CHAPTER 1

Getting Started

Are Men and Women Just Born Different or Do They Learn to Be Different?

What are little boys made of?
Frogs and snails,
And puppy-dogs' tails;
That's what little boys are made of.
What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice,
and all that's nice;
That's what little girls are made of.
—Robert Southey (1820)

Learning Objectives

- Identify the seven most-asked questions about gender communication.
- Create an awareness of the origin of sex differences in communication style.
- Assess personal style and the ability to code switch.
- Understand the importance of adopting an androgynous style to improve communication with the opposite sex.

Introduction

Although we are different, men and women are designed to be allies and can complement each other's limitations; we can fill in the blanks for each other. Conventional wisdom tells us that "our greatest strength is our greatest weakness." We have all witnessed a person rely on a strength in the wrong place or at the wrong time. Ouch! They fail to develop other strengths outside their behavioral repertoire that are more appropriate for the situation. One of the benefits of women and men coming together in the workplace is we can learn from each other. As a case in point, coed teams are usually higher functioning and produce a superior level of results than same-sex groups. Organizations are more effective when they apply both "female" and "male" strengths to maximize the bottom line and reach their goals.

In addition, although men and women often misunderstand each other, most of us don't try to make life difficult for the opposite sex. However, we often mistake and misinterpret each other's actions, words, and feelings. In her book, *In a Different Voice* (1982), Harvard psychologist Carol Gilligan described the problem by claiming that "men and women may speak different languages that they assume are the same . . . creating misunderstandings which impede communication and limit the potential for cooperation" (p. 2). But suggesting that gender communication is problematic is not to imply that all gender communication centers around problems; rather, simply put, it is complicated. Just the act of communication is a multifaceted process. Add gender to the equation and it becomes more complex. Research in psychology, linguistics, sociology, and anthropology demonstrates that sex differences in communication are real. We experience them every day at work and home.

Women and men can be perceived as members of two distinct and separate subcultures within a larger, more general culture. Each subculture has a set of rules, beliefs, behavioral expectations, and verbal and nonverbal symbols. For both men and women, language

and nonverbal cues receive reinforcements for employing expected communication styles and sanctions if they should venture into the other's territory. For example, most can fill in the blank: Big boys don't (cry), take it like a (man), and boys will be (boys).

In addition, this is not about sexuality. Sex is your biological determination and an unchangeable fact at birth (although in adulthood, some people decide to change their sex). Gender refers to and is created through communication; gender is learned communication behaviors. Many people think biological sex and constructed gender are the same thing. They are not. Bate (1992) distinguishes sex as referring to biologically determined, innate features and treated as permanent fact. She describes gender as socially learned behaviors, treated as behavioral ideals to achieve and prescribe (p. 5).

Women and men can be perceived as members of two distinct and separate subcultures.

Gender issues in communication begin at birth and are part of your life until you die. They never go away. For example, we know that before you draw your first breath, discussions have taken place indicating a preference for one sex or the other. The color and design of the nursery is gender specific and now the stage is set. As early as two to three years old, children learn their sex and the attending gender expectations. Only for a brief time do children engage in mixed-gender play and dress before they relinquish the gender behavior of the other sex. A boy insists on wearing barrettes in his hair and a girl refuses to wear a dress or her black patent shoes. It's Barbie and play makeup for her and trucks and Transformers for him.

A girl can be a "tomboy" or assume more boy behaviors, and it is still within the acceptable range among adults and her peer group. However, a boy will be admonished as a "sissy" for displaying any female behaviors; he is a wimp. Boys may be dissuaded from

developing an understanding of the feminine experience by the off-putting messages about femininity. He cannot explore femininity because it is highly taboo. One could argue that because there seems to be a broader range of acceptance for girls to be able to explore and assume boy behaviors, they have an advantage. She can cross over and he cannot. The entrenchment and rigidity of masculinity begins and stays with him for life. Femininity is not so inflexible.

Timing for Unit

45 minutes to 1 hour

Materials for Unit

Handouts, chart paper and easel, markers

Slides 1.1 through 1.5

Section 1: Introduction to Gender: It's Complicated

Exercise 1.1. Warm-Up Exercise: The Seven Most-Asked Questions

Goal

Identify the most-asked questions about gender communication.

