

Help! I Don't Understand You



A Guide for Greater Wisdom in Relationships

The Seven Communication Styles

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PREFACE

On January 24, 2000, after two decades of hit or miss dating, I found myself in relationship classes that had been recommended to me by a complete stranger the previous weekend. As I anxiously waited for the class to begin, I thought about why I did not belong there and told myself it was only a matter of time until I would meet Mr. Wonderful. As I looked around at the other 100+ attendees, I could sense the anticipation in the air. The classes were held on Monday evenings in a cramped, cold classroom that was a converted train depot in Boulder, Colorado.

Feeling unsure of what I was doing there and wanting to fill the void, I struck up a conversation with two men behind me before the class started. I asked if either of them knew anything about this new guy in town who was teaching these relationship classes. One of them replied, he was repeating the course because he loved it so much and had invited his friend, Douglas, to the classes. That caught my attention. For the next seven weeks, I was mesmerized by the work in Higher Alignment by Larry Byram. Quickly word was catching on that this new guy in town could tell you all about yourself and your family just by looking at photos. Larry was becoming a sort of “relationship prophet” at this point. Even by Boulder standards, this was novel and fascinating.

Over the next six months, I attended classes and participated in weekend workshops and immersed myself in this new work. I was 35 when I attended my first class and had never been married or even close to marriage, so I was open to any teacher who offered insight surrounding healthy relationships for someone with my history. In June of 2000, I was partnered up in one of the seven-week courses with a woman named Maya, who was friends with Don and Douglas, the two men I had met on the first night I attended the classes. She was a beautiful Scottish woman with an accent to match, and I looked up to her as a mentor. Douglas had asked Maya about me; she told him that I was a “significant woman.” This was intriguing to Douglas. Soon after, we had our first date and it was the beginning of a beautiful and meaningful courtship, applying the tools we were learning in the workshops. We got to know each other slowly over the course of six months, and by the holidays of 2000, we were committed to each other. We took our time getting to know each other as we built a solid foundation for our relationship. We continued to attend classes and workshops while we dated. Two and a half years later we were married on June 9, 2002 and Larry officiated our wedding.

Today, Douglas and I are both grateful for the foundation that the Higher Alignment work has given us. We share a common language and relate to each other with compassion, and respect. We have taught this work for the past 15 years and are now relationship and

communication coaches spreading the word to couples, singles, and corporations. The catalyst for this book is our desire to share what we have learned to help others enjoy the quality of relationship we have cultivated.

Communication Process, presented by Larry has been the tool that has helped us the most in our 17-year relationship. It is our mission to teach this work to the world so that singles, couples, educators, coworkers, and managers can all appreciate and learn from each other while not being reacted by each other. May this e-book open your eyes to the truth that we are each unique and our desire to be understood, loved, and accepted is universal.



Douglas and Eileen on their wedding day

Eileen Barber
November 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Higher Alignment body of work was founded more than 30 years ago by researcher Larry Byram of Silicon Valley. Larry wondered why some relationships thrive and grow under stress while others disintegrate. While doing research with couples, Larry interviewed a number of those purported to be in a “great relationship”. The first couple he interviewed told him that they only had an “OK relationship” and referred him to another couple who referred him to another and so on. It was not until he met the seventh couple that Larry finally found a couple that truly had a great relationship. More importantly, they knew why they had a great relationship.



Larry Byram

At least one of three factors had to be present in the relationship for it to be extraordinary:

1. One of the people in the relationship had to have had a near death experience.
2. One had to have received a diagnosis of a life-threatening illness.
3. One or both had to have experienced a spiritual awakening.

Such couples realized that life was bigger than their bodily existence and that they had a choice to make. In each of these situations, the couple knew that their lives were precious, and that their time on earth was to be cherished. So they committed themselves to expanding their awareness and developing a co-creative relationship with their partners. This became the focus of their life.

In our 17 years of experience, we have learned that the more conscious you are, the better you are at creating a great relationship even when there are differences. Each of us sees the world differently, and sometimes these differences can create friction in the relationship. One of the biggest deterrents to a healthy relationship is the inability to effectively communicate with each other. Great communication—where each person feels heard and accepted—is a touchstone for a thriving and supportive relationship. Awareness around the seven communication styles and consciously using them in all your relationships will help you develop extraordinary connections with everyone in your life!

THE SEVEN COMMUNICATION STYLES

Everyone has thoughts, feelings, and actions; they just don't all manifest in the same sequence. Some people think first; others feel first; and others act before they think or feel. About 51% of the population thinks before they feel or act. Another 38% feel before they think or act. And about 11% of the population acts before thinking or feeling.

Why This Is Important

When we are able to identify our communication style and that of others, we feel more connected and understood. When we observe others' communication style, and compare it to our own, we create space to honor our differences and invite a deeper connection. Recognizing differences in communication styles can be the first act of "being conscious" in relationships, which allows people to show up as fully as possible in their authenticity and creativity. Awareness of the seven different styles allows us to engage more fully and easily with everyone in our life.

People generally assume that everyone communicates the same way they do. This projection creates barriers to open and honest relating because it limits our ability to connect. The more conscious people are in relationships, the more their communication style will be simultaneous. It will appear as though they go through all of the stages at the same time. When we are not aware of our communication style, or that of others, we have the potential to compromise the authenticity and connection in the relationship. Our ability to see and know ourselves, while accepting and honoring our differences with others, is the best gift we can give each other. Recognizing the communication differences allows us to have a deeper connection with everyone.



