

Interaction Styles, Emotional Intelligence and Charisma

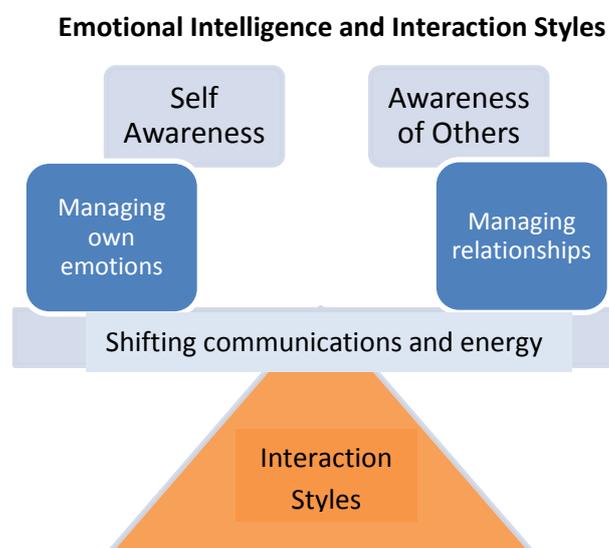
This is my last column as co-ordinator for articles on Education, Learning and Development and I am delighted to be handing over to Dave Hodgson, who with his vast experience of using type in schools, will bring a welcome shift of focus back to Education. I look forward to his contributions to Typeface.

This article is about how to use a knowledge of Interaction Styles to develop emotionally intelligent behaviour and become a more confident and charismatic communicator.

Getting on well with other people and having good relationships is, for most people, the most important thing in their lives and gives them meaning and a sense of purpose. There is convincing evidence that “our relationships with other people matter, and matter more than anything else in the world” (Vaillant). When our relationships are poor, we experience loneliness, distress and ill health. Good relationships are the basis for well-being and fulfilment.

But getting on well with other people at work and at home can be difficult – misunderstandings and conflicts arise, and we don’t get the results we want. Worse than that, we may get results that we definitely don’t want! We are not always aware of how we come across to others or the impact of our behaviour on them and we aren’t always very good at picking up cues from other people about what might be important to them or what is driving their behaviour so that we can respond appropriately. We need to be more emotionally intelligent, but recent findings in neuroscience have shown that perception of other people is prone to distortion and error and that even our knowledge of ourselves isn’t always accurate.

This is where knowledge of Interaction Styles can be a practical help. Interaction Styles is a **tool for being emotionally intelligent in the moment**. Knowing about the four Styles – their aims, drives, core beliefs, talents and stressors - makes us more self-aware and aware of others, and provides practical guidance on how to shift our communication and energy to connect with others and get better outcomes for everyone. It gives us more chance of making accurate inferences from other people’s behaviour as well as giving us more insight into our own, and we can respond more appropriately.



At a recent Type Academy workshop, we discussed what aspects of interactions with other people can trigger *positive* emotions in people of each Style. This is what we thought.

Triggers for positive emotions for each Style

Chart-the-Course <i>Push for a plan of action</i>	In-Charge <i>Push for action with results</i>	Get-things-Going <i>Push for involvement</i>	Behind-the-Scenes <i>Push for the best result</i>
Having a process or a plan and “getting there”, not going off at a tangent People repeating back to show they’ve understood Knowing everyone is on the same track Clarity of understanding from everyone Deciding with the <u>right</u> information	Seeing movement towards the target Hearing people say what they are doing People speaking about the task, even if they disagree with us or each other Sense of urgency, getting on with the job without too much discussion Feeling of everyone “mucking in”	Giving energy to the group, seeing them using it and seeing where it takes us Optimistic energy – “we” can do this Creating a space where connection can happen People responding with openness and integrity The whole group feeling important, not only individuals	Being allowed the time and space to speak Enabling the outcome to develop and emerge Sense of open-ended exploration People listening to what we have to contribute People being comfortable with some silence

If you know your own triggers for positive (and negative) emotions, you can manage situations better to get what you need. If you are aware of the positive triggers for others, you can adapt your behaviour to respond to what they need and have a positive impact on them.

Interaction Styles and Charisma

One definition of charisma suggests it is in part about triggering positive emotions in others – “the ability to make other people feel good” (Fox Cabane) – rather than triggering negative emotions and making them feel bad. People want to follow you, rather than avoid you (OED definition of charisma is “compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion”).

