Communication Styles

**LINEAR:** discussion is conducted in a straight line, developing casual connections among sub-points towards an end point, stated explicitly. Low reliance on context. (Cut to the chase, where the rubber meets the road!)

*versus*

**CIRCULAR (CONTEXTUAL):** Discussion is conducted in a circular movement, developing context around the main point, which is often left unstated. High reliance on context. (Once you have the relevant information, you’ll know just what I mean!)

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**DIRECT:** Meaning is conveyed through explicit statements made directly to the people involved, with little reliance on contextual factors such as situation and timing. (What you see is what you get!)

*versus*

**INIRECT:** Meaning is conveyed by suggestion, implication, nonverbal behavior, and other contextual cues; for instance, statements intended for one person may be made within the earshot to a different person. (What you get is what you manage to see!)

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**ATTACHED:** Issues are discussed with feeling and emotion, conveying the speaker’s personal stake in the issue and the outcome. (If it’s important, it’s worth getting worked up over!)

*versus*

**DETACHED:** Issues are discussed with calmness and objectivity, conveying the speaker’s ability to weigh all the factors impersonally. (If it’s important, it shouldn’t be tainted by personal business!)

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**INTELLECTUAL CONFRONTATION:** Disagreement with ideas is stated directly, with the assumption that only the idea, not the relationship, is being attacked. (We’re just arguing—don’t take it personally!)

*versus*

**RELATIONAL CONFRONTATION:** Relational issues and problems are confronted directly, while intellectual disagreement is handled more subtly and indirectly. (Be authentic about your feelings and respectful of other’s ideas!)

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**ABSTRACT:** Issues are best understood through theories, principles, and date, with emphasis on general rather than the specific. (What’s the principle?)

*versus*

**CONCRETE:** Issues are best understood through stories, metaphors, allegories, and examples, with emphasis on the specific rather than the general. (What’s an example?)

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**Source:**