

Achieving Communication Excellence



Guide to Giving Feedback Ian Tibbles

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1. Focus on the client

The influence of Carl Rogers focuses the feedback process on the client. To assist them we have to understand their preferred behavioural styles and how these relate to their *“map of the world”* – the way in which they interpret, understand and deal with events and people. Completion of the ACE Survey generates data that can open a window of understanding of the individual’s **sub-conscious self-awareness**. The feedback process brings this awareness into consciousness, creating new insights and choices for the client to explore. In a sense the coach is a tour guide on the client’s journey of self-discovery. **Always be curious not judgmental.**

2. Some working principles

1. Every *behaviour* has a positive **aim** for the person exhibiting it – but not necessarily a positive **outcome** for them.
2. Everyone’s **conduct** is doing the best that they can do with the behavioural resources that they possess.
3. All learning, behaviour and change occur at an unconscious level.
4. Everyone has, or can obtain, the behavioural resources they need.
5. Integration of learning into sub conscious understanding takes time.

3. Process

- Access the client’s subconscious self-awareness through completion and interpretation of an ACE Survey.
- Explore the client’s positive intentions through explanation and discussion of their report and the underlying value systems that they have chosen
- Through dialogue, access historical, situational and contextual data to enrich the picture and achieve a conscious self-understanding
- Identify where the client’s behavioural choices may hinder them from communicating effectively with the widest range of individuals
- Establish new choices through exploration of other approaches to the issue
- Ensure space to integrate the learning into the client’s sense of self
- Create friendly feedback from someone the client knows and trusts to have a constructive opinion of them.
- Establish a review point.

4. The Coaching Contract

Most people do not find the ACE survey threatening because it focuses solely on behaviour and is not a test. The results of the survey do however provide a language for discussing the client's behaviours in everyday circumstances and under stress or conflict. The process then goes on to explore the potential strengths and weaknesses of these preferences and seeks insights into how their preferred behavioural styles will interact with those of other people.

The crucial aspects of the contract with the client are to establish that:

- They are the experts on themselves and the results of the survey are a starting point for discussion
- There are no right or wrong approaches
- They can choose to accept or reject the interpretations which are made
- The person giving feedback – ‘the coach’ will use the information contained in the survey to develop hypotheses about their *behaviour* that can be discussed and evaluated by the client - and, if appropriate, checked out with someone they know and trust to have an accurate and constructive opinion of them
- The discussion with the client is used to access additional historical, situational and contextual data which will assist the coach in understanding the strategies which the client uses and to identifying potential development opportunities
- No medical diagnosis or advice is involved - ¹In a formal coaching context we recommend that clients are always given the following information verbally and in writing: *“I am not a doctor. I do not undertake medical diagnosis or treatment. If you feel you may require such help I recommend that you contact a qualified medical practitioner and inform them of the work I am undertaking with you. I will be happy to co-operate with them if requested to do so”*.
- Those hypotheses which are perceived to be relevant and helpful following discussion will be added to the profile information to assist the client in future self-development work and finally
- All aspects of the coaching session will remain strictly confidential.

