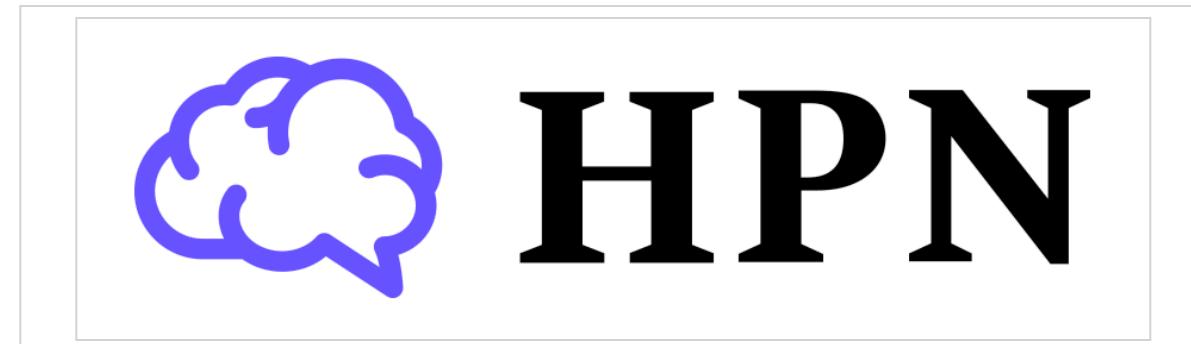


Forget the Myers-Briggs, Use the Big Five



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Forget the Myers-Briggs, Use the Big Five

The [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator](#) (MBTI) is the most popular personality assessment in mainstream culture. It provides people with one of sixteen personality types that purport to give you an accurate profile of your personality type.

Every year, around [2 million Americans](#) take the test, with the Myers-Briggs Company making around [\\$20 million dollars](#) off it annually. Furthermore, they charge [\\$49.95](#) to take the test online.

This appears tantamount to fraud.

The Abuse of Jungian Psychology

The MBTI is based on the presuppositions of Carl Jung, an eminent psychoanalyst of the 20th Century. He proposed [eight types](#), based on two differing attitudes; Extraversion-Introversion, and four differing functions; Intuition-Sensing, Thinking-Feeling.

Extraverted Sensing (Se)	Introverted Sensing (Si)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about objective perceptions • experiences factual external data in environment • experiences reality through the senses • reflects on the current physical world • relates to intensity of physical world in real-time • focuses on external objects • experiences world as immediate sensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about subjective perceptions • experiences factual data in detailed memories • records reality as gathered through the senses • reflects on internal impressions of the past • relates to intensity of previous experiences • focuses on internal memories • experiences world as precise recollection
Extraverted Intuition (Ne)	Introverted Intuition (Ni)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about objective possibilities • perceives aspects of physical reality • uses the external environment of people and objects as triggers • converts what is into what could be • generates new opportunities from environment • changes existing objective situations into possibilities through concrete connections • sees the potential of what is in the present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about subjective meanings • perceives aspects of psychic reality • uses environment and unbidden contents of the unconscious as triggers • converts what is into meaning and symbolism • generates new meaning through unconscious insights • changes existing or future situations through inner images • sees what is to come with certainty
Extraverted Thinking (Te)	Introverted Thinking (Ti)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about objective analysis • motivated by external reality to bring order to life • focuses on external facts and objects • establishes order in the environment • adopts criteria for decision making from logical constructs in the environment • depends on external analysis to reach conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about subjective analysis • motivated by inner ideas to bring precision to life • focuses on internal images and concepts • establishes clarity and precision in the mind • adopts criteria for decision making from logical internal constructs • depends on internal analysis to reach conclusions
Extraverted Feeling (Fe)	Introverted Feeling (Fi)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about objective values • follows generally accepted social values/norms • motivated by a sense of the worth of others • creates harmony externally by attending to others • may sacrifice one's own values in order to avoid negative social consequences • strives for rapport with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about subjective values • follows internal standards and ethics • motivated by private core values • creates harmony internally by attending to self • follows one's own value system regardless of social consequences • strives for inner peace

Building Blocks of Personality Type. Haas & Hunziker. 2006.

[Source](#)

For example, an Extraverted-Thinking (ET) type would likely base their activities on intellectual considerations guided by external criteria, like a lawyer or a technician.

However, Jung did not advocate rigid typologies, especially ones that rely on strict dichotomies like the MBTI.

“Everyone possesses both mechanisms, extraversion as well as introversion, and only the relative predominance of one or the other determines the type. Hence, in order to throw the picture into the necessary relief, one would have to retouch it rather vigorously, and this would amount to a more or less pious fraud” explained Jung in ‘[Psychological Types](#)’.

The MBTI was developed by a mother and daughter team, Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers, [neither whom had formal training in psychology](#). They adapted Jung’s original types and added a fourth dimension that claims to identify an individual’s preferred function for the external world.



