Languages of Appreciation and Other Models:
Do Preferences in Psychological Type Functions, Temperaments, or Interaction Styles Inform a Person's Preferred Language of Appreciation?

Editor's Note

Some of you may have had the pleasure of hearing Paul White, Ph.D., present at to the Dallas APTi chapter in 2019. That presentation was shared with all APTi chapters. Dr. White has been researching the Languages of Appreciation for 20 years. His research has defined the 5 Languages of Appreciation and created the MBAI instrument to measure an individual's preference for one of the five appreciation languages. He has extended his research to examine whether preferences in Psychological Type, Temperament, or Interaction Styles™ are related to one's preference for a language of appreciation.

In this article, Dr. White's Research Specialist, Dr. Natalie Hamrick, introduces us to the 5 Languages of Appreciation and shares the results of her analyses in this new research. She invites us to consider how to use appreciation languages, along with models we already know, to enhance our own lives and to work with clients. Dr. Hamrick ran analyses that examine whether a participant's preferences in type function-pairs, Temperaments, or Interaction Styles™ can predict their preference for a language of appreciation.

Paul White, Ph.D., will extend this discovery process in his session at the APTi 23rd Conference. Hope to see you there.

Authors

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Carol A. Linden, MBTI Master Practitioner and NSA Professional Speaker has been teaching adults how to *play well with others* for 20 years. She has taught Psychological Type, Temperaments, and Interaction Styles™ to more than 1,000 clients and students. She is the author of *The Job Seekers Guide for Extraverts and Introvert,* multiple articles in *The Bulletin* over the past 10 years, and an article in *Journal of Adult Learning and Professional Development*. Through Effective With People, LLC, she speaks and teaches corporate workshops. Through Sandbox Academy, she offers video training and live workshops for professionals. She served on local APTi boards and now serves on the APTi board.

Paul White, Ph.D. is a Psychologist, Speaker, and Consultant who "makes work relationships work." Dr. White has consulted with a wide variety of organizations including Microsoft, the U.S. Air Force, Princeton University and many more. He is co-author of three books including *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace, Sync or Swim,* and *Rising Above a Toxic Workplace; and* author of *The Vibrant Workplace*. Dr. White is the developer of the online *Motivating By Appreciation Inventory* which has been taken by 240,000 employees worldwide. Presenter for the 23rd APTi Conference.

In work-based relationships, individuals have a specific "language" that hits the mark to speak appreciation to them. Based upon years of research, the *Motivating By Appreciation (MBA) Inventory* (White, 2016b) is a 30-item online assessment tool that identifies a person's most preferred appreciation language. See Table 1.

Table 1: The Languages of Appreciation

Language of Appreciation	Description
Words of Affirmation	Praise communicated orally or in writing
Quality Time	Focused attention such as having individual time with your supervisor, "hanging out" with coworkers, working together on a project
Acts of Service	Helping coworkers troubleshoot or complete a time-sensitive project
Tangible Gifts	Giving a small gift reflecting colleagues' food preferences, hobbies, or interests.

Previous work found no differences among the traditional 16 Personality Types (Myers-Briggs) in the way people prefer to be shown appreciation in the workplace (White et al., 2018). The current study is a follow-up to further assess if clear differences in preferred language of appreciation exist for:

- Psychological Type function pairs (Myers-Briggs, 1998; Jung, 1971) (ST, SF, NT, and NF);
- Temperament models such as Keirsey's Temperament Theory (Keirsey, 1998) and Berens' Essential Motivators (Berens, 2010);
- A Social Styles model, specifically Berens' InterStrength Interaction Styles™ (Berens, 2008).

To inform hypotheses, characteristics of the type patterns (Berens, 2010; Briggs-Myers, 1998; Keirsey, 1998) were organized according to their applicability to each language of appreciation. Refer to Tables 2-4 for a summary.

