

Elisabeth Feuersenger and Andrea Naef

## **If you want them to listen, talk their language**

**Communication, Motivation and Success in Business and Personal Relationships using the Process Communication Model®**

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## Foreword by Dr Taibi Kahler

Elisabeth and Andrea have taken my Process Communication Model and brought it alive with everyday, understandable, application examples. Their clarity of writing invites the reader to feel as if he or she were reading about their very own neighbours, or perhaps even themselves.

The characters are real with consistency of language and behaviour, from their inner thoughts, emotions, likes/dislikes, opinions, actions or inactions, to their predictable interactions and behaviours. The Thinker, whose reality is defined by logic: “If everyone would just think clearly, we wouldn’t have as many problems”; the Harmoniser, whose reality is relationships and caring about others: “If we all just got along person to person, the world would be a better place”; the Rebel, whose reality is reacting to most any situation: “If we all just chilled out and had some fun, the world would be less of an uptight mess”; the Persister, whose reality is values and beliefs: “Morals, loyalty, commitments, dedication, respect, perseverance, missions... these are the building blocks that can cement our future”; the Promoter, whose reality is adapting to people and situations: “Go for it...and if you can’t lead, get out of my way”; and the Imaginer, whose reality is in a world of imagination: “Some people say, ‘If this, then that’. I say, ‘What if....’”.

The authors have shown how each of us is comprised of these six Personality Types, but with our own unique order, allowing for the complexity of human beings to be understood in profoundly simple ways. Daily home and work examples show the characters in remarkably recognisable scenarios. Elisabeth and Andrea let us eavesdrop on the lives of these characters, then explain why they are getting along when they do, and why they are having problems communicating when we see them upset with one another.

The model is so precise in describing behaviour that readers can identify in the dialogues the word for word sequences each Personality Type character uses in distress with the others.

And most importantly, Elizabeth and Andrea tell their readers not only why each Personality Type gets into a very predictable sequence of observable Three Degrees of Distress, but also tell us what we can do to keep ourselves out of the distress dance, and at the same time what we can say to invite the other person out of his or her distress. By understanding distressed behaviour, we can avoid getting 'hooked' into it, and even help others out of it, thus preserving the relationship with the real person 'behind the mask' - our colleague, our friend, our loved one...

Elizabeth and Andrea have written a wonderful PCM primer and novel, to be enjoyed by the casual reader and the PCM scholar.

**Taibi Kahler, PhD**

## 1 . Background and History

PCM is such a dynamic model, and the various elements so interlinked, that the best starting point is perhaps to give you some background to how the model developed and where it is being used.

In the early 1970s, Dr Taibi Kahler, then at Purdue University, made a series of remarkable discoveries.

He observed that there was a process involved in verbal communication – identifiable sequences by which people interacted with one another. These sequences included specific speech patterns that were associated with both positive and negative interactions and were sequential, measurable and predictable. Dr Kahler found that listening for these patterns made it possible to objectively identify interactions, literally second by second, as being either productive (communication) or non-productive (miscommunication).

He also discovered that each of the negative speech patterns was associated with a specific series of negative stress behaviours. In other words, by listening to how someone was speaking, he could predict how they would behave under different types and levels of stress. Subsequent research showed that each speech and behaviour pattern was uniquely correlated to one of six distinct personality types.

Based on this research, Dr Kahler developed a clinical model for rapid psychological diagnosis called the ‘miniscript’, which psychiatrists and psychologists could use to identify their patients’ preferred communication styles and predict their negative behaviours simply by listening to their language choices. They found that using the miniscript improved communication and significantly reduced treatment time.

This significant discovery in the field of psychology earned him the International Transactional Analysis Association’s 1977 Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award.

The following year, Dr Terry McGuire, NASA’s lead psychiatrist for manned space-flight, invited Dr Kahler to demonstrate the efficacy of his model in connection with the astronaut selection process. After comparing notes on several candidates, Dr McGuire hired Dr Kahler, commenting that ten minutes using his approach revealed as much or more about a candidate than a standard psychological interview of several hours. This began an extended relationship with NASA, during which Dr Kahler worked with Dr McGuire to incorporate the model into the astronaut selection, evaluation, training and management processes. It also gave him the opportunity to translate the concepts underlying his model into behavioural terms.

