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# SEEING PEOPLE THROUGH

*Unleash Your Leadership Potential with the  
Process Communication Model®*

**Nate Regier, PhD**

“*Seeing People Through* is a much-needed leadership guide for tapping into the power of individual differences. The Process Communication Model® is genius, and Regier makes it accessible and applicable to anyone who wants to include and leverage all personality types.”

—**Daniel H. Pink, author of *When, Drive, and To Sell Is Human***



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— NATE REGIER, PhD —

# SEEING PEOPLE THROUGH



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Unleash Your  
Leadership  
Potential  
with the Process  
Communication  
Model®

Foreword by Taibi Kahler, PhD

# SEEING *People* THROUGH

Unleash Your Leadership Potential with  
the Process Communication Model®

NATE REGIER, PhD



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*I am so proud to dedicate this book to Jamie Remsberg.  
Our team is blessed to be on this journey with you. You  
embody the message and purpose of this book.*



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# Foreword

## by Dr. Taibi Kahler

A NOTE FROM THE ORIGINATOR

I just returned from visiting the man I admire most, Dr. Terry McGuire, former Lead Psychiatrist for Manned Space Flight at NASA (1957–1994). His supportive and courageous wife Toni recently passed away from a nine-year battle with cancer, and it was important that he and I spend time together. He had always been there for me.

At ninety-one, Terry's mind is marvelously active as ever, reading two to three books a week ranging in topics from the latest research in neuroscience, to trivia and humor. He is the most remarkable person I have ever known and at the same time the humblest. It was more than ten years after we met that I found out Terry had invented the first high-altitude space suit and the external heart defibrillator, both while at NASA.

As I was taking in the many pieces of NASA memorabilia in the room—his awards, autographed pictures from astronauts, models of jets and shuttles—Terry remarked, “I owe a lot to you.”

Quizzically, I turned my gaze to him. He continued, “I want to thank you again. The heads of NASA thought I was a magical prophet when I was accurate in predicting that of the five flight missions where there was conflict, I had advised them of the possibility, including which astronauts would be involved as well as the dynamics of their conflict. I did it using your Process Communication Model.” I felt honored, and thanked him for all he has done at

NASA—inventions, interactions with the astronauts and their families, contributions to the entire program.

We spoke of many things in those two days—Toni, lessons of life, altruism, honor, and the value of humor. Terry creates several “cartoons” daily, often with witty and poignant aphorisms. Always with a keen insight into human behavior, his observations are well-thought through, as is the case with most highly intelligent people who are also wise.

“Taibi, the business of people is communication. That’s why everybody needs to know PCM.” I repeated that in my head: “the business of people is communication.” Hmmm. Business: the trade we are in; that in which a person is principally and seriously concerned; being rightfully concerned about as a service. . . .

I immediately thought of my view of business just as a profession, but Terry was being Terry, speaking in a metaphor. And he was not only effective, but correct. Profoundly correct.

I reflected on the interesting and serendipitous data that we received from our PCM management seminar participants. In addition to scores of 9.4 on a scale of 10 in value to them professionally, 50 percent of all of these “business” people in those seminars commented at the end in written evaluations how important the information was to them personally—what a difference it could have made and will make in their lives with children and spouses.

I began to think metaphorically: “PCM is the science of communication. PCM is the GPS of relationships. PCM is the MRI of personality structure.” I was in a Terry loop, gleeful of the fabric of life that PCM describes.

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PCM is the science of communication.  
PCM is the GPS of relationships. PCM  
is the MRI of personality structure.

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My friend and colleague Dr. Nate Regier describes such PCM fabric in this easy-to-read book, taking us into the intimately personal

and business professional lives of the characters. His narrative style invites us into the minds, hearts, and actions of the individuals, allowing us to identify behavior in ourselves and in others. As the characters learn to apply PCM in their daily lives, we realize the value of how to talk and interact more effectively with others in our own lives. And with the turn of each page, have more insight into ourselves. Thanks, Nate!



