

**Straight Talk®**

# **Communication Styles**

**Survey, Scoring Guide and Style Descriptions**

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**Excerpted from the book**

**Straight Talk:  
Turning Communications Upside Down  
for Strategic Results at Work**

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**Take the survey on line at  
[www.straight-talk-now.com](http://www.straight-talk-now.com)**

## Introduction

These are the instructions for taking the Straight Talk® Communication Styles survey and scoring your results. For faster results, you can go to [http://www: straight-talk-now.com](http://www:straight-talk-now.com) to take the survey on-line.

## Step 1: Take the Survey

Find a quiet place to take the survey. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Carefully consider each of the sentences below; then use a pen or pencil to fill in the appropriate triangle on the survey that best describes you. Be as honest as you can in your responses. They'll be most useful to you this way. No one else needs to see them.

Your style of communicating may vary, depending upon whether you're at work or at home. To assess your style of communicating while at work, think of yourself in that setting. Similarly, if you're trying to assess how you communicate with your family, then picture yourself in that context.

You will be using the following key to respond to the survey, so take a moment to familiarize yourself with it.

- A – Not at all like me
- B – Not much like me
- C – Somewhat like me
- D – Like me
- E – Completely like me

### **Example:**

1. I follow instructions well.

A	B	C	D	E
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

There are no right or wrong answers. But you do need to fill out the survey accurately to determine your style of communicating. When torn between two answers, go with your first response. It's more likely to be the most accurate.

- A – Not at all like me
- B – Not much like me
- C – Somewhat like me
- D – Like me
- E – Completely like me

	A	B	C	D	E
1. I'm not very precise.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. I'm reserved around strangers.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. I like envisioning big projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. I don't promote an atmosphere of harmony.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. I don't follow instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. I'm courageous.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. I lack attention to detail.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. I mix easily with new people.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. I feel calm and relaxed most of the time.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. I'm not talkative.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. I like big challenges.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. I analyze situations carefully.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. I maintain a cheerful disposition.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. I'm shy with new people.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. I'm persistent.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16. I'm soft spoken.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17. I pay attention to detail.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18. I'm quick to challenge the views of others.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19. I enjoy talking in front of a group.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
20. I'm careful and deliberate in making a decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
21. I'm not peaceful in my inner self.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
22. I'm not confident in my abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
23. I'm a good team player.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
24. I'm daring.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
25. I'm focused on getting things done right.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
26. I'm even-tempered under most circumstances.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
27. I don't like taking risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
28. I'm not generous with my time.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
29. I make new friends easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
30. I'm very cautious.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
31. I'm trusting of others.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
32. I'm not outgoing.	<input type="checkbox"/>				



- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #10, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #14, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #16, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #19, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #29, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #32, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total Expresser score equals the sum of item points.

### Thinker Worksheet

#### Points:

- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #1, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #5, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #7, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #12, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #17, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #20, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #25, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ For item #30, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total Thinker score equals the sum of item points.

**Harmonizer Worksheet****Points:**

\_\_\_\_\_ For item #4, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.

\_\_\_\_\_ For item #9, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.

\_\_\_\_\_ For item #13, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.

\_\_\_\_\_ For item #21, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.

\_\_\_\_\_ For item #23, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.

\_\_\_\_\_ For item #26, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.

\_\_\_\_\_ For item #28, give yourself 5 points for A, 4 points for B, 3 points for C, 2 points for D, or 1 point for E.

\_\_\_\_\_ For item #31, give yourself 1 point for A, 2 points for B, 3 points for C, 4 points for D, or 5 points for E.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Harmonizer score equals the sum of item points.

**Step 3**

Transfer the totals from the four worksheets to the appropriate boxes below. Then circle the two highest scores you received. If your highest score is 10 points or more above your next highest score, go to Step 5. If your two highest scores are identical, go to Step 6. Otherwise, proceed to Step 4.

Director Score

Expresser Score

Thinker Score

Harmonizer Score

**Step 4**

Using the following table, circle the style in column one receiving the highest score. Staying in that row, circle the style in column two receiving the second highest score. Then follow the arrows and circle the corresponding style in the third column. That's your communication style. Proceed to Step 7.

Column 1		Column 2		Column 3
<b>My high score</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>My identical high score</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>My specific style</b>
Director	<b>+</b>	Expresser Thinker Harmonizer	→ → →	Initiator Explorer Persuader
Expresser	<b>+</b>	Director Thinker Harmonizer	→ → →	Charmer Diplomat Socializer
Thinker	<b>+</b>	Director Expresser Harmonizer	→ → →	Investigator Organizer Supporter
Harmonizer	<b>+</b>	Director Expresser Thinker	→ → →	Counselor Nurturer Provider

**Step 5**

If your highest score is 10 points or more above your next highest score, then use the table below to discover your communication style. In the first column, circle the style receiving the highest score. Then circle the corresponding style in the second column (follow the arrows). That is your communication style. Proceed to Step 7.

