The **Myers-Briggs** Company

WHITE PAPER

Developing Psychological Safety Through Personality Type

Dr. Roger R. Pearman,
CEO TalentTelligent®, EOT

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Abstract

Psychological safety is essential for fostering open communication, trust, and collaboration within teams. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) model provides a constructive framework for enhancing psychological safety by celebrating individual differences and promoting self-awareness. Defined as an environment where individuals feel secure and supported, psychological safety improves team dynamics, innovation, and organizational performance. The MBTI approach helps teams understand diverse interaction styles, fostering mutual respect, constructive conflict resolution, and inclusivity. When used intentionally, the MBTI assessment becomes a powerful tool for cultivating trust, empathy, and effective collaboration in teams.

Dr. Roger R. Pearman,
CEO TalentTelligent®, EOT

Personality type is ideal for promoting psychological safety in teams and throughout an organization. In the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) model, personality type refers to a framework that categorizes individuals into one of 16 distinct types based on their preferences in how they perceive the world and make decisions. Isabel Myers declared in her presentation to the joint meeting of the APA and AMA that "the Indicator gets at what is right with people, not what is wrong." She was promoting a celebration of differences. That celebration of differences and the associated benefit of doing so occurs when individuals facilitate psychological safety in a group or a team.

Psychological safety is defined as the emotional state in which individuals feel secure, supported, and free from fear or threat. Safety encourages open communication, risk-taking, and overall well-being.[1,2]

At the core of psychological safety are these key conditions:[3]

- Mutual sharing of information with positive and empathetic regard and assuming positive intent, especially with divergent views
- Seeking and receiving feedback openly and without rejection
- Engaging in constructive conflict resolution
- Demonstrating respect for competence and capabilities
- Feeling empowered to experiment and take risks
- Sharing vulnerabilities that foster trust and inclusivity

The evidence that psychological safety contributes to personal, team, and organizational well-being and overall performance is substantial (see References). While psychological safety is foundational, other key team behaviors are

essential (e.g., working a plan agilely, fostering inclusion, creating effective team structures, etc.) and are maximized when psychological safety exists in a group.[4] Relating psychological safety and effective team practices to real economic outcomes has been established through increases in efficiency, effectiveness, generativity, and overall motivation. The failure to attend to this aspect of work life has significant implications for individual and organizational performance, including physical and mental well-being.

Personality type accessed through the MBTI assessment provides a handy and understandable model to achieve, develop, and maintain the conditions essential for psychological safety.[5] The inventory is built on the proposition that self-sorting on a set of behaviors reveals a pattern of behavior that can be predictable and often easily demonstrated.[6] The *initial* sorting is between the following polarities of psychological energies or tendencies:

Mental energy management (E–I)	Extraversion—active engagement with the environment, people, or things	Introversion—internal engagement processing information, experiences, and observations
Information preferences (S–N)	Sensing—attracted to sensory experiences, details, and action	Intuition—attracted to patterns, connections, ideas, and concepts
Decision-making preferences (T–F)	Thinking—using an analytical and critical evaluation of information and experience; seeking logical solutions	Feeling—using an evaluative method aligning ideals, values, and outcomes that foster personal and interpersonal alignment
General orientation toward adapting to experience (J–P)	Judging—demonstrating the need for closure, making a decision, and taking action	Perceiving—demonstrating the need for more information, gathering from multiple data sources, and waiting for clarity

Myers and her mother (Katherine Briggs) had already identified behavior patterns when they came upon C. G. Jung's framework. Myers based her tool on Jung's proposition that personality type is a psychological mindset and behavioral pattern related to how an individual sees and manages the world. While Jung identified extraverting, introverting, sensing, intuiting, thinking, and feeling, he was clear that these were just the building blocks for getting at the core of mental functions (discussed later).

Myers was cognizant that Jung's framework had an essential complexity to tap into, so she developed the fourth scale (Judging and Perceiving) to access the richness of his model. Jung outlined eight basic mental functions or sources of mental energy available to each individual. Myers kept this theory in mind as she persisted for decades in collecting and analyzing data using the statistical tools that her father, the engineer, physicist, and administrator of the National Bureau of Standards (NBS) Lyman

Briggs, taught. She would access the first computers of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to analyze response patterns to the items of her assessment.[7]

The MBTI approach is timeless in its power for self-awareness and personal growth and is now more relevant than ever with pressing issues like psychological safety. Used by millions around the planet, it thrives because it is both practical and constructive in its application. As in the example below, the tool invites conversation in positive ways about differences in communication and outlook and mutual recognition of positive intent to make a difference.

