

What's Your Communication Personality?

By JoJo Tabares

Are you a Gabby Gloria or a Shy Sheila? And how can knowing this help you be a more effective communicator? Understanding your communication personality can allow you to make slight changes in your communication style that can help you relate better to others. Most people are some combination but may be dominant in one. Here are some basic communication personalities and some tips for better communication if you find yourself talking to one or if you find that you are one!

1. Gabby Gloria is an extrovert. Relationships mean a lot, and she makes you feel like you are important, but she may never get to the point, forget what she was going to say, and may jump from one topic to another without warning.

If you are a Gabby Gloria . . .

You are surrounded by people because you are a lot of fun! You are always doing things and going places, and people love to hear the stories you tell! However, you can sometimes overwhelm others or hog the spotlight. Make sure to really listen to those you communicate with and draw them in, especially if they are Shy Sheilas! You also tend to overlook important details and may, in your enthusiasm, jump around from one thought to the next. This makes people like Analytical Andrea very frustrated. Slow down and let your audience have time to digest what you are saying, because sometimes you speak so quickly that they have a hard time following you.

Gabby Gloria is fun, but may not get her point across because she is not an organized communicator. To become an effective communicator, Gabby Gloria needs to remember her point and get there by taking a direct route. She confuses people as her mind wanders and she gets to gabbing. She needs to slow down and concentrate on purposeful conversation. Gabby Gloria writes this way too, and that is even more confusing for her readers. Use an outline when writing to keep on track. Use a mental outline when speaking. Use notes when making a speech. Time yourself to get used to having a limited time to get your point across.

If you are talking to a Gabby Gloria . . .

You might not get a word in edgewise, but you will be entertained!! If you are trying to befriend a Gabby Gloria, you will have no problem at all. She will love to engage in conversation. If, however, you are trying to persuade her or tell her something of great importance, you will need to speak her language to get her attention. Gabby Glorias don't like just the facts, they love the embellishments. They love a good story with a build to the climax and a surprise ending. Make the story exciting, build the suspense, use facial expressions and hand gestures and body language. Use props if you can—anything to keep her attention if it is a longer period of time. If your story reminds her of another great story, she may feel the urge to tell it in its entirety! If you need her to remain focused to finish your thought, you will need to catch her before she finishes taking a breath and steer her right back to your point.

2. Shy Sheila is an introvert, usually with low self-confidence. She may almost seem snobby or uncertain in social situations.

If you are a Shy Sheila . . .

It is hard for you to enter into a conversation because you feel like you are interrupting or that you are an outsider. You are afraid of saying the wrong thing, so you lie back and let others talk. People like you because you really listen to them! This is a wonderful gift you give others. You must learn to speak up and take chances. Speak clearly and loud enough so others can hear you. You have wonderful insights from all that listening you do—a blessing to bestow upon others! Take tiny steps in asserting yourself; don't try to do it all at once. As you can see, not everyone is always happy with the Gabby Glorias of the world either. Every communication personality has its strengths and weaknesses.

Shy Sheila needs to be a little more bold. Increase your volume and articulation. If you have something to say, it's worth hearing! Don't worry so much about how you look. Smile! Be friendly. Say hello! Get involved!

If you are talking to a Shy Sheila . . .

Draw her out. Ask for her opinion; she has a lot to offer! Don't overwhelm her with loud thundering and excited communication, especially in a crowd. Encourage her.

3. Bold Betty is an extrovert, sticks her foot in her mouth, speaks without thinking, doesn't consider her audience before she opens her mouth, but gets stuff done!

If you are a Bold Betty . . .

Confidence and power are yours! Valuable traits to be sure, but you tend to speak first and think about the consequences later—and there are some! Channel that assertiveness and excitement that you have and focus it on others. Keep in mind how others may interpret your communication. Be careful that you don't scare off any Shy Sheilas with your zeal! You are refreshingly honest about yourself and others. Just make sure that your honesty doesn't step all over someone else's insecurity.

