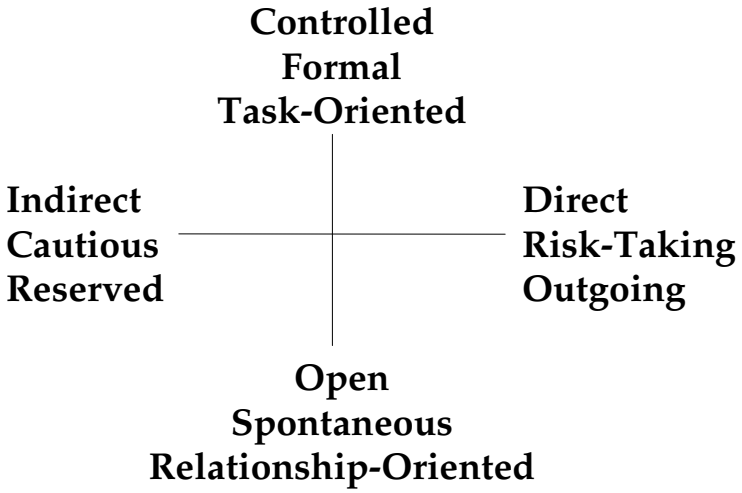
Interpersonal Style and Adaptability Index

Dimensions of Interpersonal Style

Each person has habits that are unique to his or her way of perceiving the world and of interacting with it. These habits, or patterns, generally fall into categories that are known as "interpersonal style."

There are four distinct interpersonal styles, although we are all made up of components from each style. They are the Director, the Expressive, the Relater, and the Thinker. The styles are first influenced by whether the person is Controlled or Open in their responsiveness; that is, how much information they will reveal, whether or not they will share their feelings and emotions, and how much information they reveal through non-verbal cues. Secondly, the styles are influenced by how Direct or Indirect a person is. For example, how assertive the person is, whether they ask questions or give orders, whether they are reserved or risk-taking.



Directors are Controlled in their responsiveness (verbal and nonverbal) and are Direct in their approach to people and activities.

Expressives are Open in their responsiveness and Outgoing in their approach with people and activities.

Relaters are Open in their responsiveness and Reserved in their dealings others and in social situations.

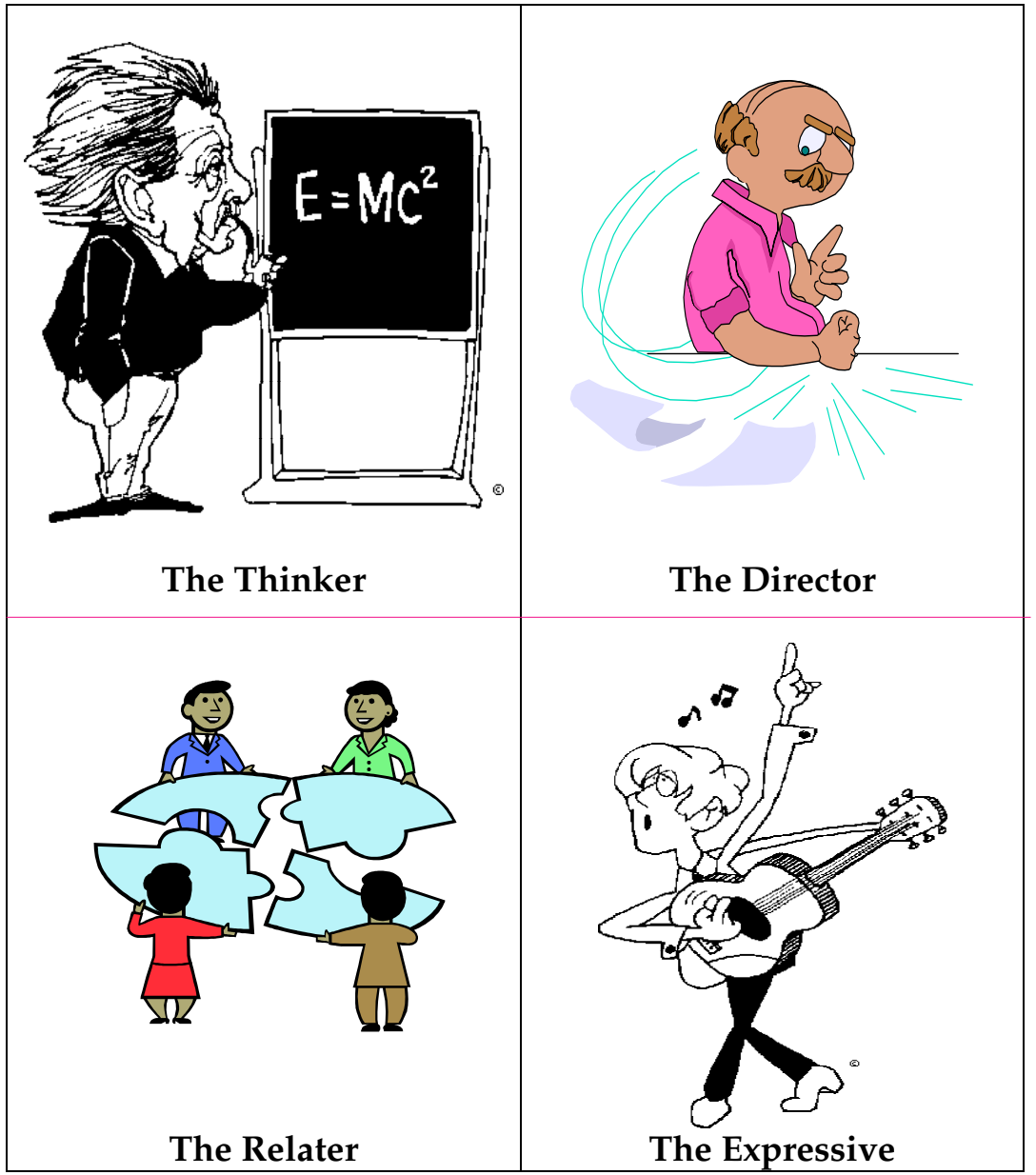
Thinkers are Controlled in their responsiveness and Cautious in their dealing with people and tasks.

