Effective Interpersonal Communication

- **In ECS 1200, which most of you have already taken, you studied communications to peers and superiors in the professional world.**
- **These included oral presentations, (including lengthy formal presentations and the brief "elevator pitch"), and also effective written presentations or reports.**
- **Such reports are the backbone (unfortunately) of modern office communication, and thus the technique of the effective "office report" or presentation are important to engineers-in-training.**

"Interpersonal Communication"

- **Professional communications** are very important, true.
- **However, equally important are your <u>interpersonal communication</u>, that is, communication between you and other professionals on a one-on-one basis.**
- **Your ability to communicate with other professionals – both peers and superiors – can be a key to your success:**
    - **What if you get a chance to convince a superior of your qualification for a major promotion?**
    - **What if you get a chance to pitch your "great idea" to the boss?**
    - **Wouldn't you like to know the best way to communicate?**

Personality Styles and Effective Communication

- **It turns out that effectively communicating with others (peers, bosses, even spouses and girl/boy friends!) is a skill that can be learned.**
- **Much theory has been developed on personal communication, most of it centered on <u>understanding the personality style of the person with whom you need to communicate.</u>**

Foundation of Personality Style Analysis*

- **Isabel Briggs Myers (1897-1980), with, by the way, only a bachelor's degree in political science was responsible for creating the most widely used "personality inventory" of all time.**

- **The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® test, now taken by millions of people each year, was developed over a period of more than forty years.**

- **Myers and her mother, Katharine Cook Briggs (1875-1968), were highly interested in Jung's work on personality, which led to their development of a psychological testing instrument that would clarify the basics of an individual's personality.**

- **She researched and developed the personality type instrument (or test) over the next four decades, until her death.**

* From the web page of the Center for Applications of Psychological Type

Briggs-Myers (Continued)

- **The Briggs-Myers personality classification test (and associated techniques) make up a rather difficult three-dimensional description that (at least to me) seem rather ethereal and hard to quantify.**

- **Although I am a strong believer in the basic Briggs-Myers approach, I prefer a simpler categorization system used by several experts, including Merrill-Reid and Bob Phillips.**

- **The original Briggs-Myers system is probably somewhat more accurate, but the system I propose (and will introduce you to) is actually usable in daily life!**

Sources

- **Some of the information in this presentation comes from the excellent book by Bob Phillips,** *The Delicate Art of Dancing With Porcupines*.

- Much of the remaining information comes from both courses I have taken and courses I have developed and given that present the basics of personality styles and how they interact.

- Where a specific item is used, a source will be shown. The Phillips book is really great, and I recommend it, although it does have some religious overtones that may make some uncomfortable, depending on your religious background.

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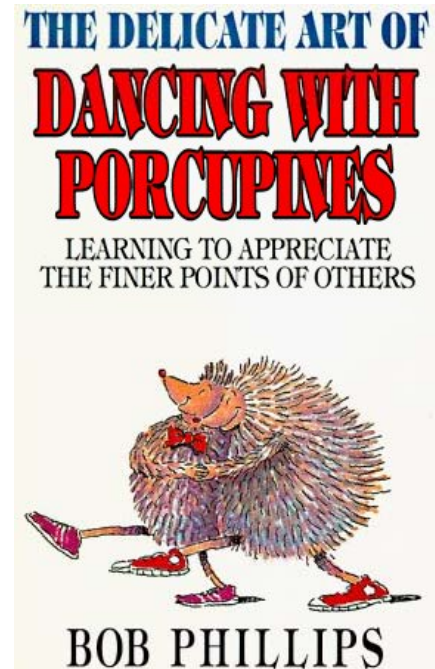
"That Guy Just Always Irritates Me!"

- **Ever known somebody like that?**
- **Everything that he (or she) says just rankles. Whenever you have to interact with this person, the result is bad feelings, misunderstandings, or bungled communication and maybe even (in a work environment), a project disaster.**
- **Of course, it's <u>their fault</u>! I mean, after all, you KNOW what YOU MEANT! If they couldn't understand your information, that's their problem!**
- **Right?**

People Communicate Differently

- **It's true.**
- **People communicate differently.**
- **They speak differently, have different "body language," and further, because of that, they interpret other people's communication differently.**
- **You do the same. Because of your "personality style," you interpret (or misinterpret) the interpersonal communications of other people in ways that they might not anticipate.**
- **But what if you knew a technique to smooth this two-way communication path?**

Charting Personality Styles

- **A variation of the Myers-Briggs personality style "map" can be useful in understanding people have different communication styles.**

