What's Your Learning Style?

Learning styles refer to the ways you prefer to approach new information. Each of us learns and processes information in our own special ways, though we share some learning patterns, preferences, and approaches. Knowing your own style also can help you to realize that other people may approach the same situation in a different way from your own.

Take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire to assess your preferred learning style. Begin by reading the words in the left-hand column. Of the three responses to the right, circle the one that best characterizes you, answering as honestly as possible with the description that applies to you right now. Count the number of circled items and write your total at the bottom of each column. The questions you prefer will offer insight into how you learn.

	a	b	c
1. When I try to **concentrate...**	I grow distracted by clutter or movement, and I notice things around me other people don't notice.	I get distracted by sounds, and I attempt to control the amount and type of noise around me.	I become distracted by commotion, and I tend to retreat inside myself.
2. When I **visualize...**	I see vivid, detailed pictures in my thoughts.	I think in voices and sounds.	I see images in my thoughts that involve movement.
3. When I **talk with others...**	I find it difficult to listen for very long.	I enjoy listening, or I get impatient to talk myself.	I gesture and communicate with my hands.
4. When I **contact people...**	I prefer face-to-face meetings.	I prefer speaking by telephone for serious conversations.	I prefer to interact while walking or participating in some activity.
5. When I **see an acquaintance...**	I forget names but remember faces, and I tend to replay where we met for the first time.	I know people's names and I can usually quote what we discussed.	I remember what we did together and I may almost "feel" our time together.
6. When I **relax...**	I watch TV, see a play, visit an exhibit, or go to a movie.	I listen to the radio, play music, read, or talk with a friend.	I play sports, make crafts, or build something with my hands.
7. When I **read...**	I like descriptive examples and I may pause to imagine the scene.	I enjoy the narrative most and I can almost "hear" the characters talk.	I prefer action-oriented stories, but I do not often read for pleasure.
8. When I **spell...**	I envision the word in my mind or imagine what the word looks like when written.	I sound out the word, sometimes aloud, and tend to recall rules about letter order.	I get a feel for the word by writing it out or pretending to type it.
9. When I **do something new...**	I seek out demonstrations, pictures, or diagrams.	I want verbal and written instructions, and to talk it over with someone else.	I jump right in to try it, keep trying, and try different approaches.

10. When I assemble an object...	I look at the picture first and then, maybe, read the directions.	I read the directions, or I talk aloud as I work.	I usually ignore the directions and figure it out as I go along.
12. When I teach other people...	I show them.	I tell them, write it out, or I ask them a series of questions.	I demonstrate how it is done and then ask them to try.
Total	Visual:	Auditory:	Tactile/Kinesthetic:

The column with the highest total represents your primary processing style. The column with the second-most choices is your secondary style.

Your primary learning style: _____

Your secondary learning style: _____

Now that you know which learning style you rely on, you can boost your learning potential when working to learn more. For instance, the following suggestions can help you get more from reading a book.

If your primary learning style is **visual**, draw pictures in the margins, look at the graphics, and read the text that explains the graphics. Envision the topic or play a movie in your thoughts of how you'll act out the subject matter.

If your primary learning style is **auditory**, listen to the words you read. Try to develop an internal conversation between you and the text. Don't be embarrassed to read aloud or talk through the information.

If your primary learning style is **tactile/kinesthetic**, use a pencil or highlighter pen to mark passages that are meaningful to you. Take notes, transferring the information you learn to the margins of the book, into your journal, or onto a computer. Doodle whatever comes to mind as you read. Hold the book in your hands instead of placing it on a table. Walk around as you read. Feel the words and ideas. Get busy—both mentally and physically.

More information on each style, along with suggestions on how to maximize your learning potential, is available in the book _Learn More Now_ (Hoboken, NJ; John Wiley & Sons, 2004).

Personality Styles

How do you re-energize?	
Introvert - Prefer privacy - Energize alone with time for thought and reflection - May be seen as "quite a thinker" - Asked often if I am angry (even when I am not)	**Extrovert** - Prefer to be with other people - Energize with others, like to bounce ideas off of other people to think out loud - Often seen as "socially adapt" - Feel often as if I have "said too much".

How do take in information?	
Sensate - Think, plan and write in paragraphs - Look to past history for help in making decisions - Enjoy attending to details and making sure all bases are covered in all matters - Feel short changed and uneasy with lack of details	**Intuitive** - Think, plan and write in bullets - Look to future possibilities in making decisions - Enjoy brain storming and coming up with new innovative ways to do things. - Feel bored and irritable with too many details

How do you usually base decision making?	
Feeling - Makes decisions based on personal convictions - Feels justified ignoring analytical data if someone's feelings are hurt - May sabotage a process if they feel excluded - Often wear feelings "on my sleeves"	**Thinking** - Make decisions based on subjective analytical data - Feels justified ignoring someone's feelings if analytical data supports their decision - May go into opposition if they sense a lack of fairness - Prefer "emotional" privacy

