

Chapter Six

Major Learning Modalities

Reality is simply what is. We miss it because all most of us see is what we THINK should be there.

DEEPAK CHOPRA

In conceiving his theory of Relativity, Einstein said the one crucial thing that helped him was his ability to visualize what it would be like to be riding on the end of a light beam.

UNKNOWN

There are infinite versions of every event, depending upon the observer.

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OBJECTIVES

- Identify the three basic ways we learn, using our three major senses
- Define VAK
- Define eye accessing positions
- Describe why knowing the preferred mode of processing is important in relationships

Our body constantly processes an immense amount of information every moment, whether we are awake or asleep. Information about our environment bombards our senses at the rate of millions of different stimuli per second. Ninety per cent of all of the motor activity of our brain and our nervous system is used to gather sensory input from ourselves and our environment. Even though our conscious mind filters out about 92–97% of all stimuli, ALL incoming stimuli is fully received, stored, and filed by our subconscious. Most of us have a preferred way of learning through our senses, usually highly specialized by the time we reach second grade.

THE WAYS WE LEARN, USING OUR THREE MAJOR SENSES

Think back about when you were in school. Was it easier for you to remember information if you saw it up on the board, if you heard the teacher say it, or if you wrote it down? Most of us find we had a definite preference with the way we were able to receive, learn, and remember information.

The three basic ways we learn are called VAK for short:

Visual

Auditory

Kinesthetic

For each of these methods, or modalities, we usually perceive information first as external events and then form internal representations, based on our process of internalization. For example, if we visually saw sights, we stored them as mental pictures. If we heard sounds and words, we stored them as internal sounds and dialogue. If we gathered information kinesthetically, in feelings of temperature, pressure, or texture, we then internalized our reaction to such stimuli in feelings such as motivation, pleasure, discomfort, excitement, fear, etc.

The process of internalization includes two main filtering systems, and five possible ways to shift raw data or stimuli received. The two main filtering systems we use are:

- **Survival:** Is the perceived stimuli life supporting, or life threatening?
- **Known or unknown:** Is the perceived stimuli a known quantity, and if not, is it dangerous? How does the perceived stimuli fit in to any of our prior experiences?

THE FIVE POSSIBLE WAYS TO SHIFT INCOMING RAW DATA ARE:

- **Accurate perception.**
- **Complete deletion.** This occurs if the perceived stimuli offers no reference point to what is part of the person’s culture. One example would be early visitations to the Australian Aborigines by photographers. Because the Aborigines had never seen a photograph, when handed an enlarged photographic portrait of themselves, all they reported seeing was a blur of dots!
- **Selective attention.** This occurs when we pay selective attention to certain aspects of our perceived experience, and omit the remaining aspects.
- **Distortion.** This occurs when we internally shift our experience of perceived data to fit in with our belief structures, unknowingly making it misrepresentation of information
- **Generalization.** This occurs when we form an overall belief, habit, or global conclusion on only one or two actual experiences.

COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION IN VERBAL AND NON VERBAL WAYS.

Here is a sampling of process words, made up of verbs, adverbs and adjectives, used to represent internal experiences as we communicate with others. Which category contains the largest amount of words and phrases you use most in your everyday communication?

METHOD	MODALITY	EXAMPLE
VERBAL	Auditory Auditory	Content, pattern of presentation, words, sounds. Voice tone, pitch, tempo, volume, accent.
NONVERBAL	Visual Visual Kinesthetic	Through written words, or printed images. Our own personal skin tone, body language, head movements, hand/arm movements, facial expressions, body posture and breathing Manner of touching, amount of pressure applied, smell, fragrance, quality of dampness or dryness.