My highest score		My specific style
Director	→	Dictator
Expresser	→	Entertainer
Thinker	→	Analyzer
Harmonizer	→	Pleaser

**Step 6**

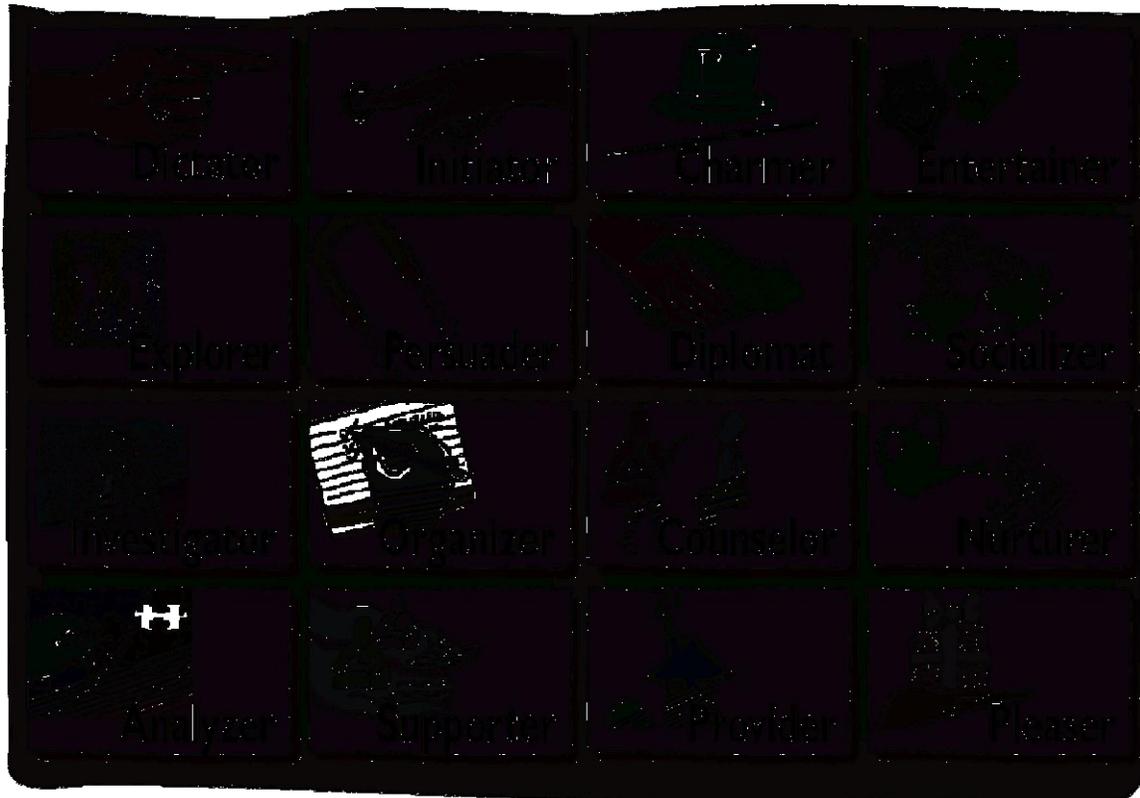
If your two highest scores are identical, you are a blend of two styles. In the following table, circle one of your two highest scoring styles in column one. Circle your other highest score in column two. Then follow the arrows and circle the corresponding style in the third column. Repeat the process, using the other high score for column one. You should end up with two specific styles.<sup>1</sup>

Column 1		Column 2		Column 3
<b>My high score</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>My identical high score</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>My specific style</b>
Director	<b>+</b>	Expresser Thinker Harmonizer	→ → →	Initiator Explorer Persuader
Expresser	<b>+</b>	Director Thinker Harmonizer	→ → →	Charmer Diplomat Socializer
Thinker	<b>+</b>	Director Expresser Harmonizer	→ → →	Investigator Organizer Supporter
Harmonizer	<b>+</b>	Director Expresser Thinker	→ → →	Counselor Nurturer Provider

<sup>1</sup> For example, if you received the same score for both Harmonizer and Thinker, then you'd calculate two combinations: Harmonizer + Thinker = Provider, and Thinker + Harmonizer = Supporter. Your communication style is a blend of Provider and Supporter.

**Step 7**

Circle your specific communication style (or styles) on the Matrix of Communication Styles below. Then proceed to the following pages to read about each style.



## **Step 8: Learning About Your Communication Style**

Find your communication style in the list below. Remember that each communication style reflects a different way of seeing the world – a different way of processing and responding to information.