Further research revealed that while everyone has a ‘base’ personality type that does not change, they also have a personality structure that includes all six of the types, in different orders and amounts. It also showed that each of the personality types:

- perceives the world differently than the others,
- prefers a specific 'channel' or way of communicating,
- has unique character strengths,
- prefers a specific interaction style,
- has specific psychological and motivational needs, and
- has a consistent and predictable pattern of behaviour when in distress.

Working with Dr McGuire at NASA, Dr Kahler also developed the Personality Pattern Inventory, an assessment that identifies a person's exact personality structure. As a result of his work with NASA and the Berne award, Dr Kahler was invited to speak at business and organisational conferences. At the urging of business leaders, he translated his concepts into what is now the Process Communication Model, a non-clinical model for personality assessment, communication and management for businesses and individuals.

Dr Kahler's theory has withstood professional scrutiny and been enhanced through continued research for more than 30 years. Today, PCM is used by businesses and government agencies throughout the world in a wide range of fields including management, recruitment, placement and motivation. Teachers apply PCM to maximise their effectiveness and to connect with hard-to-reach students. Psychiatrists, psychologists and counsellors use the clinical sister model, PTM (the Process Therapy Model), to treat and counsel their patients and clients.

Those convinced of the value of PCM include Fortune 500 CEOs and executives, politicians and prominent health care professionals and educators.

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# The Six Personality Types

## 2. The Six Personality Types

As described in the previous chapter, Dr Kahler's research showed that specific speech and behaviour patterns are uniquely correlated to one of six specific personality types. Their names are self-explanatory:

Harmoniser, Imaginer, Persister, Promoter, Rebel and Thinker.

These names are nothing more than labels, for the sake of convenience. No type is better or worse, more intelligent or less intelligent.

### 2.1 Six personality types

#### *2.1.1 Harmoniser*

For Harmonisers, it is most important to live in harmony with their fellow human beings in an atmosphere of kindness and genuine warmth. They have an authentic interest in other people and their lives. In a professional environment they are the ones who care about the wellbeing of team-mates and clients. They take the initiative to approach others and are nurturing, friendly and always ready to help. Harmonisers also have a natural ability to please the senses - their own as well as those of others. Many of them are excellent cooks and hosts. They know how to turn a house into a home, creating an atmosphere of comfort and warmth. They like to pamper all the senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Being so receptive for sensual pleasures, they like to wear fabrics that feel good: silk, fine linen, soft wool and pure cotton. They usually have a talent for combining colours, and they enjoy

taking good care of themselves and looking attractive. They love compliments, especially unconditional and personal ones. In turn they are generous with praise and say things like: “I’m so happy to see you. I missed you,” or “You look fantastic. That jersey goes so well with your lovely green eyes!”

Harmonisers like touch and attention and often exchange hugs and warm glances. Likewise, they appreciate attentive acknowledgement from others.

Children, family and friends are a constant source of happiness for Harmonisers and they love having extended family and friends around the table enjoying a good meal and telling each other their joys and sorrows. When someone needs a shoulder to cry on, Harmonisers are ever ready to offer a listening ear, comfort and encouragement. Daily soul food for Harmonisers is to love and be loved and to experience life through their senses. Their world is the world of emotions, senses, friendship and love.

(If you visualised only women Harmonisers here, remember that all of the above holds true for men too. Statistically, however, 75% of all Harmonisers in the United States, the only place we have validated data for so far, are indeed women.)

### ***2.1.2 Imaginer***

Imaginers are calm, reflective and imaginative. They have a talent for delving into complex and complicated matters and grasping their meaning. They live a major part of their life within. Very often they are skilled with their hands. They like gardening and working in their basement or shed while letting their thoughts wander and linger. They use routine manual labour as a means to withdraw and be by themselves. They are able to deal with scientific, philosophical or literary issues, having inner dialogues all by themselves and contemplating a subject from all possible angles. Appearances don’t mean much to them – very often they don’t even notice them. The classical caricature of an Imaginer is the absent-minded professor, looking for his glasses, which are perched on his forehead, while wondering whether reality really exists out there or is just a figment of our imagination.