On the following pages we will explore each of these interpersonal styles. Before doing so, however, a note of caution:

- There is no ***best*** style. All interpersonal styles have their pros and cons. That's life!
- All individuals who share a given style do not behave in exactly the same ways. Nevertheless, people can be placed in one of the styles. Just as a song may be sung differently by various performers, it can still be recognized by its tune. So it is with people.
- People tend to describe themselves in ways they would like to be seen by others. This may be deceptive. Obtain feedback from others who know you well and see if your perception of yourself is shared by those with whom you work and/or are close.

Controlled
W

Indirect
Z

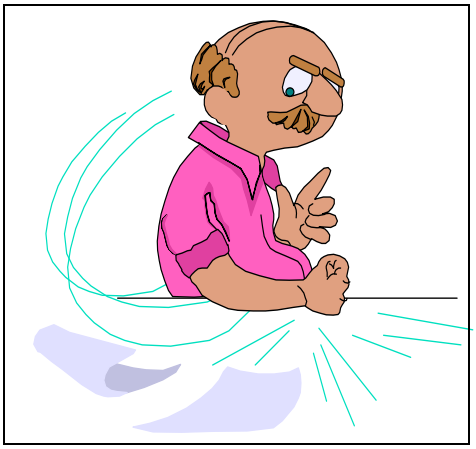


X Direct

Y
Open

The Director

Controlled



- ❒ **What excites them?** ***Action!***
- ❒ **Greatest Asset:** ***Out-accomplish anybody.***
- ❒ **Greatest Failing:** ***Can't stand weakness.***
- ❒ **Greatest Fear:** ***Being "soft."***

Stress Reaction: ***Autocratic power.***

Direct

Strengths→ → → → → →	**→ → → → When Overextended**
• **Determined.....**	**.....Domineering**
• **Confident.....**	**.....Arrogant**
• **Candid.....**	**.....Blunt**
• **Decisive.....**	**.....Dogmatic**
• **Efficient.....**	**.....Insensitive**
• **Assertive.....**	**.....Aggressive**
• **Bold.....**	**.....Pushy**
• **Firm.....**	**.....Brusque**

Director Style Tendencies:
☛ **Wanting the final say**
☛ **Deciding without consulting with or informing others**
☛ **Taking charge of situations**
☛ **Wanting to chart own course**
☛ **Pursuing new challenges/opportunities**
☛ **Believing they are always right**
☛ **Disliking---inaction**
predictability
softness
lack of change

