

## Your Style Under Stress

*Instructions.* The following survey will help you identify the communication style you revert to when crucial conversations start getting tense. Before you start:

- Decide if you want to focus on work or home.
- Think of a specific person or topic where you have trouble staying in dialogue (perhaps your Crucial Conversation).
- Candidly answer the questions on pages 19–20 while keeping this crucial conversation in mind.

- T F** 1. At times I avoid situations that might bring me into contact with people I'm having problems with.
- T F** 2. I have put off returning phone calls or e-mails because I simply didn't want to deal with the person who sent them.
- T F** 3. Sometimes when people bring up a touchy or awkward issue I try to change the subject.
- T F** 4. When it comes to dealing with awkward or stressful subjects, sometimes I hold back rather than give my full and candid opinion.
- T F** 5. Rather than tell people exactly what I think, sometimes I rely on jokes, sarcasm, or snide remarks to let them know I'm frustrated.
- T F** 6. When I've got something tough to bring up, sometimes I offer weak or insincere compliments to soften the blow.
- T F** 7. In order to get my point across, I sometimes exaggerate my side of the argument.
- T F** 8. If I seem to be losing control of a conversation, I might cut people off or change the subject in order to bring it back to where I think it should be.
- T F** 9. When others make points that seem stupid to me, I sometimes let them know it without holding back at all.
- T F** 10. When I'm stunned by a comment, sometimes I say things that others might take as forceful or attacking—comments such as "Give me a break!" or "That's ridiculous!"

- T F** 11. Sometimes when things get heated I move from arguing against others' points to saying things that might hurt them personally.
- T F** 12. If I really get into a heated discussion, I'm sometimes tough on the other person. In fact, he or she might feel a bit insulted or hurt.

### Scoring

Compare the following score sheets to the answers you gave and check the boxes where you answered "true." Add up the scores in each column and record the total in the box next to "Silence" or "Violence."

SILENCE	VIOLENCE
1 (T)	7 (T)
2 (T)	8 (T)
3 (T)	9 (T)
4 (T)	10 (T)
5 (T)	11 (T)
6 (T)	12 (T)

### What Your Style Under Stress Score Means

Any score you have in silence or violence comes with a cost. A high score in either means you use that technique fairly frequently.

- When you move to silence or violence, what are the negative consequences?
- How can you do less of this?