# Introduction

## **GROUNDHOG DAY**

Early in her career as a corporate trainer, Jamie Remsberg, one of my cofounders at Next Element, was in Minnesota delivering back-to-back leadership trainings for a school system. She was training the Process Communication Model® (PCM), a behavioral communication model that teaches people how to assess, connect, motivate, and resolve conflict with different personality types. She delivered the same curriculum over and over for multiple groups within the school system. She said it was like Groundhog Day. By the end of the first week, Jamie was exhausted.

Two things about PCM make it difficult to train well. First, it focuses more on how people communicate than what they say, so the behavior of the trainer is being scrutinized all the time. Second, PCM engages learners at a deep level and can bring up a lot of emotion and resistance as people learn about themselves in new ways and recognize increased responsibility for how they communicate. It's hard work for all involved.

PCM is a model for adaptive communication. It is unique in that it teaches people how to recognize and respond effectively to personality-based communication styles simply by observing behavior. A PCM trainer is expected to use these strategies in real time, especially while teaching the material and interacting with

learners. This magnifies a dynamic that all trainers experience: that vulnerable moment when your students know enough to assess whether you are walking the talk.

Anticipating another full week of Groundhog Days with the educators in Minnesota, Jamie wasn't sure where she'd find the energy. She went out for Chinese food on Friday evening to wind down and plan her strategy for round two.

As usual, a fortune cookie came with the bill. Jamie was stunned when she read her fortune.

*The intention is not to see through people, but rather to see people through.*

“That’s it!” Jamie exclaimed to herself. Her epiphany was two-fold. “This is why I do what I do and this is why PCM is different from anything else.”

## **WHY ME? WHY US?**

Dozens of books and dissertations have been written about PCM. Why another book, and why should I write it?

It all started in 2005 when I was a clinical psychologist specializing in neuropsychological assessment and addictions treatment. My supervisor and mentor, John Simmering, told me about this communication methodology in which he had been trained and asked if I'd be interested in taking an online assessment to get my Process Communication Model Profile (PCM Profile) and going over my results. I'm always curious about these types of things, having been steeped in the science of individual differences, assessment, and behavior measurement. I had studied and taken a bunch of personality assessments and used several of them regularly in my clinical practice.

What I discovered changed my life. The results revealed patterns in my behavior that I had never understood before. It affirmed characteristics in me that had always been labeled as problematic by my family, teachers, and coaches. It described with uncanny accuracy

how my personality had stayed the same since I was six years old, but how I had changed within it. It predicted with scary precision the types of positive motivation I need to thrive, and how I sabotage myself when I am not properly motivated. It explained with embarrassing clarity the repeating power struggles and patterns of self-sabotage throughout my life.

I was hooked. I had to have this so that I could get even better at figuring people out! “Not so fast,” was John’s response. “This isn’t about other people. This is about you. It starts with you figuring yourself out and taking care of you first.”

Thanks to great mentors and teammates along the way, I’ve managed to balance applying PCM to myself as much as to others. PCM became an invaluable resource for me in my clinical work, making an immediate positive impact.<sup>1</sup>

From then on, I devoured everything I could learn. I studied with the originator of the model, Dr. Taibi Kahler, and was certified in PCM with specialization in corporate, clinical, and spiritual applications. Within a couple of years, Taibi invited me to become a Master Trainer so I could train other trainers. This step, along with further mentoring from Taibi, proved to be invaluable since at about this same time, I was assuming more leadership responsibilities, including being director of the organizational consulting division where I worked.

I was 12 years into my marriage and had three children. My wife was trained in clinical social work, with specialized experience working with at-risk youth. One evening after work we were reflecting on our lives and she asked me, “When it comes to our marriage and parenting our children, if you had to choose between your PhD in clinical psychology or PCM, which would it be?” I didn’t even need to think about it. PCM, hands down.

After cofounding Next Element in 2008 with a team of two other PCM trainers, I was really in my element. Continuously training, practicing, and interacting with leaders on a daily basis revealed new facets of the model. I was honored when Taibi tapped me on the shoulder again to become a Certifying Master Trainer,

one of only a few in the world entrusted to certify Master Trainers and maintain the fidelity and evolution of the model following his death. In this capacity, I have had the privilege of traveling around the world coaching other trainers, conducting master classes, and experiencing the worldwide impact of PCM, not to mention receiving precious mentoring from Taibi along the way.

