How Different Views on the Function Attitudes May Enrich a Type Practitioner's Life and Work

When we gain certification through the MBTI® Qualification Program, we are informed about the attitudes Extraversion/Introversion and Judging/Perceiving and also learn about the irrational functions Sensing/Intuition and the rational functions Thinking/Feeling. Then we discover everyone develops the functions in a different order. One function is the superior or dominant, followed by the second or auxiliary function. We are taught that the dominant and auxiliary function are expressed in different attitudes. The theory behind the MBTI® tool is very specific about this: Extraverts have an extraverted dominant function and an introverted auxiliary function, and Introverts have the opposite pattern. So my type code of INFP is Introverted Feeling with Extraverted Intuition. I have always been, and still am, happy with my INFP profile. How happy? Well, 80% happy. Here's why …

I am 100% sure I hold a strong, locked-in preference for Introversion and Feeling (Fi) and for Perceiving. But the Extraverted Intuition (Ne) part of my INFP has always confounded me. In her very comprehensive book, *You've Got Personality*, Mary McGuiness identifies one of the primary gifts of Ne: "other people often see them as change agents." Now that description is definitely not me. I am certain that nobody sees me as a change agent, at least not in the Ne sense.

So now what? Maybe I am not an INFP after all. But Extraverted Sensing (Se) that comes with the only alternative profile with dominant Fi,

ISFP, does not fit me either. For years I wondered about the type accuracy of the Ne part of my reported INFP function couplet, but took some comfort from the thought that Carl Gustav Jung once said that there is no description of a personality that fits more than one person.

Then, in 2004, a new psychometric instrument was introduced to the Netherlands: The Insights Discovery Personal Profile (Discovery). Like the MBTI tool, Discovery is based on Jung's theory and has been developed by Insights Learning, the brainchild of a father and son team from Dundee in Scotland, Andi and Andy Lothian.

Discovery uses four colors, each color represents a rational function in the respective attitude, and the results are displayed around a wonderful Mandala-like wheel. The extraverted functions are aligned with one side of the model, while the introverted functions are on the other side. The model also positions the eighth, or shadow, psychological function directly opposite the dominant, as one might anticipate. You can read about Insights and the Discovery instrument at www.insights.com/LearningSolutions/Tools/PersonalProfile.aspx.

Paul Scheffer (INFP) is a self-employed type practitioner, coach, and trainer from the Netherlands. In his teambuilding workshops and career coaching program, he uses both MBTI® and Insights Discovery® instruments.

paul.scheffer@mac.com

Five years ago, I completed Discovery and was plotted on the wheel at a position that confirmed my MBTI reported type of Introverted Feeling with Intuition. But it was not the expected Introverted Feeling with Extraverted Intuition, but Introverted Feeling with INTROVERTED Intuition! At first, my type conditioning made me reluctant to accept this, maybe just as reluctant as you who are reading this article are likely to be. But bear with me as we take a look at Andi Lothian's arguments.

In her book *Gifts Differing*, Isabel Myers quotes Jung (1923, p. 515): "For all the types appearing in practice, the principle holds good that besides the conscious main function there is also a relatively unconscious, auxiliary function which is in every respect different from the nature of the main function." It may have been Myers' interpretation of this quote which led to her conclusion that for the auxiliary to sit in the opposite attitude to the dominant, it must be unconscious, or relatively unconscious, resulting in the MBTI prescription of the sixteen-type playing field, where for each type the attitude of the auxiliary is opposite to that of the dominant. Indeed, if the dominant function is conscious and the auxiliary function is unconscious then, according to Jung in *Psychological Types*, the resulting type couplet will consist of alternate attitudes.

However, while working to align his Discovery system with Jung's theory, Andi Lothian discovered that in fact this passage, key to an accurate portrayal of typology, is the result of a mistranslation by both translators (Baynes, 1923 and Hull, 1971) of the two versions of *Psychological Types*. Just one word, but this word is critical to establishing a sixteen-type model based on Jung's theory. The word, "unconscious," has been wrongly translated into English from the original German word which Jung wrote as "conscious." The correct translation from the original German should read "For all the types appearing in practice, the principle holds good that besides the conscious main function there is also a relatively *conscious*, auxiliary function which is in every respect different from the nature of the main function" (1923, p. 515; 1973, para 669).

I have checked the original German versions and indeed Andi Lothian is right about this. Now in the paragraph where this quote comes from, Jung writes that if the dominant function is a rational one (Thinking or Feeling), then the auxiliary function is an irrational one (Sensing or Intuition) and vice-versa. He does not mention the attitude of the functions, although Jung's expectation is that the auxiliary will likely be in the same attitude as the dominant, giving a base of 32 types,

double the conventional 16, if the auxiliary can sport either attitude.

Andi Lothian quotes many extracts from Jung's various works in support of his approach, all of which confirm Jung's experience that the dominant and auxiliary function, where conscious, will share the same attitude: "the introvert does possess an extraverted attitude, but it is unconscious" (*Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, C.G. Jung, 1953, para 81). Thus, if both the dominant and the auxiliary function are conscious, then they must have the same attitude, must they not?

Another valuable source of information on the auxiliary function is Jung's *Typology in Perspective* by Angelo Spoto. In the first part of this book, Spoto mostly agrees with Isabel Myers, but in chapter 6, "Type Development and the Individuation Process," he introduces the Complex Types (the 16 types we use in the MBTI) and the Aberrant Types. In the Aberrant Types, a balance between introversion and extraversion is not assumed. There is no even balance between the rational and irrational functions. These descriptions relate to those persons whom Jung stated to be difficult to type – those who do not appear to have a clear type.

What have I learned from these views of Isabel Myers, Andi Lothian, and Angelo Spoto? The MBTI tool, developed by Myers with 16 types, is a wonderful instrument, but it does have some limitations. The Discovery instrument developed by Lothian, goes further with Discovery's 16, then 32, and finally 72 sub-types. For me, this extension of Fi with Ni matches me better than Fi with Ne.

But the ultimate conclusion is that this is a personal choice. Everyone who is introduced to the work of C. G. Jung, either through the MBTI tool or through the Insights Discovery system must work hard to heighten their own self-awareness to arrive at the type fit closest to whom they believe themselves to be.

As a practitioner, I know it is my duty to facilitate this choice. ■

RESOURCES

Jung, C.G. (1971). *Collected Works*, Volume VI. Princeton University Press.

Lothian, A. (2009). *The eight function model of consciousness*. Insights Practitioners' website.

McGuiness, M. (2004). *You've Got Personality*. MaryMac Books.

Myers, I.B. (1980). *Gifts Differing*. Davies-Black Publishing.

Spoto, A. (1995). *Jung's Typology in Perspective*. Chiron Publications.