Objectives

- Create an awareness of predispositions and commonly held beliefs regarding gender communication.
- Discuss the range of attitudes toward gender communication.
- Define the origin and nature of gender differences.

Timing of Exercise

15–20 minutes

Materials

Handout: The Seven Most-Asked Questions, chart paper and easel, markers

Slide 1.1.

Setup

☐ Conduct this exercise in dyads and then process it with the entire group or organize it in groups of five to eight members, where each member shares his or her response, and then process it with the entire group.

☐ The content for the handout is the same as the content on slide 1.1. Distribute the handout.

☐ Solicit the group for three or four of the seven questions with the entire group participating. The trainer presents the responses to the remaining questions. In other words, the group can dictate what questions they are most interested in to begin the discussion; then the trainer supplements the answers to the remaining questions.

☐ Ask the group for the questions that received the most attention or debate. Question 1 is usually selected most often, followed by question 6.

Debrief

1. How did men and women acquire their communication styles? Are we just born that way, or did we learn them? Is it a question of nature or nurture?

   - Ask for a show of hands of participants who believe sex differences are primarily a result of nurture or environmental influences or if they are learned.
   - Then ask how many participants believe that sex differences are inherited by nature.
   - Finally, ask how many think sex differences are a result of both nature and nurture. Most people are aware that sex differences

are a combination of both environmental influences and genetic predispositions.

Slide 1.1

The Seven Most-Asked Questions

1. How did men and women acquire their communication styles? Are we just born that way, or did we learn them? Is it a question of nature or nurture?
2. Which communication style is better: male or female?
3. Is gender really that important in defining the way people interact with each other?
4. Can men and women learn to change and adapt their styles? Haven't we been this way forever? How do you expect us to change?
5. Are there individual differences, as well as gender differences?
6. Who acts as though they're responsible for effective gender communication: women or men?
7. Haven't things changed in gender relationships?

Source: Nelson, 2004, p. 17.

Most people are aware that sex differences are a combination of both environmental influences and genetic predispositions.

- Ask the group to provide examples of influences of both nature and nurture. Nature or inherited biological examples would include that male and female brains are wired differently. Hormones also affect behavior. For example, boys are genetically programmed to be more aggressive than girls; girls are genetically programmed to be more nurturing than boys. Finally, girls acquire language sooner than boys, who tend to be better in spatial-relations ability. This is the "nature" part of the equation. And remember, biology is not destiny.
- Nurture is also a part of the gender equation. We are socialized through being rewarded by adults for gender-appropriate behavior when we are children. Children imitate adult role models and are influenced by peers. Other influences include television, popular music, Hollywood, and social networking. Remember, the average child is in front of a screen (texting, e-mail, TV, computer) approximately six hours a day. Ask the group to reflect on messages they received from their parents, teachers, peers, or a coach on what it meant to be a boy or a girl. Solicit the group to share some examples.
- Ask the group members if they can think of any other double standards for behaviors that might have been sanctioned for one gender but not the other.

2. Which communication style is better: male or female?

   - As the saying goes, "There are no dumb questions." But from the perspective of communication, this is the wrong question to ask. No one gender has the edge on a better communication style. Both women and men are unique in their styles, and each brings a different perspective and skill set to the table. The more correct question to ask is, "What style best fits the situation?" The mantra in communication is, "Communication is context bound." The context or situation dictates what kind of communication style should be used;

that is, a successful communicator has the plasticity and flexibility in his or her communication style to be able to adapt to the particular needs of a situation. Some contexts may call for empathic listening, such as when a coworker announces they were just denied a promotion. This is typically a more feminine style. However, a situation where a brief, to-the-point summary is required is more typical of men's linguistic style. Some encounters call for a synergistic blend of styles or an androgynous approach.

3. Is gender really that important in defining the way people interact with each other? Yes, gender is a predictor of communication style. The distinction between male and female is perhaps the most obvious, visible, and dramatic subdivision within our species. An abundance of empirical and theoretical literature documents sex differences in behavioral realms, brain functioning, cognitive skills, peer relations, and hormonal makeup.

