

**1 KNOW
YOURSELF**

**How to be
interesting**



Know yourself

If we're to look at what it means to be interesting and to begin to find out how interesting we might be as individuals, then we have to try to get to know ourselves. We need to gain some understanding of "what makes me, me". We need to look at what makes up our personality.

One of the most popular personality tools out there is called the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or MBTI. It's said to be used by 89 of the Fortune 100 companies, and has been translated into 24 languages. Think of MBTI as a useful self-awareness tool rather than a test or in-depth psychological assessment.

Some people can be rather sceptical about this sort of thing, particularly when used in an employer–employee relationship, and correctly cite that there is no empirical evidence that the test results are accurate. But in our experience working out your Myers–Briggs profile can be illuminating, helpful and fun – just the process of self-examination alone is a useful trigger for you to think about where you are in life, how you can better understand yourself and how to interact with others. As an exercise, it certainly qualifies as interesting.

The MBTI aims to make Carl Gustav Jung's psychological types understandable to us in our everyday lives and, more importantly, useful. The typological theories were first proposed by Jung in his book *Psychological Types* in 1921.

Carl Gustav Jung

Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist Carl Jung (26 July 1875–6 June 1961) is credited as the founder of analytical psychology. Jung proposed and developed the concepts of the extroverted and the introverted personality.

He thought that the human psyche could be divided into three parts: the ego (the conscious and thinking self), the personal unconscious (collective personal experiences unique to each one of us) and the collective unconscious (the experiences and behaviour patterns that are common to everyone).

Psychological preferences

Mother and daughter team Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers developed Jung's theories into The Myers–Briggs Type Indicator. It's a psychometric questionnaire that measures our psychological preferences in how we, as different individuals, perceive the world around us and how we make our decisions based on this perception.

To understand the MBTI we need to understand Jung's theory. He proposed that cognitive functions could be divided into two dichotomous pairs.

Cognitive function is all about knowing and processing thoughts. It includes aspects like awareness, perception, reasoning and judgement.

The two dichotomous pairs he proposed were:

- 1. The rational, judging functions of thinking and feeling.**
- 2. The irrational, perceiving functions of sensing and intuition.**

These, according to Jung, can be expressed in a further grouping of either introverted or extroverted form.

In this context by extroversion we mean "outward-turning" and by introversion we mean "inward-turning".

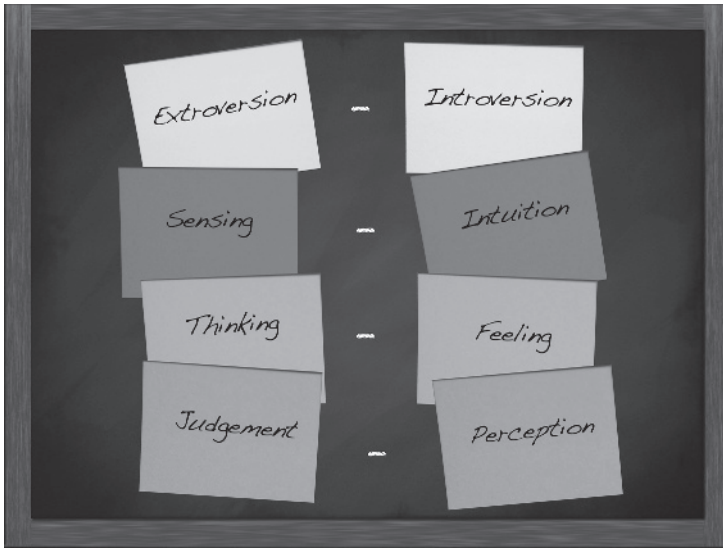
Jung thought of psychological type as somewhat like being left- or right-handed. Some of us write with our right hand, others with their left hand. Right-handed people can write with their left hand (if they have to) but prefer to use their right hand.

Jung said that in a similar way individuals were born with, or developed over time, preferred ways of thinking and acting.

The MBTI groups these differences into four opposite pairs or dichotomies, which results in 16 possible psychological types. It is important to note that none of these types are better than others – it's just that individuals have natural preferences.

The four dichotomies

The four opposite pairs are known by their initial letters except for intuition, which is known as N, as in iNtuition. So the four pairs are:



Extroversion–Introversion

These preferences are sometimes called attitudes. Here, extroversion means “outward-turning” and introversion means “inward-turning”. An extrovert type personality is directed out towards people and objects while an introvert type personality is directed inward toward concepts and ideas.

