

Opportunities and Challenges

The ACTIVITY Coaches' Guide to Working With All Six Perceptual Styles

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Welcome!

*Opportunities and Challenges – The **ACTIVITY** Coach's Guide to Working With All Six Perceptual Styles* has been designed to help you understand the opportunities and challenges you face as a coach with the **Activity Perceptual Style** as you work with clients of varying **Perceptual Styles** in your practice.

This guide is exactly that, a guide. It is not a hard and fast rule book. While **Perceptual Style** is a very important determinant of behavior, it is by no means the only one. Using the tips in this guide, along with your knowledge of a client's **Perceptual Style** and **Preferences for Interaction**, will help you to make quicker, deeper, and more genuine connections and ultimately greater impact.

Remember that despite the information in this guide and the power of **Perceptual Style Theory (PST)**, you will still encounter some clients that you will have difficulty connecting with. This can happen for a number of reasons – perhaps the client has issues that are beyond the scope of a coaching relationship, perhaps the client is unable to accept that their way is not the only way. With **PST**, you will recognize these impasses quickly and you'll feel confident in letting go of a coaching relationship that isn't right for you or the client.

This guide is divided into six sections, one for each of the six **Perceptual Styles**. Each section is loaded with critical information about each **Perceptual Style** presented in a way designed to be most useful to a coach with the **Activity Perceptual Style**, like you!

We trust you will find this information as useful and helpful in your coaching practice as we do in ours.

To Your Coaching Success,



Lynda-Ross Vega and Gary M. Jordan, Ph.D.

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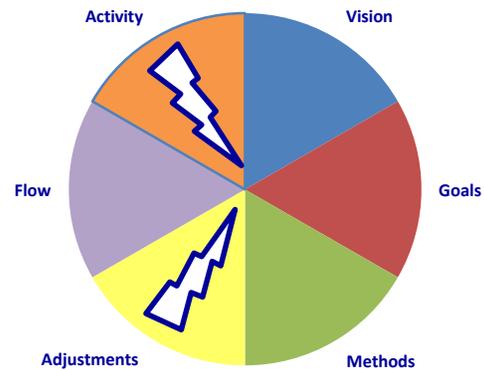
ACTIVITY AND ADJUSTMENTS

One-off Relationship

Activity and **Adjustments** are one-off on the Perceptual Style wheel. Working with one-off Perceptual Styles poses the biggest challenges for you as a coach.

Unlike neighbors, with one-off Perceptual Styles nothing feels common, and unlike opposites the reason for the disconnect is not immediately obvious.

The biggest challenge you will have with people with the **Adjustments PS** is to find any common ground at all. The way that they see things will feel alien and uncomfortable at best.



Common areas where this disconnect happens between **Activity** and **Adjustments**:

Area	Disconnect
Energy level	Engaged v. Calm
Acceptance of Change	Innovation v. Stability
Social	Outgoing v. Polite
Intensity	Spontaneous v. Reserved
Communication	Candid v. Diplomatic

Adjustments Perceptual Experience Summary:

- Sees the world as a complex system of objective processes and systems that function smoothly without personal interference or action.
- Keen and thoughtful observers of the world.
- Knows that hasty action is thoughtless action and makes sure actions are both deliberate and careful.
- Knows that preparation and practice are the keys behind proper behavior and mentally walks through possible scenarios while gathering information.

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- Experiences the world in an extraordinarily rich and complex manner and has much to offer when others are willing to listen.
- Gets great satisfaction being an information resource for others.
- Constantly reworks, rethinks, and redrafts communications and fine-tunes actions, projects, and responsibilities in an attempt to deliver perfection.
- Skillful diplomats whose complete and thorough grasp of situations gives them the ability to see issues from all sides.
- Time pressure, competition, and a drive for the bottom-line all violate their view of the world.
- Believes change for the sake of novelty is an appalling breach of prudent behavior.

Experience of Each Other

How you see them – You will be attracted by their good listening skills (they make a good audience for your stories), their skillful and precise use of language, their quick grasp of nuance and complexity, their ability to understand subtlety both socially and linguistically, and their “quick wit”. You will find their unwillingness to act as quickly as you would like, their need for complete and thorough detail, and their need to constantly polish and refine exasperating. Their reserved, low-key, and careful approach will baffle you and your broad, expansive, and ‘open book’ manner of interacting. Unlike you, they are extremely reluctant to express their emotional experience or share the details of their inner life. At times you will wonder what, if anything, is going on inside, as they will stonewall attempts on your part to breach their calm, diplomatic demeanor.

How they see you – They will respond positively to your curiosity and will enjoy giving you as much information about a topic as you can absorb. They will enjoy your energy, sense of humor, and the stories you tell (if you are not careful they will allow you to take all the air time you want without revealing anything about themselves). They will be helped by your ability to put the emotional and relational aspects of life in a perspective that makes sense to them, but will be annoyed by your lack of precision, meticulousness, or thoroughness. They will be troubled by the incomplete nature of what they perceive as your intuitive and experiential approach to life.

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What **Adjustments** folks would like you to understand:

- Enough time is a necessity, not a luxury – that's how they ensure completeness and accuracy.
- They really enjoy being an information resource.
- Their decisions are purposeful and made with intent.
- They have much to offer if you ask them.
- Refining, perfecting, and the stability of routine are very satisfying.
- They love statistics and analysis.
- Compromise is far more important than win/lose.

