

WAYS OF THE SPIRIT

PERSONS, COMMUNITIES, SPIRITUALITIES

Edited by
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Way of Personality Types

Christopher Ross

When we draw near to ourselves, it is hard to shake the idea that we are *the original*. “This is me” we say, and we are reflexively distrustful of personality systems and typologies that would seem to shrink our sense of ourselves as one of a kind, as unique. We are familiar to ourselves. If we dig beneath our modesty, we may hear ourselves add “... and this is normal.” Furthermore, somewhere in the recesses of our personality we assume that other people are psychologically like us. And so not only do we tend to privilege our needs over others but also tend to see ourselves as the norm, with other people as less successful versions of *our* humanity. However, at some point in our spiritual journeys we need to confront the subtleties of our narcissism.

The challenge to transform our natural preference for favouring ourselves into concern for others in their uniqueness is expressed in most world religious traditions in a form of the Golden Rule, the encouragement to “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” as enjoined by Jesus, or by Buddha’s “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.” One hundred years of research in the psychology of individual differences, or personality psychology, confirms the worst fears of our narcissism: not only are the majority of people not like us, but there is indeed a minority of other humans who are quite like us.

The journey from division and aloneness to wholeness and community is one way to describe the course of personal development. Carl Jung (1875 – 1960), Swiss psychiatrist and early collaborator with Freud, captures this aspect of human development through his concept of individuation. Jung chose the term individuation to describe the processes of psychological and spiritual growth into wholeness, which for him went hand in hand. In Jung’s view, being an *individual* was a process of becoming “*undivided*.” Jung’s “Analytical Psychology” is based on the assumption that a dynamic and valuable tension exists between opposites that form part of the human

psyche. The most basic polarity in his depth psychology is that between conscious and unconscious.

Jung thought the most accessible aspect of our unconscious to be the sets of opposites that were the foundation to his personality typology articulated in *Psychological Types*: energetic focus (extraverted or introverted), way of perceiving (sensing or intuitive), way of judging or deciding (thinking or feeling), and outside interface (perceiving or judging). Understanding his personality typology is a good starting place for our journey toward individuation. Jung describes *eight* associated but different ways of being conscious in order to correct our personal bias of considering others as merely less successful versions of ourselves.

Jung's approach to psychological life undergirds the world's most frequently used personality instrument,¹ the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI [1980]) pioneered by Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother Katherine Myers, which in turn is compatible with the most scientifically validated personality measure – the NEO-PI based on the Five Factor Theory of Personality.² My presentation of their approach to individuation through personality typology follows that of Jungian analyst John Beebe who emphasizes familiarity with all eight as ways of orienting human consciousness.³

Jung considered that there were four key cognitive processes that he called functions, each of which may be directed in an introverted or extraverted direction depending on whether we are energized from the outside world (extraversion [E]) or our inside world (introversion [I]). Each of us possesses two contrasting perceiving functions – sensing (S) and intuition (N) – and two contrasting ordering or judging functions – feeling (F) and thinking (T) – for organizing our perceptions and making decisions. The sensing function gathers information by focusing on specific details, whereas the intuitive function orients to patterns and cognizes ‘wholes.’ Thinking and feeling are contrasting – yet complimentary – ways of judging and ordering the information we gather through our perceiving processes. Thinking orders information through detached logical analysis with attention to consistency. Feeling orders on the basis of values – what matters – with special attention to human need.

While each of the four cognitive processes of consciousness – sensing, intuition, feeling and thinking – can be differentiated for the purpose of measurement, as with the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, in practice each operates in an extraverted or introverted direction in any given moment. Individuals therefore have the capacity to orient their consciousness in eight ways: through extraverted sensing (Se), introverted sensing (Si), extraverted intuition (Ne), introverted intuition (Ni), extraverted thinking (Te), and introverted thinking (Ti), extraverted feeling (Fe), and introverted feeling (Fi).

