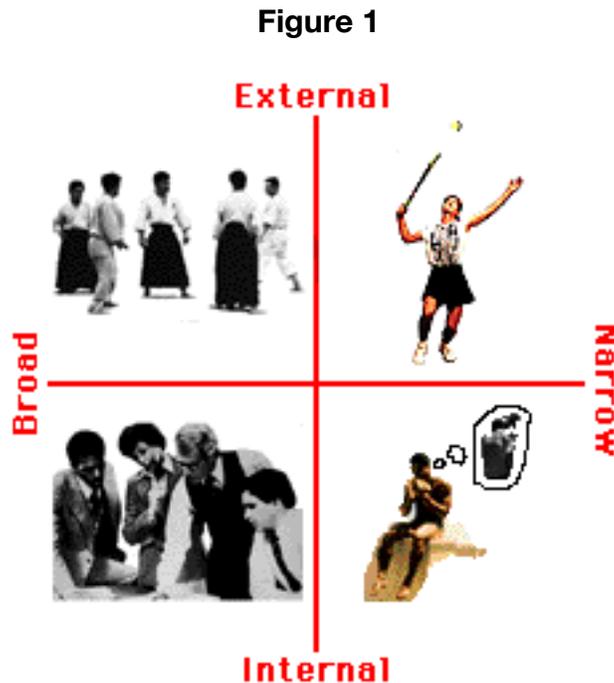


Why Take The ICCS?

Once you have developed the knowledge base and technical skills required to be successful in a highly competitive job or sport what is it that determines your success or failure? The answer is simple, it's your ability to stay focused, to concentrate on task relevant cues. Nothing is more basic to performance, or more critical to success, than your ability to concentrate. ***The Inventory of Concentration and Communication Skills (ICCS)*** is a tool that measures basic concentration skills.

To be successful, you need to be able to shift your focus of concentration along two intersecting dimensions, width, and direction. When you can make those shifts in response to the changing demands of performance situations, you can "do it all." Figure 1 shows the four basic concentration styles you need to be able to shift between.



You use a *broad-external* focus of concentration to maintain awareness of and sensitivity to your surroundings. A master of the martial arts needs this focus to be ready to respond to an attack from any direction. A good salesperson uses this focus to be sensitive to customer reactions.

You use a *broad-internal* focus of concentration to strategize and to creatively problem solve. A coach uses it to make adjustments in a game, a manager uses it to develop strategic goals and objectives for a division or for the company.

You use a *narrow internal* focus of concentration to create a logical set of systems and/or procedures. A diver uses this style of concentration to mentally rehearse his performance. Program managers use it to create a set of rules or steps that lead to the accomplishment of a production goal or corporate objective.

You use a *narrow-external* focus of concentration to actually implement and/or execute a plan or an action. This is the type of concentration used to catch or hit a ball in sport. It's the kind of concentration a production line worker uses to drill a hole, or a writer uses to type a letter, a surgeon uses to cut out a tumor.

ICCS Measures Your Concentration Preferences

Although everyone is capable of developing the four different styles of concentration shown in Figure 1, if you are like most of us one or two of the concentration styles will be more highly developed than the others. Your scores on ICCS will identify your preferred or more highly developed concentration style. Typically, these preferred styles of attending are associated with both your genetic makeup and your educational and occupational background. Most CEO's for example, are strategic or "big picture" thinkers. Scores on ICCS indicate that for CEO's and other high level executives, it's a broad internal focus of concentration that is most highly developed. In contrast, it is the ability to narrow one's focus to a single task or goal that is more developed in engineers and other highly skilled technically oriented individuals, including most world record holders in sport.

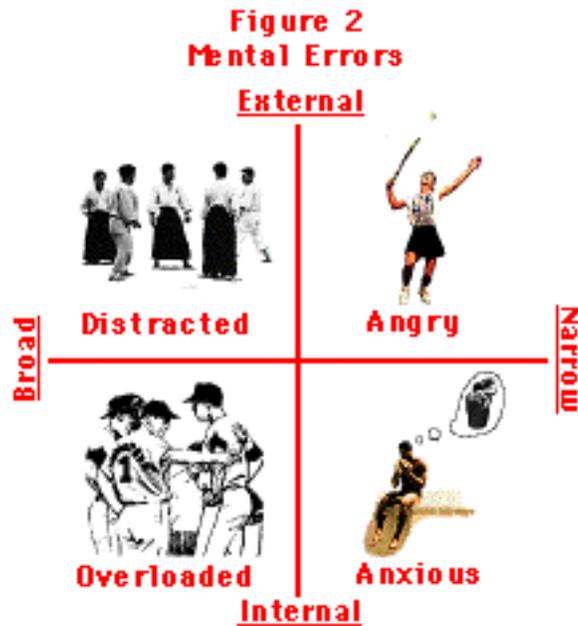
Having a dominate or preferred style does not mean you can't shift your focus. Under conditions of optimal emotional arousal, you perform effectively, and have no problems shifting between the four different styles of concentration when required to do so. When emotional arousal drops too low or goes too high, however, you often fail to make adjustments in your focus of concentration, becoming dominated by your preferred style, and performance errors occur.

ICCS Identifies Your Most Likely Mistakes In High Pressure Situations

When arousal levels drop too low, your mind begins to wander. As that happens individuals who are dominated by a broad-external focus of concentration, become distracted by things going on in their environment. In contrast, individuals dominated by a broad-internal focus of concentration have a tendency to become overloaded and distracted by their own thoughts.