What to expect in their initial presentation

People with the **Adjustments PS** experience the world as a complex and intricate interacting system of naturally occurring patterns. They will seek coaching when they experience something that they cannot fit neatly into their view of the world. This 'anomaly' will frequently arise in the area of interpersonal interaction, as they are often baffled by human behavior that they experience as rash, risky, or overly driven by emotions. They assume their lack of understanding is due to inadequate information and they want help gathering additional details to allow them to find new patterns and models. They will focus only on the immediate disconnect and reveal only what they need to in order to get what they deem to be the necessary information. While you also view things complexly, the level you focus on and the content of your view is vastly different from theirs. They build understanding by starting with the fine granularity and building an explanatory system, while you naturally see the interconnections happening in a broad spectrum. Your larger perspective can be helpful to them by forcing them to expand their view, but they will need to analyze your perspective to discover the details before they can use your input. Frustration can arise if you expect expansive insight and 'ah has', or excitement and demonstrative enthusiasm from them. They appreciate your input as a data source, but will find it very foreign and a bit perplexing. Keep in mind that they 'see' the world as a place of complexly interacting systems. You may find what you experience as their emotional reserve disturbing, but attempts to force them into feelings, expansive expression, or excitement will be met with calm, stoic non-responsiveness.

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Communication

How they will communicate with you – A person with the [Adjustments PS](#) will communicate to you in a way that is careful, accurate, refined, and in a calm, quiet manner. It will take time for them to explain to you the complexity and detail of their situation. If you try to summarize too quickly or show impatience they will shut down and let you do the talking. They need to describe not only the details but the backstory and how it all connects in an elegant and precise manner in order to believe they will be heard and understood. Their communication will be thorough and deliberate, highly informative, and richly detailed. They understand the world as a series of categories, processes, and procedures and their words will reveal this. If given the time, they will deliver a rich and highly nuanced description of their situation.

What they expect in communication from you – People with the [Adjustments PS](#) are patient and reflective listeners. They listen for complex and elegant explanations of natural events, so you will need to be careful about sharing broad, sweeping declarations. They are excellent listeners and will be more than happy to let you provide examples and stories (they are exceptional at being an appreciative audience). They are used to being quiet and letting someone else take the lion's share of air time, but the more you talk the quieter they will become, so you need to carefully monitor your natural desire to talk and explain. They will be amused and even entertained, but not particularly helped, by your dramatic and expansive communication style. They are looking for you to help them gain greater knowledge and detail about their situation in order that they can integrate that information.

Motivation

The core motivator for people with the [Adjustments PS](#) is the experience of being valuable. They seek to constantly discover more information about life in order to refine their systemic understanding. Information is their focus and they gather it diligently in order to create processes and procedures. Action plans developed to maximize your impact on their lives should include opportunities for these behaviors. They want to teach and want others to learn and to these ends have become excellent gatherers, collators, and categorizers of knowledge.

Change

People with the [Adjustments PS](#) are more likely to be observers than initiators of change. They abhor change for change sake and prefer careful progress that cautiously integrates refinements improvements. Your difficulty will be in getting them to understand that everything in life cannot be neatly fit into their systemic

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view of the world. By gently showing them that 'anomalies' don't have to fit perfectly into pre-existing groups, but can expand their overall knowledge base, you can increase their opportunity for new and creative outcomes.

Conflict

Because **Adjustments** is a one-off there are lots of opportunities for conflict between you. Just like **Goals**, your other one-off, it takes conscious intention from both parties for a relationship to flourish.

Probably the biggest danger for you will be the manner in which **Adjustments** will challenge on the details. Their natural desire to absorb information by building their knowledge from the ground up leads them to constantly seek details. In the absence of details, they will dismiss with an air that will feel condescending to you. When they do latch on to the details you have, they will seek more (because they are interested) and then assail you with their "deeper" knowledge, leaving you to feel that what you offered must have seemed shallow to them. This is actually a disconnect in the level of detail that is needed by each of you to take action. **Adjustments** folks see complexity everywhere and consequently need and process more information than you care to deal with. As a coach their demeanor can feel like a put down, a challenge, a "tsk, tsk" shaking of the head at your lack of depth. You need to remember that isn't usually what is intended (an angry **Adjustments** makes darn sure you feel inferior) and just take a breath and continue calmly to share the information you know they need.

On a fun note, be prepared that when you say something innocuous to just open a conversation like "how about those Rangers" you will receive a detailed analysis in return.

What **Adjustments** folks do when stressed:

- Become condescending.
- Get lost in the details, rules, and processes.
- Withdraw from interaction.
- Passively block taking action.
- Overwhelm with information.
- Accept no less than perfection.
- Refuse to accept accountability.

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What **Adjustments** folks need from a Coach:

- Acknowledge their knowledge.
- Help them learn by allowing them the time to process new ideas.
- Address the complexity they see; don't expect them to accept simple answers.
- Encourage them to share details about their concerns; don't ask them to share their feelings.
- "Good Enough" is not enough, help them find an acceptable compromise.
- Challenge them to work with some assumptions.