

# “The discipline of thinking”



The last article began a short series of articles about how we all communicate, and pointed out that, according to Carl Jung (the noted Swiss psychoanalyst who is now widely respected as an authority in his specialism) we do so in one of 4 primary styles. It outlined how those that speak using the “Intuitor” style are normally conceptual, synthesising, inductive, reasoning and projecting. It showed the positive and challenging traits of this style, how stress could affect it and how you might look for tell tale signs that would enable you to communicate with them in their style.

This article will look at the second style; namely those that use the **Thinker**” style.

**Thinkers** are people who place high value on logic, objectivity, and systematic inquiry, and take a logical and principled approach to identifying problems and developing solutions. When working with others, they are relatively unaffected by their feelings and are sometimes quick to point out the errors in other people's thinking. They are disciplined and deliberate decision makers who are not easily swayed by the emotions of a given situation.

They are deliberate and reliable and, because of the power of their objectivity, can sometimes be seen by others as being autocratic or insensitive. However they do tend to be fair-minded, not easily swayed by their emotions, and treat everyone with a similar fairness and equality.

While Thinkers are distrustful of ideas lacking orderly reasoning they are comfortable expressing their scepticism. This scepticism extends to their own initial reactions to things as well. Until they have had time to test the logical consistency of an idea, they would rather "sleep on it" before taking a position or making a commitment to it. They avoid being swept along by the needs of the moment.

Thinkers are often seen as consistent producers. They are logical, results-oriented individuals who tend to be valued for their thoughtful analysis rather than for their skill in mobilising the enthusiasm of others.

Thinkers are often sought for their objectivity and cool thinking under pressure. They have a natural ability to develop sensible methods that enable others to logically assess and select alternatives best fitting the situation. Hence they are probably best suited to occupations such as lawyers, engineers, scientists, technicians, financially oriented businesspeople, systems analysts, and administrators.

**The positive traits of Thinkers are therefore that they are seen at their best as being:**

- Stable and consistent forces for progress
- Able to cut through smokescreens of untested ideas and emotional fervour
- Principled individuals who are respected for their ability to treat everyone fairly
- Highly effective in organising themselves and others to research and plan in systematic ways.

**However the challenges facing Thinkers are that at their worst they are seen as being:**

- Overly cautious and conservative
- Keen to emphasise deliberation and thereby de-emphasise action
- So bogged down in checking the consistency of an issue that others perceive them as indecisive
- Disappointed when a project does not run smoothly as they expect things to unfold logically
- Blunt and insensitive and sometimes criticised for being mechanistic or impersonal.
- Adept at noticing ineffective reasoning because truth is their key objective
- Less affected by emotions tending to point out the negatives & omit the positives in others' actions
- Keen to emphasise the correctness of a situation assuming everyone else approaches things the way they do. This may distract them from nurturing the relationships necessary for group harmony.

### **Under stress however Thinkers run the risk of being seen as:**

- Coming across to others as rigid, overly cautious, and emotionally distant.
- Being overly concerned with justifying the correctness of their assessments
- Missing opportunities for helpful input from others

Thinkers would look at time from all dimensions be it past, present, and future and concern themselves with the accuracy and consistency with which the past and future relate to a present course of action. It is difficult for them to frame time in any other way. To do so would mean they would not take into consideration the precursors and logical consequences associated with a current undertaking. While time is a logical progression, Thinkers are less concerned with specific events than with the progression of their own experience. They therefore pride themselves on continuing to learn and extending the framework of their thinking to all three-time dimensions.

Do you know of such a person? If not here are a few clues you might look for:

1. **Their communication style:** Since Thinkers assume that others see and do things as they do, they expect their actions and communication to be self-evident and understood by most everyone else. They are inclined to question and seek the clarity in other people's thoughts or findings and because they are not as subject to their own emotions as others, they can be as candid with others as they tend to be with themselves. Honesty tends to precede tact in their interactions and this is often a source of conflict for those who need more validation of feelings and support in their relations.
2. **Their approach to problem solving:** Thinkers tend to be logical and objective in their approach to problem solving. They are suspicious of poorly developed ideas and faulty reasoning, and will painstakingly correct such "deficits" if they affect the outcome of a project.

3. **Their writing style:** It is not unusual for the different types (i.e. Thinkers or Intuitors) to engage in written communication that reflects their personal style or preference for verbal communications. For the Thinker style such people will tend to extend their logical and sometimes impersonal approach to others to their written communications. Their writing, as is their thinking, tends to be connected to the consistency or cohesiveness of the ideas or facts presented. Letters and memos will be straightforward, appealing first to the logic behind what is being communicated rather than its personal impact. Truths, not values, are often the main thrust. The assumption that Thinkers make is that the reader is, or should be, just as interested as they are in truth over tact. However Thinkers can benefit from remembering to address the personal needs and values of the person to whom they are writing.

Are you a Thinker? If so then you need to appreciate the difficulties others may experience when communicating with you and adjust your style to accommodate them. This will mean that you need to be able to identify their style & then speak their language. If you're not a Thinker or Intuitior, your style has to be one of the remaining two. So you may need to read on if you want to be a more effective communicator particularly at that all-important interview.