The MBTI extended the Jungian typology to include 16 types, organised into four letter abbreviations. The first letter pertains to the individual's attitude towards the external world, either **Extraversion (E)** or **Introversion (I)** (external vs internal projection of energy).

The second letter pertains to an individual' **perceiving** function, either **Sensing (S)** or **Intuition (N)**. The third letter is the individual's **judging** function, either **Thinking (T)** or **Feeling (F)**. The final letter determines which function the individual uses to relate to the outside world, either **Perceiving (P)** or **Judgemental (J)**.

Each type has a dominant and auxiliary function, which is determined by the final letter. If someone is **Perceiving**, then that function, either **Sensing or Intuition**, is **dominant**. Their **auxiliary** function is in direct opposition, either **Thinking or Feeling**.

What's Your Personality Type?



[Source](#)

These functions are further categorised as such: Extraversion and Sensing is **Se**, Extraversion and Intuition is **Ne**, Extraversion and Thinking is **Te** and Extraversion and Feeling is **Fe**. The inverse is true for those with an introverted attitude, for example, Introverted and Sensing is **Si**.

Therefore, type **ENFJ** has a dominant **Fe** function and an auxiliary **Ni** function. We should suspect such an individual to be 'caring, enthusiastic, idealistic, organised, diplomatic and responsible'. Furthermore, they should be 'skilled communicators who value connection with people'.

The MBTI is Wrong

The problem with this logic, is the logic itself. There is no evidence behind any of the suppositions made above. [Research](#) has consistently shown that the clean types provided by the MBTI do not correspond to demonstrable differences in personality functioning.

"In social science, we use four standards: are the categories reliable, valid, independent, and comprehensive? For the MBTI, the evidence says not very, no, no, and not really" explained [Adam Grant](#), an organisation psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania.



[Source](#)



The MBTI has extremely unreliable test-retest scores. If you retake the test after 5 weeks, there is a [50% chance](#) you will fall into a different type. In other words, the reliability is equivalent to a coin toss.

There is [no concrete evidence](#) that the MBTI measures what it claims to measure, making the categories invalid. Furthermore, the MBTI claims that functions such as **Thinking** and **Feeling** are two ends of a bipolar continuum, rather, they are [independent](#).

Finally, the MBTI [is not comprehensive](#) because its categories do not capture the full extent of personality. There is no measure for negative emotion, and the remaining domains lack information central to personality assessment.

The MBTI is a Sham

This is merely the tip of the iceberg regarding MBTI dysfunctionality. The theory has been debunked countless times over the decades, yet it still maintains mainstream popularity.

Psychologists reckon this is due to the [universal appeal of each type](#). Each type in the MBTI is painted in very positive, even flattering, terms. In reality, the Myers-Briggs Company is selling a product that panders to people's sensitivities.



The news derived from the MBTI is always positive.
But people can only improve their performance
if they know what they are doing wrong.

ROBERT HOGAN

[Source](#)

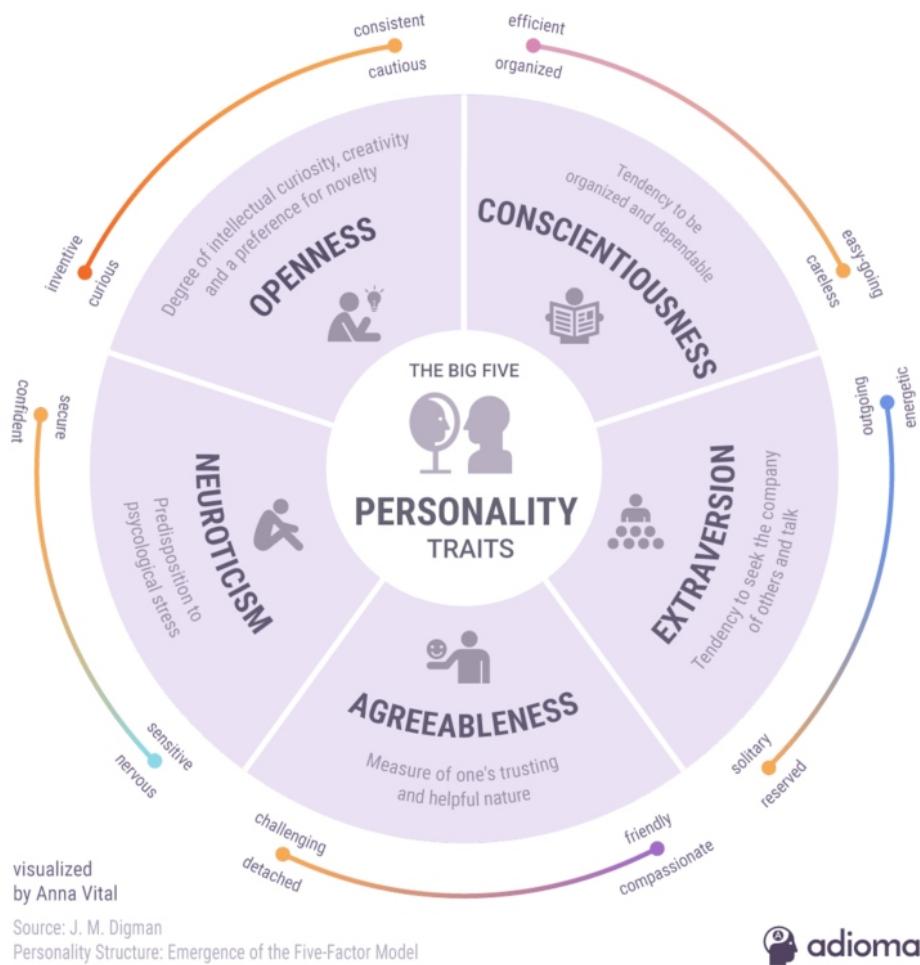
If you take the MBTI, or God forbid buy the official test, you are being lied to and taken advantage of. The test is [archaic and psychometrically invalid](#). It was developed before the necessary computational power required to design valid personality assessments.

