



Paul Beaudry presents

Intentional Collaboration

www.IntentionalCollaboration.com

How This Journey Got Started

Hello, my name is Paul Beaudry, founder of the Intentional Collaboration method. I'm also a teacher, coach, mentor, parent, and world-traveler jazz bassist.



Born in San Francisco, CA and raised in nearby South San Francisco, ever since I was a child I was a voracious learner with a huge appetite for knowledge. After going through such effort I would try to teach people whatever I learned in a way that was easier for them to understand than what I might have gone through to learn it.

I started playing music at a young age and started formally teaching music before I graduated from high school. Among those who did not study with me formally I would coach to help them reach greater heights and perform on the level that they were trying to reach. Basketball was my favorite sport but for additional fun and to be involved I also played baseball and soccer. Even though my baseball skills had something left to be desired I would win the Best Sportsmanship award every year for being the one teammate that people could turn to for encouragement.

In college at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo I studied Computer Science as a major with a minor in Music, paying for nearly all of my college expenses by either getting scholarships, working internships at IBM and Apple during the summers, or teaching and performing jazz during the school semesters in the Central Coast area of California. As a student of color (my mother is African-American, my father is French-Canadian, with different Native American tribes on both parents' sides) we had to help and mentor each other a lot to get through school and navigate job placements which at times felt impossible. We wanted as many of us to enroll, graduate, and work in the engineering and technology field as possible as we wanted to be a part of the dream of creating the future for humanity. There was a general sense that the technology field was inventing the future and as students of color we wanted to be a part of that movement.

Before I graduated with my Computer Science degree I was far more pulled by the direction of moving to New York City to be a world-travelling jazz musician than I was by working in nearby Silicon Valley for the rest of my working years. There was a lot of money to be made in Silicon Valley (boy, do I wish I had bought some Apple stock in 1995 when I was working there) but my heart wasn't in it. I got offers from many directions and could have started working in Silicon Valley right away but instead I had also applied for and received several scholarships from Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. So three months after I finished my Bachelor's in Computer Science in California

I moved to the East Coast and became a full-time music student at Berklee in Boston.

One of the things I've always loved the most about performing jazz music is it's acute sense of connection with the other musicians. There is a form to a song which everybody knows and from there we collectively create on a blank canvas of sound. We respond to each other in the moment. Many of these communications are non-verbal. Some are visual cues, but all happen in the exact moment that they are being created.

Jazz is the act of creation from the familiar (the song) to whatever is non-verbally negotiated spontaneously between the members of the ensemble. When played among masters it keeps both the musicians and audience hanging on the edge of their seats for what is going to happen next since neither the musicians themselves nor the audience knows in advance. The level of spontaneous co-creation requires a deep level of communication not only between the different musicians but within each individual musician within themselves in a constant inquiry of what it is that they are trying to create. Successful attempts at doing this result in some of the greatest life experiences you've ever had for both the performing band members and the audience. This is an example of the art of communication at its highest level.

I finished my degree at the Berklee College of Music in Composition with a minor in Film Scoring as composing classical music

and large-form jazz music was something I had always wanted to learn. While I was a student I made a living as a jazz performer which I expanded after graduation then moved to New York City in 2001. Since moving to NYC I've performed with many jazz legends (such as Clark Terry, Grady Tate, Frank Wess, Eddie Henderson), contemporary top jazz performers (including Roy Hargrove, Steve Turre, Wycliffe Gordon, Bruce Barth, Lewis Nash), released three recordings as a band leader and performed in over 35 countries all over North, South, and Central America, Europe, the Middle East and also a few countries in Africa and Asia.

A New Calling



Since 2007 among my activities as a world travelling jazz bassist is I have worked with the U.S. State Department as a US cultural jazz ambassador giving concerts and workshops to diverse audiences of all ages. During one tour in Guatemala in 2015 I had a new calling. I didn't feel like it was enough to come into the country only for one week, play and teach music for everyone, and then go back home or move on to the next country on the tour. I loved it yes, and was having unparalleled experiences doing so. Audiences were very happy and appreciative, the band would likely get multiple standing ovations, we

would be local celebrities, we'd see things that we would have never seen before and meet people we would have never known before from all cultures, languages, age ranges and backgrounds. But something was missing. I wanted to give something more.