As Alice walked into the team meeting, Eric looked at her and pointed to his watch. The meeting was to start at 10 a.m., and it was 10:05. Jaylen, the team lead, was still sorting through some papers when Eric asked when the meeting was going to start.

Jaylen said, "In another minute," which prompted Eric to declare that he would go get another cup of coffee and return. When Eric came back, the team was already discussing the first item on the agenda. So, he declared, "Couldn't wait for me?"

Jaylen shared a brief article on psychological safety and asked that the team talk about how to achieve that. Silence followed the request. Jaylen shared that he had just seen the article a couple of days ago, and it had struck him that some of the team dynamics and interactions might unintentionally reduce the sense of psychological safety. So, he said that he had set up a confidential survey for the team to complete and offer suggestions.

Two weeks later, while looking at the report from the survey, Jaylen started researching how to both present the data and present a solution. Overwhelmingly, the team did not feel there was psychological safety; team members reported feeling criticized, undersupported, unrecognized for what they bring to the table, and an unwillingness to share. He knew that without addressing these underlying conditions, the key practices of team effectiveness would be limited. Remembering an experience with the MBTI model caused Jaylen to lean into using it. First, he created an open agenda when reporting the data from the survey and then asked about the kinds of behavior that would be needed to move into the direction of safety.

The team listed phrases like "respecting differences," "sharing freely," "managing the interactions so everyone has a chance to share, not a select few," "being creative about responding to ideas," and "having a forum for managing conflicts or different points of view."

Jaylen suggested that the team take the MBTI assessment to look at how their individual interaction styles and interpersonal approaches might unintentionally send the wrong messages and how they can use an understanding of differences in productive ways. He was quick to point out that the inventory was the start of a conversation and ongoing exploration and not the end of one, and that it brought structure to understanding differences and provided safe territory to share multiple points of view.

Alice shared that as an ESFJ, she was compelled to help people whenever she was asked for assistance, which sometimes happened in the hallway as she was coming to meetings, resulting in her being a tad late. She expressed that she knew this annoyed some folks and while she had been working on this, it seemed to happen a lot. Eric spoke up and said that as an ISTJ, details, timing, and schedules were very important to him, and it felt disrespectful not to honor time commitments.

Other team members began to share other miscues in their interactions, which led to a conversation about what standards the team wanted to create that would foster psychological safety given their differences. The team suggested that the scales of the MBTI model actually provided some basic guidance to promote psychological safety:

1. Structure conversations so everyone has a chance to share and no one is "taking the airspace" that is available on a topic (Extraversion–Introversion balance).

2. Making sure to review detailed, concrete information and links, possibilities, and ideas about topics (Sensing–Intuition balance).

3. Confirming an analytical and evaluative approach that recognizes both the key criteria and ideals/values when making a decision (Thinking–Feeling balance).

4. Managing agreements about accountabilities, metrics, and expectations (Judging–Perceiving balance).

There isn't much doubt that the team leader's openness and willingness to explore the topic of psychological safety, and to use the MBTI approach in very intentional ways, enabled the team to move further toward the conditions that would foster the environment Jaylen wanted to encourage.

Jaylen knew that this would be regularly addressed in team processes, and this was critical to fostering key team practices for greater effectiveness.

Exploring psychological safety from a basic preference lens

Not all preferences are equally valuable at all times, but they are all valuable at different times in the life of a team or relationship. At a basic preference level, there are rich insights on how psychological safety can be developed and enhanced from a personality type framework. For each of the conditions of psychological safety, personality type contributions are provided below. Consider how each factor might play out given the type preferences.

