



The 16 Personality Types: Profiles, Theory, & Type Development

A.J. Drenth

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Are you tired of vague, superficial, and seemingly arbitrary personality descriptions that seem to have little to no scientific or theoretical backing? If so, *The 16 Personality Types* is for you.

Rooted in the seminal works of Jung and Myers-Briggs, as well more recent advances in type theory, this book offers in-depth descriptions and analyses of each of the sixteen personality types (i.e., INFJ, INTP, INFP, INTJ, ENFJ, ENTP, ENFP, ENTJ, ISFJ, ISTP, ISFP, ISTJ, ESFJ, ESTP, ESFP, ESTJ).

Each personality profile includes an introduction, overview of type development, as well as analyses of the personality functions of each type's "functional stack." What emerges is a sort of mathematics for understanding human behavior.

Among the most valuable elements of this book is its ability to account for what may otherwise appear to be contradictory attitudes or behaviors of the types. For instance, how can we understand Feelers who resemble or perhaps even believe themselves to be Thinking types? The answer, as explained in the book, relates to the fact that each personality type is comprised of pairs of opposing functions. So when Feelers behave more like Thinkers, they have typically fallen under the spell of their inferior Thinking function (i.e., Ti or Te). And since it is commonplace for all types to act "out of character," it is crucial that we understand the ways and manifestations of the inferior function, which serves as a primary focus of this book.

In short, *The Sixteen Personality Types* is geared for those who take serious interest in understanding the psychological laws and formulae that govern human behavior. But this book is no mere intellectual exercise, promising to increase self-knowledge and self-awareness while catalyzing personal growth, self-development, and authentic functioning.

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Matthew Greiner says

This is an excellent book! Dr. Drenth attempts to explain type theory in a way that, in my opinion, is probably the closest to the original intent of Jung's Psychological Type theory and he does it in an easy to understand, highly accessible way. As most books these days explain type theory as "type is the sum of the letter combination", Dr. Drenth actually places emphasis on the order of psychological functions. As I already stated, I believe this is more aligned with the original intent of Carl Jung's psychological type theory, and when you read it, it begins to actually make a lot more sense than other attempts at explaining type.

For example, a person can look at an INTP and an INTJ and based on the way that most books attempt to explain the difference, they will be explained as really having no differences other than the INTJ having a preference towards closure when compared to the INTP. However, with Dr. Drenth's elaboration on the order of psychological functions, one can see that, although both types have a preference for objectivity (T), they really are quite different from each other.

The psychological function ordering or "stack" of the two types are:

INTP:

- 1) dominant: Introverted Thinking (Ti)
- 2) auxiliary: Extroverted Intuition (Ne)
- 3) tertiary: Introverted Sensing (Si)
- 4) inferior function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

INTJ:

- 1) dominant: Introverted Intuition (Ni)
- 2) auxiliary: Extroverted Thinking (Te)
- 3) tertiary: Introverted Feeling (Fi)
- 4) inferior function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

So, as you can see, when one actually scratches the surface of the "type letters", it can be seen that they do not share ANY of the same psychological functions, thus creating two completely different people. This is why, despite sharing a preference for objectivity, an INTP like Albert Einstein looks very different than an INTJ like Hannibal Lecter (I apologize for comparing real-life and fictional characters, but since they are both strong examples of each type they give a solid illustration of the principle).

Dr Drenth also elaborates on the roles of the dominant and inferior functions and how insidious the inferior function can be when it attempts to "hijack" our consciousness. When this happens it is commonly known as being "In the Grip" and it creates a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde situation within the individual.

In all, this short, concise, yet very thorough book is one of the best books on the market for explaining type theory and making sense of Jung's, Keirsey's, and Briggs/Meyers descriptions and theories. If you want to get a thorough, clear, and perhaps the best holistic understanding of type, search no longer, you have found your book.

P.S. If you happen to be an INTP, know one, or just want to learn more, Dr. Drenth's book "INTP" is an

excellent resource and I highly recommend it.

Stephen says

This book—in addition to the further information available via the author’s website—serves as the most comprehensive and accurate resource I have found regarding the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. The explanations of the cognitive functions of each type validate typology for those having difficulty typing themselves or others using web-based resources.