### **Dictator**

The Dictator thrives on being in control. He or she bristles when someone else is in charge. When the Dictator is talking to other people, it's usually to discuss things that he or she wants to accomplish. Personal issues and emotional situations are awkward for the Dictator. They'd rather talk about a possible business venture, or their new mountain bike.



At work, the Dictator seems to have amazing energy to get things done. But he or she can also seem insensitive and manipulative. Dictators are valued for their leadership skills and "take charge" attitude. But they tend to make decisions quickly – much more quickly than other people do. So not everyone may be on board when he or she says, "This is what we're going to do."

The Dictator has a hard time with interpersonal communication. They talk in abrupt sentences, and don't offer a lot of information. The way Dictator's are perceived makes it hard for people to open up to them. Dictators enjoy dealing with other "bottom-liners." But he or she doesn't like to waste time with idle chitchat.

To be a more competent communicator, the Dictator needs to be much more patient and inquiring about other people's ideas and feelings. Since this is difficult, Dictators should try to set aside a specific time and place to talk about a problem. He or she should imagine how much time people will need - and then double it. Dictator's should start by talking about how he or she feels about the particular situation, but emphasize that their mind is open. Then he or she should give other people plenty of time to talk it through. Above all, he or she should ask questions and listen. But don't conduct an interrogation! Dictators need to make people feel they're really interested in their point of view, not just in collecting evidence against them. Try using the device of paraphrasing and playing back what people say. Once the Dictator learns to temper their instinct for snap judgments, the Dictator is far more likely to find his or her troops behind them when they yell "Charge!"

### **Initiator**

The Initiator is happiest when he or she's leading a group of people or is on their own – they are not happy when someone else is in charge. The Initiator's energy and ingenuity inspires admiration. But their desire to make others conform to his or her way of doing things can undermine the respect they desires. Initiators tend to be private with their own feelings. In their best moments, the Initiator is charismatic and enthusiastic – in their worst moments, arrogant and bossy.



At work, the Initiator can display great vision about the needs of an organization. He or she may undertake too much at times; yet somehow they manage to get the job done.

Initiators are often regarded as having impossible standards and making snap judgments about people. This can make the people around them feel uneasy and anxious.

The Initiator has the potential to be a good communicator. He or she likes people and prefers a direct, honest approach. But Initiators tends to jump to conclusions about what people mean without checking their facts. To be more successful a communicator, the Initiator needs to soften their style, and ask more questions. Because the Initiator is perceived as aggressive, their questions can appear patronizing or demanding. Initiators need to make it clear that he or she wants to increase the level of understanding for everyone involved, not gain the upper hand. They should try to restrain themselves from drawing conclusions too quickly. It also might help if the Initiator controls their body language and reduces the amount of direct eye contact. They should show respect for other people by paraphrasing what they say. People will respond much more positively once they see that the Initiator is willing to take the time to understand what they're saying.

### Charmer

The Charmer is happiest when he or she's expressing themselves or doing something creative. Charmers not happy with humdrum day-to-day stuff. Details are not the province of the Charmer. Instead of preparing in advance for important situations or meetings, the Charmer tends to rely on his or her personality to carry the day. This can make them popular and well liked, but can also make them appear inconsistent or superficial. The Charmer especially likes people they have just met, revealing to them their innermost feelings and secrets. This can vex the people closest to the Charmer, who wonder why they don't get such special treatment.



At work, the Charmer is well suited to providing a creative spark to an organization and its people. At the same time, he or she may not be patient enough, or sufficiently well organized, to provide the necessary structure and stability. Because the Charmer tends to be assertive and demanding, he or she can appear insensitive to others. But, in fact the Charmer is attuned to how other people feel. The Charmer tends to leap to conclusions, especially about people's intentions. They are quick to feel slighted if people don't communicate with them. The Charmer is sensitive to any apparent sign of disrespect. This can make them seem difficult to get along with.

The Charmer has the potential to be a competent communicator, especially if he or she can learn to pay more attention to details and process. When important situations arise, the Charmer should give him or herself plenty of time for preparation and focus their attention on the details of planning. The Charmer should decide on two or three objectives, and rehearse, allowing other people to critique their presentation. In meetings, the Charmer should ask more questions and paraphrase people's responses. The Charmer should also tell people when they are thinking aloud, it helps people to distinguish their finished thoughts from "works in progress."

### Entertainer

The Entertainer is happiest when the spotlight is on them – least happy when someone else is getting all the attention. The Entertainer is good



at public speaking and sales presentations – maybe even one of the performing arts. But their sensitivity and desire to be liked make it difficult for the Entertainer to deal with awkward situations and make tough decisions.

