

<b>STYLES OF COMMUNICATION</b>				April Lewis Kaiser Permanente Northwest	
<b>Compare column A with column B and pick <u>one</u></b>			<b>Compare column C with column D and pick <u>one</u></b>		
	<b>Column A</b>	<b>Column B</b>		<b>Column C</b>	<b>Column D</b>
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Slower paced	<input type="checkbox"/> Faster-paced			
			2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely uses hands when talking	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently uses hands when talking
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates less energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates more energy			
			4	<input type="checkbox"/> Controlled body movement	<input type="checkbox"/> Flowing body movement
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Less forceful gestures	<input type="checkbox"/> More forceful gestures			
			6	<input type="checkbox"/> Less facial expressions	<input type="checkbox"/> More facial expressions
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Softer-spoken	<input type="checkbox"/> Louder voice			
			8	<input type="checkbox"/> Appears more serious	<input type="checkbox"/> Appears more fun-loving
9	<input type="checkbox"/> More Likely to ask questions	<input type="checkbox"/> More likely to make statements			
			10	<input type="checkbox"/> Less voice inflection	<input type="checkbox"/> More voice inflection
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Less likely to exert pressure for action	<input type="checkbox"/> More likely to exert pressure for action			
			12	<input type="checkbox"/> Infrequently shows feelings	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently shows feelings
13	<input type="checkbox"/> More tentative when expressing opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> More assertive when expressing opinions			
			14	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefers task-oriented conversations	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefers people-oriented conversations
15	<input type="checkbox"/> Slower to resolve problem situations	<input type="checkbox"/> Quicker to resolve problem situations			
			16	<input type="checkbox"/> More oriented toward facts and logic	<input type="checkbox"/> More oriented toward feelings and opinions
17	<input type="checkbox"/> More likely to lean backward when stating opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> More likely sit up or lean forward when stating opinions			
			18	<input type="checkbox"/> Less likely to use small-talk or tell anecdotes	<input type="checkbox"/> More likely to use small-talk or tell anecdotes

Add TOTAL A \_\_\_\_\_

Add TOTAL B \_\_\_\_\_

Add TOTAL C \_\_\_\_\_

Add TOTAL D \_\_\_\_\_

## COMMUNICATION STYLE INVENTORY

**Instructions:** This inventory gives you eighteen pairs of statements.

1. Compare column A with B and pick the **one** that you think most accurately expresses **how other people see you**.
2. Compare column C with D and again, pick the **one** that you think most accurately expresses **how other people see you**.
3. At the bottom of each column enter the total number of A, B, C, and D.
4. Transfer your total numbers into the spaces below.

Column Totals (Make sure that columns:  $A + B = 9$  and  $C + D = 9$ )

A \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

5. Add A,B,C,D as shown below and circle the letter in bold (**W,X,Y,Z**) that is the largest number. If you have two that are close, circle both of them.

$B + D = \underline{\quad\quad\quad} = \mathbf{W}$

$A + D = \underline{\quad\quad\quad} = \mathbf{X}$

$A + C = \underline{\quad\quad\quad} = \mathbf{Y}$

$B + C = \underline{\quad\quad\quad} = \mathbf{Z}$

**Your Name** \_\_\_\_\_

## Styles of Communication

This model is based on the book called *People Styles at Work* which provides a practical way to handle communication differences at work. This session is designed to help you to:

- Identify your preferred style of communication
- Realize how your style of communicating comes across to others
- Work best with people with other styles and
- Adapt your style so that work relationships are enhanced and therefore productivity and creativity increase.

### What is it?

**Differences** between people are a major source of friction. Just by being yourself---you are potentially irritating 75% of the people who work with you! Your style is based on other's perceptions of you—regardless of whether or not those perceptions match your own self-image

### What can we do about it?

It is possible to successfully manage such differences. Dr. David Merrill's model is based on differences of observable behaviors. This method of improving work relationships is based on the following:

1. There are 4 styles; none is better or worse than the others
2. Each style has characteristic strengths & weaknesses not shared by the others
3. Each person has a dominant style that influences the way he or she communicates
4. Our population is evenly divided among the 4 styles
5. People of each style can be successful
6. The behavioral patterns of one style tend to trigger stress in the other styles
7. To create optimum working relationships, it is necessary to learn to flex to the style-based behavioral patterns of the people you are working with.

### Two dimensions of behavior are measured:

1. **Assertiveness** is the degree to which one's behaviors are seen by others as forceful or directive.
2. **Expressiveness** is the degree to which one is seen by others as showing his or her own emotions or demonstrating awareness of the feelings of others.

