

Pathways to Self-Discovery

A Self-Assessment Resource Guide

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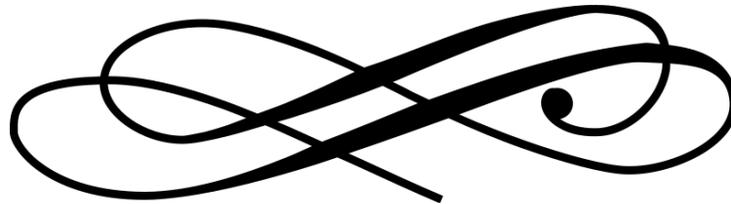


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Introduction

Welcome VISTAs!

A year of VISTA service can and should be one of the most memorable years in a person's life. VISTA service leads to great personal and professional achievement, development, and advancement. It is our hope that with this collection of assessment and learning resources, the VISTA year of service will also be a time of great awareness.

Most VISTAs begin their service with a decent understanding of poverty and its vast reaching effects, especially after pre-service orientation. What many VISTAs may not be as familiar with is how they individually are suited to combat poverty and how they can best aid in the battle against it. These self-assessment resources will encourage you to explore, expand, and examine many areas of your VISTA service.

As VISTA Leaders, we've all been there. We've all been surprised by our abilities, or disappointed in the lack thereof. We've conquered the unknown. We've reached out for help. We've relied on the mistakes and knowledge of others. We'd like to pass on these experiences to you with topics we selected as being particularly useful. Each assessment was taken by many of us in hopes to bring you only the very best. Each learning resource was selected with careful criteria. We hope that you will find something useful to you as an individual, a future employee, and a VISTA.

So browse, assess, and learn! We hope you enjoy the result as much as we all enjoyed creating it.

In Service,

This Awesome Team

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VISTA
Volunteers In Service To America

How To Use This Guide

This resource is divided into eight different modules. Each module focuses on a separate topic and contains three assessments. All assessments included in this guide are available online. Some are in PDF format and may require printing, while others are to be taken online. Each assessment contains individual instructions. Some are self-scoring and provide your results, some ask you to add your own results and find the correct answer.

The assessments included in this resource were used with permission and should not be sold, or used for anything other than personal advancement. Each assessment is self-standing; it is not necessary to take every assessment in order to receive the benefits. You may have to create an account to view the results, but such resources were only permitted to be included if they proved to be extremely useful and did not abuse account information.

Each assessment has at least one, or up to three, corresponding learning resources to help you understand and utilize the results of the assessments. These resources may be in the form of articles, websites, books, or links. We encourage you to continue your own research if you find particular interest in any topic. In addition to corresponding learning resources, each module contains independent learning resources. These were selected for their content or merit but did not match the intention of any assessment, or are in addition to the corresponding learning resources.

The most important thing to remember while using this guide is that the resources selected were chosen by your peers for relevance, content, and professionalism but may not provide perfect results for each taker. Your results are only to be used as a tool for advancement and should not be permitted to define or discourage you.



Facilitation and Training Skills

As a VISTA member, you wear many hats throughout your year of service; two of the most important hats are as a facilitator and trainer. Whether it's for a volunteer training, a community meeting, or a team building exercise, these are essential skills that you will be able to carry beyond your year of service. Facilitation and training are two arts that don't necessarily come naturally to everyone and need to be learned, honed, and routinely evaluated. The assessment tools in this section help to assess your current facilitation and training skills, and give you a chance to reflect on your skills and identify strengths and growth opportunities.



About the Selected Assessments



Assessing Your Trainer Skills

This tool focuses specifically on training programs, evaluating your effectiveness at multiple facets of training. There is no sign up or additional information required, and it will take anywhere from 10-20 minutes, depending on the speed of the user.



Facilitation Skills Self-Assessment

This is a reflection tool, designed to have the user concentrate most on what they already know about their own skills. It will take anywhere from 15-20 minutes depending on the user. The tool opens as a Word document.



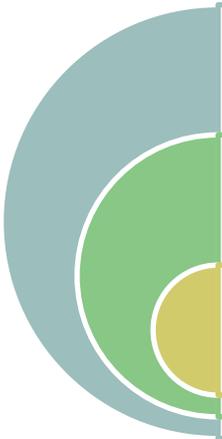
Master Facilitator Competency Self-Assessment

This tool focuses not just on facilitation skills but also on the well-being and centeredness of the facilitator, putting emphasis on how that affects the group being facilitated. There is no sign up needed, and it will take the user 20-30 minutes.

Corresponding Learning Resources

Assessing Your Trainer Skills	Skills Converged This is a one-stop-shop for train the trainer resources, including a 20 part Self Study email course and multiple train the trainer resources under "Training Tutorials".	
Facilitation Skills Self-Assessment	All About Facilitation, Group Skills, and Group Performance Management This is a robust resource, compiling dozens of pages that delve deeper into specific skills facilitators should have, such as listening skills or morale boosting skills.	
Master Facilitator Competency Self-Assessment	Facilitating Meetings Comprehensive guide on facilitating from beginning to end, including how to troubleshoot certain scenarios.	

Further Learning Resources

	Facilitators Guide to Making Meetings Accessible
	Facilitating Workshops
	Facilitation Tools for Meetings and Workshops

*"There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man;
true nobility is being superior to your former self."
— Ernest Hemingway*

Communication

Whether during your year of service or in your daily life, everyone is in constant contact with others and we each respond to communication styles in different ways. Everyone has a unique style of communication that varies from our word choice to body language. Communication is so ubiquitous it is difficult to define, but this section will assist you in identifying how you interact with others and ways to improve your particular style of communication!



About the Selected Assessments



Speak Strong – Communication Style Inventory

This assessment tailors areas of strengths and development for your style of communication. It is a great way to start thinking about how you tend to approach others and how they prefer to engage you. It prescribes some power phrases for you to use when communicating and will encourage you to learn more through this publication.



DiSC Personality Test

This test asks probing questions about your personality and therefore how you communicate with others. This assessment can profile how you both verbally and non-verbally interact with people. This test can yield different results depending on the environment (workplace, home, etc) you are considering. This assessment will ask demographic information which you can skip.