The problem with most internet sources on the MBTI is that they only cover the four letters for each personality type—as the the personality types ENTJ, INFJ, or ESTP—and the preferences they stand for: Extraversion (E) vs Introversion (I), Sensing (S) vs Intuition (N), Thinking (T) vs Feeling (F), and Judging (J) vs Perceiving(P). Even the online tests are designed based on the preferences. In truth, the four letters collectively form a code. Introversion and Sensing are both perceiving functions, while Thinking and Feeling are both judging functions. In the four letter code, the J or P indicates whether or not one’s judging or perceiving function is directed outwardly (extraverted). In fact, the base cognitive functions are Thinking, Feeling, Sensing, and Intuition, which each type possesses to varying degrees. And each cognitive function may be extraverted or introverted.

The book goes in to much better detail. The point is that the tests are inaccurate, and A.J. Drenth’s book and website PersonalityJunkie.com are much more reliable resources.

I recommend this book for anyone seeking to learn more about themselves, especially fans of Susan Cain’s book on the introvert personality, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*. It isn’t as inspiring as Cain’s book, but its insights can lead to self discovery and empowerment, thus serving as a helpful companion. Whether you’re an introvert or extravert, Drenth’s book can help you distinguish yourself even further in a positive way.

While I have long been active in my pursuit of self actualization, this book still served as an awakening. I have been so much more comfortable and accepting of myself ever since I found out I was an INTP and what that actually meant. It helped me understand why I am the way I am and how I can better live from my essence. For example, while I am mostly rational and not socially inclined (dare I say not socially intelligent), I have always had an impulse to help people, sometimes to the point of self sacrifice. Unfortunately, this impulse often results in a clumsy or socially awkward attempt. This is due to Extraverted Feeling being my inferior function, meaning that I do not wield it with as great natural skill as the more social ESFJ, whose stereotype is the caregiver or the mother who bakes cookies for everyone. I’ve worked with some ESFJs who make highly informative and caring salesmen. I also know one who used to be a nurse, now works in retail in the supplement industry, and everyone who is in her presence for more than 15 seconds falls in love with her. And even though I have a similar desire to help people, that will never be me. And now I know why, and I also am able to accept it and embrace the things that I can do that ESFJs can’t.

I now know that I can best serve others by utilizing my other strengths, such as research and development. Like software programmers, I can best serve by doing all the hard work in isolation, and design a tool that makes everyone else’s life easier. The software development industry is, in fact, rife with INTPs as well as other intuitive types. The author of this book is also an INTP, and this book and his website were likely his way of fulfilling his desire to make a contribution to the world. My own way will likely be in the form of imparting advice on fiction writing as I continue to study the craft. I really hope I can be of help to others in

that regard—I head off to my MFA program next month.

On that note, learning the 16 personality types can aid a writer tremendously in making characters distinct from one another. When writing the “strict, routine-driven boss” character, you’ll better understand how his cognitive functions as an ESTJ honor and work within the system in place (Extraverted Thinking) and why he so strongly preserves past precedent (Introverted Sensing), making it difficult for him to be innovative or open-minded. You can also understand how his Introverted Sensing’s propensity for memory recall leads to a sense of humor that favors anecdotal storytelling. Furthermore, because his dominant function is Extraverted Thinking and his inferior function is Introverted Feeling, his storytelling is often related to his past conquests and stroking his ego. In contrast, the ESFJ, who also has Introverted Sensing, uses her storytelling sense of humor to lift the mood because her priority is Extraverted Feeling (making everyone feel good). [Note: The commentary on sense of humor did not come from Drenth’s book. It is my own observation and conclusion drawn from reading Drenth’s book and website information.] Furthermore, there are plenty of web forum posts on other sites where MBTI enthusiasts try to type fictional characters, which can be helpful to writers for comparison.

While the tone of this book is a bit more practical than inspiring, like I stated earlier, I still consider it a life changer. I can accept others’ differences a lot more, as well as my own. I used to be something of a curmudgeon as a teenager. Studying the MBTI has been a valuable tool in growing out of that. For those who seek community support in their growth, the web forums for the MBTI can be a valuable resource.

A note to those who fear or hate the notion of typology because they feel it puts people into “boxes”: There is ever more emerging evidence that personality is at least 50% genetic. The MBTI seeks to help us understand that 50%; it does not say that there are only 16 kinds of people in the world, nor does it invalidate individuality. It explores our common natures, while our nurtures are what makes us different. It would be most unfortunate to miss out on the benefits of understanding oneself better simply because of a misinterpretation that the MBTI threatens one’s sense of individuality.