People with a preference for extroversion tend to act first, then reflect, then act further. They are often considered good talkers.

People with a preference for introversion tend to reflect carefully first, then act, then reflect again. They are often considered good listeners.

Sensing–Intuition

These are the two perceiving or information-gathering functions.

People who prefer sensing are more likely to trust information that is tangible and solid. They are often interested in small detail and facts. They prefer to trust experience and reality.

People who prefer intuition tend to trust information that is more abstract or theoretical. They tend to focus on the big picture and often prefer to trust their instincts.

Thinking–Feeling

These are the two judging or decision-making functions.

They are used to make rational decisions, based on the information received from their sensing or intuition functions.

People who prefer thinking often tend to decide things from a detached view based on logic and reason. They are often goal focused and make decisions with their head.

People who prefer feeling often reach decisions by associating or empathizing with the situation. They are often subjective in their decision-making, like to maintain harmony and make decisions with their heart.

Judgement–Perception

People also have a preference for how they use their judging function and their perceiving function in relation to the outside world.

People who prefer judging are often planned and organized in their daily routines. They are often task driven and don't like last minute changes or surprises.

People who prefer perceiving can appear to have no plan of action. They are often flexible, adaptable and enjoy acting on spontaneity. They thrive on variety.

16 possible psychological types

The 16 possible psychological types are referred to as abbreviations of four letters. There are plenty of websites that list the MBTI types of famous people, some of which we've shown here – though how accurate these are is anyone's guess of course!





—————→ **Intuitive**

Nelson Mandela
ISFJ
Nicole Kidman

Dwight D. Eisenhower
INTJ
Martina Navratilova

Audrey Hepburn
INFP
JRR Tolkien

Albert Einstein
INTP
Marie Curie

Sandra Bullock
ENFP
Robin Williams

Walt Disney
ENTP
Tom Hanks

Johnny Depp
ENFJ
Kirstie Alley

Bill Gates
ENTJ
Sigourney Weaver

Introvert



Extrovert

—————→ **Thinking**



The MBTI questionnaire looks at how a person perceives the world and how they prefer to interact with others. It helps people improve their working and personal relationships in a positive and constructive way by helping them understand their personality in more depth. It helps you to:

- Understand your own and others' behaviours in greater depth.
- Approach problems in different yet healthy ways.
- Understand and utilize your natural strengths.
- Improve teamwork.
- Resolve conflict.

It can be really useful when it comes to extracting more value from your personal and working relationships. It may feel like problems all arise out of other people's shortcomings, but you'd be amazed how much easier life is when you're aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. Myers-Briggs can help you understand your own personality in more depth, and this, in turn, impacts upon the way you deal with others. Don't knock it till you've tried it. Who knows, you might find it interesting.

An ISTJ – Introvert, Sensing, Thinking and Judging type personality, like Warren Buffett, is no better or worse than an ENTJ – Extrovert, Intuitive, Thinking and Judging type personality such as Margaret Thatcher. They are simply different personality types.

Likewise, someone who prefers judgement to perception is not, by definition, more judgmental or less perceptive.

And someone who scores high for extroversion as opposed to introversion is not a more extroverted person necessarily. They just have a clearer preference for extroversion.

To take the MBTI personality type indicator

The MBTI takes the form of a simple questionnaire of forced-choice questions where the individual has to choose one of two possible answers to each question. The choices are a combination of word pairs and short statements. Choices are not literal opposites, rather they aim to reflect the opposite preferences on the same dichotomy.

There are 88 questions in the European English version and 93 in the North American English version.

We are the best judges of our own type

In MBTI individuals are thought to be the best judge of their own type. The questionnaire gives a *Reported Type* but this is only an indication of the probable *Overall Type*. During feedback, a *Best-Fit* discussion helps the individual increase their understanding of the four dichotomies and decide on the personality type closest to their own.

Considered feedback is important

It's best when taking the assessment to get detailed feedback from a trained MBTI practitioner with a Best-Fit exercise and discussion to check against the Reported Type.

Type not trait

The MBTI sorts only for personality preferences – it's not about assessing strength of ability.

No right or wrong

No preference or total type is better or worse than another – all are equal.

