The Representational Systems

The Representation System refers to how people take in information. We see, hear, feel, taste and smell. Some schools of thought consider intuition as a sixth sense – a way of processing information. Through the study of NLP by many in the field, four primary systems were identified. Smell and taste were dropped and the category of Auditory Digital was added. The four representation systems clearly link to styles of communication, ways of learning and processing information resulting in behaviors information

There are four main representational systems:

1.   Visual (seeing)
2.   Auditory (hearing)
3.   Kinesthetic (feeling)
4.   Auditory Digital (using language)

By identifying one's favored representational system and debriefing these concepts, one can gain powerful insights into how to subtly, yet powerfully change desired behaviors, habits and ways of being. In addition, understanding the concepts of the representational systems can offer an additional key to maintaining rapport.

On the following pages, you will find a Representational System Preference Assessment. Take a few minutes and complete this paper version on the next page to ensure you are comfortable with the scoring process.

The Representational System

PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT

For each of the following statements, please give them a ranking using the following system to indicate your preferences: What describes you in most situations?

4	**=**	**Closest to describing you**
3	**=**	**Next best description**
2	**=**	**Next best**
1	**=**	**Least descriptive of you**

1.   I make important decisions based on:

____   gut level feelings.
____   which way sounds the best to me.
____   what looks best to me.
____   a precise review and study of the issues.

2.   During an argument, I am most likely to be influenced by:

____   the other person's tone of voice.
____   whether or not I can see the other person's argument.
____   the logic of the other person's argument.
____   whether or not I feel I am in touch with other person's true feelings.

3.   I most easily communicate what is going on with me by:

____   the way I dress and look.
____   the feelings I share.
____   the words I choose.
____   the tone of my voice.

4.   It is easiest for me to:

____   find the ideal volume and tuning on a stereo system.
____   select the most intellectually relevant point concerning an interesting subject.
____   select the most comfortable furniture.
____   select rich, attractive color combinations.

5. **(There is no question, just rate 1-4)**

____ I am very attuned to the sounds of my surroundings.
____ I am very adept at making sense of new facts and data.
____ I am very sensitive to the way articles of clothing feel on my body.
____ I have a strong response to colors and to the way a room looks.

6. **People really know me best when they...**

____ experience what I am feeling.
____ see my perspective.
____ listen carefully to what I have to say and how it is said.
____ are interested in the meaning of what I'm doing or saying.

7. **I am more likely to:**

____ want understanding of the facts you tell me.
____ picture the overview or plan.
____ sequence the information you give me to make sense of it all.
____ get a handle on the feeling of the project.

8. **Describing myself I'd say...**

____ showing it to me makes it believable.
____ the sincere tone of your voice makes it believable.
____ when it feels right it's believable.
____ when it makes sense it's believable.

9. **In times of stress I'm most challenged with...**

____ trusting the people or situation.
____ being diplomatic.
____ separating what my feelings are from what other people are feeling.
____ being flexible and changing plans easily.

10. **(There is no question, just rate 1-4)**

____ I easily receive inner inspirations.
____ I can tell easily where new ideas fit.
____ I easily follow the direction of the tried and true methods.
____ I easily organize and plan the timing of things.

Scoring the Evaluation

Step one: Copy your answers from the test to the lines below in the same order they appear.

1.	K	2.	A	3.	V	4.	A	5.	A
	A		V		K		D		D
	V		D		D		K		K
	D		K		A		V		V

6.	K	7.	A	8.	V	9.	D	10.	D
	V		V		A		A		A
	A		D		K		K		K
	D		K		D		V		V

Step two: Add the numbers associated with each letter. There will be ten entries for each letter.

	V	K	A	D
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Totals				
	V	K	A	D

The maximum column score is 40 and the minimum is 10.
The comparison of the totals gives the relative preference for each of the four representational systems.

To check the accuracy of the scores, add up V+K+A+D. The total must equal100.

Note: D is the Auditory Digital type, known as AD.

Debriefing the Representational Systems

Human beings perform five basic functions, as well as use language. We see, hear, feel, smell, taste and touch. The Representational System Preference Assessment uses the four primary categories - seeing (visual), hearing (auditory), feeling (kinesthetic), and using language (auditory digital).

V: Visual (seeing)

People who are visual often stand or sit with their heads and/or bodies erect with their eyes up. They will be breathing from the top of their lungs. They often sit forward in their chair and tend to be organized, neat, well-groomed and orderly. They memorize by seeing pictures and are less distracted by noise. They often have trouble remembering verbal instructions because their minds tend to wander. A visual person will be interested in how your program LOOKS. Appearances are important to them.

A: Auditory (hearing)

People who are auditory will move their eyes sideways. They breathe from the middle of their chest. They typically talk to themselves and are easily distracted by noise (some even move their lips when they talk to themselves). They can repeat things back to you easily, they learn by listening, and they usually like music and talking on the phone. Often, auditory people will tilt their head (telephone position) when they are listening. The auditory person likes to be TOLD how they're doing and responds to a certain tone of voice. They will be interested in what you have to say about your program. They will remember **how** it is said. The tone, tempo, timbre and volume are most important to the auditory person.

K: Kinesthetic (feeling)

People who are kinesthetic will typically be breathing from the bottom of their lungs, so you'll see their stomach go in and out when they breathe. They often move and talk verrry slooowly, and sometimes have pauses as they speak. They respond to physical rewards and touching. They also stand closer to people than a visual person will. They memorize by doing or walking through something. They will be interested in your program if it feels right.

AD: Auditory Digital (using language)

People who are auditory digital will spend a fair amount of time talking to themselves. They will want to know if your program makes sense. The auditory digital person can exhibit characteristics of the other major representational systems. They memorize by steps, procedures, and sequences (sequentially).

Auditory digital means that the words themselves, theoretically, have discreet units of meaning. We can compare this to the difference between analogue and digital clocks. An analogue clock has a hand (or marker) that moves through a range and the full spectrum has meaning. A digital clock has numbers that are very precise - the meanings are fixed, either one or the other. Therefore, the reason why self talk or words are called auditory digital is because each of the words has a discreet meaning.