- **Instead of the more complex 3-D personality matrix of some M-B approaches, the following 2-D map is a useful way to chart the basics of human behavior.**

- **The chart posits the following:***
  - **A 2-dimensional map of behavior, with dimensions of (1) "personal interaction" (assertiveness) and (2) task-orientation (concern for relationships).**
 - **The four major personality styles that result.**

* **From Bob Phillips,** *The Delicate Art of Dancing With Porcupines*, **(hereafter referred to as "Phillips").**

The Ask-Tell Axis

| Highly Asking | Moderate Asking | Moderate Telling | Highly Telling |
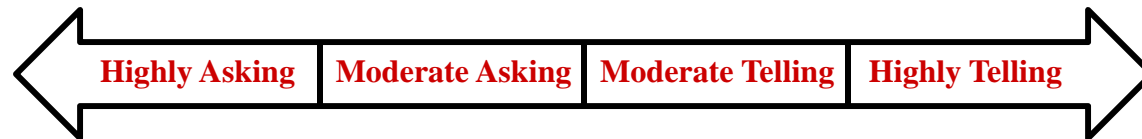
- **In the 2-D personality chart, the horizontal axis is the "Ask-Tell" axis.**
- **The further <u>right</u> along the axis a personality is charted, the <u>more assertive</u> the person is.**
  - A person charted to the <u>left</u> is an <u>asker</u>, a person who tends to NOT give unilateral directions to others, but asks for input and considers other's opinions before making a decision.
  - A person to the far right is a <u>teller</u>, someone much more likely to make a unilateral decision (sometimes without asking for opinions and thereby hurting feelings or "ruffling feathers").

Ask-Tell

Highly Asking | Moderate Asking | Moderate Telling | Highly Telling
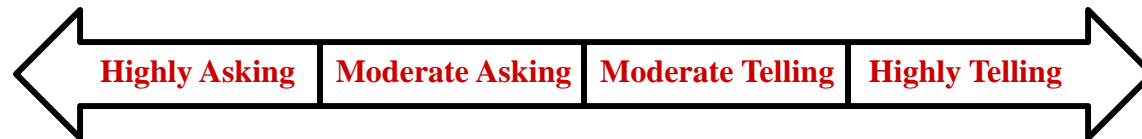
- **It should be pointed out that NONE of the behaviors that can be charted according to the horizontal Ask-Tell axis are "bad behaviors."** **All have their place.**

- **For instance, nobody would like a military leader, who, in the thick of battle, turned to his soldiers and said "Hey, guys, what do you think we ought to do?" That is a time for immediate, crisp orders which may save lives and win the fight.**
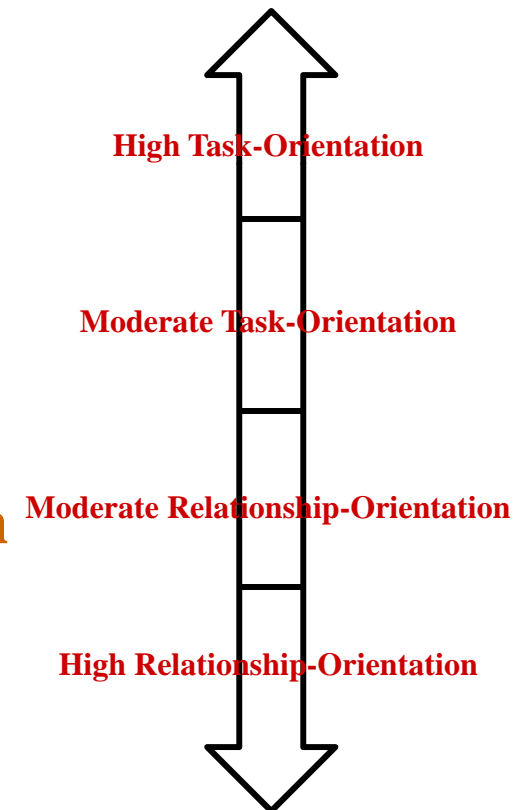
The Task-Relationship Axis

- **In the "personality plane," the vertical axis is the task/relationship-orientation axis.**

- **People higher on the vertical axis will be more focused on task completion; they are ruled more by thinking than by feeling.**

- **People lower on the axis are more governed by feelings; they place relationships over tasks.**