Not for selection

Because MBTI measures preferences not aptitude, it should not be used for employment selection.

The original Latin meaning of the word character is an inscription or marking that differentiates one thing from another for identification purposes. In ancient Greek “charaktér” is an engraving

What's my type?

Here are a few examples of the sort of questions that are asked in the MBTI questionnaire. These are not actual questions from the MBTI; they are merely to give you an idea of the type of questions asked.

You prefer to plan ahead rather than do things on the spur of the moment

☐ Yes ☐ No

You are more interested in general ideas than in the specific details

☐ Yes ☐ No

You trust reason above personal feelings

☐ Yes ☐ No

You like helping people, expecting nothing in return

☐ Yes ☐ No

You easily sympathize with other people

☐ Yes ☐ No

You often prefer to read a novel than go to a party

☐ Yes ☐ No

You enjoy putting things in order

☐ Yes ☐ No

You feel comfortable and at ease in a crowd

☐ Yes ☐ No

You often make decisions based on the feelings of the moment rather than on careful planning

☐ Yes ☐ No

You like to keep your desk or workspace neat and ordered

☐ Yes ☐ No

You find talking about your feelings difficult

☐ Yes ☐ No

What personality type do you think you might be?



**Knowing
me,**

**Knowing
you,**

Aha

Abba and Alan Partridge
(or maybe it should be the other way around).

Holding the interest of others

If you are attuned to the way a person is feeling, you are more likely to hold their interest than someone who is not receptive to what is happening beneath the surface. Developing your emotional intelligence is one way of helping to improve your understanding of others and your relationships.

What is emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is sometimes known as EQ or EI. It's all about the ability to perceive, control and evaluate our emotions. It's about self-awareness and self-motivation.

Emotional intelligence theory was first developed by psychologists Gardner, Salovey and Mayer in the 1970s and 1980s. Daniel Goleman further developed the concept in his book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995).

Salovey and Mayer defined emotional intelligence as, "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions".

In Daniel Goleman's book – *Emotional Intelligence* – he says that EI creates social abilities that: "... allow one to shape an encounter, to mobilise and inspire others, to thrive in intimate relationships, to persuade and influence, to put others at ease".

Goleman identified five "domains" of emotional intelligence:

1. Knowing your emotions.
2. Managing your own emotions.
3. Motivating yourself.
4. Recognizing and understanding other people's emotions.
5. Managing relationships; that is, managing the emotions of others.

The subtitle to the book is: "Why it Can Matter More than IQ".

He goes on to say:

“People with well-developed emotional skills are more likely to be content and effective in their lives, mastering the habits of mind that foster their own productivity.”

Goleman’s poser of “Why it Can Matter More than IQ” is a very interesting one. We are sometimes drawn to people with high intellects because they often have interesting things to say – and that’s great.

But if a person has a high IQ and is able to match it with a high EQ – even better?

Truly great leaders have a high EQ. They know what inspires and motivates. They know how to make people feel good about themselves. They hear the unheard. They understand the value of emotional investment. They are interesting people.

People with high emotional intelligence are good at understanding other people’s feelings and managing relationships.

Because high emotional intelligence helps us interact better with people, it plays a very important role in being interesting.

It is worth noting that a high IQ does not necessarily translate to having a high EQ or EI.

How high is your EQ? However high it is, it could probably be higher. Take every opportunity to work on this facet of your character. There’s always room for improvement! Do one thing this week to start growing this part of your identity. Next time you’re talking to a friend, listen harder ...



Brain power

We can't really look at the whole subject of being interesting and how humans think and behave without talking briefly about the human brain.

Our brain performs an incredible number of tasks.

- It controls body temperature, blood pressure, heart rate and breathing.
- It takes in and processes masses of information about the world around us. This information is fed in from our senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching.
- It manages the physical movement of our body.
- It enables us to think, reason, dream and experience emotions.

Left-brain–right-brain theory

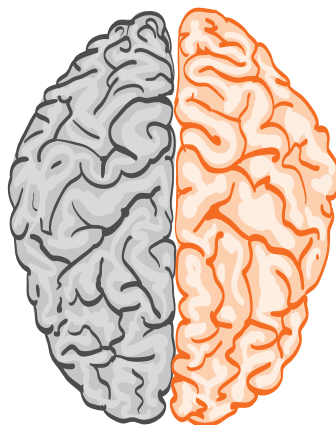
According to the theory of left-brain or right-brain dominance, each side of the brain controls different types of thinking. It is thought that people prefer one type of thinking to the other.

