

Chapter 7

The Personality Factor

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- Discovering How You Gather Information
- Identifying How You Make Decisions
- Describing Your Personality
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Understanding Personality Styles

Did you ever have the feeling that you could finish a person's sentences without even knowing him or her very well? On the other hand, have you run into those you can listen to, look straight in the eye, ask questions of, and still not totally understand not only what they said, but how they got there?

One might think that, when it comes to communication, there is some kind of systematic way to approach the process. After all, we learn how to talk when we

are just a few years old; we understand at least some of what is said even earlier. People communicate in the language they are taught, and verbalizations are common ways of moving thoughts to speech. So the rules of the game must have some logic behind them, as we have discussed throughout this book. Why, then, is it sometimes just impossible to “get through”?

What we take in and how we analyze words depends on characteristics we were born with, our experiences, and our background. The inborn part of the communication process comes from personality type. To get a small taste of your personality type, follow the directions below.

In each of the four sets of statements below, choose which list (A or B) is closest to your preference. There are no right or wrong answers.

A1	B1
I express my thoughts easily.	I prefer to ponder before I speak.
I like gatherings and engage easily with friends and strangers.	I need some alone time to regroup in a quiet setting.
I enjoy working with groups rather than by myself.	I may not say much during a meeting, but I will be listening and thinking about the discussion.
I am easy to get to know.	People sometimes think I’m reserved.
I prefer to act rather than reflect a lot.	I am reflective.
A2	B2
I am good with details.	I have keen intuition.
I like facts rather than hunches.	I have hunches that cannot always be “proven” with data.
I am good at carrying out policies and procedures.	I am imaginative and creative.
I follow directions in sequential order and complete one step before I go to the next.	I may skip steps in a project and come back to them later.
“Big picture” people drive me nuts.	I leave the details to last, and preferably to others.

A3	B3
<p>I am logical and objective.</p> <p>The same principles should apply to all in the same way.</p> <p>I have been told I can be critical and condescending.</p> <p>I value precision.</p> <p>I am analytical.</p>	<p>I have strong values and work from them.</p> <p>I give people chances and sometimes modify expectations.</p> <p>I am warm-hearted and enjoy appreciating people.</p> <p>I value the work that people put in.</p> <p>I believe that harmony is essential in the workplace.</p>
A4	B4
<p>I am organized and decisive.</p> <p>I am uncomfortable when closure is not reached.</p> <p>I plan ahead and meet deadlines.</p> <p>On vacation, I need to know where I'm staying, how long it will take to get there, and what the schedule entails.</p> <p>My desk is either clean or acceptably neat.</p>	<p>I go with the flow and prefer spontaneity.</p> <p>I like to keep an open mind and like change and flexibility.</p> <p>My planning is conditional and I don't mind interruptions.</p> <p>On vacation, I would prefer to see what happens, experience the moment, and avoid schedules.</p> <p>My desk is a mess and so is my closet.</p>

You may have had a hard time choosing columns. This is natural. We are never just one way or the other. However, everyone has certain areas of comfort, even though they may be able to operate outside their comfort zones. For example, while you may enjoy “going with the flow,” learning to be decisive in certain situations is, of course, a part of life and necessary for survival.

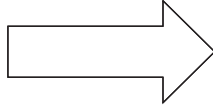
Instruments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator™ (MBTI®), based on Carl Jung's theory of psychological type, provide a comprehensive picture of the areas in which you are most comfortable, termed “preferences.” When you answer the questions on the MBTI and score it, your “type” is confirmed by your own knowledge of what you prefer. Depending on the strength of inborn preferences,

you lean somewhat or strongly toward ways of getting your energy, gathering information, making decisions, and practicing a certain lifestyle or relating to the outside world. Learning about the Myers-Briggs can be eye-opening, validating, reassuring, and informative.

