AIRLINE PILOT CENTRAL

The Pilot Personality

Pilots are a distinct segment of the general population. In addition to flying skills, pilots are selected for their personalities and for a distinct "pilot persona." These characteristics make them safer pilots.

Pilots tend to be **physically and mentally healthy**. Pilots tend to be **"reality based,"** because by the very nature of their work they are constantly testing reality. There are those, however who would dispute this claim.

Pilots tend to be self-sufficient and may have difficulty functioning in team situations without CRM and other training. They have difficulty trusting anyone to do the job as well as they can. Pilots tend to be **suspicious, even a little paranoid.** In moderation, this quality serves them well within their environment and is, in fact, a quality that managements look for in the pilot personality. Outside the cockpit, this quality shows up in the tendency of many pilots to set two or three alarm clocks-- even though he or she may generally wake up before any of the pilots go off. **The suspicious/ paranoid tendency also affects the way pilots function in their private lives, as well.**

Pilots tend to be intelligent but are typically **not intellectually oriented**. They **like "toys"**-- boats, cars, motorcycles, big watches, etc. They are good at taking things apart, if not putting them back together. Pilots are **concrete, practical, linear thinkers rather than abstract, philosophical, or theoretical.** On a scale that ranges from analytically oriented to emotionally oriented, pilots tend to be toward the analytical end. They are **extremely reality- and goal-oriented**. They like lists showing concrete problems, not talking about them. This goal orientation tends towards the **short term as opposed to the long term.** Pilots are **bimodal: on/off, black/white, good/bad,** safe/unsafe, regulations/non-regulations.

Pilots are i**nclined to modify their environment rather than their own behavior.** Pilots **need excitement;** a 9-to-5 job would drive most pilots to distraction. Pilots are **competitive,** being driven by a **need to achieve**, and **don't handle failure particularly well**. Pilots have a l**ow tolerance for personal imperfection**, and **long memories of perceived injustices.**

Pilots tend to be scanners, **drawing conclusions rapidly** about situational facts. Pilots scan people as if they were instruments; they **draw conclusions at a glance** rather than relying on long and emotion-laden conversations.

Pilots avoid introspection and have **difficulty revealing, expressing, or even recognizing their feelings.** When they do experience **unwanted feelings, they tend to mask them, sometimes with humor or even anger.** Being unemotional helps pilots deal with crises, but can make them insensitive toward the feelings of others. **The spouses and children of pilots frequently complain that the pilot has difficulty expressing complex human emotions toward them.**

This emotional "block" can create difficulty communicating. How many incidents or accidents have occurred due to poor communications? The vast majority of Professional Standards cases will be caused by poor communication.

Courtesy of ALPA

An effective aviation educator is a **"compassionate coach"** allowing each unique client enough freedom to operate independently (making some mistakes and correcting them). While maintaining a safe environment is essential, clients need "learning opportunities" to boost PIC authority and maintain motivation. **"Incremental Mastery"** requires full command of each basic level skill before moving to higher, more complex maneuvers. In cases of plateauing or inconsistent performance at advanced maneuvers, a good educator **"deconstructs"** complex maneuvers into primary skill components that can be mastered and reassembled for success. Our job is to get out of the aircraft one step at a time!

QUIZ Yourself!

Emotional Intelligence Is No Soft Skill

1. The ability to develop relationships with their students The most frequent response is that a great teacher develops relationships with students. The research literature agrees with them: Teachers need to be able to build trusting relationships with students in order to create a safe, positive, and productive learning environment. For example, a student in Boston told us that great teachers are "Willing to listen to students when there is a problem."

2. Patient, caring, and kind personality Personality characteristics related to being a compassionate person and having a sensitivity to student differences, particularly with learners, was the second most frequently reported quality. Again, there is research to support that teacher dispositions are strongly related to student learning and development.

3. Knowledge of learners This is a broad category that incorporates knowledge of the cognitive, social and emotional development of learners. It includes an understanding of how students learn at a given developmental level; how learning in a specific subject area typically progresses like learning progressions or trajectories; awareness that learners have individual needs and abilities; and an understanding that instruction should be tailored to meet each learner's needs.
A good teacher understands the pace and capacity of each student providing "optimal challenges" suited to their level of understanding and ability.

4. Dedication to teaching Dedication refers to a love of teaching or passion for the work, which includes commitment to students' success. Responses often referred to loving the subject matter or simply being dedicated to the work. To a student, this means a teacher should be "always willing to help and give time."

5. Engaging students in learning Students also said that teachers should be able to engage and motivate students to learn. Researchers talk about three types of engagement that are required for students to learn: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Survey respondents mostly focused on making content interesting and the ability to motivate students to learn.