

Recognizing How You Learn, Who You Are, and What You Value



Discovering Your
Learning Styles

Journal Reflections:
How I Learn

Self-Concept: "Who Am I?"

Preparing a Personal
Mission Statement

Prepare: Identifying Your Values

*Organize: Placing Order on
What Motivates You*

*Work: Creating a Personal Mission
Statement*

*Evaluate: Assessing Your
Personal Mission Statement*

*Rethink: Reconsidering Your
Options*

Career Connections:
Personality Assessments
on the Job

To Thine Own Self Be
True: No One Is
Responsible for Your
Life but You

Speaking of Success:
Todd Currie

The Case of
The Instructor Who
Spoke Too Much

The transformation began when Shawn Ahermaa got his first Java project back from his Introductory Software professor. It wasn't so much the grade—which was good—but what the instructor said, almost as an afterthought, as she handed the project back to Shawn: “Nice job. Your design was very creative. Keep it up.”

Shawn was pleased. He had always known that he was good at software engineering, and he could write code without making mistakes, but he had never felt very confident in his ability as a designer.

But now something clicked; Shawn's perspective on who he was started to change. Maybe he did have the ability to succeed in a career involving software design. It was a gradual transformation, but after his professor praised his work, Shawn's view of himself began to change.



Looking

Ahead

Through the experiences we have in life, we build a sense of our strengths and weaknesses, what we like and dislike about ourselves. In the process, the sense of who we are also affects the choices we make and the things that we do. So it's not surprising that the accuracy of our understanding of ourselves has an important effect on our success.

In this chapter you will be asked to consider various aspects about yourself. First you'll look at the ways in which you learn and how you can use your personal learning style to study more effectively.

You'll then explore who you are more broadly, considering the various aspects of your personality. You'll see how your self-esteem—the way you perceive your strengths and weaknesses—can lead to success or failure.

Finally, this chapter helps you investigate where you are headed. By identifying your personal values and then creating your own personal mission statement, you'll begin to solidify the knowledge of who you are and where you would be happiest and most productive in the future.

After reading this chapter, you'll be able to answer these questions:

- **What are my learning styles, and how have they affected my academic success?**
- **What is self-concept and how does it affect me?**
- **How does my level of self-esteem affect my behaviour?**
- **What do I value and what motivates me?**
- **How can I determine my needs and make wise personal decisions throughout life?**

Discovering Your Learning Styles

Consider what it would be like to be a member of the Trukese people, a small group of islanders in the South Pacific.

Trukese sailors often sail hundreds of kilometres on the open sea. They manage this feat with none of the navigational equipment used by Western sailors: no compass, no chronometer, no sextant. They don't even sail in a straight line. Instead, they zigzag back and forth, at the mercy of the winds and tides. Yet they make few mistakes. Almost always they are able to reach their destination with precision. How do they do it?

They say it has to do with following the rising and setting of the stars at night. During the day, they take in the appearance, sound, and feel of the waves against the side of the boat. But they don't really have any idea of where they are at any given moment, nor do they care. They just know that ultimately they'll reach their final destination.

It would be foolish to suggest that the Trukese don't have what it takes to be successful sailors. The fact that they don't use traditional Western navigational equipment when they're sailing does not mean that they are any less able than Western navigators. Certainly, if they took a test of Western navigational skills, they would do badly. But their ultimate success cannot be questioned.

What about academic success? Isn't it reasonable to assume that there are different ways to reach academic goals? Wouldn't it be surprising if everyone learned in exactly the same way, without any differences in what worked best for them?

We don't all learn in the same way. Each of us has preferred ways of learning, approaches that work best for us. And our success is not just dependent on how *well* we learn, but on *how* we learn.

Learning styles reflect our preferred manner of acquiring and using knowledge. These styles are not abilities, but ways of learning.

We don't have just one learning style but a profile of styles. Even though our ability may be equal to someone else's, our learning styles might be quite different.

You probably already know quite a lot about your learning styles. Maybe you do particularly well in your Biology class while struggling with English. Or it may be the other way around. Because biology tends to be about natural processes, teachers present the subject as a series of related facts. English, however, requires you to think more abstractly, analyzing and synthesizing ideas presented in a variety of ways. Whichever subject you prefer, it is almost certain you prefer it because of your learning style.

Though we may have general preferences for fact-based learning or learning that requires more abstract thinking, we all use a variety of learning styles.



Trukese sailors, who live on a small group of islands in the South Pacific, are able to navigate with considerable accuracy across great expanses of open seas, and they do so without the use of any of the standard navigation tools used by sailors in Western cultures. The navigational achievements of the Trukese sailors illustrate that there are multiple ways to attain our goals and that there is no single route to success.

Learning style

A person's preferred manner of acquiring, using, and thinking about knowledge

Some involve our preferences regarding the way information is presented to us, some relate to how we think and learn most readily, and some relate to how our personality traits affect our performance. Different approaches to learning overlap one another, and there are few distinct categories. We'll start by considering the preferences we have for how we initially perceive information.

Are You a Primarily Visual, Auditory, or Tactile Learner?

Receptive learning style

How the initial receipt of information relates to learning preferences

Visual learning style

A style that involves visualizing information in the mind's eye, favouring reading and watching over touching and hearing

Auditory learning style

A style that favours listening as the best approach to learning

Tactile or kinesthetic learning style

A style that involves learning by touching, manipulating objects, and doing things

Analytic learning style

A style that starts with small pieces of information and uses them to build the big picture

One of the most basic aspects of learning styles concerns the way in which we initially receive information from our sense organs—our **receptive learning style**. Some of us have primarily **visual learning styles**, recalling the spelling of a word, for example, or the structure of a chemical compound by reviewing a picture in our head. Or maybe you learn best when you have the opportunity to read about a concept rather than listening to a teacher explain it. Students with visual learning styles find it easier to see things in their “mind's eye”—to visualize a task or concept—than to be lectured about them.

Have you ever asked a friend to help you put something together by having her read the directions to you while you worked? If you did, you may have an **auditory learning style**. People with auditory learning styles prefer listening to explanations rather than reading about them. They love class lectures and discussions, because they can easily take in the information that is being talked about.

Students with a **tactile or kinesthetic learning style** prefer to learn by doing—touching, manipulating objects, and doing things. For instance, some people enjoy the act of writing because of the feel of a pencil or a computer keyboard—the tactile equivalent of “thinking out loud” (which would be preferred by someone with an auditory learning style). Or they may find that it helps them to make a three-dimensional model to understand a new idea.

Having a particular receptive learning style simply means that it will be easier to learn material that is presented in that style. It does not mean you cannot learn any other way!

You may have a good idea about which learning style suits you best, but Try It! 1, “Learning Style Inventory,” will help you further understand your style.

Handling Information: Do You Focus on Pieces or the Whole?

When you are putting a jigsaw puzzle together, do you focus more on the individual pieces and how each one fits together with the one next to it, or is your strategy to concentrate on the whole picture, keeping the finished product in mind?

The way you approach a jigsaw puzzle provides a clue to the process by which you fit together bits of information. Specifically, the strategy you use suggests which of the following two learning styles you are more comfortable with:

- People with **analytic learning styles** learn most easily if first exposed to the individual components and principles behind a phenomenon or situation. Once they have identified the underlying components involved,



Try It!
1

Learning Style Inventory: Are You a Visual, an Auditory, or a Kinesthetic Learner?

Read each statement and select the appropriate number response as it applies to you.¹

Often (3) Sometimes (2) Never (1)

Visual Modality

- _____ I remember information better if I write it down.
- _____ Looking at the person helps keep me focused.
- _____ I need a quiet place to get my work done.
- _____ When I take a test, I can see the textbook page in my head.
- _____ I need to write down directions, not just take them verbally.
- _____ Music or background noise distracts my attention from the task at hand.
- _____ I don't always get the meaning of a joke.
- _____ I doodle and draw pictures on the margins of my notebook pages.
- _____ I have trouble following lectures.
- _____ I react very strongly to colours.
- _____ **Total**

Auditory Modality

- _____ My papers and notebooks always seem messy.
- _____ When I read, I need to use my index finger to track my place on the line.
- _____ I do not follow written directions well.
- _____ If I hear something, I will remember it.
- _____ Writing has always been difficult for me.
- _____ I often misread words from the text (i.e., "them" for "then").
- _____ I would rather listen and learn than read and learn.
- _____ I'm not very good at interpreting an individual's body language.
- _____ Pages with small print or poor quality copies are difficult for me to read.
- _____ My eyes tire quickly, even though my vision check-up is always fine.
- _____ **Total**

Kinesthetic/Tactile Modality

- _____ I start a project before reading the directions.
- _____ I hate to sit at a desk for long periods.
- _____ I prefer first to see something done and then to do it myself.
- _____ I use the trial and error approach to problem solving.
- _____ I like to read my textbook while riding an exercise bike.
- _____ I take frequent study breaks.
- _____ I have a difficult time giving step-by-step instructions.
- _____ I enjoy sports and do well at several different types of sports.
- _____ I use my hands when describing things.
- _____ I have to rewrite or type my class notes to reinforce the material.
- _____ **Total**

(continued on next page)

Learning Style Inventory— Continued

Total the score for each section. A score of 21 points or more in a modality indicates strength in that area. The highest of the three scores indicates the most efficient method of information intake. The second highest score indicates the modality that boosts the primary strength. For example, a score of 23 in the visual modality indicates a strong visual learner. Such a learner benefits from reading a text, from filmstrips, charts, graphs, and so on. If the second highest score is auditory, then the individual would benefit from audiotapes, lectures, and the like. If you are strong kinesthetically, then taking notes and rewriting class notes will reinforce information.

Learning Styles—Clues and Learning Tips

Clues

Visual learners usually

- Need to see it to know it.
- Have strong sense of colour.
- May have artistic ability.
- Often have difficulty with spoken directions.
- May overreact to sounds.
- May have trouble following lectures.
- Often misinterprets words.