“Most personality psychologists regard the MBTI as little more than an elaborate Chinese fortune cookie,” remarked [Robert Brown](#), an American psychologist and international authority on personality assessment, leadership, and organizational effectiveness.

The Big Five

While the general public continue to fall under the MBTI spell, [political consulting firms like Cambridge Analytica have no such problem](#). This firm used modern personality framework to analyse and target demographics with tailored political ads in order to get politicians, like Donald Trump, elected.

This modern personality framework is called the [Big Five](#) (or the Five Factor Model, or the OCEAN model). Unlike the either-or nature of the MBTI, the Big Five consists of five personality traits that exist across bipolar continuums ranging from 0 to 100.



[Source](#)



The Big Five is scientifically sound, with each trait having a strong '[construct validity](#)'. This essentially means that each of the traits meets the four categorical standards outlined above. Furthermore, unlike the MBTI, the Big Five has immense [predictive power](#).

The Big Five comprises the following traits; Openness-to-Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Robert McCrae and Paul Costa, the dynamic duo of personality psychology, pioneered the Big Five, designating each trait with [six facets](#).

Openness-to-Experience: Intellect and Openness

Openness-to-Experience's facets include 'fantasy; aesthetics; feelings; actions; ideas; values.' People high in Openness-to-Experience tend to be open minded and intellectual. They are more flexible with respect to rules and societal norms.

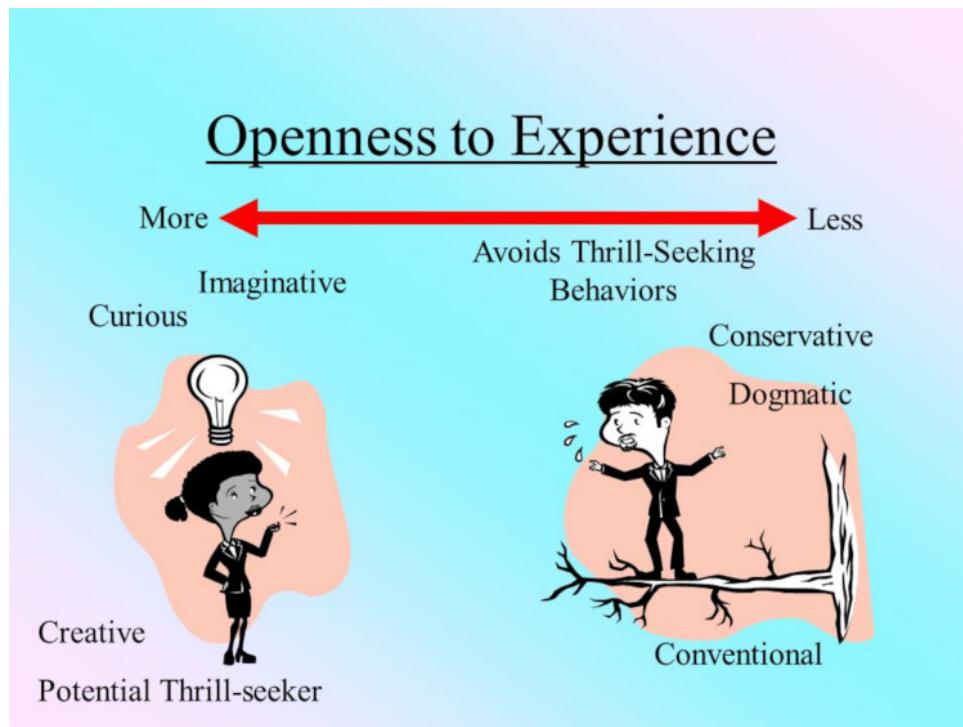
[Factor analysis](#) aggregates these facets into [two aspects](#), **Intellect** and **Openness**. Intellect is defined as a proclivity to engage in abstract and semantic reasoning, while Openness is the tendency to engage in perception, fantasy, aesthetics and emotions.

Further [research](#) shows that those high in Intellect find greater creative achievement in the sciences,

While being high in this trait [may tilt one towards a university](#), a true liberal arts education may have the impact of increasing an individual's level of Openness-to-Experience. This may be why universities tend to lean towards liberalism in their political attitudes.