I wanted the people to feel the way we felt when we were playing for their own personal and community well-being. I wanted them to have that sense of connection that we were having as a part of their daily on-going reality. Then I began to realize that I could actually use that information too. I was having that sense of connection during performance times but not necessarily as much off the bandstand during non-performance times.

I made a decision to set out and study the deeper levels of human communication not only for those I wanted to teach but for myself as well. This would turn out to be one of the biggest decisions of my life. The knowledge was about to turn inside-out many of my pre-conceived notions about myself, other people, how I came across to other people, how to communicate with others and how to connect with them.

This is an on-going journey but I have spent hundreds maybe thousands of hours studying information that I did not expect to discover and the result of the last several years of research is my 5-step method of Intentional Collaboration. Welcome to what I hope to be your next level of experience in human connection and communication.

The Call To Collaborate

It's wonderful that we have more ways to communicate with everyone world-wide than we ever have before in human history. Even 30 years ago it was unthinkable that the average person would be able to make a phone call from a personal electronic device from a beach in Hawaii to talk to a friend who is walking down a rural street in Morocco. If you told someone in the mid-1980s that by 2015 even ten-year-olds would be able to do that they would think that there is something wrong with you. Yet here we are.

We are not only making phone calls but using social media where anyone can share an images and video worldwide within seconds. We can form "tribes" and "communities" of like-minded people over the internet and share loads of information with people that we've never even met. We can go online and purchase trinkets that were made off the coast of Africa yesterday and have them ready for delivery within hours to Japan or any other country. Anything that you can think of whether it's an idea, product or service has access to worldwide exposure. Meaning even a 12-year-old can start a global business enterprise and in surprising numbers, that does happen. Being that the world is truly our oyster and any business or interaction we would like to start now has global reach, the reverse is also true. Those far outside your local area of influence can now influence the community you live in and your local market.

This means to be of value in our environment which is becoming more and more diverse we must learn to become better listeners to people's needs. Not only has our local environment become more diverse but because of our ability to interconnect world-wide our reach has become more diverse. It compels us to know where other people are coming from, how they think, make decisions, process information, and communicate in order to be in-sync with our environment. Those who do this additional step will be more valuable to their community (whether local or virtual) than those who do not.

We have seen that businesses who adapt to their customer's demands thrive and survive while those who do not change wither and die out as customers feel like they are not being listened to and would rather give their business to those who pay attention to them. We can no longer impose a business structure over an unwilling population and expect to succeed. The customer base will take their attention elsewhere - to those businesses who are willing to listen.

We've seen revolutions in cell phones, computers, home video, cars, consumption of music, online college courses, purchasing from websites as opposed to brick-and-mortar stores, the list goes on and on. We can all list a graveyard of businesses that refused to change when their customers changed (Blockbuster video, Blackberry phones, Commodore computers, Waldenbooks, Tower Records, even JCPennys, etc.). As businesses we must know what our value is as a business but

then listen to the customer as to the means of delivery and what constitutes as customer satisfaction as that does change with the times.

It becomes more important for the executive level of businesses to have voices which come from different thinking and cultural backgrounds. As you will see as we get deeper into Intentional Collaboration when a problem is presented it's more likely than not that any one person can only perceive 50% of the issue. It's normal when someone else presents an idea that is coming from the other 50% of our personal "blind spot" to say that the other person is wrong. From your perspective and thinking style, yes, they are wrong. But from their perspective they are correct.

When the idea is presented to the general public the general public will see right away all the "blind spots" of the product. These blind spots will come as a surprise to those who can't see from a point of view other than their own or who have chosen that the perspective which they did not understand is invalid and does not apply. Regardless the market will respond to the business which presents solutions that the customers can use and appreciate the way they see fit rather than the way the business owners can conceive of the use of their product. Eventually the market will tell the truth and the business will either thrive or die out depending on their ability to provide the customers with what they really want.

This means that diverse opinions which reflect the customer base must make their perspectives known at the planning stages of a product as well as it's roll-out, marketing, and implementation. The decision maker(s) must include voices that will be inevitable once the product hits the marketplace. The businesses who practice this will survive and be loved by their customers. The businesses who do not practice implementing the company leadership's blind spots from the planning stage onward will eventually die off as other companies who do listen and have their finger on the pulse will take over the market and likely push those who are unwilling out of business and out of the marketplace entirely. We've seen this happen many times over. Every year a new crop of businesses dominate their market and another crop dies out, some of which have been mainstays and pillars of the marketplace for decades.

