*Give constructive feedback
people will actually listen to*

USING PERSONALITY AI TO
GIVE FEEDBACK

By Greg Skloot, President of **Crystal** ✦
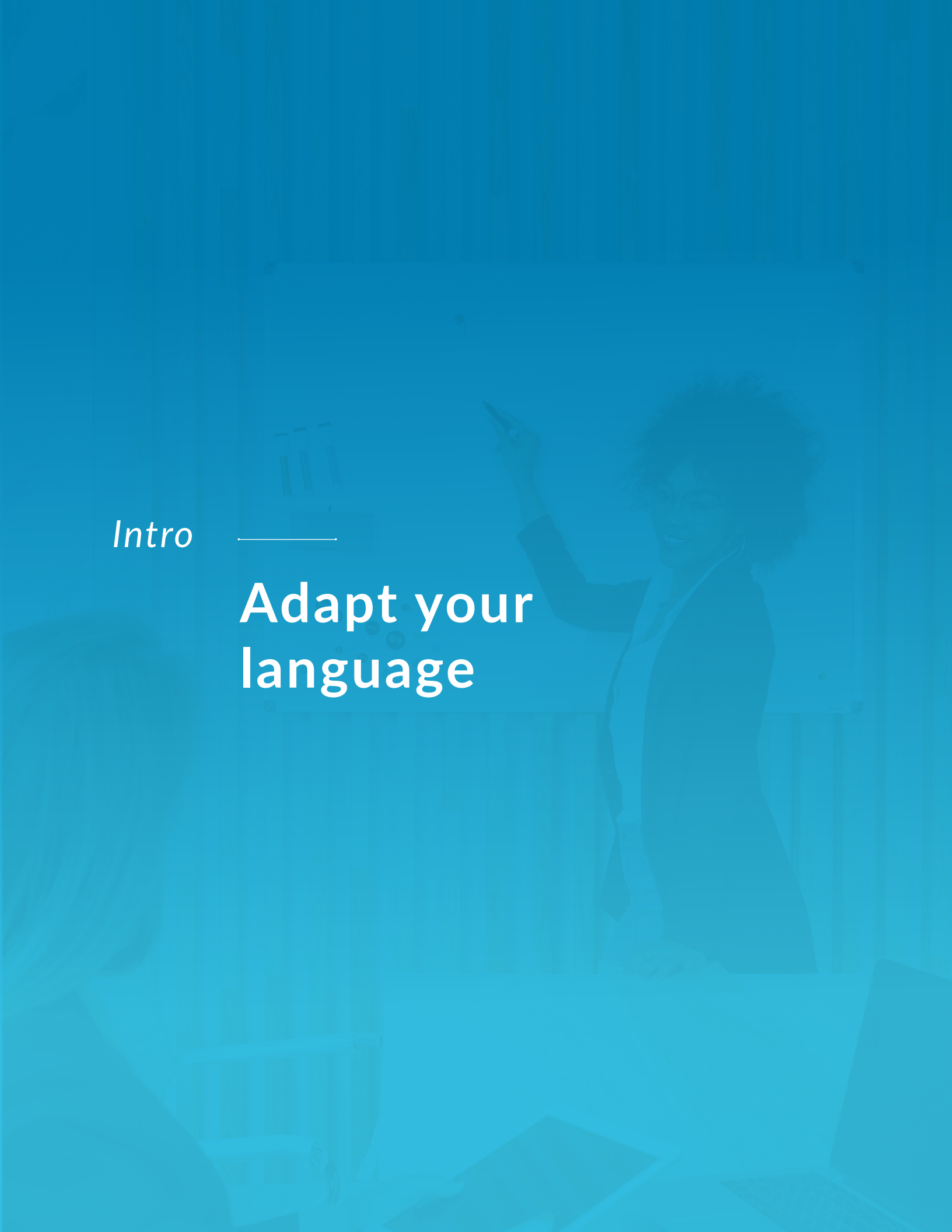
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intro ——————

Adapt your language

ADAPT YOUR LANGUAGE

Would you say you're an above-average driver? If so, you would be amongst the approximately 80% of the population who believe they are in the top half of drivers by skill. Similarly, 90% of college professors believe they are above-average teachers. Of course, this isn't possible in either case - many of these people have an inflated view of their own skills.

We all do this with our own personalities when we think about and describe our strengths and blind spots. We're all complex people with unique advantages and weaknesses, but because of superiority bias, we often perceive and understand our strengths much better than the weaknesses. Because of this, we need feedback.

