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Insights into Effective Communications

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Almost everything anyone wants or needs will depend on others to a great degree. This is true for everyone whether they are managers, scientists, teachers or carpenters. Everyone's success at getting their wants and needs met will depend largely on the effectiveness of his or her communication. Communication is therefore probably the most important skill on this planet.

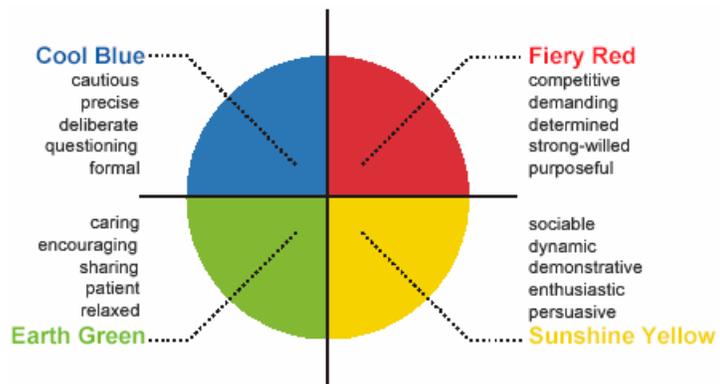
Communication is much more than simply the words we choose to speak. It involves the way the words are spoken as well as the body language that accompanies it. Written communication involves both the media chosen to transmit the words and the presentation. Studies have suggested that the actual words account for only 7% of any communication.

The essence of good communication is to impart a message in a way that the perception of the receiver matches that of the transmitter. In other words, the style and method of our communication is always matched to suit those with whom we are communicating.

An individual's preferred communications style, both for transmitting (speaking) and receiving (listening), is very much a function of their personality type. The Insights® model is built on the extensive body of psychological research that culminates in the seminal work on personality devised by the Swiss psychologist Carl G Jung. As a result of this research, Insights has developed a support system or map, which can be used to enhance a person's self-awareness and self-understanding, including 'insights into their communications style'.

Which colour energy are you?

Consider the Insights® model depicted here. Do all these descriptors sound more like you, or are you particularly like one or two of the colour energies?



Perhaps having read these adjectives you really can identify a mix of one or two that give a better understanding of you.

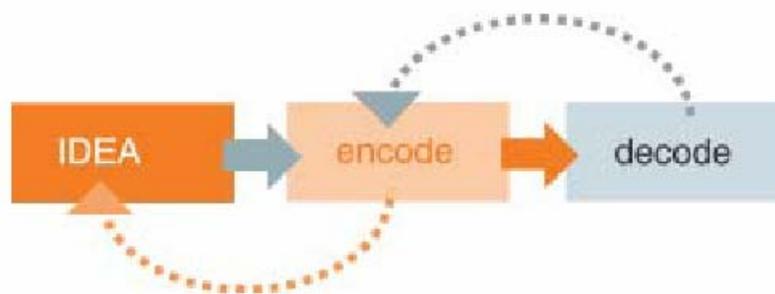
The communication process

Communication involves the exchange and the flow of ideas and information from one individual to another. It involves one person sending or transmitting an idea to another person, the receiver. The communication is only effective if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit.

An **effective** communication process involves:

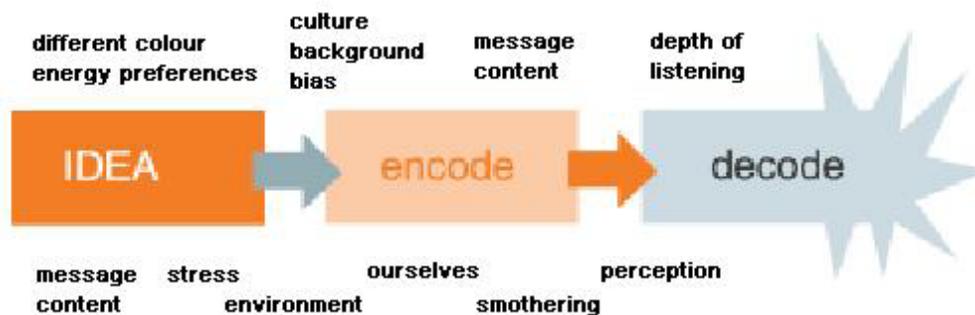
- **Information:** First, information exists with the sender. This can be a concept, an idea, information, or feelings.
- **Encoding:** Then a message is transmitted, in words or other symbols, to a receiver.
- **Decoding:** The person receiving the message then translates the words or symbols into a concept or information they can understand.

Communication is a two-way exchange, not just a give, as all parties must participate to effectively complete the information exchange.