To be valuable and to indeed survive we must a) be dedicated to the core service that we provide and b) listen to the marketplace for what their needs are and any changes in their needs along the way. This is a dynamic process as constant innovation in services change and customer's perspectives, expectations and needs also change. If we want to thrive now and in the future we must have a dual dedication to our core service and to our customers.

The 5-Step Intentional Collaboration Method

After years of individual research I tried to find a method that would bridge the gap between understanding people of diverse backgrounds and much to my surprise I found that similar and sometimes even more striking differences would occur between people of the same background, even in the same family. I did not expect to find this at all. I found that even in homogeneous settings there was much misunderstanding between people because our brains ARE wired differently. Any cultural or demographic differences could be addressed only after human communication blocks were considered. Cultural or demographic differences only took place in relation to values. But there is a step before values even takes place and that is basic perception, modes of thinking, and thinking patterns.



In structuring Intentional Collaboration I had to place human thinking perceptions and patterns first then address cultural and demographic considerations later. As a matter of fact often if people are on the same page on the human side differences between culture and demographics become far easier to navigate as there is a basis of mental understanding.

Also when studying the process of human beings understanding each other I ran into an even greater truth. In order to understand another person the one most important thing that supersedes any technique or method is you must **want** to understand, you must **intend** it. This is not a small detail.

We are so accustomed to hearing ourselves think. We have been listening to ourselves think for all long as we remember. As a matter of fact your very first memory of life is signaled by what you were thinking at the time. Even if you only remember the feelings. The feelings were the result of something that you were thinking.

For many people thinking is their perception of life itself. We are so used to our own patterns of thinking we believe there is no other valid way to think other than what our personal experience has been for as long as we can remember. Being that we are well-indoctrinated in our own way of thinking it actually takes courage to open ourselves up to consider the possibility that another person is thinking differently. And even more courage to actually be open to that other person's thinking.

Often we only do this by force, because we have to. Then we tolerate another's thinking patterns because it becomes the only way for us to get what we want or to get our needs met. We do so reluctantly and after we have achieved the minimum thinking flexibility effort

requirement to get what we needed we back off and go back to our own thinking shell.

I invite you on a journey to enter into this arrangement a little differently. Instead of trying to navigate through the minefield of differences between you and another, try the approach of being curious about the other. Why not? You already know how you think. You know it well. You know it so well it's almost inconceivable that anyone thinks in a different way. But they do. All the time. To come up with a superior solution to a problem it's extremely insightful to see the challenge from more than one point of view. Only then can you compare the perspectives and devise a path which accommodates more needs than the ones you originally started out with. And it may even do so more efficiently.

To be curious about how others' view or approach a situation would be very enlightening and would make you more knowledgeable about how others receive and perceive things. So the big question - are you willing to be open to another person's point of view?

Are you open to see things differently?

This is a big question. Often we communicate to validate our own thinking. Like an echo chamber that's reverberating in our own heads all the time. We only like and seek information that verifies what we're already thinking and what we already know or believe to be true. We do

this because it feels good and familiar to reinforce our own sense of personal boundaries and safety. But unfortunately it also means that in those moments we have cut off growth. And in reality outside of our cocoon of familiar concepts the world is a very diverse place and in a constant state of change.

Are you willing to have the courage or curiosity to find out that there is an equally valid but different way of experiencing that which you believe you are familiar and comfortable? This is important. So when you are getting ready to collaborate with someone are you trying to validate what you already know or are you open to discovering totally different answers or solutions to problems than what you already have in mind? And can you respect where these other answers are coming from?

So the first step of Intentional Collaboration is to find out whether or not you are open to collaborating or if you are just trying to validate your answers that you have already devised. If you seek validation only then stop right there. Do not bother collaborating. You are not going to listen. Save yourself and everyone's else effort and either live with your answer or choose the option to be open to another's input.

As we learn more techniques that we'll use to open up your ability to understand someone else remember that the number one most essential key of understanding someone else is - **intend** it. Lead with the heart and let the heart guide your intentional efforts and desire to

connect with those around you. This will also drive the mind to learn the techniques that make connecting more effortless.

