Personality Adaptations and AP3 – an Essay

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Ware (1983) introduced the concept of personality adaptations in an article subtitled 'Doors to Therapy' and in which he referenced only the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 3rd edition (APA 1980) (usually referred to as DSM III), the Transactional Analysis Journal articles on miniscript (Kahler & Capers 1974) and passivity (Schiff & Schiff 1971) and a chapter on Redecision (Goulding 1972).

He does not define 'personality adaptation', referring first to personality types, personality characteristics and adaptational patterns, and how in growing up we must adapt by remaining helpless, becoming helpful or being hurtful. He suggests we adapt primarily in one but possibly two of these ways. He then selects six of the personality disorders in DSM III to present as personality adaptations, saying that these are the result of certain combinations of injunctions (the Goulding 1972 reference) and of drivers (not referenced in text but presumably relates to Kahler & Capers 1974). He adds that many individuals are not pure types.

Having said without any explanation that other types listed in DSM III "do not seem to be clear personality adaptations", (p.12) Ware goes on to describe his chosen six and provides a chart of their characteristics (e.g. excitability, rigidity of thought), description (e.g. innovative, hypersensitive), drivers (one, plus one or two others) and injunctions (one has three, four have four, one has seven). He also provides a table showing the 'doors', explaining that each personality (sic) "typically invests energy in either thinking, feeling or behaviour… the open door… is where the therapist… is initially establishing contact… the target or accessible door, to invite the client away from the resistance… the trap door becomes the goal, where the client does significant work." (p.18).

Below is a table that extracts elements from the two tables provided by Ware, with amendments where the original table did not match the content of the text.

Adaptation	Main Drivers	Secondary Drivers	Open Door	Target Door	Trap Door
Schizoid	Be Strong	Try Hard or Please Others	Behaviour	Thinking	Feeling
Paranoid	Be Strong	Be Perfect	Thinking	Feeling	Behaviour
Antisocial	Be Strong	Please Others	Thinking	Feeling	Behaviour
Hysterical	Please Me or Please Others	Try Hard or Hurry Up	Feeling	Thinking	Behaviour
Obsessive - Compulsive	Be Perfect	Be Strong or Try Hard	Thinking	Feeling	Behaviour
Passive - Aggressive	Try Hard	Be Strong	Behaviour	Feeling	Thinking

Note: adaptations within the table are listed so the first three are survival adaptations and the second three are performing adaptations, as described by Joines (1986) below.

Joines (1986) wrote of how failures with the redecision therapy model could be avoided if therapists used personality adaptations (Ware 1983) and particularly the guide on contact and target areas. He also gave new names to the adaptations and separated them into three primary or survival adaptations that develop in the first three years of life, and three secondary adaptations that develop in the second three years of life.

The primary are Schizoid – Creative Daydreamer, Paranoid – Brilliant Sceptic, Antisocial – Charming Manipulator: the secondary are Passive-Aggressive – Playful Critic, Obsessive-Compulsive – Responsible Workaholic, Hysterical – Enthusiastic Overreactor. He also wrote that many combinations are possible, from only one survival adaptation to more that one of both, wit most people having one of each. Hence, the therapist needs to shift contact, or door, as the client moves between adaptations. Joines gives details of how to work with each adaptation and for typical combinations (for up-to-date details the reader is referred to Joines & Stewart 2002).

In a later article, Joines (1988) produced a variation adapted from Kaplan et al (1984), of the "OK Corral" (Ernst 1971) in which the axes were You're OK/Not OK Attached (Near to Others) (vertical) and I'm OK/Not OK Individualised (Near to Self) (horizontal). He used dashed, dotted and solid lines respectively to indicate sense-of-self boundaries as circles within square interpersonal boundaries. He then added into appropriate quadrants diagrams of ego state contamination, exclusion or impasse along with each adaptation.