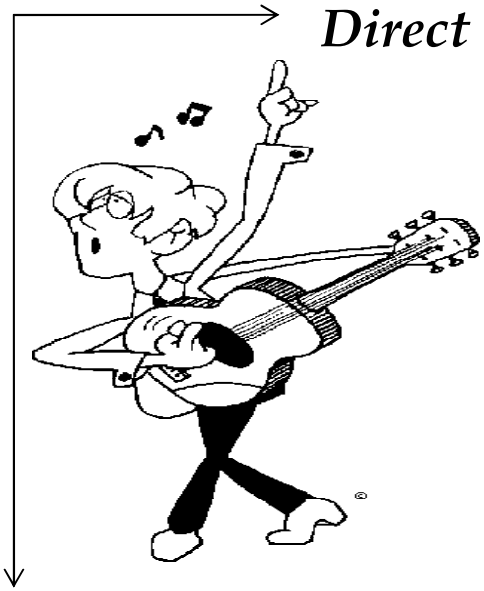
❒ **Developmental Challenges:**

- **Listening to others**
- **Controlling the need to control**
- **Slowing down**

Famous Directors	
General George Patton **John Wayne** **Ricky Ricardo** **Nancy Reagan**	**Lee Iaccoca** **Scarlett O'Hara** **Rhett Butler**

The Expressive

Direct



- ❒ **What excites them?** ***Brainstorming ideas.***
- ❒ **Greatest Asset:** ***They are fun to be around.***
- ❒ **Greatest Failing:** ***Being unpredictable.***
- ❒ **Greatest Fear:** ***Being unpopular.***
- ❒ **Stress Reaction:** ***Attacks the source of frustration.***

Open

Strengths→→→→→→	→→→→When Overextended
• Enthusiastic.....	.....Overbearing
• Imaginative.....	.....Unrealistic
• Spontaneous.....	.....Erratic
• Persuasive.....	.....Manipulative
• Stimulating.....	.....Excitable
• Dramatic.....	.....Over Emotional
• Fun-Loving.....	.....Hyperactive
• Embraces Change.....	.....Careless

Expressive Style Tendencies:
☛ Tendency to talk more than listen ☛ Seeking approval ☛ Is motivated by others' acceptance ☛ Giving effusive praise ☛ Being exuberant, emotional, and outgoing ☛ Being optimistic ☛ Accepting diverse others ☛ Starting a lot of activities but finishing few ☛ Becoming sentimental and even careless under pressure ☛ Avoiding lots of specifics.

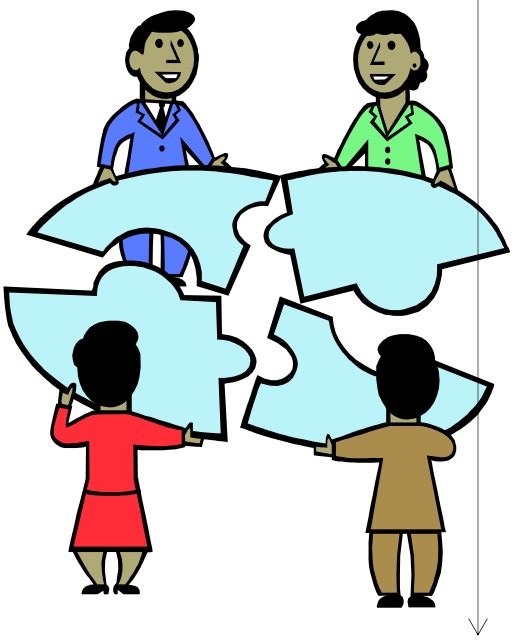
❒ **Developmental Challenges:**

- **Paying attention to detail**
- **Not getting deeply involved with people too quickly**
- **Learning self-discipline**

Famous Expressives	
Bill Clinton	**Richard Simmons**
Dennis Rodman	**Dr. Ruth**
Dick Vitale	**Lucille Ball**
Mohammed Ali	**Jim Carey**
Johnny Carson	**Kathy Lee Gifford**