If you work hard enough you can have zero techniques and bump yourself into and figure out a way to understand one another. And yet you can have all the techniques in the world and if you are not truly open to listen none of the techniques will work and the collaboration will either break down or be very one-sided. Techniques will get you to the destination faster, maybe even very easily, but nothing is more powerful than intending the outcome in advance. If necessity is the mother of invention then intending will get you where you want to go. However to collaborate quickly and skillfully knowledge will get you there much faster and far more painlessly.

It's like asking passers-by pedestrians for directions to find something as opposed to having a map. If you have a map you can go right to where you are trying to arrive. If you stop and ask everyone you will get there eventually if you are earnest enough. We've all had the experience of well-intended people leading us in totally the wrong direction then finding we've gone in a big circle nowhere near our destination. We have to start asking again from scratch hoping that the person we're interacting with actually knows where we're trying to go and eventually with good directions and luck we arrive at our desired destination.

In the world of business and communication speed is very important and can actually make a difference in the outcome of a situation. If there's a misunderstanding the world moves so fast that there may not be time to go back and clarify a communication. Great ideas can get dropped as they get lost in translation and there's no time to clarify unless it's presented properly at the beginning with expediency.

This method is designed for you to be able to facilitate communication among people with diverse styles with clarity and efficiency. Doing so allows you to keep pace with the marketplace or even better to be one or two steps ahead either by setting or anticipating trends in advance. With this in mind I present you the 5-Step method of Intentional Collaboration.

Method Outline



Step 1) Self-evaluation: Am I ready / intending to collaborate?

This step involves an evaluation which asks questions that aims to discover whether you are ready to be open to new information or a different perspective. If the score is high enough you may proceed to the next step. If not, you will need to re-evaluate your assumptions before proceeding through the system. If the purpose of your communication is to prove your point of view then you are not ready to collaborate. If you are grounded in your perspective yet you are open enough to potential greater possibilities or avoiding possible pitfalls about your current approach in advance you may proceed. Compelling data is given to showcase the power, conditions, and necessity of thinking about solutions from multiple perspectives.

Step 2) Understanding perception styles and modes

This is the core education component of the Intentional Collaboration system. People use different modes of perceiving and communicating information. There are also many thinking talents or “strengths” and several cognitive methods to pursue problem solving. There are four primary ways of analyzing information and many

personality types which express how that information is communicated. Cultural and demographic considerations are included as one's background will influence perception, thought process and communication of ideas. Often awareness of the different elements of this step alone are enough reach heightened levels of teamwork and synergy. However further mastery of each element will result in even greater and faster results.

Step 3) Identifying your own and other people's perception styles and modes

Taking the core component from step two you identify your own modes and styles of perceiving, processing, and communicating information. Then you consider your team. As an individual or group exercise you identify your team member's methods of perceiving, processing, and communicating. Through this method you can visually see and identify problem areas as well as synergistic areas between team members not yet explored.

Step 4) Altering your perception and communication to meet others' needs

Knowing what your team needs to understand you, you can change your methods of communication as well as be more open to their input than you had been previously. Your team can do the same in how they work with you and with each other. The results of this step

lead to higher levels of teamwork, productivity, results and loyalty among team members. As people feel more listened to and valued they are more likely to work for and be loyal to the team. Their ideas are welcomed and they feel like they are making a difference. There's one last step.

Step 5) Evaluating feedback

Nobody is perfect. When there are more sides of a problem or a solution being considered the end results are often better or significantly better. But there will always be room for improvement. Those groups who are dedicated to improvement will achieve their results and goals faster than others. As the workplace and the world is dynamic the continuing process of improvement will be dynamic as well to meet the changing environment of the group both internally and externally. Steps two through five will need to be refined to continually meet group goals.

That's the overall layout of the system but as you know the power is in actually doing the steps. I'm going to take this opportunity to go through Step One and a select portion of Step Two right here in this ebook.

Jumping into Step One - Am I ready to collaborate?