Auditory learners usually

- Prefer to get information by listening; they need to hear it to know it.
- May have difficulty following written directions.
- Have difficulty with reading.
- Have problems with writing.
- Are unable to read body language and facial expressions.

Kinesthetic learners usually

- Prefer hands-on learning.
- Can assemble parts without reading directions.
- Have difficulty sitting still.
- Learn better when physical activity is involved.
- May be very well coordinated and have athletic ability.

Tips

Visual learners should

- Use graphics to reinforce learning: films, slides, illustrations, diagrams, and doodles.
- Colour code to organize notes and possessions.
- Ask for written directions.
- Use flow charts and diagrams for notetaking.
- Visualize spelling of words or facts to memorize them.

Auditory learners should

- Use tapes for reading and for class and lecture notes.
- Learn by interviewing or by participating in discussions.
- Have test questions or directions read aloud or put on tape.

Kinesthetic learners should

- Engage in experiential learning (making models, doing lab work, and roleplaying).
- Take frequent breaks in study periods.
- Trace letters and words to learn spelling and remember facts.
- Use a computer to reinforce learning through the sense of touch.
- Memorize or drill while walking or exercising.
- Express abilities through dance, drama, or gymnastics.

Try It!

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they find it easier to figure out and grasp the broad picture and determine whether particular cases exemplify the principle.

- Those with **relational learning styles** learn most readily if exposed to the full range of material that they are aiming to learn. Rather than focusing on the individual components of a problem, as those with analytic styles prefer to do, people with relational learning styles do best when they are first given the full picture. They can then take this broad view and break it down into its individual components.

For example, consider trying to understand the way that food is converted to energy in a cell. A more analytic learner would approach the task by learning each individual step in the process, first to last. In contrast, a more relational learner would consider the big picture, focusing on the general, overall process and its purpose.

Students who use an analytic style study most effectively by focusing on facts and specific principles, for they excel at organizing information. They often work best on their own, and science and math may come particularly easy to them. Students with a relational style perceive concepts globally, thinking in terms of the big picture. They may be drawn to subject areas that demand the ability to forge a broad overview of material, such as English and history. You probably already have a good idea of whether you have an analytic or relational learning style, but Try It! 2, “Assess Your Analytical and Relational Learning Styles,” will help you understand your learning style further.

Multiple Intelligences

The theory of multiple intelligences, developed by Dr. Howard Gardner, proposes that the conventional view of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing, is too narrow. Dr. Gardner asserts that there are eight different approaches to interpreting intelligence, significantly expanding our traditional understanding of the word.

Journal Reflections

How I Learn

1. Suppose a friend is teaching you a new and complex procedure (such as a complicated card game or the way to use a piece of computer software). Do you prefer to get the big picture first or the details?
2. Do you think you would ask your friend to slow down while you get the details, or would you be impatient to get started? Would you rather try doing it while your friend talks you through it?
3. Do you tend to picture things while you're learning?
4. When you're in class, what do you do during lectures—try to write down the instructor's exact words, draw pictures, jot down a few big ideas, doodle, tune out?
5. When someone gives you directions to a new place, what do you do?
6. Would you rather read a newspaper, listen to the news on the radio, or watch it on TV? Why do you think you have this preference?
7. When you get a new piece of electronic equipment, do you like to read the instructions or just play with it until you get the hang of it?

Assess Your Analytical and Relational Learning Styles

Consider the following pairs of statements. Place a checkmark next to the statement in each pair that more closely describes your style.

- _____ 1a. Before tackling a complex task that I'm unfamiliar with, I prefer to have detailed instructions on how to do it.
- _____ 1b. I prefer to dive into a new task, trying things out to see what happens and finding my way as I go.
- _____ 2a. I like watching movies a second time because then I know where they're going.
- _____ 2b. I generally don't like watching movies a second time because I know their plots already.
- _____ 3a. I prefer to solve math or science problems using formulas and directions.
- _____ 3b. I prefer to figure out why formulas work.
- _____ 4a. When I read mystery stories, I usually let the author tell the story and reveal the mystery.
- _____ 4b. When I read mystery stories, I like to try figuring out the mystery before the author reveals it.
- _____ 5a. I usually read the instruction booklet before trying out a new piece of software.
- _____ 5b. I never read the instruction booklet before trying out a new piece of software.
- _____ 6a. I prefer to have someone who knows about a subject explain it to me before I try my hand at it.
- _____ 6b. I'm impatient when others try to explain things to me, preferring to get involved in them myself without much explanation.
- _____ 7a. Whenever I see a really amazing special effect in a movie, I like to sit back and enjoy it.
- _____ 7b. Whenever I see a really amazing special effect in a movie, I try to figure out how they did it.

If you tended to prefer the "A" statements in most pairs, you probably have a relational style. If you preferred the "B" statements, you probably have a more analytic style. Remember that no one is purely analytical or purely relational.

Relational learning style

A style that starts with the big picture and breaks it down into its individual components

These intelligences are:

- Verbal/Linguistic ("word smart")
- Logical/Mathematical ("number/reasoning smart")
- Visual/Spatial ("picture smart")

- Bodily/Kinesthetic (“body smart”)
- Musical/Rhythmic (“music smart”)
- Interpersonal (“people smart”)
- Intrapersonal (“self smart”)
- Naturalist (“nature smart”)

By tradition, academic and cultural environments have esteemed linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligence, resulting in our valuing articulate or logical people. However, using multiple intelligence theory, individuals displaying capacity in other intelligences, such as artists, architects, musicians, naturalists, designers, dancers, therapists, entrepreneurs, and others who enrich the world in which we live are also acknowledged, recognized, and esteemed for their gifts.

Research shows that all human beings have elements of these different types of intelligence. Depending on your background and age, some intelligences are more developed than others. Try It! 3, “You and Your Multiple Intelligences,” will help you discover what are your strengths. Knowing this, you can work to strengthen the other intelligences that you do not use as often or focus on the intelligences that are well developed.

Personality Styles

Our learning styles are also influenced by our personality. Are you a person who is likely to try out for school productions? Or is the idea of getting on a stage something that is totally lacking in appeal (if not completely terrifying)? Do you relate to the world around you primarily through careful planning or by spontaneously reacting?

According to the rationale of the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, a questionnaire frequently used in business and other organizations, our personality type plays a key role in determining how we react to different kinds of situations. Specifically, the idea is that we work best in situations in which others—both students and instructors—share our preferences and in which our personality preferences are most suited to the particular task on which we are working.

According to studies done on personality, four major dimensions are critical. Although we’ll describe the extremes of each dimension, keep in mind that most of us fall somewhere in between each of the endpoints of each dimension.

- **Introverts versus extroverts.** A key difference between introverts and extroverts is whether they enjoy working with others. Independence is a key characteristic of introverted learners. They enjoy working alone and they are less affected by how others think and behave. In contrast, extroverts are outgoing and more affected by the behaviour and thinking of others. They enjoy working with others, and they are energized by having other people around.

“To be fond of learning is to be near to knowledge.”

Tze-Sze

- **Intuitors versus sensors.** Intuitors enjoy solving problems and being creative. They get impatient with details, preferring to make leaps of judgment, and they enjoy the challenge of solving problems and taking a big-picture approach. People categorized as sensors prefer a concrete, logical approach in which they can carefully analyze the facts of the situation. Although they are good with details, they sometimes miss the big picture.



Try It!

3

You and Your Multiple Intelligences

Read the following statements and check any sentence that accurately describes you. Total your checkmarks and determine if your highest scores are an accurate reflection of you and your multiple intelligences.

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

- I enjoy telling stories and jokes
- I have a good memory for trivia
- I enjoy word games (e.g., Scrabble and crossword puzzles)
- I read books just for fun
- I am a good speller usually
- In an argument I tend to use put-downs or sarcasm
- I like talking and writing about my ideas
- If I have to memorize something I create a rhyme or saying to help me remember
- If something breaks and won't work, I read the instruction book first
- For a group presentation, I prefer to do the writing and library research

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

- I really enjoy math class
- I like logical math puzzles or brain teasers
- I find solving math problems to be fun
- If I have to memorize something I tend to place events in a logical order
- I like to find out how things work
- I enjoy computer and any math games
- I love playing chess, checkers, or Monopoly
- In an argument, I try to find a fair and logical solution
- If something breaks and won't work, I look at the pieces and try to figure out how it works
- For a group presentation, I prefer to create the charts and graphs

Visual/Spatial Intelligence

- I prefer a map to written directions
- I daydream a lot
- I enjoy hobbies such as photography
- I like to draw and create
- If I have to memorize something I draw a diagram to help me remember
- I like to doodle on paper whenever I can
- In a magazine, I prefer looking at the pictures rather than reading the text
- In an argument I try to keep my distance, keep silent, or visualize some solution
- If something breaks and won't work I tend to study the diagram of how it works
- For a group presentation, I prefer to draw all the pictures

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

- My favourite class is gym since I like sports
- I enjoy activities such as woodworking, sewing, and building models
- When looking at things, I like touching them
- I have trouble sitting still for any length of time
- I use a lot of body movements when talking
- If I have to memorize something I write it out a number of times until I know it
- I tend to tap my fingers or play with my pencil during class
- In an argument I tend to strike out and hit or run away
- If something breaks and won't work I tend to play with the pieces to try to fit them together
- For a group presentation, I prefer to move the props around, hold things up or build a model

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

- ___ I enjoy listening to CDs and the radio
- ___ I tend to hum to myself when working
- ___ I like to sing
- ___ I play a musical instrument quite well
- ___ I like to have music playing when doing homework or studying
- ___ If I have to memorize something I try to create a rhyme about the event
- ___ In an argument I tend to shout or punch or move in some sort of rhythm
- ___ I can remember the melodies of many songs
- ___ If something breaks and won't work I tend to tap my fingers to a beat while I figure it out
- ___ For a group presentation, I prefer to put new words to a popular tune or use music

