

Personality Type Explained

According to Carl G. Jung's theory of psychological types [Jung, 1971], people can be characterized by their preference of general attitude:

- Extraverted (E) vs. Introverted (I),

their preference of one of the two functions of perception:

- Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N),

and their preference of one of the two functions of judging:

- Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F)

The three areas of preferences introduced by Jung are *dichotomies* (i.e. bipolar dimensions where each pole represents a different preference). Jung also proposed that in a person one of the four functions above is dominant – either a function of perception or a function of judging. Isabel Briggs Myers, a researcher and practitioner of Jung's theory, proposed to see the judging-perceiving relationship as a fourth dichotomy influencing personality type [Briggs Myers, 1980]:

- Judging (J) vs. Perceiving (P)

The first criterion, **Extraversion – Introversion**, signifies the source and direction of a person's energy expression. An extravert's source and direction of energy expression is mainly in the external world, while an introvert has a source of energy mainly in their own internal world.

The second criterion, **Sensing – Intuition**, represents the method by which someone perceives information. Sensing means that a person mainly believes information he or she receives directly from the external world. Intuition means that a person believes mainly information he or she receives from the internal or imaginative world.

The third criterion, **Thinking – Feeling**, represents how a person processes information. Thinking means that a person makes a decision mainly through logic. Feeling means that, as a rule, he or she makes a decision based on emotion, i.e. based on what they feel they should do.

The fourth criterion, **Judging – Perceiving**, reflects how a person implements the information he or she has processed. Judging means that a person organizes all of his life events and, as a rule, sticks to his plans. Perceiving means that he or she is inclined to improvise and explore alternative options.

All possible permutations of preferences in the 4 dichotomies above yield 16 different combinations, of *personality types*, representing which of the two poles in each of the four dichotomies dominates in a person, thus defining 16 different personality types. Each personality type can be assigned a 4 letter acronym of corresponding combination of preferences:

The 16 personality types

ESTJ

ISTJ

ENTJ

INTJ

ESTP

ISTP

ENTP

INTP

ESFJ

ISFJ

ENFJ

INFJ

ESFP

ISFP

ENFP

INFP

The first letter in the personality type acronym corresponds to the first letter of the preference of general attitude - “E” for extraversion and “I” for introversion.

The second letter in the personality type acronym corresponds to the preference within the sensing-intuition dimension: “S” stands for sensing and “N” stands for intuition.

The third letter in the personality type acronym corresponds to preference within the thinking-feeling pair: “T” stands for thinking and “F” stands for feeling.

The fourth letter in the personality type acronym corresponds to a person’s preference within the judging-perceiving pair: “J” for judging and “P” for perception.

For example:

- ISTJ stands for Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging
- ENFP stands for Extraverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Perceiving