Mutual sharing of information with positive and empathetic regard and assuming positive intent, especially with divergent views

Preference	How demonstrated	Preference	How demonstrated
Extraversion	Expressive and engaging affirmatively	Introversion	Reflective and demonstrating active listening
Sensing	Identifying specific feelings, reactions	Intuition	Identifying patterns and contextual elements
Thinking	Exploring options and potential consequences	Feeling	Exploring ways to gain alignment
Judging	Clarifying goals	Perceiving	Clarifying questions

Seeking and receiving feedback openly and without rejection

Preference	How demonstrated	Preference	How demonstrated
Extraversion	Initiating feedback conversation	Introversion	Providing a verbal framework for feedback
Sensing	Pointing to specific behavior	Intuition	Providing contextual elements in feedback
Thinking	Framing reasonable, realistic solutions	Feeling	Linking ideals and values to possible solutions
Judging	Using a systematic approach	Perceiving	Using an open-ended approach

Engaging in constructive conflict resolution

Preference	How demonstrated	Preference	How demonstrated
Extraversion	Outlining individual needs in the conflict	Introversion	Focusing on particular needs
Sensing	Laying out the facts for all sides	Intuition	Identifying possibilities for resolution
Thinking	Sharing criteria for making a resolution decision	Feeling	Sharing resolutions that align with ideals and values of those involved
Judging	Setting resolution parameters	Perceiving	Exploring approaches to unanswered questions

Demonstrating respect for competence and capabilities

Preference	How demonstrated	Preference	How demonstrated
Extraversion	Actively showing competencies needed	Introversion	Reflectively distilling information that leads to identifying essential competencies
Sensing	Listing all those skills and attributes needed	Intuition	Observing linkages between skills and attributes of those working together
Thinking	Explaining benefits of the competencies present	Feeling	Expressing appreciation for the capabilities useful to the team
Judging	Aligning capabilities to tasks	Perceiving	Providing emergent new information about what others bring to the team

Feeling empowered to experiment and take risks

Preference	How demonstrated	Preference	How demonstrated
Extraversion	Declaring the risks to take	Introversion	Giving synergistic observations about risks under consideration
Sensing	Clarifying details of risks to consider	Intuition	Communicating about implications of risks and experiments under consideration
Thinking	Giving an independent analysis of risks	Feeling	Affirming the benefits of risk outcomes
Judging	Giving a push for risks to take	Perceiving	Offering risk-related alternatives

Sharing vulnerabilities that foster trust and inclusivity

Preference	How demonstrated	Preference	How demonstrated
Extraversion	Expressing needs and parameters of trust	Introversion	Accommodating different needs and focusing on individuals
Sensing	Confirming common vulnerabilities	Intuition	Sharing perceived patterns in needs
Thinking	Identifying aspects of vulnerabilities and how these contribute to the team	Feeling	Demonstrating inclusivity and openness
Judging	Structuring engagements to be inclusive	Perceiving	Showing how to be open and agile in exploring differences

Extraversion

Sensing

Thinking

Judging

Introversion

Intuition

Feeling

Perceiving

The Stradivarius of personality tools: using the MBTI® model as it was designed

The psychologist Jim Neuman, PhD, once commented, "The MBTI® is the Stradivarius of instruments, often played like a dime store violin."[8] He was referring to the extensive research Myers, and later others, put into refining the tool and its applications and then how the tool might be used in violation of its purpose and its deeper psychological content. Myers wanted her tool to provide a constructive look at patterns in human differences and to provide a positive avenue to explore personal development.[9] **Jung and Myers were opposed to applying type labels as a definitive characterization of individuals**. Both were eager for personality type to be a doorway to exploring the ways individuals can grow and become more effective by starting with

a home base (type pattern such as ENFJ) and accessing available mental resources (eight functions, such as extraverted Feeling). While there is no assumption of "pure" types as individuals are a blend of type functions, the confirmed type pattern produces a predictable approach to life situations.

Misused type can be harmful to many development initiatives, including efforts to create psychological safety. When treated as an "end," such as "this is your fixed type pattern" (e.g., ENTJ), the invitation for deeper exploration is avoided. The personality type pattern is important—it's

just not the end game. It is a door opening into exploring how your psychology works. This is acutely true when the MBTI approach is used in facilitating psychological safety in groups and teams.

To avoid the pitfalls, it is important to explore type first as preferences (E–I, S–N, T–F, J–P), as outlined above. The presumption is that all preferences are accessible and used by each individual, though at different levels of intensity. This fluidity and flexibility of the model have long been misunderstood and under-recognized.

