

YOUR STYLE UNDER STRESS TEST



What kind of a self-monitor are you? One good way to increase your self-awareness is to explore your Style Under Stress. What do you do when talking turns tough? To find out, fill out the survey below. It'll help you see what tactics you typically revert to when caught in the midst of a crucial conversation.

	(T) TRUE (F) FALSE	INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions explore how you typically respond when you're in the middle of a crucial conversation with your spouse. Answer the items while thinking about how you typically approach risky conversations in that relationship.
1		At times I avoid situations that might bring me into contact with my spouse when there is a problem.
2		I have put off returning phone calls or emails because I simply didn't want to deal with my spouse at that moment.
3		Sometimes when my spouse bring up a touch or awkward issue, I try to change the subject.
4		When it comes to dealing with awkward or stressful subjects, sometimes I hold back rather than give my full and candid opinion.
5		Rather than tell my spouse exactly what I think, sometimes I rely on jokes, sarcasm, or snide remarks to let them know I'm frustrated.
6		When I've got something tough to bring up, sometimes I offer weak or insincere compliments to soften the blow.
7		In order to get my point across, I sometimes exaggerate my side of the argument.
8		If I seem to be losing control of a conversation, I might cut my spouse off or change the subject in order to bring it back to where I think it should be.
9		When my spouse make points that seem stupid to me, I sometimes let them know it without holding back at all.
10		When I'm stunned by a comment, sometimes I say things that my spouse might take as forceful or attacking—comments such as "Give me a break !" or "That's ridiculous!"

	(T) TRUE (F) FALSE	INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions explore how you typically respond when you're in the middle of a crucial conversation with your spouse. Answer the items while thinking about how you typically approach risky conversations in that relationship.
11		Sometimes when things get heated, I move from arguing against my spouse' points to saying things that might hurt them personally.
12		If I get into a heated conversation with my spouse, I've been known to be tough on the them. In fact, my spouse might feel a bit insulted or hurt.
13		When I'm discussing an important topic with my spouse, sometimes I move from trying to make my points to trying to win the battle.
14		In the middle of a tough conversation, I often get so caught up in arguments that I don't see how I'm coming across to my spouse.
15		When talking gets tough and I do something hurtful, I'm quick to apologize for mistakes.
16		When I think about a conversation that took a bad turn, I tend to focus on what I did that was wrong rather than focus on my spouse' mistakes.
17		I'm pretty good at persuading my spouse by helping them understand the reasoning behind my views.
18		I can tell very quickly when my spouse is holding back or feeling defensive in a conversation.
19		Sometimes I decide that it's better not to give harsh feedback because I know that it's bound to cause real problems.
20		When conversations aren't working, I step back from the fray, think about what's happening, and take steps to make it better.
21		When my is spouse defensive because they misunderstand me. I quickly get us back on track by clarifying what I do and don't mean.
22		There are times I'm rough on my spouse because, to be honest, in the moment I feel like they need or deserve what I give them.

	(T) TRUE (F) FALSE	INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions explore how you typically respond when you're in the middle of a crucial conversation with your spouse. Answer the items while thinking about how you typically approach risky conversations in that relationship.
23		I sometimes make absolute statements like "The fact is..." or "It's obvious that..." to be sure I get my point across.
24		if my spouse hesitate to share their views, I sincerely invite them to say what's on their mind, no matter what it is.
25		I sometimes feel so frustrated or put down that I come across pretty aggressively toward the my spouse.
26		Even when things get tense, I'm good at finding out why my spouse is upset and getting to the root cause of the problem.
27		When I find that I'm at a cross-purpose with my spouse, I often keep trying to win my way rather than looking for common ground.
28		When things don't go well, in the heat of the moment I'm inclined to think the my spouse is more at fault than I am.
29		After I share strong opinions, I go out of my way to invite my spouse to share their views, particularly opposing ones.
30		When my spouse hesitate to share their views, I listen even more attentively and show more interest in their view.
31		I often have problems with my spouse failing to do what we agreed to and then the burden is on me to bring it up again.
32		After conversations, I have additional problems because I have different recollections of what was discussed or agreed to.
33		When trying to work out problems with my spouse, I find we either disagree or have violated expectations aboutwho has the final say on some issues.

AND NOW TO THE SCORING...

STYLE UNDER STRESS SCORE

Please feel out the score sheets in Figures 1 and 2 below.

- Each domain contains two or three questions.
- Next to the question number is either a (T) or an (F).

For example:

under “Masking,” question 5 on Figure 1, you’ll find a (T). This means that if you answered it true, check the box. With question 13 on Figure 2, on the other hand, you’ll find an (F). Only check that box if you answered the question false— and so on.

Your Style Under Stress score (Figure 1) will show you which forms of silence or violence you turn to most often.

FIGURE 1					
☐ SILENCE			☐ VIOLENCE		
<u>Masking</u>	☐ 5 (T)	☐ 6 (T)	<u>Controlling</u>	☐ 7 (T)	☐ 8 (T)
<u>Avoiding</u>	☐ 3 (T)	☐ 4 (T)	<u>Labeling</u>	☐ 9 (T)	☐ 10 (T)
<u>Withdrawing</u>	☐ 1 (T)	☐ 2 (T)	<u>Attacking</u>	☐ 11 (T)	☐ 12 (T)

Your Dialogue Skills score (Figure 2) is organized by concept from the resource, Crucial Conversations.

FIGURE 2	
<u>Start with Heart</u> ☐ ☐ 13 (F) ☐ 19 (F) ☐ 25 (F)	<u>STATE My Path</u> ☐ ☐ 17 (T) ☐ 23 (F) ☐ 29 (T)
<u>Learn to Look</u> ☐ ☐ 14 (F) ☐ 20 (T) ☐ 26 (T)	<u>Explore Others’ Paths</u> ☐ ☐ 18 (T) ☐ 24 (T) ☐ 30 (T)
<u>Make it Safe</u> ☐ ☐ 15 (T) ☐ 21 (T) ☐ 27 (F)	<u>Move to Action</u> ☐ ☐ 31 (F) ☐ 32 (F) ☐ 33 (F)
<u>Master my Stories</u> ☐ ☐ 16 (T) ☐ 22 (F) ☐ 28 (F)	

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

Your silence and violence scores give you a measure of how frequently you fall into these less-than-perfect strategies. It's actually possible to score high in both. A high score (one or two checked boxes per domain) means you use this technique fairly often. *It also means you're human.* Most people toggle between holding back and becoming too forceful.

The seven domains in figure 2 reflect your skills in each of the corresponding seven skill discussed in **WINGS**. If you score high (two or three boxes) in one of these domains, you're already quite skilled in this area. If you score low (zero or one), you may want to pay special attention to these areas discussed. Feel free to contact Mike or Cheryl your facilitators for more information if you are still stuck or need clarity.

Since these scores represent how you typically behave during stressful or crucial conversations, they can change. Your score doesn't represent an inalterable character trait or a genetic propensity. It's merely a measure of your behavior—and you can change that. In fact, people who take this process seriously and with intentionality, they will practice the skills presented during each WINGS session and eventually they will change. And when they do, so will their lives.

What next? Now that you've identified your own Style Under Stress, you have a tool that can help you **"Learn to Look"**. That is, as you enter a touchy conversation, you can make a special effort to avoid some of your silence or violence habits. Also, when you're in the middle of a crucial conversation, you can be more conscious of what to watch for.

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Reference:

Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., Switzler, A. (2012). *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*, 2ed.

Thank you 