I know that I am more than just an INTP, some four letter code or psychological profile. But knowing my nature helps me fulfill the essence of who I am within the context (nurture) of my life. I feel happier, more awakened, and better equipped for growth in this life. It is a gift for which I am truly grateful.

Pixie says

In depth analysis of the different personality types. Assumes a pre-existing familiarity with the types and personality functions.

Benjamin says

Perfectly clear, functional analysis of the 16 personality types. Useful for those who wish to really get to the heart of MBTI.

Hussam Elkhatib says

An enlightenment on the Mechanism of Personality

Explains the mechanism of personality in an easy-to-understand language that is free of jargon. Could be helpful at a domestic, social, academic, and professional levels. Also, may help people understand why someone behaves the way he or she does, let alone helping the person him- or herself realize why they act the way they do. Highly recommend without a doubt.

Andre says

Interesting book. However, I was expecting more detailed information about my own functional stack. Very useful if you want to read a brief and concise description about each personality type

PranaB Hait says

it doesn't clearly define the difference between 16 personality types. Many personality seems almost alike in this book

Liz says

At first I was annoyed by the “functional stack” which is really what separates this book from any old Meyers-Briggs synopsis you’ll find online. I’m still not totally sold, especially for those of us who find ourselves straddling two or even three different Types, because the stack varies dramatically with the switch of a single letter. However, once I made some friends/family test their Types, the descriptions got a whole lot more fun. Also, I appreciate that my Type (which appropriately seems to be the Type most curious about Personality Types in general, according to the author) gets a bonus “Sub-Type” section that sort of made me feel like less of a robot. The “Life Phases” are garbage (horoscope-level vagueness) but the rest I quite enjoyed, and I’m sure I’ll continue to dip into this in the future.

Bella says

I will forever use this book as a reference to MBTI. It's succinct, and the repetitive nature of the explanation of each type helps the reader see similarities. There are some spots where the author might fall into the pitfalls of stereotype caricatures, but there aren't so many that it ruins the essence of each type.

April says

Wow. This is honestly terrifying. I've grown up thinking I've just gotten more and more messed up mentally,

thinking there must be something wrong with my brain. But the INFJ personality perfectly summarized almost every single problem I have! It's like seeing my personality in depth on a page! Usually I'm unimpressed by psychology personality quizzes because they are never fully accurate, or they just seem like speculative theories that aren't really real science. As a result I have never taken psychology that seriously, at least not as personalities go. I always thought personalities couldn't be put in a box and it's true that we're all different, but I honestly can't believe how close they got me. I can't believe it. Reading the INFJ section for me was terrifying, like eyes were raking the insides of me and could see everything. It was CREEPY! I still can't get over it. I can't believe it...I've never seen psychology hit so close to the mark, ever!

Laurel says

While the majority of MBTI type descriptions read like horoscopes, those in this book are systematic and defined using the eight cognitive functions and their relative strengths. So while I don't think that MBTI is necessarily a tool that is useful in describing every person's personality, a description of Jungian cognitive functions working in combination with each other can be very insightful. For example, the cognitive function explanation of the INFJ type really resonated with me, especially when highlighting the similarities with INTJ. Typical MBTI type descriptions often pigeonhole F types as being very "feel"y and not logical, but this is a complete misunderstanding. This book rightly identifies the common analytical nature of INFJs and INTJs, and it has similar insightful comparisons for other types as well, all based on comparisons and contrasts with their cognitive functions.

in all, I don't totally endorse MBTI theory, but to the extent that you buy into it you should focus on the Jungian cognitive function theory. This book is a very good introduction to that approach.

Aaron Carlisle says

Know thyself to know the world that surrounds you. Interesting how accurate each personality type is, especially considering how off-putting the rest of them are when you compare them to your own (at least in relation to how you process thoughts and emotions alike).

Josiah Aston says

A.J. Drenth gives a comprehensive review of the 16 MBTI personality types. what makes this book unique, and why I gave it 5 stars, is it's focus on the underlying Jungian functions that make the personality type what it is. This book is not a superficial review, but gives deeper understanding of why people think and act the way they do.

Helen Hnin Oo Lwin says

This books explains the types very simply and perfectly.