High Task-Orientation

Moderate Task-Orientation

Moderate Relationship-Orientation
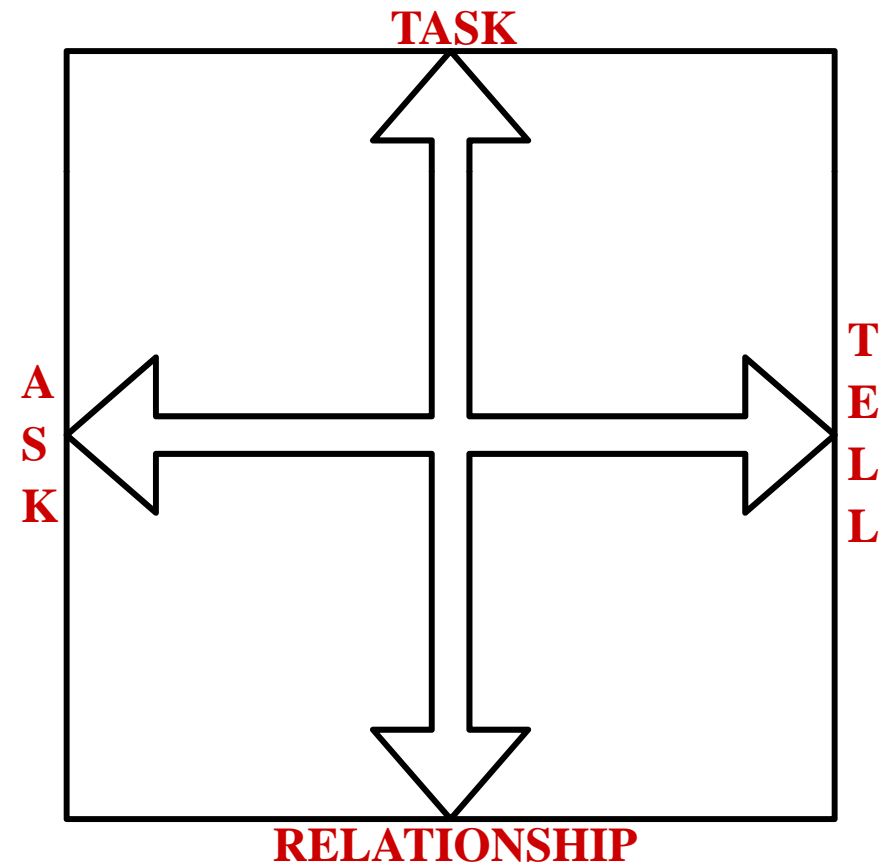
High Relationship-Orientation
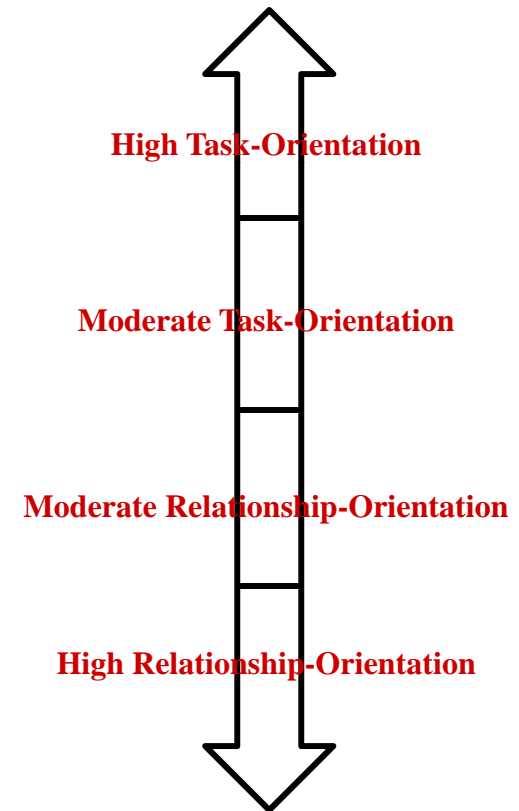
Task-Relationship Axis