Myers-Briggs preferences are designated by letters:

E = Extraversion

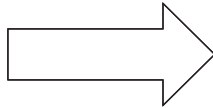
I = Introversion



How you get your energy

S = Sensing

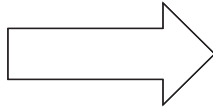
N = Intuition



How you gather information

T = Thinking

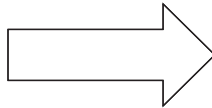
F = Feeling



How you make decisions

P = Perceiving

J = Judging



How you relate
to the outside world

The dichotomies of the two columns, taken together, form sixteen different personality types. Each dimension has its own common characteristics; however, for an accurate description of type, all four of your preferences interact in ways that have validated attributes and are more descriptive than any one dimension. In the discussion below, each preference will be reviewed; but the descriptions used, such as “extraverts,” are only one part of a person’s makeup. Knowing your integrated Myers-Briggs type and the types of others provides a wealth of information. Organizations such as the Center for Applications of Psychological Type (CAPT) and Consulting Psychologists Press (CPP) provide resources for you to learn more about your preferences and your type. You can also access www.kiersey.com to take David Kiersey’s Temperament Sorter, another way to look at personality. Kiersey is the author of the *Please Understand Me* series, available in bookstores and on the site.

With knowledge and practice, you can increase your soft skills and communicate in ways others can understand based on what you know about your own and others’ preferences. Personality type requires much more than a chapter; however,

some key principles can help you think about why people do what they do, how they do it, and how you can be a catalyst for better communication.

Finding Your Source of Energy

The activities you just completed gave you an idea of your personality preferences. Each selection you chose was an area you are prone to favor. The first columns (A1 and B1) represented extraversion and introversion. In the discussion of these preferences, as with others, consider how you can use your strengths at work and in your personal life.

The Extravert Experience

Columns A1 and B1 relate to how you get your energy. Extraverts usually have characteristics of Column A1. They get their energy by interaction with others. They like to put their thoughts out for people to hear. It is somewhat torturous for extraverts to be alone all day long or to sit in a meeting where they cannot express themselves. They get their energy from talking, socializing, bantering, telling stories, and letting others know them. “Getting energy” is much like charging a battery. Energy keeps us going, and *people* keep extraverts’ batteries charged and running. Put an extravert in a cubicle with no people or phone contact, and at some time during the day, he or she will get up, talk to someone, visit, or engage in some kind of human contact. You don’t see many extraverted bookkeepers or data entry staff members.

Extraverts give life to parties and company events. Energized after one celebration, they can go to another and have just as much fun. They are easy to get to know and are generally perceived as friendly and approachable. They are eager to articulate and quick to give opinions and verbalize thoughts. In their desire to “share,” they can dominate a conversation, repeat what others have said and think it’s their own, and become annoyed if someone says something they were thinking and they didn’t say it first.

The Introvert Experience

Introverts (Column B1) get their energy from being pensive and thoughtful. A tough day for an introvert is to attend three meetings and a company event, be a part of a focus group, and end the day with a team discussion. Whew! This is a

bit too much outward direction. Batteries drained from no time for reflection, it is likely the introvert will not even want to turn on the radio on the way home. Quiet is the goal.

Introverts are often good listeners because they take in what is said and think about it. They are less likely than extraverts to interrupt or to pull the focus back to themselves. In a meeting they may be the ones who, at the end of the discussion, reflect back what people have said and come up with a solution that no one else considered. Without needing the stage, they are good synthesizers of opinions and create new solutions.

Although introverts may end up in large venues, they prefer small groups or one-on-one discussions. Intimate settings allow them to comfortably participate. They are not competing with extraverts to put their points across. Because introverts prefer to be with few people they know well and who know them, their best environment is with friends or colleagues who have established a trusting relationship. They do not linger much after gatherings and may be the first to leave a big party, especially if they have not connected with one or two others.

There are no right or wrong preferences. Those with different preferences help each other, as long as there is understanding of the wealth and depth of thought that can be experienced with different people's gifts. And every person has gifts to offer. To be annoyed or exasperated by someone who is not like you is like missing parts of the equation, and possibly overlooking the best answers, results, or outcomes. Corporate think tanks have been known to make sure that all personality types are represented for the purpose of coming up with the best solution seen from different angles. NASA and Southwest Airlines are two of the many companies that use the Myers-Briggs to study high performers and to revise curriculum and training opportunities to include soft skills for different personality types in learning sessions.