As noted earlier, Myers was cognizant of Jung's eight mental functions, which she viewed as central to understanding Jung's model. There are eight mental functions—four kinds of energy for perceiving and four for judging—which combine in a dynamic way to create the pattern. While all eight functions are used with varying degrees of intention and skill, the model holds that one of the eight is primary in an individual and the others are supportive.[10] It is this habitual blending that produces one's type pattern and mindset.

It is the use of these eight functions and the identification of the primary function that enables researchers to show the subtle but powerful differences among the 16 personality types Myers identified.[11] Understanding the type pattern as a whole is important in clarifying the configuration of the type. As a metaphor, consider the Stradivarius violin: its strings, fingerboard, peg box, bridge, body, and even the bow are all distinct yet essential components, each crafted with precision and quality. Only when these elements are finely tuned and skillfully brought together does the violin produce its direct and precise resonating sound, responding to the slightest touch with refined direction and elegance. Similarly, in the MBTI model, personality preferences are unique elements that form a solid, predictable, and persistent pattern when blended and expressed in balance.

In *everyday* terms, the eight mental functions are illustrated below:

Four perceiving functions

01 Action and scanning view of experience—Sensing that is extraverted (Se)

02 Possibilities and making connections view—Intuition that is extraverted (Ne)

03 Detail and factual view— Sensing that is introverted (Si)

04 Scenarios, pattern recognition, insights emerging—Intuition that is introverted (Ni)

Four decision-making functions

01 Critiquing voice—Thinking that is extraverted (Te)

02 Affirming voice—Feeling that is extraverted (Fe)

03 Logical modeling—Thinking that is introverted (Ti)

04 Ideals aligned and values identified—Feeling that is introverted (Fi)

The whole is more powerful than the parts

The 16 types can demonstrate and assist with creating psychological safety by recognizing and utilizing the following attributes.[12] The dominant or lead mental function for each type pattern is listed first, and the primary supporting mental function is listed second. Note that either a perceiving or judging mental function is first or second to illustrate the essential importance of how we perceive life events and decide or evaluate those events.

Extraversion

Sensing

Thinking

Judging

Introversion

Intuition

Feeling

Perceiving

THE EIGHT PRIMARY PERCEIVING TYPES
(STRONG USE OF SENSING OR INTUITION)

ISTJ (introverted Sensing with extraverted Thinking)

ISTJs create a stable and reliable environment, ensuring everyone knows what to expect, which can build trust and safety. **Be sure to:**
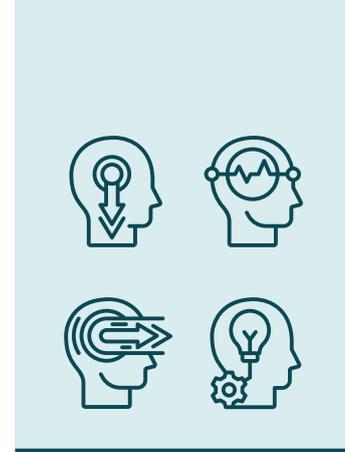
1 **Lean into consistency:** Follow through on promises to build trust.

2 **Listen actively:** Show attentiveness to others' perspectives.

3 **Provide clear expectations:** Offer clarity to reduce uncertainty.

4 **Acknowledge contributions:** Recognize others' efforts and ideas.

5 **Stay open to feedback:** Show willingness to adapt based on team input.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** Being dependable, organized, and detail oriented often creates a stable environment where others feel secure. Providing consistent follow-through builds trust, while clear communication of expectations reduces ambiguity.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ISTJs' preference for rules and tradition can make them resistant to change, stifling innovation. They may also struggle to validate others' emotions, focusing instead on tasks and outcomes.

Tip: ISTJs can foster psychological safety by balancing their structure with flexibility and showing more empathy when team members express concerns.

Tip: Practice mindfulness: Cultivate mindfulness to become more aware of your own emotions and reactions. This awareness will help you manage your emotions more effectively and respond to others with greater empathy.

Tip: Improve emotional expression: Work on expressing your emotions more openly and constructively. This can involve sharing your feelings in a calm and clear manner, which will help build trust and improve relationships.

Tip: Develop empathy: Make a conscious effort to understand and appreciate the perspectives and feelings of others. This can be achieved by asking open-ended questions and actively engaging in conversations to learn more about their experiences and emotions.