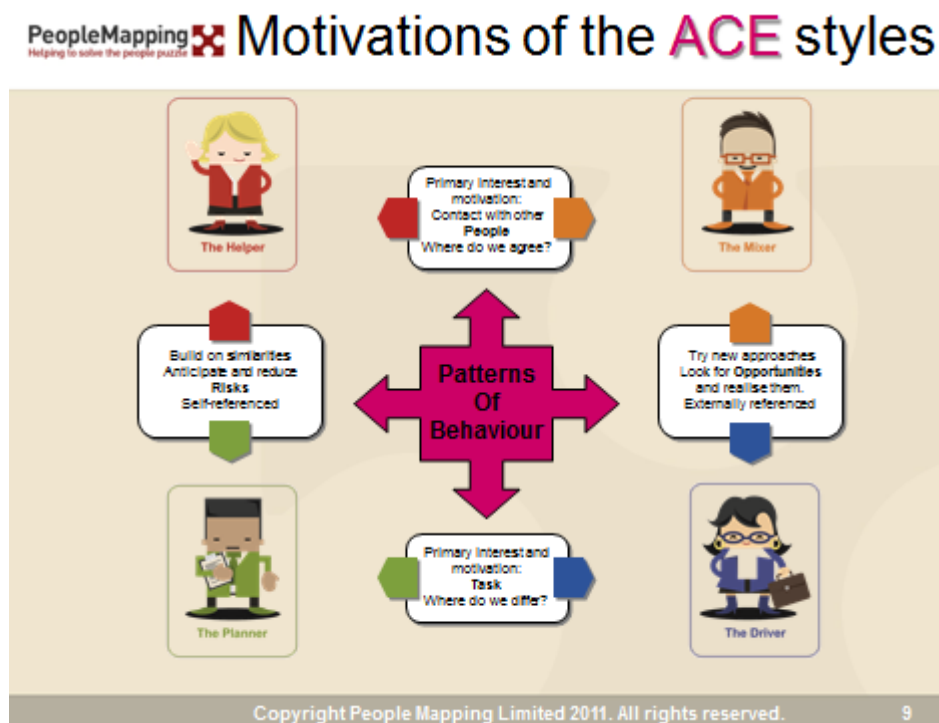
5. Motivations of the ACE Styles

The very different behaviours and approaches of the four ACE styles arise from some fundamental differences in what motivates and drives us. The following list will help to explain how the different behaviours arise.

The Mixer and The Driver test **differences** from what they already know. The Planner and The Helper learn and build understanding by identifying and building on **similarities** with what they already know.

The Helper and The Planner are **self referenced** - they tend to judge success using their own personal criteria and opinions. The Mixer and The Driver are **externally referenced** - they tend to judge success by external criteria and the opinions of others.

The Helper and The Mixer are primarily interested in and motivated by contact with other **people**. The Driver and The Planner are primarily interested in and motivated by the **task** or job they are doing.



The Helper and The Planner tend to see the **risks** in a situation and focus on reducing them. The Driver and The Mixer tend to see the **opportunity** in a situation and try to realise it.

6 Tuning in to and influencing others



As you will realise by now, to influence people effectively and make them want to listen to your message, you need to understand the way they like to communicate and behave. For example, when trying to communicate with someone who is enthused by innovation and change, it is not sufficient or effective to stress the safety of a particular approach, and its cost-effectiveness. They need to hear what is different and new in your solution.

The previous section gave you tips for recognising a person's preferred style or styles. The following pages describe key points to be aware of when communicating with people preferring each of the four ACE styles. They will give you a powerful set of tools and options for working with others helping you to tune in to people quickly and get your message across effectively and persuasively.







7a. Pacing

Pacing involves adjusting:





- Delivery
- Phrasing
- Thinking.

For each of the four suits pacing is different:

 <p style="text-align: center;">Helper</p>	<p>Helper- moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopt a measured approach at the start (they need to build trust in the coach and the process) ▪ Speed up later as they become more trusting ▪ Utilise non-linear thinking.
 <p style="text-align: center;">Mixer</p>	<p>Mixer- variable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open with some social dialogue before getting down to business so that they can get to know you as a person ▪ Adopt a pace to suit the subject of the discussion ▪ Be prepared for lateral thinking and points to be made by the client - sometimes at a tangent to the main discussion.
 <p style="text-align: center;">Driver</p>	<p>Driver- fast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get down to things relatively quickly, without becoming superficial ▪ Make points crisply, giving the conclusion before an appropriately summarised analysis ▪ Offer conclusions for a reaction (the bottom line approach).
 <p style="text-align: center;">Planner</p>	<p>Planner- measured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take it one step at a time ▪ Give the analysis before the conclusion ▪ Allow thinking time when asking questions.