Making other people feel good is often an outcome of emotionally intelligent behaviour and the model of EI below shows that EI feelings and behaviours are underpinned by attitudes of positive self-regard and positive regard for others (Maddocks).

Unpicking these underlying attitudes gives us a route to communicating with confidence and charisma.

	Personal Intelligence	Interpersonal Intelligence
Behaviour	Self-management	Relationship management
Feeling	Self awareness	Awareness of others
Attitude	Self regard	Regard for others

Maddocks - The EIP Framework

Having positive regard for ourselves and others is about our basic social needs (Schutz) to feel good about ourselves and to feel that we are:

- Significant ie that we matter to others
- Competent ie that we are respected
- Likeable ie that others like us

We have corresponding fears that can affect our behaviour:

- Fear of being excluded if we are not important to others
- Fear of being humiliated if we fail
- Fear of being rejected if others don't like us

These are fundamental fears and the brain experiences them as acutely as if they were threats to our physical survival, and the flight or fight response can activate (Burnett).

A charismatic person allays these fears by making people feel that they matter, that they are worthy of respect and that they are liked. So, you can develop charisma – the ability to make other people feel good - by behaving in ways that enable others to feel that they are significant, competent and likeable, as well as maintaining positive self-regard by believing the same of yourself. If you don't have positive self-regard, you will feel anxiety and self-doubt, which will prevent you from coming across confidently. If you don't have positive regard for others, if other people don't matter to you, if you don't respect or like them, then this will affect how you behave towards them and the impact will not be charismatic! Holding healthy beliefs that we and the person with whom we are communicating are significant, competent and likeable, is an essential starting point for communicating with confidence and charisma.

Tips on how to make other people feel good:

Making people feel significant
Build rapport, show that they matter, listen, invite them to participate, include them, make eye contact, pay attention to them, don't interrupt them, make them feel special.
Making people feel competent
Give praise, avoid criticism, don't make them feel they are wrong, ask their opinion, encourage them, don't mock them.

Making people feel likeable

Express liking through your body posture, have an open and approachable manner, smile, soften your eyes, look friendly, express concern for their concerns, show empathy, ask them about themselves, feel goodwill towards them.

Looking at emotional intelligence and charisma with the Interaction Styles lens, there are some specific behaviours that people of each style could develop to get themselves into a resourceful state and have a more confident and charismatic effect on others. We discussed this at the Type Academy, and the chart below shows some initial ideas for people of each style to become more charismatic and confident communicators.

Ideas to develop charismatic effect for each Style

Chart-the-Course	In-Charge	Get-things-Going	Behind-the-Scenes
Speak up more Show more energy – to make moments memorable Show warmth Smile and soften the eyes Make eye contact when speaking and listening Show interest in others’ personal lives Give more explanation of your ideas Adopt a more open posture	Be present Cultivate a genuine interest in others Slow down speech and movement Make time for others Listen actively and reflect back Relax your muscles and breathe deeply Control your sense of urgency Practice mindfulness	Develop ability to focus attention Have a vision, purpose you believe in Slow down speech Lower your tone of voice and add some pauses Use fewer words – get to the point more quickly Listen and let others speak Be more explicit about what you want to happen Focus on the topic and be specific	Use stories to show what something sounds like, looks like Maintain eye contact when speaking Use assertive phrases Display expressive body language Increase the volume of your voice and lower the tone Avoid raising your tone at the end of sentences Speak up more – think it then say it! Don’t give in to others against your better judgement

Awareness of our own Interaction Style (our aims, drives, core beliefs, talents and stressors) helps us have positive self-regard and feel “I’m ok” which in turn enables us to communicate with confidence. Awareness of other Interaction Styles helps us have positive regard for other people and feeling that “you’re ok” enables us to act in a way that has a charismatic effect and *makes them feel good*.

If you would like to discuss any of these ideas further, please get in touch.

References:

Vaillant, G, (2012) *Triumphs of Experience: the Men of the Harvard Grant Study*

Fox Cabane, O (2012) *The Charisma Myth: Master the Art of Personal Magnetism*

Maddocks, J. (2014) *Emotional Intelligence at Work – how to make change stick*

Schutz, W (1958) *FIRO: a three dimensional theory of interpersonal behaviour*

Burnett, D (2016) *The Idiot Brain: a neuroscientist explains what your head is really up to*