ISFJ (introverted Sensing with extraverted Feeling)

ISFJs' nurturing nature helps in creating a supportive atmosphere where team members feel valued and cared for. **Be sure to:**

1 **Show empathy:** Demonstrate care for others' emotional well-being.

2 **Encourage quieter voices:** Invite input from less vocal team members.

3 **Offer practical support:** Help others with tasks when needed.

4 **Create a safe space:** Reassure team members they can share concerns.

5 **Be approachable:** Maintain a warm and nonjudgmental demeanor.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ISFJs excel in creating harmonious and supportive environments. Their empathy and attentiveness to others' needs make team members feel valued and cared for.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ISFJs may avoid conflict or suppress their own needs to maintain harmony, leading to unaddressed tensions. They can also struggle with adapting to new ideas quickly.

Tip: Encouraging ISFJs to address conflicts constructively and embrace change can enhance their ability to support psychological safety.

Tip: Enhance your assertiveness by practicing expressing your needs and opinions openly and respectfully in various situations. This will help you communicate more effectively and stand up for yourself when needed.

Tip: Focus on authenticity by being true to your values and beliefs in interactions with others. This involves being genuine and transparent, which can foster trust and deeper connections.

Tip: Work on constructive discontent by learning how to express dissatisfaction or disagreement in a positive and productive manner. This will enable you to address issues without causing conflict or discomfort.

Tip: Develop your emotional problem-solving skills by identifying and analyzing emotional challenges, then brainstorming and implementing practical solutions. This will help you manage emotional situations more effectively.

Tip: Build self-confidence by recognizing your strengths and achievements and using them as a foundation to tackle new challenges. This will boost your self-assurance and ability to handle various situations with poise.

INFJ (introverted Intuition with extraverted Feeling)

INFJs foster deep connections and understanding, promoting empathy and acceptance within the team. **Be sure to:**

1 **Value individuality:** Acknowledge and appreciate diverse perspectives.

2 **Be inclusive:** Ensure everyone feels part of the conversation.

3 **Model vulnerability:** Share personal challenges to encourage openness.

4 **Facilitate deep conversations:** Create opportunities for meaningful dialogue.

5 **Recognize emotional needs:** Tune into others' feelings and validate them.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** INFJs are deeply empathetic and driven by a desire to support others' growth. Their ability to see the bigger picture allows them to advocate for fairness and inclusivity.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** INFJs' idealism may lead them to overanalyze situations or become discouraged when others do not share their vision. They may also avoid confrontation, leading to unresolved issues.

Tip: INFJs should focus on balancing their visionary mindset with practical solutions and learn to address conflicts directly but compassionately.

Tip: Assertiveness: Practice expressing your thoughts, feelings, and needs openly and honestly while respecting others. This will help you communicate more effectively and stand up for yourself in various situations.

Tip: Conflict management: Work on your ability to handle disagreements constructively. Focus on understanding different perspectives and finding mutually beneficial solutions to conflicts.

Tip: Effective confrontation: Develop the skill to address issues directly and calmly, ensuring that you maintain respect for all parties involved. This will help you resolve problems before they escalate.

Tip: Influencing others: Enhance your ability to inspire and motivate those around you by understanding their needs and aligning them with your goals. This involves building trust and rapport with others.

Tip: Reality testing: Strive to maintain objectivity by regularly assessing whether your perceptions and emotions align with reality. This will help you make more balanced and informed decisions

INTJ (introverted Intuition with extraverted Thinking)

INTJs' strategic foresight and clarity help in setting a vision that everyone can align with, reducing uncertainty. **Be sure to:**

1   **Provide a clear vision:** Give the team a sense of purpose and direction.

2   **Encourage innovation:** Create a judgment-free zone for sharing ideas.

3   **Respect competence:** Value others' skills and expertise.

4   **Show patience:** Allow time for others to process and respond.

5   **Be open to dissent:** Welcome constructive criticism and diverse opinions.

6   **Use strengths for psychological safety:** INTJs bring clarity and long-term vision to their teams. They value competence and encourage innovation, creating an environment where intellectual contributions are respected.

7   **Address challenges to psychological safety:** INTJs may appear dismissive of emotions, focusing instead on logic and results. Their direct communication style can be perceived as overly critical.

Tip: INTJs can foster psychological safety by showing appreciation for others' efforts and incorporating emotional awareness into their leadership style.