Reflecting so thoroughly and deeply, they are able to grasp aspects of a problem that escape the superficial observer. They excel in free and imaginative chains of thought and explore the jungle of their ruminations. If asked to share their thoughts, their eloquence is often a surprise, since they are not usually talkative. To recharge, they need ample time and space for themselves, quite unlike Thinkers, who are very conscious of planning and using their time. When Imaginers are deep in thought they sometimes forget about time. If someone reminds them in a direct, concise way, they don’t mind at all, and even appreciate being directed.

Imaginers are sometimes underrated by others because they rarely step forward to present themselves. They are indeed ‘still waters’ that ‘run deep’.

### **2.1.3. *Persister***

Persisters have a great sense of dedication and discernment. They form opinions on the basis of values and stand up for these opinions. They share some of their strengths with Thinkers, as they also collect and process information, facts and data, but differ from Thinkers because they use their knowledge to develop opinions, beliefs and principles. They, too, are conscientious and hardworking and go for goals. The main difference is that Persisters' goals are missions based on conviction and may involve a lifelong commitment. For them it is not enough to have goals and achieve them; their goals must have meaning and value. Persisters are committed – sometimes passionate – defenders of a cause, principle or ideal. For some, this is their reason for living.

Persisters are motivated by recognition of their opinions, judgments and commitment. They don't want to persuade sheepish followers; they want to convince. They prefer a good argument with a person of different convictions to someone who will support them for opportunistic reasons. They draw deep satisfaction from the recognition of a person they admire, and may keep photographs or souvenirs of this person as valued treasures. Persisters appreciate value, good craftsmanship and sometimes the traditional. They prefer intrinsic quality to superficial gloss and may choose an old but solid masterpiece over something new if they have misgivings about the quality.

Their appearance often shows their sense of value. They seldom use the word 'good' because for them it has meaning. They like to wear 'good' shoes, and take 'good' care of them. They appreciate materials that are 'good' and drive 'good' cars. They would rather spend money to repair something 'good' than throw it away and spend less on a cheaper substitute. Quality, value and durability are key terms for them. If a Persister praises your work with the short word 'good' it means a lot.

Persisters are reliable and you can count on them to keep their word. They don't take things lightly.

### **2.1.4 *Promoter***

Promoters exude authority, energy and even charisma, and are able to enthuse and motivate others and lead them by giving clear directions. Promoters don't need to convince others by thorough, persistent reasoning. They intuitively know how to get to the other person and are charmingly persuasive. They are adaptable and tough, and willing to invest everything they have when they smell a fast and profitable deal. They show initiative, get things going, take risks and have fine antennae for promising opportunities. They hate long-drawn-out discussions and endless meetings to come to a decision – they want to get the show on the road, jump headlong into action and move. They like speed, excitement and challenges and live by the motto:

“If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen!” Their understanding of Darwin is: “The fittest survive and good riddance to the weaklings!”

Promoters enjoy showing off what they have. They like to drive fast, flashy cars and wear designer outfits, and they don’t mind dropping names. If something goes wrong, they shake it off and are ready for new action. They are always looking forward and don’t waste time with painful regrets, analysing what went wrong yesterday. A quote from T.S. Elliot might be a Promoter’s motto: “Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far they can go.”

### ***2.1.5 Rebel***

Rebels add colour, spice and fun to our lives. Whether eight or 80 years old, Rebels are masters of the art of having a fun time. They work playfully and are at their best when free to use their creativity and apply unconventional methods. They are good at finding unusual solutions to a problem and ‘thinking outside the box’. They need playful contact and are ingenious in getting it. Like colourful butterflies, they are constantly on the move, absorbing stimulation and inspiration like a sponge. They react spontaneously to people and situations and leave no-one in any doubt whether they like something or not. They hate boredom and like toys of all kinds. With their good sense of humour, Rebels are gifted comedians and always ready to have a ball, enjoying amusing, unusual and unconventional situations. Even when Rebels are not at their desk (they like to move a lot), it is easy to identify: toys, like a mechanical tin mouse, an iPod, colourful decorations and posters or funny mottos and the funkiest screensaver around speak volumes about the kind of person who works and plays here.