Intrapersonal Intelligence

- ___ I like to work alone without anyone bothering me
- ___ I like to keep a diary
- ___ I like myself (most of the time)
- ___ I don't like crowds
- ___ I know what I am good at and what I am weak at
- ___ I find that I am strong-willed, independent, and don't follow the crowd
- ___ If I have to memorize something I tend to close my eyes and feel the situation
- ___ In an argument I will usually walk away until I calm down
- ___ If something breaks and won't work, I wonder if it's worth fixing
- ___ For a group presentation I like to contribute something that is uniquely mine, often based on how I feel

Interpersonal Intelligence

- ___ I get along well with others
- ___ I like to belong to clubs and organizations
- ___ I have several very close friends
- ___ I like helping teach other students
- ___ I like working with others in groups
- ___ Friends ask my advice because I seem to be a natural leader
- ___ If I have to memorize something I ask someone to quiz me to see if I know it
- ___ In an argument I tend ask a friend or some person in authority for help
- ___ If something breaks and won't work I try to find someone who can help me
- ___ For a group presentation, I like to help organize the group's efforts

Naturalist Intelligence

- ___ I am keenly aware of my surroundings and of what goes on around me
- ___ I love to go walking in the woods and looking at the trees and flowers
- ___ I enjoy gardening
- ___ I like to collect things (e.g., rocks, sports cards, stamps, etc)
- ___ As an adult, I think I would like to get away from the city and enjoy nature
- ___ If I have to memorize something, I tend to organize it into categories
- ___ I enjoy learning the names of living things in our environment, such as flowers and trees
- ___ In an argument I tend to compare my opponent to someone or something I have read or heard about and react accordingly
- ___ If something breaks down, I look around me to try and see what I can find to fix the problem
- ___ For a group presentation, I prefer to organize and classify the information into categories so it makes sense

Continued



Try It!
3

You and Your Multiple Intelligences—Continued

TOTAL SCORE

_____ Verbal/Linguistic	_____ Musical/Rhythmic
_____ Logical/Mathematical	_____ Interpersonal
_____ Visual/Spatial	_____ Intrapersonal
_____ Bodily/Kinesthetic	_____ Naturalist

Eight Styles of Learning

Read the following descriptors and comment on the information; you can utilize the information to power-up your postsecondary learning experience.

Verbal/Linguistic Learner

likes to: read, write and tell stories.
 is good at: memorizing names, places, dates and trivia.
 learns best by: saying, hearing and seeing words; teaching others.
 Comments: _____

Logical/Mathematical Learner

likes to: do experiments; figure things out; work with numbers; ask questions and explore patterns and relationships.
 is good at: math, reasoning, logic and problem solving.
 learns best by: categorizing; classifying and working with abstract patterns/relationships; organizing information sequentially.
 Comments: _____

Visual/Spatial Learner

likes to: draw, build, design and create things; daydream; look at pictures/slides; watch movies and play with machines.
 is good at: imagining things; sensing changes; mazes/puzzles and reading maps, charts.
 learns best by: visualizing; dreaming; using the mind's eye and working with colours/pictures.
 Comments: _____

Musical/Rhythmic Learner

likes to: sing; hum tunes; listen to music; play an instrument and respond to music.
 is good at: picking up sounds; remembering melodies; noticing pitches/rhythms and keeping time.
 learns best by: rhythm, melody and music.
 Comments: _____

Bodily/Kinesthetic Learner

likes to: move around; touch and talk and use body language.
 is good at: physical activities (sports/dance/acting) and crafts.
 learns best by: touching; moving; interacting with space and processing knowledge through bodily sensations.
 Comments: _____

Interpersonal Learner

likes to: have lots of friends; talk to people and join groups.
 is good at: understanding people; leading others; organizing; communicating; manipulating and mediating conflicts.
 learns best by: sharing, comparing, relating, cooperating, and interviewing.
 Comments: _____

Intrapersonal Learner

likes to: work alone and pursue own interests.
 is good at: understanding self, focusing inward on feelings/dreams; following instincts; pursuing interests/goals and being original.
 learns best by: working alone; individualized projects; self-paced instruction and having own space.
 Comments: _____

Naturalistic Learner

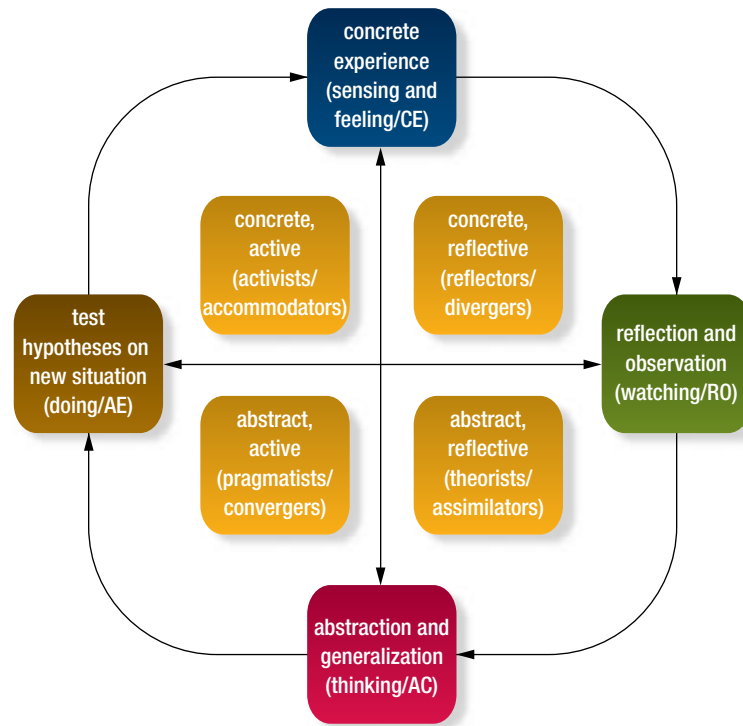
likes to: be outside, with animals, geography, and weather; interacting with the surroundings.
 is good at: categorizing; organizing a living area; planning a trip; preservation, and conservation.
 learns best by: studying natural phenomenon, in a natural setting; learning about how things work.
 Comments: _____

- **Thinkers versus feelers.** Thinkers prefer logic over emotion. They reach decisions and solve problems by systematically analyzing a situation. In contrast, feeling types rely more on their personal values when responding. They are aware of others and their feelings, and they are influenced by their emotional responses and attachments to others.
- **Perceivers and judges.** Before drawing a conclusion, perceivers attempt to gather as much information as they can. Because they are open to multiple perspectives and appreciate all sides of an issue, they sometimes have difficulty completing a task. Judges, in comparison, are quick and decisive, sometimes making decisions before they have all the available information. They like to set goals, accomplish them, and then move on to the next task.

Each personality type has specific likes and dislikes when it comes to learning preferences. For example, introverts usually enjoy working alone, while extroverts usually enjoy cooperative learning and projects involving many people. Intuitors most enjoy creative problem solving, while sensors flourish with assignments that are concrete and logical. Thinkers prefer to systematically use logic to analyze a problem, and feelers enjoy assignments that involve others and their emotional reactions. Finally, perceivers favour work on which there are multiple sides to an issue, while judges' preferences are to be decisive, determining goals and sticking to them.

Figure 3.1

Kolb's Experimental Learning Style



A short, free adaptation of the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, “Personality Pathways: What Is Your Myers-Briggs Personality Type?” can be found at www.personalitypathways.com/type_inventory.html. This site has an on-line Myers-Briggs test as well as descriptors of all 16 types, along with information about careers and personal relationships.

Experiential Learning

Kolb's Learning Style Inventory is based on the idea that learning should be active and grounded in experience. The model has four stages: *watching*, *thinking*, *feeling*, *doing*. Kolb's theory is that learners prefer to start the learning cycle in one of the stages but that we learn from all four stages. The model is often shown in two dimensions, with the horizontal grid focusing on the task, moving from *doing* on the left and *watching* on the right. The vertical dimension focuses on our thought and feeling processes, moving from *feeling* on the top to *thinking* on the bottom. See Figure 3.1.

- *Watching*: Learners who prefer *watching* (RO: reflective observation) use observation to make judgments, preferring lectures, learning logs, or journals to process their learning.
- *Doing*: Learners who prefer *doing* (AE: active experimentation) learn best when they can actively engage in projects, homework, or class discussions.
- *Feeling*: Learners who prefer *feeling* or *sensing* (CE: concrete experience) learn best when they can make feeling-based judgments using specific examples (such as exercises and simulations) in which they can be involved.
- *Thinking*: Learners who prefer *thinking* (AC: abstract conceptualization) learn best when they can apply thinking and analysis to their learning by using case studies or theoretical readings.

Within the quadrants formed by the grids are the learning styles of each person: *theorists* (assimilators), *pragmatists* (convergers), *activists* (accommodators), and *reflectors* (divergers).

- *Assimilators* use abstract conceptualization and reflective observation in their learning process. They ask, “How does this relate to that?” They prefer case studies, reading, and thinking. Their strength is in their ability to create theoretical models. Instructors who lecture and assign papers are effective for learners with this learning style.
- *Convergers* use abstract conceptualization and active experimentation to learn effectively. They ask, “How can I apply this in practice?” They prefer peer feedback and activities that apply skills. Their strength is in their ability to apply skills and ideas. A coach or helper is an ideal instructor for this type of learner.
- *Accommodators* use concrete experience and active experimentation to learn best. They say, “I’m game for anything.” They prefer practising the skills, problem solving, small-group discussions, and peer feedback. Experts who model professional practices are effective instructors for these learners.
- *Divergers* like to use reflective observation and concrete experience to learn well. They ask, “What does that mean?” They prefer lectures, with time to think or write about their subject. Their strength lies in their imaginative ability. They like instructors who can provide expert interpretation and set external criteria for evaluation.



