

# *COMMUNICATION PATTERNS*

## *DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES*

One of the benefits of studying personality theory is the development of a deeper understanding of the differences in communication dynamics for various personality types. In general, an Extravert may have a greater propensity for verbal communication. This does not mean Extraverts will naturally be skilled orators. They may just like, even need, to talk. An Introvert may be more adept at written communication but may need to work to develop a coherent writing style. Introverts may be in their element in the written word but will also need to develop verbal communication skills to be active member of a community. Equally, Extraverts may find writing an awkward form of communication, which they may need to intentionally practice in developing a level of proficiency. Communication is a skill, which must be studied, practiced, and refined regardless of one's type.

Beyond practice, however, the rudimentary dynamics of communication are grounded and shaped in and by ones personality preferences. The use of the four functions frames the content. Skillful communication involves the alignment of content, timing and context.<sup>1</sup> While cultural context and personal experiences are essential in communication development, it is the preferences of personality type that appear to be key to establishing a person's communication pattern, the framework for shaping the content.

Communication pattern, herein, refers to the order in which the functions (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, or Thinking), in combination with the attitudes of Extraversion and Introversion, take precedent in giving substance to an individual's, or corporate entity's, communications. One who communicates primarily from a preference for Sensing will tend to articulate the facts, experiences or details. The content, agenda, or style will be different for the one whose communication pattern centers in the Intuition, which readily articulates the options, possibilities and patterns.

## COMMUNICATION PATTERNS FOR EXTRAVERTS

One could assume that there may be more ease of communication between two people whose communication dynamics begin with the same function, (S or N, or T or F). It is not that simple. The general communication dynamic is different for Extraverts than it is for Introverts even when they share the same pattern of functions. The eight extraverted types will communicate out of their dominant function. Because of their preferred focus on the external world and because they primarily use the dominant function, the verbal communication agenda of Extraverts appears to be rather straightforward and more immediate than the pattern of Introverts. Extraverts, in fact, prefer to talk things out. They come to clarity on an issue through discussion. It is often said of Extraverts that they will "speak to think." The more intense the issue, the greater the likelihood Extraverts, while wanting to respond quickly, will come to clarity of thought only as they talk

through the issue. This principle applies equally to extraverted congregations; it is in and through the conversations and discussions that the congregation will formulate clarity about a decision or direction. Extraverted congregations want, need, to be part of the discussions. In lending their voices they have more clarity on the topic at hand.

It may be helpful to simplify the communication dynamics raised in the MBTI theory by reducing the focus of each function to a single question. The issues and agendas of the Sensing function are represented by the question “What are the facts, details, or the objects of experience?” while “What are the possibilities or alternatives?” represents the general focus of the Intuitive function. In a similar manner, the primary orientation of issues for the Judging functions (T and F) is each represented by a question. “What policies, rules, logic apply?” is the question indicative of the Thinking function and “Who is going to be affected and how?” reflects the valuing emphasis of the Feeling function.

These questions are intended merely to represent the general interest of each of the four functions. In this way we can more easily see the variety of interests and communication patterns in the sixteen types. While Table 9.1 highlights the eight extraverted types, Table 9.2, depicted later in the chapter, displays these communication patterns, with the oversimplified question format, for the eight introverted types.<sup>2</sup> The numerical order corresponds to the order of functions for