    - Many demographic variables affect communication. Solicit the audience for examples. The most common factors are age, socioeconomic status, race, and cultural identification. Gender is one of the most significant variables affecting the choices we make in how we communicate.

4. Can men and women learn to change and adapt their styles? Haven't we been this way forever? How do you expect us to change?

    - Yes, both men and women can change and have the ability to adapt and modify their communication styles. This is a shared equal opportunity. Change is a choice. And as stated earlier, biology is not destiny. Yes, men and women can learn to change, and this training is about how you can change and alter or modify your communication behaviors to be more successful with the opposite sex. Some participants may express a betrayal of self: "Well, this just isn't me." We are always evolving and change is inevitable. True, some people are more

open and receptive to change than others. And the goal of this training is to evolve into a better, new, and improved communicator. The more someone can expand his or her communication behavioral repertoire, the more successful he or she will be.

5. Are there individual differences, as well as gender differences?

   - In addition to gender differences in communication, there are also individual differences. It is common to hear a female participant say, "Wow, I identify more with the male characteristics of communication style." Or a male supervisor exclaims, "You have not met my female assistant. She is a bulldog." On the home front, people will disclose that they have almost swapped gender styles in their marriage. A woman will remark, "I think I am the man on my team, because I am direct and to the point, have no problem putting conflict on the table, and am not the best at empathizing."

     We are all unique and don't always fit neatly into the gender box. Gender is one aspect of who we are, and personality traits can certainly play a role in defining our communication style. Social psychologist Douglas Kenrick and his colleagues suggest that "stereotyping is a cognitively inexpensive way of understanding others: By presuming that people are like members of their group, we avoid the effortful process of learning about them as individuals" (Kenrick, Neuberg, & Cialdini, 2002, p. 339).

6. Who acts as though they're responsible for effective gender communication: women or men?

   - Traditionally, women have assumed the role of social maintenance. They take care of people and relationships. Women can "read" feelings and are usually better able to empathize. There is also a societal expectation that because women are the nurturers, the moms, they automatically come equipped to soothe hurt feelings and offer counsel. At work, a woman is often called the "office mom."

Traditionally, women have assumed
the role of social maintenance.

7. Haven't things changed in gender relationships?

   - Of course things have changed. But have we arrived? No. Listen to the watercooler talk and pick up the newspaper. Old attitudes are pretty firmly entrenched and still lurking in the hallway and evident in the Monday morning staff meeting. Some attitudes are subtle and others not so subtle.

     Often people assume that with close to four decades of women having entered the workforce, we've arrived. Haven't we given enough attention to this gender problem at work? Aren't we beating a dead horse?

     Bill, a manager at a factory location of Lucent Technologies, recently suggested, "When I began here as an engineer thirty-five years ago, there wasn't a single woman in my department. Now a woman heads it. Women are everywhere. Things have changed!"

     You have to admit that he has a point. Twenty years ago, it was easier to identify inequities between men and women because there were far fewer females in the workplace, especially in senior positions. Overtly, it seems as if we've altered our actions to meet the new requirements of corporate America, which often has zero tolerance toward any communication inequities, such as ignoring women, hoarding power and information, or excluding them from networks.

     But Bill mistakenly equates the larger number of women holding jobs with equitable treatment. Just because there are more professional and working women doesn't yet mean that they have arrived, or that attitudes toward them have changed. Men still dominate senior executive and CEO positions of Fortune 500 companies, and they still make more money than women, even for the same jobs.

Although outwardly we all know how to behave, internally certain mind-sets still prevail at work. Occasionally that inner, unspoken perception that affects women reveals itself in a spontaneous remark or gesture. Attitudes drive behavior, and attitudes are not all that plastic or flexible. In spite of everything, they're tough to change.