IABC Communication Skills Assessment Tool

This assessment appeals to a variety of projects and as a consequence, some sections will not directly apply to you or your current position. It is recommended that a peer or supervisor also gauge your strengths and limitations. Review criteria and scoring on page 3-4 before delving into the actual assessment on page 5.

Corresponding Learning Resources

Speak Strong – Communication Style	Conversational Skills Rating Scale The most important section for the purposes of this report start on page 8 which outlines the qualities at the core of interpersonal communication.	
DiSC Personality Test	DiSC Profile Fifteen classical patterns emerge from the DiSC Personality Test, which you can compare your results to in order to profile your communication style.	
IABC Communication Skills Assessment	IABC Communication Skills Assessment Tool This corresponding learning resource can be found within the tool at the end of the assessment.	

Further Learning Resources

[How to Improve Your Listening Skills](#)

Great tips on effective listening skills, which is a vital element to successful communication!

*“Formal education will make you a living;
self-education will make you a fortune.”
-Jim Rohn*

Team Building and Participation

It is highly likely that a VISTA will become a part of a team at some point during their service year. Most will collaborate with co-workers or fellow VISTAs, or even community members. Sometimes working as part of a team comes naturally and is easily managed. Other times, personalities conflict, priorities shift, and good intentions are buried under a nonproductive layer of distractions. The purpose of these assessments is to help identify your role within the context of a team and how you can best relate to others to achieve maximum results.



About the Selected Assessments



How Effectively Are We Working Together? The Team Self- Evaluation

This assessment may be taken at any point in the team building process and takes about 20- 30 minutes to complete. Used with permission from Sid Henkin, Prism Learning Solutions (shenkin@prismls.com, 248.254.3468 30514 Fox Club Drive, Farmington Hills, MI 48331).



Team Building Activities and Discussion

This assessment is best for use with a close team who is comfortable with open discussion. The assessment is short but the activity continues with the discussion. Used with permission from Lin Yihan.



Successful Strategies for Teams: Team Member Handbook

The assessment section is located from pages 17-27 in this resource packet. This tool is comprehensive and multifaceted, containing many learning tools in addition to the assessment. Used with permission from Frances A. Kennedy, Ph.D. and Linda B. Nilson, Ph.D., Clemson University.

Corresponding Learning Resources

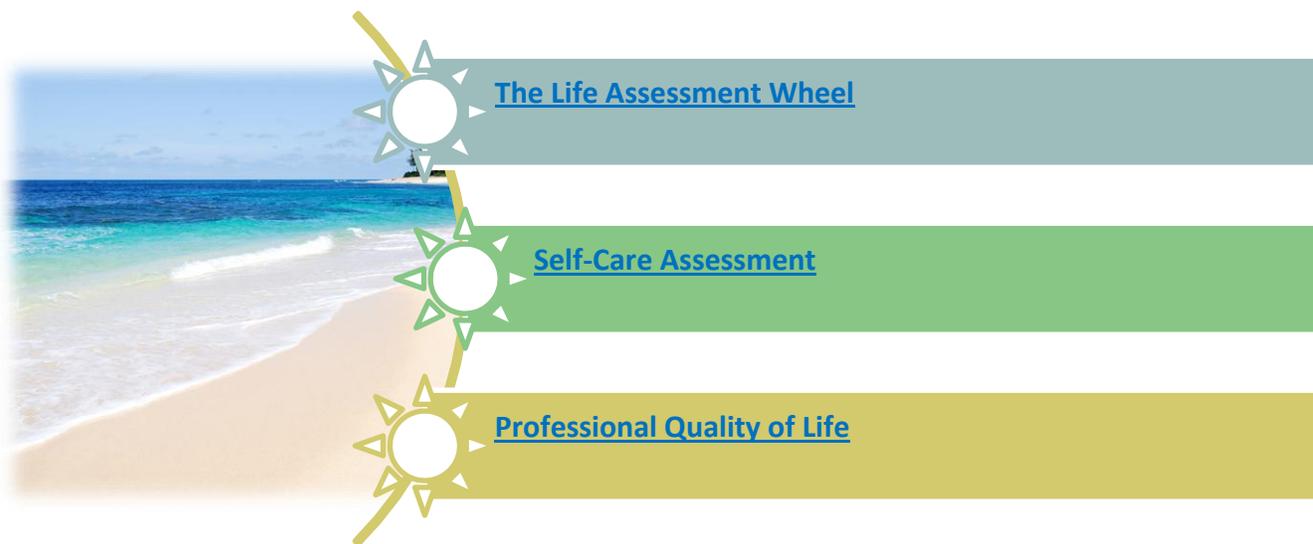
The Team Self-Evaluation	The Behavioral Side of Project Team Effectiveness	
	This resource is a PDF article available in the resource section of this packet.	
Team Building Activities and Discussion	What's That Spell? TEAMWORK! An article from Fortune Magazine on the importance of team motivation.	
	Three Types of Team Building: What you Need to Know Article describing the three different types of team building; fun, true, and consulting.	
	Guide to Managing Human Resources: Team Building Activities for team building and guiding discussion.	
Team Member Handbook	Successful Strategies for Teams: Fillable Team Member Handbook This version of the resource is a fillable PDF file so that personal notes may be created and saved on the computer. A log in is required.	

Further Learning Resources

	Developmental Sequence in Small Groups by Bruce Tuckman in <i>Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal</i> . Number 3, Spring 2011 and available as a Word document.
	Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing Helping New Teams Perform Effectively, Quickly
	Assessing Your Collaboration: A Self-Evaluation Tool
	How to Manage Conflict in Virtual Teams

Well-Being

The VISTA experience sheds light onto an array of social issues such as homelessness, domestic violence, and extreme poverty. Serving with such at-risk populations can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, or imbalance during your VISTA year. This section offers three self-assessment tools that you can utilize multiple times throughout your year to help you avoid burnout or an imbalance. The follow up corresponding learning resources address potential sticking areas and offer guidance to help keep your service and personal lives balanced.



About the Selected Assessments



The Life Assessment Wheel

The Life Assessment Wheel measures your perspective on your own success in different areas of your life, including career, personal growth, and health and well-being. Once you have answered the questions, you can see if your life wheel is balanced or unbalanced. The assessment should take 10-15 minutes to complete.



