

# Concrete to Abstract Thinking Wavelength

Each of us naturally thinks in a certain way—the way in which we order our world, tolerate change, and juggle variables. No one way of thinking is right and another wrong. But it is helpful to know how we are inclined to think (as well as how others are inclined to think). The way that we think may or may not be similar to our spouse, supervisor, children, and employees as we engage in tasks, conversations, decision making, or problem solving. Thinking is usually related to the type of work that you are going to do successfully.

There are five types of thinkers.

## **Grinders**

Grinders get the work done. They are detail-doers. Grinders document things, are risk-averse, like few variables, take things one step at a time, have a low tolerance for ambiguity, understand tasks and the need to solve problems, handle administrative details well, and deliver working drawings. The world cannot operate without grinders.

## **Minders**

Minders can manage a unit team, having both the people skills and the organizational abilities to do so. They can supervise the performance of work. They function best as frontline supervisors, have the ability to diagnose problems, “mind the store,” and put out “brush fires.” They can run a department and manage people in their area of expertise. They are usually supervisors, teachers, chief engineers, section leaders, and foremen. They can be counted on to keep the committees and programs of the church functioning.

## **Keepers**

Keepers are capable of managing the whole store, possessing an appreciation for the administrative and the strategic. They may have both concrete and abstract thinking skills, but will be biased to the administrative/operational work. They make great mediators in conflicts, good personnel managers, directors of departments, plant managers, and executive assistants. They handle details and see the broader vision. They handle many variables, are organized, and good with people.

## **Finders**

Finders are entrepreneurs. They are abstract thinkers, so they oftentimes don't complete the paperwork that concrete thinkers require. They appear to be loose cannons in a group structure. They are innovators and creators. Follow-through is not their strength. They need grinders, minders, and keepers to follow in their wake of creativity. They sense and seize opportunities, spot voids and fill them, are bored by a steady state, are good site locators, love a new challenge, must be thrown “raw meat” regularly. They are usually the chief executive officer, chief visionary, product or market manager, joint venture leader, church planter or founding pastor, and advanced development engineer.

## **Theorists**

Theorists are usually bright, articulate and persuasive, but they don't bring things to closure. They work best in universities, seminaries, and pure research laboratories. They don't belong in business. They cannot manage others well, and their ideas rarely become commercialized. They embrace risks, draw little sketches, can make quantum leaps, welcome change, are strategic, produce seminal concepts, enjoy many variables, are opportunity oriented, have a high tolerance for ambiguity, postulate the new (but don't execute), and love the forty-thousand-foot macro-view. Theorists include researchers, philosophy professors, and theologians.

**Question: Where are you on the thinking wavelength? Chart it on the next page.**

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