- **Again, <u>no position on the axis is "bad."</u>**
- **For example, a funeral director planning services for a deceased spouse would certainly be expected to center preparations around the desires and concerns of the surviving spouse.**
- **On the other hand, an emergency-room doctor might be very concerned about an accident victim's state of mind, but his major concern is the survival of the patient!**
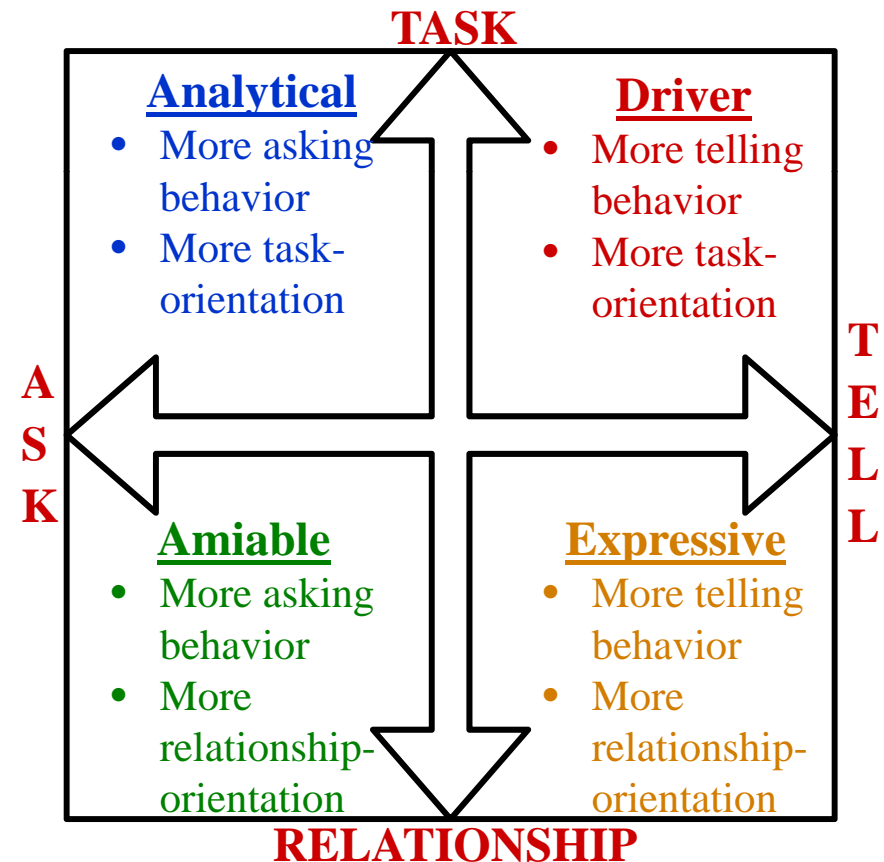
High Task-Orientation

Moderate Task-Orientation

Moderate Relationship-Orientation

High Relationship-Orientation

The "Personality Plane"

- **The "personality plane" charts human personality types according to a person's asking/telling behavior and their task/relationship orientation.**

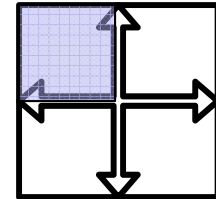- A somewhat simplistic categorization process allows all personalities to be subdivided into **four basic types.**

TASK

ASK ← → TELL

RELATIONSHIP

"Personality Plane" (2)

- **Based on a person's ask/tell behavior and task/ relationship orientation, there are four basic personality styles, corresponding to the four quadrants of the personality plane.**
- These are **Analytical**, **Driver**, **Expressive**, and **Amiable**.
- **EVERYONE can be classified into one of these basic styles.**

TASK

Analytical
- More asking behavior
- More task-orientation

Driver
- More telling behavior
- More task-orientation

ASK

TELL

Amiable
- More asking behavior
- More relationship-orientation

Expressive
- More telling behavior
- More relationship-orientation

RELATIONSHIP

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The Analytical: Thoughtful and Deliberate

- **Analyticals want to analyze and think over an issue before taking action. They have a strong sense of duty and work ethic. They are often very smart and talented.**
- **Analyticals are schedule-oriented and detail-conscious. They love charts and graphs and lots of data to analyze (a good engineering trait)!**
- **Analytical Strengths:**
  - **Persistent**
  - **Exacting**
  - **Orderly**
  - **Loyal**
  - **Sensitive**
  - **Highly Disciplined**
  - **Idealistic**
  - **Self-Sacrificing**
  - **Very Industrious**
- **Analytical Weaknesses:**
  - **Moody**
  - **Self-Centered**
  - **Picky**
  - **Critical**
  - **Unsociable**
  - **Inflexible**
  - **Indecisive**
 - **Moralistic**
  - **Vengeful**