Sometimes Rebels have to fit in with a dress code, maybe a suit or a company uniform. Not to worry – they’ll use their ‘discretion’ when it comes to ties, socks or underwear to add their personal touch!

### ***2.1.6 Thinker***

Thinkers are very responsible and reliable. They have an analytical mind and collect facts, data, and numbers, which they use for clearly defined goals. They excel in drawing logical conclusions, categorising data and organising information.

They work hard to achieve: formulating goals, planning the steps to get there, preparing a schedule and organising their activities to succeed. For them, time is not merely a phenomenon that comes and goes but a significant factor in their lives. They plan their days, weeks, months and years and use time efficiently. For Thinkers, it is not only the ultimate in politeness to be on time, but essential for efficiency.

In their professional lives, they value good tools, a place for everything and colleagues who are reliable and work effectively and intelligently.

Thinkers like to dress in a way that suits their work as well as their position. A director or chief executive Thinker likes to dress according to rank, yet would refuse even the classiest outfit if it did not have pockets for a mobile phone, pen and glasses or did not coordinate with their elegant briefcase. Their prime motivation for keeping up the good work is recognition of their performance, time structure, good ideas and suggestions. They earn certificates and diplomas and are proud of them, exhibiting them neatly and symmetrically in their office or workplace. They appreciate money and perceive a good income as recognition of their achievements.

## **2.2 The characters**

We invite you to meet some people who are entirely fictional, yet you might find them somehow familiar. We all know them, within ourselves as well as in others. They will tell us about their strengths and potential and about what they do and say when under stress.

### 2.2.1. Thomas Taylor



My name is Thomas Taylor. I'm 42 years old, have a PhD in aeronautical engineering and am the managing director of Fly-Tech Ltd, a production plant for aeronautical supply systems.

When I was 12, my father took me to an air show. I was tremendously fascinated to see up close how the huge, heavy aeroplanes managed to take off and climb into the air at such a steep angle. It seemed like magic, and I wondered how it was technically possible to overcome gravity. That was when I decided to become an aeronautical engineer – I wanted to be involved in making that happen. After I completed my PhD, I worked at a large European aircraft manufacturer in France and acquired advanced skills in French.

Since I started working for FlyTech I have always kept up with the latest technical developments and got training in leadership and human resources management.

My efforts got me where I am now, holding the position of Managing Director of one of the leading companies in the field of aeronautics.

I married Helen 12 years ago. We have two children, Ramona, 8 and Patrick, 10. Four years ago we bought a beautiful house set in a large garden in a nice suburb. In addition to my office at the company, I have an office at home where I can develop ideas and projects before I present them officially to my staff.

I am good at developing projects and breaking them down into long-term and short-term plans. I structure my days, weeks, months and years to achieve my goals. Sometimes I find it difficult and irritating to have to deviate from my schedule. Every so often when we're sitting at the breakfast table, I'm already thinking about the day ahead at work and almost forget about Helen and the kids. I love Helen, Ramona and Patrick, but their early morning chatter sometimes gets on my nerves. Work is very important to me and when I come home with a new idea in mind, all I want is to have dinner and then continue working on my computer.

At the company I have a team of first-rate experts. Every one of them is good at what they do. I respect their work and take care not to waste their time with irrelevant

talk. I know that I'm not the most spontaneous person in the world and when I have a meeting with Pania, our business development manager and Reby, who does our marketing and communications, I'm amazed and sometimes even frustrated to see them chatting away a mile a minute, jumping from one subject to the next. They laugh and exchange ideas like balls in a game and before you know it they decide how to do it, stuff their papers into their bags, and off they go, while I'm still sitting there analysing and trying to structure the chaos.

I know they're good at what they do and I accept their way of doing it, but sometimes I wonder how they do it.