each type as previously presented in the Overview of Functions and Attitudes,

<b>Table 10.1</b> Pattern of Communication Dynamics in Question Form by Rank Order and Type for Extraverts. (Note: The table could be further expanded with 5-8 showing the order of functions repeated with the opposite attitude.)	
<b>ESTP</b>	
Asks	1. S <sup>(E)</sup> What are the objects of experience, details or facts
May consider	2. T <sup>(I)</sup> What policies, rules, logic apply
May not consider	3. F <sup>(I)</sup> Who is going to be affected and how
Unlikely to consider	4. N <sup>(I)</sup> What are the possibilities or alternatives
<b>ESTJ</b>	
Asks	1. T <sup>(E)</sup> What policies, rules, logic apply
May consider	2. S <sup>(I)</sup> What are the facts, details or objects of experience
May not consider	3. N <sup>(I)</sup> What are the possibilities or alternatives
Unlikely to consider	4. F <sup>(I)</sup> Who is going to be affected and how
<b>ESFP</b>	
Asks	1. S <sup>(E)</sup> What are the objects of experience, details or facts
May consider	2. F <sup>(I)</sup> Who is going to be affected and how
May not consider	3. T <sup>(I)</sup> What policies, rules, logic apply
Unlikely to consider	4. N <sup>(I)</sup> What are the possibilities or alternatives
<b>ESFJ</b>	
Asks	1. F <sup>(E)</sup> Who is going to be affected and how
May consider	2. S <sup>(I)</sup> What are the objects of experience, details or facts
May not consider	3. N <sup>(I)</sup> What are the possibilities or alternatives
Unlikely to consider	4. T <sup>(I)</sup> What policies, rules, logic apply
<b>ENFP</b>	
Asks	1. N <sup>(E)</sup> What are the possibilities or alternatives
May consider	2. F <sup>(I)</sup> Who is going to be affected and how
May not consider	3. T <sup>(I)</sup> What policies, rules, logic apply
Unlikely to consider	4. S <sup>(I)</sup> What are the objects of experience, details or facts
<b>ENFJ</b>	
Asks	1. F <sup>(E)</sup> Who is going to be affected and how
May consider	2. N <sup>(I)</sup> What are the possibilities or alternatives
May not consider	3. S <sup>(I)</sup> What are the details, objects of experience or facts
Unlikely to consider	4. T <sup>(I)</sup> What policies, rules, logic apply
<b>ENTP</b>	
Asks	1. N <sup>(E)</sup> What are the possibilities or alternatives
May consider	2. T <sup>(I)</sup> What policies, rules, logic apply
May not consider	3. F <sup>(I)</sup> Who is going to be affected and how
Unlikely to consider	4. S <sup>(I)</sup> What are the objects of experience, details or facts
<b>ENTJ</b>	
Asks	1. T <sup>(E)</sup> What policies, rules, logic apply
May consider	2. N <sup>(I)</sup> What are the possibilities or alternatives
May not consider	3. S <sup>(I)</sup> What are the facts, details or objects of experience
Unlikely to consider	4. F <sup>(I)</sup> Who is going to be affected and how

Table 9.2, in the previous chapter. The identified order of dominant, auxiliary, tertiary, and inferior functions was discussed in that chapter. These functions with their attitude by type are the foundation for Tables 10.1 and 10.2.

Extraverted types, Table 10.1, focus their verbal communication through the dominant function which they extravert. This is labeled as “1” in the communication pattern for each type. The focus of communication for Extraverts will be oriented toward their first question as it rises out of their dominant function. The subsequent functions with corresponding questions for each type are labeled 2, 3, and 4. For the Extravert, these take on the introverted attitude.<sup>3</sup> As such, it is likely the issues of interest to these functions may be only contemplated by the Extravert and may not be recognized in the overt verbal communication. Issues or concerns rising from the introverted functions may be the hidden energy helping to drive the communication of the extraverted dominant function. Yet verbal communication with an Extravert will tend to be more immediate and straightforward. It can be both the means and the end.

The ESTJ, for example, asks, “What policies, rules, logic apply?” This is the question representing the dominant function of Thinking. The ESTJ in Table 9.1 is annotated by 1. T<sub>(E)</sub>. This notation indicates the dominant function, the number 1 function, is Thinking, and is held in the extraverted attitude, <sub>(E)</sub>. Since the next three functions take on the introverted attitude, the Extravert may only contemplate them, rather than verbalize them. The ESTJ may consider, “What are the facts, details or the objects of experience?” “What are the possibilities or

alternatives” may not be considered by the ESTJ, while consideration of “Who is going to be affected and how” will carry little influence in shaping the communication. The issues of these last three functions tend not to be an immediate or natural focus of communication for the ESTJ. In fact, the Extravert may sound like a one-drum percussionist. However, through awareness and intentional practice the Extravert can develop an ability to raise and communicate concerns shaped by these other three functions.

