



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 **inclined 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 **low 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.