

Personality and Social Style Activities

Countless theories have been developed to help understand the different personality traits and styles observed in human beings. For example, personality tests exist that categorize you as a type of animal, a character from literature, a person from the Bible, or a set of letters. Various theories break down personality into 2, 4, 16, 29 or more dimensions. Common inventories include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Kiersey Temperament Sorter, DISC, and the NEO. While no one personality inventory is perfect or completely describes personality, some are more reputable and sound than others.

Personality inventories can be helpful in providing you with a “description” of your personality styles and how you will interact as a couple. Be aware that these inventories aren’t perfect and won’t always fit you in every case. In general, if a personality test fits you 80% or more, it’s a good match.

The following inventories in the Appendices can help you and your spouse better understand your personalities. While these inventories are simple and imperfect, completing each inventory can provide you with insight into how to understand each other more fully and lead you to further discussions.

PERSONALITY TYPE PREFERENCES ^{1,2}

Directions: Each of the following four pairs of traits describes tendencies on opposite ends of a spectrum. Read the items below and circle the numbers of the phrases that describe you. See if you score higher on one side than another. Because our preferences feel “right” to us, we sometimes can’t understand why others see things differently than we do. However, learning about our preferences and the preferences of others can help us be more understanding of others and increase effective communication. While most people tend to lean toward one side or the other of each of the pairs, in certain circumstances we have the ability to do both sides. The more strongly we lean to one side, the more comfortable and “at home” we feel there and the more difficult it is for us to understand and do the other side.

Pair 1 - Extroversion v. Introversion: Where do you get and direct your energy?

<u>Extroverts</u>	<u>Introverts</u>
According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer Extroversion like to focus on the outer world of people and activity. They direct their energy and attention outward and receive energy from interacting with people and from taking action.”	According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer Introversion like to focus on their own inner world of ideas and experiences. They direct their energy and attention inward and receive energy from reflecting on their thoughts, memories, and feelings.”
According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Extroverts:	According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Introverts:
1. Prefer being around people	1. Are comfortable spending time alone
2. Are interested in many things	2. Are selective and like to focus on one or a few things at a time
3. Have lots of friends and associates	3. Have a few very close friends
4. Jump into things pretty quickly	4. Think about things before they act
5. Tend to be talkative	5. Tend to be fairly reserved
6. Are more public and easier to get to know	6. Are more private and harder to read
7. Are enthusiastic and outgoing	7. Appear calm and self-contained

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Pair 2 - Sensing v. Intuition: Do you tend to focus on the facts or on the possibilities?

<u>Sensors</u>	<u>Intuitives</u>
According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer Sensing like to take in information that is real and tangible – what is actually happening. They are observant about the specifics of what is going on around them and are especially attuned to practical realities.”	According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer Intuition like to take in information by seeing the big picture, focusing on the relationships and connections between facts. They want to grasp patterns and are especially attuned to seeing new possibilities.”
According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Sensors:	According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Intuitives:
1. Focus on the facts and specifics	1. Focus on the possibilities
2. Are more concrete; like ideas to be practical	2. Are more abstract; like ideas and theories for their own sake
3. Trust their direct experience	3. Trust their gut instincts
4. Like to operate in the here and now	4. Like to imagine and think about the future
5. Are realistic and practical	5. Are innovative and imaginative
6. Like established ways of doing things	6. Like to create new ways of doing things
7. Think and talk in a step-by-step manner	7. Frequently jump around from topic to topic

Pair 3 - Thinking v. Feeling: Do you make decisions based on logic or feelings?

<u>Thinkers</u>	<u>Feelers</u>
According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer to use Thinking in decision making like to look at the logical consequences of a choice or action. They want to mentally remove themselves from the situation to examine the pros and cons objectively. They are energized by critiquing and analyzing to identify what’s wrong with something so they can solve the problem. Their goal is to find a standard or principle that will apply in similar situations.”	According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer to use Feeling in decision making like to consider what is important to them and to others involved. They mentally place themselves into the situation to identify with everyone so they can make a decision based on their values about honoring people. They are energized by appreciating and supporting others and look for qualities to praise. Their goal is to create harmony and treat each person as a unique individual.”
According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Thinkers:	According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Feelers:
1. Are more logical and analytical	1. Are more sensitive and sympathetic
2. Believe it’s better to be truthful than tactful	2. Believe it’s better to be tactful than truthful
3. Are fair and consistent; apply one standard to all	3. Like harmony; look for extenuating circumstances
4. Are motivated by achievements	4. Are motivated by being appreciated
5. Like to compete and win	5. Like to cooperate and create consensus
6. Easily see flaws; can be critical and brusque	6. Like to please others; express appreciation easily
7. Are thick-skinned and not easily offended	7. Get their feelings hurt more easily

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Pair 4 - Judging v. Perceiving: Do you prefer to be more planful or more spontaneous?

(Note: the term “judging,” as it is used here, is not the same thing as being judgmental.)

Judging	Perceiving
According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer to use their Judging process in the outer world like to live in a planned, orderly way, seeking to regulate and manage their lives. They want to make decisions, come to closure, and move on. Their lives tend to be structured and organized, and they like to have things settled. Sticking to a plan and schedule is very important to them, and they are energized by getting things done.”	According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer to use their Perceiving process in the outer world like to live in a flexible, spontaneous way, seeking to experience and understand life, rather than control it. Detailed plans and final decisions feel confining to them; they prefer to stay open to new information and last-minute options. They are energized by their resourcefulness in adapting to the demands of the moment.”
According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Judgers:	According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Perceivers:
1. Like to make decisions; decide quickly	1. Like to keep options open; may procrastinate
2. Prefer to make and keep plans	2. Prefer to be free to act spontaneously
3. Are usually well organized	3. Are often disorganized
4. Like to be in control	4. Like to adapt to changing situations
5. Have a strong work ethic: work, then play	5. Have a strong play ethic: play, then work
6. Are more formal and conventional	6. Are more casual and unconventional
7. Tend to see things as black or white	7. Tend to see things as shades of gray
8. Are often better at finishing projects	8. Are often better at starting projects

Sources:

- Briggs-Myers, I., *Introduction to Type (Sixth Edition)*, Mountain View, CA: CPP, 1998.
- Tieger, P., & Barron-Tieger, B., *Just Your Type*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company, 2000.