Finally, there is a great debate on who is doing the most changing. Men complain that they have had to make adjustments because now they are in "mixed" company. It cramps their style. Women complain that they have had to change to meet the male standard of behavior in the workplace. Men set the rules and women must follow them. Actually, it is vital for both sexes to understand each other. Both will benefit from the knowledge of gender communication style differences and how they affect the way the sexes are perceived. And remember, most men and women have goodwill toward each other. They are just lacking knowledge. Intent is not enough, and impact is the bottom line and the measure of successful communication. Once the obstacles are identified, they can be overcome.

Section 1: Introduction to Gender: It's Complicated *(continued)*

Exercise 1.2.
Case Study: Big Boys Don't Cry

Goal

Provide an example of a sex-role message and the influence of "nurture."

Objectives

- Understand how boys and girls learn sex roles.
- Create an awareness of the unintentional dual prescriptions of appropriate and sanctioned behaviors for boys and girls.

Timing of Exercise

10–15 minutes total:

5 minutes to read the case study and talk in small groups

10 minutes to hear responses from each group or sample of groups

Materials

Handout: Case Study: Big Boys Don't Cry, chart paper and easel, markers

Setup

- ☐ Explain the process to the large group.
- ☐ The content for the handout includes the case study and questions.
- ☐ Ask the participants to read the handout with the case study and questions.
- ☐ Address each question with the entire class and ask for the individual group answers.

Case Study: Big Boys Don't Cry

Audrey's eldest child, Alexandra, and son, Armand, are four years apart and had the same teacher for second grade. During parent-teacher conferences, the issue of crying was brought to Audrey's attention. Armand's teacher shared that he would occasionally cry when he was frustrated with a work assignment or when he chose the wrong answer and was corrected. Audrey asked the teacher if Alexandra would also occasionally cry when she was a student in her class. The teacher replied that she did. Armand's crying required parent notification and was an issue. In contrast, Alexandra's crying was a nonissue and acceptable.

Questions

1. Is there a double standard for crying?
2. Is there an implied sanction for boys' crying?
3. What kind of implication does this have for socialization? What is the message?
4. Do we want our children to be stuck in a gender box?

Section 2: What Do Women and Men Really Think of Each Other?

Exercise 1.3. One Thing I Wish the Opposite Sex Would Change in Their Communication Style

Goal

Create an awareness of challenges communicating with the opposite sex.

Objectives

- Identify specific communication skills that both women and men could improve.
- Discuss shared perceptions or emerging themes from the group.

Timing of Exercise

10–15 minutes

Materials

Colored paper with four different colors, chart paper and easel, markers

Slide 1.2

Setup

☐ Conduct this exercise with small-group discussions and then process it in the large group or do this with the large group only.

☐ Distribute colored sheets of paper (to encourage anonymity).

☐ Ask the participants to respond to the question, "What is one communication behavior you wish the opposite sex would change?" One or two sentences are sufficient.

☐ Participants do not sign their names.

☐ Participants must indicate whether they are referring to men or women; for example, "I wish women would speak more to the point."

☐ Ask participants to fold their colored paper into a paper airplane.

☐ When they are finished, ask the participants to stand up to wait for the cue from the instructor to throw the airplane into the air (this is done simultaneously in one group).

☐ On the count of three, have the participants throw their airplanes into the air and then each retrieve one.

☐ Break up the large group into smaller groups of five to eight.

- ☐ Allow two to three minutes for everyone to share what is written on their respective airplanes. Each group gets to choose one to share with the larger group discussion.
- ☐ Solicit the group for the communication behaviors that received the most attention or debate.

Debrief

In research conducted by Audrey Nelson (2004) with one hundred men and women across the United States, she asked four questions (see slide 1.2). The responses to these questions revealed the respondents' self-perception, as well as their awareness of how their gender communicates with the opposite sex. A major finding was that there was no debate: Men and women had significantly shared views of their own and the opposite sex's weaknesses and strengths in communication—and these are weaknesses and strengths that seem to have been written about since time immemorial in the media and portrayed by Hollywood (p. 20).

Slide 1.2

Four Questions on Gender Communication

- What do you feel is the greatest strength in women's communication?
- What do you feel is the greatest strength in men's communication?
- What do you feel is the biggest weakness in women's communication?
- What do you feel is the biggest weakness in men's communication?

