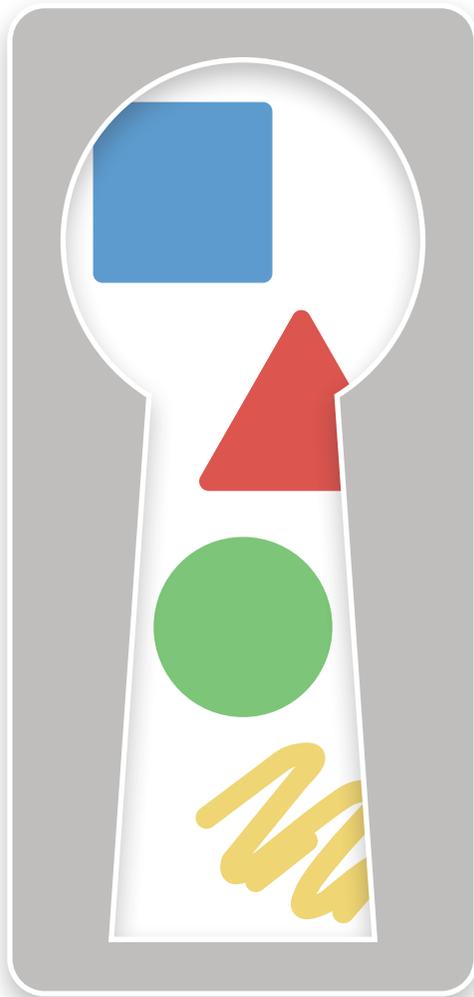


COMMUNICATING Beyond Our Differences

It Is What You Say *and* How You Say It!



Susan Hite and Susan Dellinger, Ph.D.

What Shape Are You?

Identify your Shape and Communication Style.

Learn why you feel, think, and act like you do.

Understand why you get along with some people better than others.

Apply all five Shapes to become a more effective leader, co-worker, spouse, parent, or friend.

The Shapes Assessment® powered by PsychoGeometrics® uses five geometric shapes to identify your communication style. In this third edition of ***Communicating Beyond Our Differences***, Susan Hite, Innovator of PsychoGeometrics®, updates the original work of Dr. Susan Dellinger (circa 1978) and adds new content and applications.

“One of the things I love about PsychoGeometrics® is it does not determine or limit who you are, what you do, or how well you do it based on your Shape. Instead, it identifies which of the five Shape behaviors are your natural Shape strengths, which ones need to be developed as a skill set, and how to leverage all five Shapes to be the best possible version of you!

All five Shapes are equally important but are not used equally. You don't have to be great at being or using all five Shapes, but you can use all five Shapes to be great at whatever you want to do!

Here's to ***Communicating Beyond Our Differences*** at work, at home, and with those you love...because ***It Is What You Say and How You Say It!***”



Susan Hite
PsychoGeometrics®
Innovator



COMMUNICATING

Beyond Our Differences

It Is What You Say *and* How You Say It!

powered by



Susan Hite
Susan Dellinger, Ph.D.

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Communicating Beyond Our Differences

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PsychoGeometrics®

Shapes Assessment®

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Bulk orders of this book are available at www.psychogeometrics.com or contact shapes@psychogeometrics.com.



Acknowledgments

From Susan Hite

To Susan Dellinger – *What an impact you have made around the world reaching more than one million people with your brilliant, yet simple and amazingly profound communication system! Not only have you helped so many of us “communicate beyond our differences,” you have given people a way to quickly understand and recognize our differences as a strength, not a weakness. You were truly ahead of your time championing the value of diversity and inclusion in a workplace that was anything but diverse. Although we still have a long way to go, it is a privilege to carry on your life’s work which will undoubtedly benefit the personal and professional lives of many, many generations to come.*

To our partners, vendors, and certified Shapes Facilitators – *Thank you for your patience, support, understanding, and flexibility during our Rectangle phase of Change and Growth. True to what we know, Rectangle Change can take 3-18 months for individuals and 3-7 years for organizational and culture change. It’s been three years since I purchased the PsychoGeometrics company from Dr. Dellinger, transitioning from owning a small, personality driven business to transforming and leading a large process driven business. It’s a great example of “Strategically Shaping” our way through change, and our team is grateful for your support.*

To my family – *for your unconditional love and for keeping the faith!*

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Preface

A note from the author, Susan Hite

2023 New Edition

It has been 34 years since this book was first written and published. In 2008, it was updated for the second time, and now 15 years later it is being completely rewritten, adding new content and updating the remaining content from the original author and creator of PsychoGeometrics® in 1978, Susan E. Dellinger, Ph.D.