At work, the Entertainer's strength is expressing him or herself to other people. He or she is at his best in a creative environment that requires on-the-spot improvisation and imagination. Brainstorming meetings are where the Entertainer shines, not analyzing financial reports or preparing a work plan.

To communicate better, the Entertainer needs to listen more carefully, ask more detailed questions, and think more analytically. He or she should avoid assuming that they need to be the center of attention. Instead, the Entertainer should try to listen, gather data, and analyze what additional information is needed before drawing a conclusion. When the Entertainer has the spotlight, he or she should try to talk about someone other than themselves. Thinking aloud can get the Entertainer into trouble, so they should rehearse what they are going to say – especially in sensitive situations. This can help prevent the Entertainer from developing a sudden case of "foot-in-mouth disease."

### Explorer

Complex challenges are what the Explorer enjoys most, whether it's playing with a three-dimensional spreadsheet or climbing a mountain. The Explorer prides him or herself on how much he or she can accomplish compared to other people. People view the Explorer as logical and independent. They also think them as unemotional. In relationships, the Explorer tends to be a perfectionist. They are not always an easy person to get along with.

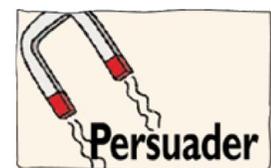


At work, the Explorer is known for doing things on their own and conceiving new theories or solutions. The Explorer enjoys taking the long-term perspective and meeting large challenges. At the same time, they can become lost in the theoretical, forgetting about other people's emotional concerns.

To communicate better, the Explorer needs to remember that his or her natural instinct is to hide their feelings and look at everything logically. So they should focus on people's feelings more. At times, the Explorer is prone to jumping to conclusions about the solution to a problem before they have gathered all the facts. In addition, he or she may be right about the solution – but they need to pay more attention to the process of getting buy-in, by letting other people talk through the problem. Expressing frustration at how much time it takes to reach a solution won't help. The Explorer should practice putting him or herself in someone else's shoes and feeling what they feel – and not worry about being wrong or looking foolish. By focusing their attention on other people's feelings, the Explorer will find that other people respect and respond to their insights far more readily.

### Persuader

The Persuader possesses a pragmatic, people-oriented approach that enables him or her to get other people to do the things he or she wants. For the most part, the Persuader can be warm and friendly.



But when their back is up against the wall, they can seem cold and dictatorial.

At work, the Persuader likes to run and organize activities. He or she makes a good leader because they tend to consider everyone's point of view, not just his or her own or a select group's. The Persuader's pragmatic approach enables him or her to communicate effectively and honestly – though sometimes with a degree of cynicism. While balanced in their approach to people and the requirements of the situation, the Persuader can be imprecise in spelling out exactly what he or she wants. This can make them weak on follow-through.

Most of the time the Persuader communicates effectively and honestly. To communicate better, he or she needs to work on two things: First, precision. The Persuader tends to leave out crucial details, leaving their audience uncertain about what to do next. He or she should organize their thoughts in advance and make sure everyone has the same information. Second, while the Persuader recognizes the need to listen and gather input, he or she tends to make assumptions about what needs to be done before the process is complete. This can undermine the process and cause people to respond cynically when he or she calls a meeting. The Persuader will benefit by making clear that their mind is open to suggestions and alternative strategies. Only after the input is gathered should he or she try to be persuasive. Given the Persuader's ability to listen, this will make them a very effective communicator.

### **Diplomat**

The Diplomat is a bit of a contradiction: fun loving and jovial, yet aloof and analytical. He or she revels in pleasurable things, people, and places – and loves talking about them, which makes them a magnet for other people. Yet the Diplomat can be very analytical and sober-minded. Taken together, this can make the Diplomat something of an enigma. People can interpret him or her as masking their calculating nature with their social skills. This double-edged sword can cause people to resent the Diplomat.



At work, the Diplomat is perceived as personable, versatile, and analytical. He or she is drawn to situations and organizations where their people management skills can be used. He or she is competent at leading people through complex projects. At times, the Diplomat's focus and determination can be overwhelming to others, especially those less articulate. The Diplomat may need to learn to temper his or her drive for perfection with sensitivity to other people's feelings.

The Diplomat can be a skilled communicator. Their ability to ask detailed questions nicely complements their expressive side. To communicate better, he or she may need to allow other people to contribute equally to the discussion. The Diplomat may need to remind people that their mind is open, and that he or she is genuinely looking for ideas and input. The Diplomat should remember to begin persuading only after everyone has had a chance to say his or her piece. In addition, the Diplomat may need to temper their drive for perfection with sensitivity for other people's concerns.

## Socializer

The Socializer is happiest with other people, engaged in animated conversation; he or she's least happy when alone. They love social activities – going to parties, attending meetings, engaging in conversation. To their friends, the Socializer is loyal to the end. But when he or she feels unappreciated, they can become depressed and withdrawn. In relationships, the Socializer is a true friend, sensitive to other's needs. The only downside is that the Socializer may not examine a situation logically, and therefore may make decisions without considering all the information.