Table 2: Characteristics of the Psychological Type Function Pairs Relevant to Each Language of Appreciation

Function Pair	Words of Affirmation	Acts of Service	Quality Time	Tangible Gifts	Positive Attributes
NT	More logical than compassionate	Results-Focused Pragmatic Strategic	Independent		Ingenious Innovative Pragmatic Strategic Goal-Oriented Calm
NF	Inspirational Sensitive Empathetic Loving Value Being Unique		Prize meaningful relationships	Generous	Loving Kindhearted Authentic Imaginative Intuitive Diplomatic Giving Inspirational
ST	Direct	Objective Analytical	Prefer technology vs. people		Objective Analytical Realist Tech savvy
SF	Sympathetic	Hands-on help Service	People-oriented		Warm Sympathetic Helpful Welcoming

Table 3. Characteristics of the Temperament Models Relevant to Each Language of Appreciation [1]

Temperament	Words of Affirmation	Acts of Service	Quality Time	Tangible Gifts	Positive Attributes
Guardian/ Stabilizer	Humble Prize gratitude	Hard-working Helpful Diligent	Value teamwork and having a place to contribute		Hard-working Helpful Dependable Loyal Detail-Oriented Diligent
Artisan/ Improvisor	Performer Optimistic		Fun-loving	Generous	Optimistic Adaptable

[1]Note: Guardian, Artisan, Rational, and Idealist are Keirsey's names for these patterns. Stabilizer, Improvisor, Theorist, and Catalyst are Berens' names.

					Unconventional Bold Persuasive Generous
Rational/ Theorist	More logical than compassionate	Results-Focused Pragmatic Strategic	Independent		Ingenious Innovative Pragmatic Strategic Goal-Oriented Calm
Idealist/ Catalyst	Inspirational Sensitive Empathetic Loving		Prize meaningful relationships	Generous	Loving Kindhearted Authentic Imaginative Intuitive Diplomatic Giving Inspirational

Table 4. Characteristics of the Interaction Styles Relevant to Each Language of Appreciation.

Interaction Style	Words of Affirmation	Acts of Service	Quality Time	Tangible Gifts	Positive Attributes
Chart the Course ISTP, ISTJ INTJ, INFJ	Provides objective guidance	Results-focused, progress is important	Independent but likes to be informed of what's happening		Hard-working Focused Intentional Deliberate
In Charge ESTP, ESTJ ENTJ, ENFJ	Achievement-focused	Urgent need to accomplish in a timely manner	Desires interactions to "be brief and get to the point"		Productive Determined Efficient Assertive Decisive
Get Things Going ESFP, ESFJ ENTP, ENFP	Encouraging, Needs to feel liked, accepted, and involved	Supportive team member	Urgent need to involve others and be involved		Inclusive Engaging Supportive Facilitator Process-focused
Behind the Scenes ISFP, ISFJ INTP, INFP	Needs to feel appreciated for diligent work	Value contributing to the team	Value input from expert		Calm Supportive Inclusive High standards

Characteristics associated with a given function pair, Temperament, or Interaction Style do inform how an individual might prefer a given Language of Appreciation., However, these alignments do not definitely point to a specific Language of Appreciation based one's function pair, Temperament, or Interaction Style. Rather, the aligning descriptors of each function pair, Temperament, and Interaction Style suggest two or more Languages of Appreciation might be selected by a person. For example, someone who identifies with the In-Charge Interaction Style, being achievement-focused, may value Acts of Service to get the job done, yet may also thrive when given Words of Affirmation to highlight their achievements.

Hypothesis:
None of these models (Psychological Type Function Pairs, Temperaments, or Interaction Styles) will display clear differences in preferred Languages of Appreciation.

Methodology

Procedure
Individuals who had taken the *MBA Inventory* were invited to take the *TypeCoach Verifier.*

Participants
A total of 300 participants took both the *MBA Inventory* and the *TypeCoach Verifier.* The sample was mainly female (68%), with a median age range of 40-49 years old, which closely parallels those of the general population of users of the MBA Inventory (White, 2017).

Instruments
MBA Inventory. The *MBA Inventory* (White, 2016b) is an online assessment that identifies the ways that individuals prefer to be shown appreciation in the workplace. The inventory consists of 30 paired statements from which respondents choose, and their primary Language of Appreciation is identified from the summary scores for each of the four languages for each participant. The reliability and validity of the MBA Inventory has been reported previously (White, 2016b).

TypeCoach Verifier. The TypeCoach Verifier (TypeCoach, 2013) is a video-based online process which assesses the personality type preferences that comprise the Myers-Briggs model, allowing participants to make an informed selection. Each participant's TypeCoach responses were scored as one of the sixteen traditional Myers-Briggs 4-letter personality types (i.e., INTJ, ENFP), and then grouped according to Berens' Essential Motivators/Keirsey's Four Temperaments, Psychological Type Function Pairs, and InterStrength Interaction Styles™.