*On behalf of Dr. Dellinger, we are excited to launch this new edition of **Communicating Beyond Our Differences – It Is What You Say and How You Say It!** Today, more than ever, PsychoGeometrics is needed to embrace diversity and demonstrate how we can 1) understand, 2) accept, and 3) leverage our differences. From our natural traits, behaviors, and ways we interact with others, we all have our unique communication style that makes us who we are.*

I believe that understanding is the key to effective communication and that acceptance is the highest form of love. PsychoGeometrics helps us realize both, providing the power, knowledge, and skill to see ourselves and others through a whole new lens. That's why we place a special emphasis on the Rectangle, the most misunderstood of the five Shapes.

It was Jack Wolf, PhD, partnering with Dr. Dellinger at the time, who created the Shapes Assessment in the early 2000's. Dr. Wolf especially believed in the power of the Rectangle and that it is one of the unique differentiators of Shapes from other assessments. The concept, according to Dr. Wolf, is the Rectangle is the roomiest Shape, which allows for moving around, as if to explore what's next. Hence, the Rectangle serves as the Shape of change, growth, and space unlocking the gateway between your primary "home" Shape and "what's next". In fact, when designing the assessment, Dr. Wolfe and his wife, Valerie, designed the Rectangle with a keyhole in the center of its Shape to reinforce the fact that to grow you must walk through the door of change, which is also why being the Rectangle can be exciting and scary at the same time. Furthermore, the reason the Rectangle is such a game changer is because it is teaching us not only how change impacts who we

are, how we act, and how we interact, but also how to “see” and better understand others through the wide-angle and open lens of the Rectangle. Unlike the other four Shapes that represent the primary and secondary traits, behaviors, and interactions of a person, the Rectangle is neither a primary nor secondary Shape. Instead, it’s a transitional Shape that can be developed with awareness, knowledge, skill, and desire, unlocking the door to understanding.

It is our hope that PsychoGeometrics will continue to help people across all borders to accept our differences and teach us how to effectively communicate, making one another feel valued, included, important, understood, and ultimately loved.

Finally, we would like to thank all our PsychoGeometrics Shapes Certified Facilitators, clients, customers, family, and friends for your support of us and PsychoGeometrics, the Science of Behavior and the Art of Communicating. We are better together...



Susan Hite, CEO, Innovator, Author
Squiggle Triangle



Wilmington, NC
PsychoGeometrics®

How PsychoGeometrics Came About

The 45-year-old history of PsychoGeometrics as told by the two Susans

Part One – by Dr. Dellinger

It all began in the late 1970's when I became a management trainer for General Telephone and Electronics (GTE – now Verizon) in Tampa, Florida. With a fresh new Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Colorado, I was eager to help my telephone company supervisors and managers to communicate with their employees more effectively. I put on the hard hat, got in the truck with my supervisors, and went out to the field to observe them with their cable-splitters and installers. The experience was eye-opening for me; this world was not the same as the university. When I returned to my office in the training department, I realized that our programs were missing the mark. Instruments such as the MBTI (Myers- Briggs Indicator), DISC, Wilson Learning, and Drake-Beam just didn't stick with my supervisors. They were long, complicated to score, and difficult to interpret. Worst of all, few of my managers retained the information or were able to apply it to their work group. I needed something new... something that incorporated the same concepts of personality and communication "styles," but was easier to administer, more quickly understood AND equally as accurate.

One day I walked into the training classroom and drew five geometric shapes on the board. I asked my supervisors to choose the one that best described them (I was winging it)! Although the shapes were somewhat different from the final five in PsychoGeometrics today, the concept was the same. It was an instant hit!