Healthy Communication=Happy Family

In Parenting

Children's self-esteem and self-respect are both reinforced when others engage with them in the natural sequence of their communication style. This is because they are seen for who they truly are and how they experience life. Imagine a world where every child gets to fully express himself in his true creative and natural way of being. The goal of parenting then becomes learning to acknowledge, admire, and adore the unique being who has shown up in the family. The idea of needing to mold our children into a copy of ourselves will be

recognized for what it is—fruitless and futile. When children are supported in their natural communication style, they have a strong head start on determining what contribution to society they are most aligned with.

It is important to remember that we were all children once seeking validation and support. We always find it rewarding to see when parents have that “aha” moment, when they realize their children process communication different than they do. From there, the relationship can be focused on loving and supporting rather than criticizing and coercing. Imagine the shift possible in our world today when we see and support each child we encounter as the unique being s/he is.

In Business

Contrary to the fact that competition is often touted as the driving force behind humankind’s actions in our culture, research has shown that we are more aligned with cooperative behaviors to reach our goals. Nowhere is this more evident than in the workplace. Within an organization, cooperation creates long-term success. And conscious cooperation in the culture of any enterprise flows from the executive offices down to the managerial level and from there to the rest of the people who contribute to the ultimate success of the business. Imagine the alignment of creative energies that is possible when competent and conscious managers understand the core capabilities of the people they lead. In this scenario, disharmony, conflict, and competition is minimized, and managers are able to identify and hire people who have the best potential to help the organization’s teams achieve the desired results.

This feedback loop extends back up to the executive level and allows those guiding the business to develop a greater sense of purpose for the business, a unified vision that all can follow. This also creates greater accountability from top to bottom within the organization.

In Management

Executives and department managers benefit from learning the seven communication styles because they are able to understand and appreciate each employee’s creativity and contributions while encouraging his/her highest potential. The leaders in an organization are responsible for the implementation of the strategic goals, demonstrating leadership skills and team-building abilities, qualities that benefit greatly from healthy communication. Managers who know how to lead people connect authentically, which



Honoring a Child's Unique Creativity

results in a more conscious organization. Another advantage of this work is it fosters the ability for managers to identify which employees contribute positively to the team and who has potential to compromise the goals of the group. A conscious organization, with authentic communication, cultivates progressive leaders able to respond to and coach diverse types of employees. Progressive, conscious leaders are crucial to navigating the challenges and opportunities in a competitive business environment.

In Sales

A salesperson who is aware of her communication style and those she is selling to has a valuable insight into the relationship. Think back to a time when you felt met and understood in a transaction, that warm feeling of being taken care of, not taken advantage of. When we are selling and are not aware of the communication style of the person we are engaging, the interaction can result in friction, lack of empathy, and a feeling of being “sold to.” Conversely, when a salesperson meets with someone and is aware of how best to connect with his communication style, she is able to more easily facilitate a mutually beneficial outcome. Imagine a world where every interaction involves conscious intention and authentic communication!



Sales Training Workshop

In Hiring

HR managers benefit from knowing communication styles to quickly filter out top hiring prospects from a group of applicants. When a hiring manager is aware of his own style and coached in the six other styles, he is more competent in selecting candidates who are more culturally aligned with the organization and those that would fit best within departmental teams. This knowledge allows the hiring manager to choose the most appropriate candidates while understanding the communication strengths and weaknesses of those newly hired—essentially, a shortcut for managers and team members and an asset for more rapid company integration.

THE THREE STAGES OF COMMUNICATION STYLE

Communication style is the sequence by which you prioritize your thoughts, feelings, and actions. Each of us uses these three elements of communication to process our experiences. As previously mentioned, they are not always processed in the same order from person to person. You are born with your communication style, and it stays consistent throughout your life. People sort out their sequence 30 to 40 times each day.

At the first stage, a person initially focuses and engages her energy. This is a true reflection of her deepest strength. A “Think First” has thoughts and focuses on truth. A “Feel First” has feelings first and focuses on creating harmony. An “Act First” focuses on movement and getting into action. A person is most comfortable with her primary stage as it is where she naturally begins to understand and experience the world. This stage is more transparent to her and is more obvious to others around her.

Our second stage is where we protect ourselves and need validation of our thoughts, feelings, or actions. This stage highlights where we initially believe our greatest weakness lies, and we can spend a lot of time in this stage because we have not mastered it yet. People often identify with their second stage because this is the stage they’re most aware of doing. For example, a Feel First person might believe he has a Think First sequence because he spends so much time in his thoughts. An example of this for a “Think Second” is trying to imagine all the possible outcomes for a particular scenario, and finding oneself spending hours imagining every conceivable iteration.

Our third stage is where we experience completion and relax and release our process. If we do not reach the completion stage, we continue to overcompensate energetically in our second stage with very little fulfillment. The best way to move through this stage is to acknowledge the importance of completing the process; that is, finishing all three of the elements that go into our personal communication style. Then we can regenerate and integrate all that we have learned.

Key Concept

A person is most comfortable with her primary stage, as it is where she naturally begins to understand and experience the world. This stage is more transparent to her and is more obvious to others around her.

The next section of our book defines the three stages of communication style. We then address the seven different styles in people. We offer online courses to go deeper with this material and embody these concepts in more detail. See the last page for contact information.

