Skills for Career And Life Effectiveness®
(An evolution of the Personal Skills Map™)

INTERPRETATION GUIDE®
Skill #4 – Empathy (E) (Interpersonal Sensitivity)

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Information About Skills for Career And Life Effectiveness® (SCALE®) And The Concepts From Which It Springs:

This section of the SCALE® Interpretation Guide will give you detailed information on interpreting each of the skills on the SCALE®.

This background section includes data on:
- What the SCALE® is
- What the SCALE® is not
- Resources for gaining additional knowledge of the research base of career/life effectiveness assessment

The SCALE® is a positive approach to the self-assessment of skills that are important in healthy living and successful working.

By responding to the questionnaire you will gain a picture of your current levels of skill effectiveness — skill strengths and skill areas in which you may wish to pursue growth.

The picture of current skills becomes a “map” for the future as you begin to plan skill development and personal growth experiences using the SCALE® information.
The SCALE® Is:

**Wellness Oriented**
The SCALE® is wellness oriented. It is a positive and constructive model for personal renewal.

**Based on the Concepts of:**
- Life-long learning
- Individual responsibility for learning
- A direct relationship between effective living and effective working or productivity
- Identification of the need as the first step in actually meeting the need
- Skill improvement depends on having permission to honestly acknowledge the need for such improvement
- Self help
- Effective training is directly related to a person's perceived needs

**Learnable Skills**
SCALE® measures only those areas of one's life that can be taught, learned, modeled, and practiced – in other words, things that can be changed and that a person is not "stuck with."

**Committed to Change**
SCALE® is based on the commitment that people can change, and will change if and when they want to and have resources available for it.

**Research-based**
Darwin B. Nelson, Ph.D., Gary R. Low, Ph.D., and Keith Taylor, M.S., of the Institute for the Development of Human Resources in Corpus Christi, Texas, have developed the research base, validity, reliability, and technical aspects of the SCALE® since 1976. The SCALE® process and instrument have an extensive and sound norming base.

**Valid**
The care and exactness with which the SCALE® Instrument has been nurtured to its present state is documented in a sixty-page book entitled, Personal Skills Map™: A Positive Assessment of Career/Life Effectiveness Skills Manual. Through their own long-term research, the research of colleagues and students, independent research, and with the corroborating evidence of a number of independent doctoral research dissertations (over 50 completed and others in progress), Nelson, Low, and Taylor can verify that the SCALE® does what it is designed to do. Currently, Drs. Nelson and Low continue to build the substantive research and application base of SCALE® skills, attitudes, and behaviors for career and life effectiveness, as well as leadership excellence. Dr. Rick Hammett has joined them in their life's work with Emotional Intelligence Learning Systems. Rick's contributions through statistical analyses, web development, and original ideas have been instrumental to improving SCALE® and our positive assessment and learning processes.

The SCALE® does significantly differentiate between more effective and less effective career/life skills among those who take the instrument under the conditions prescribed for its administration.
The SCALE® Is (continued)

The SCALE® Manual also identifies the correlations among the skills of the SCALE® and the correlations between the SCALE® and other related but dissimilar instruments:

- Personal Orientation Inventory (POI)
- Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS)
- Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)

A Map to Use for Further Skill Development

- Training
- Trying new behavior
- Seeking counsel
- Reading
- Seeking feedback from others
- Modifying your job
- Career pathing
- Insights into taking better care of yourself

All are corrective strategies for SCALE® skill areas where change is desired.

Relevant to Organizations

The SCALE® is most relevant to the needs of organizations that are centered on problems of people. Symptoms of career and life skills problems emerge in employee productivity, employee turnover, absenteeism, interpersonal problems, substance abuse, and physical disorders, such as ulcers, hypertension, weight problems, and aches and pains. Such personal problems become problems for the employees' organizations when they cause dysfunction in the work place.

These problems of organizations are directly related to the underdeveloped personal/life skills of its employees and management. The SCALE® maps out the current level of these skills so that growth strategies can be designed to further develop and strengthen essential career and life skills.
The SCALE® Is Not:

A screening Instrument

Alone, the SCALE® cannot be used as an assessment instrument to screen, hire, or point out who should be a candidate for promotion. It cannot adequately serve as a selection device in and of itself. The SCALE® was designed to protect the integrity and personal rights of the individual completing it, so it is inappropriate to use it to evaluate or diagnose a person’s potential for employment or promotion. Most people can fake the SCALE® if they are suspicious of how the results will be used.

For Defensive Individuals

The SCALE® has limited usefulness for persons who have difficulty in being honest and objective about themselves. Defensive (highly threatened) individuals may not be willing or have the skills to look at themselves in an objective, straightforward way.