The Driver: Bold and Decisive
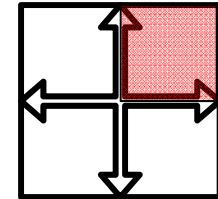
- **Drivers want to take control! They are performance-oriented and delight in hard work. Idleness drives them crazy.**
- **Drivers like challenges (a good engineering trait!) and have a passion for knowledge (also good!). They can be forceful and require too much from themselves and, as managers, from employees. The vision of failure haunts them.**
- **Driver Strengths:**
  - **Determined**
  - **Visionary**
  - **Self-Confident**
  - **(Very) Independent**
  - **Mover**
  - **Efficient**
  - **Optimistic**
  - **Practical**
  - **Natural Leader**
- **Driver Weaknesses:**
  - **Workaholic**
  - **Opinionated**
  - **Inconsiderate**
  - **Unsympathetic**
  - **Domineering**
  - **Prejudiced**
  - **Sarcastic**
 - **Hostile**
  - **Unforgiving**

The Expressive: Rash But Caring
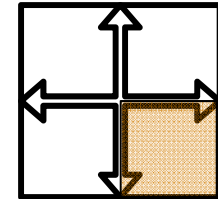
- **Expressives are impulsive; they live in the here and now.**
- **They tend to be happy and endure hardships better than other social styles, as they know it will usually pass (also a good quality for engineers!).**
- **They like to reminisce and love social interaction. They also are friendly and outgoing.**
- **Expressive Strengths:**
  - **Outgoing**
  - **Warm**
  - **Talkative**
  - **Ambitious**
  - **Stimulating**
  - **Enthusiastic**
  - **Charismatic**
  - **Responsive**
  - **Generous**
- **Expressive Weaknesses:**
  - **Weak-Willed**
  - **Undependable**
  - **Loud**
  - **Manipulative**
  - **Undisciplined**
  - **Disorganized**
  - **Restless**
  - **Obnoxious**
  - **Egotistical**

The Amiable: Supporting and Friendly
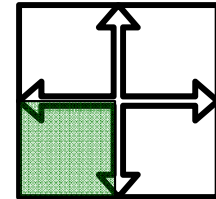
- **Amiables are friendly; they work well with others and often get involved in causes. They are wordsmiths, and frequently produce written work that can influence people. They are compassionate.**
- **Amiables like to have direction. When working with a group, they seek input frequently and work for group agreement (a good trait for an engineering team leader). They seek to promote harmony.**
- **Amiable Strengths:**
  - Calm
  - Likeable
  - Practical
  - Supportive
  - Efficient
  - Dependable
  - Easygoing
  - Organized
  - Cooperative
- **Amiable Weaknesses:**
  - Wants to Conform
  - Selfish
  - Indecisive
  - Not Self-Confident
  - Stubborn
  - Awkward
  - Not a Doer
  - Dependent
  - Blasé

The Secret to Good Interpersonal Communications

- **It is not hard to learn to be a really good person-to-person communicator.**
- **There are two things you need to know:**
  - **What is YOUR personality style.**
  - **What is the style of the person with whom you need to communicate.**
- **If you understand the two personality styles involved in the communication, it is easy to understand how to improve your communication technique.**

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What is Your Style?

- **Get out your two questionnaires.**
- **Hopefully, you completed them as requested and have your totals for each column on each page written down.**
- **Before we look at your totals, please note:**
  - **This is a fairly coarse rating test. You should not accept the answers as absolute or 100% correct.**
  - **However, they can give <u>some indication</u> of your style.**
  - **They are probably somewhat accurate if, on sober consideration, you think they describe your personality style at least approximately.**
  - **If you think you are misdescribed, fine. You can purchase books and more complete tests that can do a better job of carefully describing your style.**

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Your Style (2)

- **Task/Relationship: The totals move you up and down the y-axis:**
  - *If your task total is higher, you are moving into the Analytical-Driver area of the personality plane.*
  - *If your relationship total is higher, you are moving into the Amiable-Expressive area of the personality plane.*
  - *If your ask total is higher, you are moving into the Analytical-Amiable area of the personality plane.*
  - *If your tell total is higher, you are moving into the Driver-Expressive area of the personality plane.*
- **Now let's consider the totals together:**

Your Style (3)

- **High Task/Ask totals indicate an Analytical personality.**
- **High Task/Tell totals indicate a Driver personality.**
- **High Relationship/Tell totals indicate an Expressive personality.**
- **High Relationship/Ask totals indicate an Amiable personality.**
- **Remember, your indications are very approximate. However, they can be of potential use.**
- **Further, remember that there are no BAD personality styles. All four have strengths and weaknesses.**

Communicating with the "Other" Styles

- **Knowing the styles of the four major personality types, and knowing their strengths, weaknesses, and general tendencies, we can now think about communicating with each group.**
- **In general, most communications in the workplace are to either (a) convey information, or (b) persuade co-workers (or superiors) about a course of action.**
- **The first purpose (a) generally does not require any change of style. However, for (b), you need to <u>structure your communication to the style of the addressee</u>.**