First Stage

The first stage is how we initiate interacting in the world. It is the filter through which we start to process our experience.

Think First

Think First individuals like the details through which they construct the big picture. They are adept at creating new ideas to deal with the problems around them and are enthusiastic when others respond to the ideas they share. Think First people are also motivated by others sharing their truth. They are precise in their communication. They rely on their intellect and are skillful at organization and logic. Their commitment to truth is the basis for their understanding and insights into life's problems. They are visual learners and process information linearly, so they are great at scheduling.

Think First Communication Style			
Key words	Positive characteristics	Negative characteristics	Part of the body where this shows up
To know, understand, focus, see	Precision, clarity, knowledge, original thinking, determined to find the truth	Overly theoretical, rigid in structure with little flexibility, over-reliance on logic	The head is where Think Firsts are comfortable because they spend time in their thoughts.

Feel First

Feel first individuals are motivated by harmony and friendly interactions. They feel supported when others connect on a feeling, or emotional, level. These individuals focus on the 93% of communication that is nonverbal: body language and tone. Feel First people want connection first and see the big picture much more quickly than the other communication styles do. They also have a greater need to be accepted than the other styles do.

Feel First Communication Style			
Key words	Positive characteristics	Negative characteristics	Part of the body where this shows up
Harmony, acceptance, connection	Healthy emotional radar, great with timing on when to talk about sensitive topics, desire to find a common solution, desire to maintain harmony	Overly sentimental, fear of rejection	The gut is where Feel Firsts are most comfortable because this is the seat of emotional knowing.

Act First

Act First individuals have a kinesthetic knowing and trust their body wisdom about what works and what does not work. Consequently, they want to jump into action so that they can determine whether the action is right. Their passion and power manifest more easily when they are aligned physically with others, making them great athletes, dancers, and emergency responders because they react without having to think about it. They need to clarify the value of an activity before engaging in it and are the most intentional and purposeful of all the styles because of this. Act First people have an innate body wisdom that allows them to act immediately based on their natural and inner kinesthetic knowing.

Act First Communication Style			
Key words	Positive characteristics	Negative characteristics	Part of the body where this shows up
Kinesthetic, quickness, consistent, action-oriented	High endurance, incredible productivity	Frenetic, lack of focus	The whole body is supported by Act First because staying in movement is important for self-expression.

Phrases to Use with a Person in the First Stage

Think First

- Tell me what you are thinking.
- What are your thoughts on this?
- Tell me what you think makes the most sense.
- How do you think we should move forward?

Feel First

- Please share with me how you are feeling.
- What feels like a good place to get started?
- Do you feel comfortable with generating ideas now?
- I get the sense we can start making a plan now. Is that OK?

Act First

- When do you want to get started?
- Let's go for a walk now and talk about this.
- Let's make a plan right now and jump in.



2 Think First Women

Second Stage

In this stage, we protect our thoughts, feelings, or actions. We want others to agree with what we are doing for validation in our second stage. It can often be where we spend much of our time and energy trying to figure it out or “get it right.”

Think Second

Think Seconds can become overly analytical because they are concerned about making the wrong choice or not being understood. Think Seconds anticipate what others will ask. To feel prepared, they will have scripted answers available. They feel as though they have not thought things through enough even when this is not the case. They feel most vulnerable in their thoughts and can appear to talk in circles hoping to appear authoritative on a subject. They can also spend time before an event practicing possible scenarios and their responses to each scenario.

Feel Second

These people can be identified by the way they protect their feelings over their thoughts or actions. They feel vulnerable in their feelings and are sometimes unsure about how to express them. Feel Seconds feel much better when they are in relationship with someone who allows them to have their feelings. This helps them to release anxiety around expressing their feelings “correctly.” The more defensive they are, the more they act out emotions in dramatic ways, often appearing overly emotional.

Act Second

These people are comfortable taking action to determine their best choices. This action actually is the catalyst for determining the best choice. They can only show vulnerability when they are in action, and they sometimes appear to others as a “loose cannon.” When others try to tell the act second what they need, act seconds get impatient because they don’t trust others with the truth. They need to find the truth for themselves while in action. The more defensive an Act Second person is, the more he hides his thoughts and feelings behind physical performances that others admire. Many professional athletes are this type.

Third Stage

This stage allows us to release and relax into the process of completion. If we don’t get to this stage, we overuse our energy and time in the second stage, feeling trapped and unfulfilled. Spending time in the third stage is very useful because it allows us to integrate what our experience has been. It is wise to pause here to get clear and grounded again before initiating a new cycle of communication.

Think Last

This is the least represented communication style in the United States, so these individuals appear impulsive to the rest of the population. These people wait until the end of the process to think about what they have learned from each situation. Then they decide what to do next. They make the best decisions when they don't judge themselves negatively. Their wisdom comes from evaluating how effective a certain course of action was and whether they would want to repeat it. Think Lasts relax into their process by reading or talking about their thoughts.



Feel Last

Feel Lasts relax and get into their feelings allowing them to accept the decisions they have made. They can be judged as unsentimental or lacking an emotional connection, whereas the reality is they want the circumstances to be safe enough to express themselves. Most Feel Last individuals enjoy laid back environments so they can feel safe enough to express their emotional truth. They use this to determine if the experience was worthwhile and whether to repeat it. Feel Last people relax by processing emotions and sharing how they feel about what is happening in their lives.

