

## 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.

<b>1.</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>4.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>5.</b>	<b>A</b>
	<b>A</b>		<b>V</b>		<b>K</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>D</b>
	<b>V</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>K</b>		<b>K</b>
	<b>D</b>		<b>K</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>V</b>		<b>V</b>

<b>6.</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>7.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>8.</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>9.</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>10.</b>	<b>D</b>
	<b>V</b>		<b>V</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>A</b>
	<b>A</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>K</b>		<b>K</b>		<b>K</b>
	<b>D</b>		<b>K</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>V</b>		<b>V</b>

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

	<b>V</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>1</b>				
<b>2</b>				
<b>3</b>				
<b>4</b>				
<b>5</b>				
<b>6</b>				
<b>7</b>				
<b>8</b>				
<b>9</b>				
<b>10</b>				
<b>Totals</b>				
	<b>V</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>

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 equal 100.

**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.

## Using the Representational Systems to Assess States of Being In Balance and Out of Balance

Most people have a blend of all of the representational systems. They often have one system that is higher than the rest. The score may be slightly higher or significantly higher. There are some individuals who are evenly balanced among all four systems. What follows is a description of each of the four styles from a perspective of “in balance” – that is when life is in flow, and “out of balance” which refers to times of stress. Note the percentage of the population that tends to have these styles. At the end of each description the most common challenge for these individuals is presented

### **Visual – seeing (is estimated to be 20% of the population)**

#### **In Balance**

When a visual person is in balance, he/she will

- be a very good organizer
- see the overall plan
- stay detached
- be a good communicator
- have a neat appearance
- usually be artistic
- like beauty and balance
- have a photographic memory
- be very traditionally minded



### **Out of Balance**

When a visual person is off balance, he/she will

- be a poor listener because of the fixed picture
- be challenged in achieving harmony and peace within self and surroundings
- not be good with pressure
- want perfection
- want others to see it his/her way
- be disorganized with many details
- want to dominate others; if that is not possible, he/she will be discouraged and quit
- control and manipulate
- live in a fairytale
- worry a lot
- hold onto negative emotions

### **Biggest Challenge**

A visual person's biggest challenge is flexibility. He/she will have his/her own picture in mind of how things are. If changes are needed, the adjustment period takes longer.

## **Auditory – hearing (is estimated to be 10% of the population)**

### **In Balance**

When an auditory person is in balance, he/she will

- be a born leader
- be most comfortable with the big picture
- be very direct, frank, or to the point
- be highly skilled with people
- understanding
- have the best sense of what's fair
- analyze thoroughly
- be original and creative
- be a go getter,
- be a Pioneer
- bring people to a higher level of awareness
- be warm and affectionate

### **Out of Balance**

When an auditory person is off balance, he/she will

- apply pressure
- be hostile
- be aggressive
- plant fears
- be demanding
- not work well under pressure
- humiliate others
- give the silent treatment
- not be very kinesthetic at all

### **Biggest challenge**

An auditory person's biggest challenges are diplomacy and softening the delivery so people can hear the message.

## **Kinesthetic – feeling (is estimated to be 40 % of the population)**

**Forty percent of the population is kinesthetic.**

### **In Balance**

When a kinesthetic person is in balance, he/she will

- organize details
- have manual dexterity
- be out going
- be extremely sensitive to the environment and to people
- demonstrate the gift of healing
- demonstrate the gift of psychometrics
- be full of energy
- be a powerhouse

### **Out of Balance**

When a kinesthetic person is off balance, he/she will

- be defensive about feelings
- have a hard time receiving criticism or suggestions
- need reassurance
- be disorganized and manipulative
- wants attention
- be highly emotional
- have difficulty disciplining his/her feelings
- be dependent on others

- love to suffer

### **Biggest challenge**

A kinesthetic person's biggest challenges are discerning where the feeling is coming from (self or other).

## **Auditory Digital – using language (is estimated to be 30% of the population)**

### **In Balance**

When an auditory digital person is in balance, he/she will

- “KNOW” things
- uses Hunches and premonitions
- can be an outstanding executive
- be future minded
- command respect
- be good with both the big and small pictures
- be direct, accurate and dependable
- be good at helping people find their own way without interfering
- can be extremely sensitive and productive
- can be a good channel for Spirit
- talk to himself/herself out loud

### **Out of Balance**

When an auditory digital person is off balance, he/she will

- be distrusting
- be moody
- be critical
- be controlling
- take on too much work
- be judgmental
- play the blame game
- doubt himself/herself
- mind other people's business
- be a gossip

### **Biggest Challenge**

An auditory digital person's biggest challenge is learning to trust himself/herself, others and/or the circumstances

**Note:** The In Balance and Out of Balance descriptions were developed by Dale Hancher and are used with permission.

## **KEY WORDS IN REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEMS**

Through the study of NLP it has been observed that there is a distinct language pattern associated with each representational system. For example a person who has a higher score on the visual representation system will tend to habitually and unconsciously use "visual" words and phrases such as;

- What does that "look" like to you?
- I "see."
- "Picture" this.
- What is your "view."

