

# The Cognitive Styles Lens: Deeper Type Clarification, Stronger Relationships, Richer Careers & Clearer Coaching

Article by Christopher L. Montoya, M.A.

About five years ago I was taking a certification program with Linda V. Berens, Ph.D. at her office in Huntington Beach, California. At a break, I went up to Linda and asked why there were things that the four Essential Motivators (a.k.a. Temperament) have in common, and the same for Interaction Styles but why not four cognitive styles instead of the 8 processes. Gently, she said that a four-type style model wasn't developed yet, but we could work on it if I was interested. I think I took her too literally, and after a few more conversations I was off working on looking for patterns.



## Finding The Cognitive Styles

I struggled for six months to find common themes. I had plastered a giant white poster paper on the walls of my office and began charting observations of the things in common those with supposedly opposite type codes seemed to share upon observing their behaviors.

At first, I was tripped up by the Essential Motivator patterns because it seemed that the opposites were Essential Motivator Patterns (a.k.a. Temperament) look-a-likes or blends in many ways, even if the topics or content they focused on was different. But I rigorously kept removing my observations that had those Temperament flavors because it wasn't cognition.

Next, I noticed most profoundly the way that those with different cognitive 'styles' used mental energy and how it was expressed in their speech. There were four distinct ways the styles are communicated in their language that fulfilled an intention I couldn't yet articulate.

Soon, I realized that the only way to understand our cognition is through speech. Thinking produces language. Cognition forms speech patterns and preferences, and that's where I found the access to uncovering the four Cognitive Intentions.

## Researching the Cognitive Styles

After looking at deep interviews from four people of each of the 16 type patterns, I mined the information for things the type opposites had in common. What emerged as likely shared patterns were the types that share the same four cognitive processes as primary processes.<sup>i</sup> For example, STJ and NFP share Si and Ne perceiving processes and Te and Fi judging processes.

Linda had previously described these pairings as tandem processes because in these type codes Si and Ne seem to be working in tandem, not separately.<sup>ii</sup> After dissecting the information into cards that contained one complete thought or idea from those interviews I emerged with over 2000 individual cards I needed to sort to find themes that were in common. That process took me a year of sorting and classifying.

Linda told me many times that in order to make sense of the different cognitive styles; she needed to ‘crawl inside’ of the pattern to see if the information fit from the vantage point of each of the 16 types. I never really knew that experience until I sorted and classified those individual cards. I became intimately acquainted with each of the 16 types and grew to have a deep respect and appreciation for sensing what it might be like to live in each of their worlds. Anyone who has worked this thoroughly with the different types in my opinion receives a Ph.D. in psychological type.