This diagram is reproduced, with minor changes, in Joines & Stewart (2002). It is interesting to note that two surviving adaptations (paranoid and antisocial) are shown in the I'm OK, You're Not OK quadrant, two performing (hysterical, now called histrionic, and obsessive-compulsive) in the I'm not OK, You're OK sector, and one of each (schizoid and passive-aggressive) in the I'm not OK, You're not OK quadrant.

Harman (1991) referenced Ware (1983) and Joines (1986) when she related personality adaptations to the treatment of adults from alcoholic homes. She pointed out that Joines had changed the names to less pejorative terms to emphasise that adaptations range from healthy to pathological. She concentrated on the obsessive-compulsive adaptation as being commonly found in adult children of alcoholics, and based on Ware's (1983) description of them, wrote that they are "super conformists who are overly conscientious and extremely critical of themselves… [with] Be Perfect and Be Strong… Don't Be a Child, Don't Feel and Don't Be Close… contact door is through thinking, their target door is feeling, and the trap door is behaviour." (p.32). Harman gives several case studies but concludes that categorising clients using only one model would unnecessarily limit the range of possible interventions.

When the Joines & Stewart (2002) book entitled Personality Adaptations was published, they wrote that "we show you how to diagnose personality adaptations rapidly and accurately – after only a few minutes interaction, and without the need for "history-taking" – by observing certain distinctive behavioural clues known as *driver behaviours"* (italics in original) (p.ix). They say that this will allow you to gain quick and reliable insight into: typical modes of social relating, approach to problem-solving, communication style, initial and ongoing contact areas, life patterns, principle issues during personal change, and how to work with them. This of course is similar to, although not as powerful as, Kahler's (1975) statement that "the stopping of the driver behaviour also prevents the concurrent script sentence (thought) patterns." (p.280) and "If a person changes driver formed sentences, he (sic) may change his whole life (process) script pattern." (p.283).

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There is too much content in the Joines & Stewart book to produce a meaningful summary here: those wishing to work with their process are recommended to read the book – and train with the authors.

However, for those seeking self awareness, Joines & Stewart present information on parenting styles as follows:

Schizoid – underdone, tentative – so child withdraws or cares for parents
Antisocial – overdone, anticipating but then missing – so child attention-seeks or manipulates
Paranoid – inconsistent, unpredictable – so child becomes hypervigilant and controlled
Passive-Aggressive – over-controlling – so child attempts tenacity and then stubborness
Obsessive-Compulsive – achievement focused – so child over achieves
Histrionic – emphasise keep people happy – so child is emotionally reactive and centre of attention

Three years after the book appeared, White (2005) produced a critique of the theory of personality adaptations, and particularly of Ware's (1983) article. White points out that Ware had no TA qualification, does not explain how he decided on the six adaptations, nor why he excluded others in the DSM III. He notes that Joines & Stewart address the last point by saying that the other DSM III classifications are combinations of the six: White says this is a circular argument. He also challenges their view that narcissist and borderline lack healthy versions, which White disputes, and that they cannot be mapped on the Assessing Quadrant, which White says is a problem with the Quadrant. White also notes the omission of dependent personality, before going on to present his own material including ego state patterns against the three groups of personality traits and disorders within DSM IV (APA 1994).

White's critique appears to have been published only on the internet, whereas three years later Tudor & Widdowson (2008) provided a similar "critique of the Process Model and Personality Adaptations." (part of article title, p.218). In addition to the omissions of DSM IV classifications, they also identify the following problems: the myth of universal explanation – it is not possible to explain so much with one theory; the seduction of being too simplistic – is reductionist; the confusion of being too complicated – especially as individuals have a mix of adaptations; the underdevelopment of development – the models are not supported by research in child development; the danger of diagnosis – quoting Steiner (1971) that diagnosis is a form of alienation unless based on organic factors plus, for good measure here they mention inconsistency, limitation, discounting, partiality and inaccuracy; and the individualisation of the person – because it locates pathology within the intrapsychic process and ignores the social, cultural and interactional context.