At work, feedback is a tricky (and at times risky) game, particularly when there is a lot of money, emotions, or relational capital at stake. It's often difficult to share suggestions in the right way for each person. No one wants to seem too judgemental or hurt someone else's feelings, and it's challenging to offer suggestions in a way that isn't condescending but can be clearly understood. However, constructive feedback is essential to maintaining quality work, having strong relationships, and consistently improving ourselves.

Having spent years providing feedback in all kinds of contexts, I have seen many feedback meetings not go as I intended.

I remember one instance in which I thought I gave feedback on some navigation issues to a website designer. Later, in another check in, I realized the issues had not been dealt with. I tried to keep my feedback casual and positive, but the fixes he was coming up with weren't solving the problem. I was trying to give feedback in a light-hearted way, which is how some people prefer to receive feedback, but it seemed like he wasn't really understanding the problems.

Eventually, I decided to be more direct and clear by getting right to the issues, sharing the specifics, and asking him what he thought he could do to fix them. He thought for a minute before offering a couple of great solutions; he could easily fix the navigation problems. Once I adjusted my feedback style, our discussion began to flow more easily and we were able to quickly work through future check-ins more effectively.

Our frustrating and confusing situation became an opportunity to learn and grow once I made an effort to adjust my feedback style to be more in line with his preferences. We both left the conversation in a better mood because we knew we were on the same page.

If I hadn't adjusted my communication, we might have left feeling confused and misunderstood, which would have hurt our working relationship and negatively impacted the project. Neglecting to adapt to someone else's communication style can lead to a loss of trust, reduced efficiency, disconnected teams, and conflict.

By learning more about the role personality plays in communication, you'll understand how to frame your feedback to fit the other person's preferences.

Making the effort to learn how to adapt to others can mean the difference between hurting someone and helping them flourish.

Section 2

Understanding personality

UNDERSTANDING PERSONALITY

Historically, the only way you would be able to fully understand someone's personality is to know them really well, which takes lots of time and emotional intelligence, or to have them take a personality test. Both of these approaches require you have an established relationship with the person, which doesn't tend to work in the world of outreach communication, since we are often trying to connect with new people who we have never spoken with before.

Thankfully, there is a new technology that unlocks another way to learn about someone's personality without an assessment - Personality AI. We wrote about this in detail in another ebook titled, very cleverly, Personality AI (which you can download free on Crystal's website). This new technology analyzes publicly available information on websites like LinkedIn to predict someone's personality, using artificial intelligence and machine learning. We built our product, Crystal, to harness Personality AI and enable anyone to identify personalities online to improve their communication and build stronger relationships, all based on the core principle of empathy.