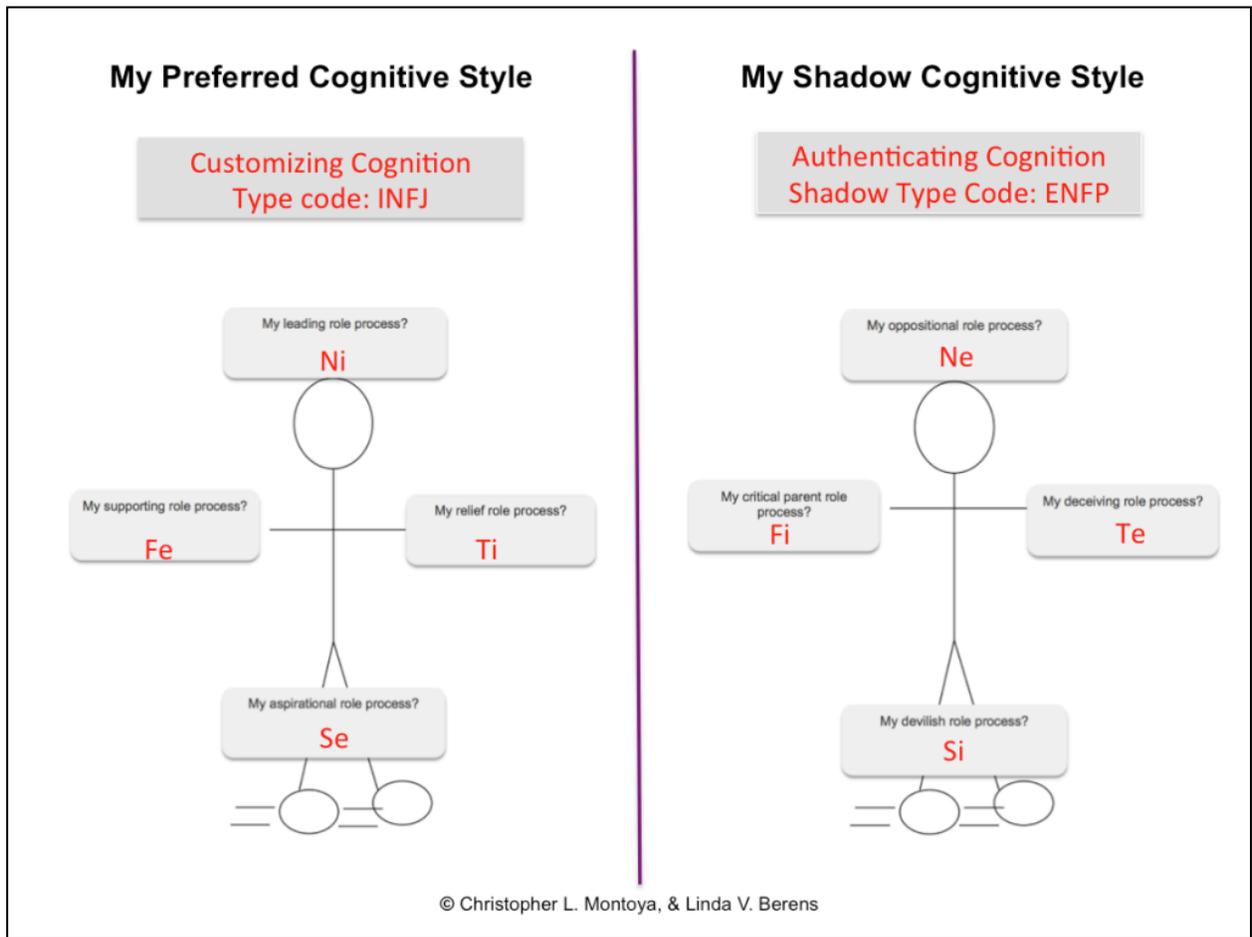
## The Essence of the Cognitive Styles

The next step was to apply Linda’s criteria for a type model and look for a main driver and talents. Soon, a clear picture began to come into view that provided a pattern for each. Now the most intriguing aspect of finding these themes is that it’s not the content of our speaking that reveals the cognitive style, but rather the intention of what we are saying that drives our cognition and reveals a style pattern.

It is for this reason that while we can begin by identifying the 8 cognitive processes, trying to spot the Cognitive Style and its Intention means we need to be clear on how we prefer to think and how it varies from how those with other Cognitive Intentions prefer to think. Most people don’t really know the reoccurring patterns of how they think. They know what they think about (the content), but they are unaware of the intentional patterns of thinking. Communication is at the heart of Cognitive Styles.

Recently, during a Human Agility Mapping Certification Training where I was describing the Cognitive Styles lens, one participant exclaimed toward the end of the learning module, “Why didn’t you say that the Cognitive Styles were the overall stick figure Linda drew for the preferred processes? Now that I see that, I realize I have a shadow style, not just shadow processes, right?” I agreed.

The profound implication is that we do have some flexibility with the other styles besides our own. Where we share some cognitive tandem processes it can be easier to flex to that style temporarily. The style where the other person has four primary processes that are our four shadow processes means that the opposite Cognitive Style is our shadow style and it can be very hard to go there for long and remain positive.



Knowing this information as a coach, practitioner or type enthusiast is important to have greater facility and development about meeting your own needs and the needs of others as well as dealing with conflict. The potential this has to foster and forge better communication and respect for others is limitless.

#### Four Cognitive Styles and Their Intentions

The language I'm using to describe the four styles and intentions is used to illustrate cognition and knowledge such as attention, memory, judgment, evaluation, reasoning, computation, problem solving, decision making, comprehension and production of language. This language might seem conceptually abstract at first, but over time you can begin to see that we are trying to get at the cognition *patterns* the four Styles used to observe and evaluate the world around them. Then the language enables you to see the patterns.

	<b>Enhancing™ (SFJ-NTP)</b>	<b>Customizing™ (STP-NFJ)</b>
Intention:	Looking for Inconsistencies	Looking for Reciprocities
Value:	Drive for Accuracy	Drive for Equality
Seeking:	What's best about the world based on standards	What's vital about the world based on differences
Contribution:	Deep Integration	Deep Simplification
Filter:	Comparisons	Objectives
Desires:	Refinement	Movement
Shadow Style:	Dark Orchestrating™	Dark Authenticating™
	<b>Authenticating™ (STJ-NFP)</b>	<b>Orchestrating™ (SFP-NTJ)</b>
Intention:	Looking for Evaluations	Looking for Workabilities
Value:	Drive for Ethics	Drive for Credibility
Seeking:	What's right about the world based on values	What's effective about the world based on utility
Contribution:	Deep Investigation	Deep Negotiation
Filter:	Rightness	Persuasiveness
Desires:	Integrity	Utilization
Shadow Style:	Dark Customizing™	Dark Enhancing™

Here are descriptions of the four Cognitive Styles:

**The Enhancing Style** uses the tandems (Si-Ne) and (Ti-Fe) and have SFJ & NTP in their type codes.

It's about looking at the world to find information about what's best about it, where information comparisons exist between new information and what is already known.