At work, the Socializer is a born team member, always looking to inject a creative idea and motivate people. When inspired, he or she can work endless hours. When the Socializer feels unappreciated, he or she can become withdrawn and unproductive. The Socializer may need to work on handling conflict more directly by remembering that conflict is natural in any organization.

To communicate better, the Socializer needs to be more logical and analytical in his or her communications. They should work on asking logical questions and pursuing a rational line of inquiry, especially in disagreeable situations. By avoiding painful feelings and situations, the Socializer is only half a communicator – the easy half. He or she should try to analyze a difficult situation in terms of the missing information. What does he or she know that other people don't? Or what could he or she be missing? In a difficult situation, it will help if the Socializer rehearses what they are going to say. The more practiced they get at addressing the things that don't feel right, the more effective a communicator they will be.

## Investigator

The Investigator likes to be viewed as an encyclopedia of information, a walking expert. He or she's happiest when someone asks them a question or to perform a complex analytical task. The Investigator is not very focused on people's feelings, preferring to observe life and all its curious ways with an air of detachment. The Investigator's logical, forceful personality is at its best during times of crisis, when he or she's known for calmly analyzing the situation and keeping their head while all about them are losing theirs.



At work, the Investigator is perceived as cool, calculating, and competent. He or she may make an excellent engineer because they like dissecting things, figuring out how they work, and using their knowledge to improve them. The Investigator enjoys being called upon to provide solutions on the spot; as a result, they make a good trouble-shooter.

To communicate better, the Investigator needs to curb his or her desire to dissect everything and everybody. By nature, the Investigator is a good listener and communicator when the subject is a task, or a process, or a piece of equipment. But they may resist using the same skills of inquiry when it comes to people. By being more willing to expose him or herself to other people's feelings and points of view, the Investigator will find that he or she can solve organizational problems, too. Because the

Investigator has a naturally cool demeanor, he or she might try using facial and hand gestures more often to make their point. Above all, the Investigator should train themselves to think about how other people feel. If he or she succeeds, the Investigator will make a great communicator.

### **Organizer**

The Organizer enjoys getting people to do things together, which makes him or her effective in almost any social situation. At times the Organizer appears single-minded because of their analytical approach. But their compassion and dedication to other people is apparent. The Organizer is comfortable talking about other people, but not particularly comfortable talking about him or herself. The Organizer's relationships tend to be varied and well rounded – if a bit lacking in passion. Their style of communicating is to avoid trouble spots, which may make him or her less of a leader than they could be.



At work, the Organizer is respected for his or her principled and conscientious way of doing things. Compassionate toward people, he or she enjoys helping others interact and work together, which makes the Organizer a good manager. At times, the Organizer needs to go somewhere where he or she can be focused and alone.

The Organizer has the ability to be a strong communicator. He or she knows how to ask questions and analyze a situation. The Organizer also knows how to say things in a sensitive, understanding way. The Organizer's challenge is to communicate when there's a potential conflict. He or she may be reluctant to take a position or raise an issue that they feel may be a magnet for controversy or criticism. The Organizer needs to be willing to step in and find out what people think and get their opinions. By asking for input, he or she can build ownership in the decision. By beating around the bush, they will only leave everyone feeling frustrated.

### **Counselor**

The Counselor's strong suit is finding out what other people need and then helping them get it. The Counselor is better than most at mediating disputes. He or she may even have played matchmaker. The Counselor is something of a dual personality: happy to go along for the sake of the group, yet at times feeling a strong urge to express their own feelings. The Counselor operates from a deep sense of loyalty to their friends and loved ones. In relationships, the Counselor is perceived as low-key, caring, and competent. He or she tends to take criticism personally.



At work, the Counselor is likely to be someone people turn to for help. As a communicator, he or she is gifted in being able to articulate people's concerns and needs. Their ability to empathize with other people's points of view makes the Counselor a trusted and respected figure. Because the Counselor operates from a deep sense of loyalty to the cause, he or she can be effective at mediating disputes, since they are rarely seen as operating out of their own self interest.

To communicate more effectively, the Counselor needs to make sure he or she takes the time to figure out their own priorities and goals. The Counselor's tendency not to reveal him or herself makes it difficult for other people to open up and state their goals.

This can lead to a dilemma – everyone spends time being nice; no one says what's really on their minds. As a starting point, the Counselor should practice stating his or her thoughts and feelings, couching them in terms like: "It's important for us to be brutally honest with each other, regardless of how other people will react." In exchange, he or she'll have the standing to ask people to express their viewpoints more openly. The Counselor should also guard against being overly optimistic in their communications; he or she should try to be honest and clear about potential problems, not mask them.

