



Communication and Personality Traits

The giving and receiving of messages is influenced by our inbuilt filters – one very important filter is our personality. Some of us like facts, while others are more interested in feelings. Some people like detail and some can only see the ‘big picture’. Some people are sympathetic listeners and some are empathetic.

How do these different approaches influence communication? The figure below groups personalities into four categories and includes suggestions for how to communicate with each group.

ST	Communicating with a factual ‘thinker’	SF	Communicating with a factual ‘feeler’
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be factual▪ Be practical▪ Short and sweet▪ Use fewer personal words▪ Use step by step instructions▪ Prepare to be tested		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use personalised facts▪ Emphasise loyalty and pride (important to build rapport first)▪ Use personal words – value statements▪ Ask questions about personal issues▪ Work to maintain the relationship
NT	Communicating with a big picture ‘thinker’	NF	Communicating with a big picture ‘feeler’
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use personalised possibilities e.g. I thought about your comments on ... and think we could ...▪ Use a rational train of thought▪ Paint a picture with words that reflect the listener▪ Be concerned with harmony		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hear challenges as them showing interest▪ Treat the person as a unique individual▪ Talk future▪ Stick to the business at hand▪ Talk about the pros and cons of an idea▪ Involve them in final solutions

Personal reflection

Which category do you most relate to?

Do you recognise your mentee in any of these categories?

Reflect on your own communication preferences – how could you alter your communication style to enhance your mentoring relationships?



Questions and Statements to Enhance Communication

ST	Communicating with a factual 'thinker'	SF	Communicating with a factual 'feeler'
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ So let's go through the facts about this ...▪ Tell me step by step what happened ...▪ What ...?▪ How ...?▪ So if this ... then ...▪ What do you think are the pros and cons of this approach?▪ Tell me about it step by step so I can follow along ...		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What is happening about this right now?▪ I am fascinated by your story but I don't know anything about Could you explain it in more detail?▪ How is this impacting you?▪ How have other people you know resolved this?▪ I can see this is really important to you, tell me more about ...▪ So in your situation this would mean ...
NT	Communicating with a big picture 'thinker'	NF	Communicating with a big picture 'feeler'
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Why do you think ...?▪ So if this ... then ...▪ What are the long term consequences for you if ...?▪ Give an overview of ...▪ What are the key outcomes you want?▪ What resources do you need to make this happen?▪ What is your gut feel about this?▪ What is your plan for ...?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ I can see you are excited about You have done a wonderful job. Let's summarise your progress so that we can let others know what you have achieved.▪ Why do you think ...?▪ What are you hoping to achieve by ...?▪ What is the most important part of this for you ...?▪ Give me an overview of ...▪ What is your gut feel about this?▪ How are you feeling about ...?