from others
- resents strong direction and leadership from others
- works at a slow pace
- resists power dominance of other personalities
- difficult to motivate and inspire
- fears change and risk taking
- willing to stay in same monotonous job
- easily manipulated by others when unmotivated or uncerned

AS A PARENT

- refuses to engage in conflict with spouse about children
- doesn't initiate activities and interaction with children
- poor disciplinarian
- works obsessively to maintain peace
- poor leadership and delegation with children
- easily abused by children when promoting unpopular ideas
- easily controlled or ignored by spouse or children

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AS A CHILD

- resents being pressured to do things
- doesn't contribute much to conversations
- contributes quietly to family activities
- waits for parent to initiate ideas and then criticizes unacceptable suggestions
- prefers the comforts of home to the demands of the world
- indifferent to family dilemmas
- uninvolved in family action
- doesn't complete tasks

AS A FRIEND

- lacks creativity to make suggestions
- easily led by others' opinions
- won't express honest perception if controversial
- passive
- requires extra protection and a lot of support
- easily hurt and defeated

AS A COMMITTED COMPANION

- prefers the other person to lead
- boring and indecisive
- too accommodating
- won't make suggestions for activities
- willing to let life and love pass him or her by
- may experience difficulty initiating relationships
- feels too inadequate to take a stand and voice opinions
- not emotional about intimate relationships

How to Develop a Positive Connection with Whites

Do:

1. Be kind
2. Be logical, clear, and firm about the content you present
3. Provide a structure (boundaries) for them to operate in
4. Be patient and gentle

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5. Introduce options and ideas for their involvement
6. Be simple and open
7. Acknowledge and accept their individuality
8. Be casual, informal, and relaxed in presentation style
9. Look for nonverbal clues to their feelings
10. Listen quietly

Don't:

1. Be cruel or insensitive
2. Expect them to need much social interaction
3. Force immediate verbal expression; accept written communication
4. Be domineering or too intense
5. Demand conformity to unrealistic expectations/behaviors
6. Overwhelm them with too much at once
7. Force confrontation
8. Speak too fast
9. Take away all their daydreams
10. Demand leadership

"I used to be apathetic,
but now I just don't care."

Recommended Time-Management Tips for Whites

1. State verbally how you feel and what you perceive about yourself, current tasks, and others' behavior. Whites are vulnerable to wasting energy because they can't accurately identify how they feel and present it confidently to others.
2. Empower yourself by addressing issues rather than avoiding them.
3. Conflict can be enriching. Share your ideas and seek others' input, rather than taking their feedback personally. See them as enlightening and broadening your horizons. Time management in a vacuum can be limiting and dangerous.
4. Seek a sense of urgency. Whites can miss living passionate lives by refusing to get excited about projects and people. Don't let time pass you by.
5. Set proactive agendas, rather than merely reacting to agendas others set for you. Proactive attitudes will challenge your natural tendency to being passive-aggressive.
6. Don't be overly defensive when others seem demanding. Focus on *what* is being said rather than *how* it's being said.
7. Risk a little. Set goals that require effort and build confidence rather than taking a "wait and see" attitude.
8. Make the effort to control daydreams that rob you of valuable time to get legitimate work done.

