

# Communication Differences

In the last lesson you learned about the importance of listening, asking open-ended questions and finding the right time to communicate. We also discussed some differences in the ways people communicate.

In this lesson, you're going to explore more in depth some natural differences in how people think, express themselves, and feel surrounded by people.

### Understanding the Role of Introversion and Extroversion

In Lesson 8, you were introduced to the concept of introverted thinkers and extroverted thinkers. Let's delve more deeply into this topic as it will help you understand the differences in yourself, your partner, and others.

Most people think of introverts as being shy and withdrawn from others. This isn't correct. Understanding introverts is more complex.

### There are three types of introverts:

1. Social introverts
2. Introverted thinkers
3. Those who are both

Knowing characteristics of an introvert will assist you in understanding why they often like being alone.

### Consider these important characteristics of introverts:

1. **A social introvert needs alone time.** The more socially introverted they are the more alone time they need.
  - Being with people, especially in groups, drains the energy from a social introvert. **To recharge, social introverts need to be alone.**
  - If your partner is a social introvert, they'll need time apart from you. It doesn't have anything to do with you. They just need to spend

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time alone to get their energy back.

- If you're both social introverts, you'll both need space from each other. There is nothing wrong with your relationship. You simply need alone time to recharge.
2. **An introverted thinker sorts through their thoughts and feelings internally.** Even if they're the expert in a subject, they'll take a few seconds to gather their thoughts before they speak.
    - Introverted thinkers are private people. They keep their inner world close to them. **When introverted thinkers share their life with you, they have handed a sacred part of themselves to you.**
  3. **A person who is a social and thinking introvert may seem withdrawn from you and the world.** There's a tremendous amount of activity happening in their quietness.
    - If you're an introvert, know your needs to recharge. If you're an extrovert, know an introvert's behavior is not about you. Be adaptable and be patient.

**An individual can be an extroverted thinker, socially extroverted, or both. Consider these characteristics:**

1. **A social extrovert needs people to recharge.** Being with a group recharges them. They love parties. They'll strike up conversations with anyone one around. They are very social.
  - **Being alone is draining for a social extrovert.**
2. **An extroverted thinker thinks out loud.** This means they may begin their thought process with one idea and end it somewhere totally different. They're not changing their mind. They're examining their options aloud.
  - When you ask an extroverted thinker a question, they'll answer immediately.

Extroverts have a difficult time understanding introverts. Introverts can find extroverts overwhelming.

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## Two Different Ways of Looking at Life

Some major miscommunications occur because people look at life differently. We see it in politics, families, business, and religions. The source of the problem can often be identified as the thinker versus the feeler.

### **A thinker can feel, and a feeler can think, but they make decisions differently:**

1. **A thinker looks at the world and makes decisions based upon rules, laws, and social norms.** Right and wrong is important to them.
2. **A feeler will make decisions based upon feelings and relationships.** It's not that right and wrong aren't important, but they're likely to take into account an individual's feelings.

The communication challenge comes when the feeler is discussing an issue from an emotional perspective and the thinker is coming from a rational perspective. When each person believes their perspective is correct, hurt feelings, confusion, and frustration can develop.

### **Instead of discounting the other person's viewpoint, know that their perspective can broaden your view point.**

In Lesson 12, you'll discover strategies you can use to ensure each of you is understanding what the other is saying.

## Two Special Types of People

Good communication requires that you access non-verbal information. The words of the message are only 20% of the message. Body language and tone of voice are most of communication.

### **There are two types of people at opposite extremes in picking up social cues:**

1. **Highly sensitive people (HSP) are easily overwhelmed in situations most people consider normal.** Sudden noises, bright lights, and intense

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feelings can send an HSP running for cover.

- About 20% of people identify themselves as HSP. Of these, about 70% are introverts and 30% extroverts.
  - When an HSP says they need to leave, they mean right now. They're at a point where their anxiety level is high.
  - When in conversation with an HSP, be sure they are calm and relaxed. **Communicating with an HSP when they're overwhelmed results in misunderstandings and hurt feelings for both people.**
2. **Some people have difficulty picking up on social cues.** They either can't or have difficulty noticing when someone is sad, upset, or anxious.
- Their brain functions differently than most people.
  - Don't take it personally when they don't notice you're upset. **You need to tell them what's going on with you emotionally.** They won't figure it out on their own.

## Summary

In this lesson, you've discovered how there are differences in personality which will affect how you give messages and how they are received. When you and your partner are different, it's important to take more time in communication and working to understand each other.

Now that you've laid the foundation for communication, you're going to learn about four different ways people talk to each other. Three are both unhealthy and common. There is one healthy way to communicate.

Before you go to the next lesson, anchor in this one by reflecting on the following questions.

## Reflection

1. Are you introverted or extroverted? Why?

