

## **The SuccessTypes Learning Style Type Indicator Introduction to Your Psychological Type**

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### **A type indicator tells you what kind of thinking is most comfortable for you.**

Type indicators are questionnaires that help you identify your own preferences for the way you process information, day-in and day-out. Thus, they describe an important part of your personality, but they don't describe all of your personality. Many aspects of personality are measured with tests and not indicators. A test measures how much of a given trait you have, such as motivation, or the need for achievement. Type indicators don't measure quantitatively. They just classify you into one or the other type. Thus, you aren't a little or a lot of a type. For example, you wouldn't be a strong or a weak extravert, you would just be an extravert. If you have already taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator mentioned below, the score for each scale is only a measure of how certain you are of that preference. The sum total of all your preferences is your way of identifying the ways of thinking that are consistently most comfortable for you.

### **Most type indicators are not scientifically reliable.**

The primary scientifically valid instrument for determining your type is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI). All other questionnaires that are called type indicators or type tests, are designed to illustrate type, but most are not proven to determine type with greater reliability and validity than the MBTI. The SuccessTypes Learning Style Type Indicator (LSTI) has been shown to have statistical validity in the sensing-intuitive dimension (Cook and Smith, 2006). However, the primary purpose of the LSTI at this website is for educational purposes. If you want an unambiguous type determination you should go to your school's counseling center and have someone who is qualified to interpret your results administer the MBTI for you.

### **Your type is just an expression of consistent preferences in your thinking.**

As a way of developing your interest in psychological type and also to teach you something about it, I've devised a brief questionnaire that is linked below to serve as a type indicator. It is different from other type indicators in that it relies solely on your preferences in learning to determine your type. However, if you consider that learning is just another form of thinking, just as shopping for a car or deciding on a career, then you can conclude that your type preferences in learning are the same as your type preferences in general.

### **If you aren't sure what your preferences are, you might bias your type.**

Before you proceed with the type questionnaire I need to give you a caution about bias in determining your type. You will notice that all of the questions are 'forced choice,' meaning you choose one of two opposites. That is because, by definition, if you prefer one you cannot simultaneously prefer the other. The mistake most first timers make in thinking about type is the assumption that being a type is saying you only think that one way. Just remember that having a preference in your thinking does not prevent you from thinking the opposite way. A classic case is the question that makes you choose between head and heart. When I first encountered this question about my psychological type, I thought, 'OK, I'm usually pretty logical, but I have

strong feelings, too. So I'm both." Well, I was wrong. What I didn't see at the time was that it is OK to be logical and still have feelings. It makes it a little clearer when you look at it this way. The question is really asking what do you trust the most to make your decisions? That makes it much easier for me, because I know I don't trust my feelings. I much prefer to use logic. It is interesting to note that since I became knowledgeable in the area of psychological type (I was qualified by the Association for Psychological Type in 1986), I now have learned to consider feelings as additional facts to incorporate into my logic. This is very different from a person who primarily uses feelings, values and human outcomes as the basis for their decisions and who are uncomfortable in trusting their use of logic.

### **The way you think at work (or school) isn't necessarily an indication of your type.**

A second way you can bias your type determination is to confuse what you do at work with what you actually prefer to do. A pediatric resident came up to me after a workshop and pointed to his appointment book to show me how his day was structured and planned out. He told me that my description of the perceptive type, that is adaptive and flexible, describes him best, but since he is so structured at work he seems to be the opposite type. I asked him if he used the appointment book when he went home and he told me no, at home he could do as he wanted. You see, if he was the organized judging type, he would have *wanted* to use it at home too.

### **Type summaries can help you sort out uncertainties in determining your type.**

Now you know that you can unwittingly bias your type. You always need to compare your results with a reliable description of your type to confirm that it sounds like you. I guarantee you, only one of the 16 types will sound uniquely like you. Type summaries are available in Appendix A of *SuccessTypes in Medical Education*, a free download at this website, [www.ttuhsu.edu/SOM/success](http://www.ttuhsu.edu/SOM/success). I wouldn't trust the type descriptions available on the web unless the contributing individual is a member of the Association for Psychological Type. You can get an inexpensive description of the types from CAPT ([www.capt.org](http://www.capt.org)). The book "Looking at Type: The Fundamentals" by Charles Martin, Ph.D., (Product No. 60107) also will provide you with in depth descriptions of each of the types.

Reference:

Cook, DA and AJ Smith, *Medical Education* 2006; **40**: 900-7.