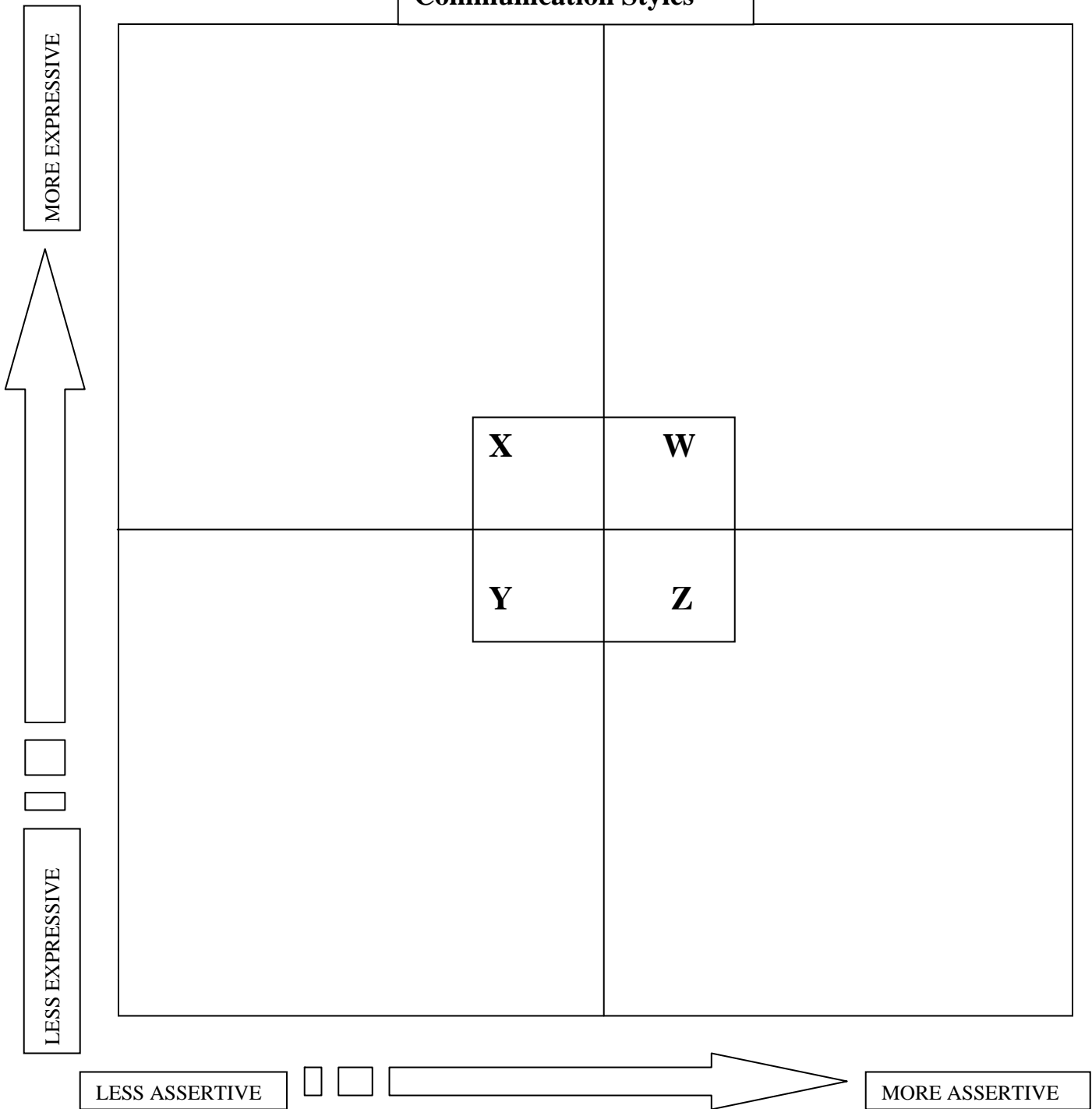
You have a dominant style—you prefer to communicate and relate in ways characteristic of one of the four styles. Your style emerged early in life and you rely on it because it is habitual and easiest to function that way. This is your comfort zone. Although you have a preferred style you are a four style person also. No one operates with only one style so you will see parts of yourself in all the styles.

### Remember:

- You can't change your dominant style
- You are far more than your style, you have many influences. You are different from others of your style
- Your acceptance of each of the styles enables you to make this model work for you rather than against you. Recognizing a style's worth without focusing on its limitations

Try to avoid the tendency to move from recognizing differences to judging superiority or inferiority. Unless we work to be objective, we are tempted to focus on the least desirable characteristics of other styles. We benefit from viewing other styles as the spice of life and celebrating their strengths and understanding how to style flex.