## COMMUNICATION PATTERNS FOR INTROVERTS

Verbal communication for Introverts is radically different. By definition, Introverts use their dominant function on their own inner world of thoughts and ideas. It will be the auxiliary function from which the eight introverted types attempt to communicate. Verbal communication for them is not necessarily as easy and, generally, is not as straightforward as for persons who prefer to extravert their dominant function, i.e., the Extraverted types. As Introverts want, even needs, time for reflection, their communications will tend to be delayed. It is said of Introverts they “Think to speak - sometimes without ever speaking.” Often, when preparing to speak to another person, Introverts may rehearse in their mind both sides of the conversation—what they will say, as well as, how the other person will respond. In their mind’s eyes they may see, and experience, both sides of a conversation as clearly as if it took place. Later, when challenged by the other person about never talking about a particular topic, they may be thoroughly convinced the conversation

actually did take place. They remember it in their mind's eye. Introverts indeed “think to speak - sometimes without ever speaking.”

This need to think before one speaks for the Introvert is lived out in real life in the need to have time to contemplate. The more intense the conversation, the greater the emotional energy being directed at them, the more pressure there is on making an immediate decision, the more the Introvert needs space for thought and time to come to clarity. Lyle Schaller frequently pointed out at seminars he was conducting in the church “No” does not mean “No”: it simply puts the topic at hand on the agenda for future consideration. Introverts often, without thinking, will respond to a request with a quick “No!” Later they may come back to the topic having changed their minds. They use the “No” to create space in order to think about how or what they really feel or think. If you can, bring to mind a parent who, when approached about allowing you to participate in an activity with friends, immediately responded with “No!” Later, the No was retracted. It may upset the one receiving the negative answer, but it buys time for Introverts to come to clarity about how they feel or what they think about your request.

Therefore, the communication pattern for Introverts in Table 10.2 shows, while their “need to know” issues are pertinent to their dominant function, number 1 of the communication pattern, their extraverted communication begins with their auxiliary function, number 2 of the communication pattern. The Introvert may more

readily communicate an interest for questions or issues connected with the

**Table 10.2** Pattern of Communication Dynamics in Question Form by Rank Order and Type for Introverts. (Note: Introverts want to know number one but tend to begin their communication by extraverting number two. This table could also be expanded 5-8 showing the order of functions repeated with the opposite attitude.)

<b>ISTP</b>	
Needs to know	1. T (I) What policies, rules, logic apply
But asks	2. S(E) What are the objects of experience, details or facts
May ask	3. N(E) What are the possibilities or alternatives
Possibly will ask	4. F(E) Who is going to be affected and how
<b>ISTJ</b>	
Needs to know	1. S (I) What are the facts, details or objects of experience
But asks	2. T(E) What policies, rules, logic apply
May ask	3. F(E) Who is going to be affected and how
Possibly will ask	4. N(E) What are the possibilities or alternatives
<b>ISFP</b>	
Needs to know	1. F (I) Who is going to be affected and how
But asks	2. S(E) What are the objects of experience, details or facts
May ask	3. N(E) What are the possibilities or alternatives
Possibly will ask	4. T(E) What policies, rules, logic apply
<b>ISFJ</b>	
Needs to know	1. S (I) What are the details, objects of experience or facts
But asks	2. F(E) Who is going to be affected and how
May ask	3. T(E) What policies, rules, logic apply
Possibly will ask	4. N(E) What are the possibilities or alternatives
<b>INFP</b>	
Needs to know	1. F (I) Who is going to be affected and how
But asks	2. N(E) What are the possibilities or alternatives
May ask	3. S(E) What are the objects of experience, details or facts
Possibly will ask	4. T(E) What policies, rules, logic apply
<b>INFJ</b>	
Needs to know	1. N (I) What are the possibilities or alternatives
But asks	2. F(E) Who is going to be affected and how
May ask	3. T(E) What policies, rules, logic apply
Possibly will ask	4. S(E) What are the details, objects of experience or facts
<b>INTP</b>	
Needs to know	1. T (I) What policies, rules, logic apply
But asks	2. N(E) What are the possibilities or alternatives
May ask	3. S(E) What are the objects of experience, details or facts
Possibly will ask	4. F(E) Who is going to be affected and how
<b>INTJ</b>	
Needs to know	1. N (I) What are the possibilities or alternatives
But asks	2. T(E) What policies, rules, logic apply
May ask	3. F(E) Who is going to be affected and how
Possibly will ask	4. S(E) What are the facts, details or objects of experience