Learning styles reflect our preferred manner of acquiring, using, and thinking about knowledge. Tactile learners prefer hands-on learning that comes about through touching, manipulating, and doing things.

To discover where you fit into Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory, complete Try It! 4, “Learning Style Indicator.”

Facts to Remember about Learning, Personality, Experiential, and Processing Styles

- **You have a variety of styles.** As you can see in Table 3.1 (on page 75) and Try It! 5, “What I Know About My Learning Styles.” (on page 76), there are several types of styles. For any given task or challenge, some types of styles may be more relevant than others. Furthermore, success is possible even when there is a mismatch between what you need to accomplish and your own pattern of preferred styles. It may take more work, but learning to deal with situations that require you to use less-preferred styles is important practice for life after college or university.



Learning Style Indicator

What kind of learner are you? Read each statement carefully. To the left of each statement, write the code that best describes how each statement applies to you.²

SECTION 1

Place either an AE or a RO next to the statement below, depending on which part of the statement mostly closely describes you:

- _____ (AE): I often produce off-the-cuff ideas that at first might seem silly or half-baked. (RO): I am thorough and methodical.
- _____ (AE): I am normally the one who initiates conversations. (RO): I enjoy watching people.
- _____ (AE): I am flexible and open-minded. (RO): I am careful and cautious.
- _____ (AE): I like to try new and different things without too much preparation. (RO): I investigate a new topic or process in depth before trying it.
- _____ (AE): I am happy to have a go at new things. (RO): I draw up lists of possible courses of actions when starting a new project.
- _____ (AE): I like to get involved and to participate. (RO): I like to read and observe.
- _____ (AE): I am loud and outgoing. (RO): I am quiet and somewhat shy.
- _____ (AE): I make quick and bold decisions. (RO): I make cautious and logical decisions.
- _____ (AE): I speak slowly, after thinking. (RO): I speak fast, while thinking.

Total of AEs: _____. Total of ROs: _____. The one that has the larger number is your task preference.

SECTION 2

Place either an AC or a CE next to the statement below, depending on which part of the statement mostly closely describes you:

- _____ (AC): I ask probing questions when learning a new subject. (CE): I am good at picking up hints and techniques from other people.
- _____ (AC): I am rational and logical. (CE): I am practical and down to earth.
- _____ (AC): I plan events down to the last detail. (CE): I like realistic but flexible plans.
- _____ (AC): I like to know the right answers before trying something new. (CE): I try things out by practising to see whether they work.
- _____ (AC): I analyze reports to find the basic assumptions and inconsistencies. (CE): I rely on others to give me the basic gist of reports.
- _____ (AC): I prefer working alone. (CE): I enjoy working with others.
- _____ (AC): Others would describe me as serious, reserved, and formal. (CE): Others would describe me as verbal, expressive, and informal.
- _____ (AC): I use facts to make decisions. (CE): I use feelings to make decisions.
- _____ (AC): I am difficult to get to know. (CE): I am easy to get to know.

Total of ACs: _____. Total of CEs: _____. The one that has the larger number is your thought or emotional preference.

SCORING PROCEDURES

Each preference (high score) from the two above sections is used to determine your learning style. Note that you learn in *all* four styles, but you normally learn best by starting in and using one style the most.

- If you are an AE and a CE then you are a Doer/Accommodator.
- If you are an RO and a CE then you are a Watcher/Diverger.
- If you are an RO and an AC then you are a Thinker/Assimilator.
- If you are an AE and an AC then you are a Feeler/Converger.

Table 3.1

Learning, Processing, Personality, and Experiential Styles

Category	Description
Receptive Learning Styles	
Visual	A style that involves visualizing information in the mind, favouring reading and watching over touching and listening.
Auditory	A style in which the learner favours listening as the best approach.
Tactile	A style that involves learning by touching, manipulating objects, and doing things.
Information Processing Styles	
Analytic	A style in which the learner starts with small pieces of information and uses them to build the big picture.
Relational	A style in which the learner starts with the big picture and breaks it down into its individual components.
Personality Styles	
Introvert versus Extrovert	Independence is a key characteristic of introverted learners, who enjoy working alone and are less affected by how others think and behave. In contrast, extroverts are outgoing and more affected by the behaviour and thinking of others. They enjoy working with others.
Intuitor versus Sensor	Intuitors enjoy solving problems and being creative, often taking a big-picture approach to solving problems. Sensors prefer a concrete, logical approach in which they can carefully analyze the facts of the situation.
Thinker versus Feeler	Thinkers prefer logic over emotion, reaching decisions and solving problems by systematically analyzing a situation. In contrast, feelers rely more on their emotional responses and are influenced by their personal values and attachments to others.
Perceiver versus Judger	Before drawing a conclusion, perceivers attempt to gather as much information as they can and are open to multiple perspectives. Judgers, in comparison, are quick and decisive, sometimes making decisions before they have all the available information; they enjoy setting goals and accomplishing them.
Experiential Styles	
Divergers	They prefer to observe or watch others, think, and record thoughts about learning.
Assimilators	They prefer to read or listen to instructions, understand theories, and create theoretical models.
Convergers	They prefer to be coached, learn from an expert, and go step-by-step through a learning process.
Accommodators	They prefer hands-on learning, practising, and working with others.

- **Your style reflects your preferences regarding which abilities you like to use—not the abilities themselves.** Styles are related to our preferences and the mental approaches we like to use. You may prefer to learn tactilely, but that in itself doesn't guarantee that the products that you create tactilely will be good—you still have to work!
- **Your style will change over the course of your life.** You can learn new styles and expand the range of learning experiences in which you feel comfortable. In fact, you can conceive of this book as one long lesson in learning styles because it provides you with strategies for learning more effectively in a variety of ways.



What I Know About My Learning Styles

LEARNING STYLE	I AM BEST DESCRIBED AS:	MY STRENGTHS ARE:	I LEARN BEST BY:	ACTION PLAN
Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic				
Multiple Intelligence Theory				
Analytic, Relational				
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator				
Kolb's Learning Style Inventory				
Other Things That I Know About Me				
Time				
Responsibilities				
Values				
Other				

Sample: What I Know About My Learning Styles

LEARNING STYLE	I AM BEST DESCRIBED AS:	MY STRENGTHS ARE:	I LEARN BEST BY:	ACTION PLAN
Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic	<i>a strong visual learner</i>	<i>visualizing, artistic</i>	<i>seeing things—visuals, colours</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I will use colours in my notes and when I am reading my text and diagram some of my notes. -I will organize my study time using my planner and highlight.
Multiple Intelligence Theory	<i>logical/mathematic</i>	<i>reasoning, problem-solving</i>	<i>seeing the patterns or relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I will try and work by myself or with a study peer. -I will take a philosophy course and see if I like logic.
Analytic, Relational	<i>an analytic learner</i>	<i>focus on facts organizing</i>	<i>starting with the pieces and building up</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I will do the chapter exercises and online quizzes to make sure I know my stuff.
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	<i>introvert, sensor feeler, perceiver</i>	<i>independence, working logically, values gathering information</i>	<i>working by myself or with one other person</i>	
Kolb's Learning Style Inventory	<i>a converger</i>	<i>apply my skills</i>	<i>step-by-step, coaching</i>	
Other Things That I Know About Me				
Time	<i>prime time—morning</i>	<i>organizing the early part of the day</i>	<i>starting early</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I will use library for early studying and get the hard stuff out of the way. -I will do some of my reading at work.
Responsibilities	<i>part-time job (12 hours per week)</i>	<i>flexible</i>	<i>staying organized</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I will try and switch floors in my res—quiet floor. -We can study together sometimes instead of just hanging out all the time.
Values	<i>value: love, art, freedom</i>	<i>I know what's important to me</i>	<i>having a quiet harmonious environment</i>	
Other	<i>steady relationship</i>	<i>mutually supportive</i>	<i>helping each other</i>	

- **You should work on improving your less-preferred styles.** Although it may be tempting, don't always make choices that increase your exposure to preferred styles and decrease your practice with less-preferred styles. The more you use approaches for which you have less of a preference, the better you'll be at developing the skills associated with those styles.
- **Work cooperatively with others who have different styles.** If your instructor asks you to work cooperatively in groups, seek out classmates who have styles that are different from yours. Not only will your classmates' differing styles help you to achieve collective success, but you can learn from observing others' approaches to tackling the assignment.

Self-Concept: "Who Am I?"

Of course you know who you are: You know your first and last name, you know where and when you were born, and you have no trouble identifying your ethnic background. You may even be able to recite your social insurance number with ease.

"When I discover who I am, I'll be free."

Ralph Ellison, U.S. author

But if this information is all that comes to mind when you think about who you are, you're missing a lot of the picture. What makes you unique and special are your thoughts, your beliefs, your dreams. You

have a unique past history, and this set of experiences together with your genetic makeup—the combination of genes you inherited from your parents—is unlike anyone else's.

Our view of ourselves—our **self-concept**—has three parts:

1. Our *physical self* is both who we are physically—the colour of our eyes or the curliness of our hair—and how we feel about our physical form. We all have our blemishes, protruding stomachs, long noses, or other physical quirks, but we don't all feel the same way about them.
2. Our *social self* is made up of the roles we play in our social interactions with others. As you're reading these words, you're not only a student; you're also a son or daughter, a friend, a citizen, and possibly an employee, a spouse, a lover, or a parent. Each of these roles plays an important part in defining your self-concept.
3. Finally, our self-concept also contains a *personal self*—our inner core, which is that private part of ourselves that no one knows about except us. It consists of the innermost thoughts and experiences that we may or may not choose to share with others.

