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STYLES of LEARNING, WAYS of THINKING

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION! Imagine that you wrote the script, then starred in a movie about you. In reality, you are writing the script about you every day of your life and acting out that script, too. Do you think Shakespeare was right when he observed, “All the world’s a stage”? Do you think we act out who we are by what we do?

This book, *Learning Styles: Personal Exploration and Practical Applications*, is designed to help you explore your special abilities and qualities as a person, learner, and thinker, and to tell your story. Through it, you will find new ways of looking at yourself and consider different approaches for understanding how you naturally learn and think. I hope the information, ideas, and points of view will help you broaden the way you see yourself as a person, the way you relate to others, and the way you learn.

I have developed the information in this book from many sources—by reading the ideas and theories of many researchers about how people learn, by observing how students in middle and high school actually learn, and by interviewing people like you to find out their views on how they learn. In the opening section of this book, you are going to read about several different types of students I have known. Like you, they have many things in common with other students. But, like you, they also have their own unique strengths and their own style. Through their examples, you will be able to consider your own strengths and reflect on how you use your style. After that, through a questionnaire and several checklists, you will be able to assess how you learn best, and how to take advantage of your own learning strengths.

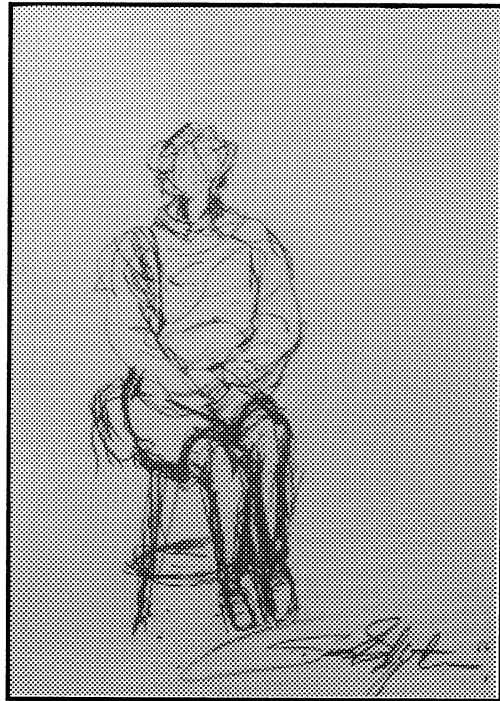
Welcome to the set—that is, to your world, your mind! You have quite a fascinating story to tell.

AN INTRODUCTION TO STYLE

Just what is style? Style is a personal pattern of behavior that shows others—through your behavior—the natural qualities and abilities of your mind. Check out the way you organize your locker, keep your room, or plan a party; these all reflect your style, how your mind works naturally. However, some things about you reflect more than your personal style. Quite often your taste in clothes, music, or even colors may include the influence of your friends, your social group, or perhaps, even your parents.

There is no one best style or style of learning. When you understand your own style, however, you are better prepared to make wiser decisions and choices, to be self-directed in your own learning, and to work more appreciatively with others. Because your teachers and assignments will not favor just your style all the time, the more you know, the more you will be able to adjust your style without losing your own sense of worth; the more you understand, the more you will be able to communicate your needs most effectively without making excuses.

It seems obvious that we should understand and value ourselves and others, as well as value our own and others' styles. But, just what is *your* style? Most of us do not always feel sure about our style or necessarily have confidence that our natural approach has value. Through the readings and exercises in this book, you will have an opportunity to explore personal style for yourself—to identify your strengths and natural abilities. As you consider style in this book, concentrate on what YOU do, feel, think, and experience rather than what others expect of you.



Once you have a sense of your own personal style, you'll be ready to look at your learning style: how you gain knowledge in your own way, work with it so that it makes sense to you, and then have the ability to show teachers you understand it.

The more you know, the more you'll grow.