It is when personality traits enter the extreme end of the continuum that they become problematic. For example, Cuban revolutionary, [Fidel Castro](#), was said to be high in trait Openness-to-Experience, and led a Communist revolution. Conversely, very low Openness-to-Experience is strongly associated with an [authoritarian personality](#).

The key takeaway here is that both aspects of Openness-to-Experience have academic and artistic utility but predict [different outcomes politically](#). In general, liberals tend to be higher in trait Openness-to-Experience, specifically, its aspect Openness.



[Source](#)



Hence, liberals like to open and expand borders, whether they be literal state borders or metaphorical borders such as the expansion of gender categories.

Conscientiousness: Industriousness and Orderliness

The most predictive trait is [Conscientiousness](#). Its facets are ‘competence; order; dutifulness; achievement-striving; self-discipline; deliberation.’

Conscientiousness is [further defined](#) as individual differences in the propensity to follow socially prescribed norms for impulse control, to be goal-directed, planful, able to delay gratification, and to follow norms and rules.

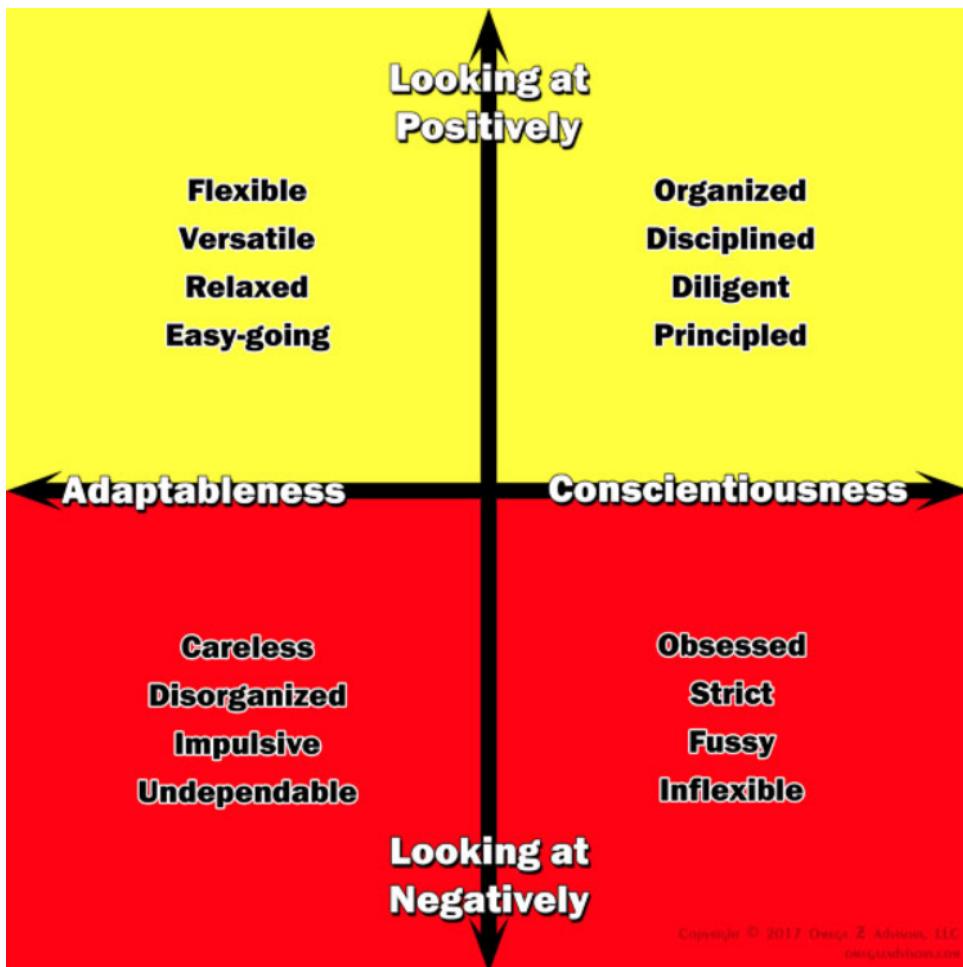


Source

Conscientiousness is an important predictor for numerous outcomes across the entire human lifespan. Conscientious people perform better in school, in work, in relationships and in health.

People who are low in Conscientiousness tend to suffer in life. There is a [significant relationship](#) between low Conscientiousness and criminality.

Furthermore, Conscientiousness predicts political orientation. Breaking down the trait into two fundamental aspects, **Industriousness** and **Orderliness**, researchers have found that the latter is positively associated with conservatism and traditionalism. The manifestation of this finding can be found in attitudes towards immigration.