Self-concept

Your view of yourself that forms over time, comprising three components: the physical self, the social self, and the personal self

Self-Concept and Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

The way we view ourselves determines how we interact with others, what challenges we feel ready to take on, and our expectations for future success. If you see yourself as a successful student, you are likely to expect that you'll continue to be a successful student; if you see yourself as an incapable, inept student, your chances for future success are diminished.

In short, our self-concept can act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. A **self-fulfilling prophecy** is the tendency to act in accordance with our expectations and beliefs, thereby increasing the likelihood that events or behaviours consistent with those expectations and beliefs will occur. In other words, believing that something will happen can lead to actions that make it more likely that it actually will happen.

For instance, a person who views herself as a poor student may find herself thinking: “Why bother working hard? I’m no good as a student; that’s just the way I am.” It’s easy to see how such a view could lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy: By not working hard, the student guarantees that the prophecy of poor performance comes true.

On the other hand, self-fulfilling prophecies can have positive effects. A person who sees herself as a good student will probably be motivated to study and will complete assignments enthusiastically. Her view of herself can bring about the expected behaviour—in this case, success.

To get a clearer picture of your own self-concept:

- **Examine the roles you play.** To understand who we are, we need to understand the different roles that we play in life. Consider which of these roles are central to who you are—and who you want to be. Think about the time you spend each day and how much of it is devoted to each of these roles.
- **Identify your strengths and weaknesses.** Look at yourself with a clear and objective eye, and consider what you do particularly well and what you don’t do particularly well. If you’re honest, you’ll come up with several areas in which you need work—and many other areas in which you’re already quite strong. Use Table 3.2 to help you organize your thoughts and build an initial inventory of your strengths and weaknesses.

As you consider your strengths and weaknesses, don’t place a value on them. The fact that you procrastinate and put off tasks doesn’t make you a bad person, just as the fact that you’re a good student doesn’t necessarily make you a good person. The point in seeking to identify who you are is to determine your self-concept with accuracy, not to determine how good (or bad) a human being you are.

Furthermore, be sure you construct your own definition of who you are. Don’t let what you believe others think about you determine what *you* know you’re good at and bad at. See yourself through your own eyes, not somebody else’s.

- **Pull your selves together.** Try to form a coherent view of your self-concept. Seek to understand how the various parts of your self-concept—physical, social, and personal—fit together.

If you consider your self-concept this way, you’ll find that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. We’re not just the bodies we inhabit, the roles we play, and the experiences we have, but something bigger and better.

- **Accept your entire self-concept.** If you’re being honest with yourself, you’ll find that there are parts of yourself that you like more than others. That’s okay. Don’t disown the parts you don’t like; they’re also part of who you are. Instead, accept that some parts of yourself need work, while others are the source of justifiable pride.

Self-fulfilling prophecy

The tendency to act in accordance with our expectations and beliefs, thereby increasing the likelihood that events or behaviours consistent with those expectations and beliefs will occur

Table 3.2**Inventory Your Strengths and Weaknesses**

Aspects of Self	Strengths	Weaknesses
Physical Self		
Health and fitness		
Sports		
Nutrition and diet		
Appearance		
Other		
Social Self		
Friend		
Son/daughter		
Lover/spouse		
Citizen/community member		
Employee		
Student		
Roommate		
Classmate		
Team or group member (e.g., sports, band, club)		
Other		
Personal Self		
Personal experiences		
Unique traits		
Personality		
Spiritual self		
Habits		
Attitudes/opinions		
Ideas/thoughts		
Other		

Not everything we do belongs in our self-concept. If you once shoplifted when you were a child, that doesn't mean you were a juvenile delinquent then or are a criminal now. Failing a course in high school doesn't make you a failing student.

Make Sure Your Self-Concept Is Yours

Our own perceptions are not the only source of self-fulfilling prophecies. We sometimes permit *others'* views of who we are and their expectations about us to determine our behaviour.

For example, if we think an instructor views us as a particularly hard worker, we may not want to disappoint him by slacking off. If we believe that our boss admires our persistence, we may be motivated to show her our persistence when we're working on a difficult problem.

Responding to others' positive perceptions can be fine, for the results are good. But what happens if someone holds a negative view of who we are? What if we're constantly told that we're not working hard enough, or that we're not as smart as our older brother, or that we are the hard worker but not the creative one?

"A lot of my fellow classmates are younger than me, and therefore concerned with different things."

Kim Ritchie, Student, Lambton College

The results can be devastating. If we consistently hear such messages about who we are, we can come to believe them. Even worse, our behaviour can begin to reflect the negative messages. If we're constantly told that we don't work hard enough, we may in fact *not* work very hard. If we're told we're not as smart as someone else, we may begin to think of ourselves as not very bright. Or if someone tells us we're not creative, we may not try very hard to be creative.

In short, the negative messages that we hear from others can come to act as a prison of others' negative beliefs about who we are and what our capabilities are. It's crucial, then, not to buy into others' negative views of who we are. Instead, we need to create our own self-concept, independent of what we believe others think about us. Our biggest help, and sometimes hinderance, in this effort is self-esteem.

Self-Esteem: Building a Positive View of Yourself

When you think about yourself as a student, you probably don't stop there. Instead, you likely see yourself as a "good" student, a "bad" student, or maybe a "just okay" student. Similarly, when you consider yourself in the role of friend, you may view yourself as a "loyal-to-the-end" friend or maybe, in the opposite case, a "fair-weather" friend. In short, when we look inward at who we are, we don't just stop with a characterization of the different roles that we play in the world. Instead, we place a value on them. We see the various facets of our self-concept not in neutral terms, but as either positive or negative.

Self-esteem is the overall evaluation we give ourselves as individuals. It reflects the degree to which we see ourselves as individuals of worth and determines our general acceptance of ourselves. If we have high self-esteem, we generally feel respect for and acceptance of ourselves. Conversely, if we have low self-esteem, we generally lack respect for ourselves, reject parts of who we are, and judge ourselves negatively.

To get a sense of your own general level of self-esteem, complete the self-assessment in Try It! 6, "Measure Your Self-Esteem."

Self-esteem

The overall evaluation we give ourselves as individuals

Why Self-Esteem Matters

People with high self-esteem are generally happier and better able to cope with adversity. High self-esteem provides a sense of security, because people with high self-esteem feel they are able to deal with problems that may arise.



Measure Your Self-Esteem

To get an informal estimate of your self-esteem, complete the following scale by placing a checkmark in the appropriate box after each statement.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.				
2. At times I think I am no good at all.				
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.				
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.				
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.				
6. I certainly feel useless at times.				
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.				
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.				
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.				
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.				

Scoring: For statements 1, 3, 4, 7, and 10, score as follows:

Strongly Agree	4 points	Disagree	2 points
Agree	3 points	Strongly Disagree	1 point

For statements 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9, score as follows:

Strongly Agree	1 point	Disagree	3 points
Agree	2 points	Strongly Disagree	4 points

The highest possible score (i.e., an apparently very high level of self-esteem) is 40 points, and the minimum score (i.e., an apparently very low level of self-esteem) is 10. Most people score in the 30-point to 40-point range. A much smaller number of people score in the 20s. A score of 10 to 20 is often found in people who suffer from severe depression. Keep in mind that this is a very rough gauge of self-esteem and that scores will vary depending on many factors, including your mood when you complete the questionnaire.³

Do the results of the questionnaire match your own gut feelings about yourself? Do you think your self-esteem has changed? Do you have any ideas as to why?

Self-efficacy

The expectation that you are capable of achieving your goals in many different kinds of situations

They also have a sense of **self-efficacy**, the expectation that they are capable of achieving their goals in many different kinds of situations. High self-esteem can also give people a sense of purpose and the belief that they are productive members of society.

In contrast, individuals lacking in self-esteem are more insecure, and their belief in their ability to reach their goals is weak. They feel less tied to others,

and their sense of purpose is not firm. When others are successful, people with low self-esteem may feel jealousy and envy.

Low self-esteem can produce a *cycle of failure* in which low self-esteem leads to low expectations, reduced effort, elevated anxiety, poor performance, and, finally, an affirmation of the low self-esteem that began the cycle in the first place. Such a cycle can be difficult to break (see Figure 3.2).

If a student with low self-esteem begins studying for a test believing that he is likely to do badly, he may put forth relatively little effort. After all, why should he bother, when he sees himself as an incompetent student of little worth? Moreover, because he is virtually sure he is going to do poorly on the test, he may experience extreme anxiety, feeling that (another) failure is lurking just ahead.

Ultimately, the combination of lack of effort and anxiety produced by his low self-esteem do him in, and he actually does do poorly on the test. But the cycle of failure is not yet complete: Rather than telling himself that low effort and elevated anxiety caused his poor test performance, he views it as an affirmation of his inferior ability. In turn, this misperception serves to reinforce his low self-esteem.

Breaking the Cycle of Failure “Okay,” you may be saying to yourself, “I understand that self-esteem is important. But how am I supposed to ignore a lifetime of learning and improve my self-esteem, especially when I have low self-esteem to begin with?”