I was asked recently how I maintain my childlike enthusiasm for PCM. Because the model is so deep, so profound, and so multilayered, every day is like an archeological dig. I never know what I will find! Dr. Kahler discovered a code for what makes humans at the same time unique and interconnected. My favorite quote from Taibi is that “PCM is about types *in* people, not types *of* people.” I look forward to sharing with you the profound implications of this statement for who we are in relationships and how anyone can unleash their leadership potential with PCM.

## **HOW IS PCM DIFFERENT?**

The fundamental difference between PCM and any other model of individual differences is that, at its core, it is a way of life. It’s not what we do to people, it’s who we are with people.

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PCM is not something we do to  
people, it’s who we are with people.

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It’s more than a tool to categorize people; it’s a methodology for assessing individual differences in communication, in real time, and adapting on the fly.

It’s more than a model for appreciating personality diversity; it’s a way to honor who people are, how they are built, and invite their unique contribution.

It’s more than a framework for reducing prejudice; it’s a set of behavioral skills and attitudes to leverage individual differences toward shared goals.

It's more than a lens for understanding how people see things differently; it's a deep journey into self-awareness and self-transformation.

It's more than a set of labels and characteristics; it's a shift in mindset that sees the whole person behind the behavior.

It's more than a predictive assessment; it's a window into a person's past, present, and future revealing unconscious patterns of success and failure.

It's more than an analysis of miscommunication and distress; it's a step-by-step guide for getting back on track.

It's more than a tool for managing people; it's a philosophy of leadership with visible behavioral guideposts for the journey.

It's more than another way to prop up self-esteem by affirming "I'm unique and special." It's a personal responsibility roadmap toward transcending ego while preserving the individual within an interdependent and connected humanity.

In the earlier section, "A Note from the Originator," Taibi referenced NASA's astonishment with how accurate and predictive PCM is. While PCM can help you analyze people and predict behavior with incredible accuracy, that's only the beginning. Anyone who stops there is missing the purpose and invitation of PCM.

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PCM is about seeing people through,  
not seeing through people.

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PCM is powerful and effective at transforming how people communicate and relate to one another. Here are a few of my favorite testimonials from clients who have worked with PCM:

*"PCM is the doorway to self and the WD40 to effective communication!"<sup>2</sup>*

*"PCM shows you your past and present. It gives roadmaps for self-care, it shows you why you've had issues in the past,*

*and what you can do in the future to strengthen communication. PCM is the real-life equivalent of counting cards at a blackjack table.”*

*“PCM goes deeper—much deeper—than ‘personality profiles.’ There is a rich context here for leaders of all entities to allow for more effective relationships, cultures, and outcomes.”*

*“PCM is an important part of our shift to a culture of Servant Leadership within our organization.”*

For 40 years, a growing community of PCM trainers and coaches have been teaching people about the model. Nearly one and a half million people have been exposed to it. The list of blue-chip clients who have used it is impressive, including NASA, Coca-Cola, IBM, Microsoft, Audi, Hewlett Packard, Pixar Animation Studios, and former U.S. President Bill Clinton. It is being taught by over 3,800 trainers and coaches in 51 countries and 2 dozen languages worldwide. Several books have been written about PCM.<sup>3</sup> Our company just finished a global research study on PCM in partnership with Indiana State University. The results showed that PCM training is associated with statistically significant and sustained improvements in personal and professional efficacy, and between 60–80 percent improvement in a variety of key leadership behaviors.<sup>4</sup>

PCM works, no question. When it comes to models of individual differences in general, however, we have a big problem.

## **THE PROBLEM WITH PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS**

If you’ve been exposed to a personality model, you’ve probably experienced it like most people. You took an online assessment. A consultant presented your results in a fancy booklet. If you were lucky, you got a couple of hours of debriefing. By the end, you may have even been enthusiastic about the possibilities.

Understanding your personality could help you become aware of your strengths and identify your weaknesses, you hoped. It

could help you appreciate differences in other people. It might even be able to guide you in selecting a job that's a good fit.

A couple days or weeks later, once the intrigue wore off, it was business as usual. Your booklet began collecting dust along with the rest of the training manuals on your shelf. By then, your company had probably paid the consultant and he was off to the next organization looking for a magic bullet.