Self-Care Assessment

This Self-Care Assessment worksheet offers a reflection on personal strategies for self-care. The creators of this assessment recommend working on one strategy from each area. It should take less than 15 minutes to complete.



Professional Quality of Life

This assessment measures your compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress levels in your current position. To score yourself, please see page three. The assessment should take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Corresponding Learning Resources

The Life Assessment Wheel



[Work/Life Balance: Wisdom or Whining](#)

This article discusses how personal resource management can lead to a better work/life balance.

[Work-Life Balance](#)

This website offers statistics on different countries' behaviors on work and life balance.

[Work Life Balance](#)

This short PDF offers a glimpse into how to balance work and personal needs.

Self-Care Assessment



[Self-Care in a Toxic World](#)

This article explores the true meaning of self-care and how to practice it everyday.

[How to Avoid Burnout](#)

This article focuses on how to care for yourself to avoid burnout now and in the future.

[Managing Stress](#)

This article discusses symptoms of stress as well as how to manage your stress.

Professional Quality of Life



[Professional Quality of Life Manual](#)

This extensive manual discusses the background of the assessment as well as an in-depth look into your scores. The Scale Definitions and Score section is especially helpful (p 17).

[Job Burnout: How to Spot It And Take Action](#)

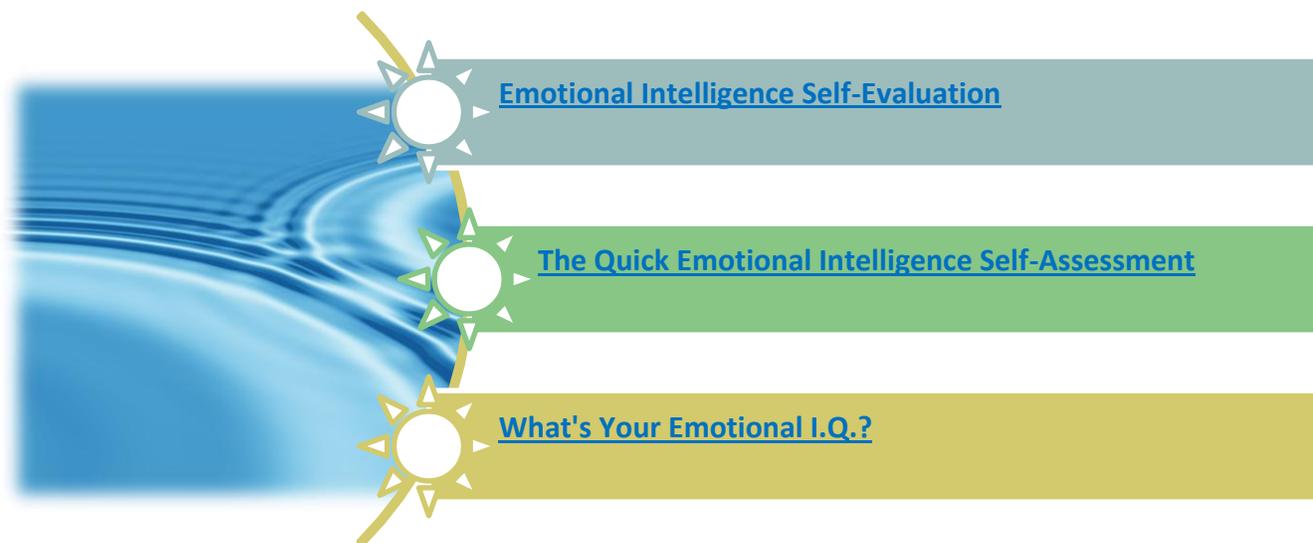
This article focuses on spotting burnout and what to do when you find yourself burnt out.

[Recovering From Burnout](#)

This article highlights the positives that burnout can lead to, such as personal growth opportunities.

Emotional Intelligence

There are many definitions of emotional intelligence (EI) and many ways to measure it. EI is often defined in terms of two models: the ability model and the trait model. The ability model defines EI as the ability to monitor your emotions and others emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide your thinking and actions. The trait model defines EI as an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence your ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures. Also, significant correlations have been found between EI and the development of successful personal and professional relationships and advancement in the workplace. Through the following tools you can assess, leverage, and strengthen your EI, which will help you have a more enriching and fulfilling service year. You will also become more knowledgeable and capable of advancing professionally at your program sites and in future organizations.



About the Selected Assessments



Emotional Intelligence Self-Evaluation

This tool, developed by psychoneuroimmunologist Dr. Nicholas Hall, will help you find out which five aspects of your EI (emotional awareness, emotional management, self-motivation, empathy, and ability to coach others' emotions) are definite strengths or growth opportunities compared to a sampling of managers and other professionals who also took the assessment.



The Quick Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment

This tool, developed by neuroscience professor Dr. Paul Mohapel, will help you measure your emotional effectiveness in four domains (emotional self awareness, social emotional awareness, emotional management and relationship management).



What's Your Emotional I.Q.?

This tool, developed by author Dr. Molly Bransfield, will help you learn if any of the five EI categories (how well you understand your emotions, how much you like yourself, how much control you have over your emotions, how much you depend on others to define your personality, and how mature you are emotionally) need to be developed or strengthened.

Corresponding Learning Resources

Emotional Intelligence Evaluation



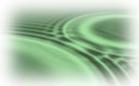
Four Career, Leadership, and Team Skills Articles on MindTools.com

The following articles will give you strategies to develop and strengthen your EI: [Emotional Intelligence - Developing Strong 'People Skills'](#)", "[Managing Your Emotions at Work](#)," "[Emotional Intelligence in Leadership - Learning to Be More Aware](#)," and "[Helping Your People Develop Emotional Intelligence - Creating a Positive, Balanced Team](#)".

[Stephen Covey on Developing Emotional Intelligence](#)

This article summarizes how you can put the seven habits and principles outlined in author Dr. Stephen Covey's books into practice in order to further develop your EI.