7b. Matching

This means adopting behavioural approaches, which, whilst in no way seeking to mimic the client's behaviours (as this can appear rude), gives them a sense of comfort and security. Using the same example described above i.e. a 'Driver' coach and a 'Planner' client, the coach might, for example, seek to establish a serious, thoughtful climate for discussion using rational arguments backed by example and employing silences to allow the client to think through the issues under discussion before moving on to the next point. Again for each of the suits the matching process is different:

 <p>Helper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open ▪ Displaying trust ▪ A serious demeanour ▪ Language which includes values, principles, ideals and co-operative and collaborative concepts.
 <p>Mixer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sociable ▪ Personable ▪ Flexible ▪ Language which encourages discussion about feelings, people, harmony, ideas and presentation.
 <p>Driver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To the point ▪ Clear, but always respectful ▪ Language which focuses on outputs, opportunity (personal), action, competence and challenge.
 <p>Planner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Objective ▪ Unemotional ▪ Structured ▪ Language that suggests logic, analysis, evidence and prudence.

7c. Leading

Having moved three quarters of the way towards the client's needs, to relax them and achieve rapport, the coach can then lead by pacing gradually towards his or her own preferences and introducing language which is appropriate to the coach's preferred style, thus creating finally the communication bridge. This process enables both coach and client to feel comfortable and competent to ensure that the coaching session is as productive as possible. Whilst working in their own preferred way however the coach needs to keep alert to the client's responses and be prepared to adjust their behaviour accordingly. The following sections describe how coaches with each of the four suits are likely to be comfortable in leading:

 <p>Helper</p>	<p><i>Open & Trusting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open dialogue ▪ Serious tone ▪ Display trust ▪ Develop a collaborative dialogue.
 <p>Mixer</p>	<p><i>Personable and flexible</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lighten the tone ▪ Use humour ▪ Explore the possibilities – be curious ▪ Flexible structure.
 <p>Driver</p>	<p><i>Direct and purposeful</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speed up the discussion ▪ Increase direct observation ▪ Explore hunches.
 <p>Planner</p>	<p><i>Objective and structured</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slow down the pace ▪ Evolve the discussion in a methodical way ▪ Explore options.

8. ACE Materials available for coaching

In addition to the data on the coach ACE provides a rich array of data to assist the coaching process:

The ACE Report (Section 9)

This report is generated on line from an expert system and provides the richest source of data on any individual as it draws data from all the responses the client made to the survey questions.

The Hand of Cards (Section 10)

This pictorial representation shows the profile of the strength of each suit in everyday circumstances and under threat.

The ACE User Guide

This summary of the ACE model, attached to the client's report, can be used both during the coaching session and as a follow-up to help the client in their future development. The slides on the structure of the 4 ACE styles and the slide on each suit can be used to explain to the client the main characteristics of their style (slides 9-14). Slides 22-28 describe the potential excesses or negative behaviours that each style can slip into if they overplay one approach. Slide 29 provides a summary of the characteristics of each suit so they can assess the likely style of people they know or as an aide memoire when meeting new people.

9 The ACE Report

9a Purpose

- Designed as an end-user self-development tool
- Generated by the expert system from a database of paragraphs
- Uses all the survey responses to go beyond the stereotypes of the 4 suits so is best guide to each individual's particular profile and its behavioural consequences
- What the client will have read already if they've taken the survey online
- Includes the hand of cards' summary

9b Report structure

Hand of cards page showing the balance of the four styles including which are their **lead** and **least** preferred styles

An introductory section which explains how the report is generated and how to approach the outputs before any individual coaching session

A summary of the individual's communication style

Everyday

- An introductory summary of the likely characteristics of someone with your profile
- Your strong suits
- Overplaying your hand
- Weaker suits
- The combination of your strong suit and lower suits

Your likely game plan in some typical situations

This section builds on answers they made about how they normally behave under everyday circumstances

- Working with colleagues
- Coping with changes
- Planning the future
- Giving a lead

When the going gets tougher

This section is driven by the response that they made in relation to "Threat" situations e.g. dealing with difficult people, giving bad news etc.

- Dealing with conflict
- Dealing with stress

Making the most of your hand

This section covers both everyday and threat situations and if their profile changes between them will normally contain comments and tips which picks this up.