Act Last

This is the predominant style in the United States, reflecting that most people feel or think before they act. The thoughts and feelings of Act Lasts have to be in congruence before they enjoy doing things. Because many partners in the United States have this tertiary centering process, they relax by doing things together. Act Last people relax into the completion by going on a hike, playing a game, dancing—anything to get them into action.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SEVEN COMMUNICATION STYLES

1. Think-Feel-Act

Think-Feel-Act (T-F-A) people make up 35% of the U.S. population. They show up as consistent, focused, and able to prioritize details easily. They use clarity and precise language while communicating and hold truth above anything else. As Think First individuals, they use logic, words, and options to access their possible actions. Once they have a choice that feels right, they act on it quickly. After they act on it, they can relax and reflect on it and release the emotion around their choice. Their action must be congruent with their thoughts and feelings.

A T-F-A person always starts with her ideas and then validates them by examining her emotions regarding each idea, which lets her take action when one idea feels more aligned with her original purpose than the others.

The Think-Feel-Act Individual			
Definition	Phrases	Best way to relate to this style	How to relax and release
A T-F-A person focuses on truth, protects feelings, and enjoys the flow while in action. He exhibits a methodical game with insightfulness.	"One step at a time so I know the best course of action."	Allow a T-F-A to fully express his thoughts before giving your opinion.	Journaling, walking/hiking, going to a bookstore, having coffee with a friend, and sharing ideas

How T-F-A Shows up in Relationship

Positive characteristics: In flow with their surroundings and trusting they are in the right place doing the right thing at the right time

Negative characteristics: Timekeepers, calculated, question their decisions, overly analytical

How to tell if a person is a T-F-A: She uses the word *think* much more frequently than the word *feel* when sharing with someone. T-F-A is more concerned with details and dates when doing projects and is able to stay on target with deadlines. T-F-A realizes her strength lies in putting the pieces together to construct the big picture. Her logic and organization make her shine in situations that require project management skills, deadlines, and complex outcomes.

How T-F-A wants to be honored in relationship: You can acknowledge a T-F-A person by consistently following through on plans that you create together. When you need to cancel or change the plans, let him know as soon as possible. Give him time and a safe space to express his feelings.

Examples

Eileen is a T-F-A. In the past, she lived by her calendar and was expert at keeping dates precisely. As a T-F-A, she highly values the embodiment of truth, so she established relationships based upon how honest and trustworthy people were in the relationship. As she got to know Douglas better, if he was not forthcoming with details, she would press him to



2 T-F-A's

understand what he was thinking in certain situations. The only problem is that Douglas is a Feel First, so he could explain his feelings and was not in his thoughts as she was. Eileen has realized that always standing by “the truth” has limitations and that with growth and flexibility, a more authentic connection can be made by accepting her partner’s communication style. She recognizes that each person has a different perspective of any event; each will have his own “truth” about the experience. Honoring our partner’s differences can be a great learning experience.

Key Concept

When we are not validated in our feelings and we are accustomed to protecting them, we have to accept that we may be nervous about making a mistake and understand that the only way we can develop more ease and comfort in these sorts of situations is to make a choice. The crucial part after we have made the decision is to stay present and see how we feel as our choice unfolds.

Douglas worked with a woman who was T-F-A. She had a hard time making decisions because she would weigh all her options so thoroughly that she could never figure out what would feel best for her. Her feelings around her decisions were not validated, so she was afraid to make a mistake and could not move forward in a timely manner. If she could have gotten into action around her options, this would have given her an opportunity to complete the sequence and clear the mechanism to start the process over again. For instance, for a business invitation, she wanted the perfect colored ribbon and went to every store in a large metropolitan city. This took hours and hours

looking at all the possible choices. By the time she had decided, most of her memory from this experience centered around how hard it was to make a decision.

Recently Douglas heard “The Piano Man” on Pandora and commented on how much he loved that song by Harry Chapin. Eileen was flabbergasted, and said, “That is Billy Joel, not Harry Chapin.” Douglas said calmly, “I am pretty sure it is Harry Chapin.” Eileen raced to do an internet search and then exclaimed, “See, I told you it is Billy Joel.” Douglas just said, “Oops, I am wrong.” Because Eileen is so focused on truth, she found herself going down a rabbit hole of mistrust when faced with a falsehood: “What other things can’t I trust about this guy?” This is how different information impacts us with our communication styles. At this point, Eileen had a choice to think of all the times Douglas may have been wrong with songwriters and songs. She asked herself, “Is it really useful for our relationship to be “right” here or to let it go and move on?” She chose the latter, and they frequently laugh about the incident.

Key Concept

When we are in relationship with people and we are having a strong reaction about who they are, and how they should be, this is a great time to pause and ask ourselves, “Is this really that important? Is it worth getting in an argument over?”

2. Think-Act-Feel

Think-Act-Feel (T-A-F) people make up 15% of the population and begin by thinking and generating different options. Then they explore those ideas and feel into what flows best. Once the process is complete, they evaluate how much they have accomplished and how things can be improved next time. They typically act quickly and can appear almost impulsive, embodying how they feel once they are in action. They will either carry out their action or at times abort what they are doing before they get too far. They develop confidence by assessing the different ways they do things in certain situations. This permits them to feel the actions they have taken in each endeavor. This communication style, along with Feel-Act-Think, is the most resistant to change, particularly if things are working for them. People with this communication style make great presenters and trainers because they engage the audience with their movement to keep people focused.

