



Special Report

Why don't they understand?
Why don't they see things the same
way I do?

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Have you ever been in a disagreement with someone and felt that you were living on entirely different planets and definitely not talking about the same thing? Or with some friends sharing a memory of an experience and someone with you says, "No, that's not what happened. What I remember is..."

We've all been there, attempting to prove our point and convince someone that we are "right," with no success. The trouble is we often assume there is only one objective reality that everyone is more or less aware of (if they are paying attention).

Research implies that not only is this not true, but perception is actually a filter applied to objective reality, resulting in natural differences – differences in **Perceptual Style™**.

Perceptual Style is the way you take in information through your five senses and make that information meaningful to you. Your **Perceptual Style** acts as a filter between sensation and understanding. It is at the core of who you are and impacts your values, beliefs, feelings, and psychology.

Your **Perceptual Style** is the foundation of all of your natural skills – the abilities you have the potential to truly excel at with grace and ease because of the way you see and experience the world around you.

Each of us has one of six unique **Perceptual Styles** that is innate. Our individual **Perceptual Styles** are hard-wired and have grown with us as we age and develop.

The decisions you make, the actions you take, and the directions you choose are all influenced by your **Perceptual Style**. This is because your **Perceptual Style** defines your reality.

To understand why someone sees things differently than you do and that they really aren't intentionally trying to be stubborn or argumentative, we need to look at perceptual experience.

6 DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES

It is because of our varying **Perceptual Styles** that we all experience a different reality.

All six **Perceptual Styles** provide distinctly different experiences of the world. These differences result in a profound psychological and perceptual diversity that is the most important diversity there is.

Everyone has one **Perceptual Style** that is innate and unchanging. You were born with it. Your awareness and depth of understanding of it evolve as you grow, but your **Perceptual Style** doesn't change.

Research confirms all six **Perceptual Styles** are evenly distributed in the world, and there is no difference regarding culture, race, gender, or age.

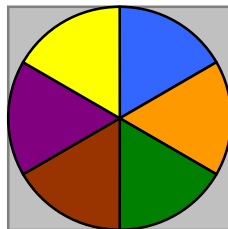
While **Perceptual Style** is innate, it's not inherited. You don't necessarily have the same **Perceptual Style** as one of your parents. And if you have siblings, it's not unusual for your **Perceptual Styles** to be different. (It sure helps explain some of those interesting and challenging family dynamics!)

Each of the six innate **Perceptual Styles** has a vast repertoire of natural skills and abilities. Everyone develops some of their skills and abilities over time, but everyone also has a treasure trove of talents they're unaware of, just waiting to be discovered.

OPPOSITES ATTRACT, BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER

There's some truth in each of those sayings. But it's also true that opposites repel, and birds of a feather get bored with each other. Interpersonal dynamics are definitely impacted by **Perceptual Style**.

If we think of perceptual reality as a big circle, then each **Perceptual Style** has its very own "slice of the pie":



Each **Perceptual Style** has two next-door Neighbors (one on each side), one direct Opposite, and two "One-Offs" (neither a Neighbor nor an Opposite).

When you meet a person with the same **Perceptual Style as you**, you'll experience an almost instant bond as you relate quickly and easily and without the need to explain yourself. The communication challenges eventually surface from assuming the other person thinks precisely like you do.....and forgetting that things like life experience make a big difference.

A person with a Neighbor **Perceptual Style** will seem to have a few apparent similarities with you. On first blush, it feels like you are both on the same page, but given a little time (very little time), you turn out to have differences that catch you off guard. The

communication challenges that arise are often based on stylistic differences (how) rather than content differences (what).

People with the Opposite **Perceptual Style** from yours are pretty obvious from the start. The fascinating thing about Opposites is we are all intuitively aware of what we don't do, and we admire people who can do those things. So, initially, Opposites can be very attractive. But with time, one of two things happens – either you develop a complementary relationship with each of you, valuing what the other person does that you don't, OR you start trying to change the other person to do things your way. Communication with your Opposite **Perceptual Style** will either be a very rewarding or a very frustrating experience.

When you meet a person with a One-Off **Perceptual Style**, it's not unusual to wonder what planet they are from. Unlike Neighbors, nothing feels common, and unlike Opposites, the reason for the disconnect is not immediately obvious. The biggest communication challenge with One-Off **Perceptual Styles** is to find any common ground at all. The way they see things is most often puzzling to you.

Intriguing, isn't it? It's so easy to assume that someone "doesn't get it" or is purposefully being stubborn or difficult when all along they really don't see things the same way you do.

Let's take look at some of the key characteristics of each **Perceptual Style** to help illustrate the differences between them:

ACTIVITY

Frank's **Perceptual Style** is **Activity**. He perceives the world as a dynamic and exciting experience enriched by a personal network of family, friends, and acquaintances.

Frank loves to tell stories and anecdotes, sometimes to make a point but many times just to share his experience. He communicates comfortably and easily builds rapport with a variety of people.

Frank takes action with the confidence that the details will sort themselves out.

Frank brings energy and vitality to almost everything he does; he's often instrumental in getting things started.