Tip: Develop your EQ by building self-awareness. This involves understanding your own emotions, which will enable you to better read and understand the emotions of others, leading to improved relationship management.

Tip: Practice active listening. Focus on what others are saying as well as their tone and body language. This will help you become more observant and empathetic in your interactions.

Tip: Avoid making assumptions about people based on initial impressions or biases. Take the time to ask questions and get to know individuals on a deeper level before forming judgments.

Tip: Seek feedback from others about your interactions and communication style. This can provide valuable insights into how you are perceived and areas where you can improve your emotional intelligence.

ESTP (extraverted Sensing with introverted Thinking)

ESTPs' adaptability and energy can motivate the team to embrace change and innovation with confidence. **Be sure to:**
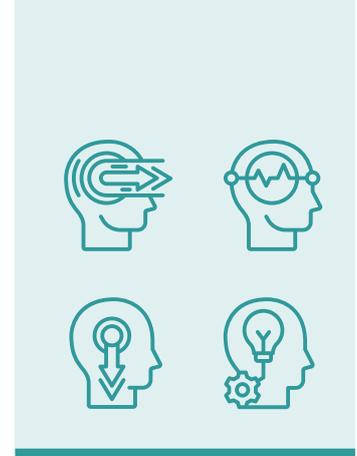
1 **Promote team energy:** Use enthusiasm to energize the group.

2 **Model resilience:** Show how to recover quickly from setbacks.

3 **Encourage participation:** Actively involve everyone in discussions.

4 **Celebrate risk-taking:** Reward bold ideas and initiatives.

5 **Stay adaptable:** Be open to changes and new directions.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ESTPs bring energy and enthusiasm to the workplace, encouraging active participation and collaboration. They model resilience and adaptability, creating a dynamic environment.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ESTPs' impulsive nature and focus on immediate results can overshadow others' concerns. They may dominate discussions, inadvertently silencing quieter voices.

Tip: ESTPs should practice patience and actively seek input from all team members to ensure everyone feels included.

Tip: Emotional expression: Practice expressing your emotions clearly and constructively, ensuring your intentions are understood by others.

Tip: Active empathy: Work on understanding and responding to the emotions of others. This involves actively listening and showing genuine concern for their feelings.

Tip: Impulse control: Develop strategies to manage your impulses, allowing you to respond thoughtfully rather than reactively in various situations.

Tip: Listening generously: Enhance your listening skills by focusing on others' words without immediately formulating a response. This demonstrates respect and fosters deeper connections.

Tip: Mindfulness: Incorporate mindfulness practices into your daily routine to become more aware of your own emotions and how they influence your interactions with others.

ESFP (extraverted Sensing with introverted Feeling)

ESFPs bring enthusiasm and positivity, creating a lively environment where everyone feels included and appreciated. **Be sure to:**
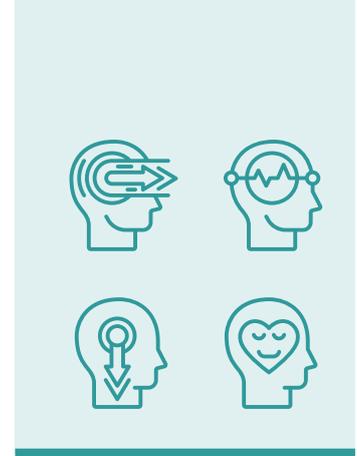
1 **Spread positivity:** Foster a fun and welcoming atmosphere.

2 **Show appreciation:** Regularly thank team members for their efforts.

3 **Create opportunities for bonding:** Encourage team-building activities.

4 **Be approachable:** Make others feel comfortable coming to you.

5 **Support inclusivity:** Ensure everyone feels seen and valued.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** Create a lively and supportive atmosphere. The warmth and enthusiasm of ESFPs make team members feel valued and appreciated.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ESFPs' tendency to avoid serious or uncomfortable topics can lead to unresolved issues. They may also struggle with long-term planning and consistency.

Tip: ESFPs can enhance psychological safety by addressing challenges directly and balancing their focus on the present with future-oriented thinking.

Tip: Enhance emotional problem-solving: Focus on understanding and addressing emotional challenges effectively, which will help in navigating complex interpersonal situations.

