

IDENTIFYING HOW WE THINK: THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR® AND THE HERRMANN BRAIN DOMINANCE INSTRUMENT

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI®) is the most widely used personality-assessment instrument in the world. Designed by a mother-and-daughter team, Isabel Myers and her mother Katherine Cook Briggs, the MBTI® is based on the work of Carl Jung. Myers and Briggs developed the instrument during World War II on the hypothesis that an understanding of personality preferences might aid those civilians who were entering the workforce for the first time to find the right job for the war effort. The instrument conforms to standard testing conventions and, at last count in 1994, had been taken by more than two-and-a-half million people around the world. The MBTI® is widely used in business, psychology, and education, as well as in career counseling.

The MBTI® uses four different pairs of attributes to create a matrix of 16 personality types:

- **Introversion Versus Extraversion¹** The first pair measures the degree to which one is an introvert (I) or an extrovert (E). These I/E descriptors focus on the source of someone's mental energy: extraverts draw energy from other people; introverts draw energy from themselves. Each finds the other's preferred operating conditions enervating.
- **Sensing Versus "iNtuiting"** The second pair identifies how one absorbs information. "Sensors" (S) gather data through their five senses, whereas "iNtuitives" (N) rely on less direct perceptions, such as patterns, relationships, and hunches. For example, when asked to describe the same painting, a group of S's might comment on the brush strokes or the scar on the subject's left cheek, whereas a group of N's might imagine from the troubled look in the subject's eyes that he lived in difficult times or suffered from depression.

- **Thinking Versus Feeling** The third pair measures how one makes decisions once information is gathered. Feeling types (F) use their emotional intelligence to make decisions based on values—their internal sense of right and wrong. Thinking types (T) tend to make decisions based on logic and "objective" criteria—their assessment of truth and falsehood.

- **Judging Versus Perceiving** The fourth pair reflects how slowly or rapidly one comes to a decision. Judging types (J) have a high need for closure. They reach conclusions quickly based on available data and move on. Perceiving types (P) prefer to keep their options open. They wait until they have gathered what they consider to be enough information to decide. J's crave certainty, and P's love ambiguity.

To read descriptions of the personality types identified in the MBTI®, see the matrix in Table 1.

Ned Herrmann created and developed the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) while he was a manager at General Electric. Starting his research with large groups within GE, he expanded it over 20 years through tens of thousands of surveys and has validated the data with prominent psychometric research institutions, including the Educational Testing Service.

The HBDI measures a person's preference both for right-brained or left-brained thinking and for conceptual or experiential thinking. These preferences often correspond to specific professions. Engineers, for example, consistently describe themselves as analytical, mathematical, and logical, placing them on the left end of the continuum. Artists, in contrast, describe themselves as emotional, spatial, and aesthetic, placing them on the right end of the continuum.

		Table 1 The MBTI®			
		Sensing Types (S)		Intuitive Types (N)	
		Thinking (T)	Feeling (F)	Feeling (F)	Thinking (T)
Introverts (I)	Judging (J)	ISTJ Serious, quiet, earn success by concentration and thoroughness. Practical, orderly, matter-of-fact, logical, realistic, and dependable. Take responsibility.	ISFJ Quiet, friendly, responsible, and conscientious. Work devotedly to meet their obligations. Thorough painstaking, accurate. Loyal, considerate.	INFJ Succeed by perseverance, originality, and desire to do whatever is needed or wanted. Quietly forceful, conscientious, concerned for others. Respected for their firm principles.	INTJ Usually have original minds and great drive for their own ideas and purposes. Skeptical, critical, independent, determined, often stubborn.
	Perceiving (P)	ISTP Cool onlookers—quiet, reserved, and analytical. Usually interested in impersonal principles, how and why mechanical things work. Flashes of original humor.	ISFP Retiring, quietly friendly, sensitive, kind, modest about their abilities. Shun disagreements. Loyal followers. Often relaxed about getting things done.	INFP Care about learning, ideas, language and independent projects of their own. Tend to undertake too much, then somehow get it done. Friendly, but often too absorbed.	INTP Quiet, reserved, impersonal. Enjoy theoretical or scientific subjects. Usually interested mainly in ideas, little liking for parties or small talk. Sharply defined interests.
Extraverts (E)	Perceiving (P)	ESTP Matter-of-fact, do not worry or hurry, enjoy whatever comes along. May be a bit blunt or insensitive. Best with real things that can be taken apart or put together.	ESFP Outgoing, easygoing, accepting, friendly, make things fun for others by their enjoyment. Like sports and making things. Find remembering facts easier than mastering theories.	ENFP Warmly enthusiastic, high-spirited, ingenious, imaginative. Able to do almost anything that interests them. Quick with a solution and to help with a problem.	ENTP Quick, ingenious, good at many things. May argue either side of a question for fun. Resourceful in solving challenging problems, but may neglect routine assignments.
	Judging (J)	ESTJ Practical, realistic, matter-of-fact, with a natural head for business or mechanics. Not interested in subject they see no use for. Like to organize and run activities.	ESFJ Warm-hearted, talkative, popular, conscientious, born cooperators. Need harmony. Work best with encouragement. Little interest in abstract thinking or technical subjects.	ENFJ Responsive and responsible. Generally feel real concern for what others think or want. Sociable, popular. Sensitive to praise and criticism.	ENTJ Hearty, frank, decisive, leaders. Usually good at anything that requires reasoning and intelligent talk. May sometimes be more positive than their experience in an area warrants.

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