

## How to Determine a Social Style Through Observation and Improve Relationships

### Introduction

Every person we come in contact with, whether through business dealings, a social setting, or personal relationships, has a social style that is their own. There are those that may share their style, but not necessarily to the same degree.

Understanding that each person has a style is helpful when working with other or when developing a friendship. Sometimes differences between people is no more than a style difference that has one person interpreting events differently than the other person.

There are simple ways to determine another person's style, and as result differences or similarities which can impact the success of the relationship are easier to understand.

There are four main styles that envelop everyone. They are Analytical, Directing, Expressive and Amiable. A person will be dominant in one style, but may be socially versatile enough to exhibit other styles as well. Another person without versatility will predominantly demonstrate characteristics of their primary style.

The four main styles are then broken down into twelve observable character traits. Six of the twelve fit along a continuum from Controlling to Emotional, the other six, from Asking to Telling. Each of the two sets are then plotted on a small grid, the average value of one set are plotted vertically, and the other average value horizontally. The quadrant where the two data points meet is the primary social style of that person.

Below you will find listed, the twelve observable character traits. Following this is a grid that will show you how to plot the information you have observed. Finally, each Social Style has it's pro's and con's, and you will find a description of what they are. With this information, it may be possible to better understand a teammate, friend or business partner, and thereby improve the quality of your relationship.

## The Process

There are three steps in this process to determine a Social Style. The first step is to determine the degree to which a person is either Controlling or Emotional, or Asks more or less than Tells Each set is measured by the use of six different categories, twelve in all.

Observe a person and determine the degree to which the person is, for example, speaking in a Monotone or with an Inflection; or whether the person is speaking in a slower pace vs. a faster pace.

In each case circle a value from 1 to 5. A value of 1 means the person is speaking entirely in a Monotone and talking only about Tasks, etc. If the person is doing the opposite, speaking entirely with Inflection and talking only about People, then assign a value of 5. If the person is 50/50, then assign the number 3, etc.

Average the values of each of the 6 categories to arrive at a single value for Controlling vs. Emotional.

<u>Vertical Axis Category</u>	<u>Style - Controlling</u>						<u>Style - Emotional</u>
1. Speech	Monotone	1	2	3	4	5	Inflection
2. What you talk about	Tasks	1	2	3	4	5	People
3. Elements of conversation	Facts/Data	1	2	3	4	5	Opinions/Stories
4. Body Language	Less Hand Movement	1	2	3	4	5	More Hand Movement
5. Posture	Stiff/Upright	1	2	3	4	5	Casual/Leaning/Sitting
6. Facial Expression	Non-expressive	1	2	3	4	5	Animated

Average of 6 Categories                      enter #

The second step is to determine whether the person is more likely to "Ask" or to "Tell" you something. Using the same process and values as described in step one, determine the average value of these six categories.

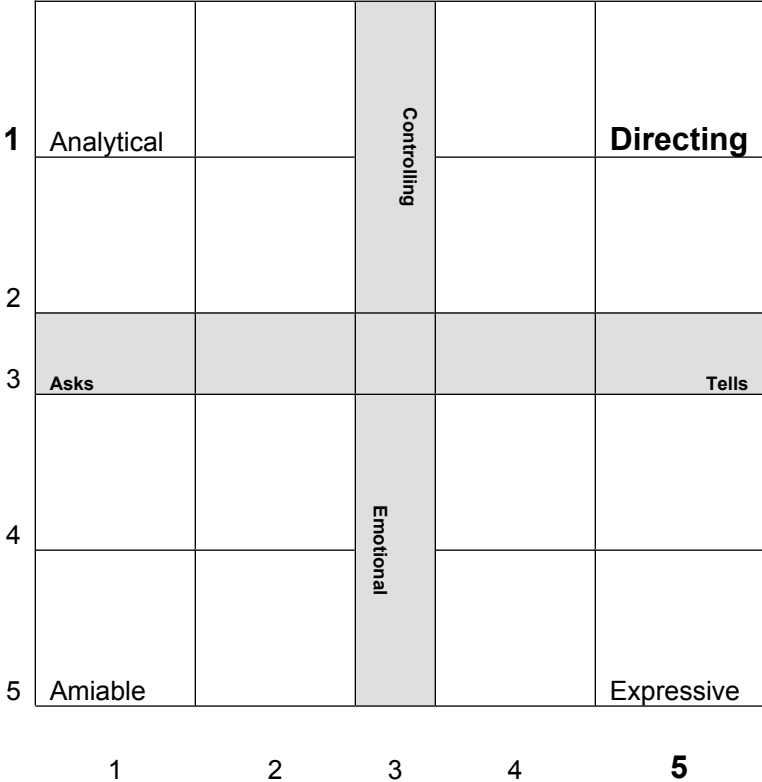
<u>Horizontal Axis Category</u>	<u>Style - Asks</u>						<u>Style - Tells</u>
7. Speech Pace	Slower Pace	1	2	3	4	5	Faster Pace
8. Speech Pattern	Fewer Sentences	1	2	3	4	5	More Sentences
9. Speech Volume	Quieter	1	2	3	4	5	Louder
10. Use of Hands	Non-directive/Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	Directive/Points for Emphasis
11. Body Language	Leans Back	1	2	3	4	5	Leans Forward
12. Eye Contact	Indirect	1	2	3	4	5	Direct

Average of 6 Categories                      enter #

### Plotting the Data

The third step is to plot the average values from the Controlling/Emotional and Asks/Tells categories plot the values on the grid. Place Controlling/Emotional value on the vertical scale, and Asks/Tells on the horizontal scale.

For example, if the two values are 1 (Controlling) and 5 (Tells) then the person is in the uppermost right hand box. This would indicate a Directing Social Style. On the other hand if the values are 3 and 3 then the person is in the center box and is likely to exhibit elements of all four styles.



## Using the Information

After having identified a person's style as Directing, Analytical, Amiable or Expressive it is important to know what to do with this information. Each of the four styles has accompanying traits. The following traits will further explain how this person is oriented. Understanding these traits can enhance your ability to interact with each style.

The elements of each of the four Social Styles occur in three groups:

- (1) Need - What is the person seeking to receive from the interaction with you;
- (2) Orientation - What is the person focused on during the interaction; and
- (3) Growth Opportunity – What the person likely will not do in an interaction

	<u>Analytical</u>	<u>Directing</u>	<u>Expressive</u>	<u>Amiable</u>
<b>This Person Needs...</b>	To be right	Results	Personal Approval	Personal Security
<b>This Person is Oriented Toward...</b>	Thinking, Ideas, Concepts	Actions, Goals, Tasks	Spontaneity, Stream of consciousness talking	Relationships, Minimizing differences with other people
<b>This Person's Growth Opportunity is...</b>	To Declare, or to say what they are thinking	To Listen	To Check, or to see if the other person understands what they are saying	To Initiate, or to present their point of view, instead of being a passive listener.