A Personality Type Demonstration

Inborn preferences are part of every person. Under usual circumstances, preferences do not change. Here is an activity that Myers-Briggs trainers use to demonstrate the principle of preferences.

Instructor: Sign your name on any piece of paper you have handy.

Instructor: How did that feel?

Participants often stare at the instructor before they answer, some thinking “What do you mean ‘How did it feel?’” Then someone will say something like, “Natural, effortless, easy, didn’t have to think about it, just did it, felt fine; it was easy.”

Instructor: Now change hands and write your name.

Some groan, laugh, chuckle, grimace, and look at how others are doing it.

Instructor: How did that feel?

There is almost always someone who says, “I’m ambidextrous.” But most say something like “awkward, hard, can’t read it, looks like my three-year-old’s attempts; had trouble doing it,” and there is a lot of laughter in the room.

That’s a simple way to demonstrate how preferences work. On a more complicated level, neuroscientists have studied this exercise and others for evidence about how the brain works. Try the exercise yourself.

Soft Skills for Extraverts and Introverts

Since extraverts like to express their thoughts aloud, allow them to do it. If you are extraverted, too, take the time to listen and then express your point of view. Here are some ways to get a word in edgewise:

- “Thanks for giving me your thoughts. I’d like to tell you mine. Then we can see if there’s a conclusion here” (or middle ground or compromise).
- “I agree with what John is saying, but I’d like to add something for the group to consider.”

Keep your tone of voice and body language in an accepting mode, but assertive. This is important because, otherwise, you might communicate frustration and intolerance. Bear in mind that you’re an extravert, too, and others may struggle to get their own points of view across. You may have to use questioning techniques to obtain the opinions of introverts.

- “What do you think, Irene?”
- “Let’s hear from some of the people who haven’t spoken.”

One cautionary note is that introverts may not want to speak on the spot. Teachers who give extra credit for “participation” favor extraverts. It is a shame that those teachers are not educated in personality type and learning style. Expecting all students to speak up over the extraverts who pontificate naturally (sometimes

at length and on and off of the topic) is ignoring the nature of introverts, who prefer to think about the topic deeply or aren't as quick on the gun and do not like to present off-the-cuff answers.

Encourage introverts to reveal what they are thinking by using writing and reflection. Suggest they email their thoughts, allowing time for reflection and organization of responses. You could also say, "Let me come back in a few minutes and continue the discussion." Introverts will often give you the hint anyway and say, "Let me think about that." I was in a discussion the other day and my colleague said, "Let me marinate on that."

If you are an introvert talking to another introvert, questions and paraphrasing work well. Also, acting on the person's suggestion is motivating. "Oh, that's a good idea. Let's go with that for action step one." Supporting is a positive behavior to practice with fellow introverts, providing, of course, that you agree. Encouragement leads to further contributions.

Discovering How You Gather Information

Once you have gained some knowledge about how you get your energy, the next preference is between sensing and intuition, two distinct ways to observe the world around you, what is there for sensors, and what may not be there, but somehow intuited for intuitive types.

Put simply, a person is either a big picture type (Intuitive—N) or a detail type (Sensor—S). People who prefer sensing are usually very good with details. They are the staff members you want on your team to make the schedules, order the food, collect data, construct the charts, and follow procedures. They take numbers at face value and are good at administrative work that requires standardization. Remember the old TV series "Dragnet"? Sergeant Joe Friday was famous for saying, "Just the facts, Ma'am. Just the facts." In other words, I believe what I see, hear, touch, taste, smell, and observe.

Here's a conversation that might occur between a sensor and an intuitive:

S: "How much did we spend on the employee event?"

N: "Not that much."

S: "How much?"

N: "It was well received."

S: "How much did we spend?"

N: "Around \$500."