Emotional Intelligence Assessment



Two Emotional Health Articles on HelpGuide.org

The following articles review key skills and strategies that will help you raise your EI and improve your emotional health: "[Emotional Intelligence \(EQ\): Five Keys for Raising Emotional Intelligence](#)" and "[Improving Emotional Health: Strategies and Tips for Good Mental Health](#)".

[Emotional Intelligence \(EI or EQ\)](#)

This resource depicts the four domains of EI as a 4-rung ladder, and it includes a list of strategies for each domain from the book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*.

Emotional I.Q.



[EQ FOR EVERYBODY](#)

This resource is a condensed version of Steve Hein's original book and provides EI guidelines through discussions of empathy, emotional honesty, feelings, listening skills, and more.

Five TalentSmart Emotional Intelligence Articles

The following articles provide more insight into EI: "[Four Signs You Have Low EQ \(Emotional Intelligence\)](#)", "[Amplify Your Strengths with Emotional Intelligence \(EQ\)](#)", "[Responding with Emotional Intelligence When Your Values Are Violated](#)", "[Emotionally Intelligent Arguing](#)," and "[How to Choose and Use an EQ Mentor](#)".

Further Learning Resources

[Emotional Intelligence](#)

by Sean McPheat

[What is Emotional Intelligence](#)

by Cary Cherniss

[Emotional Competence Framework](#)

by EI Consortium

[Bringing Emotional Intelligence to the Workplace](#)

by Cary Cherniss, Daniel Goleman, Robert Emmerling, Kim Cowan, & Mitchel Adler

Conflict Management

Everyone experiences conflict; it's a natural part of life. Conflict at work and in your personal life is okay, so long as you can process it effectively. Conflict needs to be addressed in a productive way to find solutions so the parties involved can learn and grow. Authentic communication is key in solving conflict. These assessments will help you identify how you process and deal with conflict and show steps you can take to address it in a healthier way. These are skills you will not only use during your term of service but also for the rest of your life in the professional world.

"Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict."

- William Ellery Channing



About the Selected Assessments



Self Assessment Tool for Conflict Management

This assessment is a downloadable file that you can print and complete. It will identify your conflict management style and describe when it is and is not effective to use.



How Good Are Your Problem Solving Skills?

This online assessment calculates your problem solving skills and ranks you on each step of the problem solving process. Please note that the corresponding resources are included in your results and may take more time to go through.



Conflict Management Style

This assessment is a downloadable file that you can print and complete. It should be taken with your work environment in mind to get the most accurate results.

Corresponding Learning Resources

**Self Assessment Tool
for Conflict
Management**

[Conflict Resolution Skills](#)

This resource will help you take your conflict management style to a more productive level with tips on how to turn conflict into opportunity.



**Conflict
Management Style**

[Conflict Resolution Kit](#)

A list of 12 skills to improve your conflict management style and take your abilities to the next level.



Further Learning Resources

[Getting to the Core of Conflict: Conflict Management Skills](#)

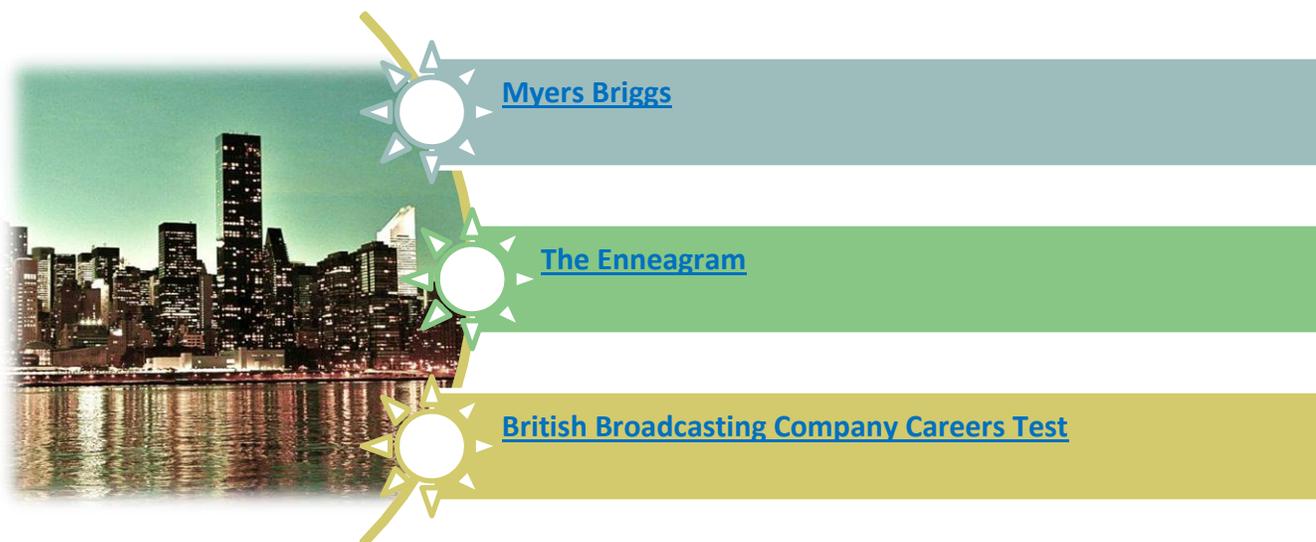
[Checklist for Holding Difficult Conversations](#)

[Conflict Resolution Resource Library](#)

*“There is only one corner of the universe
you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self.”
-Aldous Huxley*

Finding Your Career Path

It's common knowledge that not every career is right for every person. Personality has a lot to do with this—for instance, someone who doesn't enjoy lots of talking probably wouldn't be happy at a call center, and someone who has a need for adventure wouldn't enjoy being stuck in the same cubicle year after year. This is why personality assessments and career assessments are so closely related and sometimes overlap. A test cannot tell you who you are or what will happen in the future, but the following assessments will give you some valuable food for thought—both about your personality, and what work environments might naturally suit you.



About the Selected Assessments



Myers Briggs

Myers-Briggs is one of the most famous personality tests in existence. It has sixteen different personality types based on four dimensions of personality.



The Enneagram

The Enneagram has been around almost as long as the Myers-Briggs system, but it's recently exploded in popularity. In the Enneagram model there are nine basic personality types, and each type has its own strengths, challenges, and basic motivation. As with any assessment it should be taken with a grain of salt, but many people have found it to be particularly insightful.