This portion is a self-test. It's not completely about being right or wrong as much as to raise awareness about where you are at right now. We grow up with so many assumptions and rules we've had to adjust to that we



often don't see or appreciate that other people are operating by a different set of rules and also a different approach to thinking. Since we've been listening to our own self-talk for as long as our memory can go back we assume that our own thinking and perception is the only correct way of doing so. True, the thinking that we have been using is how we got to where we are at now. However that same thinking can also be what's holding us back from getting better results. Remember that this is also true of everyone else. They have been using *their* thinking to get where *they* are at now. And if they're open they might benefit from learning one or two things from you.

When I did an extensive study of world cultures I found a nugget of truth which should be obvious but we don't often think about it in the moment. Every culture with it's own unique set of rules and societal behaviors developed exactly the way it had to in order to survive the last several thousand years of wars, natural disasters, weather patterns,

availability of natural resources, unique innovations, geography, foreign invaders, alliances with other cultures, etc. When you meet someone of another culture their culture is a survivor of all of those events going back thousands of years. Since no two groups of people had to deal with exactly the same set of circumstances no two groups of people developed, survived, and thrived in exactly the same way. The path to surviving and thriving will be different based on the circumstances that they have come from. To impose your point of view on someone else coming from a different situation is to not take into account their entire history leading up to their encounter with you, not to mention special personal or family circumstances which could drive their thinking and decision-making as well.

Self Evaluation

Use this quiz as a benchmark by taking it now and then take it again after trying some Intentional Collaboration methods to measure how you have expanded your effectiveness with others.

Respond to the following statements on a scale of 0-10 (0 = Not at all; 10 = great)

==--==

1. The ease with which I contribute ideas in meetings
2. The frequency with which I share my talents and resources with other team members
3. The frequency with which other members offer their talents and resources to me and to each another
4. From my perspective, the opportunity for a minority opinion in team meetings to be considered and accepted
5. The frequency with which I think cross-functionally (input from different disciplines - marketing, HR, finance, operations, etc.)
6. The options for different participation styles I create in meetings - visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.
7. My knowledge of exactly which talents and resources each person brings to the team and how to leverage them fully for the group
8. My effectiveness with challenging clients/customers/co-workers
9. My ability to get people to act together
10. My ability to get people to think together

11. Most team members feel energized after team / group meetings
12. I feel I understand how other team members' perceive problems
13. I know how other members of my team figure out challenges
14. The group often comes up with solutions better than what I can do on my own
15. I present information to others based on their point of view
16. I am comfortable with my colleagues' reasoning as to how they arrive at a suggestion or solution

==--==

Tally up your score. There are no right or wrong responses. This is only where your understanding is at now.

0-40: You have likely come from a background that is closed to new ideas in how you view yourself and others. You and the group of people you grew up with have probably had to defend your or your group's point of view often. Good news, you are about to experience a seismic shift in how you relate to other people by the time you reach the end of this program!

41-80: You've had some experience trying to see a problem from another's perspective. You are about to learn some powerful tools that will take you beyond empathy to understanding and following how other people perceive data, understand it, process it, communicate their response and how they trust that you are open to what they are saying. By going through this information you are about to become twice as valuable to your group than you are right now!

81-120: You are more flexible than most but you need some more information that will be useful in bringing out the best in your team and understanding your team members. You can build on your current skills and become a better team member and leader!

121-160: You have a sense that people communicate, understand, learn, and trust in different ways. You've done well adjusting your communication and comprehension of others depending on who you are talking to. You are ready to further refine your collaboration skills!

I promise if you try with earnest to use and apply the Intentional Collaboration methods then compare the result to the self-test again in a few months your score will escalate. This is only like a journal to see where you started then to see how much progress you made after learning more information and trying some new effective approaches that you may not have done before.

With your score in mind let's dive in to just one of the Intentional Collaboration methods which opens you up to understanding other people and for them to understand you.

A Select Technique From Step Two: Focused/Sorting/Open Thinking Modes



When I first started putting the system of Intentional Collaboration together I thought for certain that differences in cultural, societal and family background would be the primary cause for miscommunication

between people. I found actually that there were many steps in whether or not the brain was even being open to information which take place before one can even evaluate whether or not a piece of incoming information sits well with one's cultural programming or experience. There's a step that takes place even before you can accept the information before you decide to filter it out or disagree with it or not.

At any given time during your waking day brain is operating in one of three different modes: focused, sorting, or open.