S: "How much *exactly*?" (getting frustrated)

Sensors need exact information, and sometimes they cannot fully move on until they get it. Here's another example of a phone conversation between a leader (L) and some participants (P):

L: "Training in the state will be changing. Instead of being centralized it will be up to individual organizations. We will hold a meeting sometime in August to discuss how we will roll out the program. This is a big change, and we'll have to all put our thoughts together. We'll be discussing standards that all can follow and competencies to give us a baseline."

P1: "So, we'll use the competencies to create our programs?"

L: "Yes, and we will be able to individualize the curriculum based on local needs."

P2: "This is a big change, and there are a lot of ramifications. Let's think about a few."

P3: "What time is the meeting?" (Silence from all others.)

P4: "What?"

P3: "What time is the meeting?"

L: "We haven't decided that yet."

P3: "Where is it?"

L: "We haven't decided that yet."

P5: "Can we get back to the discussion?"

Here we have a sensor who needs to have exact information in order to proceed. Although the time and location of the meeting are important, the leader said it would be "sometime in August." P3 may have a tight schedule. Changing schedules is hard for sensors, and until that one question is answered, she is going to be uncomfortable and could miss important parts of the discussion.

More on the Sensing Experience

Sensors are practical. They are good at conserving energy and materials, often figuring out the best price or the closest location. They go step-by-step in following directions and like a structured approach to discussions, such as reviewing action plans. They like things that are definite and measurable.

Sensors are often literal. They ask specific questions and want specific answers. If you don't give them what they want, they may discount your explanation or ask the same questions again. Consider this child's question:

Boy: "Mommy, where do I come from?"

Mom: "Well, I thought you would want to know one day."

Boy: "Where?"

Mom: "Well, your Daddy and I had so much love that we wanted a little boy like you, and we got together, and Daddy planted a seed in Mommy, and it grew to be you!"

Boy: "But where did I come from?"

Mom: "Well, I carried you in my womb. When you were inside me, it made my tummy look big. And then you were born."

Boy: "But where do I come from?"

Mom: Silence. Mom doesn't really know what else to say at this point. She figures that sex is not part of the conversation; he is too young to get it.

Boy: "Bobby comes from New York. Where do I come from?"

Mom: "Oh. . . !You come from Massachusetts, honey. We moved here to New York when you were only one year old."

Never underestimate the tenacity of a sensor who wants an answer.

The Intuitive Experience

Intuitives (N) are interested more in meaning than specifics. (The N is capitalized so as not to confuse the dimension with introverts.) They want to know what's behind the numbers, how they were collected, and whether there is any meaning to a chart, graph, or directive. Or they can entertain themselves in their own worlds and not even notice that the graph is posted on the wall. Their minds are usually active, thinking about solutions, creations, innovations, theories, and dreams. They often overlook what's in front of them and, deep in thought, miss exits on the highway, trip over something they didn't see, or forget where their cars are at the mall. They are perfectly capable of creating an excellent presentation, working hard on the overall theory as well as details (not their favorite) and then forgetting to copy the presentation on a zip drive for presentation in another location the next day. Introverted intuitives live in their heads a lot; extraverted

intuitives are more likely to express their plans, ways of doing things better, and their creative innovations.

Intuitives enjoy variety. While sensors like to make lists and cross things off in pleasure, intuitives would rather do different, intriguing projects and aren't that interested in accounting for the details and crossing off specific tasks. With vivid imaginations, intuitives appreciate possibilities and delight in envisioning what could be rather than what is. Top-level leaders are often Ns, moving the world's companies and organizations to better and longer sustainability based on changes in the environment and economy. They are often backed up by sensors, who keep them grounded with facts they might not consider.

Soft Skills for Sensors and Intuitives

Sensors need facts based on reality. If your boss is a sensor and you are an intuitive, you will probably hear, "Give me some concrete facts to back up what you are suggesting" more than once. He or she needs data to show others to support your intuition, even though you may have used facts to come to your conclusion. Soft skills for you include your presentation style (to include charts, graphs, raw data, and predictions based on past history and current demonstrated trends); listening to reactions and accepting that more facts might be needed to put your intuition into action, and validating your boss for pointing out areas that you might have missed. These principles don't apply only to your boss. You can get support from your sensor teammates in the same way, and you can also engage other areas in the organization to help make your points by collecting data that you might not have readily available.