During the same year, Kahler's (2008) book on the Process Therapy Model appeared. This contains a statement that "Teaching or training of the material in this book requires certification by Taibi Kahler Associates Inc or one of its authorised affiliate organisations." (before title page). Hence, again you will need to get the book if you wish to know more. However, Kahler does describe the considerable amount of research conducted that supports the current version of the model, and how research at NASA (interviewing for astronauts) during 1979-1982 helped him re-analyse the 1972 research data with a new hypothesis that gave significance at the >.01 level.

Three years later, Joines (2011) responded to the critique by Tudor & Widdowson. He referred to his 30 years of clinical work with clients and the questionnaire he uses (Joines 2002). He challenged what he regarded as misunderstandings, pointed out that he does not use Kahler's process model; this had been added to the book by Stewart and subsequently criticised by Kahler (Note: Kahler 2008 included in that book the apology he had received from Joines & Stewart). Joines went on to address the specific criticism of simplicity, defined a personality adaptation as "a combination of innate characteristics plus the way an individual adjusts his or her behaviour in order to survive physically and/or psychologically and to get along well in his or her family of origin." (p.93-94), explained that personality disorders are mainly the negative sides of adaptations and that some disorders are combinations; and pointed out that narcissistic is due to be omitted as a type in DSM V (APA 2013) and become a trait for antisocial/psychopathic type.

Personality Styles

Based on personal notes taken at a conference workshop led by Kahler during the mid 1970s, and supplemented by booklets by Kahler (1979a, 1979b), Hay (1995, 2001, 2009) developed an alternative, simplified view of styles within a framework she called AP3 because the three axes were each labelled with A and P.

Hay (2009) begins her description of the model with the following caveats:
- "This is a simplification of material that has been developed in great depth by therapists. See my notes about Taibi Kahler at the end of this chapter.
- We can't really fit people into boxes. We do it so we can have a framework to guide us in choosing our own behaviours so we will maximise our chances of getting on with people.
- People are immensely interesting and varied individuals so use the framework tentatively – don't allocate someone to a box and then get annoyed when they don't do everything in the way predicted by that box." (p. 184)

The following is an extract, with permission, from pages 184-194 of the 2009 book.

Imagine a cube, as shown in Figure 1, for which there is height, width and depth. Imagine that these three dimensions are, respectively:
active – passive – do we initiate contact and move towards people and goals – or do we respond to contacts and goals initiated by others?
alone – people – do we prefer to be, or work, alone – or would we rather be functioning within a group of people, perhaps as the central figure?
acceleration – patience – do we prefer to do things quickly, perhaps even with ever-increasing speed – or do we like to take our time, doing things slowly and carefully?
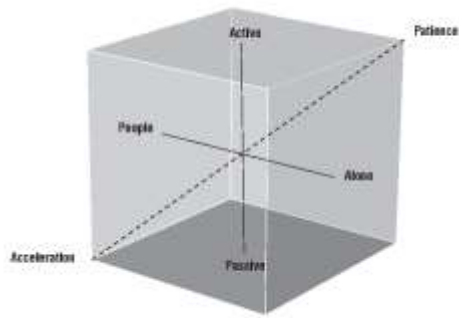
Note that the *acceleration – patience* dimension runs from the top right-hand corner at the back to the bottom left-hand corner at the front rather than simply from back to front. I will come back to this later.