In **focused** attention mode the brain focuses on one piece of information at a time. Either accepting it as a solution or evaluating it to see how it works against the way you think, how that idea has worked with your own past experiences or what you would like to see in your future experiences. Regardless of whether the idea is accepted, rejected or suggestions are thought of to modify the idea in this thinking mode there is only one idea being considered.

In **sorting** attention mode the brain is considering one of several options. The brain is comparing not only personal familiarity but also the pros and cons of the approach and how easy it would be to implement. The brain will quickly go back and forth between one idea and another it see how it feels given all the important factors. The brain will also include whether the level of required personal involvement or desired outcome is desirable or achievable.

In **open** attention mode the brain is involved in one of two things. Either it's brainstorming, looking for and imagining all the different possibilities, or it's entirely tuned out of the matter. In either case the brain is far from either focused or sorting as in this mode the imagination is running the show. People are thinking about things conceptually, abstractly and trying not to get too focused on any details at all. Often it's of great value for decision-making to start with this phase before going into sorting which then gets you closer to focus.

Sounds good, so what's the problem here? We should all move from open to sorting to focused unless we already know a situation well and we can either start with sorting or focused if we already know the correct actions in advance. What you may not know is different bodily senses will trigger different thinking modes. After much research it seems with some people a [visual](#) stimulus will trigger focus. With others a visual stimulus will trigger either sorting or open. The same goes for [auditory](#) stimulus. Auditory in some can trigger focus and in others either sorting or open. The same holds true also with [Kinesthetic](#) (or feeling).

So imagine you have a room full of people or a team. You have presented your final solution in a visual manner. You have just lost two-thirds of the room. By focusing on your visual presentation two-thirds of the room just went into sorting or open modes. They have just moved into confusion or they are lost completely and **THEY DON'T KNOW WHY**. Nor do you.

So you decide to be sophisticated and incorporate audio and kinesthetic into your presentation as many of us have learned to do over the years particularly in the realms of education. When many of us were first introduced to this kind of [VAK \(Visual-Audio-Kinesthetic\)](#) system only focused attention was given any value. You probably didn't learn about sorting or open attention. While only paying attention to focus may be wonderful in order to present something when we are working as a team we need to figure out how to work in sorting and open

attention to create dialogue and discuss ideas. The ideas will need to flow in BOTH directions between you and the group.

OK, so now you've spruced up your presentation to include VAK and everyone has a chance to focus on your work. Now a colleague has a question. This is where it becomes very useful to know your colleague's VAK pattern and for your colleague to know yours. The question they ask will lead the answer to be a direct solution (focus), offer a choice of solutions (sorting), or a conceptualization to see the big picture as opposed to other big pictures (open). Can you imagine how much more of an effective communicator you will be if you can answer them in a way that their brain can accept?

If you are teaching in a classroom setting it is good enough to teach in such a way that you incorporate VAK in your presentation because the information is flowing one way. When you are working as a team, even as a duo, your level of effectiveness will skyrocket when you know how your partner(s) think. In this setting it will be of great value to know the VAK pattern of each individual in the room.

In my personal experience, I'm going to take it one step further. If you know your own VAK pattern you can be more effective when working individually. When you are working solo you can do what you need to do to stimulate yourself into focus so you can complete tasks faster which have an immediate deadline. You can stimulate yourself into sorting when you have to make big decisions, and you can stimulate

yourself into open when you need to brainstorm new ideas or consider taking a project in a whole different direction. Procrastination is often the direct result of stimulating yourself into one mode than trying to think in another. It's like traffic gridlock and the brain shuts down because it's getting two different signals and your effectiveness drops dramatically.

So let's go into what I mean by the VAK system. "V" stands for **visual** and is triggered by experiences like reading, writing, or looking at something. "A" stands for **audio** and is triggered by talking and listening. "K" stands for **kinesthetic** and is triggered by physical movement, touching and feeling. I had first heard of this system decades ago but what I didn't know until my recent research is that each of these stimuli is a catalyst for a thinking attention mode. Depending on what kind of person you are a stimulus can put you into focused attention, sorting attention or open attention.