British Broadcasting Company Careers Test

This test was developed by psychometric specialist Neil Scott of Cassin-Scott Associates. Those who have taken the Strong Test Inventory or the Holland Codes test will notice that it uses the RIASEC model.

Corresponding Learning Resources

Myers Briggs



[Personality Desk's Description of Each Myers-Briggs Type](#)

Discusses type dynamics, each type in a work environment, and the percentage of each type in the population.

[Know Your Type dot Com's Description of Myers-Briggs Types](#)

This website discusses typical behaviors of each type as well as likely career choices

[Career Planner's Description of Each of the Types](#)

Features insightful description of each type, with a special "Career Mapper" also available for each of the types.

The Enneagram



[EnneaType- Website for "The Career Within You"](#)

Brief description of EnneaType and a description of the work environments they thrive in.

[Seeing Through Your Blind Spots](#)

CEO of the Energy Project, Tony Schwartz, discusses the use of the Enneagram in the Harvard Business Review blog.

BBC Careers Test



[iSeek Career Clusters](#)

Provides possible career clusters, specific roles, and even hobbies suited to your type.

[The Career Key](#)

A website dedicated to the Holland Codes, with plenty of free material.

Further Learning Resources

Career Match: Connecting Who You Are with What You'll Love to Do

By Shoya Zichy & Ann Bidou

The 9 Ways of Working: How to Use the Enneagram to Discover Your Natural Strengths and Work More Effectively by Michael J. Goldberg

The Career Within You: How to Find the Perfect Job for Your Personality

by Elizabeth Wagele and Ingrid Stabb

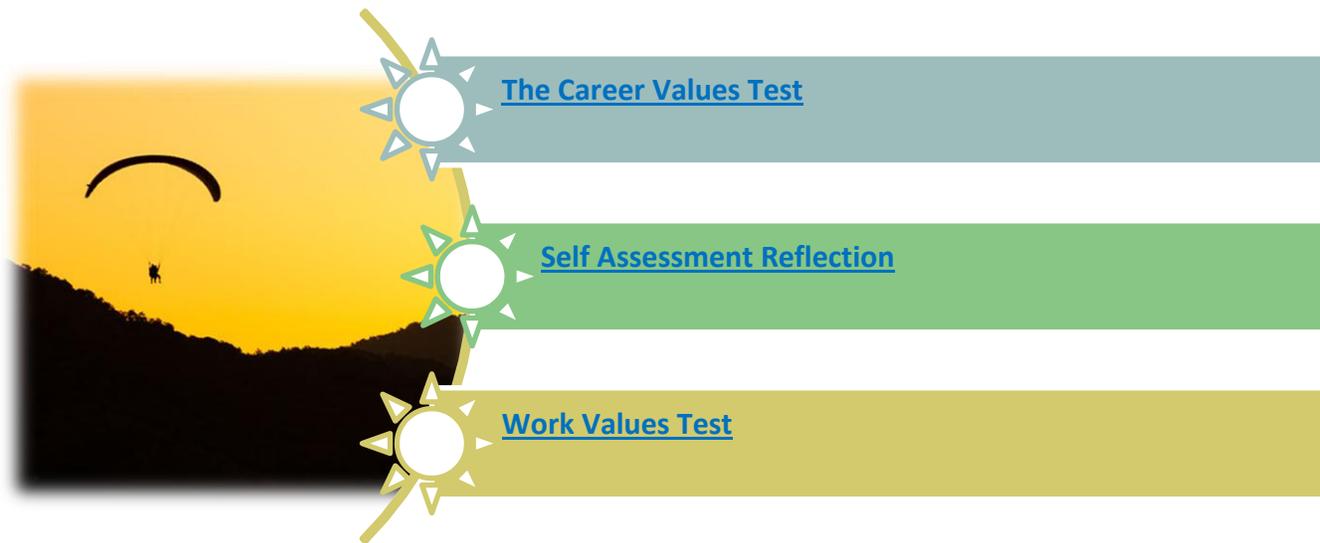
Type Talk: The 16 Personality Types That Determine How We Live, Love, and Work

by Otto Kroeger & Janet M. Thuesen

Defining Your Values

Work values are key to finding a great occupational and work culture fit. Just like our taste buds, our values tend to change based on our age and position life so periodic values clarification exercises, help you identify rewarding positions and career paths after VISTA and tweak your current environment and responsibilities to better reflect your core mission as a professional.

Many have sought to define values and have come up with several theories and corresponding terms to define values. While terminology may vary in the following assessments - each resource listed will help you better understand what motivates you. Once you know your values, you can use them to identify rewarding tasks and create a more meaningful experience during your service year and identify great positions or careers for life after VISTA.



About the Selected Assessments



The Career Values Test

A unique 15 minute online assessment that uses card sorting to help you better understand your top work values.



Self Assessment Reflection

A deep assessment tool and learning resource in one. Use this tool alone or in a group to reflect on values, skills, and accomplishments and how they impact your career options and path.



Work Values Test

A very short tool to help you find your top values. No sign-up required, but you will have to enter some brief demographic information.

Corresponding Learning Resources

The Career Values Test

[Using Values as a Compass](#)

Eight helpful steps to turn your values into action steps and a lasting career resource.



[Why Values Matter](#)

A fun resource to better understand the why and how behind values and why they matter.

Self Assessment Reflection

[Values-based Leadership: How Our Personal Values Impact the Workplace](#)

A journal article with information about value-based leadership - best used as a reflection tool for a larger group.



Work Values Test

[Deciding What's Most Important in Life](#)

A fun complement to the Work Values test that allows you to go a step deeper to understand the source and impact of your values.



[Develop a Personal Mission Statement](#)

Use your values to create a personal mission statement. Great for resumes and geared toward nonprofit professionals!

"The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change."

Carl R. Rogers



Appendix A: Team Building Resource

The Behavioral Side of Project Team Effectiveness

Sid Henkin, Vice President, Market Innovation,
Prism Learning Solutions

Project Management is a Team Activity

Project teams have two universal measures; to satisfy the customer, and to deliver on time, on budget and on spec. The rationale for using teams is simple, high performing teams save money and satisfy customers. Unfortunately there is the other side of the coin, poor performing teams cost money and disappoint customers.