Identifying the Styles
We will concentrate first on the four AP³ styles that fit within the height and width dimensions of the cube. We can show these as if they are 4 boxes created by the axes, as in Figure 2.
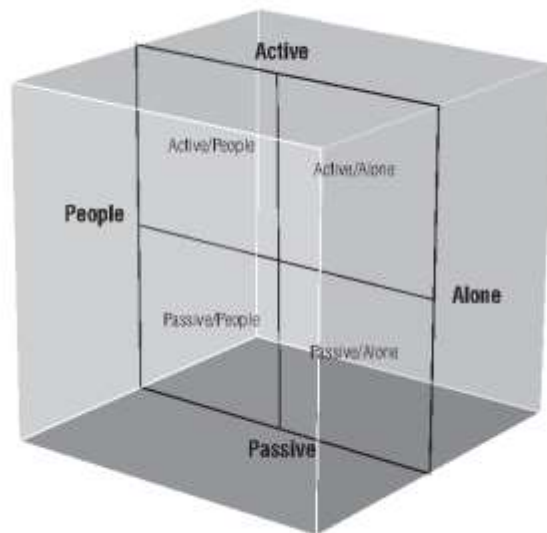
The following are some ideas on how you might recognise the different types (and, of course, position yourself!). As you read the descriptions, imagine that the individual (or you) has arrived at a conference. They are expecting this to be mainly work-based but with a significant element of socialising. They arrive before the first formal session is due to start – and come into a large room where people are having coffees or cocktails, chatting with each other, meeting new contacts or talking to people they already know, and generally passing the time until the official opening event.

Active/Alone

The first thing you'll notice when someone arrives at a conference (or when you meet them anywhere) is their appearance. In particular, you can see what they are wearing and this will be your initial set of clues to their AP³ type.

Active/Alone people are likely to be dressed very neatly, in a classically business orientated style. Everything they wear will be pressed or polished or otherwise in perfect condition. They will be appropriately attired to comply with whatever the cultural norms are for business in the area – and you may well suspect that they are likely to continue to look business-like at all times. These are the people who choose fairly formal outfits even for weekends; in the UK, for example, the men choose blazers and flannels for weekends and the women wear dresses and tights. Not for them the comfort of casual clothes – they actively dislike dress-down days at work.

Having noticed their clothes, you can next observe their behaviour as they come into the room. Because they are *active*, they will probably initiate contact by walking up to people. Because they are *alone*, they will prefer to talk to only one or two people at a time.

They will therefore approach one person, or maybe two people who are already together. They will initiate a conversation with them – this will usually be about something work-related. For example, they may introduce themselves with their name and job details, clearly expecting the other person to reply with similar information. Or, if they already know the person, they may begin with a work-based comment such as a query about a current project or a request for information.

As they begin to talk, you get more clues. In addition to the work-based content, you will notice that *active/alone* people speak clearly and concisely. Their words are precise and their sentences are grammatically correct. They will not use slang, they will pause as if for punctuation at the correct points, and they will tend to use long words because these are usually more specific, and therefore more accurate, than shorter, everyday words.

They may also add clauses, or sub-sentences, into their sentences as if in brackets (which they would call parentheses as this is a more specific word) – just as I have done when writing this sentence. You will, I am sure, realise that too much of this makes the sentence rather long, and hence difficult to follow and understand! In their attempts to speak in perfect sentences that include everything, they often merely overload and confuse the listener.

One final clue – *active/alone* people often have horizontal frown lines – generated through all that worrying about getting it right.

When you consider what motivates them, their working style is most likely to be *Be Perfect*. Their preferred channel of communication will be Functional Adult-Functional Adult and they will respond best to strokes about their work performance.

Active/People

When an *active/people* type arrives at our conference, they will be wearing bright colours, interesting fabrics, plenty of jewellery and you'll notice their perfume or aftershave. Women have more scope for this in most cultures, although men will find ways to get round dress codes such as dark suits or plain white robes by wearing rings, cufflinks, decorative watch or identity bracelets, coloured ties, braces, or anything else that can be brighter or more colourful.

These people will not deliberately flout convention but they will opt for colourful and decorative clothing as soon as it becomes generally acceptable. For instance, they would not have been the first men to wear 'Mickey Mouse' ties and socks but may choose them once these are no longer seen as unusual. And *active/people* women will choose colourful fashions but not while these are still regarded as avant-garde. They will not want to shock people with their appearance but will want to look pleasing, often in a way that gets them noticed.