*LANGUAGE PREFERENCE
A SAMPLING OF VISUAL WORDS AND PHRASES*

An eyeful	Bird's eye view	Angle	Appears
Aspect	Bright	Clarity	Clear
Clear cut	Catch a glimpse	Colorful	Conspicuous
Crystal clear	Dark	Dawn	Dim view
Discern	Envision	Examine	Flash in the pan
Flashed on	Focus	Foggy	Foresee
Get an image	Get a perspective	Glanced	Glimpsed
Hazy idea	Hindsight	Horizon	Illustrate
Illuminate	Imagine	In light of	In view of
In person	Inspect	Look	Looks like
Make a scene	Mind's eye	Mental image	Naked eye
Noticed	Peek	Obscure	Observe
Outlook	Paint a picture	Perception	Perceive
Perspective	Picture	Plainly see	Pretty as a picture
Read	Reveal	Recognize	Scope
Scrutinize	See	See red	See to it
See ya	Shortsighted	Show off	Show me
Sight	Sign	Sign off	Sketchy
Sparkling	Starry-eyed	Stare	Stare into space
Survey	Take a peek	Tunnel Vision	Twinkle
Under your nose	Unforeseen	Up front	Vague
View	Vision	Watch	Witness

LANGUAGE PREFERENCE
A SAMPLING OF AUDITORY WORDS AND PHRASES

Afterthought	Amplify	Announce	Articulate
Ask	Audible	Be all ears	Be heard
Blabbermouth	Call	Call on	Clear as a bell
Clearly expressed	Comment on	Deaf as a doornail	Describe
Discuss	Dissonant	Divulge	Earful
Earshot	Enunciate	Exclaim	Express yourself
Give an ear	Give an account of	Gossip	Grant an audience
Harmonize	Hear	Hear from you	Heard voices
Hidden messages	Hold your tongue	Hush	Idle talk
Inform	Inquire	In other words	Key note speaker
Listen	Loud	Loud and clear	Make music
Manner of speaking	Mention	Mutter	Noise
Outspoken	Overhear	Overtones	Pay attention to
Power of speech	Proclaim	Pronounce	Purrs like a kitten
Question	Quiet	Quoted	Rap session
Remark	Resonate	Ringling	Rings a bell
Roar	Rumor	Say	Scream
Screech	Shout	Shrill	Silence
Sound	Speak	Speechless	Squeal
State	State your truth	Suggest	Talk
Tattletale	Tell	Tone	Tongue tied
Tune	Tune in	Tune out	Unheard of
Utter	Verbal contract	Vocal	Voice an opinion
Well informed	Word for word	Within hearing range	

*LANGUAGE PREFERENCE
A SAMPLING OF KINESTHETIC WORDS AND PHRASES*

Active	All washed up	Bearable (Unbearable)	Beside myself
Boils down to	Calm	Catch on	Cool
Chip off the old block	Come to grips with	(Un) comfortable	Concrete
Control yourself	Embrace	Emotional	Fall apart
Feel	Firm foundations	Firm	Flow
Floating on thin air	Forceful	Go to pieces	Get a hold of
Get a load of this	Get a handle on	Get in touch with	Get the drift
Get your goat	Grasp	Grip	Gut feeling
Hand in hand	Handle	Hang in there	Hard
Head on	Heated argument	Heavy	Hold
Hold on	Hold it	Hop to it	Hothead
Hurt	Keep your shirt on	Kick	Lightheaded
Lay cards on the table	Lukewarm	Lump in my throat	Make contact
Move	Not following you	Numb	Pressure
Pain in the neck	Pull strings	Pull through	Pull away
Push comes to shove	Rough	Scrape	Sensation
Sense	Sharp	Sharp as a tack	Slip through
Smooth operator	Soft as a ...	Solid	Sore
Stiff as a board	Start from scratch	Stay in touch	Stand on
Stiff upper lip	Stress	Strike	Suffer
Tap into	Tension	Throb	Throw out
Tied up tight	Tight	Tired	Touched
Touched base	Tough	Turn around	Underhanded
Warm	Weary	Whipped	