### 2.2.2. Helen Taylor



I feel very fortunate. I'm married to a wonderful man and we have two delightful children. We live in a beautiful house, and the garden is our little corner of paradise where Ramona and Patrick can play. There are always friends and neighbours dropping by. I used to be a paediatric nurse and enjoyed my work tremendously. When Patrick was born, I decided that I'd rather be with our own children and I rarely regret that decision. What a joy to have healthy children and see them grow and be happy! I feel so privileged that I can use my talents for what I love most – our family and our home. I love people and like to share my life with people I care for. I want to know about their friends, family and even pets and am happy when I can help them. I love to cook and set a beautiful table and when Thomas brings business friends home for dinner, I am happy to see the pride in his eyes. Of course they talk shop and some of the

technical talk is way above my head. When they have heated discussions and get into aeronautical arguments I feel uneasy and want to change the subject, even though I know it's about solving technical problems, not about being angry at each other. I prefer it when the wives or partners come along. Then the conversation is not only about aeroplanes and contracts. I feel so good when our guests feel at home

and they like me. I'm not vain but I like to take good care of my appearance. I dress in colours that go with my blue eyes and blonde hair and when they tell me how nice I look, I feel happy.

I always put on big birthday parties for Ramona and Patrick, with all the things that children love to eat, games and activities, hordes of children and some parents. These parties usually start when the children come home from school and last until everybody is exhausted from playing and eating. Even though all the preparations are a lot of work, I wouldn't want to miss our birthday fun.

### 2.2.3. *Henry Harding*



I am Thomas' executive assistant. A few years ago I had the opportunity to work as an intern in all the different departments of FlyTech. I was undecided where I wanted to go professionally and was grateful when Thomas offered me a job as his executive assistant. What I like most about this position is that I get to know customers and staff and that all of them seem to like me. I manage correspondence, do research and act as 'gatekeeper' for Thomas. In order to be able to decide which events or meetings are most appropriate when I'm allocating his time, I need to understand his priorities and responsibilities. That's why Thomas and I often work as a team and why I sometimes represent him in meetings or communications. I've made a lot of friends in the company and also met Helen, Patrick and Ramona. FlyTech feels like family to me now. I know people's birthdays, the names of their partners and children, even pets, and their

health problems. When I suggested a small budget for special occasions, Thomas agreed and I enjoy buying little gifts for birthdays, returns after extended sick leave or long service anniversaries. Sometimes I've noticed Thomas rolling his eyes or shaking his head when I have personal conversations with customers or during my daily 'morning corridor conversations' with colleagues. I know he wouldn't 'waste' time talking like that but I also know that he acknowledges that my personal ap-

proach has won over many hesitant prospects. I'm happy when I can show staff and customers that they count as persons. Customers and colleagues often talk to me when they have problems or requests and trust me to pick the right time and mood to present them to Thomas. I really like people and they tell me that I contribute a lot to mutual trust and a good corporate culture.

One of my hobbies is cooking. My girlfriend Susan and I love to cook together and have friends over for dinner.

#### **2.2.4. Paul Pearce**



Years ago, FlyTech was Pearce Brothers Ltd. My grandfather and his brother founded the company 80 years ago as a family business producing and assembling high quality steel precision parts. In those days, craftsmanship was our trademark and I learned everything you can learn about precision from scratch. When my father retired, the company went public and changed its name. I don't believe in shareholder value. It reflects the stock market, not how solid a company actually is. It was a very hard decision but economically unavoidable. As one of the major shareholders, I have some influence on company policies, and my mission is excellent training and quality control. I am totally convinced that in the long run, excellent quality is the best publicity and marketing. Our products are in great demand all over the world even though they are expensive. In my opinion, our free-lancing customer acquisition lady does not fully appreciate the value of our products,

and I suspect that she'd sell lesser products with the same enthusiasm. In the aviation industry, where safety is a most important factor, reliability and precision are mandatory. That's my department, as the manufacturing operations manager. I'm proud to say that FlyTech still offers formal apprenticeships and that my graduates, the 'Pearce graduates', have excellent chances on the job market. I am strict but fair and my loyalty works upward as well as downward. I feel responsible for my

trainees and those who are committed can be sure of my full support. I see myself as a father figure for my trainees – I want the best for them and I demand their best from them. They may not always like me, but they know they can depend on me and trust me.