**The Enhancing Intention** is about discovering inconsistencies based on the natural essence of something and what finding makes it more whole, revealing its excellence and making it worthy of attention. Ultimately, it's about refining standard processes based on what is consistent and compatible about that information.

**Enhancing Style examples** might include:

- The HR Director who is good at integrating multiple points of view during a mediation based on a model of effective mediation. Then she weeds out conflicting or unimportant data to come to a resolution that accounts for all parties' input, needs and desires.
- The Scientist who can weigh scientific data and the latest research findings against a hypothesis to see what might work and what might not work. Then finalizing and concluding the research into application while staying open for more information.

- The prep cook at a restaurant who can take standard recipes and refine them for simple, amazing flavor combinations and can delicately design it for pairing with wine flavors. Next, the cook creates an elegant presentation for guests to enjoy.

These examples are enhancing in alignment with the information that will likely produce consistency for best results.

**The Customizing Style** uses the tandems (Se-Ni) and (Ti-Fe) and have STP & NFJ in their type codes.

It's about looking at the world to find information that's vital, where information gaps exist between desired information and available information.

**The Customizing Intention** is about discovering reciprocities regarding the desired direction of movement, revealing what's unique and based on a shared vision or ideal purpose. Ultimately, it's about designing simply tailored approaches based on what is targeted and useful about that information.

**Customizing Style examples** might include:

- The career coach who can synthesize the client's goals and needs and honoring the uniqueness of the client. Then the coach uses a coaching process to focus the key dialogue and actions the client needs to move toward a shared vision of success.
- The executive project manager who can take in information from her multiple stakeholders, synthesize an overarching scope of work, and get it adopted. Then meets individually with team players to address needs, has update meetings, and keep projects moving forward.
- The custom auto designer, who can discover and synthesize the car owner's personalized wishes. Then they create a plan for the car and transform it into a functional, yet unique vehicle that reflects the car owner's persona and maintains the integrity of the vehicle.

These examples are customizing based on the information that forms the shared objectives of others and themselves and will likely produce differentiation.

**The Orchestrating Style** uses the tandems (Se-Ni) and (Te-Fi) and have SFP and NTJ in their type codes.

It's about looking at the world to find what information will efficiently work, where information informs priorities between available information and what is quickly achievable.

**The Orchestrating Intention** is about discovering workabilities with what's most effective, influential, and expedient, based on coordinated and controlled action. Ultimately, it's about negotiating desired results based on what is persuasive and credible about that information.

**Orchestrating Style examples** might include:

- The corporate CEO who can negotiate with a client and find a new product's leverage points. Then they can acquire multiple teams of people coordinated to take rapid action to create, test, market and launch the product.
- The librarian who meets with multiple people individually in the library to ensure the work keeps moving forward, the computers are maintained, and ensuring customers can find what they need. Then the librarian probes to understand staff workloads, stays informed from all areas of the library and informs others to keep things running smoothly for customers and staff.
- The construction welder who can take a current project, influence support from others in clever ways, and find available resources that will work on the project even if they're limited. Then can coordinate the team to get more work done collectively than alone and reach the goal.

These examples are orchestrating in alignment with the information that is considered credible for goal efficiency.

**The Authenticating Style** uses the tandems (Si-Ne) and (Te-Fi) and have STJ and NFP in their type codes.

It's about looking at the world to find what information will morally guide actions, where information highlights what is most importantly valued between agreed-upon information being honored and information that is being acted on.

**The Authenticating Intention** is about discovering evaluations regarding what's most important, available, and accurate, based on supporting and preserving actions. Ultimately, it's about investigating appropriate actions based on what is determined to be right about that information.

**Authenticating Style examples** might include:

- The deep-sea diver who instructs people on proper tank and airflow procedures at precise depths with protocols for safety. Then the diver ensures student accuracy against those precise standards at various ocean depths to enjoy the riches of the natural ocean.
- The banking consultant who helps people understand the importance of preserving their resources and helps them reach their financial goals through savings and

resource-maximizing vehicles, while ensuring the integrity of accounting for the financial deposits and withdrawals each day.