The Relater

Indirect



- ❒ **What excites them?** *Productive, enjoyable routines.*
- ❒ **Greatest Asset:** *Easy to be around and work with.*
- ❒ **Greatest Failing:** *Being too indirect or cautious.*
- ❒ **Greatest Fear:** *Change.*
- ❒ **Stress Reaction:** *Giving in or giving up.*

Open

Strengths→ → → → → →	→ → → → When Overextended
• Supportive.....	.....Conforming
• Cooperative.....	.....Wishy-washy
• Diplomatic.....	.....Pliable
• Loyal.....	.....Dependent
• Patient.....	.....Indecisive
• Agreeable.....	.....Pushover
• Attentive.....	.....Oversensitive
• Good Listener.....	.....Ingratiating

Relater Style Tendencies:
☛ Seeking acceptance from others ☛ Need to be involved with people when working ☛ Being reserved in social interactions ☛ Being supportive of others ☛ Avoiding changes in established routines ☛ Following procedures and well-established practices ☛ Doing small numbers of tasks through to completion ☛ Taking lots of time to work on projects ☛ Being specific and concrete ☛ Being practical and conservative

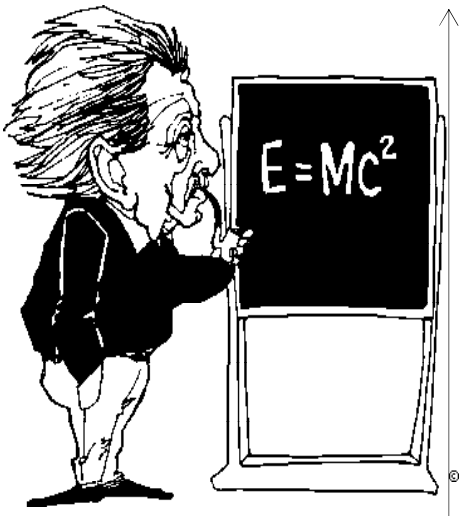
❒ Developmental Challenges:

- **Being more assertive**
- **Learning to deal with change.**
- **Being more decisive.**

Famous Relaters	
June Cleaver **Mr. Rogers**	**Albertg Schweitzer** **Gandhi**

The Thinker

Controlled



- ❒ **What excites them?** ***Rationality and logic.***
- ❒ **Greatest Asset:** ***Produces high-quality results.***
- ❒ **Greatest Failing:** ***Over analyzing.***
- ❒ **Greatest Fear:** ***Anything illogical and irrational.***
- ❒ **Stress Reaction:** ***Avoiding.***

Indirect

Strengths→ → → → → →	→ → → → When Overextended
• Exacting.....	.....Critical
• Systematic.....	.....Nitpicky
• Logical.....	.....Laborious
• Serious.....	.....Moralistic
• Thorough.....	.....Indecisive
• Methodical.....	.....Inflexible
• Planning.....	.....Perfectionist
• Accurate.....	.....Too detailed

Thinker Style Tendencies:
☛ Accumulating masses of information and data ☛ Wanting the best answer ☛ Love of problem solving ☛ Giving long, detailed responses ☛ Place emphasis on rationality and logic ☛ Dislike emotion and emotional displays ☛ Avoids risk taking ☛ Excessive worrying when under pressure ☛ Concerned with appearances

❒ **Developmental Challenges:**

- **Not becoming paralyzed by data.**
- **Making decisions quicker.**
- **Sharing information; sharing feelings and concerns**
- **Being less self-critical.**

Famous Thinkers	
Albert Einstein **Carl Sagan** **Barbara Jordan**	**Mr. Spock** **Alan Greenspan**

Interpersonal Style and Adaptability Index

	Director	Expressive	Relater	Thinker
Backup Style	Autocratic	Attacker	Acquiescer	Avoider
Measures Personal Value By	Obtaining Results	Receiving Applause	Getting Attention	Amount of Activity
For Growth Needs To	• Listen • Slow Down • Be Less Controlling	• Attend to Details • Listen • Manage Conflict	• Manage Change • Be Decisive • Be Assertive	• Be Decisive • Be Open With Ideas/ Feelings • Be Less Critical
Let Them Save	Time	Effort	Relationships	Face
Needs Climate That	Allows Them to Build Own Structure	Inspires Them to Their Goals	Supports People	Provides Details
Take Time To Be	Efficient	Stimulating	Agreeable	Accurate
Support Their	Conclusions & Actions	Testimony & Intuitions	Relationships & Feelings	Principles & Thinking