Communicating With an Analytical
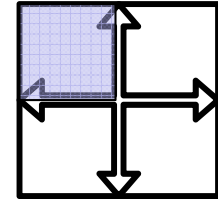
- **Remember: Analyticals want to analyze and think over an issue before taking action. They are schedule-oriented and detail-conscious, and they simply LOVE charts and graphs and reams of data to analyze! They are also smart, so you can't persuade them with smoke and mirrors! However, they have a very strong work ethic, so they want to do the right thing.**

- **Therefore, if you need to persuade an analytical to a course of action, give them lots of data!**
  - Provide charts, graphs, lists, schedules, everything that proves your point and does it in garish detail! Use data that makes your point for you, and clearly.
  - Do not, however, push for a quick decision. Analyticals are slow-moving and prone to extensive analysis, making certain that the data shows a clear trend.
  - But beware! Analyticals are the most prone to fall into "analysis paralysis." You may have to give them a "gentle shove" to finally get a decision!

Communicating With a Driver
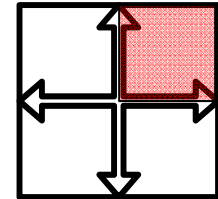
- **Remember that drivers want to drive the bus! They love challenges and delight in hard work, and idleness drives them crazy. They hate, hate, hate to fail. As they said in the movie *Apollo 13*, "Failure is NOT an option!"**

- **Further, drivers don't care much what people think (they are not good "people persons"), but they really want to complete the task!**

- **Therefore, to persuade a driver about a course of action, show them the goal!**
  - **Show a clear path to the problem/project/etc. resolution.**
  - **Show how they <u>win</u>!**
  - **Show that the proposal or solution is a natural outcome of the problem, and a practical and sensible path.**
  - **If possible give proof that this solution or method gets the group moving and sets the course to a fast resolution.**

Communicating With an Expressive
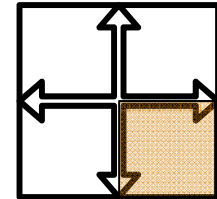
- **Remember that expressives live in the here and now and like immediate action. They are willing to accept hardships or temporary discomfort, as they know it will probably not last long.**
- **They like to reminisce and love social interaction, and tend to be friendly and outgoing. What whets the analytical's appetite bores them to tears.**
- **Therefore, to persuade the expressive, show them the benefits (especially people benefits)!**
  - Be friendly and genial; establish a good relationship early-on.
  - Show them the career benefits of their choice.
  - Explain how this is the best choice for the <u>team</u>; how this will promote group harmony and the best working conditions.
  - Build their enthusiasm by stressing your good relationship. On the other hand, don't use too much data, or they will get bored!

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Communicating With an Amiable
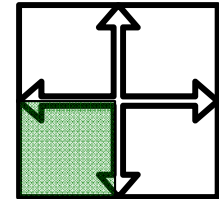
- **Remember that like expressives, amiables are friendly and compassionate, working well with others.**
- **Amiables do like to have direction. When working with a group, they seek input frequently and work for group agreement. They always seek to promote harmony.**
- **Therefore, to win over the Amiable, show them the teamwork possibilities!**
  - Help them to see how the team will work more efficiently and communications will be better.
  - Show how organization will be more cohesive.
  - Stress how you expect their support and their efforts to improve team bonding.
  - Since amiables appreciate direction (unlike analyticals, who cannot be pushed), emphasize how you expect their acquiescence and adherence to the ideas.

Notes on Communication
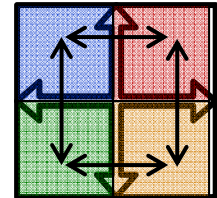
- **Clearly, any two persons with the same fundamental style will be "in sync" while communicating.**
- **What about communication between styles?**
  - **Analyticals and drivers are task-oriented. This is a plus, but the analytical must watch out, as the "telling" driver will take control.**
  - **Drivers and expressives are both "tellers." Good. But drivers care less about relationships, so conflict over people ("feelings") can occur.**
  - **Expressives and amiables are relationship-oriented, so that is good. But once again, the "asker" must beware the "teller" taking control.**
  - **Amiables and analyticals like to ask questions, take data, and consider. Problem is, they will clash over putting task over people.**
- **Notice that styles in the same half-plane have commonalities that can help in communication. But what about…**

The Dreaded "Opposite-Corner" Problem
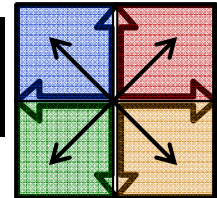
- **Analyticals and Expressives have NOTHING in common!**
- **Neither do Drivers and Amiables!**
- **They conflict on both of the major "personality plane" descriptives. They agree on neither ask/tell interaction nor on task/relationship orientation.**
- **Guess what? These disparate pairs have real trouble in communicating!**
- **What this says to us, the knowledgeable personality-style mavens, is NOT that they cannot communicate, but that they will have to work at it!**

How Can You Identify a Style?