From that day on, it didn't matter what course I was teaching, the class begged for "that game with the shapes." People couldn't get enough. The system raced through the company. People called me at home to discuss problem employees re: Sam the Triangle, Jane the Circle, etc. I named it the "geometric psychology game," and it became the centerpiece of our in-house communications program.

*In 1982, I left GTE to take my newfound magic on the road. I became one of the first eight (8) trainers with a fledgling public seminar company called Career Track Inc. in Boulder, Colorado. For the next sixteen (16) years I traveled the globe presenting my PsychoGeometrics to people of all walks of life. Career Track co-workers in the Customer Service Department told me that the most common question they received was, “Where can I learn more about PsychoGeometrics?” So, in 1989, I wrote the first edition of **Communicating Beyond Our Differences** for them... and now, for you (NOTE: The first edition of this book in 1989 was updated in 1996, 2008, and has been updated, revised, and edited by Susan Hite in 2023).*

*In 2020, I officially passed along my “PsychoGeometrics baby” to our long-time PsychoGeometrics consultant Susan Hite. I have always wanted Susan to be the one to purchase my company because she understands it better than anyone and has the same genuine passion I have for seeing Shapes continue to help people around the world. I know she will protect it and ensure that it is used responsibly for understanding, accepting, and respecting our various communication styles for “**Communicating Beyond Our Differences**” around the world. My baby is in good hands...*

Dr. Susan Dellinger

Part Two – by Susan Hite

It was just four months before 9/11 in 2001 when I officially trademarked Susan’s Train Your Brain Series™, a personal and professional development program featuring “7 Steps for Living a more Peaceful, Balanced, and Productive Life.” It is based on the overarching principle that you must Train Your Brain to find “the good” in every situation and focus on what you can control, instead of what you can’t, for survival, success, and significance. Just two months before 9/11, and ironically around the U.S. holiday celebrating independence and freedom, I went out on my own as an entrepreneur, hoping to share how the “7 Train Your Brain Steps” could literally change your life. I had been sharing my Train Your Brain Series™ since 1994 as part of my role in a company with the mission of “Grow Your People, and Your People will help Grow Your Business.” This was before 9/11, and

long before soft skills were taken as seriously, or even seriously, as the “hard skills.” It was also long before anyone was talking about mental health, work-life balance, working remotely, or about what would later become a best seller just after 9/11, **The Purpose Driven Life**, written by Pastor Rick Warren and published in 2002. *Training Your Brain* is what I still believe everyone needs for survival, success, and significance, especially when

“Life isn’t always how it’s supposed to be. It’s just the way it is. What makes the difference is the way you respond.” — Virginia Satir, American author, psychotherapist, and recognized for her approach to family therapy (1916-1988).

...and it is our response that makes all the difference between feeling helpless or hopeful.

What I know for sure is our response makes all the difference between feeling helpless or hopeful.

It pained me to see people struggling, feeling worthless, and without the wisdom and knowledge that had been shared with me by my parents. Growing up, I was taught that every person on this earth is valuable to God and that no person is more valuable than another.

Working as Marketing Director for a company that believed in “taking care of your people, so your people can take care of the business,” was a natural fit for me. Even better, providing something like the Train Your Brain Series for our employees was seen by my boss and others in our industry as a brilliant marketing strategy, and I was given the freedom and resources to execute it. For seven years I was more of a content and training developer, facilitator, and keynote speaker as part of our employee recruitment, onboarding, engagement, and retention strategy. This unique way of marketing was linked directly to results, from lowering turnover to tripling the national sales average in the industry’s highest profit category.

Eventually I was asked to share this “unique marketing strategy” at our industry’s national conference, then other companies asked me to share the Train Your Brain Series with their people, and

from there it just continued to grow, not only among our industry, but expanding to more than 50 different industries around the world.

With the support of my boss, I ventured out on my own, thinking it would take at least another seven years to grow and build my business. But as it turns out, something so horrific as 9/11 created the demand for soft-skill training, life skills, coping skills, and a new concept such as making a difference, while you make your living.