Magic

Like any assessment instrument, the SCALE® can be no more effective than the person using the instrument. The SCALE® is a helpful tool for a skilled and sensitive professional who wants to work with people in effective ways — it performs no magic.
## Interpretation of the SCALE®

This section of the Interpretation Guide provides detailed information on each SCALE® skill. The information is organized in this way:

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<td>A brief statement defining the skill</td>
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<td>INTERACTION WITH</td>
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<td>OTHER SKILLS</td>
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<td>RELEVANCE TO</td>
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<td>PURSUING GROWTH</td>
<td>Suggestions for ways to pursue growth and strengthening of skill. The material in this section will be phrased as a discussion with the respondent so that you can readily use these explanations when you are interpreting the SCALE® as or with a user.</td>
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Skill #4 – Empathy (E) (Interpersonal Sensitivity)

**DEFINITION:** How accurately you think you understand another person’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and how willing you are to accept them.

**INTERACTION WITH OTHER SKILLS:**

- **Self Esteem**
  Recognizing how one feels about oneself is essential to listening to and understanding others. The secure person can put self aside to put another into focus.

- **Interpersonal Comfort**
  Listening is a key element of developing skills in empathy. To listen and truly hear others we must be able to be close them.

- **Stress Management**
  Very high scores on the empathy scale can indicate you put others first to an excessive degree. This can create stress if you feel torn between the priorities.

**RELEVANCE TO CAREER/LIFE EFFECTIVENESS:**

- **Key to:**
  - Managing diverse people
  - Selling
  - Building relationships
  - Being a professional helper/consultant
  - Being a mutual problem solver
  - Being an effective team member or meeting participant
  - Getting by with strong drive strength, dominant and aggressive behaviors.

- **Signifies Importance**
  A common human experience is that of not being listened to, not being heard. If a person does not feel listened to, that person feels less than important, misunderstood, and not very motivated to continue the relationship or the conversation, to make the purchase, to continue working at the meeting, to cooperate with the supervisor, to talk any further to the parent, to continue pitching in as a team member, or to continue struggling to solve a problem.

- **Walk a Mile...**
  The Native Americans had a saying that to understand someone you had to have “walked a mile in his moccasins.” That’s empathy—getting inside someone else’s soul (or trying to) before judging or deciding about that person. Empathy skills are essential for interpersonal understanding.

- **Essential Skill**
  Managing, selling, building relationships, helping, consulting, problem solving, teaming, having effective meetings, and facilitating others to do what needs to be done — and especially loving — are all dependent upon empathy skills.
Skill #4 - Empathy (E) (Interpersonal Sensitivity) (continued)

**Critical for Leaders**

Dominant, aggressive, strong leaders are often shy in the listening end of things. They can gain tolerance and cooperation on the part of others, no matter how dominant they are, if they sharpen up their listening skills. When a person feels listened to, he or she feels understood and appreciated as a human being.

**Can be Learned**

There are some people who seem to naturally have more empathy or interpersonal sensitivity than others. All people can improve these skills if they choose. The focal point for improving empathy is listening.

**Empathy Needs Balance**

There is a caution to using empathy skills to excess. Being sensitive with others without also being assertive and taking care of yourself in a relationship can lead others to not take you seriously, to take advantage of your kindness, and to use you. Empathy skills should be accompanied by assertiveness and drive strength skills. Without such a complement the person with good empathy could be perceived to be weak and too gentle. Whether it ought to or not, a little intimidation seems to help in gaining the respect of others, and empathic people tend to be not very intimidating. It might even be said that strong empathy without assertiveness could be “dangerous to your health.”

**PURSUING GROWTH IN EMPATHY:**

**Practice Putting Yourself in the Shoes of Others**

Try to feel what others are feeling and to think what they are thinking before you assume anything about them. Going to a welfare office for the first time and sitting in the waiting area with those who are waiting for food stamps or for word on work opportunities can give you a new appreciation for those who have that dehumanizing experience on a weekly basis. Spending twenty-four hours on the streets of the city with .25 in your pocket and no place to sleep can give you insight into those people who spend most of their living days on the streets, surviving as best they can.

**Who Do You Have Difficulty Understanding or Appreciating?**

## Skill #4 - Empathy (E) (Interpersonal Sensitivity) (continued)

**Practice Not Talking**
You can improve your listening level significantly by:

- Practicing not talking
- Focusing on the person who is talking
- Putting into your own words what the other person seems to be saying
- Checking out your understanding with that person

This participative approach to listening is called “active listening.” Skillfully paraphrasing what you are hearing is critical to this skill area.

**Take a Listening Workshop**
Listening workshops or interpersonal communication skills workshops are available everywhere. Sign up for one. Make sure it allows for practice time.