Only it wasn't business as usual. It was worse.

People began labeling everyone they met. The categorizers went around acting as if they could figure everyone else out. After a while, your teammates developed tunnel vision, expecting people to act according to their identified personality type. When they didn't, it may even have led to an argument. Hidden bias against certain personality types oozed out. Several teammates hid behind their personality, developing an entitled attitude, expecting everyone to give them special treatment. It was a fiasco.

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Learning about personality differences is virtually worthless unless you also learn how to communicate effectively with them.

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I'm not against personality assessments. They have value when used correctly. However, learning about personality differences is virtually worthless unless you also learn how to communicate effectively with them. Learning about your personality becomes an entitlement program unless you use what you know to become a better steward of how you're built. Insight and learning should make you more capable of responding effectively instead of keeping you fixed in your old habits.

Take a moment to reflect on these questions:

- What's the point of knowing something if you can't put it into meaningful practice?

- What good is diversity awareness if you have no ability to leverage that diversity through inclusion?
- Why help people find a good job fit if you can't keep them motivated over the long term?
- Why introduce people to fancy categories and labels when they are often misused as weapons?

Personality models that don't teach communication, cooperation, leadership, and management skills are a waste of energy, money, and time. Leadership development efforts that introduce people to personality diversity without going the distance to teach and hold leaders accountable to new communication behaviors are doing more harm than good. Furthermore, unless new learning leads to greater capacity for safe, productive, trusting, and accountable relationships, what's the point?

When I introduce people to PCM and they learn that it identifies individual differences in personality, the most common question they ask is "How is PCM different from the other personality models we've used?" I usually answer by emphasizing that personality only matters when two or more people are trying to get something done, and what matters most is how we adapt our communication accordingly. I pose these questions:

1. How do your leaders individualize communication to engage each personality type? Can you see it and hear it in their daily interactions?
2. How have your policies, systems, structures, and processes been adapted to enable success with different personality types?
3. How do your performance incentive and evaluation systems motivate the types of personalities you most want in your organization?
4. How does your organizational communication reflect the types of language that reaches all personality types?
5. Regarding your mission, vision, and values statements, which personalities will connect with them?

Unfortunately, most leaders and most organizations don't have an answer for these questions. Many are surprised that personality differences would even apply. Some have considered these questions but didn't know what to do next. Very few have incorporated what they've learned into the DNA of their leadership and organizational life. While their intentions are noble, the models they were using left them empty-handed when it came to the most important driver of success: relationships.

## **THE SOLUTION**

The solution is to make the transition from a categorization system that is largely polarized to one that actually embodies personality—a system that enlightens and empowers leaders to build better relationships. People don't need another behavior checklist, color classification, or list of animals. In this book, I'm turning the problem upside down. Instead of teaching another personality or communication model, I will show how PCM can enlighten and empower leaders in a twenty-first-century connection economy. I will use PCM to shine a fresh light on the biggest relevant leadership issues like authenticity, trust, and influence. My experience and our company's research with PCM over 15 years have revealed additional aspects to leadership that are only recently gaining attention, like agility, curiosity, authenticity, self-care, and openness. More than ever, leaders need paradigms and frameworks for transforming relationships.

There are a growing number of leaders who crave authentic connection and want to cocreate a balanced and meaningful life with their families, friends, peers, subordinates, bosses, and clients. People in every generation are recognizing the desperate need for sustainable and sustaining relationships that create possibility and potential instead of draining energy. In this emerging era, even familiar concepts like authenticity need a face-lift.

Transformation happens within relationships. Communication is the activity of relationships. I believe PCM can significantly transform relationships through better connection and communication.

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Transformation happens within relationships. Communication is the activity of relationships.

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## **THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK**

Here's what I want to accomplish and why it's important.

1. Show how leadership is all about relationships and communication—with ourselves and with others.
2. Provide a fresh and relevant framework on leadership that is consistent with emerging trends.
3. Show how individual and collective concerns can be reconciled in leadership.
4. Shine a more focused light on the inner life of a leader.
5. Give the global network of PCM trainers and coaches around the world a resource that helps them show PCM in action, in leadership, in real life.
6. Demonstrate the power of PCM as a transformative leadership communication framework far beyond just another personality model.