When Feel Last get into their feelings, it allows them to accept their decisions, and others around them can relax. They can be judged as unsentimental or lacking emotional connection; however, these people just want the circumstances to be safe enough to express themselves emotionally.

The Think-Act-Feel Individual			
Definition	Phrase	Best way to relate to this style	How to relax and release
The T-A-F person focuses on truth, protects his actions, and integrates his feelings to determine the best option. He is structured with a quick response and is action oriented.	"I know what to do, so why wait?"	T-A-F wants to be with others who will not drown him in thoughts and feelings but will support his decisions. He wants to be supported in getting into movement, to feel supported in his feelings.	Playing sports, reading, going for a walk, writing

How T-A-F Shows up in Relationship

Positive characteristics: Decisive, healthy body wisdom, structured, trusting

Negative characteristics: Impulsive, tense, emotionally distant, resistant to change, abuses the body

How to tell if a person is a T-A-F: This person appears focused and ready to engage in any activity, is more tense, is quick to respond, and offers snap judgments. She can have a "loose cannon" way about her. T-A-F needs precise information so she can quickly put together the big picture. Her enthusiasm is contagious when she shares her ideas with others. Her power and passion come from creating new solutions for the problems she sees around her.

How T-A-F wants to be honored in relationship: T-A-F has intellectual power that shows up in the quality of questions he asks and in his ability to prioritize things. Act Second wants others to follow his lead so that he can have the full experience of the choice he has made.

Examples

Douglas's dad Howard was a T-A-F and was very spontaneous with his actions. Douglas rarely saw his dad slow down and relax; he was in motion for most of his life.

Key Concept

What is most helpful for T-A-F people is to learn from their mistakes by allowing themselves to fully feel which of their actions makes them happiest.

Howard moved to Alaska in the late 1950s and bought a hotel although he had no prior experience in the hospitality industry. This is a classic example of acting on impulse without considering the ramifications



Another time when Douglas was 13 upon learning that Spring break started that afternoon, his father spontaneously directed the family to pack the car after school. They drove 15 hours to the Gulf Coast with no hotel room booked—acting on a whim.

In the summer of 1978, Howard decided he wanted to travel extensively in China. He decided he needed to learn the language first and moved to San Diego, California, in 1979 to study Mandarin at UC-San Diego for a semester. He left behind his wife and five teenage sons to pursue this. Again, acting impulsively without considering the impact it would have on his family or the circumstances of his life.

Howard chose to do some great things in his life, but he didn't always consider other people's feelings or the impact of his choices. For both Act Second communication styles, they learn through making mistakes. When an Act Second is aware of his communication style, he can make more conscious choices while considering those around him.

3. Feel-Think-Act

Feel-Think-Act (F-T-A) people are 23% of the population, making it the second most common communication style after Think-Feel-Act. They operate from a gestalt or inner knowing of their experiences and feel into possibilities, intuitively sensing which ones appeal to them. This style is always tuned into what is more comfortable and easy to implement. The best option is usually the one that gives them the most potential for results while maintaining flexibility. Taking action is relaxing for folks with this communication style because there is no longer conflict between their thoughts and feelings. People with this style also need approval and attention from others when making suggestions. They experience their power and passion when they are able to share their feelings and motivate others into aligned action with them. This allows them to operate from serenity and compassion. Feel-Think-Act are best at creating the big picture, filling in the details as they get into action, and accessing their options.

The Feel-Think-Act Individual			
Definition	Phrase	Best way to relate to this style	How to relax and release
F-T-A focuses on harmony and the need to be accepted, protects his thoughts, and enjoys the flow once he is in action. He is holistic and has an imprecise knowing of what to do.	"I have a good feeling about this. What do you think about it?"	Allow him to explore all viable options until he sees the best one. This usually gives him the greatest potential for the best results while maintaining flexibility. F-T-A wants a heart connection first before engaging in any heavy conversation.	Visiting a museum, watching a movie, going to a concert, playing music

How F-T-A Shows up in Relationship

Positive characteristics: more socially engaging, friendly, mentally acute, flexible

Negative characteristics: argumentative over disagreements, selectively edits thoughts when under stress, needs to validate the truth intellectually by documenting the details



2 F-T-A's

How to tell if a person is an F-T-A: She is supported best when others connect on an emotional or feeling level first. She is validated as a F-T-A by her commitment to creating and maintaining harmony, both internally and externally, in her life.

How F-T-A wants to be honored in relationship: The best way to connect is by asking him how he feels. Then listen to him and be comfortable with his emotions. Don't try to solve the problem. Don't start talking about thoughts until you have a sense that the emotional energy has been expressed. At this point, you can offer other possible solutions before getting into action.

Examples

Douglas is an F-T-A. He and Eileen had a decorative painting business for 8 years in Arizona. Douglas was skilled at looking at very complex projects and knew how to focus the crew to get them started because he could see the big picture. Before work began, Douglas would heart-connect with the other F-T-As he had hired. He would talk details to the Think First crew and big picture with the Feel First crew.

We know of a 15-year old boy who is an F-T-A. He recently had a classmate expelled from his school. Despite the fact that the classmate was causing trouble and really disrupting the school environment, the F-T-A boy felt bad that the other boy was expelled. As a Feel First, this boy was more concerned with harmony and people's feelings than the truth of the situation.