auxiliary, tertiary, and inferior functions, as they prefer to extravert these functions, while not revealing the primary issues of their dominant function.

The communication challenge for and with Introverts could be framed as follows: “Introverts tend not to ask the question to which they desire an answer.” Introverts deal with the outer world primarily through their auxiliary function. This function takes on the extraverted attitude, as do the tertiary and inferior functions.<sup>4</sup> Introverts’ verbal communication style (what they say or ask) using the extraverted auxiliary function differs from their communication preference (what they want or need to know) as this is governed by the introverted dominant function. Introverts, using their auxiliary function to deal with the outside world, may appear to others to be exploring one thing while really desiring an answer to a different, yet hidden, question. This tends to increase the difficulty for Introverts in both intimate relationships and the public world, and, at best, can only be confusing for Extraverts.

An example of this is INFPs who may be known as the idea person as their communication style comes out of the intuitive. They may see and communicate the possibilities and/or are skilled at getting others to talk about what might be or how programs might work. The INFPs’ preference, however, is to know the valuing issues of who is going to be affected and how. Introverts use the auxiliary function in the external world to generate ideas and thoughts for their inner worlds. Then in their own minds they use new information to attempt to discern an answer to the real unasked-question posed by their dominant functions. They internally process,

“So, if we go with this idea this is who might be affected and how, but if we go with the other idea this will be the effect.” They tend not to verbalize this process or conclusion. Rather, they are extraverting the ideas, the possibilities, as a means for their dominant function to get what it really wants, i.e., more food-for-thought about the valuing issues involved in the topic. Communication for the Introverts is the means to the end — the end being that for which the Introvert lives — space to contemplate the thoughts about details or ideas, structure or relationships. Introverts tend to ask one thing while looking for an answer to something different. Introverts tend not to ask the question to which they are seeking an answer.

Look at another example of verbal communication patterns for Introverts in Table 10.2. Consider the communication pattern for the ISTP, which is the first pattern displayed. The ISTP will appear to be pursuing the experiences or facts with the sensing function by the direction of the extraverted Sensing attitude,  $S_{(E)}$ . The ISTP asks, “What are the objects of experience, details or facts?” In reality, they are engaged in a still deeper quest. Within themselves they are trying to resolve the situation or issue through their dominant function of Thinking,  $T_{(I)}$ . What the ISTP really wants to know, but may not come right out and ask, is “What policies, rules, logic apply?” The dominant Thinking function wants to know what is going to be acceptable, systematic, legal, or constitutional, and what will not meet the criteria.

Communication with Introverts can further be confusing as, in pursuit of an internal answer to a question framed by the dominant function, they may elicit the aid of the other two functions labeled 3 and 4 on Table 10.2. These also carry the

extraverted attitude. Introverts may ask questions and raise issues shaped by these two lesser functions. As information is gathered through these other functions, Introverts continue to work within themselves to come to clarity on the issues associated with the concerns of their dominant function. This process is a key reason why Introverts tend not to be immediate in their response to issues. Introverts need to contemplate, process, and integrate the information received from the extraverted functions in order for their responses to be congruent with the needs of their dominant introverted function.