Interpersonal Style and Adaptability Index (continued)

	Director	Expressive	Relater	Thinker
Give Benefits That Answer	What	Who	Why	How
Style Specialty	Control	Social	Supportive	Technical

Guidelines for Recognizing Interpersonal Style

Controlled

Indirect	▪ Controlled facial expression and body posture/movement ▪ Appears serious ▪ Dresses formally ▪ Less interested in small talk ▪ Uses lots of data in decision making ▪ Takes a lot of time to complete tasks ▪ Communicates sparingly ▪ Cautious ▪ Indirect eye contact ▪ Soft spoken	▪ Exerts effort to control situations and people ▪ Controlled facial expression and body posture/movement ▪ Lots of direct eye contact ▪ Points at others ▪ Talks and moves at a fast pace ▪ Focuses on tasks rather than people ▪ Uses limited facts and data ▪ Likes change ▪ Loud and forceful	**Direct**
	▪ Cautiously friendly ▪ Focus on relationships rather than task ▪ Dress more casually ▪ Speaks softly and slowly ▪ Tenative about expressing opinions and making requests ▪ Slow to make decisions ▪ Less consistent eye contact ▪ Less likely to take initiative; will be supportive of others ▪ Unhurried ▪ Need for routine patterns	▪ Overtly friendly ▪ Makes impulsive decisions and is unpredictable ▪ Uses lots of vocal inflection ▪ Short attention span ▪ Avoids conflict ▪ Moves quickly and used lots of gestures ▪ Focuses on relationship--liking him/her ▪ Animated expressions ▪ Need for excitement ▪ Boisterous	

Open

The Director Style:
Improving Relationships

THINKER Styles: Relate to your efficiency, logic, command of data, and task orientation. Question your haste, bossiness, decisiveness, competitiveness, and risk taking. ***To Work Better with THINKER Styles:*** 1. Bring them detailed facts and logic in writing. 2. Be patient while they evaluate and check the accuracy of the data. 3. Help them to reach conclusions by encouraging them to set deadlines after you have porovided time for review.	***Other DIRECTOR Styles:*** Others of like type perceive you as action oriented, in a hurry, bossy, commanding, efficient, stubborn, disciplined, tough, independent, secretive, logical, demanding, non-listening, quick, decisive, and unfeeling. ***To Work Better with Fellow DIRECTOR Styles:*** 1. Agree in advance on specific goals and provide freedom to work within these limits. An unproductive deadlock can occur when there is too much dominance and no allowance for independence and individuality.
RELATER Styles: Relate to your efficiency and discipline. Question your lack of feeling, tough mindedness, bottomline orientation, impatience and secretiveness. ***To Work Better with RELATER Styles:*** 1. Show concern for them and their families, interests, etc. 2. Slow down and provide details and specifics about how to accomplish objectives. 3. Support efforts and accomplishment with personal attention.	***EXPRESSIVE Styles:*** Relate to your accomplishments, independence and decisiveness. Question your coldness, lack of playfulness, critical nature, and discipline. ***To Work Better with RELATER Styles:*** 1. Be more open about yourself, feelings, gossip and opinions. 2. Relax time constraints within structure; provide incentives. 3. Provide public recognition for accomplishments (let them win in front of others).

The Thinker Style:
Improving Relationships

Other THINKER Styles: Others of like type perceive you as thoughtful, wanting more facts, conservative, quiet, critical, logical, cool toward others, thorough, cooperative, distant, reserved, stern, austere, dependable and accurate. ***To Work Better with Fellow THINKER Styles*** 1. Recognize the need for making timetables and for reaching decisions. Reinforcing one another's desire for more information may form a self-perpetuating cycle that does not produce results.	***DIRECTOR Styles:*** Relate to your logic, command of data, accuracy, and dependability. Question your overabundance of facts, lack of decisiveness and lack of risk taking. ***To Work Better with DIRECTOR Styless:*** 1. Summarize facts and various outcomes; let them decide. 2. Depend on self-discipline rather than on excessive reports or precise instructions. 3. Recognize results with monetary and/or tangible rewards.
RELATER Styles: Relate to your cooperative and conservative nature, accuracy and patience. Question your lack of warmth and close relationships and your dependence on figures. ***To Work Better with RELATER Styles:*** 1. Show your interest in them as people, rather than as workers. 2. Use their skills as mediators to build relationships inside the organization. 3. Help them to perceive the big picture and how they relate to it.	***RELATER Styles:*** Relate to your cooperativeness and dependence on facts, criticalness, stuffy nature, impersonal approach, and lack of fun. ***To Work Better with RELATER Styles:*** 1. Spend informal time with them. 2. Recognize their need for package sales, incentives, and contests. 3. Ask for their opinions and input on a noncritical, accepting basis.