Soft skills for sensors working with intuitives (and in personal situations) require faith and trust. Since this concept may not be the norm for sensors, it does take some learning. Trust is built on acceptance and belief in the person with whom you are engaging. Instead of punching holes by firing questions and tearing apart assumptions, listen first. Intuition may be off the deep end, it may be right on, or be a little of both. Practice listening. Think about the times when colleagues offered their gift of intuition and they were right. Sometimes, it is too late to take advantage of insight after the fact. It may take years for what is obvious to intuitives to be validated with enough facts for sensors, and by then the project or the company may be so far gone that the suggestions may be moot or the company may be out of business.

Identifying How You Make Decisions

Thinkers

People who prefer the thinking function make decisions based on logic. Talking about a situation and analyzing the benefits, obstacles, consequences, and outcomes, a thinker applies rationality in coming up with final answers. Once a decision is made, since it has been analyzed with the information available, the thinker wants to apply it to all in the same way, because, as thinkers think, this is fair. Fairness, considered “the same for all,” is important.

Thinkers may be perceived as harsh and critical. Picture Clint Eastwood in *Dirty Harry*, and Meryl Streep in *The Devil Wears Prada*. More likely to find the mistakes and criticize, thinkers are often considered cold and condescending. Donald Trump is also a good example of a thinker, both in real life and on “Celebrity Apprentice.”

At work, thinkers can motivate by providing logic and helping people analyze plans, projects, and processes. They are good at correcting errors and finding holes in others’ logic. They can also demotivate by assuming they are always right. This would be because, as they see it, they have analyzed everything with great thought—their thoughts. Their behavior could come across as arrogant, abrasive, or rude. They can put a red pen to the most earnest of reports and consider it a gift of feedback.

Feelers

Those who prefer to make decisions by their feeling preference consider their own values, which most often include harmony in the workplace, personal relationships, and supporting those on a team or at home with understanding and compassion. They are keenly aware of the feelings of others and take those feelings into account when making personal and organizational decisions. Feelers often have the pulse of the workforce, especially of intuitive feelers, and they can capture what may not even be verified by surveys. Sometimes, people do not reveal the truth on surveys. This is not to say that feelers are right. It is just to say that they may have some information that can be very useful.

If the people with whom feelers work are going to be negatively affected by a decision, they go to their defense. Feelers often support those who are negatively impacted by social norms where dignity and respect are denied to groups or vulnerable individuals. Consider Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, and Carl Rogers.

Feelers can be very persuasive when they are passionate about a topic. Take budget cuts, a common organizational necessity in tough times. Here's a familiar discussion between a CFO thinker (T) and feelers (F).

T: As your CFO, I must tell you that there will be serious budget cuts this year.

F: How will they determined?

T: We will look at the whole organization and see where we can save money in every area.

F: What about people's jobs? There are rumors out there that people may be cut.

T: We are considering all aspects.

F: There are plenty of ways we can save money without people losing their jobs. Without the front line, we compromise services to the people who count on us, and to our internal employees. Morale is already low.

T: The workforce comprises the highest costs in the organization.

F: People will not stick around if they think they are not supported by the administration. Why don't we eliminate the new technology that will cost millions?

T: We will take your feelings into consideration, but reducing expenses is an organizational priority that may involve staff layoffs. Technology is important to keep the company on the cutting edge.

Although people are generally affected by the possibility of losing their jobs, feelers are most likely to be concerned about others as well as themselves. Loyal to the people in the business (and the organization, too), they may feel wounded by the pain that will be caused if fellow staff members are laid off with no means of supporting their families. They understand people's needs and are empathetic. They are usually willing to take responsibility for their own actions and are more likely to apologize, appreciate, and express caring. Those who have a Thinking preference may not see the rationale of those who prefer to make decisions from the Feeling perspective and may think of them as emotional and "soft."