- To enhance your interpersonal communication, you not only need to understand <u>your</u> style, you need to identify the other person's style.
- This is not always easy. Even if you were to ask someone, "What is your personality style?" (a somewhat awkward way to start a conversation), they probably have not had the training, and therefore don't know!
- However, you can observe them and identify behavioral characteristics that can help identify their basic style.

"Tells"

- **Poker is very popular these days, with popular televised tournaments and lots of publicity.**
- **Therefore you have probably watched some of them, or at least heard people talk about them.**
- **Thus the word "tell." A "tell" is an unconscious habit that a poker player may have that reveals what kind of a hand the person has.**
- **For example, a man might run his left hand through his hair when he has a good poker holding. Or a woman might rub an earring in the same situation.**

"Tells" (2)

- **Personality styles have similar "tells." You can use these essentially unconscious motions or characteristics to help you identify the personality style of someone with whom you wish to communicate effectively.**

- **With a little practice, these "tells" can be easy to recognize and quite effective in nailing the basic style of your counterpart in a conversation.**

- **Personality style characteristics are as distinct as fingerprints, and with practice, as easy to recognize.**

- **Let's consider some examples.**

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TASK

ASK ⟵ ⟶ **TELL**

RELATIONSHIP

Analytical
- Little emotion ("poker face")
- Reserved
- Argue with facts
- Not flexible
- Hard to know
- Few gestures

Driver
- Little emotion ("poker face")
- Aggressive
- Focuses on win
- Inflexible
- Takes control
- Few gestures are usually emphatic

Amiable
- Face alight with emotion
- Friendly
- Suggests
- Informal, easy
- Ready to go along
- Animated, many gestures

Expressive
- Face alight with emotion
- Friendly
- Argues emotionally
- Informal, easy
- Attitude very clear
- Animated, many gestures

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"Tell" Summary

- **Analyticals and drivers display little emotion, but drivers are emphatic and want to take control.**
- **Drivers and expressives are very emphatic and want to take control, but expressives will consider feelings of others, while drivers focus on task.**
- **Expressives and amiables are people-oriented, but expressives seek to control while amiables want outside input.**
- **Amiables and analyticals ask questions, analyze, and seek to defer decisions, but analyticals are not people-oriented, and focus only on the task.**

Some Niceties

- **Although our version of the Myers-Briggs personality analysis has only two dimensions and four basic styles, experts in this discipline usually subdivide each basic style into four sub-styles. Each sub-style has a less emphatic version of one of the major styles.**
- **Thus each style is subdivided into analytical, driver, expressive, and amiable sub-styles. This acknowledges the fact that in each style, there is a variation of behavior which must be accounted for.**
- **This additional complexity also adds flexibility with which to better describe human behavior.**

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	TASK		
Analytical			**Driver**
Analytical Analytical	Driving Analytical	Analytical Driver	Driving Driver
Amiable Analytical	Expressive Analytical	Amiable Driver	Expressive Driver
Analytical Amiable	Driving Amiable	Analytical Expressive	Driving Expressive
Amiable Amiable	Expressive Amiable	Amiable Expressive	Expressive Expressive

ASK (left side) **TELL** (right side)

Amiable   **RELATIONSHIP**   **Expressive**

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Sub-Styles (2)

- We do not have time in a single lecture to delve into characteristics of sub-styles.
- If you are interested, there are very complete testing instruments that can give you amazing insight into both your fundamental style and your sub-style.
- All we will say here is that simply knowing the basic style of an individual will help you communicate with them better.
- This is true in work situations, classroom situations, relations with friends, and even spousal relationships (and those with girl/boy friends!).

