Introduction to MBTI/Personality Typology: Understanding Type, the Preferences, the Cognitive Functions, the Temperaments

Why MBTI? A model for understanding something abstract, which is the personality

- It’s not the complete you, it’s just a tool, BUT an effective tool for:
  o Self-understanding, understanding others
  o Self-acceptance
  o Self-observation: get outside of yourself, see yourself from a more objective place
  o Personal growth: once you understand the mental processes that drive your personality (i.e. the cognitive functions), you will have a powerful leverage point to grow yourself

History of Personality Typology and the MBTI

- The concept of personality typology or personality type was initially developed by Swiss psychologist Carl Jung in his book “Psychological Types” (1923)
- Mother-daughter team (Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs-Myers) later expanded Jung’s theory and developed it into a questionnaire: the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – hence MBTI

How do you type yourself? Let yourself be you; be free and honest with yourself
* no value judgements attached to any one type, all 16 types are necessary to the world
* it’s a lot of info: give yourself time to process this information after reading this document
* as you mature, you’re type doesn’t change but grows; you better access different parts of yourself

Understand the four basic aspects of human personality: four dimensions that can be pictured as a continuum between two opposite ends:

(E) Extraversion ←-------------→ Introversion (I)
How we interact with the world and where we direct our energy

(S) Sensing ←---------------------→ Intuition (N)
How we take in information, otherwise seen as the kind of information we naturally notice/prioritize

(T) Thinking ←---------------------→ Feeling (F)
How we evaluate that information, otherwise seen as how we make decisions

(J) Judging ←---------------------→ Perceiving (P)
Whether we prefer to live in a more structured way (focused on making decisions), or in a more spontaneous way (focused on taking in information)

Each opposite end is called a preference. We call it a preference because you use both ends of each scale in daily life, but one feels more comfortable. Just like your preference for using your right or left hand. There are 8 preferences that combine to form 16 personalities. On online tests, many people test “out of type” because they might often use the opposite of their natural preference in daily life. But it is important to know your natural preference for each dimension, because your type is more than the sum of its parts.

Now, read the preferences checklist and examples. If you are still unsure about one or more letters after looking at these documents, read type descriptions (general, plus strengths and weaknesses) until one clicks. Taking some online tests might help too. But don’t rely on the tests too much.

The “meat” of MBTI are the cognitive functions. No two types share the same functions in the same order, so it’s important to feel “rested into” your type if you want to use typology for personal development. Give yourself time to understand the preferences and process the type descriptions.
Preference checklist/examples taken from: Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type, Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron
See also: http://files.meetup.com/9679252/Type%20yourself%20-preference%20checklist%20long.pdf (Long preference checklist on our group site under “files”)

EXTRAVERTS
- Are energized by being with other people
- Like being the center of attention
- Act, then think
- Tend to think out loud
- Are easier to “read” and know; share personal information freely
- Talk more than listen
- Communicate with enthusiasm
- Respond quickly, enjoy a fast pace
- Prefer breadth to depth

INTROVERTS
- Are energized by spending time alone
- Avoid being the center of attention
- Think, then act
- Think things through inside their heads
- Are more private; prefer to share personal information with a select few
- Listen more than talk
- Keep their enthusiasm to themselves
- Respond after taking the time to think things through; enjoy a slower pace
- Prefer depth to breadth

SENSORS
- Trust what is certain and concrete
- Like new ideas only if they have practical applications
- Value realism and common sense
- Like to use and hone established skills
- Tend to be specific and literal; give detailed descriptions
- Present information in a step-by-step manner
- Are oriented to the present

INTUITIVES
- Trust inspiration and inference
- Like new ideas and concepts for their own sake
- Value imagination and innovation
- Like to learn new skills; get bored easily after mastering skills
- Tend to be general and figurative; use metaphors and analogies
- Present information through leaps, in a roundabout manner
- Are oriented toward the future

THINKERS
- Step back; apply impersonal analysis to problems
- Value logic, justice, and fairness; one standard for all
- Naturally see flaws and tend to be critical
- May be seen as heartless, insensitive, and uncaring
- Consider it more important to be truthful than tactful
- Believe feelings are valid only if they are logical
- Are motivated by a desire for achievement and accomplishment

FEELERS
- Step forward; consider effect of actions on others
- Value empathy and harmony; see the exception to the rule
- Naturally like to please others; show appreciation easily
- May be seen as overemotional, illogical and weak
- Consider it important to be tactful as well as truthful
- Believe any feeling is valid, whether it makes sense or not
- Are motivated by a desire to be appreciated

JUDGERS
- Are happiest after decisions have been made
- Have a “work ethic”: work first, play later (if there’s time)
- Set goals and work towards achieving them on time
- Prefer knowing what they are getting into
- Are product oriented (emphasis on completing the task)
- Derive satisfaction from finishing projects
- See time as a finite resource and take deadlines seriously

PERCEIVERS
- Are happiest leaving their options open
- Have a “play ethic”: enjoy now, finish the job later (if there’s time)
- Change goals as new information becomes available
- Like adapting to new situations
- Are process oriented (emphasis on how the task is completed)
- Derive satisfaction from starting projects
- See time as a renewable resource and see deadlines as elastic
Examples: E vs I – does not mean “outgoing” vs “shy”!

