

Traits to Understand

Contents:

- 1) Preamble
- 2) Worldly Wealth
- 3) Intelligences
 - 3A) IQ
 - 3B) Realism
 - 3C) Cunning
- 4) Big 5 Personality Traits
 - 4A) Extroversion
 - 4B) Agreeableness
 - 4C) Neuroticism
 - 4D) Agreeableness and Neuroticism, Comfort With Conflict
 - 4E) Conscientious
 - 4F) Openness

1) Preamble:

What follows are a list of traits you must understand in order to have any hope of comprehending the content within the rest of this publication. If you are well educated in matters of strategy and psychology, give this essay a skip; you already know it.

2) Worldly Wealth:

Worldly wealth is what every man wants: money, power, status. It's what billionaires have plenty of and the homeless have none of.

3) Intelligences:

3A) IQ (Cognitive Ability)

IQ is nothing more than cognitive processing power. It measures a person's ability to comprehend complexity.

People with high IQs are commonly referred to as 'smart'. They are capable of analyzing complex information fast and accurately, doing advanced mathematics, have good memories, and so on.

People with low IQs are commonly referred to as 'dumb'. Their reading comprehension is below average, and their ability to understand complex information is poor.

IQ is a ruthlessly good predictor of long term life success, and indeed it is the single best predictor of income. If there is one advantage you could give a child for succeeding at life it would be this: give them a high IQ.

An individual's IQ is partially determined by both genetics and early childhood environment. Tragically, IQ is not changeable once a person has reached adulthood; if you have a low IQ, there is nothing that can be done to help you (or at least nothing that has yet been discovered).

Men and women have equal IQs on average, however male IQ is more variable than female IQ. What this means is that most geniuses are men, and most idiots are also men.

3B) Realism

Realism is simply being in touch with reality. Choosing to believe ugly truths, rather than happy lies.

Those with high realism prioritize facts over feelings and fill their mind with what they perceive to be true, even if it offends their sensibilities. Those with low realism prioritize feelings over facts and will reject something they subconsciously realize is true if it offends their sensibilities.

If a person rejects the truth when there is plenty of evidence to support that the thing is true, they probably aren't doing this due to a lack of IQ points; usually it's due to a lack of realism.

You might think that 'realism' is simply an extension of IQ, but you would be wrong. To have a high IQ is to have immense processing power. To have high realism is to be in touch with reality. There are many high IQ people who are hopelessly out of touch with reality. Some say things like "IQ isn't real" and "Gender is just a social construct".

A person with a high IQ *and* high realism has a mind with immense processing power, and will use that cognitive horsepower to figure out what the truth is. A person with a high IQ but low realism has a mind with immense processing power, and they will use their cognitive horsepower to manufacture rationalizations for lies that appeal to their sensibilities, rather than for the sake of finding the truth.

Historical and contemporary examples of people with high IQs but low realism are endless.

There are high IQ university professors who honestly believe that there are no behavioral or psychological differences between men and women driven by biology and genetics.

There are high IQ priests who believe in God, but who will laugh at a child who believes in Santa Clause, not realizing they are both equally delusional. There are high IQ intellectuals who think communism is a viable economic system.

Men average higher on realism than women, and amongst the people with the best realism almost all of them are men.

It has been noticed by many that autistic men are often exceptionally good at logical reasoning. Autists usually don't have exceptionally high IQs; what they do have is exceptionally high realism.

To be clear men in general should not be given too much credit; most men, like almost all women, are low realism. A minority of men are high realism; they are disproportionately autistic.

3C) Cunning

Cunning is often euphemistically referred to as 'people skills' or 'social skills'. Within this publication it will sometimes be referred to as 'machiavellianism' or 'machiavellian intelligence'.

To be 'high cunning' is to have the ability to charm people (make them like and trust you), persuade people, lie convincingly, read body language and vocal tonality accurately, and analyze social situations accurately.

To be 'low cunning' is to be bad at charming people (socially awkward), inept in matters of persuasion, incapable of lying convincingly, and incapable of reading body language or vocal tonality accurately.

Cunning is distinct from IQ, and the correlation between them seems to be zero. There are many men with sky high IQs who are hopelessly socially awkward; they don't lack intelligence, they lack cunning.

