

Understanding Time Perception and Communication

Improving relationships at home and work

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Understanding Time Perception and Communication and the impact this can have on relationships

Have you ever felt like you're constantly waiting on someone who's always late, or that someone is rushing you through a task you need to focus on?

These frustrations often stem from fundamental differences in how people perceive and manage time.

In this blog, we'll explore the concepts of '**in-timers**' and '**through-timers**': two distinct communication and time perception styles that can significantly impact our relationships at home and in the workplace. By understanding these differences, you can learn to navigate communication challenges and foster more harmonious interactions.

What are In-Timers and Through-Timers?

In-Timers: These individuals experience time as a sequence of distinct moments. They prioritize being **on time**, sticking to schedules, and completing tasks in a linear fashion. Interruptions are often seen as disruptive.

Through-Timers: These individuals view time as a continuous flow. They are more flexible with schedules, comfortable multitasking, and less concerned with strict adherence to timelines. They are often comfortable with interruptions and changes to the plan.

In-Timers

- Value punctuality
- Prefer structured schedules
- Focus on one task at a time
- May seem rigid or inflexible
- Communicate directly and concisely

Through-Timers

- More relaxed about deadlines
- Adaptable to change
- Comfortable multitasking
- May seem disorganized or scattered
- Communicate more indirectly or expansively

Why Do These Differences Cause Conflict?

Misunderstandings arise when these two styles clash. For example:

- An in-timer may perceive a through-timer as unreliable or disrespectful for being late to a meeting.
- A through-timer may see an in-timer as overly controlling or inflexible when they insist on sticking to a rigid schedule.
- In-timers might feel overwhelmed by through-timers as the latter may not follow a set structure when communicating, or may try to communicate about too many things at once.
- Through-timers might feel unheard by in-timers, as they struggle to get a word in when the in-timer has their communications structured in advance.

Identifying Your Own Time Perception Style

Consider these questions to determine whether you lean towards being an in-timer or a through-timer:

- Do you feel anxious when you are late?
- Do you prefer to focus on one task at a time?
- Do you find it difficult to adapt to unexpected changes in your schedule?
- Do you communicate in a direct, linear fashion?
- Do you prefer short and concise communications rather than long ones with lots of tangents?

If you answered yes to most of these, you likely lean towards being an in-timer. If you answered no to most of these, you likely lean towards being a through-timer. Most people will find themselves somewhere on a spectrum between the two.

Bridging the Gap: Strategies for Better Communication

Regardless of your own style, understanding and accommodating others' preferences is key:

- **Acknowledge the difference:** Recognize that neither style is inherently better or worse. It is essential to appreciate diversity and to avoid negatively judging communication partners based on their communication style.
- **Communicate openly:** Talk about your time perception preferences and how they impact your interactions.
- **Compromise:** Find mutually agreeable solutions. For example, set clear deadlines and expectations, but allow for some flexibility.
- **Be mindful of communication styles:** In-timers appreciate direct, concise communication. Through-timers may prefer a more relaxed and conversational approach.
- **Use visual aids:** Calendars, timers, and to-do lists can help bridge the gap and provide a shared understanding of time.
- **Give each other time:** Both need time to process the other's communication style. It may take a while to adjust to the different way your partner communicates.

By increasing communication awareness and time perception, you can build stronger, more productive relationships both at home and in the workplace. Being adaptable and understanding the different ways people act can create an environment of positivity and understanding, which can also lead to better working and home relationships.

Next Steps

- Reflect on your own time perception and communication style.
- Observe how others around you perceive and manage time.
- Initiate a conversation with your family, friends, or colleagues about these differences.
- Experiment with different communication strategies to find what works best for you and others.

Contact me if you are interested in therapeutic Coaching, using Neuro-Linguistics Programming (NLP) and other techniques to help you personally and professionally.

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