These processes of consciousness will be considered in the above order, describing (1) the operation of each mental process in general terms, (2) the means of recognizing each in ourselves and others, and finally (3) a list of features that can increase our awareness of the play of each process in our lives, with the view to bringing the less preferred and therefore less developed processes more fully into our everyday lives and thereby increasing our resources for coping with life's challenges and opportunities.

EXTRAVERTED SENSING (SE)

Extraverted sensing connects us to the physical world that surrounds us, and enables us to delight in the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures of the five senses. Se provides a direct pleasure and satisfaction that cannot be derived from "reading instructions, taking a course, or considering the ramification of our actions.⁴ This is the gift of Se to us all: sometimes it is the direct experience of life that counts in all its delights and raw physicality. Jungian type educator Lenore Thomson states, "Every time our actions are changing immediately and directly in concert with our surface perceptions, we're drawing on Extraverted Sensation."⁵

Recognizing Se in Ourselves and Others

Se is (1) an information gathering or perceiving process (2) focused on the current, objective external world in order to (3) fully experience the rich details of the environment through the five senses, (4) drawing "energy and enjoyment directly from people, objects and events."⁶

We can become more aware of Se in our lives by reference to these key features:

- Delight in the physical senses
- Orienting to the present
- Detailed pleasurable attention to the immediate
- Unfiltered experience
- Effortless attunement to the here and now
- Taking pleasure in action

To access extraverted sensing, recall a time of complete immersion in a physical experience: driving down a deserted road at dusk, or preparing bread to bake – adjusting the pressure of your hands in accord with the increasing firmness of the dough's texture, or attuning your caresses to the relaxing skin of your beloved.

INTROVERTED SENSING (Si)

Introverted sensing is a process for gathering information that is focused on the subjective, internal world of an individual whereby current sensory experience is compared to similar past experiences by reference to a database of selectively stored but vividly detailed memories.⁷ A subjective factor is at the core of Si. Thompson states, “Only some things strike us as important, useful, familiar, or exciting enough to convert into mental content – that is, into facts that we retain over time.”⁸ Jung himself used the example of several painters who paint the same garden but produce a different picture.⁹

Recognising Si in Ourselves and Others

Whereas Se is the realist painter, Si is the impressionist painter “faithfully rendering ... the *impression* made by the object on the subject.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, Si dominant persons would probably insist that they *were* providing a completely factual, that is, objective version of events. This may account for heated disputes concerning the facts between people

who rely exclusively on Si to perceive ‘What *really* happened?’

When Si is operating in us, because of the specifics we are noticing in the present, we are drawn to relive the past. Through that same means, and with a view to determining ‘What is different? What is the same? What can be improved?’ we unconsciously but selectively explore the impact and significance of current events, people, and experiences. Through Si we learn from past mistakes. By the same token, Si provides stability by anchoring the impression of the external object in the familiar field of previous impressions and making comparisons. Isabel Briggs Myers was married to Chuck Myers with dominant Si and said that such types “base their ideas on a deep, solid accumulation of stored impressions.”¹¹

We can become more aware of the operations of Si in our own life and that of others by reference to these key phrases:

- accessing a detailed array of stored facts,
- unconsciously using a subjective internal filter
- selecting present impressions that resemble past impressions
- experiential recall – reliving events viscerally through an emotion filled re-play of past events

In order to access Si, recall a time when you were able to sort through a mass of detailed information, partly because your memory of handling similar information on a previous occasion made the task more familiar.

EXTRAVERTED INTUITION (Ne)

Extraverted intuition is a perceiving process focused on the outside world that grasps “sensory data as a pattern of changing relationships,”¹² seeking out new possibilities with “a nose for anything new and in the making.”¹³ Ne draws a line between the dots and gets excited about them, striving “to apprehend the widest range of possibilities inherent in the object.”¹⁴ Driven to build possibilities, Ne orients to the future – to what is ‘not yet’ – conjuring up a future even before much is known about the present.¹⁵ Ne sees the future-in-the-present external world and is energised by the possibilities in the future that are discerned

there.¹⁶ Extraverted intuition excites and is excited by multiple projects.

