

STRAIGHT TALK LESSON 1: THE FOUR BASIC COMMUNICATION STYLES

When you take the Straight Talk® survey, the first payoff is discovering the styles of communicating you use most often – Director, Expresser, Thinker, or Harmonizer. We tend to favor two styles over the others, but we have within ourselves the ability to use any of the styles in different situations.

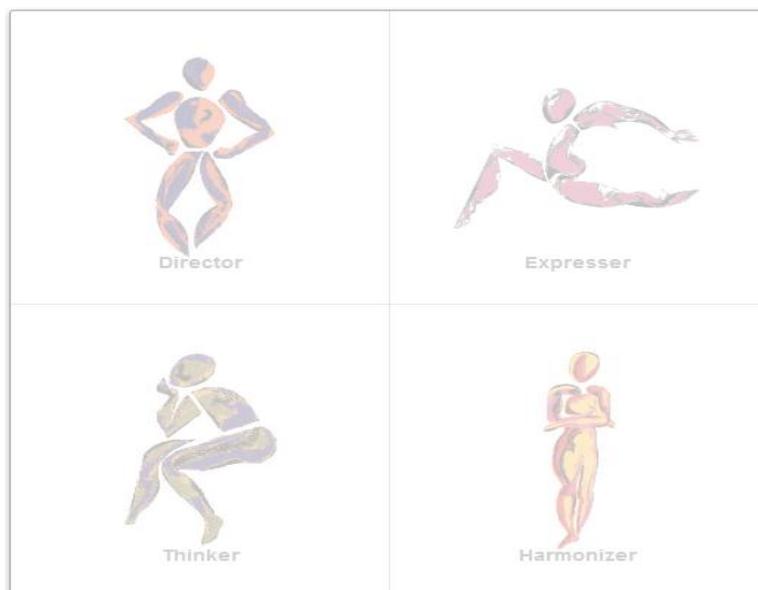
The Straight Talk® survey is designed to determine how often you use each style. For now, here are four key points to keep in mind:

1. Most people use two styles more frequently than the other two.
2. Your blend of styles determines the way you communicate.
3. It's especially important to understand your primary style, since this is the one you use most often.
4. Now one style is better than the others, but it may be to your advantage to play up one style over another, depending on the situation.

You may wonder whether men or women favor a particular style. There's no evidence that they do. Some styles may strike you as more "male" or "female" – or as more consistent with our traditional stereotypes of male and female behavior. But research shows that gender has no correlation to a particular style.

You may also wonder whether people from different countries or places of origin prefer certain styles. Our research shows that the styles are universal to all people. Yet certain cultural tendencies may favor one style over another, and a full appreciation of communication styles must factor in the particular habits of each culture.

As you read the following descriptions of the four basic styles, write down any thoughts that occur to you.



Conclusion

One of the earliest efforts at understanding human nature was led by a school of Greek philosophers who maintained that people's characters were determined by four special "humors." Each humor was concentrated in a particular bodily fluid. High levels of blood resulted in an enthusiastic type; an excess of black bile resulted in a melancholy character; high amounts of yellow bile caused one to be irritable; and an excess of phlegm created a slow, apathetic personality.

In this lesson you've learned about the four communication styles—a modern counterpart of the four humors. By training yourself to identify and understand each style, you'll quickly learn to appreciate some of the subtleties in people's communications—the hidden meanings behind their words, the types of things they pay attention to. This, in turn, will lead to more satisfying and more successful interactions.

More important, as you begin to appreciate how people see things in four very different ways, you will begin to appreciate how around us revolve four different worlds—the worlds of the Director, Expresser, Thinker, and Harmonizer.

Exercise 1: Guess Your Colleagues' Styles

This exercise will help familiarize you with the four basic communication styles. Using the information from these newsletters, guess the styles of the members of your immediate work group. This will just be a guess at this stage, because you haven't learned all the techniques for interpretation. But it will be fun to have a record of your early impressions later on.

Look at the four squares below. First, put your initials in the square that represents your primary style (refer to your survey results). Then write the initials of each member of your work group in the squares that you think best describes him or her.

<p>Director</p> <p>Talks in action verbs. Cares about bottom line. Always on the go. Speaks crisply. Talks about goals. May seem insensitive.</p>	<p>Expresser</p> <p>Speaks rapidly. Uses animated gestures. Entertaining. Thinks out loud. Talks about ideas. May be imprecise.</p>
<p>Thinker</p> <p>Talks about details. Inquiring. Often makes lists. Speaks carefully. Wants things done "right." May procrastinate.</p>	<p>Harmonizer</p> <p>Talks about people. Sensitive to others. Avoids conflict. Dedicated and loyal. Speaks softly. May overcommit</p>