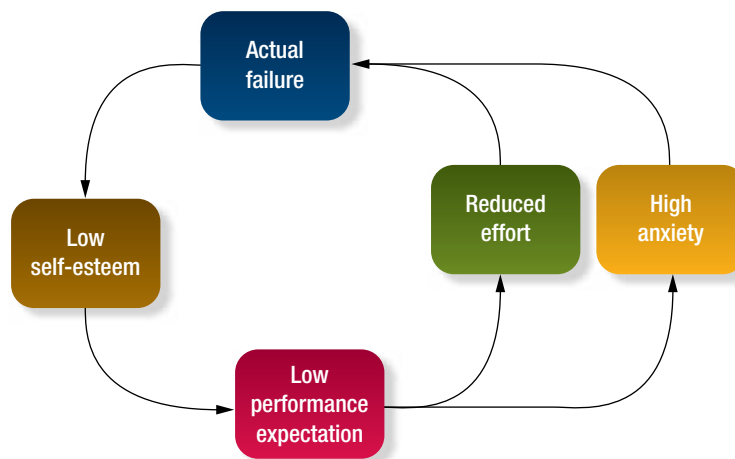


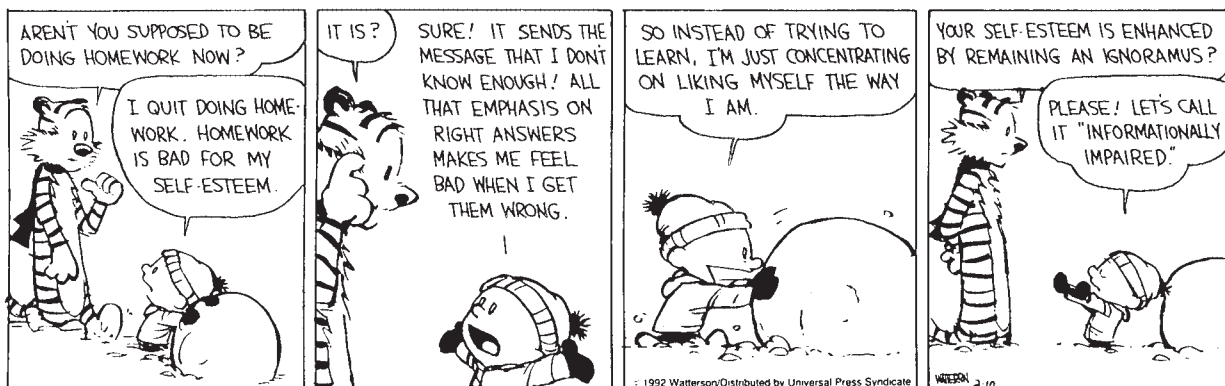
Figure 3.2

The Cycle of Failure

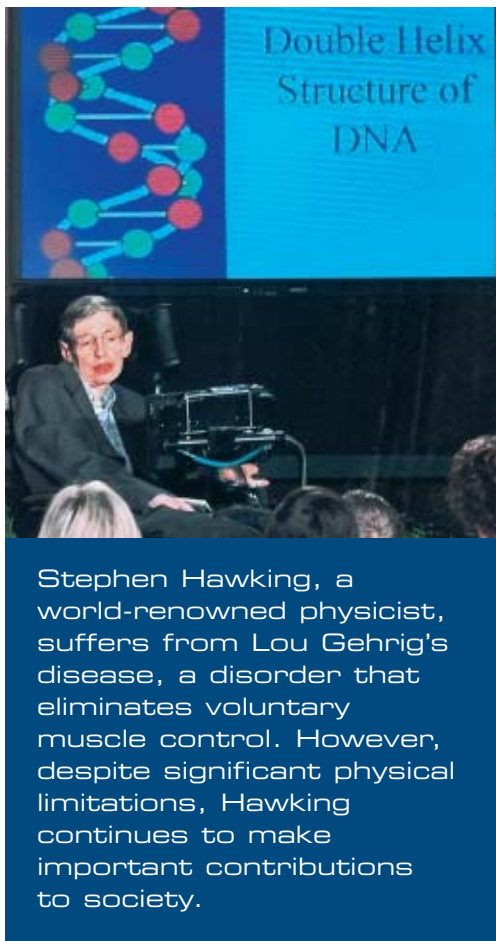
Low self-esteem can lead to low performance expectations. In turn, low performance expectations can produce reduced effort and high anxiety, both of which can lead to failure—and ultimately reinforce the low self-esteem that started the cycle.

Calvin and Hobbes

by Bill Watterson



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It's not a simple matter to shed a less-than-ideal view of ourselves and adopt a more positive one. You certainly won't be able to change your basic conception of yourself in the course of a few days.

But you can take some steps to bring yourself closer to an ideal level of self-esteem:

- **Accept yourself, warts and all.** No one is perfect, and becoming a perfect person should not be your goal in life. If it is, you are doomed to failure, because you will never measure up.

Accept the fact that you're not pleased with certain aspects of yourself and your life. If you didn't realize that some things about yourself need improvement, you are out of touch with who you are.

- **Understand that everyone has value and self-worth.** Every individual has value and self-worth, some unique spark that sets him or her apart from everyone else. Examine yourself and your life, and get a picture of the particulars that make you *you*.
- **Distinguish the different parts of who you are.** No one is all bad, just as no one is all good. Maybe a person who never reached the level of success she wanted to in school turns out to be an excellent employee, the person who always seems to be asked to solve problems or take on challenges no one else can deal with. Another person may not be the kind of husband he wants to be but turns out to be a terrific parent.

Understanding that you have failings in one area of life doesn't mean that you can't be successful in others. It makes no sense to base your self-esteem on what you do worst in life, so don't focus solely on your failings and minimize your successes.

- **Don't just rely on—or wait for—others' praise.** Your self-esteem should not be solely dependent on the praise you get from others. Use your own judgment to evaluate the level of success you've achieved on a given task.

For instance, you know when you've done your best in writing a paper. If you feel proud of it, celebrate your accomplishment and take pride in it. Instead of waiting for your instructor's feedback, permit yourself to feel good about what you've done. Your self-esteem should be based on your own assessment of your accomplishments, not only on others' assessments.

- **Understand that building self-esteem is a lifelong undertaking.** It's taken a lifetime to develop whatever level of self-esteem you currently have. Your self-esteem is not going to change overnight.

Rebuilding self-esteem isn't easy. It's particularly hard to do at a time when you face a major life transition, such as the beginning of your postsecondary experience. Your oldest friends and your family may not be nearby, and the level of academic work you encounter presents new challenges. But starting college or university presents a special opportunity to grow and develop. It's a new environment, giving you the opportunity to unlearn old patterns of behaviour that have held you back

and master new ones that will permit you to have a more positive view of yourself. Don't let low self-esteem keep you from becoming what you can be.

Preparing a Personal Mission Statement

The life that is unexamined is not worth living.

Twenty-five-hundred years later, Plato's words are still true. If you never consider what you want out of life, what your dreams and aspirations are, and where you're heading, you're in danger of missing out on the most fundamental and meaningful parts of life. The day-to-day details of life will use up all your time, and you won't know exactly where it has gone.

One way to get a clearer picture of your life is to create a formal statement of what you actually hope to achieve during your lifetime. The P.O.W.E.R. framework provides a series of steps that can help you look inward and determine how you want to carry out your life.

Prepare: Identifying Your Values

The first step toward understanding yourself is to assess your underlying values systematically. To do this, work through the following steps:

1. Choose the five values that you hold most dear. Here are some examples, but don't restrict yourself to these: a comfortable life, an exciting life, a sense of accomplishment, world peace, beauty, equality, security, freedom, happiness, inner harmony, love, pleasure, religion, self-respect, fame, friendship, wisdom, work, financial security, risk taking, being challenged.
2. For each value, answer each of these questions: *Why* is it important to you? *Who* taught it to you? *How* has it affected your behaviour in the past? *In what ways* can you affirm it through your future behaviour?

Value #1 _____

Why it is important:

Who taught it to you:

How it has affected your past behaviour:

In what ways you can affirm it through future behaviour:

Value #2 _____

Why it is important:

Who taught it to you:

How it has affected your past behaviour:

In what ways you can affirm it through future behaviour:

Value #3 _____

Why it is important:

Who taught it to you:

How it has affected your past behaviour:

In what ways you can affirm it through future behaviour:

Value #4 _____

Why it is important:

Who taught it to you:

How it has affected your past behaviour:

In what ways you can affirm it through future behaviour:

Value #5 _____

Why it is important:

Who taught it to you:

How it has affected your past behaviour:

In what ways you can affirm it through future behaviour:



rganize: Placing Order on What Motivates You

Self-actualization

A state of self-fulfillment in which people realize their highest potential in their own unique way

Lester B. Pearson, Michael J. Fox, Marc Garneau: What is the common link among these three people? According to psychologist Abraham Maslow, each of them achieved or has achieved **self-actualization**, a state of self-fulfillment in which people realize their highest potential in their own unique way.⁴

According to Maslow, self-actualization is the highest of the various needs that motivate our behaviour. As you can see in Figure 3.3, our underlying needs form a pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid are our most basic needs, the biological needs that drive our behaviour, including food, water, sleep, and sex. The basic needs are not much different from those that drive the behaviour of nonhuman animals. The needs on the next higher level of the pyramid are safety needs; we need a safe, secure environment in which to function effectively.

Because humans are able to meet their more basic survival needs, they have a chance to move to levels of need that relate to more-advanced qualities, such as the need for love. As the pyramid indicates, our love and belongingness needs come next: our need to form relationships with others and to look outside ourselves. We seek to give affection and to be contributing members of groups within society.

After these needs are fulfilled, we strive for the esteem of others. Esteem relates to the desire to develop a sense of self-worth. We want others to be aware of our competence and worth and to acknowledge our value in the world.

Only after we meet these physiological, safety, love and belongingness, and esteem needs can we strive for self-actualization. Although early views of self-actualization restricted this quality to a few well-known individuals, self-actualization is now generally regarded as a concept that can apply to any of us.