### **Nurturer**

Easy-going, accepting, friendly, the Nurturer is both a good listener and a good talker. People tend to turn to him or her when they're down. In social situations, the Nurturer is always looking to create cooperation. In relationships, the Nurturer is viewed as sweet natured, warm, and enthusiastic. The Nurturer likes any kind of social activity involving friends and colleagues, whether it's going to a meeting, planning a party, or attending a convention. At times, he or she may let socializing get in the way of achieving their goals.

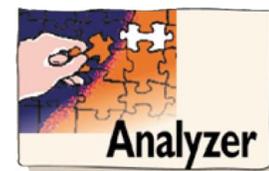


At work, the Nurturer is an open-minded and congenial communicator. He or she gets included in a lot of committees, because their enthusiasm and cooperation make them effective at bridging different people and groups. The Nurturer is perceived as someone who knows the latest gossip, so people turn to him or her for information. He or she tends to be happiest in jobs that allow them to use their considerable people skills. The Nurturer's weakness is that he or she is prone to not finishing what they start.

The Nurturer can be an effective communicator, especially as a go-between when people need to understand each other's feelings. To communicate more effectively, the Nurturer needs to spend more time thinking through the financial and pragmatic ramifications of a particular course of action. The Nurturer should communicate a desire to make sure that all information is considered before a decision is reached – even if it means making a tough decision in cases where it's tempting to take the easier course. In the Nurturer's communications, he or she should talk about the negatives, not just the positives. People will still like them – even if they don't like some of the information they bring to the table.

### **Analyzer**

The Analyzer is painstaking and thorough with detail, valued for following a logical process and getting tasks done the correct way. The Analyzer is happiest using his or her logical abilities to solve problems. They are least happy when forced to engage in social activities. To others, the Analyzer can be viewed as something of a social misfit. He or she tends to avoid showing their feelings or asserting their own desires. This makes the Analyzer an enigma to those who don't know how to get close to him or her or offer help when needed.



At work, the Analyzer can be counted on to respond positively to accomplishing a specific task – so long as it falls into their area of expertise and can be tackled using a tried and true approach. The Analyzer is adept at collecting information, but not at seeing the bigger picture. Thus, in the Nurturer's communications, he or she may appear

to be prematurely focused on details when the goal remains unclear. At times, the Nurturer's style may appear too conservative and inflexible; and he or she may expect others to behave the same way.

To become a more effective communicator, the Analyzer needs to be willing to open him or herself up to outside input and ideas. The biggest barrier to the Nurturer being an effective communicator is holding back too much. He or she should try expressing their logic and asking other people whether they see it the same way – or whether there's another equally valid interpretation. The Nurturer should try to force him or herself to listen to a full spectrum of opinion. As he or she opens up, and people feel more comfortable them, the Analyzer will discover that he or she's more apt to becoming a far more comfortable communicator.

### Supporter

The Supporter's patience with people, and innate kind-heartedness, make him or her an ideal person to turn to for help. The Supporter can be analytical when the situation requires it, but he or she is always looking out for other people. Cautious and conservative by nature, the Supporter prefers that someone else take the risks. In communications, the Supporter displays a high level of loyalty and caring for other people. But he or she should be on guard that their low-risk approach doesn't land him or her in hot water – he or she may stick with something or someone far too long.



At work, the Supporter is patient and kind, preferring to blend a cautious approach with a desire for harmony among his or her colleagues. The Supporter is valued for knowing the rules and traditions, and for paying close attention to the consequences of a given decision on the people involved. The Supporter makes a good peacemaker or negotiator. He or she is not likely to be known for their innovative thinking, which may limit the Supporter in certain types of jobs.

The Supporter is a natural communicator, especially when discussing an issue or concern outside him or herself. But the Supporter can be reluctant to assert his or her own feelings and ideas. When the Supporter wishes to communicate something about him or herself, they should try the same patient approach they take with others. The Supporter should preface their remarks by saying that he or she wants to speak plainly – then say exactly what they feel. The Supporter shouldn't worry about appearing too blunt or cold. He or she runs little risk of being thought insensitive. Once the Supporter has expressed their views, he or she'll find it breaks the ice for others to speak honestly about the same issue.

### Provider

The Provider is in his or her element doing things for others. The Provider loves figuring out just the right gift to buy for someone's birthday; he or she enjoys figuring out other people's problems. The Provider is a traditionalist; no one would accuse him or her of being too daring. Sensitive and careful of others, the Provider is likely to have many friends. In relationships, he or she's loyal and steadfast – maybe even when it's not in their best interest. The provider prefers someone else to



take the lead. He or she's very aware of other people's behavior and can show a judgmental streak – especially of people not like themselves.