Someone who is “left-brained” is often said to be more logical, analytical and objective.

Someone who is “right-brained” is often thought to be more intuitive, thoughtful and subjective.

This theory is based on something called the lateralization of brain function. But is it true that one side of the brain controls specific functions? Are people really either left-brained or right-brained?

The right-brain–left-brain theory stemmed from the work of Roger Sperry, who won the Nobel Prize in 1981.



Language – Logic	Recognizing faces – Expressing emotions
Analytical thinking	Music – Reading emotions
Critical thinking – Numbers – Reasoning	Colour – Images
	Intuition – Creativity

Are you more a right-side or left-side of the brain thinker?



We use both sides of the brain but tend to use one more than the other.

But are you more of a right-side or left-side of the brain thinker?

Try one of the many left-brain, right-brain tests on the web and make your own mind up about how indicative they are.

There's also the spinning dancer test (Google it, you'll find it easily).

Which way do you see her spinning? Clockwise or anti-clockwise?

According to some, if you see her spinning anti-clockwise you're more left-brained. If you see her spinning clockwise you're more right-brained.

According to others, it's just a clever optical illusion (it's the latter btw.)

Some interesting things about the human brain

- 😊 The average adult brain weighs about 3 lbs – between 1300 and 1400 grams.
- 😊 There's an iPad app that gives you a detailed view of Einstein's brain. It was removed without permission at his autopsy and preserved.
- 😞 The brain is made up of about 75% water. Although about 2% of body weight it uses about 20% of the oxygen in our blood.
- 😊 The brain's grey matter is made up of neurons, which gather and transmit signals. The white matter is made up of dendrites and axons, which create the network by which neurons send their signals. The brain is 60% white matter and 40% grey matter.
- 😞 There are anywhere from 1000 to 10 000 synapses for each neuron.
- 😊 It is believed that humans experience, on average, 70 000 thoughts each day.
- 😞 It is a myth that you only use 10% of your brain – every part of the brain has a function.
- 😊 It pays to keep exercising your brain, because mental activity stimulates the creation of new neurons throughout your whole life.
- 😞 While you are asleep you are practically paralyzed as your brain creates a hormone to stop you acting out your dreams.
- 😊 About 12% of us dream in black and white.
- 😊 There are 100 000 miles of blood vessels in the brain.
- 😞 The brain has no pain receptors so it cannot feel pain. Sorry Monty Python but there is no such thing as "my brain hurts".

A reminder

As we have said, this is not an instructional manual. So, unlike some instructional personal development books, we have avoided the use of irritating or silly mnemonics.

You know the sort of thing we mean?

Plan, Review, Action, Target

Remember it as

PRAT

But while we're here ...

Even though we think mnemonic devices are a bit silly, it's worth mentioning that they may well help us be interesting. Why? Because they are learning techniques that help us remember information and information makes people interesting.

Mnemonics translate information into a form that the brain finds easier to retain and recall. It is suggested that the actual process of converting a word or phrase into a mnemonic may help the transfer of information to long-term memory.

Back in the times of the Ancient Greeks and Romans differences were distinguished between two types of memory: the “natural” memory and the “artificial” memory. The first is inborn – the one we use automatically – the second is trained and developed through learning.

So do mnemonics actually work? Well, Mark's grandmother, god rest her soul, was very big on mnemonics. She taught him three when he was a small child.

Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain – for the colours of the rainbow Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet.

**Never Eat Cake Eat Salmon Sandwiches
And Remain Young** – for the word Necessary.

**Big Elephants Can Always Understand
Small Elephants** – for the word Because.

He has always remembered all of them. He was never taught “A friend is always there when the end comes”. Which is maybe why he still spells the word friend incorrectly sometimes.

There’s even a mnemonic for mnemonic apparently:

**Mnemonics Now Erase Man’s Oldest
Nemesis, Insufficient Cerebral Storage.**

So people use mnemonics because the human mind can remember spatial, personal information more easily than it remembers rather abstract, impersonal information. Putting it in a personal context seems to lodge it into our brain.

With that in mind, we would like to employ at least one mnemonic device in this book. You’ll find it over the page.

TANAMITB

There are no annoying mnemonics in this book.