As they move into the room, they will usually approach groups. They will initiate contact by moving easily into the group conversation, in a way that establishes them quickly as a significant group member

– and often as the 'star' of the group. Somehow, their presence completes the group and they become the focus of attention.

They will be unlikely to do this by talking about work. Instead, they relate to other people at a personal level, perhaps by commenting on their appearance or asking about their family. *Active/people* types tend to behave in a nurturing way, demonstrating a genuine interest in others and appreciating it when others do the same to them.

Further clues as they talk will come from their speech patterns. They are likely to phrase a lot of what they say as questions, often using an upward, questioning inflexion at the end of comments that are not really questions. For example, they might say "I was just wondering whether you would like to fetch me the file on Project X?" when they really mean "Fetch it!"

Note that they may also use a lot of 'weasel' words (a weasel is a small animal that is noted for its ability to get out of confinement). So they sprinkle terms like 'you know', 'sort of', 'maybe', 'like' – all of which reduce the impact of their comments and allow them to back off if challenged. It is as if they don't want to offend anyone by putting forward their opinion too definitely – and this may mean that they seem weak and undecided. Sometimes, they expect people to mind-read through these sentence patterns and know what they really meant. They may then get annoyed if their vague suggestions are not acted upon.

Another clue to this style is that they are usually smiling, often anxiously and at times when a more serious countenance would be appropriate. And as they speak in questioning style, their eyebrows tend to lift in a quizzical way.

In terms of working styles they are likely to be *Please People*. They feel most empowered when you use a caring approach and show an interest in them as human beings rather than simply in their work. Their preferred strokes are therefore about them as a person and they will tend to use a Nurturing Parent-Natural Child channel of communication – from either end depending on circumstances

Passive/People

What you may notice first about a *passive/people* type will be that they dress idiosyncratically. They are likely to be wearing something unusual. Even if they have followed organisational norms and dressed in business clothes, you may still spot that something doesn't look right – perhaps they're wearing casual shoes, or an unusual mix of garments.

These will be the types who wear the latest trends before everyone has got used to seeing them – or such old-fashioned outfits that they seem almost eccentric. This is the group of people who first wore the 'Mickey Mouse' ties – before abandoning them to the *active/people* once they became acceptable business wear. They are also the ones most likely to have unusual hairstyles or to wear earrings in one ear only (male or female!).

Remember that this group is at the *passive* end of the dimension. This does not mean that they do nothing – it means that they generally leave it to others to initiate contact. What they do, therefore, is go and stand near a group. They then wait until someone in the group starts to involve them in the conversation. If they are left waiting for too long, they may join in but will do so in an unusual way – such as by linking what has just been said to something that changes the subject. The people in the group may be momentarily surprised or confused by this.

Once they join the conversation, you may notice that they often seem to change the subject. These are the types who are accused of having butterfly-minds, because they go off at tangents. They are also, of course, the ones most likely to generate creative ideas! And the ones most likely to shift between groups. They may give less than full attention to the group they are in at present because they are scanning to check events in other groups. If another group seems set to become more exciting, they may well disengage themselves and move across.

You may also notice that they don't always finish their sentences. They begin with one topic, which reminds them of another, which reminds them of another, which reminds them of another . . . and then they just tail off. They will probably sound very enthusiastic about everything that gets mentioned. In fact, this enthusiasm is likely to be applied to everything. They will greatly enjoy talking about their hobbies, which may change frequently – this week, scuba diving, next week, horse riding, and so on. They often regard their work just as enthusiastically so you can expect them to enjoy discussing their latest projects.

You may be able to see the vertical frown lines that show as they 'struggle' to try and understand or to achieve; in the working styles classifications they are *Try Hards*. They will respond best to a Natural Child-Natural Child channel of communication and prefer strokes that relate to how they 'play' – inside or outside work.

