

# Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

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## Background of Myers-Briggs

The MBTI was first developed by Isabel Briggs Myers (1897-1979) and her mother Katharine Cook Briggs. Isabel had a bachelor's degree in political science from Swarthmore College and no academic affiliation. Isabel's husband, Clarence Myers, was a lawyer. Apparently, because Clarence was so different from the rest of the family, Katherine became interested in types. She introduced Isabel to Jung's book, *Psychological Types*. The rest is history. Both became avid "type watchers". Their goal was to help people understand themselves and each other so that they might work in vocations that matched their personality types. This would make people happier and make the world a more creative, productive and peaceful place in which to live!

## Theory Behind the Model

The MBTI is the most well-known personality model in the world. Personality typing was first developed by [Carl Jung](#) in the early 1920's. In its purest form, Jungian personality typing is perhaps the most complex view of human nature ever described, and even today it is quite difficult to attempt to understand Jung's writings on personality.

In the 1950's, Myers and Briggs resurrected Jungian personality typing, modified it somewhat, simplified its description, and developed a psychometric called the "Myers-Briggs Type Indicator" for measuring their revised system of personality typing. The MBTI test and associated model has become so famous that today many people refer to personality typing as the "MBTI", but in a rigorous sense this is not true; the MBTI is only one test instrument among several for determining personality types, though it is by far the most widely used.

In the simplified version, personality typing as defined by Myers and Briggs assumes that much of our personality can be defined by dividing it into four independent preference areas or scales: energizing, attending, deciding, and living. Within each scale we have a preference for one of two opposites that define the scale. This makes for a total of 16 different combinations, each of which defines one particular and unique personality archetype.

The four scales are:

1. **Energizing** - How a person is energized
2. **Attending** - What a person pays attention to
3. **Deciding** - How a person decides
4. **Living** - Lifestyle a person prefers

Following are the preferences for each of the four scales:

1. **Energizing** - How a person is energized:
  - § **Extroversion (E)** - Preference for drawing energy from the outside world of people, activities or things.
  - § **Introversion (I)** - Preference for drawing energy from one's internal world of ideas, emotions, or impressions.
2. **Attending** - What a person pays attention to:
  - § **Sensing (S)** - Preference for using the senses to notice what is real.
  - § **Intuition (N)** - Preference for using the imagination to envision what is possible - to look beyond the five senses. Jung calls this "unconscious perceiving".

3. **Deciding** - How a person decides:
  - § **Thinking (T)** - Preference for organizing and structuring information to decide in a logical, objective way.
  - § **Feeling (F)** - Preference for organizing and structuring information to decide in a personal, value-oriented way.
4. **Living** - Life style a person prefers:
  - § **Judgment (J)** - Preference for living a planned and organized life.
  - § **Perception (P)** - Preference for living a spontaneous and flexible life.

Perception involves all the ways of becoming aware of things, people, happenings, or ideas. Judgment involves all the ways of coming to conclusions about what has been perceived. If people differ systematically in what they perceive and in how they reach conclusions, then it is only reasonable for them to differ correspondingly in their reactions, interests, values, motivations, skills, and interests.

The MBTI is based on Jung's ideas about perception and judgment, and the attitudes in which these are used in different types of people. The aim of the MBTI is to identify, from self-report of easily recognized reactions, the basic preferences of people in regard to perception and judgment, so that the effects of each preference, singly and in combination, can be established by research and put to practical use.

Today, the purpose of the MBTI is to make the theory of psychological types understandable and useful in people's lives. The essence of the theory is that much seemingly random variation in behavior is actually quite orderly and consistent, being due to basic differences in the way individuals prefer to use their perception and judgment.

The MBTI functions as a tool that helps people in organizations to:

- § understand themselves and their behaviors.
- § appreciate others so as to make constructive use of individual differences.
- § make a start with personal development.
- § see that approaching problems in different ways can be healthy and productive for an organization.

The table [CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH OF THE 16 LEARNING STYLES](#) explains each of the 16 MBTI personality types.

### **Link to MBTI Test**

To help you understand your personality, or type, take one of these tests:

<http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp>

[http://personalitypathways.com/type\\_inventory.html](http://personalitypathways.com/type_inventory.html)