Barriers to effective communications

Anything that prevents the receiver from understanding the message is a barrier to effective communication. Many communication barriers exist, both physical and psychological:

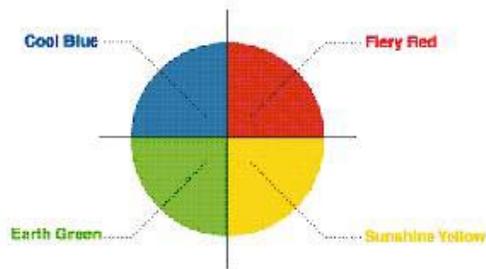


Psychological differences, or differences in colour energy preferences, is one of the most significant barriers to overcome. People with high **Fiery Red** energy and/or with high **Sunshine**

Yellow energy often encode quickly. They are less inclined to “process” their ideas before encoding them. People with high levels of **Cool Blue** energy and **Earth Green** energy may take longer to encode ideas and will be more likely to “process” the ideas before sharing them.

Often, we expect the person we are communicating with to process, encode and decode in the same way we do. Sometimes people with **Fiery Red** and **Sunshine Yellow** energy will decode a message and provide feedback so quickly; they do not realize they had only received half the message in the first place! Conversely, people with **Cool Blue** and **Earth Green** energy will still be decoding the first message, when the **Fiery Red / Sunshine Yellow** sender encodes more messages!

People with strong **sensing** preferences will encode messages with language in the “here and now”. **Intuitives** will decode messages in terms of “possibilities” and “the future”. This different use of language and these different styles of interpretation can be a barrier to communication. People with a “**thinking**” preference will encode and decode looking for logic and rationality. “**Feelers**” will encode and decode in a values based way – interpreting in terms of people issues.



What people see, feel and believe is influenced by their psychological type and psychological frames of references at any given moment – by their beliefs, values, knowledge, experiences, and goals.

Now let’s have a look at the preferred communications style associated with each of the Insights colour energies.

<p>Cool Blue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much prefer the written word. Documents and reports should contain detailed examination. • You can expect them to come back to you after the meeting for clarification. • They are great probers of information and will keep going until they understand fully what is going on. <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be well prepared & thorough. • Put important things in writing. • Let them consider all the details. <p>Don’t</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invade their personal space. • Be flippant on important issues. • Change their routine without notice. 	<p>Fiery Red</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the spoken word. They like fast pace and confidence. i.e. Be brief and be gone. • Written documents should be kept brief and concise. • They are usually not good listeners and may tend to react loudly to things they don’t understand. <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be direct & to the point • Focus on results & objectives. • Be brief, be bright & be gone <p>Don’t</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesitate or waffle. • Focus on feelings. • Try to take over.
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<p>Earth Green</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer a slow pace with plenty of quiet time to reflect on issues. • They occasionally prefer the written word so that they can go away and read it properly. • They are great listeners but may sometimes give the impression that they are not enthusiastic. <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be patient & supportive. • Slow down & communicate at their pace. • Ask their opinion & give them time to answer. <p>Don't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take advantage of their good nature. • Push them to make quick decisions. • Spring last minute surprises. 	<p>Sunshine Yellow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like enthusiasm and excitement. They prefer pictures to text. • They tend to finish others sentences and appear impatient. • They are not normally good listeners and will become easily distracted. <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be friendly & sociable. • Be entertaining & stimulating. • Be open & flexible. <p>Don't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bore them with details. • Tie them down with routine. • Ask them to do it alone.
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Hearing someone speak to you and listening is not the same thing. Generally, there are two main types of listening, passive listening and active listening. **Passive listening** is little more than hearing the sounds being spoken. It occurs when the receiver has little motivation to listen carefully to the message, or is just being socially polite. Only a part of our mind is paying attention while listening to someone, so it is easy to go into mind drift - thinking about other things or already thinking about our response.

The cure for this is **active listening** which involves listening with a **purpose**. The purpose may be to gain information, to obtain directions, to understand others, to solve problems, to share a common interest, to learn how another person feels, to show support for the other person, etc. It requires that the listener attend and be present to the words, gestures and feelings of the sender, seeking to really understand the sender's message and then verifies the meaning by offering feedback.

Some general hints for communicating your message

After listening first to understand the other person, it is then your role to be understood by that person. The following are some general speaking hints on how you can incorporate all of your energy when you communicate with another person:

Cool Blue

- Be clear about what you say. Do not be vague, but on the other hand, do not complicate what you are saying with too much detail.
- Vary your tone, and your pace.

Earth Green

- Be sure your words match your tone and body language.
- Look at the receiver. Make eye contact.

Sunshine Yellow

- Ensure the receiver has a chance to comment, or to ask you questions.
- Do not ignore signs of confusion from the receiver.

Fiery Red

- Occasionally ask the listeners if they are following you.
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes - Consider the feelings of the receiver.

The language of opposites

Possibly the most significant point to remember concerning the language of the types –

- Extroverted types (people with dominant **Fiery Red** or **Sunshine Yellow** energy) →
 - **“speak to think”** – use speaking out loud to clarify their thoughts
- Introverted types (people with dominant **Cool Blue** or **Earth Green** energy) →
 - **“think to speak”** – clarify their thoughts before speaking out loud

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