



**Common Sense Communication:**  
*Who am I*  
*Who are YOU?*

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# COMMUNICATION STYLE PROFILES

## CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

**Learns by trial & error**  
**Leads by vision and energizing others**  
Seeks possibilities  
Enthusiastic!  
Risk taker  
Active problem solver  
Adaptable  
Loves the BIG Picture  
Entrepreneurial

**Learns by observing others**  
**Leads by trust & participation**  
Seeks personal meaning  
People oriented  
Observes others  
Brings harmony  
Helpful  
Directed by feelings & emotions  
Tackles problems first by reflecting  
alone and then brainstorming

## ACTIVE

### EXPERIMENTATION

**Learns by doing**  
**Leads by personal forcefulness**  
Thrives on plans and timelines  
Values strategic thinking  
Seeks analytical solutions  
Literal  
Productive  
Precise  
Practical problem solving  
Limited tolerance for fuzzy ideas  
Integrates theory & practice

## REFLECTIVE

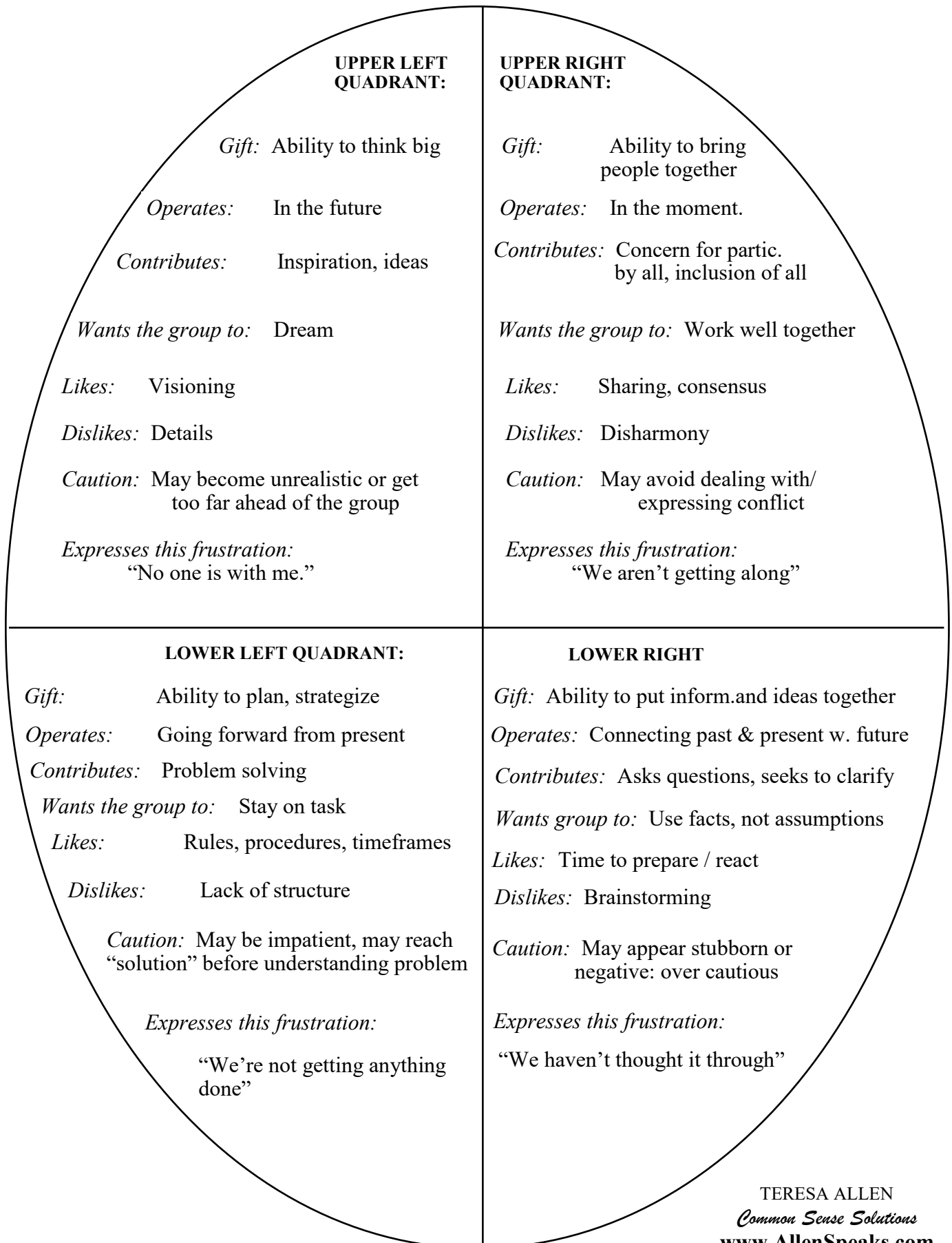
### OBSERVATION

**Learns by thinking through ideas**  
**Leads by principles and procedures**  
Makes decisions impersonally  
Firm Minded  
Driven by Intellect  
Uncomfortable with subjective judgment  
Wants to know what the experts think  
Planner  
Likes details

## ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION

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# WORKING WITH DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION STYLES



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# COMMUNICATION STYLE INVENTORY

## What Have I Learned ? ? ?

People take in information in different ways. Most people take it in in one of two ways - either through concrete experiences (talking to people, watching people, having real experiences, using their senses) or through abstract concepts (through books, the experts). If you take in information through people you are in the top ½ of the egg - if you take it in through the book, you are in the bottom ½ of the egg.

How you take in information is significant when working with others. Do you want to talk about something or must you read about it. An administrative staff was asked if they had good communication with employees. The staff insisted that communication was great - they explained that they sent out a newsletter every Monday morning. When the front line employees were asked about communication, they answered: “It is terrible - they send us a newsletter every Monday. No one ever comes to talk to us.” The whole administrative staff took in information through the written word while most front line employees took in information through people.