Bold Betty needs to consider the feelings of her audience. Put yourself in their shoes. Think before you speak. How will this sound to Mary, Bob, or little Johnny? Tone it down a little bit for Shy Sheila—she gets nervous by all that yelling! Before it comes out of your mouth, before you hit that send button, before you mail that letter, make sure you look it over to make sure you chose your words carefully or that your topic will not automatically offend someone.

If you are talking to a Bold Betty . . .

Keep in mind that she usually doesn't mean any harm. She just doesn't see how others may interpret her honesty and zest for life. Pay attention to her assessments, they are almost always very astute. She sees the world differently, and thank God she does, because she brings a new and fresh perspective when she speaks. She enjoys honesty and bluntness as well. Tell her what you think! She usually has thick skin and will often ask for critical analysis of herself.

4. Careful Carla is an introvert, thinks too much before she speaks, never offends anyone, and may not get her point across because she is too vague.

If you are a Careful Carla . . .

You are a dear, sweet one. You take such care in speaking to everyone and often lift up others because you can see that they are hurting when no one else can. On the other hand, you often take so long to formulate a response to something that your opportunity has passed to really make a difference in someone's life though you desperately want to. Trust yourself and ask the Lord for guidance when you feel led to speak to someone. Then jump in with both feet. The Lord gave you a heart to help, and you are responsible with others' feelings, so trust your instincts.

If you are talking to a Careful Carla . . .

Understand that she is afraid to do the wrong thing. She is thinking and carefully planning her thoughtful response to your query. She doesn't say anything lightly. So when she offers you some advice, just know that she has given the matter due consideration. Draw her out by telling her that she won't hurt your feelings.

5. Amiable Annie wants to please. She is afraid of confrontation and hurting anyone's feelings, so she says nothing of importance.

If you are an Amiable Annie . . .

You are very much like a combination of our Careful Carla and Gabby Gloria. You go to great lengths to please others. You are very easy to get along with, and are well liked by others. Sometimes though, you feel a little used. You do so much for others, and many times you don't feel appreciated for your efforts. You also feel that people take advantage of your good nature and helpfulness. Try to remember that it is you who is suggesting usually! If you really cannot do something for someone, don't volunteer! If someone asks you to do something that you don't want to do, you can say no politely without hurting their feelings. Most people understand that you have your own life to lead and would not be offended in any way should you say no.

If you are talking to an Amiable Annie . . .

Be careful with her. She will bend over backwards to help even a stranger just because she sees a need. She feels like she is expected to help or that she cannot say no without offending. Give her an out if she offers or if you ask. Let her know that you would understand if she had to say no. Ask to help her! Publicly thank her for all she has done for you—early and often! Appreciation is the fuel that keeps an Amiable Amy going. Don't let her run dry!

6. Analytical Andrea likes to analyze everything before she moves forward with an idea. She is chock-full of knowledge about things in general. However, she often passes her deadlines while over-analyzing things to the point of being ridiculous.

If you are an Analytical Andrea . . .

You are full of statistics and facts. People come to you for them and are amazed at how you can keep all that stuff in your head without it spilling out your ears! But . . . you also have a tendency to analyze things to death! You are perceived as wasting time or nit-picking things to death in

your thirst for information upon which to make a decision. People are sometimes frustrated by your thoroughness. You need to understand that sometimes it is best to make a decision based on the facts available at the time and that some things are just idle conversation. You have a tendency to be the Conversation Correction Patrol, passing judgment on those who have inferior arguments. Sometimes it's just a conversation, not life or death!

If you are talking to an Analytical Andrea . . .

Pick this person's brain. There's enough there to fill a computer! She loves to talk turkey about statistics. She's the answer man! Understand that she is trying to be accurate, not pick on you for your lack of knowledge. Don't take offense so easily; none is meant.

7. Dynamic Darla is a Bold Betty with a purpose. She is very clear in her communication but is sometimes intimidating to others.