Source: Copyright © 2012 by Audrey Nelson and Claire Damken Brown.

Men revealed their weaknesses in communication as failure to read nonverbal cues, trying to solve women's problems ("Mr. Fix It"), inability to stay focused on what people are saying, lack of expressing their emotions, and poor listening habits. More important, according to the study, men perceive women to have the edge in the interpersonal arena. Men perceive that this "division of labor" is an accepted norm. Men admit they are "out to lunch" when it comes to that sensitivity (pp. 22–23).

Men perceive women to have the edge in the interpersonal arena.

Women identified men's weaknesses as assuming they know what you are going to say before you finish. They interrupt the conversation and seldom allow people to finish their thoughts. Furthermore, women claimed men listen to what others say, but they do not actually hear and absorb the right information. They are unable to really empathize with the other person's feelings; they're too focused on trying to fix the problem. Men tend to zero in on only one aspect: the verbal (p. 22).

On the positive side, the majority of women's comments indicated that they believe men are direct, speak with confidence, and get to the point. According to the women surveyed, men's strongest areas include forcefulness, credibility, and control (p. 22).

The men surveyed identified women's skills as the ability to make observations of subtle nuances, usually being more thoughtful and sensitive to other people's communication and being good empathic listeners (p. 24).

When women were asked about their strengths, they most frequently reported listening, empathy, and the ability to express emotions. A woman claimed that they "put the human element into conversation: caring, compassion, interest in the other

person." Moreover, in critiquing their own communication style, women admitted to being overly emotional and indirect. Many expressed a desire to present themselves in a more credible way (p. 23).

Section 3: Transcending Gender: The Androgynous Answer

Exercise 1.4. The Code-Switching Quotient

Goal

Examine an androgynous approach to gender communication.

Objectives

- Create an awareness of the continuum and range of masculinity and femininity.
- Identify how an androgynous approach can enhance communication between the sexes.

Timing of Exercise

15–20 minutes

Materials

Handout: Code-Switching Quotient (located at the end of this chapter), chart paper and easel, markers

Slides 1.3 through 1.5

Setup

☐ Conduct this exercise with small-group discussion and then process it in the large group, or do this with the large group only.

☐ Distribute the handout.

- ☐ Ask the participants to assess themselves on the thirty communication traits.
- ☐ Instruct the participants to use the workplace as the context (not home or outside of work).
- ☐ Encourage the participants to go with their "first gut-level response" and not to mull over their responses.
- ☐ The participants must respond to all thirty characteristics; none can be omitted.
- ☐ Ask the participants to complete the scoring as instructed in the questionnaire.
- ☐ Break up the class into coed groups of five to eight.
- ☐ Allow five to ten minutes for participants to share their final Code-Switching Quotient.
- ☐ Ask for a show of hands for participants who had a final score in one of the four categories shown in slide 1.3.

Slide 1.3

Code-Switching Quotient Total Key

140–150 = Code-Switcher SUPERSTAR
120–139 = EFFECTIVE Code Switcher
99–119 = ROOM FOR Code-Switching IMPROVEMENT
30–98 = DANGER ZONE: Code-Switching Class Required

Source: Copyright © 2012 by Audrey Nelson and Claire Damken Brown.

Debrief

The Code-Switching Quotient (CSQ) is a descriptive instrument designed to assess the degree and incorporation of both masculine

and feminine communication behaviors. CSQ scores will vary according to an individual's station in life and position at work. Almost everyone's style of communication changes according to the person's current work life and personal situation.

- Ask the participants if they can identify CSQ traits that are more characteristically employed by men or women. The following are usually masculine communication traits: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 15, 20, 21, 25, 26, and 27. The feminine communication traits are: 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, and 30. *Note:* Traits 11 and 24 are considered "gender neutral."
- Ask the audience if anyone feels their CSQ score would have been different ten years ago or with a former employer. This will emphasize the changing nature of our communication styles.

Slide 1.4

Androgyny

The word *androgyny* derives from a combination of the Greek words *andros*, meaning man, and *gyne*, meaning woman (as in the prefix to *gyne*cology).

Source: Copyright © 2012 by Audrey Nelson and Claire Damken Brown.