### 2.2.5. Irwin Ingram



I am FlyTech's accounting manager. I use professional accounting concepts and internal company policies to solve complex accounting issues including monitoring the key performance indicators. While many people might find it boring, but looking at all the angles and finding the best way to manage FlyTech's financial affairs is something I actually enjoy doing. I once attempted to run my own financial consulting business. I liked the work but often spent way too much time on a single client so in the end it just didn't pay. Now I'm employed, have a regular income and don't have to worry about finding clients. There is an annex building at FlyTech, in an out-of-the-way place where most of the rooms are used for storage. One of these rooms caught my eye. I asked if I could move from the main office building and have this room for myself, so now my work place is tailor-made for me. I don't mingle easily and when I get the opportunity, I withdraw into my office and work.

I'm good at what I do. This is a place where nobody just drops in. I can work undisturbed on my own. I don't know many people in the company that well and don't usually like to participate in social activities or company parties. Sometimes, especially when it's a personal invitation from Thomas and his wife, I have to go. The people are friendly and nice but I often feel ill at ease anyway. Usually I'm one of the first to leave a party.

I prefer to work by myself. I have a nice workshop at home and made most of the furniture in the house myself. When I come home from work I often go straight to my workshop. I do gardening and spend most weekends in my garden or out hik-

ing. Many things that seem important to others don't bother me a bit. I don't worry about clothes or cars or being up to date with trends. I can get lost in my thoughts and forget all about my appearance. One morning Henry stopped me and told me that a coat hanger was still in my jacket, the hook sticking out from the back of the collar. Henry thought I would have been embarrassed – I just thanked him and went on my way.

### 2.2.6. *Reby Reed*



I'm responsible for marketing and communications at FlyTech, which means I do all the creative stuff. I developed the corporate branding, keep the website up to date, design the brochures, and think of concepts for the stand at the trade show and ads in aviation journals and manufacturing magazines. When I was a kid I used to draw and paint a lot, but the kind of stuff you can do with a computer is really far out. The design software I use is like a magic wand. It sure beats pencil and brush. I really like my job. I meet lots of people with great ideas: photographers, the stylists and the technical guys who know the details. Being with a group of people and brainstorming like there was no tomorrow brings out the best in me. Juggling with ideas, experimenting, trying new things, whether it's illustrations, text or cartoons, and having a ball as we go, that's the kind of work I love. I like work to be fun, and when it is, I find new and fast ways to get a slogan or an idea

across. I like word games – sometimes people who have never even heard of FlyTech quote my puns and limericks and catch phrases.

What I really hate is routine. I like change and new things – colours, sounds, gimmicks, toys and people to play with. When I see weird, unusual or funny things or people they can trigger ideas like bubbles. I jot them down or take a few notes or talk with others and then of course it happens that I'm late for an appointment, or I forget or misplace papers – I'm very good at multitasking and doing a dozen things

at a time.... that just doesn't fit in a strict time schedule. I like to drop in to Paul's kindergarten and joke around with his trainees. Some of them are really cool and I get new input and ideas from them.

Did I tell you about the company intranet forum I started a few months ago? Everybody has access and we exchange ideas, jokes, information and requests. It's become very popular.

I like to move a lot. I dance, play volleyball and sometimes glide to work on my Rollerblades. For me, life is movement and fun! ☺

### 2.2.7. Pania Patel



I'm responsible for sales and business development. My job is business development and customer acquisition. My base pay is lousy but the bonuses are grand. I know there are no free lunches and I don't mind investing all I've got when it pays. When I went to the interview with Thomas, I was exactly what he needed. I like a challenge, I have a good technical mind, I can adapt to any given situation and I know an opportunity when I see it. When it takes being a lady, I'm a lady, and when it takes downhill racing I'm a downhill racer. I don't mind working hard for three consecutive days and nights, if that's what it takes. I get along with big shots and I get along with truck drivers. I know I can impress people. I'm persuasive and charming. Being attractive doesn't hurt either. My motto is 'do' not 'should'. Of course you can't always succeed. Win some, lose some. Some people think I can't resist a challenge and act before I think. Well, I

deal with obstacles when I have to deal with them. And sometimes things work out fine as you go. I don't beat around the bush and when I want something done, I say so. You know the story of the frog that fell into a bucket of milk? That's me. I don't drown. I wind up on top of a bucket of whipped cream.