What follows is a list of common words and phrases for each representation system. The list is a sample list with more possibilities to be added. .

**VISUAL**

Visual people memorize by seeing pictures, and are less distracted by noise. They often have trouble remembering verbal instructions because their minds tend to wander.

**AUDITORY**

Auditory people are typically easily distracted by noise. They can repeat things back to you easily, learn by listening, like music and like to talk on the phone. Tone of voice and the words used are important

**KINESTHETIC**

Kinesthetic people often talk very slowly and breathy. They respond to physical rewards, and touching. They memorize by doing or walking through something.

**AUDITORY DIGITAL**

Auditory digital people spend a fair amount of time talking to themselves. They memorize by steps, procedures and sequences. They will want to know if your program makes sense. They can also exhibit characteristics of the major representational systems.

See Look  
Appear  
View  
Show  
Dawn  
Reveal  
Envision  
Illuminate  
Twinkle  
Clear  
Foggy  
Focused  
Hazy  
Crystal  
Clear  
Flash  
Image  
Picture  
Sparkling  
Snap Shot  
Vivid

Hear  
Listen  
Sound  
Make Music  
Harmonize  
Tune In/Out  
Be All Ears  
Rings A Bell  
Silence  
Be Heard  
Resonate  
Deaf  
Mellifluous  
Dissonance  
Overtones  
Unhearing  
Attune  
Outspoken  
Tell  
Announce  
Clicked in

Feel  
Touch  
Grasp  
Get Hold Of  
Slip Through  
Catch On  
Tap Into  
Make Contact  
Throw Out  
Hard  
Unfeeling  
Concrete  
Scrape  
Get a Handle  
Solid Suffer  
Unbending  
Impression  
Touch Base  
Rub

Sense  
Experience  
Understand  
Think  
Learn  
Process  
Decide  
Motivate  
Consider  
Change  
Perceive  
Insensitive  
Distinct  
Conceive  
Know  
Question  
Be Conscious  
Recall  
Communicate  
Remember

## Representational System Phrases

### Visual

an eyeful  
appears to me  
beyond a shadow of a doubt  
bird's eye view  
catch a glimpse of  
clear cut  
dim view  
eye to eye  
flashed on  
get a perspective on  
get a scope on  
hazy idea  
horse of a different color  
in light of  
in person in  
view of make  
a scene mental  
image mental  
picture mind's  
eye naked eye  
paint a picture  
photographic memory  
plainly seen  
pretty as a picture  
see to it  
short sighted  
showing off  
sight for sore eyes  
staring off into space  
take a peak  
tunnel vision  
under your nose  
well defined

If I could SHOW you an ATTRACTIVE way in which you could (potential benefit or their values), you would at least want to LOOK at it, wouldn't you?

### Auditory

blabber mouth  
clear as a bell  
clearly expressed  
call on  
describe in detail  
earful  
express yourself  
give an account of  
give me your ear  
grant an audience  
heard voices  
hidden message  
hold your tongue  
idle talk  
keynote speaker  
loud and clear  
manner of speaking  
pay attention to  
power of speech  
purrs like a kitten  
outspoken  
rap session  
rings a bell  
state your purpose  
tattle-tale  
to tell the truth  
tongue-tied  
tune in/tune out  
utterly  
unheard of  
voice an opinion  
well formed  
word for word

If I could TELL YOU a way in which you could (potential benefit or their values), you would at least want to HEAR about it, wouldn't you?

## KEY PHRASES IN REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEMS



## **Kinesthetic**

all washed up boils down to  
chip off the old block come to grips with connect with  
control yourself cool/calm/collected firm foundations floating on thin air get a  
handle on  
get a load of this get in touch with get the drift of hand in hand hang in there  
heated argument hold it  
hold on  
hot-headed  
keep your shirt on know-how  
lay the cards on the table light headed  
moment of panic pain-in-the-neck pull some strings sharp as a tack slipped my  
mind smooth operator start from scratch stiff upper lip topsy-turvy underhanded.  
under pressure

If I could help you GET HOLD OF a CONCRETE way in which you could (potential benefit or  
their values), you would  
at least try to GET A  
FEEL for it, wouldn't you?

## Auditory Digital

a sense of that  
a distinct personality  
I like the change of seasons thinking about that. experience joy  
distinct possibility consider learning  
I can conceive of that  
the process is the best part  
I wonder if that makes sense  
I sense that  
I have a real knowing about that  
I know what you mean does that make sense?  
I will consider your question I understand that  
I don't understand your meaning to sequence it  
considering that  
the wonder of it all my idea is  
I perceive that to be in that process  
my discernment  
That's a good question  
I can experience  
to motivate you can understanding is  
the learning process make a decision  
the conscious conception is the content included  
I need more information the procedures are

If I could help you UNDERSTAND HOLD OF a DISTINCT way in which you could  
(potential benefit or their values),  
you would at least CONSIDER it, wouldn't you?