Passive/Alone
Passive/alone people will avoid coming to the conference if they can! They prefer to stay on their own. If they do come (generally because they are given no option), you may notice that they seem to pay little attention to their appearance. They may be dressed inappropriately, or their clothes may look unpressed, unpolished, etc. Or perhaps they live with someone who has made sure they start the day looking tidy – but as the day progresses they become steadily more dishevelled because they take no notice of themselves and gradually end up with their shirt hanging out or their make-up smudged. Once at the conference location, they will enter but wait for others to initiate contact. They may simply stand about, or find an alcove to 'hide' in, or start on some simple tasks (such as putting out leaflets), that will make it less obvious that they are not chatting like everyone else.

These are the people you meet at parties, who wish they were at home but came because their partner insisted. Their partner in such cases is often an *active/people* who is thoroughly enjoying being the centre of attention in a group. If it's your party, you can earn the *passive/alone's* gratitude by finding them something to do that doesn't involve them in initiating conversations (such as clearing the dirty plates or washing the dishes).

Assuming someone does start a conversation with them, a *passive/alone* person will prefer this to be about work – and preferably to involve telling them what to do. They like to be given clear directions and will then go and do whatever is required, conscientiously and calmly, even if it is a task that most people dislike.

Their speech will probably sound fairly monotonous as they are usually fairly matter-of-fact, without much excitement or emphasis in their voice. They may be quite direct, and directive, when it is their turn to tell others what to do – and they will expect firmness from their own managers.

A visual clue to this style is often their lack of expression. Rather like the stiff upper lip of the English, or the deadpan face of the American poker player, they give little away and their smile may not extend to their eyes. Even when told something that shocks them, they can contain their emotions and appear quite calm.

These are the *Be Strong* working styles, who are great in a crisis and prefer to have only minimal amounts of recognition. The usual polite greeting rituals are often enough stroking contact for them and if you want to delegate to them, they will expect you to exercise managerial control so a Controlling Parent-Adapted Child will be the most appropriate channel to use.

Acceleration/Patience
Let's now consider the third dimension. This runs from back to front diagonally, as shown in Figure 3. It does not create lots more types. Instead, it blends with the four types already described. What you will see, in terms of appearance and behaviour, will be as we have already described. However, someone at

the *acceleration* end of the scale will do everything very quickly. Someone at the *patience* end will instead do it all very slowly. This final dimension equates to the *Hurry Up* working style.

The reason for the distorted shape of the cube is that the *acceleration – patience* characteristics are not evenly spread across the four styles. There are more people with *acceleration* in the *passive/people* quadrant, and more with *patience* in the *active/alone* box. This conclusion is not a theoretical notion; it is based on empirical evidence. We can place Hurry Up in the bottom left hand box, so that it overlaps with Try hard most, Please people sometimes, and Be Strong and Be Perfect less often. People with a Be Strong/Hurry Up or Be Perfect/Hurry Up combination may well feel more stressed as these working styles pairings have inbuilt conflict - it is much easier to Hurry Up and Try Hard or Hurry Up and Please People.

