

What else were you thinking about back then? Didn't you worry about someone topping you with the right answer if yours was wrong? Didn't you think about what everyone thought of you? How they judged you? Where you fit in the group?

Those early school years, that public test, are the source of what we still worry about most as we were questioned, privately or publicly. Although they were years in which we felt most powerless and inadequate in our lives, the concerns of group evaluation and someone's scrutiny remain in our grown-up lives.

### *What Concerns Us*

Here's what we still worry about as grownups whenever we answer questions. You'll find aspects of yourselves and of Achievers, Affiliators, and Influencers in these responses:

- Right vs. wrong and the possible humiliation and defeat we'll feel. Our culture likes winners.
- Group competition: "I hope no one else knows it either, or better than I do." Whether before a group or one-on-one, that sense of competing for status, admiration, approval against our peers remains.
- Wanting acceptance: We try to anticipate what kind of answer will be most acceptable to the questioner and the group.
- What do you really want to know? We try to read the questioner to discover what kind of answer is expected or wanted, and only give that, rather than what we really think.
- Privacy: The caution this concern brings makes us edit and censor automatically as we worry about what you can find out about me if I'm not careful.
- Consequences: "What could the fallout from my answer be?" "What could you, would you, do with my answer?" Therefore, how much or how little or exactly what should I tell you?
- Visibility: Any spotlight shining on us makes most people feel basically uncomfortable and unnerved, especially since questioning is a test, not just a chat.
- Comparison: Fitting in with the group, wanting to say something like what others would say, not falling short of the norm—these are deeply rooted needs in us and will alter what we say and how.