

# The Abstract Random Learning Style

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One evening a young lady (abstract sequential) came home from being out with her friend. Her mom was sitting on the couch in the living room reading, about 15 feet from the front door. She looked up and smiled, “Hi sweetie!” Then these words shot out of her mouth. “You **like** James, don’t you?” The girl’s jaw dropped and she exclaimed, “HOW did you know? I was just now starting to figure that out myself!” The only reply the mom could give was that she saw it on her face. Remember the abstract sequential is typically not quick to identify her feelings or to express them. But because Mom is an abstract random, her people radar is quivering sensitively at all times.

## What They Are Good at

*Heightened instincts and intuition* make the AR gifted at reading signals that to others might be invisible. In addition, the AR is strongly motivated by the needs of others. Not just sensing them, but doing something about them. Innocuous questions such as “Which show do you want to watch?” or “Which game shall we play?” or “What shall we have for dinner tonight?” often throw the AR into what looks like indecision (even though the AR might know clearly what he wants) because in making the choice, the AR worries that he will be depriving his companions of what they want!

Taken further, this *care for the welfare of others* stirs an AR to action and can form the basis of their chosen career. For example, while I am a teacher, what really interests me and furthermore, what became a career for me, is finding out where roadblocks for learning are and finding solutions for them. I feel deeply the pain of children who are failing and need help.

*Attunement and harmony* are highly valued by the AR. Harmony with those around her are important for the AR, and this results in an unwillingness to argue unless the topic is one that is vitally important. The older I have gotten, the more carefully I have edited out the things that are not worth arguing over. Rather than having a thousand hills upon which to die, I have it narrowed down to a very few. For my children, for example, the two things I want more than anything are for them to be safe and be happy. To me these two things encompass all else. They have been brought up to know what is right, how to care for others, how to make good choices, so if they are happy, that means they are living consistently with what they believe. If they are safe, this means they are free of anything that would damage them, body and soul.

## The AR at School

This attunement to people carries over into the classroom where it impacts many facets of the child’s experience there. To the AR, all of life is about people and relationships. If she feels the teacher is not happy with her, she will be distressed. If the teacher takes a hard line with a child that the AR feels is overly harsh, he will become upset for that child. If the material being studied is not clearly related to the life of the AR, she will be unable to see its importance to her life. Many ARs drop out of classes that are technical and sterile and it is critical to show the

importance of those classes as stepping stones towards achieving the final goal, which may be about helping people.

### **What They Need as They Learn**

- Frequent feedback – to answer the question, “Am I on the right track?”
- Ability to use their creativity – “I know what you want, but can I do it my way?”
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Acceptance and validation of their feelings
- Freedom from conflict
- Ability to be spontaneous
- Appreciation for their efforts
- Freedom from competition
- The ability to revise midstream once they have new information
- Personalized learning that allows them to use their strengths
- Relevance to people, to them

### **Sources of Stress at Home and at School**

- When people jump to negative conclusions
- Pressure to be more sequential
- Being alone
- Time limits, such as using a stopwatch to time her work
- Strict, inflexible schedules
- Having to be exacting with answers
- Having to finish one thing before starting another
- Being criticized unfairly or harshly
- Demands to prove her intuitions

## **Helping ARs Achieve a Good Balance**

One of the dangers of being an AR, as you might imagine, is that they can be susceptible to those who would take advantage of their good nature and desire to help. When leading AR children, while it is very important to affirm their desire to care for others, we need to also teach them that it is wise to also draw lines in the sand over which another person should not cross. Sometimes the only way to get this point across to the child is to not only show how this action will hurt her, but to also show how it will not really help the other person either. For instance, the AR child will be alert to other students who ask for help with their work. It would be easy for the AR to become so involved in helping their classmate that they neglect to do their own work. You can say, "It would be best for Jane to do her own work because if she doesn't, she won't learn the material and might fail the class. Care for Jane's welfare might prove to be the tipping point for him that will teach him to guard himself against unnecessary "helping."