The Third Dimension
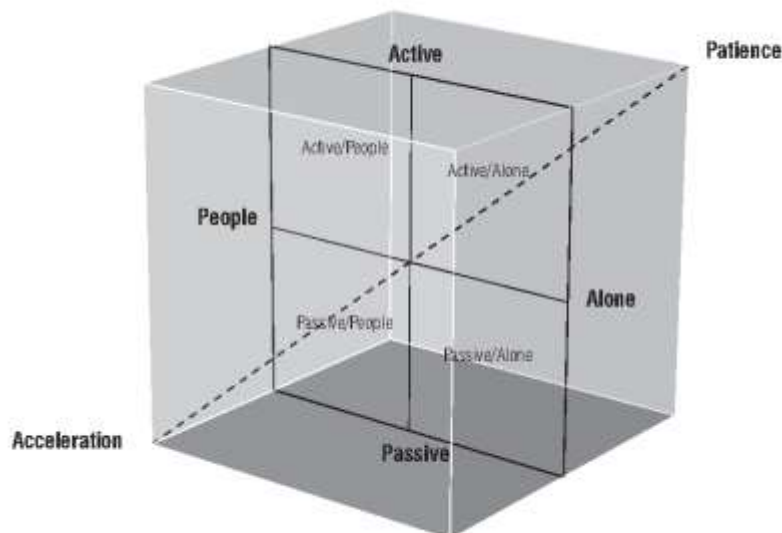
If we now consider the impact of the 3rd dimension on the four types within the quadrant you are most likely to notice:
passive/people/acceleration – dressed unusually, wait for others in groups to initiate contact, always in a hurry so may be very productive.
active/alone/patience – dressed immaculately in business clothes, initiate contact with one or two people, do things slowly and carefully.
You will, of course, also meet people who fit the following patterns:
active/people/acceleration – dressed colourfully, initiate contact and enjoy being in groups, always in a hurry – so manage to nurture or please many others.
passive/alone/patience – don't care about appearance, prefer to avoid contact, do things slowly – so great at plodding through essential but boring tasks.
And sometimes you will meet:
active/people/patience – dressed colourfully, initiate contact in groups, take their time with all they do.
passive/alone/acceleration – don't care about appearance, prefer to be alone, rush about a lot.
and infrequently, you will meet:

active/alone/acceleration – dressed in business-like way, initiate contact with one or two people, and always in a hurry so may seem impatient.

passive/people/patience – dressed unusually, wait for others in groups to initiate contact, and spend a lot of time trying, and often failing, to finish things.

Leadership Styles

Our five leadership styles can be summarised as:

Consulting – for *active/alone*: stroke them for their performance, value the positive outcomes of their Be Perfect working styles, and lead by consulting. Ask them how they think the work should be done and have rational discussions about it.

Caring – for *active/people*: know and stroke them as a person (and don't talk about work until you've asked after their family or noticed how they feel). Value them for the way their Please People working styles contribute to a pleasant team spirit. Lead by caring; nurture them and, when appropriate, appreciate the way they nurture you and others.

Connecting – for *passive/people*: recognise their Natural Child playfulness and Try Hard enthusiasm, both for work and hobbies. Get enthusiastic with them and lead by connecting. This may mean doing the work alongside them so you seem like playful colleagues rather than a hierarchical relationship.

Controlling – for *passive/alone*: keep your distance. They will prefer to be given clear instructions and left to get on with the task. Strokes can be restricted to polite greetings and matter-of-fact comments and then their Be Strong working style will be evident as they complete tasks that others might have ducked. This type expect a manager to tell them what is required so a controlling leadership style works best.

Concise – for *acceleration*: remember they may also show preferences from another box and take that into account. However, for those who are distinctly into the acceleration 'corner', then your leadership style just needs to be concise. You need to interact quickly because otherwise they will have rushed elsewhere before you have finished talking to them. Their Hurry Up style will mean they appreciate strokes for their productivity.

Udall & White (2004) referred to much of the material above and to Hay's (1995) working styles and AP3 Assessing Cube (Hay 2001) to propose their own version of what they call Personality Styles. They provide a table showing Ware, Joines and Hay material, although this is incorrect because Hay places her 'personal styles' (behavioural ego state channels) in different places to Joines; she also includes Hurry Up driver in her model, as shown above.

Uddall & White allocate a new set of names to their styles (and use Hay's label for Please People Working Style):

Connector – Enthusiastic-Overreactor/Please People
Perfector – Responsible-Workaholic/Be Perfect
Creator – Creative Daydreamer/Be Strong
Challenger – Playful-Resister/Try Hard
Orchestrator – Brilliant Sceptic/Be Perfect & Be Strong
Competitor – Charming-Manipulator/Please People & Be Strong

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