The communication, at the eventual point of response, is further diffused as Introverts may attempt to give back an answer. Introverts don't realize what happens. They think they are answering in a straightforward manner. Instead, what generally comes out of their mouths are words governed, or censored, by the extraverted auxiliary function whose job it is to deal with the outside world. The INFP is asked a question point blank to their dominant function, "How is this program going to affect the adult social groups of the congregation?" The dominant function hears the question and tries to respond. What comes out through the extraverted auxiliary function of Intuition is an answer something like, "Well, yes, there are great possibilities to be considered going into this program and we can envision a number of positive effects it could have on the Sunday School and youth programs, as well as for the adults." The question was not answered. The effects, and frustrations, of these communications dynamics on relationships cannot be underestimated.

You can't always determine whether a person is Introvert or Extravert simply by the amount they talk. Some Extraverts are quite reserved when it comes to verbal communication and some Introverts are very verbal. Quantity of words cannot be confused with skillful communication. Both Introverts and Extraverts may use words, lots of words, to control or dominate a situation. Words may be used to compensate for insecurity or anxiety. While Introverts hold issues of their dominant function introversive, they verbalize out of the other three functions. This conjures up an image of a very hungry right-handed person trying to feed himself utilizing the left hand and either or both feet, but not the right-hand. The food ends up all over the place with little hitting the mark. So too with some very verbal Introverts who don't take the time to process and mentally prepare an appropriate response. Their words end up all over the place, coming from three different directions (the three extraverted functions) and may not be organized with any clarity of purpose.

## FACING THE COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE

As Introverts become aware of the basis for their challenges with verbal communication, this knowledge calls them to move out of their comfort zone of protecting their issues of preference. It invites them now to see why others need to know the primary issues with which they are concerned. It encourages them to risk and be more direct with their responses. As humans have a desire to develop and maintain relationships, Introverts must begin to use communication as something

more than a means to an end of gathering more thoughts and ideas. For Introverts, this means risking the communication of the issues associated with the introverted dominant function. The knowledge of type can greatly enhance relationships and the vital building block: communication. Understanding the basis for the challenges in communication is the first step in turning them from being obstacles to being steppingstones to improved relationships.

Our society tends to demand an ever more immediate response. The pressure is on for instantaneous communications. Introverts, however, because of the nature of their orientation, would prefer three days to think about things. Being expected to give an immediate response, Introverts may give you one. However, they will often invoke their privilege to change their mind after they have had plenty of time to think about the issue. Many pastors remember the board member who came to church on Sunday and said, “Ya know the vote you took at last Tuesday’s meeting about starting the new program... well, I’ve been thinking about it. And...” Their new position is now 180° from where they stood at Tuesday’s meeting. Frequently in the pressure of a meeting where decisions must be made, the Introvert fails to find the space or time to come to clarity of thought on a topic. Consequently, their thoughts and ideas get expressed some days later. However, there are ways for the Introvert to create space so the necessary decisions can be made without taking three days.

Having printed agendas with all action items identified is the best way to honor all board members. When a major decision needs to be made, it helps to

schedule a break between the discussion and the vote. If this is unacceptable, the Introvert can always take a bathroom break, creating the necessary space to come to greater clarity on an issue.

These communication dynamics apply equally to corporate personality types, as they do to individuals. One member of the church board stated, “We only have three problems in this congregation: communication, communication, and communication.” Is there a consultant or judicatory leader who has not heard the concern for improving communication raised as a main issue? The so-called “miscommunication” easily develops as one extraverts the facts while the other is listening for the possibilities, or vice versa. They talk past each other. This happens, too, as one articulates the human concerns in ministry and another champions the policies and procedures that should be followed. This maze of values and interests and concerns can then become personalized and people wounded as lines are drawn and sides taken over what is important — the ideas, the rules, the ministry concerns, or the details (though never stated as such).

Good communication starts with an initial understanding that others have differing communication needs, concerns and issues. The acknowledgment begins with the recognition that people tend to lead with information oriented to their preferred extraverted function. If, for example, one’s personality preference is to extravert ideas, then it is the sharing and shaping of ideas with which they tend to lead in their verbal communication. Facts or structure, or how others might benefit, may never be developed by the speaker.

