



HELPING CHURCH LEADERS MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

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“LEADING TO LEARN, LEARNING TO LEAD”

Leaders are life long learners and one of the most powerful things a leader can do is to lead others within their organization to learn. Learning is more than head knowledge; it must also help people learn and apply new skills. Understanding how different people learn is an important skill for leaders in this new world of teams and shared ministry. There are four primary “gateways” the mind uses to obtain information for thinking and learning. While everyone learns through all four of these “gateways”, we have a strong preference for one or perhaps two. Here are the four styles, in no particular order, according to the Consulting Resource Group, (telephone 604-852-0566 or e-mail at crgi@msn.com).

Visual Learners acquire information through the eye gate. They prefer to read books, newspapers and magazines and they like viewing information over the TV by watching live programs or pretaped videos. They like watching others work and perform so they can see how things are done. They prefer to work with visual aids such as photographs, computer screens, charts, graphs and handouts. They like seeing pictures, paintings and movies and are often focused on how information is organized and presented, preferring it to be logical and sequential.

Auditory Learners acquire information through the ear gate. They prefer to listen to others talk in person and through the radio, TV and tapes. They like music and are good at remembering lyrics and specific sounds. They are also good at remembering names and details because they are naturally good listeners who focus on others when they are talking. They often prefer to hear more than one opinion before deciding on something and learn best when they can hear key points repeated several times.

Experiential Learners acquire information through the kinesthetic or “moving, touching” gate. They prefer to touch things as they are learning about them. They are very people-oriented and like learning with groups of people. They want to be allowed to be active while learning. This means they especially like to talk and move their hands and legs during the learning process. They also love to hear the leader tell stories and jokes to illustrate their learning points.

Independent Learners acquire knowledge through any of the above gates they choose. They strongly prefer to learn without assistance from others. They prefer to take things apart and put them back together; to work alone rather than with others; to learn quickly rather than slowly; and to be in charge of what is being learned or taught. They are very goal-oriented and want to know how what is being learned can help them to reach their goals. If learning is not linked to their goals, they often “tune out.”

As a leader, what is your preferred learning style? The styles of your team members?

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