The RELATER Style:
Improving Relationships

THINKER Styles: Relate to your cooperative, careful, quiet, thoughtful, and willing ways. Question your soft-hearted, easygoing nature; emotional responses; and compliance with others. ***To Work Better with THINKER Styles:*** 1. Stress the need for facts and data rather than emotions to build a case, but let them do the work with a time limit. 2. Provide added opportunities for professional development and study in return for meeting activity standards. 3. Build confidence in the relationship through demonstrated technical competence.	***DIRECTOR Styles:*** Relate to your supportive, helpful, team-oriented, and careful nature. Question your lack of initiative, need for detail, small thinking, and responsive side. ***To Work Better with DIRECTOR Styles:*** 1. Be businesslike; let them tell you how to help and what they want. Do not try to build a relationship or friendship. 2. Stay on schedule; stick to the agenda; provide factual summaries. 3. Let them make decisions based on options you provide.
Other RELATER Styles: Others of like type perceive you as supportive, quiet, friendly, shy, retiring, team oriented, helpful, kind, thoughtful, slow to act, nonthreatening, soft hearted, easygoing, complying, responsive, open, willing, careful, and cooperative. ***To Work Better with Fellow RELATER Styles:*** 1. Be hard-nosed, insistent and directive (an uncomfortable role, but a necessary one in this situation); otherwise it is likely that no one will take the necessary initiative, and the end result will be unsatisfactory.	***RELATER Styles:*** Relate to your supportive, friendly, responsive, and helpful characteristics. Question your slowness to act and your careful, complying, noncompetitive stance. ***To Work Better with RELATER Styles:*** 1. Try to bring them definite options, backed by third-party endorsement; do not waver. 2. Publicly recognize and praise their accomplishments. 3. Stand your ground when challenged about rules and previously established procedures.

The Expressive Style:
Improving Relationships

THINKER Styles:	*DIRECTOR Styles:*
Relate to your imaginative, stimulating and thought provoking nature. Question your ability to perform as stated, your follow through, and your loud, flashy, emotional side.	Relate to your outgoing, imaginative, competitive, and personable aspects. Question your "rah-rah" demonstrative, impulsive, emotional side.
To Work Better with THINKER Styles:	***To Work Better with DIRECTOR Styles:***
1. Talk about facts, not opinions, and break down component parts, preferably in writing. 2. Back up your facts with proof from authoritative sources. 3. Be quietly patient while they discover for themselves what you already know.	1. Back up your enthusiasm with actual results; demonstrate that your ideas work. 2. Be on time and keep within the agreed-on limits; provide materials promptly. 3. Provide choices of action whenever possible and let the DIRECTORs select the course of action.

RELATER Styles:	***Other EXPRESSIVE Styles:***
Relate to your warmth, enthusiasm, and stimulating and personable nature. Question your outgoing, loud, dramatic, impulsive side. ***To Work Better with RELATER Styles:*** 1. Slow down the pace and volume; allow time to build a relationship. 2. Work on one item at a time, in detail; avoid the confusion of too many tasks or ideas at one time. 3. Encourage suggestions, participation in team activities, and supportive roles.	Others of like type perceive you as outgoing, enthusiastic, warm, opinionated, talkative, intuitive, emotional, stimulating, imaginative, impulsive, excitable, loud, flashy, dramatic, personable, competitive, and caring. ***To Work Better with Fellow EXPRESSIVE Styles:*** Provide the discipline in this relationship, or all the fun and creativity may accomplish nothing. Keep on track and emphasize the basics, allowing carefully limited experimentation as a reward for results