In speaking to a congregation, or to any group of people, one is wise to assume the four communication orientations are represented in those present. Being conscious to address the issues of all four functions is essential and helpful. Following a simple pattern of S, F, T, and N gives a basic structure and continuity to both verbal and written communications. While one's own personality type dictates that the information associated with from one to three preferences will be held introversive and therefore may be withheld from the communication, all four areas should generally be included in public communication. This pattern—S, F, T, N—begins with facts and details, moves to relational effects, then considers consistency with accepted structure or policy, and concludes with where this may lead in the future. A sermon, for example, might start with the details and facts of a scripture text (S) then move to the relational (F) of both past and present. This is supported through identifying the correlation to one's system of theology (T). Finally, the sermon challenges listeners to where this is leading the congregation or the people individually (N).

## A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

The way a congregation lives out the gospel, the way it addresses issues as a community, and for that matter, what becomes an issue in the first place, is directly connected to its corporate personality type. Each congregation's perspective and values are shaped to a great degree by the deeper issues and questions of the dominant function and the use of the auxiliary, tertiary, and inferior functions to

inform and support the response. Communicating solely in the grip of one's preferences, without considering how the others hear, often results in a failure to communicate.

Pastor Lee was in her second congregational assignment. She had been serving First Church, a place steeped in tradition, for about six months. From the beginning she had been very frustrated with the curriculum used by this congregation in their faith formation classes for the 8th and 9th graders. She judged students experienced the material as boring and meaningless. Perhaps, more to the point, she was bored with the material. Having recently been at a publisher's seminar, Pastor Lee became intrigued with material emphasizing an interactive approach with a variety of teaching/learning styles. Material was published in both print and electronic formats. At the core, the same fundamentals of faith would be taught; the delivery system was more engaging for the students. The core of the curriculum taught by the pastor would be reinforced in mentoring groups. These teams would build deeper relationships with each other, as they would explore the lesson in small groups and help teach the large group by preparing skits and drama. Students would reinforce the principles of the faith through conducting service projects together. Pastor Lee was excited. This new material would bring about a change she knew this congregation desperately needed.

Pastor Lee brought a proposal to the Board the next month. She recommended the congregation contract for this new material. In her presentation she pointed out the present program was a failure; students were just going through the motions

because their parents made them go. Further, the material was outdated. She announced, “It is time for change! I have found some new material with a new approach. I have talked with colleagues who really enjoy teaching it, and they report the students are more engaged than ever. It really helps foster healthier relationships between the students. We need to change to this new curriculum. And besides, this new curriculum utilizes parents and adults from the congregation as mentors. This will enhance the relationships between the adults and young adults in our program.”

The response was immediate and sharp, “We’ve never done it that way before.” “Our material isn’t old. We just bought it three years ago.” “We looked and looked and this is the closest we could find to what we remember Pastor Schmidt using back in the sixties. He had the biggest classes.” “The pastor has always taught all the classes by himself.” “Newer is NOT always better. You don’t have to come in here and change everything. You may be the pastor, but this is our church!”

After the voices died down and the smoked cleared, Pastor Lee was left wondering what happened. She defensively came to the conclusion this church cared more about its traditions than its youth. Could her gender be the issue? She was wounded

The issue here is not the congregation being stuck, stubborn, inflexible, cheap, or unconcerned about the youth. Nor is the issue Pastor Lee’s inexperience, naiveté, or desire for change simply for the sake of change. Rather, this is a classic example of a failure to communicate. The miscommunication finds its genesis in the

conceptual language of the valuing systems, as they differ for the governing board and the pastor. The members of the board are displaying a time orientation to the past. They use words embodying tradition, commitment, and consistency. This language will be heard as being task-oriented, with task delineation. It is not about the material per se. It is more about trust, communication and simplifying history.

In contrast, Pastor Lee is simply speaking with a word selection emanating from her personality. Naturally, but quite unconsciously, her language reflects a core value system differing from the congregation. She prefers using words focusing on relationships, tolerance, and inclusivity. Individuals operating from this set of preferences value authenticity, identity, flexibility, creativity and new ideas. Change is welcomed. It is a good thing and necessary to maintain life.