Soft Skills for Thinkers and Feelers

Thinkers need to listen to feelers and, by learning soft skills (sometimes ascribed to feelers, as noted above), reflect back the feelings that are being shared. If you are a thinker, you might wince at the term "shared." If you are a feeler, sharing is a gift. Feelers know who wants their gifts and who doesn't; but they will take

risks anyway if they think their feelings substantiate values that they cherish. It is important to hear feelers out. Just listening and demonstrating that you care can go a long way in establishing trust and motivating a feeler to do his or her best work. Thinkers may respond that listening to feelings is unnecessary and that “People have jobs; they need to just do them.” Feelers might react with a song title like: “Take This Job and Shove It.” They will respond silently though, because they wouldn’t want to be so unkind out loud.

One intuitive feeler whose boss made the “people have a job” comment responded with, “They may have jobs, but in the same way people who are victims in domestic violence situations have a home.” Fortunately, the boss understood the analogy. Neither comment got them any further with action, but the feeler made her point and the boss understood that people at work were really feeling stressed from an environment that could be improved. Let it be said that there was some trust between these two individuals; and let it also be said that neither comment is an example of soft skills, lest anyone misunderstand.

Describing Your Personality

Judging

The “judging” preference does not refer to evaluation or to being judgmental; it is defined differently in Myers-Briggs language. It refers to how people use this dimension in the outside world and how it is reflected in their lives.

One’s lifestyle at work and at home may be different. However, for the judging (J) preference, planning, organizing, scheduling, and deciding are critical, even if they look a bit different in the workplace and in personal life.

Those who have the judging preference are not comfortable with leaving things up in the air or with last-minute changes. Their inclination is to be methodical enough to avoid last-minute stress. Interrupt a judger’s schedule and he or she will not be thrilled. You may hear something like: “I have to finish this report; and then I have to work on the talent management project; and then I have lunch; and then I have a training class; and then I have to order our supplies.” Their minds take one step at a time. For a motivated judger, his or her schedule might look like this:

8:00–8:15	Make or double-check the list for the day. Read emails that came in since 5:00 yesterday.
8:15–10:30	Complete the field report; Section 1 by 8:45; Section 2 by 9:15; Section 3 by 10:30.

10:30–10:45	Take a break.
10:45–11:45	See client offsite. (Directions already MapQuested.) Checklist of questions in folder. Put folder and directions in briefcase.
11:45–12:00	Complete documentation on client.
12:00–1:00	Lunch, preplanned meal.
1:00–4:00	Scheduled meeting with Team 1 in Conference Room B.
4:00–4:15	Check emails that came in during meeting and respond. (All other emails have been addressed on the BlackBerry.)
4:15–4:30	Return telephone calls that came in during meeting.
4:30–4:45	Make a “to do” list for tomorrow. Cross off “done’s.”
4:45–5:00	File and clean desk. No stray papers. Put chair back in place before leaving.

Order for judges is a necessity. Getting things done is motivating and reinforcing. In their personal lives, judges want to know what is happening and when. They plan ahead and anticipate what needs to take place for systemized functioning. They can get a lot done by keeping to the schedule. They can be stressed by interruptions and unexpected events.

Perceiving

Those who prefer the perceiving process enjoy going with the flow. Too much scheduling can be draining for them. They like to be flexible, take pleasure in surprises, and are receptive to what comes their way in terms of life experiences. They like to remain open. They can wait for decisions; delays do not drive them nuts. Too much structure will. Today they might want to do one thing; tomorrow they may want to do another. Someone may suggest something totally different and they might be just fine with that, too. This is not to say that people who are perceivers do not make decisions. They are just more open to change, and that also depends on the rest of their type dimensions. For instance, a judge who is also a feeler may not change his or her mind on certain values that he or she considers indisputable such as: “We will not discriminate.” But he may easily change his mind if his colleague wants to go to a restaurant for lunch that is different than planned.

Vacations are a “trip” (excuse the pun) for those who differ on the J/P scale. Myers-Briggs trainers have a lot of fun asking participants divided by Js and Ps to prepare on a flip chart how they would plan for a trip. Do the plans need to be made far in advance, or spur of the moment? Should there be a schedule, or would a schedule defeat the purpose of a vacation? For a perfect vacation, Js and Ps might differ a lot! The difference might be seen in the comments below.