If project teams are such a good idea, why are 53% of all projects late, over budget and/or do not meet the project requirements? [1] We have the technology and knowledge to plan and execute projects; the project plans are elegant, the individual project team members are 'the best', and the project management tools are sophisticated. Apparently, we're missing something.

In an effort to better understand this, we have tried many different tools, but the most revealing has been a simple activity we use whenever we work with a project team.

We ask a simple question, "From your experience, what are the things that cause your team to derail?" We record the list on a flip chart and then ask the team members to divide the list into two realms, the 'operational/functional' realm and the 'behavioral' realm. Invariably, the behavioral realm outweighs the operational/functional realm. This predictable outcome is supported by numerous sources, both within and outside the project community.

- In the popular business book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, by Patrick Lencioni [2], four of the five dysfunctions are behavioral.
- The Knowledge Team

Effectiveness Profile (KTEP) statistically identified seventeen discriminators of team effectiveness by comparing highly effective teams to less effective teams [3]. The top seven discriminators are behavioral.

- The Agile Alliance, the hub of Agile Software Development, identified four key values. Three of the four are behavioral. [4].

These are three diverse sources, they all say the same thing...behavior is the key.

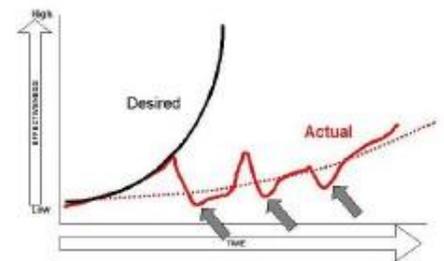
We Talk about the Behavioral, We Act on the Operational

Project management involves the application of a set of tools to carry a team from chartering through successful implementation and evaluation. In my many years helping project teams in a variety of industries and applications move to high performance, I have found that most experienced project managers can draw on their technical tool kit very well. However, where project managers seem to have the most difficulty is around the relationship/behavioral side of team performance. Unfortunately for project managers with this unbalanced skill set, the KTEP research indicates that the greatest discriminators between high performing teams and low performing teams lie in the behavioral areas of:

- Trust
- Cooperation
- Knowledge Sharing
- Inspirational Leadership

Generally, we do not address these until the team derails. Then we react and lose time and productivity.

Typically, organizations put a cross-functional group of people together, call them a team, and jump right into the work of the team. Rarely do they address the relationship of team members and the behavioral capacity of the team as part of the team launch. Addressing the relationship side of project team performance proactively at team launch, is much more effective than trying to address it reactively after open conflict, bruised egos, backstabbing, and hurt feelings interfere with project team productivity. Or completely derail the team.



When we form a team we always hope, and often depend on the hope that it will become a high performing team, rapidly. We are frequently disappointed. When we look at the actual development curve of a team contrasted with the desired curve, we notice that it has many peaks and valleys. [Figure 1] A behavioral or relationship issue usually causes the valleys. When something goes awry, we generally throw some training or some type of team building event at it to solve the problem. This is a band-aid approach; it treats the symptoms, not the cause. We get a short-term spike in performance but things usually fall back down into a valley.

When behavioral issues and relationships are not understood, the team becomes mired in conflict and the team loses momentum, resulting in lost time and effectiveness. Productivity stealers include:

- Inability to work together towards a common goal
- Fear of sharing ideas
- Fear of negative feedback
- Self interest driving actions
- Expectation that the team leader will solve all of the problems and assume all of the responsibility
- Confusion between individual tasks and relationships with other people
- Lack of appropriate acknowledgement for accomplishments.

It's Not How You Do the Work; It's How You Do the Work Together

When a project team aligns its behaviors with its tasks, the time it takes to achieve effectiveness and productivity is dramatically accelerated, improving throughput and decreasing the cost of doing business. When behavioral interference is identified and eliminated, problem solving, decision-making, brainstorming and communication activities become rapid, predictable and permanent.

This concept makes perfect sense intellectually, but it is applied far too infrequently. However, the relationship side of team performance has been given a “bad rap” (in many cases justifiably so) because of its lack of clarity and seeming imprecision. As many of our clients have put it, team development is seen as “singing Kum Ba Yah and holding hands.” One client put it even more bluntly, “We don't have time for that ****. We have work to do.” Apparently, she didn't see the value of behavioral balance—at least not at first.

What is needed is a methodology to manage team behavior with the same precision and integrity as the methodology to manage the technical project management process. So, how do we obtain that balance between the technical side and the human side of project performance—without falling into the “touchy feely” realm?

It's really a balancing act between the ‘operational/functional’ realm and the ‘behavioral’ realm. There is a tendency for a team to prefer one realm over the other. Project teams, for the most part, lean toward the ‘operational/functional’ realm. In contrast, sales teams for example, lean toward the ‘behavioral’ realm. In either case, the team is out of balance. High performing teams are those that able to maintain the balance. When we watch a tight rope walker, we readily notice that the balance pole is even and centered. If the balance pole starts wobbling or goes too high above either side of the tight rope walker, there's trouble ahead. The same is true for project managers.

Project managers have often said to me that the process side of a project is manageable because it is visible, understandable, and measurable—it is easy to see. The process side is easy to see because they know what it looks like. With today's technology, the relationship side is just as visible and measurable.

In our consulting practice, we have found that most project team members prefer an empirical and analytical approach to understanding the world around them. To match this preference, we use Axiom Software's discUS® suite to analyze team behavior because of its graphic quality, analytical structure, and ease of understanding. The basic DISC behavioral model, the basis for the Axiom suite has been around for 75 years. Traditionally, behavioral instruments like DISC have focused

primarily on the individual. This new technology has enabled us to raise behavioral understanding to a much higher level. We now have the ability to analyze team behavior, model ‘ideal’ teams and analyze behavioral relationships across multiple combinations of people with the same accuracy as individual analysis. This is essential when we have to manage relationships within the team, with team sponsors, with customer contacts, and with other teams. In a team of 10 people, there are 90 individual relationships, and the effective project manager should understand all of them.

By applying this technology in project teams, the teams have been able to generate a number of unique outputs that have improved bottom-line performance.