The sales person whose strength is his external awareness, but isn't really into the sale, pays more attention to people walking by than to the client, and because of that loses the sale. The master of the martial arts demonstrating his ability to take on several attackers at once relaxes too much and allows himself

to become distracted by one of his opponents losing his awareness of the other attackers. The coach or manager known for his strategic skills and abilities over analyzes and becomes too creative in his thinking. Instead of providing a clear set of instructions for others to follow, he overloads them with information and paralyzes them. Figure 2 shows the kind of mental mistakes athletes, and others make as pressure increases.



If the mistakes you make when you become a little too relaxed occur within an important situation, those mistakes cause an immediate increase in your level of emotional arousal, generating anxiety, or irritation and anger. The increase in arousal causes biochemical changes that then narrow your focus of concentration. Narrowing is a natural part of your bodies "fight or flight" response. You use the narrow focus to immediately assess the situation, to determine how much damage has been done.

Whether you will recover and re-focus on the task depends upon your level of self-confidence following the assessment. When confident, arousal settles into the optimal range. You are able to mentally let the mistake go and re-focus concentration on accomplishing the task. When confidence is lacking, however, arousal levels increase even more and you begin to become aware of feelings of anger and frustration, or of anxiety and doubt. Your scores on ICCS scores will make you more aware of the specific type(s) of concentration error you are likely to make as the pressure you are feeling to perform increases.

ICCS Scores Allow You To Anticipate How You Will React Emotionally To Pressure And The Impact Your Emotions Will Have On Performance

Whether or not you react to mistakes by becoming frustrated and angry or by

becoming worried and anxious depends on how you score on ICCS scales measuring your need for control, your competitiveness, your level of self-confidence, and your speed of decision-making. The higher you score on these scales the more likely you are to react to mistakes with anger and frustration. Those emotions cause your focus of concentration to narrow and you begin to try and force the issue. Whether you can use the anger successfully depends in large part on: 1) The situation you find yourself in; 2) Your belief in your ability to actually regain control and accomplish your goals, and; 3) Your ability to appropriately employ one or more of the psychological techniques used to help people control their focus of concentration and their level of emotional arousal.

Under pressure, the tennis player shown in Figure 2 tightens up and tries to hit the serve harder than she is capable of. She ducks her head, rushes her swing and hits the ball into the net. Similarly, a salesperson becomes too intense and is perceived as too aggressive by the client, pushing too hard, and not listening. The narrow external focus keeps both the tennis player and the salesperson from monitoring their own behavior and from making the adjustments in concentration and arousal they need to make to be successful.

Contrast what happens when your scores on the control, self-confidence, competitiveness, and decision-making scales are high, with what happens when they are low. The lower your scores, the more likely you are to react to pressure and mistakes with anxiety, worry, and self-doubt. When that happens your concentration narrows and becomes focused internally, on negative thoughts and feelings. The diver shown in Figure 1 begins thinking about possible mistakes instead of systematically rehearsing performance. Managers with this pattern of scores on ICCS start to worry about mistakes or about how they are being perceived by others. When this internal focus develops, it keeps you from being aware of, and reacting to, critical things going on around you.

Whether your emotional reaction is one of anger and frustration, or one of worry and doubt, the narrowing of attention, and the break down in shifting from an external focus to an internal one, or vice versa, results in decisions being made with only half of the relevant information being considered. Just how destructive that breakdown in concentration will be depends on the complexity of the task (how much information is missed), and on how important the situation is. Was it match point at Wimbledon or just a recreational tennis match? Did the manager's worry keep him from hearing the same old complaint he's already heard a dozen times, or did it keep him from reacting quickly enough to a major problem on a production line?

ICCS Scores Allow You To Anticipate Problem Areas

Scores on ICCS scales can be used to identify the specific performance conditions that will contribute to your success as well as those that will

contribute to your failure.

How high or low you score on each of the concentration and communication building blocks measured by ICCS indicates: 1) Your level of confidence in your ability in that area; 2) Your ability to be flexible and adjust your behavior(s) in response to the changing demands of the performance situation.

Take a manager for example. To be effective in all kinds of situations, managers have to know when to become more assertive and authoritative, and when to behave in a more democratic way, delegating and giving up control. As the pressure to perform and accomplish a goal increases, those managers who score very high or very low on the control and self-confidence scales on the ICCS will have difficulty adjusting their behavior and management style to the changing demands of the performance situation.

A manager with a very high need for control and a high level of self-confidence for example, will find it difficult to give up control and to effectively delegate when he is under pressure. Instead, the more pressure the manager feels the more he will micro-manage and try and do everyone else's job.

Contrast the effects of pressure on the behavior of the high scoring manager with the effects of pressure on a manager who scores much lower on the ICCS scale measuring need for control. Low scoring managers tend to be less authoritative and much more democratic and/or consensus oriented when interacting with their direct reports. Under time pressure and in a crisis consensus and democratic processes often result in the failure to react quickly enough.

This same logic applies to the other characteristics measured by ICCS. People who make decisions quickly are stressed when they have to wait. People who are introverted are more likely to become stressed when they have to initiate contact with others. Individuals who are highly verbal are stressed in situations where they have to remain silent.

All ICCS Scales Are Directly Related to Performance

What makes ICCS so useful is the fact that the concentration and communication skills and abilities the inventory measures have an obvious and very direct link to virtually any performance situation. In other words you can pick any performance situation and then anticipate just how high or how low you should score on each of the ICCS scales in order to meet the demands of that particular performance situation. It is this fact, combined with the fact you're your preferred concentration and communication styles become less flexible as the pressure to perform increases that makes the information you gain from taking the ICCS so valuable.

The report that is generated based on your responses to the ICCS will provide you with all of the information you need to develop your own, highly unique, program designed to give you greater control over both your focus of concentration, and your level of emotional arousal, under highly competitive and/or stressful conditions. The report will also provide you with links to the psychological tools and resources you need to be able to use to perform up to your potential.