

Style Under Stress

SELECT F: FALSE / T: TRUE

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1. At times I avoid situations that might bring me into contact with people I'm having problems with.

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2. I have put off returning phone calls or e-mails because I simply didn't want to deal with the person who sent them.

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3. Sometimes when people bring up a touchy or awkward issue I try to change the subject.

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4. When it comes to dealing with awkward or stressful subjects, sometimes I hold back rather than give my full and candid opinion.

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5. Rather than tell people exactly what I think, sometimes I rely on jokes, sarcasm, or snide remarks to let them know I'm frustrated.

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6. When I've got something tough to bring up, sometimes I offer weak or insincere compliments to soften the blow.

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7. In order to get my point across, I sometimes exaggerate my side of the argument.

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8. If I seem to be losing control of a conversation, I might cut people off or change the subject in order to bring it back to where I think it should be.

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9. When others make points that seem stupid to me, I sometimes let them know it without holding back at all.

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10. When I'm stunned by a comment, sometimes I say things that others might take as forceful or attacking—terms such as “Give me a break!” or “That's ridiculous!”

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11. Sometimes when things get a bit heated I move from arguing against others' points to saying things that might hurt them personally.

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12. If I really get into a heated discussion, I've been known to be tough on the other person. In fact, they might even feel a bit insulted or hurt.

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13. When I'm discussing an important topic with others, sometimes I move from trying to make my point to trying to win the battle.

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14. In the middle of a tough conversation, I often get so caught up in arguments that I don't see how I'm coming across to others.

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15. When talking gets tough and I do something hurtful, I'm quick to apologize for my mistakes.

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16. When I think about a conversation that took a bad turn, I tend to focus first on what I did that was wrong rather than focus on others' mistakes.

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17. When I've got something to say that others might not want to hear, I avoid starting out with tough conclusions, and instead start with facts that help them understand where I'm coming from.

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SELECT
F: FALSE / T: TRUE

☐

18. I can tell very quickly when others are holding back or feeling defensive in a conversation.

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19. Sometimes I decide it's better not to give harsh feedback because I know it's bound to cause problems

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20. When conversations aren't working, I step back from the fray, think about what's happening, and take steps to make it better.

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21. When others get defensive because they misunderstand me, I immediately get us back on track by clarifying what I do and don't mean.

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22. There are some people I'm rough on because, to be honest, they need or deserve what I give them.

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23. I sometimes make absolute statements like "The fact is..." or "It's obvious that..." to be sure my point gets across.

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24. If others hesitate to share their views, I sincerely invite them to say what's on their mind, no matter what it is.

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25. At times I argue hard for my view hoping to keep others from bringing up opinions that would be a waste of energy to discuss anyway.

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26. Even when things get tense, I adapt quickly to how others are responding to me and try a new strategy.

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27. When I find that I'm at cross purposes with someone, I often keep trying to win my way rather than looking for common ground.

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28. When things don't go well, I'm more inclined to see the mistakes others made than notice my own role.

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29. After I share strong opinions, I go out of my way to invite others to share their views, particularly opposing ones.

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30. When others hesitate to share their views, I do whatever I can to make it safe for them to speak honestly.

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31. Sometimes I have to discuss things I thought had been settled because I don't keep track of what was discussed before.

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32. I find myself in situations where people get their feelings hurt because they thought they would have more of a say in final decisions than they end up having.

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33. I get frustrated sometimes at how long it takes some groups to make decisions because too many people are involved.

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SCORING

Each domain contains two to three questions.

Next to the question number is either a (T) or (F). For example, under “Masking,” question 5, you’ll find a (T). If you answered question 5 true, check the box. With question 13, on the other hand, you’ll find an (F). Only check that box if you answered the question false—and so on. Finally, add the number of checks in each column to determine your total score.

Your Style Under Stress score will show you which forms of silence or violence you turn to most often.

Your Crucial Conversations Skills score is organized by concept and chapter from the book *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* so that you can decide which chapters will benefit you the most.

Your silence and violence scores give you a measure of how frequently you fall into these less-than-perfect strategies. It’s actually possible to score high in both. A high score (one or two checked boxes per domain) means you use this technique fairly often. It also means you’re human. Most people toggle between holding back and becoming too forceful.

STYLES UNDER STRESS

Masking

5 (T)

6 (T)

Avoiding

3 (T)

4 (T)

Withdrawing

1 (T)

2 (T)

----- Silence Total

Controlling

7 (T)

8 (T)

Labeling

9 (T)

10 (T)

Attacking

11 (T)

12 (T)

----- Violence Total

Style Under Stress

SKILLS

Start with Heart

13 (F)

19 (F)

25 (F)

----- Total

Learn to Look

14 (F)

20 (T)

26 (T)

----- Total

Make It Safe

15 (T)

21 (T)

27 (F)

----- Total

Master My Stories

16 (T)

22 (F)

28 (F)

----- Total

STATE My Path

17 (T)

23 (F)

29 (T)

----- Total

Explore Others' Paths

18 (T)

24 (T)

30 (T)

----- Total

Move to Action

31 (F)

32 (F)

33 (F)

----- Total

CONCLUSION

Since these scores represent how you typically behave during stressful or crucial conversations, they can change. Your score doesn't represent an inalterable character trait or a genetic propensity. It's merely a measure of your behavior—and you can change that.

Alexandra Zareth