[Source](#)



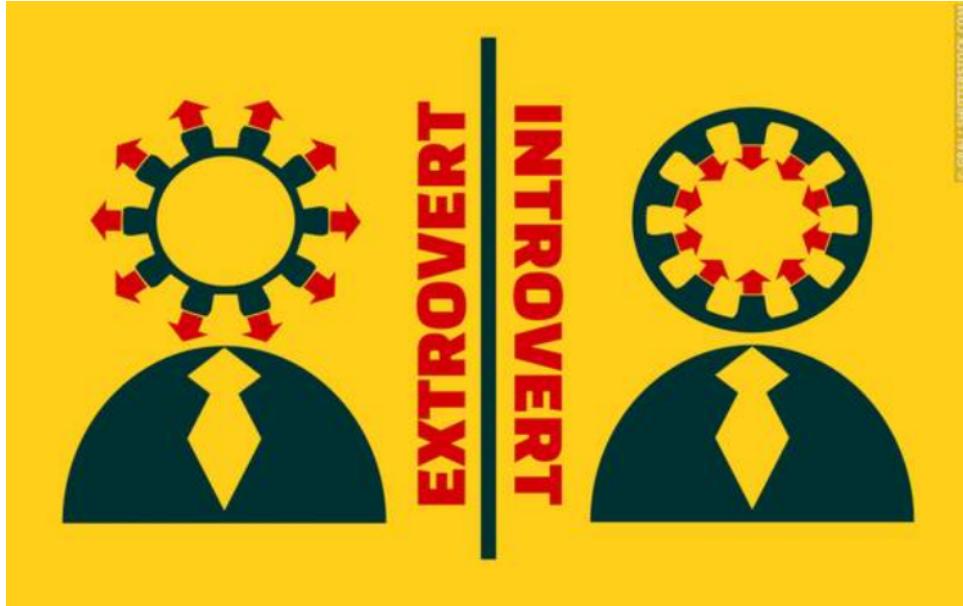
As Conservatives tend to be orderly, they are more inclined to be tougher on border control. This inclination scales into more abstract categories. Conservatives tend to disagree with transgender activists regarding the proposed expansion of gender categories, they believe that gay marriage weakens the institution; these are all manifestations of border control.

Suggested Reading: [Practical Psychology | Conscientiousness Means Success](#)

Extraversion: Assertiveness and Enthusiasm

Some scientists have proposed that [Extroversion](#) be [synonymous](#) with ‘Positive Emotion’. Indeed, the facets of Extraversion are ‘warmth; gregariousness; assertiveness; activity; excitement-seeking; positive emotion’.

Extraversion was initially coined by Jung, hence its inclusion in the MBTI. However, since its formulation, a wealth of research has been developed, refining the construct and altering its original definition.



[Source](#)

Extraversion's higher order aspects include **Assertiveness** and **Enthusiasm**. These aspects partially stem from an earlier division of the trait into Agency and Sociability.

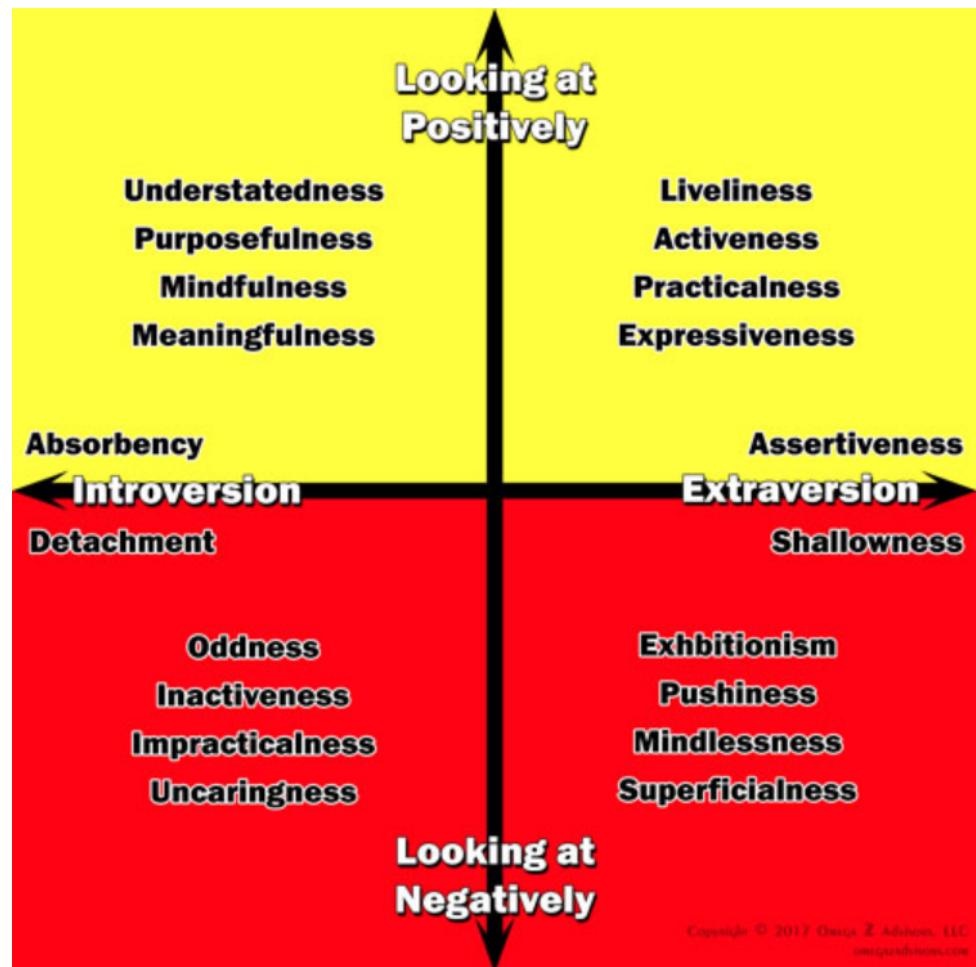
Assertiveness encompasses Agency, which is characterised by “social dominance and the enjoyment of leadership roles, assertiveness, exhibitionism, and a subjective sense of potency in accomplishing goals.”