Communication professors Virginia Richmond, James McCroskey and Steven Payne (1991) define an androgynous person as "one who can associate with both masculine and feminine characteristics. In terms of psychological gender orientation, this type of individual is able to adapt to a variety of roles by engaging in either responsive or assertive behaviors, depending on the situation" (p. 35).

Androgyny is the ability to genderflex or code switch. *Code switching* is a term derived from linguistics and refers to "the knowledge of two cultures or languages and readily swapping between them as you communicate" (C. Brown & Nelson, 2009, p. viii). Judith Tingley (1994), a psychologist, defined *genderflex* as the ability to "temporarily use communication behaviors typical of the other gender in order to increase potential for influence" (p. 39).

The word *androgyny* derives from a combination of the Greek words *andros*, meaning man, and *gyne*, meaning woman.

The famous American journalist and critic of American life and culture H. L. Mencken (1920) said, "Neither sex, without some fertilization of the complimentary characteristics of the other, is capable of the highest reaches of human endeavor." Author Amy Bloom (2002) makes this point about the range or continuum of masculinity and femininity: "Our mistake is to think that the wide range of humanity represents aberration when in fact it represents just what it is: a range. Nature is not two little notes—masculine or feminine—on a child's flute. Nature is more like Aretha Franklin: vast, magnificent, capricious—occasionally hilarious and infinitely varied" (p. 69).

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (2009) talked of the two parts of our personalities: the anima and the animus. Chinese philosophy has taught us about the masculine and feminine: the Yin and Yang. Jung believed that in order to have a whole personality, the goal of the person is to integrate the side opposite to their gender. Therefore, men must integrate their anima, or feminine side, and women must integrate their animus, or masculine side.

Today's workplace is a different world. Due to shifts in business operating environments, such as globalization and increased competition, leadership is increasingly moving away from an outdated "command-and-control" masculine model focused only on the task, toward a more blended team-oriented approach that understands the

value and bottom-line profit of interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence. It is forcing both men and women to adopt each other's strongpoints. But outdated, entrenched sex-role perceptions and expectations are still embedded in some corporate cultures. We have all heard someone remark that a strong and vigorous woman was "pushy" or an empathetic and nurturing man was a "wimp." Think about the terms you have heard in the media: *metrosexual* and *girlie men*. Both men and women who strongly identify and fit into traditional gender stereotype styles of communication experience more anxiety and have lower self-esteem. They are not successful with others, especially the opposite sex. Extremely feminine women often exhibit dependency and self-denial and harbor disappointment. Extremely masculine men risk being perceived as rude, arrogant, and exploitative. In contrast, androgynous people tend to be characterized as more creative, able to get along with almost anyone, and less anxious. These are the people we feel good being around.

Both women and men are expected to be partners at work. When the strengths of both sexes' traditional styles are respected, and wide variations are allowed in fitting the behavior to the circumstance, then the workplace benefits and reaps the rewards of an inclusive or androgynous style. Behavioral flexibility is the key to effective communication strategies in all organizational settings.

Behavioral flexibility is the key
to effective communication strategies
in all organizational settings.

training tip

The concept of androgyny will occasionally receive some push back, especially from men.

As a facilitator, be aware that some men may disagree with the concept and value of androgyny. Men who may be more invested in "masculinity" and the concept of being "macho" may disagree with the recommended value of using an androgynous style of communication. Generally fewer women prefer to maintain a feminine-only style. Most women seem to agree on and find value in using an androgynous communication style.

Emphasize that the concept is not about men becoming women or women becoming men. *Vive la difference!* We don't want to all be alike. It is our differences that make for better outcomes.

Unfortunately, the concepts of feminine and masculine are often experienced by most people as two separate constructs, and they work to attain a gender ideal, despite its being detrimental to them. Ask for a show of hands for anyone who has ever felt torn between trying to attain a gender ideal and wishing they could escape the limitations. Ask for anyone to volunteer a short personal example.

Communication works to reinforce and re-create gender, often intentionally and sometimes unintentionally, in everyday life.