Frank quickly develops an intense fascination with things that capture his imagination, sometimes finding it hard to resist the next shiny object that comes along.

ADJUSTMENTS

Susan's **Perceptual Style** is **Adjustments**. She sees the world as a complex interconnection of objective processes, information, and people. She is a keen and thoughtful observer of the world.

Susan pursues the acquisition and application of knowledge as the basis for her life experience. And she enjoys sharing her knowledge with others.

Susan has a strong sense of diplomacy, and she projects a calm certainty. She's gifted at building agreement by making everyone feel their point of view is understood and respected.

Susan knows effective change is the result of careful planning and thorough assessment of contingencies.

Susan has a genuine appreciation for the structure of language and correct grammar. She effectively reads nuance and shades of meaning.

FLOW

Bill's **Perceptual Style** is **Flow**. He sees a richly textured world where the pieces fit together, support, and depend on each other. He is an instinctive advocate for the natural rhythms of life.

Bill values history and tradition, and he honors the continuity between the past, present, and future.

Bill sees the complex connectivity among seemingly unrelated people, environments, and situations. He intuitively sees the impacts and ripple effects of change on the people involved.

Bill often acts as a listening post without the need to give advice, pass judgment, or provide opinions. He offers aid and assistance in the form of empathy and support.

Bill communicates his experience in stories that build personal connections and establish common ground with others rather than a means to convey data and facts.

GOALS

Karen's **Perceptual Style** is **Goals**. She sees a world in which possibilities combine with facts to create objectives to achieve and opportunities to seize.

Karen approaches everything she does with intense energy. She has a high level of endurance that allows her to push herself long after others have given up.

Karen thrives on challenges posed by immediate problems that need solving, and she believes there is one right way to solve them. She makes decisions and judgments quickly.

Karen's interactions are direct, uncomplicated, and frank. She approaches others directly and bluntly and wants the same in return.

For Karen, the world is full of clear, simple options with little ambiguity and little gray. She knows that the right way is the simplest and most direct one.

Karen knows life is a competition and only the strong and prepared will succeed.

METHODS

Mike's **Perceptual Style** is **Methods**. He perceives a world that is sensible, logical, and factual, and his approach is rational and matter-of-fact. Things are what they are.

For Mike, the world is full of things to be done, projects to be carried out, responsibilities to master, and tasks to perform, all of which require solid, well-structured plans to achieve the desired results.

Mike knows that even the most complex task can always be broken down into a sequence of simple steps.

Mike believes that the facts, when properly presented, will speak for themselves. He uses a rational application of facts to make decisions and solve problems.

Mike uses language to describe rather than to embellish. He describes what he sees simply, logically, and clearly.

Mike takes people at face value. He says what he means, means what he says, and expects others to do the same.

VISION

Gayle's **Perceptual Style** is **Vision**. She perceives the world as a place of infinite possibilities, full of options and opportunities, all of which build toward her vision of the future.

Gayle is an explorer and adventurer. She is unafraid of taking risks and accepts that the possibility of high rewards carries with it a potential for failure.

Gayle relies on her intuition and makes decisions with ease based on current information. She'll change direction on a dime if new information becomes available.

Gayle communicates in bold images and creates slogans, brief summaries, or bullet points to capture and express her understanding. She interacts energetically with others, listening just long enough to get a sense of what they are saying and then responding decisively.

Gayle is highly persuasive and easily convinces and inspires others to join her, and her excitement and commitment are contagious.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL DIFFERENCES

As you can see from our examples, everyone experiences many different attitudes and approaches towards life. It is important to note that **Perceptual Style** is gender neutral – there are just as many Frankies as there are Franks, just as many Bobbies as Bobs, etc.

People literally perceive the world differently, and this differing perception leads to different conclusions about what is important, how things should be done, and what the "truth" of any situation is. It really is the reason behind many disconnects between you and the people in your life.

The good news is that when you understand your own Perceptual Style and how it differs from the others, you have the tools to minimize disconnects and maximize understanding and being understood. And who doesn't want that?

Did you spot the Perceptual Style that might be yours? Be sure to visit us at www.yourtalentadvantage.com to learn how to quickly learn all about YOUR Perceptual Style and how to put that knowledge to work to claim your natural talents and skills – that's Your Talent Advantage!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lynda-Ross and Gary are the creators of **Perceptual Style Theory™**, a revolutionary psychological assessment system teaching people how to unleash their deepest potential for success.

They have been business partners since 1983.



Lynda-Ross Vega is the leading expert on unleashing natural skills, talents, and abilities to create unprecedented success. She has studied human behavior for over 30 years and is an accomplished business executive and management consultant. Driven by a passion for helping entrepreneurs succeed in business and life, her work brings together cutting-edge psychology and real-world business smarts. By assisting clients to develop their strengths, she helps people put their natural genius to work in business.



Gary Jordan, Ph.D., is a premier behavioral theories and assessment construction authority. He has over 32 years of experience in clinical psychology, behavioral assessment, individual development, and coaching. He earned his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology – Berkeley. Gary is the leading source for helping people to understand themselves, focus on their natural strengths, and discover meaning, satisfaction, and joy in their lives.

**Visit Lynda-Ross and Gary at
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