Enthusiasm encompasses Sociability, but importantly extends the term beyond the realm of social interaction. While Extraversion does manifest itself in a preference for social engagement, it also encompasses a broader range of positive emotion associated with the anticipation and enjoyment of reward.



Extroverted people tend to report greater levels of happiness than introverts. They are better at mood regulation, [as they savour positive moods](#).

[Social scientists performed an experiment to determine Extroversion direct and indirect effect on happiness](#). While Extraversion has a somewhat significant effect on happiness, it has a greater effect on social competence, which in turn has a great effect on happiness.



[Source](#)

However, Extraversion does have its drawbacks. While extraverts tend to respond optimistically to punishment, they also respond impulsively. [Psychologist, John Brebner](#), described extraverts as ‘geared to respond’, while introverts are ‘geared to inspect’.

Dopamine, the reward chemical, is fired in response to goal achievement and pleasure. [Extroverts are more sensitive to dopamine production, making them outgoing and impulsive.](#) Introverts, however, are less sensitive, therefore they’re less outgoing and importantly, less impulsive.

Agreeableness: Compassion and Politeness

Agreeableness consists of the following facets: ‘trust; straightforwardness; altruism; compliance; modesty; tender-mindedness’. It is generally defined as nice, expressive qualities of love and empathy, friendliness, cooperation, care, altruism and affection.

Characteristics of Agreeableness

Persons high in agreeableness:

- ✓ Warm and Helpful
- ✓ Friendly
- ✓ Put aside their own interests
- ✓ Cooperative and Generous
- ✓ Control their negative emotions



Persons low in agreeableness:

- ✓ Suspicious
- ✓ Unfriendly
- ✓ Self centered
- ✓ Uncooperative
- ✓ Manipulate their social relations

[Source](#)



Agreeableness is one of the only traits where men and women [significantly differ](#). If you have a random, equal sample of men and women, a woman is going to be more agreeable roughly 60% of the time. The other main sex differences are found in Neuroticism.

Agreeable people have [prosocial tendencies](#). They engage in voluntary behaviour intended to benefit others. The trait is strong predictor of altruism, indicating measures of sympathy, social responsibility, mature perspective taking and high moral standards.

Additionally, agreeable people deploy [behavioural strategies](#) aimed at defusing conflict and maintaining warm and friendly relationships. These strategies include emotional regulation, and 'turning the other cheek'.

Agreeableness is a [strong predictor](#) of conflict-free intimate relationships. Agreeable people tend not to antagonise their significant other. Furthermore, Agreeableness is [significantly correlated](#) with well-being, perhaps due to the interpersonal bonds it fosters.

Conversely, very disagreeable people tend to descend into criminality. Combined with low conscientiousness, being low in agreeableness is one of the [strongest predictors](#) of suffering from any form of antisocial disorder, with paedophilia being the exception.

Agreeableness: Exceptionally Low

You are exceptionally low in agreeableness, which is the primary dimension of interpersonal interaction in the Big Five personality trait scientific model. Agreeableness has two aspects: compassion and politeness, which will be explained separately. Agreeableness is a very complex trait, with marked positive and negative elements all along its distribution. Because of this, higher scores and lower scores need to be explained at the same time.

People high in agreeableness are nice: compliant, nurturing, kind, naively trusting and conciliatory. However, because of their tendency to avoid conflict, they often dissemble and hide what they think. People low in agreeableness are not so nice: stubborn, dominant, harsh, skeptical, competitive and, in the extreme, even predatory. However, they tend to be straightforward, even blunt, so you know where they stand.

Your score puts you at the **0th percentile** for agreeableness. If you were one of 100 people in a room, you would be less agreeable than **99** of them and more agreeable than **0** of them.

People with exceptionally low levels of agreeableness are seen by others as markedly competitive, colder, tougher and very much less empathic. They do not easily see the best in others, and are not particularly tolerant (an attitude that is much valued by agreeable people). They are very much less concerned about the emotional state of others, are uncommonly willing to engage in conflict, and will happily sacrifice peace and harmony to make a point or (if conscientious) to get things done. People may find them painfully straightforward and blunt. They tend very strongly towards dominance, rather than submission (particularly if also below average in neuroticism).