How do you like to live their day to day life?	
Judging - Happiest when finishing what I start - Like timetables and schedules - Feel the most comfortable with predictability - Have difficulty when interrupted	**Perceiving** - Happiest with free flow and having open ended time frames - Like to "fly by the seat of my pants" - Feel most comfortable with flexibility - Welcome interruptions

PERSONALITY TYPES & STRATEGIES TO FOSTER LEARNING

TYPE	WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE THE LEARNER DO	HOW TO FOSTER THEIR LEARNING
Introvert	Gets to work early to prepare Doesn't mind long procedures Has difficulty with interruptions Prefers to work alone With a new assignment needs to carefully think it through before beginning Needs down time to be alone when it has been a busy day	Allow thinking time before beginning a new task or procedure Provide written material for additional learning Provide opportunities to work alone Provide time for alone reflection "I will give you some time to think about that" "I will give you some time to process what just happened" "Let's talk at the end of the day and discuss the events of the day"
Extrovert	Volunteers to take work that will keep them busy Wants to be where the action is Often impatient with long, slow, tedious jobs Welcomes interruptions Develops ideas by discussion May just jump in to do a task without checking the policy and procedure manual first or thinking through it Likes to be around people and socializing	Assign them a variety of tasks Try to balance their assignment with tasks that may require "boring" work and tasks that may require novel procedures Provide them with limits to know when they can pay attention to interruptions and when they need to stay focused on getting their other work done Provide opportunities to "talk things out" to determine their understanding about the situation at hand Validate their thinking prior to beginning new procedures Allow opportunities to work with other team members Encourage them to think before they act
Sensing	Provides a very detailed report, attending to all the details Likes to see all the available facts and data Performs a new task/project in a very logical order, following all the appropriate steps in the proper order Wants to know what the specific routines are	Provide assignments that require careful following of steps and are detail-oriented Spend time reviewing relevant policies and procedures Review all the specific data first and assist others to then look at the big picture Set clear expectations so they know what needs to be done and how Guide them in understanding what are essential pieces of data to communicate to another team member Guide them in understanding exceptions to following each procedure exactly as written
Intuitive	Delivers a very concise, bullet-point format in communication Identifies similarities between situations that have similar themes Identifies that they have a gut feeling about things or a hunch	Guide them in knowing when they need to provide more information/details Provide opportunities to discuss their gut feelings and see the connections among the data they have at hand Foster their ability to "put the pieces

	Gets bored in discussions when a peer is providing a lot of seemingly unimportant details When doing a task/project they may jump in anywhere and skip around steps Likes having variety in work	together" and see the correlations, similarities and differences between different aspects of work Provide variety in work assignments Guide them in understanding when it is important to follow procedures exactly as written Involve them in opportunities to foster their need to understand the big picture Begin discussion with the big pictures of a project and then allow them to look at the individual pieces
Thinking	Makes decisions based on objective analytical data Decides with the head Feels justified ignoring someone's feelings if analytical data supports their contention May go on a tirade of opposition if they sense a lack of fairness Prefers "emotional" privacy May seem cold and condescending May not show any emotion when difficult situations arise	Guide them to be sensitive to other's feelings in a situation Provide the theory underlying the decisions and projects Provide them with supplemental learning materials Explore all the available data to assist their decision-making Respect their need to not discuss their feelings Acknowledge that just because they are not showing emotion it does not mean that they don't care
Feeling	Makes decisions based on their personal convictions Decides with the heart Feels justified ignoring analytical data if someone's feelings are hurt May sabotage a process if they feel excluded Often wears their feelings "on their sleeves" May seem emotional and sentimental May become emotional over relationship issues at work	Allow time to discuss feelings Include them in departmental activities Guide them in examining data in addition to personal convictions to make decisions Be supportive and allow time for them to express their feelings Acknowledge their feelings
Perceiving	Happiest with free flow and having open-ended timeframes Likes to "fly by the seat of their pants" Handles deadlines by last minute rush Has difficulty with limitations, likes to explore options Feels most comfortable with flexibility Welcomes interruptions Desk or work area may look disorganized	Allow flexibility in getting tasks done; but need to set limits when necessary Provide deadlines and accept that the work will get done, but at the last minute Let them work at their own pace and in the order they choose Provide for alternate learning experiences Provide opportunities to discover things Guide them in understanding consequences of "flying by the seat of their pants" Guide them to organize and prioritize what needs to be done
Judging	Happiest when finishing what they start Likes timetables and schedules	Provide deadlines and expectations when things need to be completed Assist them in making their list of tasks for

	Handles deadlines by planning in advance Likes clear limits and directions Feels the most comfortable with predictability Has difficulty when interrupted Desk, work area are tidy and appears very organized Makes lists and checks items off the list when completed	the day Forewarn them of any changes in routine or plan for the day Guide them to work through interruptions