Recognising Ne in Ourselves and Others

Through Ne, every fact is explored for the potential embedded in it. A series of associations are triggered by the external world, and new possibilities created. “For example, given enough elements to suggest a star ... we have a hard time *not* filling in the blanks and seeing the complete image of the star.” Yet “intuition can be dead wrong and still feel like knowledge.”¹⁷ To summarize, Ne is (1) an information gathering process (2) turned toward the external world, that (3) seeks out connections and relationships between the objects, people and events in the environment, with a view to (4) generating “real-world possibilities.”¹⁸

We become more aware of the operations of Ne by referring to these key words and phrases:

A sense of scope

- Inspiring energy triggered from the outside
- Relationships, connections, possibilities, and opportunities
- Feeling excitement about the possibilities for change existing in the present
- Enthusiasm for new projects

To access Ne, recall a time when you found yourself in a familiar situation but saw new possibilities.

INTROVERTED INTUITION (Ni)

Introverted intuition is an inwardly turned information gathering process that “searches for grand patterns, themes, and systems in order to understand the meaning and significance of everything.”¹⁹ Ni orients to inner images that convey the backdrop of accumulated human experience and that, according to Jung, have gathered into archetypes laid down in what Jung called the collective unconscious, representing the distillation of intense experiences repeated since time immemorial,

These images of the unconscious, [are] produced by the creative energy of life . . . [and] represent possible views of the world which may give life a new potential.²⁰

Recognising Ni in Ourselves and Others

Experiences arising from Ni carry great conviction of their own truth, which sometimes give rise to accusations of arrogance from those who do not share the intuition. Ni brings an inner vision of what may be possible that transcends the present moment and puts present trials and triumphs in context.²¹ In summary, Ni is (1) an information gathering process that (2) focuses on the subjective, internal world of the unconscious (3) seeking connections and relationships between the contents of the unconscious, in order to (4) discover underlying significance, systems and meaning.²²

We can become more aware of the operations of Ni by reference to these key phrases, activities and experiences:

- Seeking meaning that underlies seemingly disparate facts
- Receiving insight and hunches
- Discerning underlying commonalities and patterns
- Reflecting and reframing
- Challenging convention
- Offering critiques.

In order to access Ni, recall a time, at whatever age, when you felt stuck, reflected even for a moment and then found a way through, or out of, your predicament. For example, you may have had plans for a day's outing with someone who had to cancel because of illness, but you were nonetheless able to re-envision the day.

EXTRAVERTED THINKING (Te)

Extraverted thinking is an externally oriented ordering or judging process that spontaneously organizes the external world in a logical

way, drawing on principles of consistency.²³ Te regulates our “external situation through the methodical application of critical analysis.”²⁴ Te uses inductive logic. For example, we use Te when we examine a situation to determine “When ‘this’ happened, then ‘that’ resulted.” Our Te then proceeds to formulate a contingency plan: “If I/we do ‘this,’ ‘that’ will happen again.” Furthermore, if the “that” is regarded as a “good,” we then designate a chosen goal. Eventually, the “If we do this” becomes transformed by our Te into an “ought,” or even a “must” that carries an obligation and pressure to act.

Recognising Te in Ourselves and Others

Te develops relevant standards that guide decisions, fuelling a drive to structure and organize the external world through a common system of guiding rules. For Te, it is a matter of “responsibility, honor, and knowledge to keep faith with certain principles of order.”²⁵ The most universal example is the law of reciprocity or Golden Rule expressed in most religions: “Do to others what you would like them to do to you.” Furthermore, Te pushes for equality with regard to basic universal moral principles, for example, equal treatment before the law. Extraverted thinking is more concerned with maintaining *systems* that effectively take care of people, whereas feeling/ judging processes focus upon direct one-on-one care.

