

EXERCISE: THE MATRIX GAME

The purpose of this tool is to help you learn how to use the Matrix to modify your style with another person. Think of the Matrix as a game board, and effective communication as having the following rules:

Rules of the Game

Limit: two people:

- Each person begins on the square that represents their style.
- Each person has only one move.
- Each person tries to move to square adjacent to their own.
- The goal is to occupy neighboring squares – but not the same square.

How does this work? Let's say you're a Provider and your colleague is a Charmer. Look at your positions on the Matrix below. According to the rules, your goal is to move one square up, hers is to move one square down. If you succeed, then your two pieces will sit on adjacent squares.

Dictator	Initiator	Charmer ↓	Entertainer
Explorer	Persuader	Diplomat	Socializer
Investigator	Organizer	Counselor ↑	Nurturer
Analyzer	Supporter	Provider	Pleaser

You, the Provider, take your step by modifying your style: First, acknowledge that you have different styles. Then say that you want to speak openly and candidly and disclose what you really think and feel – even though that doesn't come naturally to you. Tell her that you value her way of thinking and that you value your relationship enough to make it work better.

The Charmer takes her step by acknowledging that she, too, recognizes the difference in your styles. She says that to communicate more effectively she'll try to listen more carefully and patiently, and be more thoughtful about her reactions. She'll say that she really values your style, and values the relationship enough to make it work better.

As you both begin your conversation, balance the level of inquiry and assertion in your conversation. Pay attention to how much of the time each of you shows real curiosity about the other's intentions, ideas, and motivations. Answer every question as honestly as you can – even if you fear it will embarrass you or make you look weak.

It sounds hard and it is. If it weren't hard, we'd all be doing it. Start to practice using the Matrix to modify your style. You'll start to appreciate the benefits of the Matrix game.

Exercise

Using the Matrix, identify your square – and the squares of three important colleagues – with initials. Then play the following modified version of the game described here. Here are the rules:

Limit: Four people

- Begin on the square that represents your style.
- Draw arrows toward each of their styles.
- Determine whether one square touches all the initialized squares. If so, mark that square with a check and go to the last instruction.
- Determine whether two squares touch all the initialized squares. If so, mark those two squares with a check and go to the last instruction.
- Determine whether three squares touch all the initialized squares. Mark those three squares with a check and go to the last instruction.
- The last instruction: Describe a set of ground rules for all four of you that would create more effective communications. These ground rules should describe the specific behaviors you would expect each person to exhibit. List ground rules in the box below.

Dictator	Initiator	Charmer	Entertainer
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The ground rules:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.