Tip: Develop emotional self-control: Work on maintaining composure and regulating emotions in high-pressure scenarios to improve decision-making and relationships.

Tip: Strengthen impulse control: Practice pausing before reacting to situations, allowing for more thoughtful responses and reducing the likelihood of hasty decisions.

Tip: Increase insightfulness: Cultivate a deeper understanding of your own emotions and those of others, which can lead to more empathetic and informed interactions.

Tip: Improve situational awareness: Pay attention to the emotional dynamics in different environments to better adapt your behavior and communication style.

ENFP (extraverted Intuition with introverted Feeling)

ENFPs' creativity and enthusiasm encourage exploration of new ideas, making it safe for others to take risks. **Be sure to:**

1 **Encourage creativity:** Support out-of-the-box thinking.

2 **Celebrate diversity:** Value and highlight unique team strengths.

3 **Be transparent:** Share your thoughts and encourage open communication.

4 **Show genuine interest:** Actively engage with others' ideas.

5 **Foster collaboration:** Encourage teamwork and shared problem-solving.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ENFPs are inclusive, empathetic, and highly encouraging. They inspire creativity and make others feel comfortable sharing ideas.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ENFPs' enthusiasm can lead to overcommitment and inconsistency. They may avoid conflict or become distracted by new ideas, leaving issues unresolved.

Tip: ENFPs should work on maintaining focus and following through on commitments to build a stronger sense of trust.

Tip: Effective confrontation: Practice addressing conflicts directly and constructively. This will help you manage difficult situations and improve relationships.

Tip: Emotional self-control: Work on managing your emotional responses, especially in challenging situations. This can be achieved through mindfulness techniques or self-reflection.

Tip: Impulse control: Develop strategies to pause and consider the consequences before acting on impulses. This will enhance your decision-making skills and reduce impulsive reactions.

Tip: Influencing others: Focus on enhancing your ability to persuade and motivate others positively. This involves understanding their perspectives and effectively communicating your ideas.

Tip: Mindfulness: Incorporate mindfulness practices into your daily routine to increase self-awareness and emotional regulation.

ENTP (extraverted Intuition with introverted Thinking)

ENTPs challenge assumptions and stimulate debate, fostering an environment where diverse perspectives are valued. **Be sure to:**

1 **Encourage healthy debate:** Foster a space for respectful disagreement.

2 **Value diverse perspectives:** Actively seek out differing opinions.

3 **Model curiosity:** Demonstrate enthusiasm for learning from others.

4 **Be playful:** Use humor to create a relaxed environment.

5 **Build trust:** Follow through on commitments and promises.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ENTPs encourage intellectual exploration and healthy debate. Their openness to diverse perspectives fosters an inclusive environment.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ENTPs' love of argumentation can be perceived as confrontational. They may dismiss emotional concerns, focusing solely on logic.

Tip: Balancing their enthusiasm for debate with emotional sensitivity can help ENTPs create a more supportive atmosphere.

Tip: Practice active empathy: Make a conscious effort to understand and share the feelings of others. This can help you connect more deeply and respond more effectively in interpersonal interactions.

Tip: Enhance emotional self-control: Work on managing your emotions, particularly in high-pressure situations, to maintain composure and make thoughtful decisions.

Tip: Improve listening generously: Focus on truly understanding what others are saying, without planning your response while they are speaking. This will help you to better grasp their perspectives and improve communication.

Tip: Engage in mindfulness: Incorporate mindfulness practices into your routine to increase self-awareness and emotional regulation. This can lead to more thoughtful and empathetic interactions.

Tip: Develop perspective-taking: Make an effort to see situations from others' viewpoints, which can enhance your ability to relate to and understand those around you.

THE EIGHT PRIMARY DECISION-MAKING TYPES (STRONG USE OF THINKING OR FEELING)

ISTP (introverted Thinking with extraverted Sensing)

ISTPs' practical problem-solving skills reassure the team that challenges can be tackled effectively. **Be sure to:**
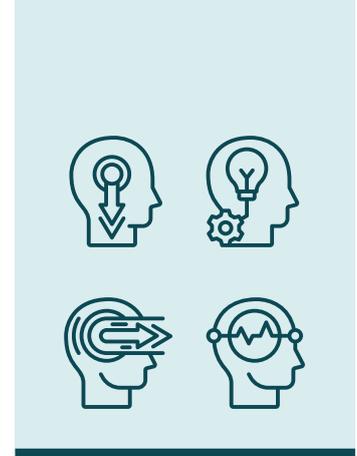
1 **Stay calm under pressure:** Model composure in challenging situations.