Teams have:

- Determined how to leverage the team member relationships based on the behavioral preferences of each of the team members.
- Established ongoing behavioral monitoring tools to address the alignment or misalignment of the team leader's leadership style compared to the team's leadership requirements.
- Identified the behavioral issues that will positively or negatively impact the accomplishment of specific upcoming team tasks.
- Determined ways to minimize or eliminate behavioral interference when it arises within the team work process.
- Assigned accountability for behavioral monitoring as the team completes its work. Created plans to maintain or improve areas of strength and limitation within their team.

- Established a customer communication strategy based on the behavioral profile of the customer.

The Behavioral Side of Team Development

Team development is an iterative process. This is readily understood when we look at the 'forming-storming-norming-performing' model for team development that has become a standard team development model since Bruce Tuckman introduced it in 1965. [5] The following is a brief description of each phase.

Forming: the phase of anticipation.

The team first comes together with high energy and expectation. There is limited knowledge of the detail of the team at this time.

Storming: the phase of anxiety.

Individuals start jockeying for position and recognition. Questions arise regarding why and how decisions are made that affect 'me'.

Norming: the phase of stabilization.

Goals are established, plans are developed, roles and responsibilities are defined.

Performing: the phase of application.

Plans are implemented, outputs are generated. The work gets done.

Whenever something impacts the team i.e. the introduction of a new team member or team leader, a change in focus or plan, or a change in the organization that affects the team, the team has to reform, a Re-forming phase. Teams, by nature, are not stable; they continually re-form and begin the team development cycle again....and again, and again.

Every team must go through each phase, whether they like it or not.

The problem arises when a team decides to skip over a phase because it doesn't like or value it. The decision to skip a phase is generally not a conscious one, but rather a subconscious rationalization of why some other phase or activity is more important or urgent. In many cases it's as simple as subconscious avoidance. Most people don't flock to take part in an activity they find uncomfortable. Unfortunately, if a team tries to skip a phase, it comes back to haunt it. The storming phase is the phase that many project teams tend to minimize or skip entirely. The storming phase can be contentious, conflict ridden and downright painful. Team members will compete for position and recognition. This is where factions and cliques form and power struggles arise. This phase is behaviorally centered. Teams that lean toward logic and analysis find the 'storming' phase the most uncomfortable and distasteful.

A similar phenomenon occurs in another recognized team development model, the Katzenbach and Smith high performance team development model. Katzenbach and Smith identified the pseudo-teaming phase. [6] Pseudo-teaming is characterized by the team members acting, or pretending to be a team. They say all the right words but their actions and motives are contentious and counterproductive.

In both cases, storming and pseudo-teaming, if a team doesn't work through the phase, it will never get past the phase. Both cases are behaviorally based and the lack of the project manager's understanding of this has been the downfall of many a team before it ever really got going.

Once a project manager understands this phenomenon, s/he can leverage it to build a strong, sustainable and high performing team.

Leveraging Behavioral Styles

Each team member has a unique style. Some prefer high levels of personal interaction, others prefer to work alone. Some prefer to work steadily and methodically, while others prefer to jump in and figure it out as they go. Some prefer data and analysis, some prefer instinct and intuition. Which of these styles is the best? All of them and none of them. Certain behaviors are more appropriate in certain situations, more inappropriate in others.

The effective project manager has the ability to understand both the situation and the appropriate style to match it. The ability to do this is a trainable skill.

The Three Steps to Leveraging Styles

Step one

Accept the reality that any one style is no better than any other style.

It's our own perceptions that assign values like better and worse. Is an analytical person a nit-picker or a master of precision? If I agree with or relate to this person, s/he's probably a master of precision, if I disagree or it rubs me the wrong way, she's probably a nit-picker. It's all a matter of perception.

Step two

Think 'leverage'.

There is a tendency to think of people with styles that oppose our own in negative terms. This is a frequent cause of conflict. When understood, these differences become

a tremendous source of synergy. By understanding the strengths of differing styles, a project manager can deploy team members in situations where they will be most comfortable and have the greatest opportunity to succeed. For example, if the team has to present a milestone review to a panel of sponsors and customers who think in bullet points, it would make sense to select a team member who thinks in bullet points to deliver the presentation. If the presenter was a person who lives in the realm of detail and analysis, s/he'd be doomed to fail...and so would go the team. On the other hand, if detail and analysis is the order of the day, don't send the bullet point person.

When a project manager understands this, the selection decisions become obvious and simple.

Step three

It's about adaptability, not change.

Teams have unique natural styles, as do individuals. The aggregate of the individuals' styles create this unique team identity. Some teams prefer to discuss, other teams prefer to apply. An effective project manager must understand the team's natural style and also the style that's required for a team to be effective in a given situation. The project manager can then help the team adapt to the situation at hand.

The key is to understand that team flexibility is the ability to adapt, not change. Change is permanent and slow, Adaptation is temporary and fast. And that's where you want to be.

When a project manager begins practicing these three steps, s/he will create balance and the team will dramatically accelerate its curve to high performance.

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Appendix B: Tools & Learning Resources

Focus Areas	Selected Assessments	Corresponding Learning Resources
Facilitation and Training Skills 	Assessing Your Trainer Skills	Skills Converged
	Facilitation Skills Self-Assessment	All About Facilitation, Group Skills, and Group Performance Management
	Master Facilitator Competency Self-Assessment	Facilitating Meetings
Communication 	Speak Strong- Communication Style Inventory	Conversational Skills Rating Scale
	DiSC Personality Test	DiSC Profile
	IABC Communication Skills Assessment Tool	IABC Communication Skills Assessment Tool
Team Building and Participation 	How Effectively Are We Working Together? The Team Self-Evaluation	The Behavioral Side of Project Team Effectiveness (See Appendix A)
	Team Building Activities and Discussion	What's That Spell? TEAMWORK! Three Types of Team Building: What you Need to Know Guide to Managing Human Resources: Team Building
	Successful Strategies for Teams: Team Member Handbook	Successful Strategies for Teams: Fillable Team Member Handbook
Well-Being 	The Life Assessment Wheel	Work/Life Balance: Wisdom or Whining Work-Life Balance Work Life Balance
	Self-Care Assessment	Self-Care in a Toxic World How to Avoid Burnout Managing Stress
	Professional Quality of Life	Professional Quality of Life Manual Job Burnout: How to Spot It And Take Action Recovering From Burnout