If you are a Dynamic Darla . . .

You are a dynamo, and people often marvel at how much you have accomplished! You are a no-nonsense person who enjoys achievement. Others learn a lot from you. However, you also are very intimidating to people like Shy Sheila and Careful Carla. In order to reach them, you will need to tone down a little bit. Engage in small talk to get to know others better and let them warm up to you. Be careful not to speak of your many accomplishments too soon or it may come off as bragging. Draw others out and let them shine in the spotlight for a while. Draw them into your spotlight!

If you are talking to a Dynamic Darla . . .

You will learn a *lot!* Listen to her! This lady is a doer; let her tell you how she does it. She likes just the facts, ma'am. Don't tell her a long story; just give her the highlights. She likes to get the details after she has heard the synopsis—if she is interested in the topic. She usually doesn't like to make small talk or talk about fluff. She may seem aloof because she doesn't usually engage in chit-chat or idle conversation, but she is usually surprisingly helpful. Stay on track during the conversation and you will have made a good friend.

8. Negative Nellie always sees the problem in everything.

If you are a Negative Nelly . . .

You usually don't miss a thing. You are aware of the potential dangers in things that others can't see, and you aren't shy about pointing them out! People learn things from you. You are also very negative, and that can be intimidating or frustrating for others. You tend to go overboard, and people begin to view you as complaining or perceive you as having a bad attitude. Some take what you say as putting others' ideas down. If you voice your opinions sparingly, people will view what you say in a more positive light and respect more of what you say. Put a smile on your face and in your voice and a sunny side to your emails. People love people who are positive and are drawn to people who make them feel good.

If you are talking to a Negative Nelly . . .

Listen to her criticisms. She usually has great insight about potential problems you may encounter with your idea. She is a fabulous “devil's advocate.” Learn from her. Also, don't take too much of what she says too hard. This is just how she views the world. Just like a doctor might see the health implications of everything he comes in contact with, a Negative Nelly sees the potential problems with everything. It is just her nature.

9. Positive Polly sees the good in everything, but she may be a little naive.

If you are a Positive Polly . . .

You are the one people enjoy spending time with. You are always making others feel good about themselves. You are always enjoying life and helping others and see the sunny side of every issue. And that can also be annoying as heck! lol Sometimes you may seem a little insensitive to the woes of another, because you see the potential good when they cannot, being in the throes of despair. You can also miss potential problems because you just cannot fathom how people could be so cruel or devious. You are easy prey for hard-luck cases that end up burning you. Before you spend a large amount of time or money on something, consult your friendly neighborhood Negative Nelly for advice!

If you are talking to a Positive Polly . . .

You are usually so taken in by her graciousness that you end up feeling wonderful about her, yourself, and everyone around you. Problems usually don't seem as tough when she is around. But be careful that you don't fall into the trap. Remember that she doesn't usually see the potential problems about getting involved with things. Not everyone has good intentions. Not everything will turn out well in the end. That's why God gave us discernment. Double check your facts. She usually doesn't keep little things like those around, because they can mess up your positive attitude. lol

Remember that each person is unique and most people are not a stereotype. Most people are a combination of two or more. Still, these tips can help you identify someone's communication personality traits so that you can communicate more easily with him or her. Whether it is someone you work with, a family member, or even one of your own children, keeping these things in mind will help you better relate. Keeping your own communication personality in mind can help you avoid difficulties when talking to those of opposite communication personalities.

Biographical Information

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JoJo Tabares holds a degree in speech communication, but it is her humorous approach to communication skills which has made her a highly sought-after Christian speaker and writer. Her articles appear in homeschool publications, such as Homeschool Enrichment Magazine and The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, which also endorses her Say What You Mean curricula. You can also find JoJo on Web sites such as Crosswalk.com and Dr.Laura.com. For more

information on communication FUNDamentals and Christian-based communication skills for the whole family, please visit <http://www.ArtofEloquence.com/>.