Results
Chi Square assessments displayed no clear differences in preferred language of appreciation as a factor of Psychological Type Functions, Temperaments, or Interaction Styles. No significant relationships were found ($p > 0.05$), although there was a trend for people who prefer Sensing and Thinking (ST) to be more likely to desire tangible gifts as their primary method of being shown appreciation than those who prefer Sensing and Feeling (SF), Intuiting and Thinking (NT) or Intuiting and Feeling (NF). See Tables 5-7 for the distributions of the frequencies of the Languages of Appreciation across psychological type pairings, Temperaments and Essential Motivators, and Interaction Styles.

Table 5. Language of Appreciation Preferences Within Psychological Type Function Pairs.

	ST	SF	NT	NF
Words of Affirmation	44%	54%	35%	49%
Acts of Service	17%	19%	21%	20%
Quality Time	26%	22%	34%	27%
Tangible Gifts	13%	4%	10%	4%

Table 6. Language of Appreciation Preferences Within the Keirsey's Four Temperaments / Berens' Essential Motivators.

	Guardian/Stabilizer	Artisan/Improvisor	Rational/Theorist	Idealist/Catalyst
Words of Affirmation	49%	48%	35%	49%
Acts of Service	18%	18%	21%	20%
Quality Time	26%	18%	34%	27%
Tangible Gifts	7%	15%	10%	4%

Table 7. Language of Appreciation Preferences Within the InterStrength Interaction Styles™.

	Chart the Course	In Charge	Get Things Going	Behind the Scenes
Words of Affirmation	40%	48%	51%	46%
Acts of Service	22%	17%	15%	23%
Quality Time	30%	27%	25%	27%
Tangible Gifts	8%	8%	9%	6%

Discussion

The results are consistent with prior research finding no relationship between employees' Languages of Appreciation and their social style as assessed by the DiSC (White, 2016a) and the traditional 16 Myers-Briggs Types (White et al., 2018). Thus, it appears that preferred ways of receiving appreciation appear to be independent of personality type, temperament, and social style preferences (both the DiSC model as well as Berens' Interaction Styles™).

Research and practical use have shown that communicating appreciation to colleagues in the ways most meaningful to them has helped to create a more supportive and encouraging workplace, which facilitates employee engagement (Chapman & White, 2019). Therefore, combining an individual's primary Language of Appreciation with their preferences can shed insight into the specific ways to speak appreciation to a given individual. For example, an individual with Guardian/Stabilizer preferences might like words of affirmation for responsible behavior that saved resources or prevented a costly mistake. On the other hand, an individual with Rational/Theorist preferences might prefer words of affirmation that pointed out their expertise or ingenuity. An individual with Behind-the-Scenes preferences would benefit from being shown appreciation quietly, not publicly. To formulate appreciation that best "hits the mark," refer to Tables 2-4 for more information on how to combine type, Temperament or Interaction Style preferences with Language of Appreciation.

Each individual has a Least Valued Language of Appreciation (their lowest scoring language). Because this language does not come naturally, this is a potential blind spot. Unless they are intentional about speaking this language to those who value it, colleagues with this primary Language of Appreciation will feel unappreciated. Similarly, there are personality preferences that present challenges for speaking appreciation. For example, individuals with preferences for Sensing and Thinking,

who are more direct in their communication style, may need to be especially careful to soften feedback to someone who is sensitive to Words of Affirmation. Additionally, an individual with In-Charge preferences may need to be intentional to let interactions be more organic than structured and task-focused.

Because each of the type, Temperament, and Interaction Style preferences has distinctive positive characteristics, this information can provide the actions for which people would like to be recognized (Tables 2-4). Including mention of these within the context of a colleague's preferred Language of Appreciation would make it even more personally relevant (thus more meaningful to the recipient). For example, an individual with Rational/Theorist preferences whose primary Language of Appreciation is Quality Time might feel especially appreciated when the supervisor suggests, "Susan, let's go out to lunch to celebrate your hard work and clever idea that resolved that issue and saved the company thousands of dollars."

Combining the knowledge of how employees prefer to be shown appreciation *along with* their personality type preferences will provide the most effective way of encouraging and supporting those with whom you work and will be the most successful in creating a positive and effective workplace.

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