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Personals

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[here]

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As published on page C1/C2 on June 29, 2005

Knowing yourself means effective communication

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Personality. Knowing it, understanding it is the key to effective communication yet many of us aren't even aware of what our personality traits look like - not to ourselves nor to others.

Thankfully, scientists like Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung were intrigued by personalities and dedicated their lives to helping unravel the mysteries of these complicated but necessary components of life on earth.

However, it was Carl Jung, a Swiss-born psychiatrist and long-time admirer of Freud, whose theories proved the impetus for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the most researched and used personality assessment in the world today.

Jung, whose personality theory has a variety of ingredients, is responsible for six of the eight personality typologies explained by the MBTI: introversion, extroversion, sensing, intuiting, thinking and feeling.

Basically, Jung theorized that we all choose to interact with the world either through our thoughts, feelings, dreams, etc. (introversion) or through people, activities and tangible objects (extroversion).

Contrary to what most of society thinks of as introverted and extroverted (shy versus outgoing), the two are really about energy and how each of us recharges our batteries.

Me, I'm more introverted than extroverted, while Marilyn, with whom I work, is extroverted. What does that mean? Well, when we were at a conference last year, Marilyn and I went back to our motel room after a very long day of meetings, seminars and lectures.

I was exhausted. Being around that many people for that long wore me out. I just wanted to watch television and go to bed. Marilyn, on the other hand, was pumped. She was hyper and full of energy. Instead of wanting to lay her head on a pillow, she wanted to go out for drinks. Introversion versus



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extroversion.

Jung knew, though, that regardless of where we get our energy we still have to deal with both inner and outer worlds. And, according to Jung, there are four possible ways to function effectively in these two worlds: sensing and/or intuiting, thinking and/or feeling.

If you obtain information through your five senses then you likely fall into the sensing category. If, like me, you tend to obtain information using a more unconscious method (gut-feel, for example), then you likely fall into the intuiting category.

As for thinking versus feeling, when you're a thinker you evaluate the information you gathered by using logic and rationale. Feeling people will evaluate the same information using their overall emotional response to determine a course of action.

But I mentioned eight personality typologies and have listed, so far, only six. That's because Jung didn't develop the remaining two components of the MBTI (judging and perceiving).

Katherine Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers, who developed the MBTI, added these two essential typologies at a later date.

Careful I am not, so therefore I am a perceiver; spontaneous and unstructured. I like and need options. People who are judgers, on the other hand, tend to be more cautious in their lives. They want and need organization, structure and a plan of action.

And why do we need to use tools like the MBTI in our businesses? Because they offer us insight that might otherwise take us years to discover. They allow us to learn about our likes and dislikes, our needs and wants, our positive and negative attributes.

When we become aware of our own tendencies, we're able to predict how we will respond in certain situations and with certain personalities. Knowledge of our needs and wants allows us to take the steps necessary to obtain these necessities. The MBTI give us the tools we need to develop ourselves in a variety of areas.

In addition to what it can do for own self-development, when the information from the MBTI is shared with the people we work with, we gain a better understanding of their wants and needs, their behavioural tendencies, their goals for self-development.

So whether you are an ESTJ or an INFP (like me), the more you know about your personality the more effective you will become as a communicator. And since communication is something we all have to do every day of our lives, in every

aspect of our lives, why wouldn't we choose to use assessments at work to enhance the process?

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