- E vs I study styles (I’s have a high amount of stimulation when just alone, E’s a lower amount, needing external stimulation): unlike her introverted student friends who spend hours studying in the quiet of their own rooms, Jill, an extraverted student, likes to study in groups, or study at the library. She likes constant input from study friends, or having background noise, it’s less boring for her.
- An E and I respond to questions: At school, Rob (an E) always raised his hand in class before having the answer; it left his teacher bewildered, but he needed to talk the answer out instead of thinking it through in his head. At work, Pam (an I), feels frustrated that her boss doesn’t give her enough time to answer his questions, she says, “he must think I’m stupid”.
- Both E’s and I’s both enjoy socializing: An E might go to party and talk to 20 people about twice as many subjects. An I might talk to just 5, being most engaged when the topic is a specific interest of theirs.

Examples: S vs N – S’s are concrete thinkers; interested in tangible/practical, N’s are abstract thinkers; interested in concepts/ideas

- A sensor and an intuitive witness the same car accident: The sensor is able to report that the light was green when she saw a late-model blue Chevrolet station wagon approach the intersection and an old red Mustang coming out of a side street too fast, around 50 m/hr. The collision made the wagon spin around two complete times before smashing into a street sign at the opposite corner. The intuitive told the police that he thought the red car might have gone through a red light, but everything happened so quickly, he wasn’t sure. He had wondered where the car was going in such a hurry and hoped that everyone had insurance. He was worried about the driver, who looked like someone he knew.
- A sensor and an intuitive take long walks together: the sensor loves the walks because they put him back in touch with nature, feeling the sun, wind, looking at the colours and being in the moment; the intuitive spends so much time thinking or talking about new ideas for her current project that often she’ll reach the end of the walk without ever really stopping to notice where she’s been.

Examples: T vs F – does not mean that T’s are not capable of emotion, or that F’s not capable of rational thought!

- A feeler and thinker both work at a college and must decide whether a student caught with drugs will get suspended: The thinker’s first response is to hold all students to the same standard; leniency might set a dangerous precedent. He’s persuaded when the feeler justifies a more lenient punishment with factors such as the student’s good grades, that he has never been in trouble before, and that the school was partly to blame by placing him in a room with older students, knowing that freshman are eager to be accepted.
- After going through hell and high water to get to an early morning meeting in another city, including switching flights because of a failed engine, a feeler is hurt when the first thing his boss asks him is how much extra his additional flight cost. The boss, who’s a thinker, explains by saying that it’s not that he doesn’t care, but that he can see that his employee is obviously all right, so he was curious about the cost.
- A thinker and feeler work for the same department and have come to rely on each other’s input over the years: the thinker asks the feeler for insight into why colleagues might be acting a certain way, the feeler finds her thinker colleague to be the most honest person she knows and relies on him for objective insight.

Examples J vs P – J feels tension until matters are resolved, P likes matters open/feels tension around closing off options

- A judger and perceiver both enter a shop interested in buying a bike: the perceiver asks the salesman a hundred questions, leaves saying he has to think over his decision, and goes to two other stores that day to get more information. The judger looks over all the bikes in the store for a few minutes, asks the salesman which he would recommend and buys that one. She leaves feeling pleased that her task is accomplished.
- A judger and perceiver both receive a brochure for a conference taking place in 4 months’ time: the judger decides to either a/ not go because she has a previous commitment, b/ go, fills in the form and makes payment right away c/ pass the brochure on to a friend who would be interested. The perceiver doesn’t want to make a decision because four months is a long time away and something better might come up. She puts it on her “just for now” stack of papers and, unless it is important, she’ll probably forget about it.
The Cognitive Functions: The 4 mental processes that underlie your personality

- Once you know your 4 letters, you can use them as a decoder for understanding how your mind is wired: your mind is wired along 4 mental processes, otherwise known as the “cognitive functions”
- The cognitive functions are why it is important to know your type: no two types share the same mental processes in the same order
- Which mental processes appear in which order for your type is called your “cognitive function stack”
- These mental processes, or cognitive functions, work together in a dynamic way to influence your personality: they define what puts you in flow, what you excel at, what makes you defensive and what you’re not interested in and consequently not that good at
- In your function stack, you have 2 learning processes and 2 information-evaluating processes organized along the lines of a primary process (process you use the most), a secondary process (a strength but not a compulsion), a tertiary process (a weakness you go to when you’re feeling defensive) and an inferior process (a weakness that you use in a very primitive way)
- To understand how your stack works: think of a four passenger car with a driver and co-pilot in the front, and a 10 year-old child and a 3 year-old child in the back.
- If you want to use personality typology for personal development, you’ll need to understand your cognitive function stack and develop your secondary/auxiliary or co-pilot process

The 4 Temperaments: SJ, SP, NF, NT types – or why some types get along so well

- Developed by psychologist David Keirsey: saw how some types share core values, helpful for career
- Grouped the types into:
  o Guardians/Traditionalists (SJ types, 46% of US population as of 2007): conservative values, value order, security, propriety, conformity, serve society’s needs, focus on duty
  o Artisans/Experiencers (SP types, 27%): like action, live for the present, focus on the immediate situation and what needs to be done now
  o Idealists (NF types, 16%): search for meaning of life, concerned with personal growth, focus on human potential, catalysts for positive change
  o Rationals/Conceptualizers (NT, 10%): search for objective knowledge, concerned with acquiring competence, focus on solving problems through a systems-approach

Resources (tests, type descriptions, advice and information):

Web:

Personality Hacker: http://bit.ly/2ekBGWg - EXCELLENT in all content, I especially love their podcasts

https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test
http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp
http://www.keirsey.com/default.aspx
http://personalityjunkie.com/
http://similarminds.com/classic_jung.html

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmDcT_Pujk8vOcxk_UcnxtQ (YouTube videos by Michael Pierce)

Books:

Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type, Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron
The Art of SpeedReading People: How to Size People Up and Speak Their Language, Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger
Was That Really Me?: How Everyday Stress Brings Out Our Hidden Personality, Naomi Quenk