## Communication Styles



**W** = Right and Above (**B+D**) = More assertive and more responsive (more emotionally disclosing) than half the population  
**X** = Left and Above (**A+D**) = Less assertive and more responsive (more emotionally disclosing)  
**Y** = Left and Below (**A+C**) = Less assertive and less responsive (less emotionally disclosing) than half the population.  
**Z** = Right and Below (**B+C**) = More assertive and less responsive (less emotionally disclosing) than half the population

## W

- Most flamboyant of styles, may tend to be dramatic
- Like bright colors, bold statements, and eye catching projects
- Like to be in the limelight
- High energy and pep
- Like to be on the go and not stay in one spot too long
- Hate to be confined to the desk all day
- Most outgoing style
- Relate well to strangers
- Prefer to do things with other people
- Naturals at networking
- Vision is bold and imaginative
- They love brainstorming and blue-sky sessions
- Prefer to focus on broad generalizations than on specific facts
- May act first and then think later
- Playful and fun loving, Look for a way to make work more enjoyable
- More people-oriented than task-oriented
- Has a tell-it-like-it-is style

Strength: Spontaneity, but may not deliver on commitments. To Adjust: Track commitments, time management, spend time planning, prioritize.

W Strength	W Overused
Articulate	Poor listener
Fast-Paced	Impatient
Visionary	Impractical
Fun-Loving	Distracting

### Style Under Stress: **Attacking**

W style is people-oriented. When overloaded with tension they focus their frustrations on other people. They become even more assertive and emotionally unrestrained when they are stressed. They may use strong, loud language, may shout or use emphatic gestures. They may be quick to boil but they also let go of it quickly and don't hold grudges.

## X

- Similar to Y in assertiveness but X shows more emotion
- Team player
- Prefers working with others
- Skilled at encouraging others
- Generous with their time
- May often volunteer to do unglamorous activities
- Unsung heroes
- More interested in hearing other's concerns than talking about their own
- Likes a stable, clearly structured situation
- Shine as maintainers and may be comfortable with routine procedures and processes
- May take a cautious approach to decision making
- More people oriented than task oriented
- May phrase questions or requests indirectly, sometimes state their opinion as a question
- Treasure harmonious relationships and are natural peace makers

**Strength:** Harmonizer, but can tend to avoid conflict at any cost.

**To Adjust:** Speak your mind; identify constructive ways to be assertive.

X strength	X Overused
Diplomatic	Conflict Avoider
Dependable	Dependent
Supportive	Permissive
People-Oriented	Inattentive to task

### Style Under Stress: Acquiescing

This usually quiet, friendly and cooperative style likes to relate to people with minimal interpersonal tension. Their desire to avoid conflict and appease others becomes more so under stress. They can go overboard trying to minimize interpersonal tension. It may be hard to tell that an X is under stress, because they may seem unobtrusive and they may be smiling and as agreeable as ever.

## Y

- Want things to be right the first time
- Sets very high standards and willing to do what it takes to achieve them
- Sticklers for detail and can be most critical of other styles
- Can be hard on themselves due to perfectionist tendencies
- Systematic and well organized
- Adept at building effective processes that produce consistent results
- This style craves data
- Prudent but will take calculated risks
- Want to be certain they are making the right choice
- Like to be alone or just with a few people
- Enjoys working alone
- May be the quietest style
- Strive for accuracy and expect it in others
- Tend to be indirect in making a request or stating an opinion
- May feel deeply but don't talk about it, may stay in their heads during conflict

Strength: Quality orientation may degenerate into perfectionism.

To Adjust: Commit to do things in a reasonable time, stick to a schedule, say thank you more often.

Y Strength	Y Overused
Prudent	Indecisive
Painstaking	Nitpicker
Task-Oriented	Impersonal
Systematic	Bureaucratic

### Style Under Stress: Avoiding

Under stress, this style wants to avoid interpersonal tension. These folks are quiet and emotionally reserved and may prefer to work alone. Under pressure these tendencies may go to the extreme. When they experience an overload of tension, they avoid both emotional expression and interpersonal involvement.

## Z

- More assertive and less responsive, very results-focused
- Most practical style
- Sets high but realistic objectives and then accomplishes them
- Get-it-done type of person (Y will think about a problem, X will meet about a problem, W will talk about the problem, Z will be doing something about it)
- Feel relieved getting something done even if it isn't the best thing to do
- Decisive, indecision is a bad decision
- Focused on the immediate situation not theory or feelings
- Excel at time management
- Communication is task-oriented
- High energy, fast-paced, direct and purposeful, doers
- Maybe more likely to change their mind than X or Y and that may surprise people because Z seems so purposeful and rational

Strength: Forcefulness but may alienate or come on too strong.