In summary, Te is (1) a decision making process (2) directed toward the external world, that seeks (3) to institute systems of organization in order to (4) assign information within an appropriate system, through (5) a process of comparison based on objective criteria.²⁶

We become more aware of the play of Te in our own life and that of others by attention to these activities:

- Applying practical logic
- Detecting causes and effects
- Asking ‘What’s the most relevant guiding principle here?’
- Creating structures and programs to get things done

- Concern for objectivity and 'equal treatment.'

In order to access Te, recall a time when you developed a plan to reach a cherished goal, for example saving money for a longed for vacation on different continent.

INTROVERTED THINKING (Ti)

Introverted thinking is an internal logical ordering process that abstracts from a range of situations or experience, with a view to naming and defining their nature. Ti is concerned with standards of truth and delights in finding just the right word to fit a particular case. Ti pokes at things and asks "Is it really true?" This cognitive process orients to the network of logical relationships implicit in a situation and deduces from these networks principles which form the foundation of an analytic framework. Myers describes Ti as "primarily interested in the underlying principles." These principles in turn organise concepts and ideas when paired with auxiliary intuition, or organise facts when paired with sensing. Ti's mode of operating is analytical, detached and impersonal: "Introverted thinkers use their thinking to analyze the world, not to run it."²⁷

A subjective element is at work in the operations of Ti, though this may be disavowed. "Introverted thinking is primarily oriented by the subjective factor.... [It] begins with the subject and leads back to the subject, far though it may range into the realm of actual reality." It formulates questions and creates theories, it opens new prospects and insights, but with regard to the facts its attitude is one of.²⁸ Beebe amplifies this subjective aspect of Ti: "Introverted thinking has to reflect on whether a particular construction really accords with the conviction of inner truth, regardless of what the received opinion might be."²⁹

Recognising Ti in Ourselves and Others

Ti has these characteristics: it is (1) a decision making process, (2) focussed on the subjective, internal world of precisely intersecting underlying principles and truths, that (3) creates original categories and systems, (4) assigning all information to a place within an appropriate

framework (5) based upon logical analysis.³⁰ Key phrases for the recognition of the operation of Ti in our own psychological life are:

- Asking: ‘What’s going on here?’
- Using logic in a precise way
- Discerning underlying structure and principles
- Establishing internal frameworks
- Engaging in successive categorisation
- Monitoring for consistency between values

In order to access Ti, reflect on how many ways you might be able to classify a range of different objects you found in your basement that did not seem at first glance to have anything in common.

EXTRAVERTED FEELING (FE)

Extraverted feeling automatically adjusts us to the social situation.³¹ Like Te, it is a rational or ordering mental process oriented to the external world, that seeks to organise whatever is perceived.³² Whereas Te proceeds on the basis of detached cause-effect analysis, the priority of Fe is making judgments and determinations in *harmony* with “generally accepted values”³³ and on the basis of the promotion of human relatedness.³⁴ Fe actively “seeks to connect with the feelings of others”³⁵ and “value[s], above all, harmonious human contacts,” and is invaluable “in situations where needed co-operation can be won by good will.”³⁶

Fe plays an important part in all our lives. It connects us warmly to those we love. Fe warns us – through the chill of indifference from others or within ourselves – of breakdowns in communication. Moreover, we make decisions based on our sense of relatedness to a person or group – as family, friend, co-worker. Indeed without Fe, “a ‘civilised’ social life would be virtually impossible.”³⁷ Jung claimed, “This kind of feeling is very largely responsible for the fact that so many people flock to the theatre or concerts, or go to church, and do so with their feelings appropriately

adjusted," especially in relation to those of other people.³⁸ Not surprisingly, a high proportion of those who affiliate with a religious group have Fe as a dominant or auxiliary function, forty three per cent of Evangelical Protestants,³⁹ thirty six per cent of Canadian Anglicans,⁴⁰ thirty five per cent of Catholics.⁴¹ Organised religion then is arguably very much an extraverted feeling institution where emphasis is placed on harmony and relationship.