- Getting your point across
- Getting the best from your hand
- Helping others to work with you effectively

10. The Hand of Cards

What the labels mean both in terms of “scores” and as a guide for the development process

Scores	Card Label	What this may mean	Explore hypothesis in feedback with User Guide
Less than or equal to 20	Very low use	Individual finds this style very difficult to use. If possible find someone else to carry out tasks requiring behaviours associated with this style If contemplating a change of job or role that would demand using these behaviours extensively individual is likely to find role hard to sustain successfully	
21-28	Low use	Individual under-uses this style and could benefit from practising its use in a safe environment and then trying it out 'for real'	
29-37	Moderate”	Individual uses this style quite frequently so likely they are comfortable with its effects and using it appropriately	
38-45	Strong style	Individual uses this style frequently. It is likely that on some occasions behaviours from the other styles could be useful alternatives especially with people who have other behavioural preferences	
46-52	Very strong style	Individual uses this style almost all the time. It is likely therefore not always to be appropriate and may often not get them the impact they want. It may also have a negative impact on others especially if they have other preferred styles Individual needs to find ways of using behaviours from other styles but they are likely to find that this may be difficult May need to structure practise exercises and find someone to give them 'safe' feedback May need to find a 'model' for their least preferred styles so they can see what they do	

Many clients will have a predominant suit. These characteristics of the 4 ACE styles are set out on pages 2 to 5 of the Users' Guide with their excesses on Page 9. Others have two or more styles as their lead suit and their characteristics are explored in the next section

11. Blends

Some people have two or more suits equally represented and the system identifies these by giving the label of '**Lead Suit**' to the two or more styles that are equally strongly represented. Individuals with these profiles tend to display characteristics drawn equally from the contributing suits. The characteristics of these blends are set out below:

'Balanced Hand' - All styles used equally

- Adjusts behaviour as needed
- Versatile
- Measured but can be clear
- Sees communication as important

Double Blends





<p>Helper/Mixer equal –</p> <p>'Team Player'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-operative and friendly ▪ Empathy and sympathy ▪ High standards but flexible ▪ Match their needs with those of others ▪ Promote their priorities in a relaxed manner.
<p>Helper/Planner equal –</p> <p>'Internally referenced'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serious and thorough ▪ Cautious and hardworking ▪ Stick to what they know and what they believe ▪ Methodical and focused.
<p>Driver/Mixer equal –</p> <p>'Persuader'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Persuasive ▪ Manipulative ▪ Politically astute ▪ Skilfully outrageous ▪ Usually has an answer ▪ Challenging while smiling.
<p>Driver/Planner equal –</p> <p>'Task profile'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Task focused ▪ Efficient ▪ Calculated risk taker ▪ Direct ▪ Create and maintain structures.

Triple Blends

<p>Helper/Driver/Planner equal – ‘Organised, committed achiever’</p>	<p>Blends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment ▪ Delivery ▪ Organisation.
<p>Mixer/Driver/Planner equal – ‘Goal-orientated, flexible planner’</p>	<p>Blends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivery ▪ Organisation ▪ Flexibility
<p>Helper/Mixer/Planner equal – ‘Friendly, organised idealist’</p>	<p>Blends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment ▪ Organisation ▪ Flexibility.
<p>Helper/Mixer/Driver equal – ‘Flexible committed achiever’</p>	<p>Blends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivery ▪ Commitment ▪ Flexibility.

Potentially Conflicting Pairs

Some blends can cause individuals problems since the underlying ‘world views of the contributing suits are in conflict

<div data-bbox="248 1391 632 1487" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Helper/Driver equal – ‘Internal Conflict’</p> </div> <p>Inner tension between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality/productivity ▪ Excellence/action ▪ Ethics/competitiveness. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Helper</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Driver</p> </div> </div>	<div data-bbox="823 1391 1206 1487" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Mixer/Planner equal – ‘Presentation conflict’</p> </div> <p>Inner tension between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sensitivity/objectivity ▪ Flexibility/structure ▪ Optimism/caution. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Mixer</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Planner</p> </div> </div>
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