Even without knowing the congregation's corporate type, Pastor Lee might have furthered her cause if she had framed her presentation using the SFTN format. For example, she might have said, (starting with details and historical facts S) "For 132 years this congregation has been committed to passing on the faith to its young people, the next generation. It has been, and still is, our tradition to have this faith formation program. It is important for our program to teach the faith as expected by our denomination."

(Transitioning from details S to relational F) "While very consistent over the years, from time to time it has been necessary to update the materials or hold classes on different days of the week so the needs of the students and their families

are met. You have made those adjustments because your primary goal is to have the young people learn more about the Bible and about being a Christian.”

(Incorporating the T values) “Standing in our tradition, and in the commitment to offer the best program we can, I recommend we use material which is now widely used in congregations in our denomination. As with pastors before, I will be responsible for this program and meet with the students to present the main portion of the lesson.”

(Moving forward with N options) “Other parents and adults will have opportunity to be of service to the church by helping out if they choose. I will provide training to all adults willing to help. You have concern for the young people, desiring they learn the tenants of the faith and stay active in the congregation as they move into adulthood. I believe the way we engage with them at this important time in their lives will help them to remain active in their faith into the future.”

## WHOSE PROBLEM IS IT?

When one observes, “We only have three problems here: communication, communication, and communication,” whose problem is it, the speaker’s, or the listener’s? The obvious answer is both the speaker and the listener have responsibility for words becoming communication. However, knowledge invites responsibility. Knowing that word choice, images, and concept-development are products of one’s type preference, the responsibility increases for each of us, as we are both speaker and listener. With such knowledge the listener recognizes people

tend to focus their speaking in and through words, images and concepts of their own primary communication function. This knowledge increases one's responsibility to develop patience in listening, not overreacting when the speaker fails to speak in language of listener's dominant function. The ones listening, knowing what they need to hear according to their preferences, have responsibility to appropriately enter dialogue to ascertain the information they require for understanding.

When it is the speaker who has the knowledge of communication differences according to type, it becomes his or her responsibility to present the information in a manner allowing the one listening to hear. Listening becomes hearing when there is interest and understanding, when there is a connection made to the content being spoken. By using personality type preference based language of the one with whom one is attempting to communicate, the potential for being understood increases, and one decreases the likelihood of misunderstanding and confusion.

Some have questioned whether, or not, this manipulation. If an ENTJ pastor knows the congregation functions by the guidance of the ISFJ preferences, is it manipulation for the pastor to start his or her communication focusing on the facts and details (S) and showing understanding of relational impact (F), or is it sensitivity to how the congregation hears? Manipulation is more about the motive of one's own agenda. Being sensitive and trying to communicate in a manner that allows the other to hear most clearly shows a motivation which respects the other. English is my primary language. When I am speaking to someone who has a language preference of German, it is not manipulation, but honor and respect,

motivating me to try to use German. The language of the Sensing preference is different, sounds different, from the language of the Intuition, from the language of the Thinking, from the language of the Feeling. Manipulation? Rather isn't it arrogant to act like everyone should speak and understand my language, filled with images, words and concepts which make most sense to me? When one is in love, is there not a desire to learn and understand the actions, words, and interests, which speak to the other's heart, striving to be more competent in conveying the love one desires to share?

Respect is shown when communication is attempted in the way affording the other the greatest opportunity to hear and understand. Honor is extended by intentionally providing the genre of sounds—facts and details, or ideas, or structure and rules, or relational benefits—which will be music to the ears of the one who is listening. Clergy, lay leadership and staff will enhance their relationship with each other and the congregation as they work at understanding the differing communication preferences of the other as a discipline of respect. Not only will communication be achieved at a greater level, but also the kindling for the fires of conflict will be dampened.

### *Endnotes*

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1. Angeles Arrien, *The Four-Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 24.
2. Michael C. Rehak, *Identifying the Congregation's Corporate Personality*, (Berkeley, CA: Doctoral Thesis, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1991).
3. Briggs Myers and McCaulley, 18.
4. Ibid.