People with exceptionally low levels of agreeableness do not at all easily forgive. They are definitely not accepting, flexible, gentle or patient. They feel minimal pity for those who are excluded, punished or defeated, and attribute such problems to weakness or inability. They are also extremely unlikely to be taken advantage of by disagreeable, manipulative or otherwise troublesome people, or those with criminal or predatory intent. Their extraordinarily high levels of skepticism play a protective role, although it often interferes with their ability to cooperate with or trust others whose intentions are genuinely good. They are also much less likely to reward good behavior or to give credit where it is due. They cooperate grudgingly, and only when cooperation is in their clear self-interest, preferring competition, with its well-defined losers and winners. They do not lose arguments (or avoid discussions) with anyone, for any reason, and enjoy the battle. This can interfere with their ability to learn from experience (their own or others'). They are very likely to be expert at bargaining for themselves, and at negotiating for more recognition or power, and are likely to have

[Source](#)



However, as personality traits are normally distributed, most people fall into the middle of the continuum. Therefore, the trait is not simply a matter of being kind or being a criminal. [The truth is far more complex](#).

While agreeable people tend to be kind and friendly, they can also be naively trusting and conflict-avoidant. While some of these avoidance strategies may be effective, others might encourage agreeable people to hide what they really think.

Furthermore, agreeable people are sometimes naïve, while disagreeable people are sometimes predatory. This leaves the former group open to exploitation by the latter. Consequently, agreeable people tend to have [lower wages](#) than their less agreeable peers.

Agreeableness comprises two aspects; **Compassion** and **Politeness**. “The two aspects distinguish between the compassionate emotional affiliation with others and a more reasoned (or at least cognitively influenced) consideration of and respect for others’ needs and desires.”

Compassionate people are much interested in the problems of other people, and other living things, particularly if they are young or helpless. They are quite concerned about helping other people avoid negative emotion. Liberals tend to be higher in this aspect.



Compassion: High

You are high in compassion, which is one aspect of Agreeableness. Your score puts you at the **81st percentile** for compassion. If you were one of 100 people in a room, you would be more compassionate than **81** of them and less compassionate than **18** of them.

Highly compassionate people are much interested in the problems of other people, and other living things, particularly if they are young or helpless. They are quite concerned about helping other people avoid negative emotion. They make more time and do more kind things for others, even when doing so may interfere with fulfilling their own needs and interests. They have a markedly soft side. Other people consider them sympathetic and nice, and will turn to them often for a listening ear. They are highly empathetic and caring. However, because they are so other-oriented, they may find it difficult to negotiate on their own behalf, and may not get what they deserve (for their hard work, for example). This can lead to resentment.

Those who are liberal, politically, score somewhat higher in compassion than conservatives.

Women are also higher in compassion than men. The mean percentile for women in a general population (women and men) is 61. For men it is 39.



[Source](#)

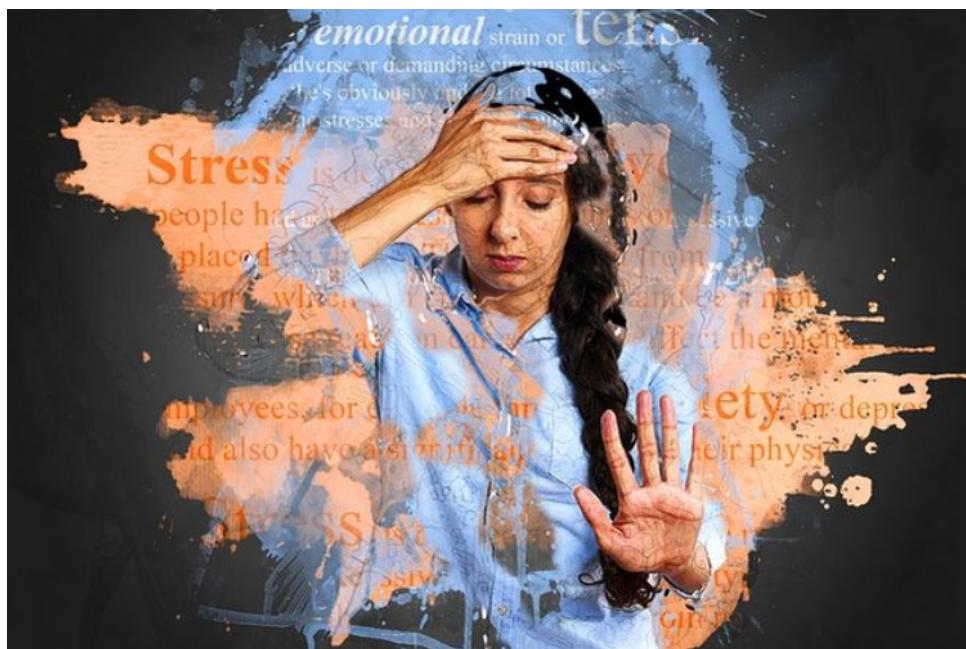
Polite people tend to respect and obey authority. They are less sceptical of hierarchy and more

counterparts. They have a greater concern for order-traditionalism, hence tend to sway towards conservatism.