Judging Preference

The plans must be made far in advance. Each day has to be scheduled so we can decide beforehand where to stay, what time we will get there, and when we will leave the next day, so we can book appropriate places to stay and be there on time. We also need to decide what clothes to bring well before leaving because we have to make sure that they fit in the suitcases and the suitcases fit in the car or plane in such a way as to carry or not be charged for unnecessary luggage. We also need to schedule where we want to go every day and what events we want to see, and we need to make sure that they meet the overall time plan for arrival and departure. We can't stop for too many bathroom breaks.

Perceiving Preference

Vacation! Go with the flow—whatever happens. We do whatever we want, when we want, and where we want. We don't schedule anything. We just take off and see where we end up. We eat at places that look interesting, and we stop for the night wherever there's a vacancy in a decent motel where we have landed. We get up when we want to get up in the morning. We eat at the motel or, if we've slept too late, we find an interesting breakfast nook or run into the 7-Eleven for coffee and whatever we can find that isn't too gross. We'll make up for it at lunch. Or we'll have a great breakfast and skip lunch. Pack? We'll throw things into the suitcase at the last minute. If we forget something, we'll stop at a Wal-Mart or mall. Or we'll buy it in the motel's store.

If you would like to do this fun and insightful activity with a colleague or team, or apply other personality concepts, see the “Activities” section at the end of the chapter.

Questions

- Based on the information you have, what would you predict your personality to be?
- What strengths do you bring to your team?

- When have you been able to present your perspective and be heard?
- When have you been challenged to put your ideas across?
- What do you think accounted for the difference between your answers to the last two questions?
- What personality characteristics make you proud?

Tips

- Take pride in your personality.
- Learn the personality types of your team and your supervisor.
- Be tactful and diplomatic when you work with personalities other than your own.
- Notice those with whom you have conflicts.
- Determine whether their personality types may be different from yours. Listen to their thoughts and try to appreciate their points of view.

The Leader's Connection

Your personality type is recognized by your staff members. They may not be able to tell what “letters” you are (T, F, etc.), but they know something about how you think and your decision-making style. At times, leaders discount people who do not think in the same way that they do. After all, being a successful leader, you must know something! This is true. The question becomes: Do you want to know more? Do you believe that you can be even more successful if you consider the perspectives of others in your organization, especially those who have diverse preferences and see the organization in a different light? Would you be willing to reach out to those with personalities that are different from yours? Extending your vision in this way serves the purpose of recognizing everyone, not just those who are like you or those you like (sometimes the same).

If some of the top companies in the United States are working with curricula related to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, it may benefit your organization as well to “type” yourself and your team, especially if you have the mindset that you can learn from everyone on your team. Your “opposite” will give you great perspective. Instead of discarding different views, consider embracing them, for understanding and to obtain a broader view. You may make the same decisions that you would have without additional input. Or you may do one or more things

differently that will make the difference between buy-in and dissent. It is worth considering for you—and for your team.

Questions

- Does your team know your personality type?
- Do you know the “types” on your team?
- Are you willing to receive training on the MBTI?
- What do you think will be the advantages?
- Are there any disadvantages as you see it?

Tips

- Hire a certified instructor in administering and interpreting the MBTI.
- Have the consultant “type” your team and discuss the results.
- Determine how you can adjust how you motivate each individual.
- Work toward greater consensus through validating all types and listening and taking into account different points of view.
- Do not expect everyone to be like you.



ABOUT THE NEXT CHAPTER

The next chapter, “Taking the Sting Out of Feedback,” shows you how you can express observations, feelings, and perceptions without sounding critical. Feedback is a positive way to gauge how you are coming across to others. It is like setting a train back on track when it is about to derail. Your true intentions are in your heart and mind. Feedback can help you realize whether your actions are being received in a way that mirrors your intent.

Activities

Notes to Reader: The activities in this chapter are designed to be done individually or in a training environment. Whether you are in a group with others or working on your own, you may go back to these activities at any time and learn from them on an individual basis.

Notes to Instructor: Suggestions for using these activities in a learning environment are included at the end of the chapter.