Which took me to the pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline (Research Triangle Park- RTP) in Durham, NC to deliver a keynote on “Dealing with Change.”

Arriving early, I found a group of employees watching a VHS tape of Dr. Dellinger delivering a keynote on her five geometric Shapes. So simple, yet so profound, I remember thinking that the Shapes would make an excellent addition to my toolbox as part of my Train Your Brain Series. Shortly thereafter, I traveled to Tampa, Florida to meet Dr. Dellinger and became one of her first licensed PsychoGeometrics consultants and served on her advisory board until I purchased her PsychoGeometrics company just months into the Pandemic (June 2020).

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Susan Hite

10 Benefits of the Book

1. You will understand why you have an instant attraction and “chemistry” with some people and not as much with others.
2. You will learn why you have difficulty communicating with certain people. It will become clear to you that they perceive situations differently than you do.
3. You will learn to accept the differences between you and your “difficult person” without placing blame or reacting emotionally.
4. You will learn how to create communication that brings more favorable results with this person and others, whether it’s personal or professional.
5. People who you don’t understand will suddenly become an “open book.” You will be able to see the world as they do, and communication will quickly improve.
6. Your understanding of yourself will be enhanced as well. Why you made certain choices in life will now make sense to you. How to make future changes or decisions will become clearer.
7. You will become more aware of your relationship “blind spots” and learn how to improve them.
8. Your self-confidence, happiness, and overall satisfaction in life will increase as you find your relationships improving.
9. You will have a deeper understanding and new appreciation for the “significant others” you have chosen to be part of your life or want to be part of your life.
10. You will begin to “see” people according to their Shape(s), quickly understand why they communicate in the way they do, and how they like to be approached.

Plan like a 

Decide like a 

Listen like a 

Care like a 

Create like a 

Section One:

PsychoGeometrics – The Science of Behavior and the Art of Communication

Chapter 1

An Overview of PsychoGeometrics

The Shapes Assessment powered by PsychoGeometrics

“It takes a lot of hard work to make something simple.”

- Steve Jobs (Apple, NeXT, Pixar)

Originally created in 1978 and backed by science in the 1980s, early 2000’s, and documented for testing accuracy since 2004, the Shapes Assessment powered by PsychoGeometrics is a psychometric tool used to identify one’s natural communication style through their traits, behaviors, and how they relate to others. The Shapes Assessment also helps one to understand the communication style of others.

When we understand the science of behavior, we understand why we communicate the way that we do. Whether it’s the way we lead, parent, or show up in our relationships, in our family or on our work team, there’s a reason behind what we do and how we do it. What we do naturally may work well for us, but it might not work well with or for others, or in every environment or situation.

For example, most people want to be made to feel welcome, comfortable, included, important, and understood. But we don’t all get those needs met the same way. That’s why it’s important to recognize the universal value of the “Golden Rule,” but practice the “Platinum Rule.” The Golden Rule says you should treat others the way you like to be treated. The Platinum Rule says to treat others the way they like to be treated.

Want to make someone feel loved? Then show them love in the way they feel loved, even if it's not the way you would naturally do it.

Want to share some feedback with a teammate? Perhaps your natural communication preference for feedback is real-time, face-to-face, direct, and to the point. But it's not about how you want it, it's how they want it, that is if you want them to be more receptive to your feedback and build trust instead of barriers. What if someone else prefers written, detailed feedback (in advance of a discussion) vs. verbal?

Obviously, we can't always approach others the way they want to be approached, but just being aware of differences and recognizing preferences can go a long way to strengthen relationships even if you can't always do it in the way others prefer it.

When you treat, approach, or communicate with others in a way that makes them feel comfortable, important, and understood, you will raise the probability for effective communication. You can't control or change others, but you can learn to control and manage your behavior that can influence a different, desired outcome.

Communication is at the core of everything we do from the way we understand ourselves, express ourselves, and interact with others to how we manage change, stress, conflict, and even our finances. It also impacts the way we connect, engage, and build trust with our partner, family, friends, colleagues, and co-workers to show love, care, and concern.

