

Timely Tips

from Thinking Well Consulting

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This week: The Three Basic Learning Styles

Dear Flo,

The Three Basic Learning Styles

These three styles are the starting points, which affect how we take in information: how we process what we hear, see and feel and which of these senses is most innate. Most people have a combination of these styles, yet there's an affinity for one.



Once you learn your own preference or individual style of learning, you become aware of what is best for you and you will notice what is best for your team, colleagues or boss. You can give up being frustrated by others doing things differently or using a different system to get their job done. As an example, some people love to organize EVERYTHING on their Blackberry and some love to write appointments in their book calendar.

The Visual Learner would greatly benefit from using a large wall planner to see how projects will progress vs. viewing the information on a small page. In a seminar, this learner gains much more from viewing a PowerPoint presentation or flipchart diagrams than from just listening to the trainer. The visual learner is stimulated by visualization techniques. You work best when using physical objects to hold things in view; bright colors for folders to recognize different accounts. You need visual reminders. The apropos description for you is "out of sight, out of mind." Your strength is the ability to visualize a concept in your mind and bring it into view for others.

The Auditory Learner is great on the phone. These learners pick up nuances in voice and typically will talk to themselves, or repeat instructions. They learn best in sessions where there are group discussions. Unlike the visual learner, this learner remembers by hearing it again. They benefit from using a voice recorder to hear again what they've learned or to record notes to themselves. The auditory learner is the person who listens to an audio book while driving. Your strength is the ability to listen to a recording while doing other tasks.

The Kinesthetic Learner is typically a physically animated person. You know who you are. You're the person who drums

on your desk with a pencil or fidgets during a presentation. These learners may appear distracted but actually they just need to be moving most of the time and need to be doing or being part of the process. Passive listening is a challenge for one who needs to process information more actively. This person needs to move around and take it all in. They will remember things by going back in their minds to what the body was doing. Your strength is the ability to focus on two different things at the same time.

Researchers agree that a teaching strategy designed to favor visually- and tactilely-oriented students increased attainment for all students in the experimental group. Other studies also show that presentations using both auditory and visual techniques, improve results for subjects across the board.

The auditory learner now knows why there's a record option on their cell phone. The visual learner loves the "take a picture" option on their cell phone. The kinesthetic learner loves the interactive bells and whistles of an iPhone.

We are all learners, and when we acknowledge and accept our individual styles, we can create the most favorable work environment for ourselves and those who work with us.

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