The "Z-Out"

- The last thing we will discuss is the so-called "Z-out," or reaction to stress, of the various styles.
- Some experts refer to this as "backup behavior."
- What is referred to is how someone's personality style changes when that person is in a very stressful situation.
- This behavior is highly predictable, given that you truly understand the target personality and their basic style.
- Let's see how this works…

Backup Style
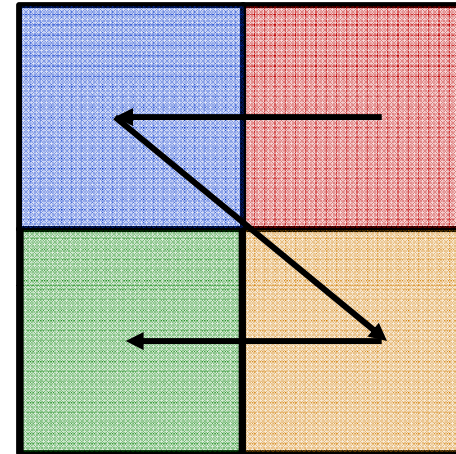
- **The primary action for someone in a stressful situation is to revert to the basic style.**
- **Thus, an analytical will withdraw, a driver will try to take control, an expressive will also seek to control (but with concern about "the team"), and an amiable will seek input and group agreement.**
- **However, in the case in which pressure <u>increases</u> (i.e., stress continues or intensifies), all four styles will begin to <u>migrate across the personality plane</u>.**
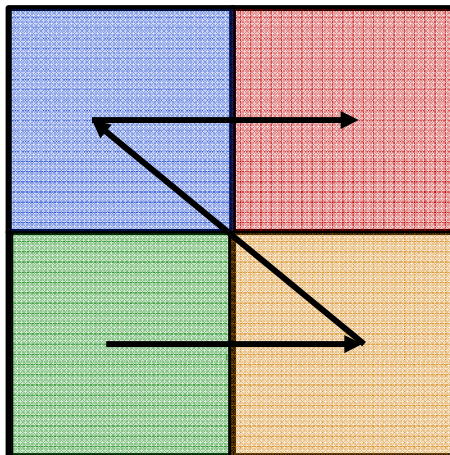- **This migration will always resemble a <u>Z or a reverse-Z</u>.**
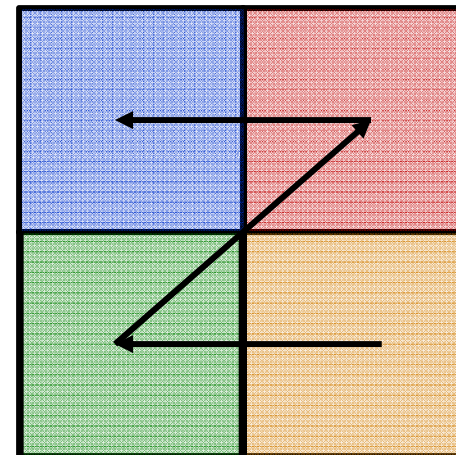
Analytical
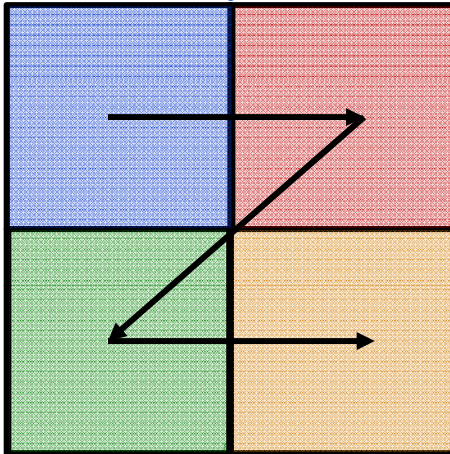
Driver

Amiable

Expressive

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Living With "Style"!

- This brief introduction has just touched on the surface of the personality style analysis capability.
- If it tweaks your interest, Google Phillips and Merrill-Reid. They have written many books in this area, and with the purchase of a few paperbacks, you can learn a lot.
- "Dancing with Porcupines" is a good introduction, but it has a religious flavor (Christian), so if that would put you off, seek some other sources.
- There are even courses in this area should you wish to pursue them.

"Style" (2)

- **Even with this basic introduction, you can use the material to communicate more effectively.**
- **Understand your basic style.**
- **Then, use the "tells" to understand the style of someone with whom you need to improve communications.**
- **With a good idea of the "target" style, adjust your own style by moving toward that style to improve communications.**
- **Here's to living with style!**

Team Assignment

- **Meet as a team and conduct an analysis to decide the personality style of each team member.**
- **Compose a brief (2-3 page) report on your team's various personality styles. Each person should have a substantial paragraph devoted to them and their styles.**
- **The analysis should include each person's personality style questionnaire summaries, plus observations of the other team members.**
- **Note in the report whether each person agrees or disagrees with the team consensus.**
- **Report due <u>next Monday</u>.**