Emotional Intelligence



[Emotional Intelligence Self-Evaluation](#)

[Developing Strong 'People Skills](#)
[Managing Your Emotions at Work](#)
[Emotional Intelligence in Leadership](#)
[Creating a Positive, Balanced Team](#)
[Stephen Covey on Developing EI](#)

[The Quick Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment](#)

[Five Keys for Raising EI](#)
[Improving Emotional Health](#)
[Emotional Intelligence \(EI or EQ\)](#)

[What's Your Emotional I.Q.?](#)

[EQ FOR EVERYBODY](#)
[Four Signs You Have Low EQ](#)
[Amplify Your Strengths with EQ](#)
[Responding When Values Are Violated](#)
[Emotionally Intelligent Arguing](#)
[How to Choose and Use an EQ Mentor](#)

Conflict Management



[Self Assessment Tool for Conflict Management](#)

[Conflict Resolution Skills](#)

[How Good Are Your Problem Solving Skills?](#)

[Conflict Management Style](#)

[Conflict Resolution Kit](#)

Finding Your Career Paths



[Myers Brigg](#)

[Personality Desk's Description of Each Myers-Briggs Type](#)

[Know Your Type dot Com's Description of Myers-Briggs Types](#)

[Career Planner's Description of Each of the Types](#)

[The Enneagram](#)

[EnneaType- Website for "The Career Within You"](#)

[Seeing Through Your Blind Spots](#)

[British Broadcasting Company Careers Test](#)

[iSeek Career Clusters](#)

[The Career Key](#)

Defining Your Values



[The Career Values Test](#)

[Using Values as a Compass](#)

[Why Values Matter](#)

[Self Assessment Reflection](#)

[Values-Based Leadership: How Our Personal Values Impact the Workplace](#)

[Work Values Test](#)

[Deciding What's Most Important in Life](#)

[Develop a Personal Mission Statement](#)

Appendix C: Team Member Profiles



ASHLEY JOHNS

Ashley Johns serves as the VISTA Leader for the SGSM Network umbrella project in St. Louis, Missouri. She completed her first year of service as a VISTA with Serve Yavapai in Arizona. As a Leader, Ashley wears multiple hats and serves as a trainer, mentor, facilitator and go to gal for 37 VISTAs throughout the St. Louis Metro area. In addition to serving her community through VISTA, Ashley works with a cat rescue and the local animal rights group. Activism is a huge part of Ashley's life and she stays up to date on issues concerning animal rights, the environment, and food issues. Ashley also likes working out, reading, going to MeetUps, cooking, crafting, and zombies.



BRIAVEL SCHULTZ

Briavel Schultz is a VISTA Leader at the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, which has the largest AmeriCorps VISTA program in OH. There she cheers on her VISTAs and works on media and design projects. She completed her first year of VISTA with the Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellow Program in Loudonville, NY. In her free time she enjoys theater, ultimate frisbee, and creative writing.



CHRISTIE ATLEE

Christie Atlee was born and raised in the Washington, DC area in McLean, VA. After graduating from Guilford College in Greensboro, NC, with a B.S. in Community and Justice Studies/Interpersonal Communication, Sociology and Non-Profit Management Minors, Christie moved back to DC to become a VISTA for Higher Achievement, a 4-year, year-round, out-of-school time program for underresourced youth in the DC area. In her first year, Christie served as the Volunteer Outreach VISTA, and recruited mentors for 500+ scholars. During her second year of service as VISTA Leader, Christie is coordinating and supporting Higher Achievement's 9 VISTAs across the east coast!



COLLEEN HOMER

Colleen Homer serves as a VISTA Leader with the Service Collaborative of Western New York in Buffalo, which hosts the Serve New York VISTA program with forty one members. During her first year of service, Colleen served with the International Institute of Buffalo by creating a financial literacy program for immigrant and refugee victims of either domestic violence or human trafficking. Colleen holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Saint Joseph's University and is looking to continue her education in the field of art history.



LEAH LOMOTEY-NAKON

Leah Lomotey-Nakon serves as the VISTA Leader at the United Way of the Piedmont which recruits a corps of 14 VISTAs each year to serve at nonprofits in the upstate of South Carolina. Leah received a B.A. in Political Science from Emory University and served as the 2010 Woodruff Fellow at the Robert W. Woodruff and Whitehead Family of Foundations before joining VISTA in 2011. Leah has leveraged her VISTA service to explore the role of the independent sector in combating poverty in the American South. During her first term Leah served as the Market Support Specialist at Jumpstart for Young children where she researched and launched the Southeastern market's inaugural Community Corps program. In the fall Leah is heading to Nashville to pursue a M.Ed in Community Development at Vanderbilt's Peabody School of Education.



MISTY PEGUE

Misty Pegue is serving as a VISTA Leader at Cornerstone Assistance Network in Fort Worth, Texas, leading approximately 18 to 25 VISTA members located throughout North and Central Texas. She completed two previous AmeriCorps terms in 2009 and 2010 as a CA Community HealthCorps VISTA at Southeast Health Center in San Francisco, California. She also earned a bachelor's degree in communication/visual journalism with a minor in science from the University of Texas at Arlington in December 2006, and she earned a master's degree in technical and scientific communication from Miami University of Oxford, Ohio, in May 2010.



SAM MOONEYHAN

Sam Mooneyhan is a VISTA Leader with Florida Campus Compact whose VISTA program focuses on leveraging higher education resources to combat poverty. He is a lifelong learner and hopes to stay immersed in education in one capacity or another after his VISTA service. Sam is inspired daily by the opportunities created and impact made by community service to both our nation and its people.



SHEILA METTETAL

Sheila is serving as the VISTA Leader for United Way of the Midlands in Columbia, SC after completing a year of VISTA service for Powell County Victim/Witness Assistance in Deer Lodge, MT. Sheila holds a bachelor's of arts in theater from the University of West Florida. She plans to use her service experience and artistic endeavors to help make the world a better place.