The average woman is more cunning than the average man. Yet at the same time, cunning seems to have far greater variance amongst men than among women. Among the most cunning people on the planet (think Robert Greene and Vladimir Putin), almost all of them are men. The least cunning people are autists, who are mostly men.

4) Big 5 Personality Traits:

The Big 5 Model is a set of heuristics for understanding a person's psychological profile. While they are useful, there are inevitably aspects of a person's mind that

can't be boiled down and encapsulated within the quantitative model of 'The Big 5'.

If a person is immensely important to your life (say a potential spouse), then you will need to dig far deeper into their psychological makeup than simply ranking them on each of The Big 5 Traits.

However, if a person is of only moderate importance to your life (say a subordinate employee), then estimating how they rank on each of The Big 5 Traits is enough; no need to dig any deeper into their psychological makeup than that.

4A) Extroversion

Extroversion measures the degree to which a person experiences enthusiasm or positive emotion, particularly from engaging in social interactions.

Those who rank high on extroversion (extroverts) find social interactions to be energizing. Those who rank low on extroversion (introverts) find social interactions to be exhausting. Extroverts tend to smile and laugh more often and with greater intensity than introverts.

Whether a person is extroverted or introverted and to what degree, is not determined by their 'attitude' or any conscious choice so much as it is by their neurochemistry; extroversion seems to be driven by dopaminergic function.

Those with high levels of dopamine tend to be extroverted, while those with low levels of dopamine tend to be introverted.

Many stimulants that enhance dopaminergic function within the brain also increase extroversion, at least temporarily. Caffeine is a notable example

Within America extroversion is viewed as good and introversion is viewed as bad, or at least boring. In truth, both extremes boost performance in different domains.

Extroverts tend to be better at activities that require charming people or being 'charismatic' (think sales).

Introverts are better at delaying gratification (since they have less dopamine driving them to seize any perceived reward that appears) and are better at doing cognitively difficult work for long periods alone, in silence. This is advantageous in fields such as engineering or writing.

The reason extroverts enjoy social interactions more than introverts is not because they desire intimate relationships or love (that's driven by

agreeableness); it's because they enjoy the *stimulation* that comes from social interaction. In the same spirit, extroverts find bright lights and loud music to be enjoyable, while introverts find them to be annoying or even painful.

4B) Agreeableness

Agreeableness is essentially a measurement of how prone a person is to feeling compassion for others. There is an *inverse* relationship between agreeableness and ruthlessness; the lower a person ranks on agreeableness, the greater their capacity for ruthlessness.

Agreeable people tend to be compassionate, polite, and have a desire for positive intimate relationships. They find conflict to be painful, even traumatizing. Disagreeable people tend to be callous, blunt, and selfish.

Men average lower on agreeableness than women, and this seems to be due to having higher testosterone levels.

The slight gender difference at the average leads to immense differences at the extremes, and the extremes are what matter. At the extreme low end of agreeableness, amongst the people who are ruthless enough such that they'd be willing to carry out murder, almost all of them are men.

You might think high agreeableness is virtuous and low agreeableness is evil, but do keep in mind the following; agreeable people are conflict avoidant and will often appear polite while waiting for a chance to stab you in the back. Generally speaking, if a disagreeable person has a gripe with you they will articulate it clearly and directly.

To be clear most disagreeable people don't enjoy conflict; they simply tolerate it while experiencing far less pain from it than an agreeable person would.

4C) Neuroticism

Neuroticism can be thought of as a person's propensity to experience negative emotions, particularly sadness and fear. There is an *inverse* relationship between neuroticism and stress tolerance; to have a high stress tolerance is to rank low on neuroticism.

Every person has a finite stress tolerance, and when they hit its limit they will either panic with fear or explode in anger.

Anger and fear are 2 sides of the same coin; they are both driven by stress.

Men average slightly lower on neuroticism than women and this seems to be due to the fact that men have more testosterone. It seems to be the case that having

high testosterone levels suppresses neuroticism (the specific biochemical mechanism being that testosterone suppresses the stress hormone cortisol).

As with agreeableness, a slight difference in the average leads to huge differences at the extremes. Amongst people who have incredibly high stress tolerances (extremely low neuroticism), almost all of them are men. Amongst people who have very low stress tolerances ('anxiety disorders'), almost all of them are women.