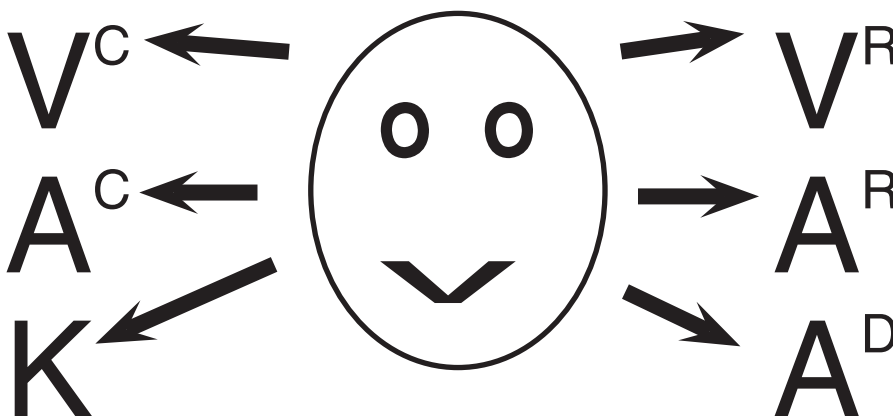
Not only do we seem to have a preferred way of receiving and storing information, we store it in places which may sometimes be perceived by others. For fun, ask yourself the following questions and notice where your eyes seem to dart as you are thinking about this information:

- What color were the walls of your bedroom when you were ten years old?
- What did your boss say to you when he gave you your last raise?
- How did you feel when your first child was born?
- What does a pink elephant look like?

Using the following chart, a person with a normally organized left and right hemisphere would look up and to the left for the answer to the first question, look to the left side (middle) for question two, look down and to the right for the third question, and look up and to the right for the fourth question, (presuming you have never physically seen a pink elephant).

EYE ACCESSING

In this diagram, the information accessed appears reversed, yet it is true if you are observing another person. These guidelines are for the normally organized hemispheres, and some people may be reversed.



R= Remembered C= Constructed D=Dialogue

V^C VISUALLY CONSTRUCTED: This area is accessed when a person needs to construct an image of something they have never seen before, or they are looking at remembered images differently than they were originally seen, (from a different viewpoint). If a person's eyes access this realm, they have usually moved into the future to gain the information. A question to access this area of processing would be: What would you look like if you were twenty years older?

V^R VISUALLY REMEMBERED: Seeing images of things seen before or as they were seen in the past. If a person is talking about a trauma or an emotional event, and they access the information by looking up and to the left, the shock or charge is primarily around something they saw, or witnessed. A question to access this area of processing would be: What is the color of the interior of your current car?

A^C AUDITORY CONSTRUCTED: When a person accesses their information by keeping their eyes level, yet moving them to the right, they are hearing sounds or words not yet heard, or not heard before. They are moving into the future to retrieve this information. A question to access this area of processing would be: If you and I were to sing Row, Row, Row Your Boat, what would it sound like?

A^R AUDITORY REMEMBERED: Information accessed by keeping the eyes level, yet moving them to the left indicates a person is remembering sounds or words heard before. If a person is talking about a trauma or an emotional event, and they access the information by keeping their eyes level, yet moving them to the left, the shock or charge is primarily around something they heard, or spoke. A question to access this area of processing would be: What does your doorbell at home sound like?

K KINESTHETIC: Feeling emotions, tactile sensations, (sensations of being touched and touching), muscle movements, etc. are accessed by looking down and to the right. A question to access this area of processing would be: What does it feel like to run?

A^D AUDITORY DIALOGUE (Internal): Looking down and to the left indicates you are talking to yourself about an event or situation, real or imagined. This is the location of the “critical judge,” and the “nag.” Someone who is mulling over a problem, or going over and over something in their minds without resolving it, will go around with their eyes in this position. A way to access this area of processing would be: Recite the ABCs.

One of the most important things we can find out about those we are in close interaction or personal relationship is their preferred method for receiving information. Taking just a moment, please do the following exercise. Then do the same exercise with your closest business associate, and/or your closest relationship.

ARE YOU PRIMARILY VISUAL, AUDITORY, OR KINESTHETIC?

One of the easiest ways to find out which of the three major methods of sorting information is your preferred method, simply ask yourself what are you most likely to say at the end of your telephone conversations:

- See ya!
- Good to hear from you
- Keep in touch
- Looking forward to.
- Thanks for giving me a ring
- Hang in there

In an argument would you be most likely say which of the following:

- You always tune me out
- It all boils down to.....
- You are making a scene
- This stinks!
- You better evaluate this and then decide.....

One of the most important elements in creating cohesive, clear and happy partnering is to know how you are loved, and then share it with your partner. Of these three examples, what would honestly mean the most to you?

- You hear: I love you
- You receive gifts, attention or favors
- Your hand is held