For those who follow brain wave states **focused** attention produces more beta brain waves where thoughts are certain, like solid objects. This is great for getting down into the details of things like figuring out specifics, scheduling or meeting specific deadlines, and accomplishing tasks. **Sorting** attention produces more alpha brain waves which puts you in a mental state which is sort like water. Thoughts are wondering back and forth and you are thinking a little deeper, considering possibilities and comparing to other outcomes. It's not uncommon to have a certain level of confusion in the sorting state as

the brain is considering several options and isn't committing to any particular one at this point. In **open** attention the brain produces more theta brain waves and a good analogy would be air. You are looking for a big picture or considering or dreaming the general direction of something. All possibilities are equal in this state. However you can also be very easily distracted and likely to forget details. If this state is used properly the lack of attention to detail is fine because no course of action has been committed to and you wouldn't want to be thinking about details or even comparing two options at this stage.

What this means in terms of working together is that there are six different types of people not just three. When we spell out the abbreviation for the thinking pattern type we start with the stimulus for focused, then sorting, then open. For example a VAK person is going to be someone who goes into focused attention when stimulated visually, sorting attention when stimulated by sound, and open attention when stimulated by feel or touch.

Here's a chart:

type	focused (beta)	sorting (alpha)	open (theta)
VAK	visual	audio	kinesthetic
VKA	visual	kinesthetic	audio
AVK	audio	visual	kinesthetic
AKV	audio	kinesthetic	visual
KVA	kinesthetic	visual	audio
KAV	kinesthetic	audio	visual

So how do you know which one you are and how do you pick it out in others?

Here's some cues:

Focused Attention

Visually focused:

- steady eye contact
- likes visual order, lists, and color-coding; visual precision
- lots of note-taking
- color coordinated and well dressed
- uses phrases "See you later", "looks good", "show me"
- gives visual descriptions of experiences

Auditory focused:

- speaks confidently and has extensive vocabulary
- likes precision in language
- great verbal recall, little note-taking
- connects first with words
- uses auditory phrases like "talk to you later", "Let's hear the points!"

Kinesthetic (hands-on) focused:

- prefers to do things with people rather than talk
- likes to make physical contact - handshake, pat on the back, sit close
- well coordinated with their body
- prefers to be in motion, standing, jiggling, playing with an object
- recalls action and physical movements easily
- organizes by piles
- uses kinesthetic language "let's do it", "hard to grasp", "get a handle"

Sorting attention

Visual sorting:

- writing about, diagramming, or seeing options helps them clarify choices
- can hold the overview and details simultaneously when writing, mapping, and editing; can make 3D images with eyes open and manipulate image to view from all angles
- often experiments with personal image in clothes, interests, handwriting
- can use images to express double meanings and to hold concepts

Auditory sorting:

- talking out loud helps get clear on personal thinking, opinions, beliefs
- may talk a lot
- may sound confusing to others when beginning to respond, getting clearer as they talk it out
- often feels confused by too much conflicting inner self-talk
- likes wordplay, uses verbal metaphors to express themselves
- can understand and agree with both sides of a story, argument, and situation. Can talk and listen simultaneously prefers overlapping conversations, interruptions are OK
- speaking has "ums" and "uhs", reflecting confusion, making space for shifts in thinking
- verbal clarity may come and go, depending on whether they are talking about what they see or what they feel/do

Kinesthetic sorting:

- movement helps process emotions and sort possible actions steps; can be fidgety
- may need to experience options and notice how they feel in order to choose; often feels confused by different emotions simultaneously
- influenced emotionally and energetically by what they see and hear; may have difficulty distinguishing own feelings from others'

Open attention

Visually open:

- looks away frequently, can be eye-shy
- little or no note-taking; may not respond to emails or responds with just a few words
- dresses for comfort rather than appearance
- prefers talking or doing to writing
- can space out if looking at lots of visual details or long emails

Auditory open:

- may take longer to speak, pauses between thoughts
- prefers to listen, then asks questions to engage everyone
- may talk in circles or use creative words
- easily distracted by extraneous noises
- can space out listening to long verbal explanations

Kinesthetic open:

- can sit easily for long periods of time
- shy about touch
- rarely talks about action
- physically still
- can be awkward physically
- private about feelings

Everyday examples

The way this plays out in terms of close relationships is you will drive yourself crazy if you are offended if your partner doesn't think using the same brain pattern as you. In reality if they have a different thinking pattern than you, it's not possible for



them to respond in the way that you are comfortable. The VAK method allows you to notice this and allow them the space to respond to you in a way that they are comfortable. In this way you'll also know in advance in which form you'll be getting your response.