Purpose: To identify the importance of personality in relationships and in work behavior and productivity.

Background: Past and present, the concept of personality has been researched and discussed as a way to understand ourselves and each other. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, developed by Isabel Myers and Katherine Briggs, identifies preferences and “type,” a concept that allows us to look at how people we work and live with get their energy, take in information, make decisions, and conduct themselves in their work and personal lives.

Activity 7.1. Your Personality Type

Instructions: Review the list early in Chapter 7 and decide which of each pair you are most like. Read the descriptions of preferences in the rest of the chapter. Then answer the questions below:

1. Based on your Extravert or Introvert (E or I) preference, what would you consider to be the strengths that you have at work. At home? What communication difficulties do you have that may be related to your preference?
2. Answer the question above as it relates to your Sensing and Intuition preference (I, N).

3. Answer the question above as it relates to your Thinking and Feeling preference (T, F).

4. Answer the question above as it relates to your Judging and Perceiving Preference (J, P).

Activity 7.2. Types and Teamwork

Instructions: Read the following scenario and answer the questions in the space below.

You are participating in a project in which you have been asked to design a new communication process for your organization, including a statement and a logo. What personality preferences would you like to see demonstrated on your team?

Activity 7.3. Relationships

Instructions: Think about those you get along with best. Based on what you determine to be your preference similarities, with whom are you most compatible? How do you communicate? How do your similarities help you in understanding the other person, and vice versa?

Es with Es, Is with Is

Ss with Ss, Ns with Ns

Ts with Ts, Fs with Fs

Ps with Ps, Js with Js

What communication struggles do you encounter with those who have opposite preferences?

Is with Es

Ss with Ns

Ts with Fs

Js with Ps

Activity 7.4. Your Ideal Work Environment

Notes to Instructor: Split participants into four teams: ST, SF, NF, and NT. Give each team a piece of flip-chart paper and some markers. Ask team members to draw their ideal work environment. Have them present it to the large group. Process the activity after the presentations and note the differences in what each team chose as its primary criteria for an ideal workplace.

Activity 7.5. Demonstrate Differences

Notes to Instructor: For the I and E preference, split the group into introverts and extraverts. Give them a topic to work on that involves discussion. Assign an observer to watch the groups. You and the observer can watch for how quickly the teams begin, how much conversation transpires, and how animated each team is in expression.

For the S and N preference, use a half-filled water bottle to display how people see things differently. In front of the group, ask those with the S preference to raise their hands. Roll the water bottle from side to side and up and down, swirling the water in the bottle. Ask the Ss to describe what they see. You will hear comments such as “A water bottle with water in it.” Then ask the Ns to describe what they see. You may hear comments such as, “A river flowing through an empty field.” Process quickly, identifying the differences, including creativity, imagination (N qualities), and specificity (S qualities). Ask how that might relate to the workforce, and how each preference complements the other.

For the F and T preference, post flip charts on either side of the room. Ask the Fs to go to one side and the Ts to the other. Give each group markers and ask them to

write this question at the top of the flip-chart sheet: “What is love?” and to answer the question.

Give participants fifteen minutes, or until you see the flip-chart paper has been written on. Some may need more than one piece of flip-chart paper, but probably for only a few sentences or phrases. Process the activities, being careful not to evaluate the responses, but to see how others view such an “emotional” word (usually Fs).

For the P and J preference, split the participants into the two groups, as above, with a flip chart and markers. Give them this instruction: “You are going on a vacation. Determine what you need to do to get ready.” Give the participants fifteen minutes to list on the flip-chart paper what they will do. Process the results.

Notes to Instructor: The activities in this chapter can be used with individuals, pairs, or teams. For pairs, give participants enough time to talk with another person and then process everyone’s insights as a group. For teams, have each person write his or her responses individually and ask each participant to share his or her responses in the team, one person at a time.

For Activity 7.2, teams of up to six people can complete the task described and present their slogans and logos. If done in a large group, all teams can present one at a time. Additional activities could include teams that have been formed by “type” writing a song or poem and then comparing differences.