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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

Your Dominant Communication Style—and That of Others



Most problems in life and at work develop--and continue--because we don't know how to communicate effectively with others. If you really want to avoid snafus, the first thing you've got to do is identify your own dominant communication style. The second thing? Recognize the natural style used by each of

the folks around you. Know what you're dealing with. It's critical.

Years ago I worked with a young woman who had all the right credentials, passion, and experience needed for her job. She had a strong work ethic too, and I admired that. But over time I concluded that being in her company was

exhausting. When something didn't turn out like she'd expected, she'd blame our boss or one of our peers. Nothing was ever her fault. When she didn't get her own way, she'd sulk. During staff meetings she usually shied away from speaking her mind, saying her opinion didn't really matter. On occasion she'd relay stories from her painful childhood and talk about how the resulting scars prevented her from doing certain things—as if she had no ability to heal and move on. I'd walk back to my office, perplexed and provoked.

Back then I didn't know much about various communication styles. I just knew that Ann and I expressed ourselves and interacted with people very differently. Today, I don't mind confessing to you, my readers, that “her way” drove me totally nuts. For five years I waited for this woman to take charge, stand tall, and be real. It never happened. The fallout? Her relationships with colleagues suffered, and many of us lost respect for her despite what she was able to bring to the table.

Does this little case study describe you or someone you know? If so, understand that such a style simply doesn't work. It doesn't work in the moment or long term. To learn more about the major communication styles, I invite you to read my feature article below.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

The Skinny on the 5 Major Communication Styles

Five major communication styles are used collectively every day by human beings around the globe. Although there may be occasions for you and I to use each of them at some time or other, the assertive style is the one we want to aim for during most of our encounters with the folks around us. Which of these tends to be your dominant style?

Passive-Aggressive: Make no mistake: This style hides a simmering anger, often stemming from feelings of powerlessness. Individuals using this style on a regular basis often speak pleasantly and sweetly with an innocent expression pasted on their faces. But don't let these behaviors fool you. They can be sulky, devious, sabotaging, unreliable, patronizing complainers and gossips who leave you feeling resentful and hurt.

Submissive: Individuals who use this style of communication are all about people pleasing and avoiding conflict. They make themselves appear small and insignificant, talk softly, dodge eye contact. Typically they apologize for everything, steer clear of confrontation, blame others when things go wrong, refuse to accept personal responsibility for choices, and hold a victim mentality. They leave you feeling frustrated, guilty, and used.

Manipulative: Calculating, envious, and shrewd, folks who have adopted this style strive to control others by making them feel obliged to do things their way. Behaving like actors, they may turn on the tears or offer a believable sob story. All of this comes from their inability to ask for what they need directly. As you interact with manipulators, know that you will feel angry, resentful, defeated, and confused.

Aggressive: Folks using this communication style on a regular basis care mostly about winning and you losing. They can be bullies. Usually loud, forceful, even nasty, people who use this style glare, scowl, and frown. Their gestures may be intense, jerky, and fast. They are demanding, explosive, hostile, belligerent, and unpredictable. When involved with them expect to feel fearful, humiliated, intimidated, and hurt.

Assertive: Assertive communicators possess healthy self-confidence—enough to accept both compliments and criticism. They don't seek to harm or manipulate others because they are secure in themselves. While they protect their own rights, they respect others' rights. Socially and emotionally expressive in a pleasing way, they take responsibility for their choices, words, and actions. You can trust them.

In reality, few people use the assertive communication style. But that, my friends, is the one you want to master.

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What Clients Say

A couple of years ago I contacted Sylvia (after a professional colleague recommended her) because I finally faced the fact that I was alienating certain key people at work with my abrasive style of communication. When angry or annoyed, I often exploded or made inappropriate sarcastic remarks. This drove a wedge between me and them—a wedge I knew I couldn't afford. It wasn't easy for me to admit all of this to Sylvia, but she never judged me. We ended up working together for six months. By the end of the contract I had learned how to manage my strong emotions more effectively and how to interact with others in ways that didn't drive them away. Today, I realize that I am a much better person as well as a more respected employee.

- Michelle B., Nonprofit Program Coordinator, Scranton, PA

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Offers and Opportunities

Beat Your Boss Blues

Having trouble communicating effectively with your immediate supervisor? Not sure if it's him/her or you? Can't put your finger on the real issue? Stop tossing and turning at night and do something about it. Allow Sylvia to move you through this painful maze. **The first person** to request a complimentary thirty minute phone coaching session will be the single lucky recipient of this special offer. If you know you need this guidance but find yourself hesitating, remember that your current job satisfaction--and perhaps your career future--depend upon putting an end to this predicament. Send an email to sylvia@launchinglives.biz to request your free phone session.

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RESOURCES

Create Your Own Resource

This exercise is ideal for teams consisting of four or more employees. If you are the team leader or department head, ask each of your members/direct reports to type a one page detailed description of their communication style

without attaching their names. Specifically tell them to consider scenarios such as these: Requesting or relaying information; coping with differences of opinion or conflict, sharing ideas; presenting a project summary; discussing change; asking for help; describing a current or potential problem, outlining a plan of action, delivering bad news, etc. Give people about a week to ten days to complete this page and forward it to you. (By the way, you need to do this yourself too.) During the next team or staff meeting, provide copies of each person's work to everyone else around the table. Invite them to guess the author of each sheet. This exercise can be both educational and fun! Folks are going to learn a lot about their colleagues' perceptions of their communication styles. You can use this as a spring board for informal discussion and/or formal communications training if you choose.

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TIP

Think of someone (in your professional sphere) with whom you seem to have difficulty. Perhaps your relationship is strained, or he frequently misinterprets what you say. Pinpoint that individual's dominant communication style. How does it mesh or clash with your own? Determine one way you can shift your approach with this individual to get better results. If you're dealing with an aggressor, for example, talk with her in a way that allows her to feel like she's winning on some level—whatever the topic or issue. She's more likely to play ball this way.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On November 3, 2017 Sylvia attended the TFEC Women's Fund elegant annual **Power of the Purse** fundraising luncheon event at the West Shore Country Club in Camp Hill, PA (supported by more than two hundred professional women representing diverse industries). This initiative's **mission** is to broaden the awareness of, and respond to, issues affecting women and girls through the power of collective philanthropy. The two main **goals** are **a)** recruit 1,000 women to join the Dream Team by each making a gift of \$1,000 which will used to create a lasting endowment of \$1 million to support women and girls now and in the future; **b)** make grants annually to local nonprofit

organizations that focus on bettering the lives of women and girls in the South Central PA area. Involved with this Fund since its inception, Sylvia has agreed to serve as Chair beginning in January 2018!

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Join Sylvia on these social networks!

About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

Back issues are [available here](#). Send an email by [clicking here](#) to manage your free subscription. Sharing content with attribution is encouraged as is forwarding the Ezine email. Include launchinglives.biz in your list of safe senders or friends, depending upon your email software, to be sure you receive the monthly emailed issues.

Launching Lives Ezine is dedicated to “building people ... building businesses.” ©2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden,

Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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