Neuroticism: Withdrawal and Volatility

Neuroticism is negative emotion. Its facets include ‘anxiety; angry hostility; depression; self-consciousness; impulsiveness; vulnerability’. These facets break down into the aspects **Withdrawal** and **Volatility**.

Withdrawal is the anxiety and depression aspect of Neuroticism, while Volatility encompasses emotional dysregulation and erratic changes in mood.



[Source](#)

Being high in Neuroticism is associated with numerous issues, such as poor health, psychological distress, divorce and even life-threatening heart disease. However, neurotics do not necessarily feel less positive emotion, rather they specifically feel higher levels of negative emotion. It is possible to be an extroverted neurotic; a hysteric.

Research has been conducted to determine why neurotics experience more daily distress. Three main sources were found. First, Neuroticism tends to expose people to a great number of stressors, especially interpersonally. Second, neurotics have strong negative emotional reactions to stressors, with their reactivity being twice as important as their exposure.

Finally, 60 per cent of a neurotic’s distress stems from factors unrelated to exposure or reactivity. It appears that those high in Neuroticism just tend to have a general bad feeling that distorts their well-being. Additionally, happiness is partly a consequence of social skills, and Neuroticism impairs social skills.

Neurotics find it difficult to adjust their social behaviour to correspond to their situation and are often unable to socialize. Scientists theorize that this may be due to a communication deficit

'hyperactivity', a high sensitivity to signals of punishment and negative emotion.



Hyperreactivity is the first process in what researchers call '[a negative cascade](#)'. This is a build-up and release of strong negative feelings in daily life. Hyperactivity comes first. Secondly, neurotics tend to experience negative emotion more frequently. Third, they tend to perceive the world negatively. Fourth, the negative emotion associated with one aspect of life spills over into other aspects of life.

Withdrawal: High

You are high in withdrawal, which is one aspect of neuroticism. Your score puts you at the **80th percentile** for withdrawal. If you were one of 100 people in a room, you would be higher in withdrawal than **80** of them and lower in withdrawal than **19** of them.

Individuals high in withdrawal may feel above average levels of anticipatory anxiety. This makes it much more challenging for them to approach new, uncertain, unexpected, threatening or complex situations. They are instead substantially more likely to avoid or withdraw in the face of the unknown and unexpected.

People high in withdrawal much more frequently feel sad, lonesome, disappointed and grief-stricken. They have higher than average levels of doubt and worry, become embarrassed easily, are self-conscious and strongly tend to get discouraged in the face of threat and punishment. Their anticipatory anxiety is likely to be general. They are sensitive to social rejection, and can be relatively easily hurt. Once hurt, frightened, or anxious, as well, it takes them longer to recover. They can be argumentative and lose their composure. They can be provocative in a dispute (particularly if also low in agreeableness). Perhaps people high in withdrawal are concerned that something bad might happen, while people high in volatility (the other aspect of neuroticism) get upset if something bad does happen. Technically, withdrawal has been associated with activity in the brain systems that regulate passive avoidance.

Those who are liberal, politically, are slightly higher in withdrawal than conservatives.

Women are higher in withdrawal than men. The mean percentile for women in a general population (women and men) is 60. For men it is 40.



Source

Finally, neurotics find it difficult to cope with past problems, which results in unresolved conflicts causing more negative emotion. Inadequate coping strategies are common in neurotic people. When coping with stressful events, neurotics tend to employ 'avoidant' or 'emotion focused' coping strategies.

[These strategies](#) are characteristic of a dominant Behavioural Inhibition System, and include attempts to soothe fears, calm nerves, escape via drug or alcohol abuse, or simply by just staying in bed. Interestingly, [research](#) indicates that while neurotics employ anxiety-inducing strategies during exams season, they do not get worse results than those low in Neuroticism.

Suggested Reading: [Practical Psychology](#) | [Loneliness is Genetic and Beatable](#)

The Science of Personality

Personality tests are important. Understanding yourself is the first step towards meaningful change. If you score high on Neuroticism, at least you have tangible evidence as to why you're feeling anxious or depressed.

Discovering that you're low in Conscientiousness may explain why your work ethic is poor, or your room is mess. If you're too agreeable, perhaps that explains why your colleagues are earning more than you for the same job; you haven't asked for a raise!

Being low in Openness-to-Experience might be why people tell you that you're acting ignorant or

alcohol.

Unlike the typologies of the MBTI, these traits have meaningful implications for individual thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Understanding your unique, complex trait make-up is essential to understanding yourself. It makes you less susceptible to your own unconscious mind, or to manipulation by political advertisers.

You can take the Big Five Aspect Scale at [Understand Myself](#), for the reasonable price of \$9.95. Don't debase yourself with the MBTI, understand yourself with the Big Five.

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