Many mistakenly attribute anger to low agreeableness, when the real culprit is high neuroticism. Many mistakenly attribute being nervous about social interactions to low extroversion (being introverted), when the real culprit is high neuroticism. Anger, and anxiety surrounding social interactions, are both driven by high neuroticism; not a lack of agreeableness, or a lack of extroversion.

4D) Agreeableness and Neuroticism, Comfort With Conflict

The lower a person ranks on agreeableness and the lower they rank on neuroticism, the more psychologically comfortable they will be with conflict. 'Conflict' can range from a heated argument on the gentle side, to mortal combat on the intense side.

Those who rank high on agreeableness find conflict to be painful because they find exposure to malevolence to be traumatizing.

Those who rank high on neuroticism find conflict to be painful because they are more sensitive than the average person to stressors of any kind, whether those stressors are malevolent or not is irrelevant.

Men averaging lower on both agreeableness and neuroticism than women (due to their higher testosterone levels) results in men being on average more comfortable with conflict than women.

The people on the planet who are the most comfortable with conflict are psychopaths, who are exclusively male; they experience zero fear (zero neuroticism) and zero compassion (zero agreeableness).

To be clear, the zero agreeableness and zero neuroticism of psychopathic men doesn't come from them having unusually high testosterone levels; it comes as a result of them having suppressed or non-existent amygdala function in the brain (psychopathy is driven by an unusual neurological structure, not an unusual hormone profile).

4E) Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is The Big 5's way of measuring how hardworking or lazy a person is. Conscientious people work hard and keep their belongings organized. Unconscientious people are lazy and disorganized. Conscientiousness can be further divided into the sub-traits 'Orderliness' and 'Industriousness'.

Industriousness determines how hardworking a person is. Orderliness drives disgust sensitivity; how much a person desires for the environment to be clean and organized.

It is worth distinguishing between industriousness and orderliness for a simple reason; it affects political affiliations. People who rank high on orderliness tend to be Rightwing, while people who rank low on orderliness tend to be Leftwing. On the other hand, the correlation between industriousness and political affiliation seems to be zero. Conservatives are more orderly than liberals, but they aren't any more or less industrious.

Many unproductive people are disparagingly called 'lazy', when in truth their problem isn't their personality (low industriousness), but rather it's biological (low energy). Some people have less energy than others, and the old have less energy than the young. If you lack energy, there are drugs that will help you (caffeine). If you lack industriousness, no drug can save you.

For purposes of this publication 'Energy' and 'Industriousness' will be used interchangeably, but it is worth knowing that they aren't actually the same thing; energy levels are determined by physical health, while industriousness is a matter of personality.

4F) Openness

Openness is The Big 5's way of measuring creativity. Those who rank high on openness enjoy creative activities; they think creating art and music is fun, they enjoy visiting museums. Those who rank low on openness find such things to be boring, or at least they are not as motivated to pursue them as those who rank high on openness.

Openness seems to be what drives entrepreneurship; the creation of new business ventures.

It is the case that openness correlates with IQ, however they are not one in the same. Virtually all low IQ people are low openness, but not all high IQ people are high openness.

People who are high IQ and high openness are intelligent and creative, while those who are high IQ and low openness are intelligent but *not* creative (such people make great accountants).

Before you start shedding tears for those who rank low on openness, realize that there are many downsides associated with high openness.

Those who rank high on openness seem to be *involuntarily creative*; they spontaneously think of new ideas and new ways of being in the world. If they don't engage in creative activity, they become terribly depressed.

From a financial perspective, creativity is a high risk - high reward strategy. More accurately, it is a suicidal strategy. Amongst those who engage in creative endeavors you will find that most are starving, while a tiny minority are spectacularly rich. This is true of artists, musicians, actors, and entrepreneurs; most make little or no money, while a tiny minority are millionaires.

Openness predicts political affiliation; those who rank high on openness tend to be Leftwing, while those who rank low on openness tend to be Rightwing.

Taken together with conscientiousness, you will find that Leftwingers tend to be high openness and low orderliness, while Rightwingers tend to be low openness and high orderliness.