The second thing communication style tells you is how people make information useful. Some people reflect on it, think about it, work it through their mind (they are on the right side of the egg). These people want agendas, they want more time to think about topics, they want to work things through in their mind before they express their thoughts. They are reflective observers.

The people on the left side of the egg are doers who make information useful by doing something with it. They try out information, they experiment, they put information to work. These people are called active experimenters.

If you reflect, you fall on the right side of the egg. If you are “hands-on”, you fall on the left side of the egg.

On the next page, we will learn about each quadrant and how people in those quadrants tend to behave. This will help you understand how to work with people in the various quadrants.

## **UPPER RIGHT QUADRANT (Concrete Experience with Reflective Observation)**

These sympathetic people take in information through people and feelings; they make the information useful through reflection. When they do talk about what they have learned or what they have decided, they often don't share all of their thought processes. It is important to draw them out, to ask for their line of thought, because it will be valuable to group decision making. These people are good listeners because they value people. They listen for the sake of listening. They lead by creating trust and ensuring that everyone is participating.

## **LOWER RIGHT QUADRANT (Abstract Concepts with Reflective Observation)**

These analytical people take in information through books - the scientific method. They process information by reflecting. Schools were designed for this quadrant - lecture and test or read and test methods work well for them. People in this quadrant lead by principles and procedures. They are very concerned about fairness and justice. They are very organized and find themselves concerned about all of the details. They look to theory and research. You will often hear them saying: "The experts say" or "the research shows". They are able to conceptualize large amounts of information - pulling out the themes and learnings.

## **LOWER LEFT QUADRANT (Abstract Concepts with Active Experimentation)**

Because these people experiment with theories, they are very practical. They are doers. They can create strategies for getting work done and are out in front leading the charge. Creating plans and timelines is their forte. They are aware of spatial existence. They look at how things work. They are architects, engineers, and business persons. Their language is precise and they take things literally. They lead by personal forcefulness.