Douglas and Eileen worked with an F-T-A client who was in academia, a very Think First profession. This client was so overwhelmed at times from spending so much time in her thoughts instead of her feelings that she would do yoga and meditate to allow her feelings to be felt. This regular practice was critical for her to stay balanced in her feelings and thoughts.

Key Concept

F-T-As need to be honored in their feelings first. This allows them to relax into knowing the best solution for the current task.

4. Feel-Act-Think

Feel-Act-Think (F-A-T) people are 15% of the population. This is the fastest growing communication style in the United States. This communication style explores potential activities and tries them out and assesses how others respond to them. F-A-Ts make their decisions from the response they get and evaluate how and why it worked and rank it compared to others and then store this information

in their bodies. They feel into what is the right action and then consider what worked for them and are more comfortable in movement. When they are under stress, they can become quiet and introspective. They do not plan ahead but learn through doing and making mistakes. Because Act Second people need real-life experiences to show them their options, they require patience as they try out their options. Feel-Act-Thinks are incredible observers of the way objects and mechanical processes work. They trust their inner knowing to guide their choices initially. Then they try out an action to see if it is effective. They are the quickest to respond to any situation. Their responses can be slightly off target, and they are always in pursuit of better solutions. Only when something works do they intellectually explore this, which then relaxes them.

The Feel-Act-Think Individual			
Definition	Phrase	Best way to relate to this style	How to relax and release
F-A-T focuses on harmony, protects her actions, and accesses the results by prioritizing the list. She feels into possibilities intuitively sensing which one appeals to her the most and makes her decisions from this perspective.	"Feels right, so I am doing it!"	The more patient you can be with an F-A-T allowing her to make mistakes so she determines what works best, the more she will trust and listen to people trying to help her out.	Doing little projects around the house, spending time in nature, engaging in arts and crafts.

How F-A-T Shows up in Relationship

Positive characteristics: Fluid and precise, responsive

Negative characteristics: Introspective, quiet, highly sensitive (easily hurt)

How to tell if a person is an F-A-T: He is emotionally centered and pursues harmony and interpersonal connections before anything else. He can switch direction in the middle of a sentence and can appear to be a "loose cannon." F-A-T can be highly sensitive and easily hurt.

How F-A-T wants to be honored in relationship: F-A-T enjoys getting into action and trying out new experiences based on how she feels. After she has had the physical experience, support her in developing a kinesthetic library of experiences and results that she can access for the future. Have patience with her as she generates these new experiences knowing that it is the only way she learns to start choosing actions that support her goals.

Examples

A friend of ours is an F-A-T. He has confided in Eileen that he had been fired from a few jobs. In one instance, he was supposed to have a review after his first 60 days and sent an email to his boss complaining about not getting what was promised when he was hired. The tone of the email was very accusatory, because our friend felt his feelings were not being honored; thus he acted impulsively, which resulted in his getting fired.

A client we worked with was a T-F-A and her daughter was an F-A-T. Mom had the hardest time understanding Daughter's actions. The girl would wake up in the morning and start jumping on her bed because she "felt like it" and wanted to get into action. She wasn't thinking about the how the others in the house felt about her jumping waking them up. They were able to solve this situation with setting times she could jump on her bed and how loud she could be when she did it.

Douglas and Eileen know a teenager who is an F-A-T and is extremely spontaneous and impulsive. When he comes over to play with their son, he wants to be in motion and active the whole time. Because they know his style is F-A-T, they plan events like swimming, hiking, and outdoor activities to keep him engaged. Staying in a bedroom playing is not a good way to engage this boy. When he is active and in nature, he is happiest.

5. Act-Think-Feel

Act-Think-Feel (A-T-F) is about 8% of the U.S. population. A-T-Fs operate by acting first, asking questions later. They then feel if they like the action they took. They have an enormous body awareness combined with an intelligence of how to use it. They take action as a way of exploring the opportunities around them. A-T-Fs are also amazed when no one sees things the way they do. Their goal is to both act and understand their experience before relaxing into it. They are great at seeing how actions correspond to thoughts, which allows them to quickly formulate solutions. What is more challenging for them is determining when an action is complete and how they feel about what they have accomplished. Once they feel into their results, it allows them to prioritize what they liked about the actions and build a "body awareness" around it. When under stress, they are concerned about making a mistake and sabotaging their ability to move forward. A-F-Ts want to be recognized for their insightfulness. They are committed to not being surprised by unforeseen circumstances. Act Firsts embody intention in all they do. Only when they are clear about how to initiate an action, and see the results from that action, do they let their emotions come into play and determine if they like the results or not. They act using their body wisdom to direct them and then examine their choices intellectually and, ultimately, pick the most efficient.

The Act-Think-Feel Individual			
Definition	Phrase	Best way to relate to this style	How to relax and release
An A-T-F person focuses on getting into movement, protects her	"Leap first, ask questions later"	A-T-F likes activity, so being in movement with her is helpful for both people because	A-T-F enjoys laid back environments, lifting weights, exercising, relaxing

thoughts or needs validation for them, and relaxes by integrating her feelings to determine the next best options by the actions she has taken.		A-T-F likes to share her experience. Supporting her in trying what works and letting her intention and purpose guide her actions is what she is looking for.	by being in movement.
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How ATF Shows up in Relationship

Positive characteristics: Minimum effort to accomplish job, good at building momentum, kinesthetic, radiates aliveness

Negative characteristics: Can be abrupt and quick to criticize, can appear aloof or indifferent, head strong, immutable

How to tell if a person is an A-T-F: He can appear almost aloof or indifferent while analyzing what worked for him. A-T-F is very body centered, so he is always in movement (think good athletes), which radiates aliveness. But he can be abrupt and quick to criticize in certain circumstances.



