

I can't get through to that person?

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Over the years I've conducted a number of seminars with sport coaches. Often, the coaches talk about the struggles they have with their athletes, saying things like, "I just can't get through to that kid. She seems to take much of what I say the wrong way. I think I threaten her."

In some cases, this difficulty to inspire may be the result of two opposite temperaments trying to connect. If the coach is a Doer temperament, for example, they may use competitive language with short, direct phrases meant to lift, inspire and challenge their athletes. "Let's go out there and get 'em. You can beat them. No problem. Give it your best." If the athlete is a Relater however, the opposite of the Doer temperament, they are not likely to be inspired by the coach's 'go get 'em' attitude. In fact, they might feel offended, awkward, and definitely not encouraged to give it their best. Relaters respond to kinder, more compassionate and considerate words. "I know you're working out there. I believe you can perform at a higher level. You have the ability and it is in you. What do you say?"

Our temperaments have a strong influence on the words we choose. The strengths of one temperament are the very weaknesses of the opposite temperament. For example, the private Thinker complements the public Influencer. The time-focused Doer is in good company with the more relaxed and patient Relater. Getting through to the other person may well be challenged by opposite temperaments. It takes effort to address the comfort zone of your opposite.

Maxim:

When temperaments are opposite, their strengths can compliment one another – they attract.

When temperament are opposite, their strengths may also compete with one another – they attack.