- The celebrity musician who deals with cultural inequities in the music, and is able to articulate important and accurate information about those inequities when being interviewed by the media. Then creating music projects with other like artists who genuinely support the promotion of minority talent and cultural equality.

These examples are authenticating against the information that is considered right for preserving material and human resources.

The following graphic shows how the tandems line up with the different type codes and then establish some other things in common.

	<b>Awareness Tandem</b> Si - Ne	<b>Awareness Tandem</b> Se - Ni
<b>Assessments Tandem</b> Ti - Fe	<b>Enhancing™</b> <u>ISFJ</u> <u>ESFJ</u> <u>INTP</u> <u>ENTP</u>	<b>Customizing™</b> <u>ISTP</u> <u>ESTP</u> <u>INFJ</u> <u>ENFJ</u>
<b>Assessments Tandem</b> Te - Fi	<b>Authenticating™</b> <u>ISTJ</u> <u>ESTJ</u> <u>INFP</u> <u>ENFP</u>	<b>Orchestrating™</b> <u>ISFP</u> <u>ESFP</u> <u>INTJ</u> <u>ENTJ</u>

### Practitioner Applications with Cognitive Styles

There are three immediate applications I found when we uncovered Cognitive Styles that have helped others understand themselves deeply and help others in their communities.

First, as a practitioner or individual, one can use Cognitive Styles to help clients clarify their best-fit type. Using this lens focused on our mental intentions for the work we do, the relationships we seek, and ways to access deep understanding about the world around us can reveal a misalignment if the Essential Motivator (a.k.a. Temperament) and Interaction Style patterns don't align with the Cognitive Style. This powerful trifecta combination opens up access to what's possible with three

powerful lenses of preferences for ourselves. It also provides clues for deeper shifting of our perspectives on how we see others and how we frame our work and communication with them.

Next, there is the application for coaching others. Since this lens is about communication and getting our mental intentions met, helping people with the goals they find important in their life is a perfect way to apply Cognitive Styles. For example, working with someone who has an Enhancing Cognitive Style means helping them explore and integrate new information. This information could be based on cases where it has worked for others and finding ways to articulate that what fits their current paradigm and will help them achieve greater capacity. In contrast, helping someone with an Orchestrating Cognitive Style understand new information by articulating what will help them become more efficient with achieving their sought goals will be more effective for their style.

The third application I found was Career Development. When a person understands their mental intention and the quest that it creates in their life, they can streamline expressing what they are good at doing with laser focus. When they can name their gifts and appreciate the gifts that others bring to the work world there's more agility with the work and with each other. Having the language of the patterns helps people understand some of their deepest purpose-drivers around work and their core contributions on teams or projects.

The work we have developed around Cognitive Styles is continuing to challenge what we know about type—it is expansive, broader and more inclusive than we once thought. If you want to deepen your consulting, coaching or training experience, explore the new Cognitive Styles type lens.

I'd love to hear from you about how this resonates with you as you begin to notice the Cognitive Style themes in yourself and others. You can reach me at [chris@chrismontoya.com](mailto:chris@chrismontoya.com).

To access the previous Cognitive Styles and Teamwork article published in the Bulletin of Psychological Type, Vol. 36, No. 4, Winter 2013, please visit <http://chrismontoya.net/articles>

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Cognitive Styles was co-developed by Linda V. Berens, Ph.D. and Christopher L. Montoya, M.A. For more information about Cognitive Styles, visit <http://lindaberens.com/articles-to-download/>

For information about Chris Montoya, visit <http://chrismontoya.net/about>

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Chris has published through APTI and presented at APTI's International Conference and the EAPT Conference about Cognitive Styles with co-author Dr. Linda V. Berens, Type Industry Expert.



Chris' expertise is in organizational learning, psychological type, effective management practices, integrated career models, and relationship skills.

In his career, Chris has trained thousands of employees and customers for Linda Berens Institute, Bernalillo County Government, Valencia County Detention, the Albuquerque Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Conergy Inc., Gap Inc., CB Richard Ellis, and Highfiber Internet Network.

Most recently, he built a training organization from the ground up as a Human Resources Training Manager in a 2700-person organization and is creating an online career clarity course using type.

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<sup>i</sup> Based on John Beebe's groundbreaking eight function/archetype model and Dario Nardi's neuroscience research. Berens, Linda V. and Nardi, Dario. Understanding Yourself and Others, An Introduction to the Personality Type Code. Radiance House, Los Angeles, 2004.

<sup>ii</sup> The tandem processes are described in two articles previously published in the Bulletin of Psychological Type, Vol. 26, No. 4, Fall 2003 and Vol. 27, No. 1 Winter 2003.2004, and also available at <http://lindaberens.com/articles-to-download/>