At work, the Provider tends to succeed by a combination of people skills and dogged determination. He or she's very good at figuring out what motivates other people. This can make them effective in preparing sales presentations – though not in presenting them (he or she tends to be uncomfortable in front of a crowd). Not showy or flashy in temperament or style, the Provider is valued for his or her steady contribution to the team. However, he or she has to keep that judgmental streak under control.

To communicate more effectively, the Provider needs to be more willing to assert his or her own opinions and feelings. When the Provider is being assertive, they may think that they have gone overboard. Not to worry! The provider can be even more so. An excellent listener, the Provider could easily become a very effective communicator if he or she would demand from himself or herself some of that listening time that they are so willing to give to others.

### **Pleaser**

The Pleaser is quiet and shy. Their loyalty, patience, and concern for others are their greatest strengths. The Pleaser lives for the comfort of relationships with other people. He or she is likely to do anything to avoid a scene or an argument, which is why the Pleaser wouldn't dream of forcing his or her opinions on others – unless he or she knows they're shared. The Pleaser's happiest moments are spent in quiet conversation. In relationships, the Pleaser is modest, cautious, and conventional. They prefer to let someone else take the lead, so long as they are mindful of them and don't cause any embarrassment!



At work, the Pleaser likes to spend his or her free time building relationships with other people. With regard to accomplishing tasks, the Pleaser most likely has a set way of doing things, and may not easily be swayed to another, perhaps more suitable method. This can make the Pleaser seem stubborn and rigid. the Pleaser can hold strong opinions, but because he or she doesn't like conflict, they withhold their opinions from others. This may limit the Pleaser in the long run.

Communication is a dance in which partners need to alternate taking the lead. To communicate more effectively, the Pleaser should learn to lead. He or she should ask a friend to give him or her fifteen minutes of serious, undivided listening time. The Pleaser should rehearse what he or she is going to say, then state exactly how he or she feels about someone or something. Then the Pleaser should ask them to paraphrase what he or she said: "Do you understand what I mean?" Through this process, the Pleaser may come to realize that he or she can rely on their friends as much as they rely upon them.

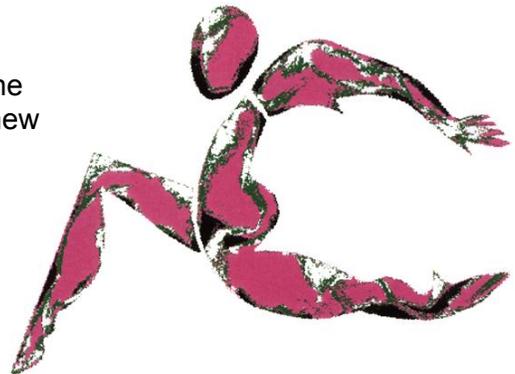
## Step 9: Interpreting Your Style

The Straight Talk survey revealed your scores in four categories: Director, Expresser, Thinker and Harmonizer. Each of these categories represents a major style. Your communication style results from the combination of the two major styles you use most often.<sup>2</sup> As you read through the following descriptions of the four major styles, think about which one you use most often, and which one you use least often. The major style you use **least** often signifies an area you need to develop in order to experience more effective interactions with other people.

### Directors

Imagine someone who's focused on getting the job done efficiently – whether it's building a house or starting a new project. This style is the Director.

The Director talks about actions. Directors don't have much time for small talk. In fact, they can be a little uncomfortable around people. They're quick to make decisions, quick to assign tasks, always on the move. Imagine Orson Wells in "Citizen Kane" and you've got a good mental image of the Director.



Directors tend to focus on doing, not listening. They don't tell long stories or spend much time inquiring into the health of your children. But they do talk about goals, about "getting a jump on the competition," about the importance of getting the job done. That's the key for the Director: completion; getting it done. Now, not later. "What's the bottom line?" – that's the Director's favorite phrase.

Directors take risks. They're willing to make tough decisions and gamble. Directors like to be in charge. Because the Director focuses on getting things done, not on people, they can at times appear insensitive – even intimidating. In sum, Directors emphasize action and results. They're great at setting goals. Without the Director's drive, vision, and decisiveness, the world would be a much more static place.

### Expressers

Now imagine people whose *modus operandi* is expressing themselves, talking about their ideas and opinions and feelings and experiences. These people – the Expressers – are great talkers. They like to gesture and use animated facial expressions to make a point.

Expressers can be very animated and expressive with their body language. But give them credit: Expressers are entertaining to have around. Imagine David Letterman or Carol Burnett. Expressers have lots of ideas and thoughts



<sup>2</sup> Some people favor one style disproportionately over the other three. Their primary and secondary styles are the same.

going on at once, sometimes so many that the ideas tumble out of their mouths before they've had a chance to edit them. In fact, thinking aloud is the trademark of the Expresser.