The Shapes Assessment is powered by PsychoGeometrics, the Science of Behavior and the Art of Communication. It uses five Shapes to represent five essential behaviors for effective communication and overall success, both personally and professionally.

When you discover your natural Shape strengths and identify your Shape challenges, you can quickly understand why you are successful in some areas of your life, but struggle in others. Just being able to identify and understand this is more than half the solution to your stability, resiliency, and overall well-being.

Once you understand the "what" from the results of your Shapes Assessment, PsychoGeometrics helps you with the "how." It's called "Shape Flexing," which allows you to still be your authentic self, while

learning to use all five Shapes, either as your natural Shape strengths or your Shape learned and developed skills.

Knowing how to leverage your Shape strengths and manage your Shape challenges is key to strengthening your personal and professional relationships, teams, and overall communication.

NOTE: It's highly recommended that you take the Shapes Assessment prior to reading this book. It will be all the more meaningful to you when you know your Shapes, how you score, and what it means to your natural communication style. Take the Shapes Assessment.



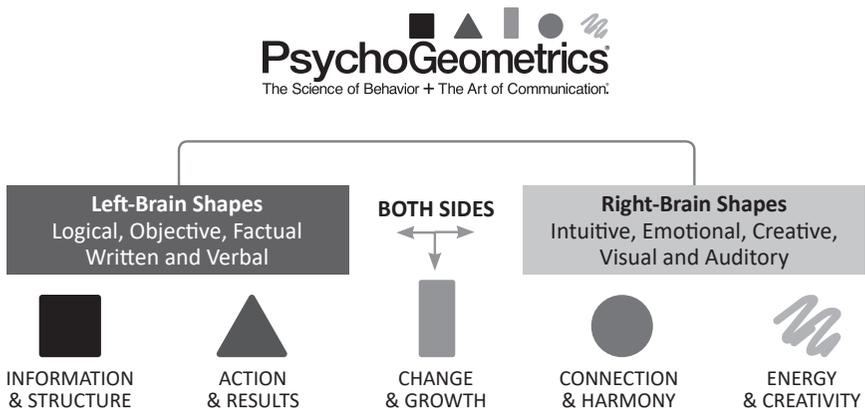
The Shapes Assessment

It takes less than 15 minutes to take the Shapes Assessment to determine your communication style.

The Shapes Assessment consists of three parts:

1. Traits
2. Behaviors
3. Relating to Others

At the completion of your Shapes Assessment, you will see your Shapes score identifying your communication style, including your strengths and challenges. Once you know your primary Shape (highest score) and secondary Shape (second-highest score) and how you score in the remaining Shapes, you can immediately apply what you know to what you will learn and come to quickly understand in this book.



The Left Brain/Right Brain Theory:

Brain Function is how we think, behave, see the world, and act within it. It is determined by brain chemistry. While there are ongoing studies and different ways to explain brain function, PsychoGeometrics and the Shapes Assessment powered by PsychoGeometrics uses the Left Brain/Right Brain theory created in the 1960s by Roger W. Sperry, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1981.

For more on the Science behind PsychoGeometrics, Brain Function, Human Personality, and the Art of Communication, see pages 213-214.

The Scoring Guide:

The total number of all five Shapes must be exactly 21. Here are what the numbers mean.

 Powered by PsychoGeometrics		
<p>LOW (0-3)</p> <p>If you score low in a Shape, it doesn't mean you are below average, or that your score is bad.</p> <p>It simply means you do not have a high percentage of this Shape within you naturally. In fact, when using one of your lower score Shapes, you may find it awkward or uncomfortable using it.</p> <p>Using one of your low-score Shapes, even if you only use it sparingly, could be the very Shape behavior that helps maximize or manage one of your Shape strengths.</p> <p>A low score can also signal a development opportunity for you.</p>	<p>MEDIUM (4-6)</p> <p>If you score medium in a Shape, it doesn't mean you are average, or that your score is average.</p> <p>It simply means you have a medium percentage of this Shape within you. It can influence your Shapes with higher scores, but it is probably not your "go-to" Shape.</p> <p>Knowing how to leverage a medium score can help balance out a higher Shape score, or help compensate for a lower Shape score.</p>	<p>HIGH (7 or more)</p> <p>It simply means you have a high percentage of this Shape within you naturally. Your highest Shape score represents your primary Shape. Your next highest Shape score represents your secondary Shape.</p> <p>How you use and manage your high score Shapes determines if your primary and secondary Shapes are your strengths, your challenges, or a little of both as a communicator.</p> <p>Knowing how to Shape Flex, which means learning how to naturally, skillfully and/or strategically use any of the Shapes or blend of Shapes regardless of your scores, is KEY to leveraging your Shape strengths, managing your Shape challenges, being an effective communicator, and strengthening your relationships.</p>