One of the unique elements of PCM is the precision with which Dr. Kahler defined each unique personality type and its characteristics in order to differentiate one from the other. Because of this, many of the descriptions of those characteristics that are presented in this book use specific terminology that was developed by Dr. Kahler and that appears in his prior works. Where this is the case, I make no claim of authorship to those descriptions or presentations, the copyrights to which are held by Kahler Communications, Inc.

## **WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS BOOK?**

### **Seasoned Leaders Who Are Always Learning and Teaching**

My definition of leadership is the ability to leverage the diversity of individual abilities toward shared goals. If you recognize that leadership is a continuous process of learning, discovery, and refinement, this book will stimulate your thinking, challenge old habits, reveal areas for personal and professional development, and unlock new possibilities for you and your team.

### **Newly Promoted and Emerging Leaders**

There are no shortcuts, but you can fast-track your leadership effectiveness. This book will connect a lot of dots for you. It will also challenge you to look past your generational and institutional wisdom and reach beyond what you learned in school. Many of the answers are already within you.

### **Mentors, Coaches, and Consultants**

This book will be a catalyst for change agents who want something deeper, different, and fresh.

### **PCM Trainers and Coaches**

Thousands of PCM certified trainers and coaches around the world are continually seeking resources to help them connect PCM to their target market in the leadership and talent development arena. Use this book to introduce leaders to PCM, as a follow-up to PCM training, and as a framework for showing the relevance and application of PCM in our daily leadership journeys.

### **MEET KAYLA**

Kayla is 27 years old. She was an only child, born and raised in Dallas, Texas, by a father who was a truck mechanic and a musician on the side, and a mother who worked night shifts doing laundry at a local hospital. Her parents weren't around much so she kept busy

with friends and school activities. In high school Kayla was on the debate team and the yearbook committee and played for her high school soccer team for three years; she enjoyed anything that involved people and activity. She attended community college to save money and get her general education courses out of the way before completing a degree in marketing and communications from a regional university.

Kayla has had two jobs since graduating from college, both helpful in developing her skills and experience, but neither were fulfilling. Kayla and her boyfriend, Lucas, who is a construction supervisor, have been dating for just over a year. Lucas doesn't understand why Kayla is so picky about jobs, and certainly has his own opinions about employment and leadership, but he supports her goals.

The story begins with Kayla deciding that she needs a change. She applies and gets hired at ProcessCorp, a company with a very different philosophy of management and leadership than she is used to. We'll follow Kayla as she cycles through skepticism, vulnerability, and curiosity while she learns about herself and the forces that helped form who she is, and what it really means to see people through as a leader. She learns about the power of personality diversity in leadership and how the principles of PCM are embedded in ProcessCorp's culture. She gains a whole new, deeper understanding of how authenticity, honesty, influence, self-deception, trust, agility, and self-fullness are integral to great leadership. She also challenges a lot of preconceived notions about why people act the way they do. She gains insight into what it means to see herself through and learns valuable leadership lessons about seeing others through.

## **HOW CAN I UNLEASH MY LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL?**

### **Ride Along**

For an engaging, informative, and compelling journey, you can ride along with Kayla, observing what she learns and soaking up the parts that apply to you.

## **Get Personal and Make It Real**

Do you want to know your own PCM personality structure? Get your PCM Leadership Profile along with a personalized debrief from a certified PCM trainer or coach. From your profile, you will gain powerful, personality-specific insights to unleash your leadership potential, including your preferred leadership communication style, motivational needs, decision-making style, self-sabotage distress behaviors, and a personal action plan for self-care and leadership success. Use your PCM Leadership Profile to join Kayla in her assignments. Complete your own PCM Leadership Design project using the guide found in the Appendix.

## **Engage Your Team**

If you want to use the book in a course or team discussion, download the Seeing People Through Discussion Guide, which is full of suggestions on how to deepen the learning with each chapter.

## **Bring PCM to Your Company**

PCM is available in many formats, including coaching, introductory courses, team-building applications, and intensive skills training. To bring PCM to your company, contact a PCM certified professional near you.

For all these things, visit [www.SeeingPeopleThrough.com](http://www.SeeingPeopleThrough.com).