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PERSONALITY RATING SCALE^{3,4,5}

Directions: Each of you rate yourself on the dimensions below. Place a mark in the box that best describes you. Be sure you make your rating based on how you view yourself and not how you wish you were or how you think someone else wants you to be. You can either answer the questions separately and then discuss them, or you can fill this out together. Note the items where you are alike and different. Discuss with your partner how your similarities and differences have already affected and could affect your relationship. There are advantages and disadvantages to both similarities and differences. How could your own similarities and differences play out in your marriage? Discuss what you can do to minimize any negative effects and maximize the positive ones.

	<i>Usually/ always like me</i>	<i>More like me</i>	<i>Both like me</i>	<i>More like me</i>	<i>Usually/ always like me</i>	
Outgoing						Shy
Dominant						Submissive
Pessimistic						Optimistic
High energy						Low energy
Impulsive						Deliberate
More logical						More emotional
Decision-maker						Indecisive
Organized						Disorganized
Leader						Follower
Formal						Casual
Easily stressed						Calm under stress
Competitive						Cooperative
Practical						Imaginative
Easily angered						Tolerant of others
Concrete						Abstract
Focus on facts						Focus on possibilities
Planned						Spontaneous
Determined						Easily defeated
Open						Distant
Modest						Arrogant
Warm						Cold
Laid back						Active/Industrious
Sympathetic						Indifferent
Excitable						Calm
Daring						Fearful
Trusting						Suspicious
Bold						Insecure
Giving						Stingy
Assertive						Passive
On time						Late
Traditional						Innovative
Perfectionist						Practical
Merciful						Just/Fair

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IDENTIFYING YOUR SOCIAL STYLE⁶

Directions: Circle one adjective on each line that best describes you. Even if you believe that both words describe you, try to choose one.

ASSERTIVENESS

A. High	B. Low
1. Competitive	Cooperative
2. Fast actions	Make deliberate actions
3. Risk taker	Risk avoider
4. Aggressive	Passive
5. Strong opinions	Moderate opinions
6. Take-charge attitude	Go-along attitude
7. Tend to use power	Tend to avoid using power
8. Take social initiative	Let others take social initiative
9. Make statements	Ask questions

RESPONSIVENESS

1. High	2. Low
1. Warm, approachable	Cool, independent
2. Open, impulsive	Guarded, cautious
3. Undisciplined about time	Disciplined about time
4. Use opinions	Use facts
5. Dramatic opinions/actions	Measured opinions/actions
6. Permissive, fluid attitudes	Strict, disciplined attitudes
7. Emotional decision making	Rational decision making
8. Easy to get to know	Hard to get to know
9. Expressive, subjective	Self-disciplined, objective
10. Easygoing with self, others	Demanding of self, others

Scoring: For each section, see if you circled more items in the High or Low side. Circle the heading that fits you (High or Low) for both the Assertiveness and Responsiveness sections. Using the two headings you circled, find your position on the grid below to determine your social style category. Read the description for your style on the next page.

Assertiveness

	A. High	B. Low
1. High	Expressives	Amiables
2. Low	Drivers	Analyticals

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DESCRIPTIONS OF SOCIAL STYLES

AMIABLES: Amiables value interpersonal relationships. These people try to minimize conflict and promote everyone's happiness. While some people view Amiables as accommodating and friendly, others may describe them as wishy-washy and lacking "back-bone." Amiables frequently find it difficult to say "no" and thus may be over committed or have difficulty setting limits. They can be counted on to do what will help and please others. They are people-oriented and non-aggressive.

ANALYTICALS: Analyticals are problem solvers. They like to get all the data before making a decision. Some say they are thorough, but others complain that they are slow. They have valuable conceptual skills. They ask the difficult, yet important, questions. At times, others may perceive them to be distant, cold, or unloving. They rarely, if ever, miss a deadline. If they do, they will certainly have good reasons to support the delay.

DRIVERS: Drivers want results! They love to run things and have the job done in their own way. "I'll do it myself" is a frequent motto. They can manage their time to the minute; they seem businesslike to some and to others they may appear to be threatening and unfeeling. Drivers make sure the job is done. They get impatient with long discussions about the "best way" or "the way to please everybody." They are confident in their ability, take risks, and push forward.

EXPRESSIVES: Expressives get involved with people in active, rapidly changing situations. These people are seen as socially outgoing and friendly, imaginative, and vigorous. When interacting with Expressives, some people see them as dynamic and energetic while others perceive them as egotistical. Expressives can get things going, but may sometimes settle for less than the best in order to get on to something else. They lack a tolerance for details, are highly competitive, and may need to learn to work with others in a collaborative manner.

Source: Merrill, D. & Reid, R. *Personal Styles and Effective Performance* (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1981).

REFERENCES

Referencing of these materials is not meant to imply an endorsement by the Apostolic Christian Church of America of the author, publisher, or organization that created the materials.

1. I. Briggs-Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 6th ed. (Mountain View, CA: CPP, 1998).
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6. D. Merrill & R. Reid, *Personal Styles and Effective Performance* (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1981).

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