

# John Sturtevant

Communication Skills Training

*Practical techniques for clear & persuasive communication.*

## Learning Style Assessment

We all tend to learn in a certain way. If we know this about ourselves, and about our colleagues, it will help us communicate more effectively. This assessment will help you determine your dominant learning style, or styles. Some people have one or two dominant styles, others are even across all three. There are no wrong answers.

For each statement, circle the letter that best describes you. You may circle more than one letter for each.

1. When I use new equipment I generally:

- A) read the instructions first
- B) listen to an explanation from someone who has used it before
- C) start using it, I can figure it out as I use it

2. When I need directions while travelling I usually:

- A) look at a map or use a GPS
- B) ask someone for directions
- C) follow my instinct

3. When I cook a new meal, I like to:

- A) follow a written recipe
- B) call a friend for an explanation
- C) do what seems right, testing as I cook

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4. When I am explaining something to someone, I tend to:

- A) write instructions
- B) give a verbal explanation
- C) demonstrate first and then let the person try

5. When I am choosing where to go for vacation, I tend to:

- A) read brochures or websites
- B) listen to recommendations from friends
- C) imagine what it would be like to be there

6. When buying a car, I will:

- A) read reviews in newspapers, magazines, and online
- B) discuss what I need with my friends
- C) test-drive many different types

7. When learning a new skill, I am most comfortable:

- A) watching what someone else is doing
- B) talking through exactly what I'm supposed to do
- C) giving it a try myself and work it out as I go

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8. When considering what to order at a restaurant I tend to:

- A) picture what the food will look like
- B) talk through the options in my head or with the waiter
- C) imagine what the food will taste like

9. When I concentrate, I most often:

- A) focus on the words or the pictures in front of me
- B) discuss the problem and possible solutions in my head
- C) walk around, play with pens and pencils, and fiddle with things

10. I choose household furnishings because I like:

- A) their colors and how they look
- B) the descriptions the sales-people give me
- C) their textures and what it feels like to touch them

11. My first memory is of:

- A) looking at something
- B) being spoken to
- C) doing something

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12. When I am worried, I:

- A) visualize the worst-case scenarios
- B) talk over in my head what bothers me most
- C) can't sit still, fidget with things, and move around

13. I feel especially connected to other people because of:

- A) how they look
- B) what they say to me
- C) how I feel about them

14. When I have to revise documents at work, I generally:

- A) write revisions, notes, and diagrams
- B) talk over my notes alone or with other people
- C) imagine making the changes or creating the document

15. When I am explaining something to someone I tend to:

- A) show them what I mean
- B) explain to them in different ways
- C) encourage them to try it

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16. When I first contact a new person, I usually:

- A) arrange a face to face meeting
- B) talk to them on the telephone
- C) suggest we meet for coffee or a meal

17. I first notice how people:

- A) look and dress
- B) sound and speak
- C) stand and move

18. If I am angry, I tend to:

- A) keep replaying in my mind what upset me
- B) raise my voice and tell people how I feel
- C) demonstrate my anger in other ways

19. I find it easiest to remember:

- A) faces
- B) names
- C) events

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20. I can tell someone is lying if:

- A) they avoid looking at me
- B) their voices changes
- C) they give me funny vibes

21. I remember things best by:

- A) writing notes or keeping printed details
- B) saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in my head
- C) doing and practicing the activity or imagining it being done

22. I tend to say:

- A) I see what you mean
- B) I hear what you are saying
- C) I know how you feel

Now add up how many As, Bs, and Cs you circled.

A \_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_

If you chose mostly A you have a dominant Visual learning style.

If you chose mostly B you have a dominant Auditory learning style.

If you chose mostly C you have a dominant Tactile learning style.

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## Learning Style Characteristics

### Visual

Their work area is organized. They are good planners. Detail oriented. Linear thinkers. They like tasks with plenty of detail, instructions, and clearly-defined outcomes.

They respond best to visuals and descriptions of events in pictures. They quickly understand graphs, patterns, and shapes.

They like presentations with colors, graphics, and pictures. They want to *see* what you are talking about. They like data, spreadsheets, and details. They are skilled at processing disparate information and finding conclusions, outcomes, errors, and relationships between data.

They easily visualize faces and places and seldom get lost in new surroundings.

They avoid talking on the phone, and tend to have a hard time listening to others. They get impatient with people who tell stories and stray from the details.

They tend to give you facts but not much about relationships between them, as they assume you know. They want quick decisions based on information presented. They will make decisions based on details and facts.

They use visual words like *see, show, reveal, I see what you mean, the outcome looks solid, we don't see eye to eye*

To work effectively with a visual learner:

- Use graphs, charts, illustrations, and other visual aids
- Include outlines, concept maps, agendas, handouts
- They will look for relationships between visual information
- Give them time to read and give them space and time to take notes
- Include plenty of content in handouts for them to read
- Invite questions to help them stay alert in auditory environments
- They flip ahead in notes or a workbook to see what comes next, and expect that sequence

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## Auditory

Great at generating ideas and understanding abstract concepts, but tend not to follow through as a task gets more detailed. Tend to talk to themselves as they plan, or while they are working. Usually good story-tellers, and excellent listeners.

Easily distracted by noise, will have a hard time paying attention in a noisy environment or with conversations nearby.

They respond well to phone calls and face-to-face meetings, rather than information presented visually.

They easily understand broad concepts and will make decisions based on breadth of information: *who, what, when, where, how, why.*

May get frustrated if given only facts or instructions without understanding the scope, outcome, or expectations.

They will tell you stories about a situation, and want that in return – not just the facts.

They will describe events or meetings as a conversation - *I said, I told him, she said...*

They use sound words like *hear, talk, sound, tell, call, listen, that rings a bell.*

To work effectively with an auditory learner:

- Expect them to want conversations and stories
- Describe the concept or broad description of your topic
- They will often stray from the topic you're discussing
- Ask them questions and allow them to ask questions
- Give them time to contemplate new information
- Avoid talking with them in a noisy environment
- They may repeat aloud what you say, or information presented

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## **Tactile**

Work area may appear cluttered and disorganized. They like to see their things around on their desks, rather than in drawers and cabinets.

They like to carry a lot of things with them like notepads, papers, files, drinking cups, large bags, backpacks, and purses.

They respond to feelings, emotion, intuition, and hunches. They are often very perceptive about subtleties in human character and behavior.

They will make decisions based on instincts, intuition, their feelings and emotions, and how a decision will affect others.

They tend to lose concentration if there is little or no external stimulation or movement. May have a hard time sitting still for long.

They are very aware of characteristics of their physical space – textures, temperature, table top material, seat material and firmness, soft or hard flooring.

When listening they will take notes, which often include drawings, diagrams, or doodling.

They use physical language: *tackle, hold, kick, run, toss, step, feel, touch, contact, grasp, I've got a feeling that, let's touch base, I'll contact you*

To work effectively with a tactile learner:

- Use activities and allow them to move around, hold objects, and interact physically in some way
- Use shapes to emphasize key points on flip charts or white boards
- Give them handouts with space, and time to take notes
- Allow them to consider how information and decisions may affect people involved
- Recognize they trust their instinct and gut feelings often more than apparent facts
- They may want time to consider a decision from a variety of points of view
- They prefer a demonstration of, or description of, a process and interrelated details