Expressers like to explore new ways to do things. They're willing to take chances, especially if their creative reputation is on the line. They're fun to invite to a brainstorming meeting – they're always coming up with an out-of-the-box idea. Yet they can also be disorganized and lack follow-through.

Expressers have a hard time focusing on one topic and listening. Nor do they have a long attention span for something that doesn't involve or interest them. This can be frustrating for people around them. So Expressers can demand a lot of patience. At the same time, Expressers tend to be sensitive to other people's feelings, and they'll express embarrassment once they realize they've said something that hurt someone else.

In short, Expressers are dynamic, dramatic, exciting, engaging, and entertaining. They may not always be organized. But without them the world would be a much less interesting place.

### Thinkers

Imagine people who like to solve problems. They like the process of working through all the details, the nuances, the ramifications and implications. These people – the Thinkers – are focused on getting things done right. Their exacting sense of detail drives them to ask lots of questions.

If a Thinker is thinking about buying a new computer system, for example, he'll ask for all the comparative data. The Thinker makes sure he or she has all his facts in order. They'll make a list of the features that they want (the list is a trademark of the Thinker). Often Thinkers postpone making a decision until they are certain that they've got every piece of information they can.

The Thinker possesses a marvelously honed ability to focus entirely on the problem at hand – often to the exclusion of the feelings of others. Imagine the character played by Jeff Goldblum in "Jurassic Park." All those questions are crucial if the job is to be done right. And their attention to detail can make the Thinker very valuable to have around.

As you might surmise, Thinkers tend to be more cautious than either Directors or Expressers. Thinkers also tend to underestimate the amount of time they need to complete a project. Unlike Directors, who rarely miss a deadline, Thinkers will give themselves "extensions" in order to make sure the project is done correctly the first time.

In sum, Thinkers are the world's problem solvers. They ask questions and revel in details. They may miss an occasional deadline, but no one is more superbly equipped than the Thinker to think it through.

## Harmonizers

Now let's meet the fourth major style of communicating. Picture someone who listens to other people's problems, someone who is steady and dependable, someone who will offer a sympathetic shoulder when someone's child catches the flu. Picture Ingrid Bergman in "Casablanca" or Gregory Peck in "To Kill a Mockingbird." Or better yet, Mother Theresa.

These people – the Harmonizers – are caregivers and healers. They bring muffins to work in the morning. They give special presents at holidays. People naturally turn to them for comfort in times of trouble. They speak warmly and lovingly to other people, who in turn speak warmly and lovingly of them. Harmonizers may not be decisive or daring, but they keep people working happily together, often in subtle ways.

Harmonizers are attuned to people's feelings, and they like to talk about people – not in the same animated or aggressive way Expressers do, but more quietly, with less attention drawn to themselves. They're focused on the group's well being; the Harmonizer's trademark is being a team player. At lunch or at a company picnic, you'll see the Harmonizers sitting together talking quietly. Harmonizers aren't trailblazers. In social situations, they'll rarely say anything inflammatory or unconventional. Harmonizers prefer to fit in, not stand out.

Harmonizers seek to avoid conflict. When a stranger comes into their midst, they are careful, guarded. You can only get to know them gradually, not right away. Because Harmonizers like to please other people, they'll say "yes" to something even though it would be better for everyone if they declined. As a result, Harmonizers can take on too much and feel overwhelmed.

In short, Harmonizers are caring people whose words express pride in the accomplishments of the team. Without them, the world would be a far less enjoyable place.



### Summary of Key Characteristics

Key characteristics of each major style are shown in the chart below:

Director	Expresser
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Goal oriented</li> <li>▪ Tells it like it is</li> <li>▪ Makes decisions quickly</li> <li>▪ Always on the go</li> <li>▪ Speaks crisply</li> <li>▪ May be insensitive, intimidating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People oriented</li> <li>▪ Animated, easily excited</li> <li>▪ Expressive gestures</li> <li>▪ Entertaining</li> <li>▪ Speaks rapidly</li> <li>▪ May be imprecise</li> </ul>
Thinker	Harmonizer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detailed in approach</li> <li>▪ Makes lists</li> <li>▪ Does things "by the book"</li> <li>▪ Speaks deliberately</li> <li>▪ A right way and wrong way</li> <li>▪ May procrastinate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relationship oriented</li> <li>▪ Sensitive to others</li> <li>▪ Dedicated, loyal</li> <li>▪ Speaks softly</li> <li>▪ Avoids conflict</li> <li>▪ May over-commit</li> </ul>

### The Rule of the Center

In general, people will become better communicators by shifting their style toward the center of the Matrix. The following tips will help you move toward the center of the Matrix.