Ryan Benson
Predicted Profile

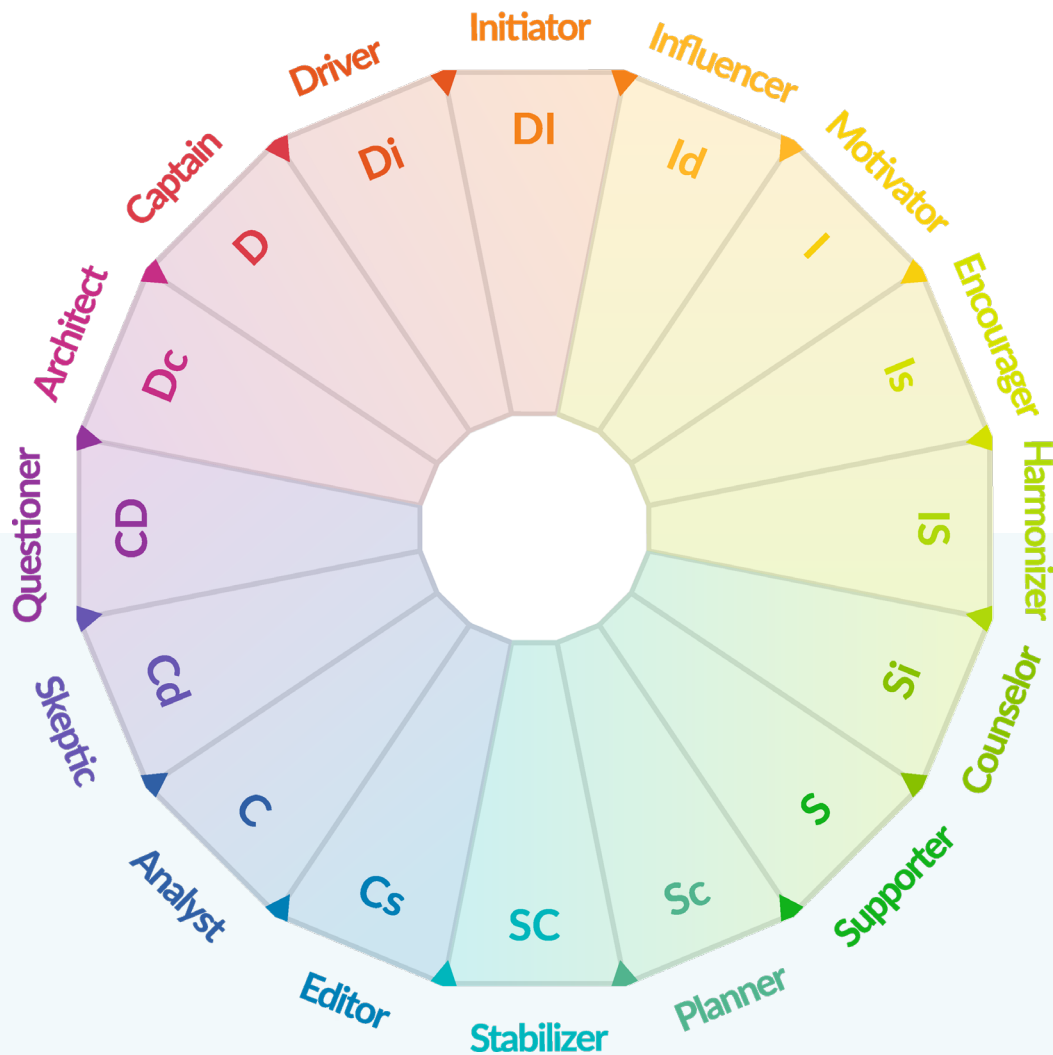## DI (Intiator)

Charamsmatic, Visionary, Sociable

Moderate Intensity: 15%

Ryan is a moderate **DI** Intiator, 15% intensity, which means he tends to have more confidence in gut instinct than formal structure, and to be charasmatic, visionary, sociable

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Without getting too technical, when Crystal determines someone's personality, it uses a framework called DISC to classify their personality into a few categories which we refer to as D (dominance), I (influence), S (steadiness), and C (conscientiousness). Each of us has a primary DISC type in one of these categories and sometimes a secondary DISC type in another. To keep things simple, we separate these into easy-to-remember labels called Archetypes.

You can see them all on this graphic called the Personality Map:

*Below is a breakdown of common personality traits
within each of the categories in DISC.*

D Personality Types: *Captains, Drivers, Initiators, Architects*

- Motivated by control over the future and personal authority
- Tend to prefer instant, concrete results and having an advantage over competition
- Communicate clearly and succinctly

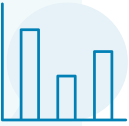**I Personality Types:** *Influencer, Motivator, Encourager, Harmonizer*

- Motivated by innovative, unique, creative ideas and excited by the future
- Tend to prefer building new relationships and experiences
- Communicate in a casual, expressive way

S Personality Types: *Counselor, Supporter, Planner, Stabilizer*

- Motivated by peace, safety, and others' wellbeing
- Tend to prefer security, reliability and trust
- Communicate in a friendly and genuine way

C Personality Types: *Editor, Analyst, Skeptic, Questioner*

- Motivated by logic, information, and problem solving
- Tend to prefer accurate information and quality solutions (quality over quantity)
- Communicate in a business-like, fact-based way

These differences are extremely important for your approach in every conversation. For example, someone who is a warm, people-oriented Supporter (S) is less likely to feel comfortable in a logical discussion about facts and data. They'd usually prefer to engage in more personal, get-to-know-you conversation. An Analyst (C), on the other hand, tends to enjoy learning more about specific, concrete information, and would, therefore, prefer a logic-driven discussion.

By understanding someone's personality type, you can learn how to best communicate with them.

Why change your feedback style based on personality?

When giving feedback, it's important to convey your message in a way the other person can easily understand. Otherwise, you're likely to upset them and see little change in their behavior, or they may not even realize you want them to change something. Giving feedback is a crucial part of leading a team, being a good friend or partner, and, ultimately, helping people improve their work and themselves. It helps everyone grow and learn, but it can be hard for people to hear or accept. Some people may be a bit defensive, while others may be sensitive. Because people react differently, your approach needs to be more individualized.