Recognising Fe in Ourselves and Others

Fe has these characteristics: it is a (1) decision making process, (2) focussed on the objective external world, that (3) creates and draws upon systems of cultural values in which (4) everything is assigned an appropriate place (5) on a qualitative, relational basis, so that (6) choices can be made and actions initiated that optimise harmony with the outer world.⁴² We can more readily recognise the operations of Fe in our own life and that of others by reference to these key phrases:

- Concern for harmonious human contact
- Caring for the needs of others
- Honouring values promoting human welfare
- Naturally appreciating or wanting to appreciate
- Organising and making decisions based on a sense relatedness

In order to access Te, recall a time when you went with your heart: you made a decision primarily out of concern for harmony with other people, even though your actions may have been perceived as inconsistent with what appeared to be the objective situation.

INTROVERTED FEELING (Fi)

Introverted feeling is an inwardly directed process of judging that orders incoming information according to our inner values and makes decisions accordingly. Fi cherishes *inner* harmony above all else, and adapts the outer world to optimise congruence between inwardly inspired ideals. Relationships, work and other activities are required

to foster what “really matters.” Fi is the most subjective of the four decision-making processes, and the only one of the eight mental processes with the non-negotiable element of complete loyalty to inner values. The resultant inner certainty is foundational to a human life, supplying it with “direction, power and purpose.”⁴³ Beliefs held by Fi are personal and uninfluenced by established value systems of the culture.

Jung thought that introverted feeling types were hard to read because “so little appears on the surface.”⁴⁴ “Still waters run deep” captures the hidden warmth that forms the core of Fi.⁴⁵ Isabel Briggs Myers regarded herself as an introverted feeling type and stated, “[They] have a wealth of warmth and enthusiasm” which “may not show until they know someone well.” Those with dominant Fi wear “their warmth on the inside, like a fur-lined coat.” “Reliance on feeling leads them to judge everything by personal values.” Knowing what is most important to them, “they protect it at all costs.”⁴⁶

Recognising Fi in Ourselves and Others

Fi is (1) a decision making process, (2) focussed on the subjective internal world of absolute personal value systems, that (3) assesses all things based upon whether they uphold these values, conflict with them, or have no impact, in order to (4) create and maintain inner harmony, and to be true to themselves.⁴⁷

These key phrases may increase our awareness of the operation of Fi in our own life in the lives of those we care about:

- In touch with a quiet inner warmth
- Experiencing inner peace and harmony with core values, integrity
- Feeling authentic matters above all else in the moment
- Feeling a deep internal moral clarity
- Intensely aware, sensitized, and attuned
- Feeling quietly inspired, passionate

In order to access Fi, recall a time when you felt driven to take a stand even though there was little chance of success, for example at a decision-making meeting at work or in a community group where yours was a minority opinion.

APPLYING THE PROCESSES TO YOUR OWN PERSONALITY

A closer reading of the eight processes may enable you to determine which is the dominant process in your psychological life, the one that plays the largest role in shaping your personality type. The dominant process is your “heroic” process that you rely on moment by moment to cope with life’s demands. Which of these eight processes do you resort to most frequently?

After determining your dominant process, identify your second most developed process – what Jung called the auxiliary function which helps the dominant by offering some diversity to your personality. For example, if your dominant process is extraverted, your second process most likely will be an introverted process. Furthermore, if your dominant process is a form of judging, either thinking or feeling, then your second or auxiliary process will be a perceiving process – either intuition or sensing.

Upon re-reading descriptions of the eight processes, select one or two to explore more thoroughly as candidates for your auxiliary process. Our second strongest process is used to nurture others, according to John Beebe. The six less preferred and less often used processes are less under our conscious control, but equally important in how they affect our lives.