Understanding Your Score

7+ HIGH — *does not mean above average*

4-6 MEDIUM — *does not mean average*

0-3 LOW — *does not mean below average*

A **“HIGH” SCORE** does not necessarily mean you are good at using that Shape. It means you have a high percentage of that Shape within you naturally, and you have the natural potential to be great at using it.

A **“MEDIUM” SCORE** does not necessarily mean you are average at using that Shape. It means you have a medium percentage of that Shape within you naturally, and you have the natural potential to improve your use of that Shape as a learned skill.

A **“LOW” SCORE** does not necessarily mean you are bad or below average at using that Shape. It means you have a low percentage of that Shape within you naturally, and it could represent a development opportunity for you to manage your Shape challenges so your Shape strengths can excel.

NOTE: *THERE IS ONE EXCEPTION TO THIS SCORING GUIDE, WHICH PERTAINS TO THE RECTANGLE.*

The Rectangle is neither a primary or secondary Shape. It is a transitional and temporary Shape. It is typical for most people to have a low score in Rectangle (3 or less). That is because most people are not naturally good at being open-minded, embracing, and navigating their way through change.

The higher the score in Rectangle, typically the bigger the change. Therefore, unlike the other four Shapes, a medium or high score in Rectangle doesn't indicate how much Rectangle you have within you naturally. Instead, it is an indication of how much change and growth is part of your life at this moment.

Changes can be exciting or scary, but either way most people find change challenging to manage.

You can learn more about the Shape Scores, Shape Perception, Shape Flexing and other Shape information and applications in the Shapes Online Learning Series. Learn more at www.psychogeometrics.com.

Communication Style of Each Shape

	<p>Boxes prefer to communicate in written form. They tend to speak slowly, precisely, and calmly and use limited body language. They prefer 1-to-1 communication and can be uncomfortable in large groups.</p>
	<p>Triangles tend to have strong and deeper voices than the other Shapes and alter the volume for emphasis. They may also use pointed gestures and direct eye contact. They typically enjoy competition and thrive in small and large groups where they can be in charge.</p>
	<p>Rectangles are in a state of transition. They may hesitate in their communication, carefully thinking and considering each of the four other Shapes. They are good listeners and ask questions often. During this state of change, they are not seeking to stand out, but rather would prefer to hang out and observe, ask questions, and not call attention to themselves.</p>
	<p>Circles exude warmth in their communication style. They tend to smile, nod, gesture and typically use physical touch, such as extending a hand to shake or fist to bump, a pat on the arm or back, or a hug. Circles communicate best 1-to-1, but they are equally as happy in small, intimate groups.</p>
	<p>Squiggles are highly energetic and expressive in their communication style. They can get so excited that they lose their train of thought. They prefer large groups where they have an audience for their “presentation” or “performance.”</p>

Thinking Style of Each Shape

People who have either primary or secondary Shapes of Box and Triangle tend to have left brain thinking styles.

People who have either primary or secondary Shapes of Circle and Squiggle rely more on their right brain.



Note: For more on Brain Function, see page 213.

This means that the Box and Triangle are linear Shapes and are logical and sequential thinkers.

The non-linear Shapes of Circle and Squiggle are more oriented to abstraction and creativity.

The Rectangle is the Shape of change and growth, and with raised awareness and skill, can be used to think, see, and feel using each of the four other Shapes, drawing from both sides of the brain. The Rectangle is not a primary or secondary Shape, but rather a transitional Shape during a period of change in one's life.