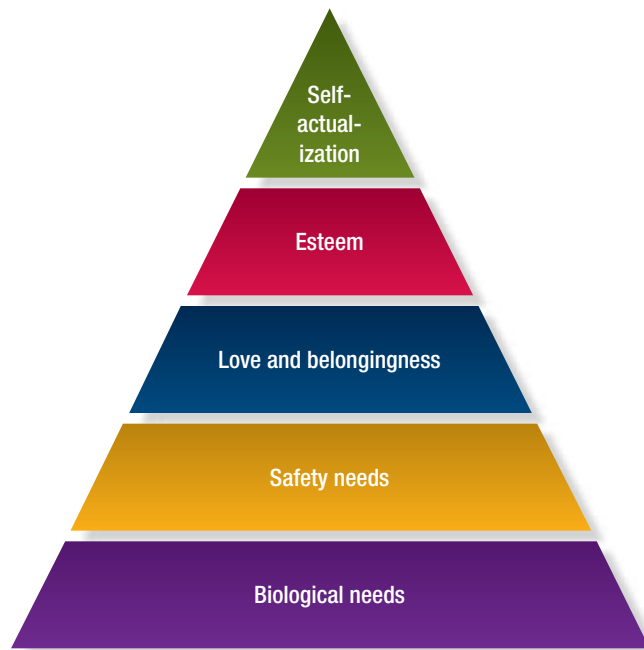


Figure 3.3
Pyramid of Motivational Needs

For instance, a parent with excellent nurturing skills who raises a family, an inventor whose product benefits others, and an artist who realizes her creative potential might all be self-actualized individuals.

The crucial characteristic of self-actualization is that we feel at ease with ourselves and satisfied that we are using our talents to the fullest. Achieving self-actualization produces a relaxation of the striving and yearning for greater fulfillment that mark many people’s lives. People who are self-actualized can find satisfaction in their current state of affairs.

“Authentic values are those by which a life can be lived.”

Allan Bloom

The pyramid shown in Figure 3.3 can help you to understand yourself more accurately. Use Try It! 7, “Organize Your Needs,” to discover the structure of your own motivational needs.

Work: Creating a Personal Mission Statement

- *To be the first choice for Canadians in Automotive, Sports and Leisure, and Home products, providing total customer value through customer-driven service, focused assortments and competitive operations.*

You may have already guessed the name of the company that would make the statement reproduced above: The Canadian Tire Corporation. Like almost every other major organization, Canadian Tire has a *mission statement*, a statement about what the organization does and the principles that guide its corporate life.

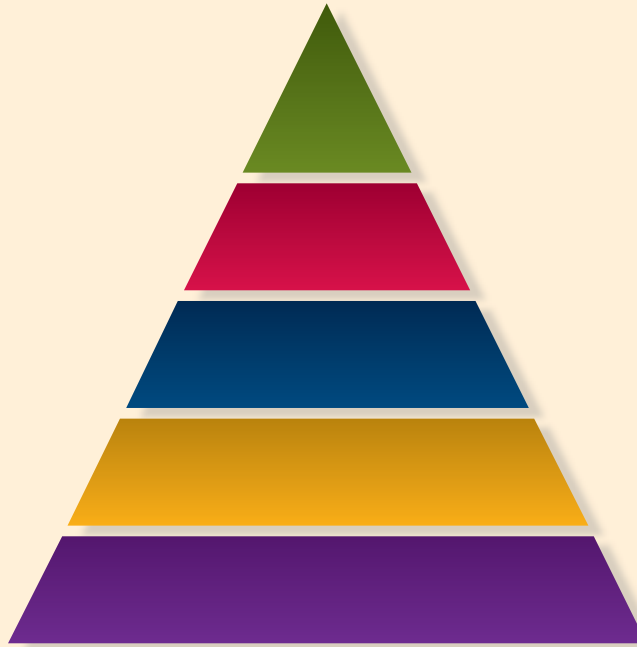
What’s good for Canadian Tire is good for you. Each of us should set out a *personal mission statement*, a description encompassing our own personal objectives, long-term goals, and guiding philosophy. It’s a kind of personal constitution that sets out broad principles of how we want to conduct our lives. It

Try It!

7

Organize Your Needs

Consider the motivational needs illustrated by the pyramid in Figure 3.3 (biological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization). Using the blank pyramid below, fill in your own particular needs in the order that best illustrates your personal hierarchy of needs. Don't feel constrained by the ordering in Figure 3.3; each of us has a unique pattern of needs that defines who we are. For example, you might feel that love and belongingness are more-fundamental needs and therefore should be closer to the bottom of the pyramid. Remember, there are no wrong answers.



Answer the following questions about your personal hierarchy of needs:

1. What similarities are there between your order and that suggested by the pyramid in Figure 3.3?
2. What differences are there in your ordering and those suggested by the pyramid in Figure 3.3? What accounts for the differences?
3. How do the values you pinpointed earlier (see “Prepare: Identifying Your Values”) relate to the needs you’ve described in the pyramid? Can you relate your key values to your motivational needs?

is a guideline that allows us to adapt our behaviour to the changing conditions of life without straying from our overall direction and purpose.

If we don't have a mission statement, or at least think about the components of one, we risk drifting aimlessly through life. Constructing a mission statement permits us to make the choices we need to make based on our own personal philosophy. It helps us to move from our abstract values and motivational needs to something concrete.

For example, consider the following mission statement created by one student:

My mission is to use my personal abilities fully to become an engineer who will work on projects that will help others improve the quality of their lives. In addition, I hope to form meaningful relationships with others and to marry and raise children who will make their own contributions to society. Finally, I want to participate in bettering the world by volunteering in organizations that will enhance the quality of my own community.

This mission statement reflects several underlying values and needs: the desire to use work to improve others' lives, the desire to form relationships with others, and the desire to make the world a better place. In some respects it is fairly specific (such as the desire to become an engineer and to marry and have children), while in others it is fairly vague (such as the desire to participate in organizations that can improve community life). The key point is that it provides a general framework, a way of evaluating whether any particular choice fits into this individual's overall personal mission.

To create your own personal mission statement, follow these three preliminary steps:

1. **Summarize your most important values and motivational needs.** You've already assessed your values and motivational needs. Try to distill them into several key principles that will guide your life.
2. **Consider what you want your major product to be.** Canadian Tire sells products for cars, camping, sports, and the home. What do you want to be known and remembered for? your work? your family? your good deeds? your relationships with others? something you've created—art, photos, writing?
3. **Reflect on the kind of person you want to be.** Do you want to be kind, friendly, helpful, assertive, powerful, wealthy, altruistic?

Once you've completed these three steps, you're in a position to create your own mission statement. Use Try It! 8, "Write a Mission Statement."



Evaluate: Assessing Your Personal Mission Statement

After you've written a personal mission statement, consider whether it accurately captures what you are looking for in life. Would a friend who knows you well see it as a valid reflection of who you are? Does the mission statement take a long-term view, reflecting not just where you are now, but where you want to be in the future? Is it general enough to fit the many different circumstances in which you will find yourself?

Only you can determine the ability of your personal mission statement to capture what is important to you. If you feel it doesn't, rewrite it. Eventually you'll come up with a statement that illustrates what you feel makes you special.



Write a Mission Statement

1. What are your most important values (e.g., comfort, environmental awareness, kindness to others, inner harmony, challenge)?
2. What are your motivational needs (e.g., love and belonging, esteem, self-actualization)?
3. In what general area or career do you want to work?
4. What will be your most important “product,” for which you want to be known and remembered (e.g., good deeds, wealth, power, prestige, artistic creations, business acumen)?
5. What kind of person do you want to be (e.g., helpful, kind, solitary, powerful, wealthy)?
6. In what sort of community do you want to live (e.g., large city, small city, small town, suburbs, country, woods, farm)?
7. With whom do you want to live (e.g., spouse, friends, children)?
8. What words describe your ideal lifestyle (e.g., sophisticated, woodsy, agricultural, down-home, laid-back, ambitious)?

Now write a one-paragraph mission statement below. You might, for example, state how you plan to achieve your motivational needs and realize your values through your chosen career. Next you might describe the sort of person you want to be and the “product” you plan to contribute to the world. Finally, you might describe your intended lifestyle, including the type of community you would like to live in and the nature of your ideal family. Once completed, include an edited copy of your mission statement in your portfolio.

Personal Mission Statement:

Rethink: Reconsidering Your Options

Personal mission statements are not set in stone; they should be considered living documents that you can change as you become clearer about what you want for yourself.

That's why it's important to periodically revisit your personal mission statement. When you do, ask yourself whether it still represents your values and motivational needs. Consider whether it should be amended to reflect changes that have occurred in your life.

Even if you don't modify it, periodically reading your personal mission



P.O.W.E.R. Plan

Career Connections

Personality Assessments on the Job



For many reasons, such as improving workplace communication, increasing productivity and efficiency, creating well balanced teams, or even ensuring corporate security, Canadian workplaces increasingly use personality testing as part of their hiring or orientation process. Employers sometimes use certain tests to help judge an applicant's suitability for a particular kind of job or level of responsibility, in other words, to match people to the jobs for which they are best suited. Tests may also measure specific aptitudes such as mechanical skills or sales abilities, or characteristics such as trustworthiness.

In an ideal situation, a person would do the job that best matches her personality, but that is not always possible. However, mismatching a personality to a job can frequently lead to poor performance and employee dissatisfaction. Employers want to know about employees' personalities to reduce conflict and maximize and coordinate staff abilities. Once an individual is on the job, personality testing can be used to identify a person's management or executive abilities in order to promote from within the organization or to do succession planning.

After completing the assessments in this book and at the Online Learning Centre, you should have a good idea of yourself, your strengths, weaknesses, interests, values, and motivations—strategic preparation for the world of work!

Enterprise Rent-A-Car suggests interested applicants consider their emotional intelligence (or EQ) when considering a career with E-Car. EQ describes a set of characteristics that influence a person's ability to be successful in everything from relationships to the workplace, that is, persistence, optimism, self-awareness, and social skills. Enterprise Rent-A-Car is particularly interested in hiring entrepreneurial individuals, feeling that entrepreneurs are happiest when running a business. Take the EQ test at Enterprise Rent-a-Car's website: <www.eric.com/recruit/EQ.htm>.

statement is important. It will remind you of who you are and what you are trying to get from the one life you have. (For a summary of the steps involved in creating a personal mission statement, see the P.O.W.E.R. Plan on the preceding page.)