To illustrate, let us see how each process plays a part in a single work day. In the course of a day, we have the opportunity to draw on each of the eight cognitive processes in Jung’s typology of personality:

When we awake, we relish the red-orbed sunrise while smelling the coffee (extraverted sensing [Se]). We feel a harmonic connection to the friend or family member who started the coffee maker and put our favorite mug beside it, and we say “Thank you” as they make their way to the shower (extraverted feeling [Fe]). We take out our day planner as see what we have organised for ourselves (extraverted thinking [Te]). We groan when we note no new overarching vision to the back-to-back

activities of the next fourteen hours. (Our introverted intuition [Ne] is not happy!) We are rescued from our misery by an unexpected telephone call from a friend not seen for three years who has a stopover at the airport less than forty minutes away. We re-organise our morning and have a new schedule for the day (extraverted intuition [Ne]): there are new possibilities. Over breakfast with our friend Chris, we share our new article. She points out some inconsistencies in our argument and suggests an alternative (introverted thinking) that nails the points we really want to make. Chris also rectifies some factual errors, thanks to her introverted sensing, which she tactfully addresses with the help of her sensitive extraverted feeling. Driving now to the office later than usual, we feel satisfied (introverted feeling [Fi]) – a friendship renewed and real progress on a cherished project that is nearer completion. It is only ten fifteen in the morning (extraverted thinking in combination with introverted sensing).

In conclusion, the more conscious we become of all eight cognitive processes at play in our psychological life – no matter what their relative strength within us – the more flexible, richer, and deeper will become our life. Our relationships with intimates and seeming strangers will improve, since we will be more accepting of these ‘others’ because we have become more familiar with the various processes within ourselves. This is the way of personality type, and the way to wholeness and community: inward and outward connection.

ENDNOTES

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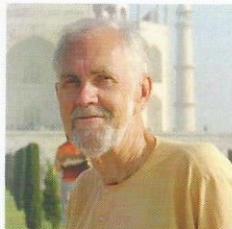
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⁴⁴ Sharpe, 75.

⁴⁵ Jung, 388.

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⁴⁷ Haas and Hunziker, 103.



Ways of the Spirit: Persons, Communities, Spiritualities is the third and final volume in this series that explores the manifold and varied world of contemporary spirituality. With contributions ranging from the Way of Wisdom to the Way of Krishna and Radha, from the Way of the Lakota to the Way of a Bosnian Muslim, and with writers from Canada to China, from Finland to

India, we are led into the wonderful kaleidoscope of global spirituality. Wendy Fletcher opens her Way of the Artist with these words: "Art as a spiritual pathway lends itself to...healing the self, mending the world and imaging the future." Something similar could be said of each of the contributions as we contemplate figures like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Guru Nanak, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, and Jonathan Edwards; communities like those of the Baha'i, Pentecostals, the Lakota, Chinese Christians, Zoroastrians, Hindus and Sikhs; and the spirituality that informing Ways of composers, programmers, artists, and mystics. What emerges is a spiritual bouquet.

Congratulations! *Ways of the Spirit: Persons, Communities, Spiritualities* hits another home run! What a rich collection of wonderful contributions!

-Jaime Maniatis, Educator of the Digital Arts, Trenton, New Jersey

What a treat! *Ways of the Spirit: Persons, Communities, Spiritualities* brings to the general reader the rich diversity of contemporary spirituality. With articles ranging from the Way of Wisdom to the Way of the Programmer, to the Way of the Jewish Mystic – yes, that's Bob Dylan – it is a treasure!

-Dr. Shelley Elkayam, Jerusalem

Well written, accessible, I learned a lot. It was instructive to read about communities I knew nothing about – like Baha'i, Krishna & Radha, Chinese Christians and Zoroastrians – as well as the Way of Wisdom and the Way of the Lakota. But my favourite was the Way of the Artist, because I'm an artist too.

-Connie H. Hodges, Artist and Gardener, St. Paul, Minnesota

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