



*"You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist."*

*Nietzche*

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## Tactics for Versatile Learners

Whether you are in charge of developing others or seeking to expand your own skills, you have probably discovered that there are some tactics for learning that are better suited to your particular style. Training design is often based on adult learning theories that focus on whether we prefer to hear, see, or feel the training content. The next step in the process is to look at how versatile we are when handling information on the fly.

From the learner's perspective, it's important to be able to use each of these four tactics, depending on the situation, rather than relying on one or two of your favorites (your comfort zone). Otherwise, you limit your effectiveness and are less prepared to handle a variety of situations, tasks, or employees. The four tactics are listed below along with their potential downside.

**Action**– You prefer to learn by doing, taking a hands-on approach, and are comfortable figuring it out as you go. You are willing to take a risk in order to get the job done. Be careful that you don't proceed before getting some level of information and aren't perceived as impatient or unfeeling toward others.

**Thinking**– You rely on past experiences and play "what-if" to figure things out on your own. You like to collect information and have all of your facts. Be careful that you are not perceived as snobbish or unwilling to get others involved. Avoid analysis paralysis.

**Feeling**– You realize the impact your feelings have on what you do and how they impact your decisions. You trust your gut reaction but are willing to confront yourself when you realize your feelings are preventing you from

taking on the challenge. If overused, you may be perceived as hypersensitive or indecisive.

**Accessing Others** – You learn by watching or talking to others and seeking advice and/or training before you tackle a problem. Avoid the perception that you are incompetent or unable to trust your own judgment.

The key is to balance these tactics and select those that are most beneficial for the particular situation. This knowledge comes with experience, but requires the ability to select the right tool at the right time.

If you're interested in [management development](#), please contact [Kammy Haynes](#).

### **How Much is Too Much?**

When giving [assessment center](#) or [multi-rater feedback](#), determining the amount of feedback to give is critical. Too little and the participants and the organization don't get full value from the process. Too much and the participants feel as if they are drinking from a fire hose and it all becomes too overwhelming.

Be sure that all of the feedback is actionable and redundancies are removed. Also, you will only want to provide feedback in areas where you can also provide development opportunities. Visual learners will also appreciate graphs along with the narrative feedback (where appropriate).

Keep in mind that people can only improve in a few areas at a time. As such, it is probably not necessary to list out all of someone's development needs (though it's good for their ego to see all of their strengths). Rather, focus on those where improvement efforts will lead to the most significant impact.

For more information on delivering feedback, please contact [Warren Bobrow](#).