Understanding and adapting to someone's personality can help prevent unnecessary stress, anger, or discomfort in important discussions like giving feedback. By understanding personality differences and adjusting your style accordingly, you can give feedback in a constructive, beneficial way that all parties involved will appreciate.

Section 3

Give feedback to any personality

GIVING FEEDBACK TO D-TYPES

Direct, assertive D-types generally prefer when feedback is straightforward. Avoid talking around the issue; instead, directly address any concerns, challenge them to do better, and help them work toward their goals. Make sure to offer concrete examples so they understand what is being asked of them.

If you're giving feedback to D-types, try using phrases like:

- I want to challenge your thinking on this...

- Here's how it compares to the others...

- Let's go back to the goal we started with...

- Do you want to take this feedback and try again?

D Personality Types *Captains, Drivers, Initiators, Architects*

Do

- Challenge them to improve
- Compare their work to that of their peers or competitors
- Stay focused on the goal they want to achieve
- Allow them to make quick changes and iterate

Don't

- Get lots of people involved
- Be too gentle in your criticism
- Be vague
- Focus too much on the process

GIVING FEEDBACK TO I-TYPES

Optimistic, people-oriented I-types tend to appreciate when feedback is presented in a conversation. Help them feel comfortable by asking them questions or sharing what was good about their performance before diving into discussing anything negative. Make sure they have an opportunity to share their perspective and try to wrap-up the meeting with something positive.

If you're giving feedback to I-types, try using phrases like:

- This is only my opinion...

- What motivated you to do this?

- Let's walk through the weaker parts together...

- What have the others said so far?

I Personality Types *Influencer, Motivator, Encourager, Harmonizer*

Do	Don't
• Keep your opinions loose	• Expect them to diagnose problems on their own
• Let them express why they wanted to do something	• Be too rigid in the expected results
• Build comfort before speaking harsh truths	• Require them to provide their own next steps
• Acknowledge what their peers think	• Discourage their creativity

GIVING FEEDBACK TO S-TYPES

Patient, sensitive S-types generally prefer feedback which addresses what they do well in addition to discussing necessary improvements. They like to be appreciated for their hard work and will likely feel dejected if it goes unacknowledged. Avoid being overly harsh or serious in tone; instead, focus on presenting feedback in a gentle, patient way. Offer to help in areas where it may be needed.

If you're giving feedback to S-types, try using phrases like:

- Let's meet one-on-one to discuss...

- You have my trust, so let's proceed with...

- Want to get help from anyone else?

- You clearly put a lot of time into this...

S Personality Types   *Counselor, Supporter, Planner, Stabilizer*

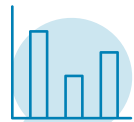| Do	Don't
• Provide feedback in a one-on-one meeting rather than a group setting	• Ask for all of their reasons for doing something
• Acknowledge their consistency and dependability	• Use competition as a motivator to improve
• Offer to enlist the help of others	• Use an overly serious tone
• Be attentive to uncomfortable body language	• Be too intense in your critique

GIVING FEEDBACK TO C-TYPES

Detailed, analytical C-types tend to prefer feedback to be clear and specific. If you're going to present a problem to C-types, make sure you work with them toward potential solutions; give them a chance to share ideas they may have. Focus on following a logical order within the meeting and avoid bringing in personal details, which may cause you to lose objectivity.

If you're giving feedback to C-types, try using phrases like:

- How did you arrive at this solution?

- Specifically, I think this part needs the most work...

- How would you do this differently?

- Let's go through this logcially...

C Personality Types   *Editor, Analyst, Skeptic, Questioner*

Do	Don't
• Let them share how they arrived at a solution	• Lose focus when they explain their thinking
• Use clear language to diagnose a problem	• Make things personal rather than objective
• Ask how they could do something differently	• Question their ability
• Go through critique in a logical order	• Be open-ended with your opinions

Help your team improve

Constructive feedback gives us the tools we need to grow and improve, but it needs to be presented in an empathetic way. Feedback can easily get lost in translation if the way you communicate it doesn't fit the other person's personality. When you make the effort to adapt your communication style and offer feedback in a way that helps the other person better understand, you can avoid unnecessarily stressful situations, maintain healthy relationships, and help people grow to their full potential.