## **UPPER LEFT QUADRANT (Concrete Experience with Active Experimentation)**

Most people fall into this quadrant. Change is very comfortable for these intuitive people. They are in touch with reality, but they want to experiment and enhance it. They are risk takers. They are enthusiastic and inventive - seeing many possibilities for how something can be done. They lead by energizing people and by holding up a vision. They always ask "what if..?"

No one quadrant is better than another, each is different and brings strengths to the group. Knowing this information does not give us an excuse to behave in a certain way. Knowing this information will allow us to use our gifts and talents and also allow us to stretch into the other quadrants.

If you understand communication styles, you will not only be able to give people information in the most effective way for them, but you will know why it is important to give information in many ways - through articles and lectures, role plays, interviews, and projects.

If you understand communication styles, you will be able to recruit for your organization or committee with a balance of styles in mind. You will be aware, for instance, that if you recruit for a program by admitting applicants on a first-come, first served basis, your program will be filled with people from the lower right-hand quadrant in the learning style inventory - the people who always turn in their applications first!

In addition, when a group is in trouble, you will know to check out communication styles - is there frustration about those differences? If so, by sharing what you know about learning styles, you will be able to turn those frustrations into a celebration!

You need to know your communication style and the communication styles of those you work with. How is your communication style affecting the way you see the situation as opposed to how others see it? Remember - those with opposite communication styles will have the most difficulty understanding each other. The most important thing to remember is that a group needs all communication styles to work most effectively. As educator Howard Garner stated: ***“It is of the utmost importance that we recognize and nurture all of the varied human intelligence and all of the combinations of intelligence.”*** What a powerful revelation!

These materials adapted from  
“Leading the Way”  
courtesy of  
Contemporary Consulting  
Mary Jo Clark & Pat Heiny, Richmond, IN  
Their program is based on the Kolb Learning Styles

# COMMUNICATION STYLE INVENTORY

Look at the adjectives horizontally. Rate how you would describe yourself 1 - 4. You should place **number 4 for the item most like you** and then go in descending order to the **number 1 which will be least like you**. Continue doing this for each horizontal line until you have filled in a number in all blanks. If you have any questions, please raise your hand and the seminar leader will be happy to help you.

- |                          |                    |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. ___ discriminating    | 1. ___ tentative   | 1. ___ involved          | 1. ___ practical       |
| 2. ___ receptive         | 2. ___ relevant    | 2. ___ analytical        | 2. ___ impartial       |
| 3. ___ feeling           | 3. ___ watching    | 3. ___ thinking          | 3. ___ doing           |
| 4. ___ accepting         | 4. ___ risk-taker  | 4. ___ evaluate          | 4. ___ aware           |
| 5. ___ intuitive         | 5. ___ productive  | 5. ___ logical           | 5. ___ questioning     |
| 6. ___ abstract          | 6. ___ observing   | 6. ___ concrete          | 6. ___ active          |
| 7. ___ pressure-oriented | 7. ___ reflecting  | 7. ___ future -oriented  | 7. ___ pragmatic       |
| 8. ___ experience        | 8. ___ observation | 8. ___ conceptualization | 8. ___ experimentation |
| 9. ___ intense           | 9. ___ reserved    | 9. ___ rational          | 9. ___ responsible     |

**FOR SCORING ONLY**

Now, look at the numbers under the lines below. For each column go up and circle those numbers. Now total the values you have filled in for only the circled items in each column. Write the total on the line below. (For example, in column one, you are getting total of the following items only: receptive, feeling, accepting, intuitive, pressure-oriented, & experience)

CE \_\_\_\_\_  
234578

RO \_\_\_\_\_  
136789

AC \_\_\_\_\_  
234589

AE \_\_\_\_\_  
136789

**Please wait until your seminar leader gives instructions to turn the page.**

# Scoring the Communication Style Inventory

Take the values you computed on the inventory and plot them on the appropriate axis. Then connect the dots with straight lines.