Many Professional Athletes are Act First

How A-T-F wants to be honored in relationship: The best way to support an A-T-F is understanding that getting into action gives her the feedback she needs. She is not as sure of her thoughts, so give her time to express them fully. She knows how she thinks or feels about an experience only by initiating the experience. When she is in action, she is good at discerning as to whether it will work.

Examples

Douglas and Eileen knew of a man who was an A-T-F. He was 5'6" and an international professional basketball player. He always related that when he was moving on the court, he could see every player and every position and knew exactly where to put the ball. When there were substitutions, he could change on the fly to a different tactic, which showcased the new players strengths and skills. Of course, this also meant he was able to anticipate the opponents moves with lightening speed and accuracy.

Douglas conducted a weekend workshop with an A-T-F coach who would spend six hours straight at a whiteboard laying out concept after concept without realizing that his students were overwhelmed. He was comfortable working until 2 a.m. and then getting up early to do it again. Because he wasn't connected emotionally to his students (as a Feel Last), he wasn't checking their reactions to understand if they were getting the material. This forced him to rely on sharing a vast amount of content so that he would feel sure his students understood the concept.

6. Act-Feel-Think

Act-Feel-Think (A-F-T) is only about 3% of the U.S. population, so these individuals are the most under-represented and least understood of the six main communication styles. (We will address the seventh style next.) A-F-Ts use their body-centered wisdom to develop options and evaluate these possibilities when seeking change. Their body acts as a compass, and they store valuable information in their movements to be accessed later. They operate from instinct and aren't concerned about how others perceive their beliefs because they seldom think about these issues. When under stress, they can appear agitated because conflict can arise between actions and feelings. They need to tap into the passion and joy they feel when taking an action that results in an intellectual conclusion about whether it worked or not. A-F-Ts need to consciously choose a particular action and feeling, so then they automatically manifest an optimum result. It can be deceiving because they require very little thought to put a very complex process into motion. This makes them great athletes, firefighters, and emergency responders. They learn by making mistakes and need to make mistakes to learn. What they want most is to make decisions that are mainstream enough so that no one will be able to prove them wrong.

The Act-Feel-Think Individual			
Definition	Phrase	Best way to relate to this style	How to relax and release
A-F-T focuses on getting into movement and protects her feelings or hides them until she is able to assess the results and prioritize what worked from her actions. She likes establishing predefined response patterns internally. Leap first, feel what happened, and then figure out why it worked.	"Leaping first gives me a sense of how it worked."	A-F-T seeks individuals who can keep up with her physically. She develops a strong trust of them. She deeply appreciates individuals who take the time and make the effort to understand her situation and are willing to demonstrate their connection with her.	Exercising, weight-lifting

How A-F-T shows up in Relationship

Positive characteristics: Great athletes, smooth-flowing movements, persevering, gut knowing

Negative characteristics: Emotionally shut down

Key Concept

An S-B-F person is a great role model for great communication.

How to tell if a person is an A-F-T: He operates from a body awareness and is very kinesthetic. A-F-T seeks approval emotionally and surrounds himself with people who will provide the least friction to his choices. He looks for those who can keep up with him. A-F-T has a strong gut knowing or innate wisdom. He is always in motion and evaluating his actions after he sees all his options. He does not share his emotions easily.

How A-F-T wants to be honored in relationship: The best way to support an A-F-T person is to get into motion with her. Follow her lead and know that this is the quickest and best way for her both to figure out her feelings and to know if this action made the most sense. She has to build up a library of responses over her lifetime, which allows her to quickly understand the best actions to focus her energies on.

Examples

The most well-known example of this communication style is O.J. Simpson. He was an excellent pro football player who had grace and unmatched skill—an exceptional athlete. He didn't have the capacity to logically foresee the consequences of his actions until he was already acting them out. With this communication style, people learn from their experiences, the good and the bad.

7. Simultaneous-Balanced-Fluid

This is the goal for the other six communication styles because it involves sensations and feelings expressed equally. It is the ability to embrace one's inner wholeness without disruption from societal or parental imprinting. Being present with both sensations and feelings neutralizes attachment to appearances and promotes an inner sense of aliveness, which empowers people. This allows people to respond both to internal states and to actions of others without reacting to them. When a person is operating with S-B-F, she is integrating her feelings and emotions in the moment. Feelings are a summary of sensations that reflect an in-the-moment sense of well-being. Emotions are states that integrate and organize thoughts through time. The goal of the S-B-F communication style is to acknowledge that thoughts are a partial reflection of the overall truth while understanding that emotions interpret experiences. When both of these are balanced desires, motivations, and aspirations can be manifested through unencumbered creativity

An S-B-F person can shift between the big picture and details to align with an outcome with ease and fluidity. He is present with both feelings and emotions and does not make one more important than another, allowing an openness and responsiveness to the universe. The Dalai Lama is an example of someone conscious in his relating. It is difficult to ascertain if he has a thought, feeling, or action from moment to moment. This is the ideal for everyone because it fosters easy, supportive and loving relating.