To Thine Own Self Be True: No One Is Responsible for Your Life but You

“Don’t take too many English courses; they’re a waste of time because they won’t help you get a decent job.” “How about going to med school? You’d make a great doctor.” “You owe it to your family to be a business major so you can join the family business when you graduate.”

Sound familiar? Many of us have heard suggestions like these proposed by parents or others close to us. Such comments are almost always well-intentioned, and often they sound quite reasonable.

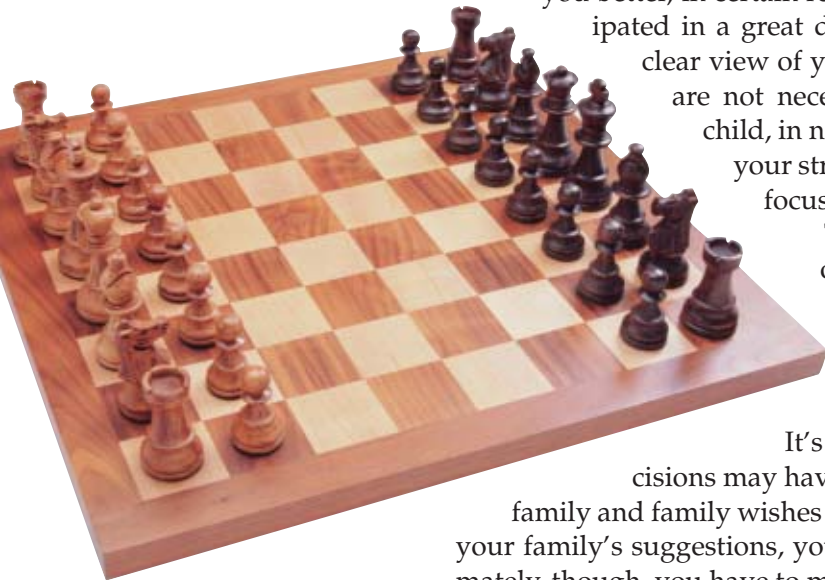
Why, then, should suggestions like these be taken with great caution? The reason is they relate to decisions that you, and only you, should make. You are the one who must live with their consequences. You are the one who must live with yourself.

One of the worst reasons to follow a particular path in life is that other people want you to. Decisions that affect your life should be your decisions—decisions you make after you’ve considered various alternatives and chosen the path that suits you best.

Making your own decisions does not mean that you should ignore the suggestions of others. For instance, your parents do have their own unique experiences that may make their advice helpful, and they sometimes may know you better, in certain respects, than you know yourself: Having participated in a great deal of your personal history, they may have a clear view of your strengths and weaknesses. Still, their views are not necessarily accurate. They may still see you as a child, in need of care and protection. Or they may see only your strengths. Or, in some unfortunate cases, they may focus on only your flaws and shortcomings.

The bottom line is that you need to make your own decisions. People will always be giving you advice. It’s up to you, though, to decide whether or not to heed the advice. You need to determine the course of your life and the way you want it to unfold.

It’s important to realize that making your own decisions may have costs. For instance, in some cultures loyalty to family and family wishes is a dominant cultural value. If you don’t follow your family’s suggestions, you may be seen as rebellious and uncaring. Ultimately, though, you have to make your own judgments about what’s right for you, following your head—and your heart.





Speaking of Success

Todd Currie

*Golf Course Technician Diploma
Seneca College*

Todd Currie's job at West Haven Golf and Country Club means 12-hour workdays during peak season and zero chance of a summer vacation, but he loves his work. Todd is Superintendent of Maintenance at West Haven, a private facility in Hyde Park, Ontario. His responsibilities are many; he supervises a staff that fluctuates from six during the winter to over 20 during the summer. He and his staff do everything from looking after the golf course and gardens to maintaining and repairing all the equipment to investigating and ordering materials.

Todd was attending university, studying to be a physical education teacher when he realized it was taking education graduates years to get teaching jobs. As someone who loved golf and had worked at golf courses in the summer to earn tuition, he enrolled in Seneca College's Golf Course Technician Program and hasn't looked back since. Todd, who loves to work outdoors, was very happy with

the Golf Course Technician Program, as the learning was very hands-on and focused on getting a job in the golf industry.

Todd continues to take courses in subjects such as pesticide and herbicide use, business administration, communication skills, resource management, and environmental

Seneca

awareness so he can provide the best product possible for the members of the golf and country club. He attends industry conferences as well to keep up with the latest innovations and practices in his field.

Todd says there are many false impressions about careers in the golf industry. Two key misconceptions are that golf courses are major polluters and irrigate constantly in order to

keep grass green. Todd says golf courses use the minimum amount of herbicide and pesticide possible, as it is important to keep costs down, but also the health and safety of wildlife, staff, and patrons is paramount. Todd, who is a member of the Oxbow Creek Watershed Project, a committee affiliated with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, is also concerned with water use. He states that new varieties of grass make irrigating less necessary and in fact, the drier the greens are the better, as far as golf is concerned.

Todd reiterates that anyone considering a career as a golf course technician must be flexible, as the job entails long hours and lots of variety, but that for people who want to work outdoors, it is a wonderful career.

What are my learning styles, and how have they affected my academic success?

- People have diverse patterns of learning styles—characteristic ways of acquiring and using knowledge.
- Learning styles include visual, auditory, and tactile styles (the receptive learning styles), and analytic and relational styles (information processing styles).
- Personality styles that influence learning are classified along dimensions of introversion/extroversion, intuition/sensing, thinking/feeling, and perceiving/judging.
- Experiential learning styles are reflected in Kolb’s Inventory of divergers, assimilators, convergers, and accommodators.

What is self-concept and how does it affect me?

- Self-concept is the understanding of the self that a person forms over time. Its major components are the physical, social, and personal self.
- Self-concept is important because of the effects it has on people’s attitudes and behaviour. Self-concept can act as a self-fulfilling prophecy, in that people act in accordance with their self-concepts.

How does my level of self-esteem affect my behaviour?

- Self-esteem is the overall evaluation we give ourselves as individuals.
- High self-esteem can lead to greater happiness, an enhanced ability to cope with adversity, a sense of security and confidence, and self-efficacy.
- Low self-esteem can lead to insecurity, low self-efficacy, and a cycle of failure.

How can I determine my needs and make wise personal decisions throughout life?

- A personal mission statement can be used to determine important values and to state the principles by which we intend to lead our lives.
- People’s needs can be organized into a hierarchy in which the most basic and fundamental needs form the base of a pyramid and higher orders of needs sit atop the basic needs.
- Although we should take into account the ideas and opinions of others, we must make our own decisions and choose our own path.

P.O.W.E.R. Portfolio

Self-Improvement

Look back at Table 3.2. Choose several of your major strengths and consider how you can demonstrate these qualities. Identify two or three of your weaknesses and turn them into challenges or goals. For example, “My preference is

to work independently, but this semester I will improve my teamwork skills by participating in a study group and volunteering for the foot patrol squad at school.” Once you have elaborated on your strengths and weaknesses, put the final copy in your portfolio.

Resources

On Campus

If you are interested in learning more about your pattern of learning styles, visit your campus counselling centre or career centre, where you may be able to take special assessment tests that can pinpoint your learning preferences and offer study strategies based on those preferences.

When dealing with the uncertainties of life and establishing your own sense of direction, it may help to speak to someone who has perspective and experience with college or university students. Here, too, a good place to start on campus is either a general counselling centre or one that is designed to help students choose career paths. Mental health offices can also be helpful in putting you in touch with a therapist with whom you can explore issues revolving around your self-concept and self-esteem. Don't hesitate to get help; you are doing it for yourself.



In Print

Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, Intelligence by David Keirsey (Prometheus Nemesis Book Co Inc, 1998) is a helpful book that states that differing styles and temperaments are to be expected and embraced.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff . . . and It's All Small Stuff (Hyperion, 1997), written by Richard Carlson, is a down-to-earth guide that is meant to help you sort out what is—and is not—important in your life.



On the Web

The following sites on the World Wide Web provide the opportunity to extend your learning about the material in this chapter. Although the Web addresses were accurate at the time the book was printed, check the P.O.W.E.R. Learning website <www.mcgrawhill.ca/college/power>, for any changes that may have occurred.

<http://career.missouri.edu>

This site has an online version of the *Career Interests Game*, designed to help you match your interests and skills with careers. It can help you begin thinking about how your personality will fit in with specific work environments and careers.

www.keirsey.com/

The Keirsey site provides two online personality questionnaires. The inventories are based on Myers-Briggs, but Keirsey groups personality types according to temperaments.

www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/step1_3.asp

This site offers an online values exercise that might be helpful in writing your personal mission statement.





The Case of . . .

The Instructor Who Spoke Too Much

Lana Carlson, a 26-year-old woman living in Calgary, Alberta, was at her wits' end. The instructor in her Diagnostic Procedures class spent each 50-minute lecture talking nonstop. He barely paused to acknowledge students' questions, and his only goal seemed to be to present as much material as possible. He even gave assignments in the same fast, nasal tone that he used throughout class.

If it weren't for her friend Darren Rubbell, who was in the same class and patiently explained material after class was over, Lana would never have managed to figure out how to complete the homework assignments. The strange thing was that Darren didn't seem to have much trouble with the professor's endless talking. In fact, he claimed to enjoy the class a lot. He had no trouble following the lectures and understanding the assignments, seeming to absorb like a sponge the information the instructor was spouting.

1. Based on what you know about learning styles, what might be the source of Lana's difficulties?
2. What learning style does the instructor apparently assume all students have? Do you think this is one of Lana's learning styles? Why or why not?
3. How might the instructor change his presentation to accommodate diverse learning styles?
4. Why does Lana's friend Darren have so little trouble with the instructor's lectures?
5. Why do you think Lana has less trouble understanding Darren after class than she has understanding her instructor?
6. If you were Lana, what might you do to improve your situation?