To Adjust: Listen well, back off in pace of getting others to decide, speak less.

<b>Z Strength</b>	<b>Z Overused</b>
Independent	Poor Collaborator
Results oriented	Impersonal
Candid	Abrasive
Pragmatic	Shortsighted

### Style Under Stress: **Autocratic**

A normally strong-willed style, under extreme stress they can become very controlling by trying to impose their thoughts and plans on others. They can seem unbending and closed to any ideas but their own. They may express less emotion than usual and may use an authoritative quiet voice or be loud and abrasive.

## **Identifying and using styles under stress:**

- Helps prevent stress from surging to levels that are dangerous to one's health
- Is a protective device that helps alleviate dangerous levels of stress
- When frustrated with others (or self)--remember that : 1. The person is experiencing excessive stress, 2. The extreme, rigid and frustrating behavior is a safety valve that helps protect the person.
- When under this extreme stress it is not the best time for decision making, since judgment is impaired.
- Disagreeable behavior towards others can be contagious—people may respond unconsciously with their own backup style—now two people are relying on extreme, rigid and non negotiable behavior with increasing estrangement

## **Damage control for yourself:**

- Eliminate stress—exercise, moderate or eliminate stressors, change the way you think about things. Change your reaction to the stress.
- Limit the interpersonal damage that could be done –act as if, reschedule for later.
- Don't make major decisions.

## **Damage control when others are using styles under stress:**

- Expect that people won't always be at their best
- Detect when the other person is in backup—you begin reacting negatively to them, their style becomes more extreme or rigid, you notice backup behaviors
- Avoid getting hooked by the other person's backup behavior—remember the cause
- Don't try to prevent a person from using backup behavior
- Reinforce group norms to protect relationships

<b>STYLE STRENGTHS</b>	
<b>X</b>	<b>W</b>
Listens well	Is persuasive
Is a good counselor	Is a good story teller
Uses supportive language	Focuses on the big picture
Builds trust	Uses motivational speech
<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>
Presents precisely	Gets to the bottom line
Focuses on facts	Speaks forcefully
Is efficient in speech	Maintains eye contact
Has a well-organized work space	Presents position strongly

<b>Behaviors that make interactions more effective</b>	
<b>X</b>	<b>W</b>
Focus on relationships	Focus on opinions and inspiring ideas
Be supportive of their feelings	Be supportive of their ideas
Make sure you understand their needs	Don't hurry the discussions
Be informal	Engage in brainstorming
Maintain a relaxed pace	Be entertaining and fast-moving
Give them time to build trust in you	Allow them to share their ideas freely
<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>
Focus on facts not opinions	Focus on their goals and objectives
Be through and organized	Keep your relationships businesslike
Provide written evidence when possible	Argue facts, not personal feelings
Be systematic in your presentations	Make presentations well organized
Avoid gimmicks	Ask questions directly
Allow time for analysis	Speak at a relatively fast pace

## **Improving Your Work With Each Other**

### **Z working with X**

There appears to be discord in your team. Although no one is openly talking about it, rumors are spreading. You (Z) feel there should be open communication that directly confronts the issues in order to clear the air. Most of the other team members are X style. This discord is affecting teamwork and performance. How will you handle this situation?

### **X working with Z**

Your team is feeling really overworked. There is very little recognition of the work you do, and, when you do get the work done on time, more work is always the reward you get. On top of that, the manager (Z) continues to make “simple” requests that you feel you need to attend to right away. You feel that this leaves your job as a secondary priority. People in the department are complaining and the morale is low. You want to work this out with your manager. How will you handle it?

### **W working with Y**

You have some new projects you want to put in place. Time is of the essence. You need to get input from your manager (Y), so you frequently pop into her office to run ideas by her. You always feel deflated when you leave because the only feedback she offers is critical, and she appears irritated with your visits rather than pleased with your genius. You get tired of hearing that there is not enough data, and you often feel that this person is a barrier to your progress. She analyzes your ideas to death. How will you handle this situation?

### **Y working with W**

Your team has just been to a powerful teambuilding session. Energy is high and a lot of great ideas were discussed. The W team members want to have time to plan a future event that will keep this energy going. You, the supervisor, realize the emotional energy is great, but you would prefer to see tangible, measurable results for the time and energy this project would take. How will you communicate with the W staff so that both of your needs are met?