For example to discuss a problem to get to a specific solution (focus) a **visual** person will want to discuss face-to-face or show you something. An **audio** person will want to talk over the phone and is comfortable getting to a solution exclusively by talking it all out down to the very fine detail maybe even without taking any notes. A **kinesthetic** person needs more time to gather their thoughts, is slow in their responses (sometimes long pauses) and since they don't think on their feet as fast as the others, they'll prefer to respond by writing a letter, a text or an email once they've had a chance to think about it.

Another useful tip is the differences in thinking environments.

Great focused thinking office environments

for a **visually** focused person:

- prefers to write a report than to give an oral presentation or make a model
- organizes in lists
- impeccable office
- prefers to discuss using eye contact in person or through video
- facial expressions are important in communication
- likes visual references and books, loves learning by video
- enjoys and is entertained by TV and movies more than most
- critical of how things look

for an **audio** focused person:

- prefers verbal reports to visual presentations or making a model
- great at giving verbal descriptions of something and discussing ideas
- very straightforward in how they communicate
- good at telling jokes or arguments; tone of voice also important
- likes to resolve problems over the phone rather than by email
- prefers audiobooks to hardcopy books if possible
- can comfortably sit through long conversations
- can think on their feet and talk to large groups without much preparation
- critical of how things are said

for a **kinesthetic** focused person:

- prefers to share and experience or make a model as a presentation
- organizes in piles
- some movement going on or soft music in the background
- can focus in public spaces
- holding a ball or object in one hand while thinking increases focus
- connects with things by using the hands
- can use a stand-up desk or think while walking or on an exercise machine
- sitting for long periods of time is torture and can evoke unsettling emotions
- critical of how things are done

This is just the beginning

The VAK communication method is only **one** aspect of Intentional Collaboration. I wanted to give you one method in this ebook right away for you to start noticing what kind of person you are and to try to figure out what are the thinking patterns of the people you work with the most. After getting really good you can begin to correctly pinpoint which mode works best to work with someone after only a few interactions or conversations with them. But for today try to figure out which one you fit in. Then proceed one person at a time so that you have a deeper understanding of those you interact with the most.

Knowing how people perceive and communicate information back to you clarifies so many potential problems and aggravations that happen everyday. This also gives you a clue as to how you operate and gives you a chance to figure out how to change your own gears from focused to sorting to open and back. If you have an office space that is designed in such a way that you are always in open mode you will find yourself constantly distracted and to get into sorting or focused you will have to change your environment.

If you are about to interact with a colleague and think you've figured out what thinking pattern they use try interacting with them in the pattern they'll need to accept what you are saying. Approach them in a way that triggers focus in them when you need a specific answer.

But if you are presenting a dilemma trigger a sorting stimulus. And you are looking for a big picture or brainstorming session approach them in a way that triggers their open mode. Try doing this and see what different results you get as opposed to what you may have been doing in the past. You may have expected them to give you a result that violates their brain pattern. When you change your expectations to accommodate how they think, what happens?

The next steps of Intentional Collaboration go into thinking talents and the different cognitive models people intuitively use to pursue problem solving and analyzing information. Cultural and demographic differences are included at the very end as they will definitely influence and color your choices and even what you consider to be right or wrong. Those factors usually come **after** the brain has perceived the raw information and processed it in a way that makes sense according to how your own brain is wired.

The ultimate goal is to not only bring harmony among your thinking team, but also to produce better results for the people who will be benefitting from the work of your team. Including the different points of view from the planning stages of an idea and onward throughout rollout will put you one or several steps ahead of those who stay in their comfort zones. The results you produce will inevitably be called to question when you present your work to the world at large. In those moments you want to shine! If you don't see your own blind spots the

rest of the world will and that will shape the overall success of your work.

I hope you have enjoyed this ebook and check back to www.IntentionalCollaboration.com for more updates and information. Start trying the VAK method today and see if you can transform a current relationship this week!

Thanks and enjoy!

Paul Beaudry
CEO, coach, speaker

(646) 389-5299
paul@paulbeaudry.com

www.IntentionalCollaboration.com