The Simultaneous-Balanced-Fluid Individual			
Definition	Phrase	Best way to relate to this style	How to relax and release
This communication style is flexible and fluid and responds in different ways to maximize connection with others. She calibrates to people and situations consistently and can be seen as charismatic and larger than life.	"I am present and responsive to whatever is happening."	Learn from her ability to be fluid and nonjudgmental in all communication. Let her show up fully so you can be uplifted by her experience, as it allows you to be more present and open to the complete possibility.	Meditation, yoga, journaling, hiking, retreats

How S-B-F Shows up in Relationship

Positive characteristics: Confident, fluid, easy-going, balanced

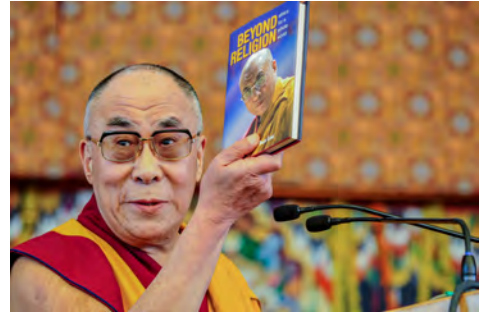
Negative characteristics: There are none

How to tell if a person is a S-B-F: He is emotionally balanced; he responds, not reacts. He is present in all situations and meets people where they are so the communication can flow more easefully. This person shows up fully alive and present in his true creative nature.

How S-B-F wants to be honored in relationship: Because she is present, she is aware and available for authentic connection. When communicating with less-conscious individuals, she naturally creates a safe space for them to step into a greater way of being so that the less-conscious person can show up more authentically.

Examples

The Dalai Lama is an example of an S-B-F. We had the opportunity to see the Dalai Lama in 2005 and were able to observe how aware and alive he was while giving a speech. He is so integrated with all three parts of the sequence that it is hard to see which part of his communication style is manifesting. This is the goal for each of us in our lives.



Dalai Lama

HOW TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE WITH A DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION STYLE

The goal of communication is to express both ideas and feelings and to have them be understood. When we are less conscious of communication styles, we are naturally inclined to develop strategies and expect others to communicate the way we do. This results in much frustration, resistance, and compromise. To be effective communicators, we need to create a safe common space where all parties in the conversation can share thoughts, feelings, and potential actions. Creating this neutral space for communication allows each party to offer ideas into the discussion where they can be shared and debated without polarizing anyone in the conversation.

Most important, we need to understand our own communication style. When we know our own preferences, we can be more easily aware when there is friction during the exchange of ideas. Awareness of communication style differences allows us to determine which communication style we are dealing with so we can adapt to effectively connect with another person.

We help singles, couples, and families to have amazing relationships through our mentoring programs. Many people we work with find relief when they figure out that their style is different than their partner or their children's style. Our coaching helps clients to see that with awareness and more conscious interactions, home life can be much more peaceful, collaborative and joyful. The type of life we are all striving to have. Our contact details are on page 31.

CONCLUSION

We have now introduced you to the seven communication styles. Your style is based on your primary way of looking at the world through thoughts, feelings, or actions. You have also learned how to identify the secondary stage (what we protect the most) and final stage (where we relax) in your communication style sequence. We have also shared with you how to identify each of the communication processes and how best to connect with them.

In our efforts to know ourselves at a deeper level and connect with others in a clean and meaningful way, we are served initially by knowing our own communication style. When we can discern the styles of others and have practiced the best way to connect with all seven styles, we will be able to effectively communicate with all people in our lives with more ease, grace, and understanding.

The benefits are myriad and start with initiating connections and conversations from your authentic self. Make it your spiritual practice to remember that before you can connect with another, you must first connect with yourself. One advantage of being conscious of your own style is the ability to connect quicker and more profoundly with others in your life. Friction and misunderstanding are greatly reduced freeing up energy to create more of what you want in your life.

In our 17-year relationship, embodying this communication style work has been the biggest contributor to the love, connection, and healthy communication we have experienced in our lives together. We believe that if everyone understands their style and the styles of others, they have the potential to live in a more creative and authentic world and manifest amazing relationships.



Douglas and Eileen

Our Vision

To share our work with 10 million people to create a tipping point for a more peaceful world through conscious conversations and authentic relationships.

We would love for you to be a part of this vision!

CONTACT US

Individuals

We help singles, couples, and families to have amazing relationships through individual and group programs. Please visit our website at www.thedadyouwishyouhad.com

We would love to support you further in having amazing relationships in your personal life and at work. This work that we thoughtfully and lovingly share with our clients is available to everyone. Please email us at Hello@thedadyouwishyouhad.com to get on our calendar for a Relationship Empowerment session. These complimentary sessions are available to anyone looking for support in manifesting the relationships they have always dreamed about.

Reserve your spot in our next program by sending an email to Hello@thedadyouwishyouhad.com

Businesses

We also offer complimentary Communication Assessments for organizations to see how our work can benefit the leaders, teams, and overall organizational culture. To schedule your assessment, email us at Hello@thedadyouwishyouhad.com

We support corporations in developing amazing leaders with great communication skills through individual mentoring and communication workshops for organizations. Please visit our website at www.thedadyouwishyouhad.com

Larry Byram continues to teach in Boulder in person and virtually around the world.
Please see his website for events at <http://www.haevents.us>
More content about spiritual relationships by Larry can be found at:
<http://www.alignmenttechnologies.us>