Slide 1.5

Characteristics of Code Switchers

An individual who can code switch and has an androgynous style is characterized as follows:

- A man who can develop interpersonal skills and still have the ability to be strong and exercise his power.
- A woman who can be assertive and still be described as sensitive to others' needs.
- Women and men who retain their natural strengths and do not need to suppress them.
- Men and women who can learn and practice new ways of responding to others.
- Women and men who have the ability to self-monitor, that is, to assess accurately the impact that their behavior has on others, and therefore who will be more successful in their communication with the opposite sex.

Refer to this book's Additional Instruments and Training Tools section, Chapter One, for other resources on understanding gender socialization.

CODE-SWITCHING QUOTIENT

Directions:

The following thirty statements are about code-switching communication. Read each statement carefully. Then, using the response key, decide how often you practice the communication described in each statement. Record your answers by checking the appropriate boxes. As you respond, your frame of reference should be your communication behavior during group and one-on-one conversations at work.

Response Key:

Almost Always, Most of the Time, Some of the Time, Occasionally, Almost Never

Statements		Almost Always	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Occasionally	Almost Never
1.	When I ask someone to do something, I refrain from using lots of unnecessary words and I am direct in my request.					
2.	When I speak to people at work, I am not excessive in my use of adjectives (words that describe).					
3.	I can express my disappointment and dissatisfaction directly and clearly to others.					
4.	I can say no to requests.					
5.	I can leave out the details and get to the point.					

Statements		Almost Always	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Occasionally	Almost Never
6.	I am not offended or hurt when someone does not agree with my ideas.					
7.	I manage my emotions in the office when I am upset due to work issues.					
8.	My communication shows that I nurture and support others.					
9.	If I am interrupted, I actively seek to get the floor back.					
10.	I tend to let the other person complete their thoughts without interrupting them before I respond with my comments.					
11.	I have the flexibility to change my communication style to fit the needs and requirements of the person(s) with whom I am talking.					
12.	I am comfortable questioning or debating my colleague during a conversation.					
13.	I use head nodding and statements of acknowledgment (e.g.,"uh-huh" or "yes") when listening.					

Source: Developed by Audrey Nelson, Ph.D., and Claire Damken Brown, Ph.D.

Statements		Almost Always	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Occasionally	Almost Never
14.	I use greetings in my e-mails (e.g., "dear," "hello").					
15.	I am comfortable using a goal-oriented style when needed.					
16.	I make sure everyone has had an opportunity to contribute in meetings.					
17.	I balance my needs with the needs of others.					
18.	I incorporate gratitude ("thanks") and affirmation or acknowledgment ("I appreciate your help") in e-mails.					
19.	When interacting with others, I listen to both the spoken words and unspoken feelings.					
20.	I speak in an assertive manner.					
21.	I usually don't use emoticons in business e-mails.					
22.	I am good at empathizing with people's feelings.					
23.	I am perceived by others as a good listener.					
24.	I make sure my nonverbal message (actions, expressions) is congruent with my verbal message (words).					

Source: Developed by Audrey Nelson, Ph.D., and Claire Damken Brown, Ph.D.

Statements		Almost Always	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Occasionally	Almost Never
25.	When I speak it generally sounds like a declaration of fact and authoritative.					
26.	I can engage in conflict.					
27.	I have no problem setting boundaries.					
28.	I use eye contact to signal support.					
29.	I am sensitive to how my message affects others.					
30.	I read nonverbal cues that are exchanged in an interaction.					
	Total					

Interpreting Your Code-Switching Quotient

You have just completed the Code-Switching Quotient. Add the number checked in each category of your questionnaire and multiply as noted below. Then add your points and see the suggested interpretation of the total score.

Almost always ____ × 5 = ____

Most of the time ____ × 4 = ____

Some of the time ____ × 3 = ____

Occasionally ____ × 2 = ____

Almost never ____ × 1 = ____

TOTAL POINTS = ____

Total Key:

140–150 = Code-Switching SUPERSTAR

120–139 = EFFECTIVE Code Switching

99–119 = ROOM FOR Code-Switching IMPROVEMENT

30–98 = DANGER ZONE: Code-Switching Class Required