**Take a Workshop in Observing and Checking Out Perceptions**
Observation of nonverbal communication and behavior is of parallel importance with listening skills. The training of the eye is a necessary mate to the training of the ear. What do certain postures and expressions and gestures usually mean? Do the nonverbal and verbal fit or does one betray the other? Once I sense what someone is expressing nonverbally, how do I substantiate that observation? How do I check out my perceptions with the other person? “You seem to be very sad this morning,” may be enough to open up my relationship with someone else. Nonverbal observation and perception checking skills are taught in workshops on interpersonal communication skills.

**Develop Helping Skills Through Courses in Conflict Resolution for Counselors and Consultants**
If you want to get the in-depth version of the course in empathy, participate in any program that is offered for the preparation of counselors and consultants or others who will become professional helpers. Practice, under supervision, the role of the third party in a conflict situation.
### Applying the SCALE® and Doing Follow-up to It

| Training Needs Assessment | It is chiefly a needs assessment instrument for the individual, indirectly for the individual’s group. It is desired by organizations and managers who have difficulty choosing from incredible numbers of training offerings available to them, especially at times when dollars are short. It is an aid to setting priorities and decision making. |
| Professional Development Planning | The SCALE® is a natural educational, professional growth-planning tool. It is best used with incorporating it into planning activities. Planning begins with asking the right questions. The SCALE® asks the right questions well. |
| Team Building | As a group of individuals constructs its own disidentified group SCALE® (noting average scores and their spread along scales) it has started significant team building by bringing to the surface group skill strengths and needs. This start is a natural for staff and consultants who want to help the organization continue team building. |
| Group Counseling | One consulting intervention is to follow the development of a group SCALE® with ongoing clarifying and guidance as to where and how skill change needs might be improved and skill strengths used more effectively. |
| Individual Counseling/Career Guidance | Some individuals want help beyond basic interpretation of their SCALE® and cannot get it from their supervisors. These individuals should receive personal follow-up from competent guidance counselors. |
| Training Offerings | A natural follow up for consultants who administer the SCALE® with groups is to also supply the training resources for the group in areas where there are clear needs which can be met with certain training interventions. |
| Organizational Effectiveness Assessments | Consultants might identify a need to their clients for further assessments going beyond the parameters of the SCALE®, such as in assessing organizational effectiveness. |
Applying the SCALE® and Doing Follow-up to It

A Second SCALE® for A Mentor or Supervisor  

The SCALE® is limited to self-perception for its database. However, if an individual and a mentor or supervisor agree to go a second step with the SCALE® (and an agreement is essential), then the mentor or supervisor could fill out a SCALE® for the individual so that there is common information for the two people to discuss regarding the individual’s skill levels.

Progress Evaluation  

Since the SCALE® is time bound, reflecting only the skill level of the moment, it is useful as a longitudinal assessment tool to measure changes in skill proficiency. It could be used every few months as a source of professional development program evaluation information.
Resources: Reading List

The authors of the SCALE® suggest the following reading list for people who want to explore resources that have been influential to the thinking and theoretical base behind the SCALE® development.

**SCALE® Intrapersonal Dimension**
1. *Self Renewal and Excellence* by John Gardner
2. *On Becoming a Person* by Carl Rogers
3. *The Transparent Self and Healthy Personality* by Sidney Jourard
4. *Toward a Psychology of Being* by Abraham Maslow
5. *Becoming* by Gordon Allport
6. *Focusing* by Eugene Gendlin

**SCALE® Interpersonal Dimension**
7. *Responsible Assertive Behavior* by Arthur Lange and Patricia Jakubowski
8. *Declare Yourself* by John Narcisco
9. *Effectiveness = My Competence + Communication* by Margo Murray
10. *Interpersonal living and People in Systems* by Gerard Egan
11. *Assertiveness* by Robert Alberti
12. *A Guide to Rational Living* by Albert Ellis
13. *Keeping Your Cool Under Fire* by Theodora Wells
14. *Don’t Say Yes When You Want to Say No* by H. Fensterheim and Baer

**SCALE® Career/Life Effectiveness Dimension**
15. *Career Planning Workbook* by Margo Murray
16. *Time Management Trap* by Alec Mackenzie
17. *Successful Time Management* by Jack Ferner
18. *Using TIME* by Margo Murray
19. *Decision Making* by Irving L. Janis and Leon Mann
21. e-Development Action Planner® (e-DAP) by Margo Murray

**SCALE® Personal Wellness Dimension**
22. *Mind as Healer: Mind as Slayer* by K. Pelletier
23. *The Relaxation Response* by R. Benson
24. *Physical Fitness and Conditioning for Everyone* by Barry Johnson

**Personal Skills Model for Personal Change**
26. *Self Change* by Michael Mahoney
27. *Change: Principles of Problem Formation & Problem Resolution* by Watzlawick, Weeleand, & Fisk
28. *Structure of Magic (Vols. 1 and 2)*, *Frogs into Princesses*, and *Patterns I and II* by Richard Bandler and John Grinder