2 **Encourage experimentation:** Allow others to try new approaches without fear of failure.

3 **Respect boundaries:** Be mindful of others' comfort zones.

4 **Offer objective feedback:** Focus on facts rather than personal judgments.

5 **Demonstrate flexibility:** Adapt to changing needs and perspectives.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ISTPs demonstrate calm under pressure and encourage experimentation. Their flexible and adaptable nature allows team members to explore new ideas without fear of failure.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ISTPs may come across as emotionally detached, making it difficult for team members to feel understood. Their preference for independence can sometimes undermine collaboration.

Tip: By engaging more actively in team dynamics and demonstrating empathy, ISTPs can enhance psychological safety.

Tip: Cooperative relations: Focus on building cooperative relationships by increasing the perception and reality of fairness. It's essential to avoid trying to win every battle. Instead, look for common ground and shared interests between you and others.

Tip: Respect and understanding: Show respect for others and their positions, which can help in reducing conflicts. Make sure the other side feels understood and respected by adopting a problem-oriented point of view.

Tip: Impulse control: Work on controlling impulses, which can help you manage emotional responses better and improve interactions with peers.

Tip: Active empathy: Practice active empathy by putting yourself in others' shoes to understand their feelings and perspectives more deeply.

Tip: Mindfulness: Engage in mindfulness practices to enhance your awareness of your emotions and reactions, helping you manage them more effectively.

ISFP (introverted Feeling with extraverted Sensing)

ISFPs bring a calm and harmonious presence, which can ease tensions and encourage open communication. **Be sure to:**

1 **Be kind and approachable:** Maintain a warm and nonthreatening attitude.

2 **Celebrate small wins:** Acknowledge team members' achievements.

3 **Validate emotions:** Show understanding of others' feelings.

4 **Encourage authenticity:** Support others in being true to themselves.

5 **Foster creativity:** Provide space for creative and nontraditional ideas.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ISFPs are warm, empathetic, and nonjudgmental, creating a welcoming space for team members to express themselves. They value individuality and encourage authenticity.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ISFPs' aversion to conflict may lead them to avoid addressing issues directly. They can also struggle with consistency, creating uncertainty.

Tip: ISFPs should work on developing assertiveness and setting clear expectations to maintain a safe environment.

Tip: Build self-confidence: Work on bolstering your confidence by focusing on your strengths and taking action in areas where you feel less secure. Consider taking courses or working with a coach to enhance specific skills, which will help you feel more capable in challenging situations.

Tip: Enhance assertiveness: Practice expressing your thoughts and needs clearly and confidently. This will help you communicate more effectively and ensure your voice is heard in various situations.

Tip: Develop conflict management skills: Learn techniques for managing and resolving conflicts constructively. This can involve active listening, empathy, and finding mutually beneficial solutions, which will improve your interactions and relationships.

Tip: Improve emotional expression: Work on articulating your emotions in a healthy and constructive manner. This will help others understand your perspective and allow for more authentic connections.

Tip: Strengthen independence: Cultivate your ability to rely on your own judgment and make decisions independently. This will enhance your personal power and resilience, allowing you to navigate challenges with greater ease.
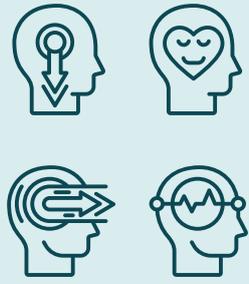
INFP (introverted Feeling with extraverted Intuition)

INFPs' authenticity and openness to new ideas invite others to share their thoughts without fear of judgment. **Be sure to:**

1 **Be nonjudgmental:** Ensure others feel safe sharing their thoughts.

2 **Encourage self-expression:** Invite team members to voice their ideas.

3 **Show empathy:** Validate others' emotions and struggles.

4 **Advocate for inclusion:** Promote a culture of fairness and equality.

5 **Be approachable:** Maintain a calm and understanding demeanor.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** INFPs are champions of inclusivity and fairness. They are deeply empathetic, often acting as advocates for quieter or marginalized team members.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** Their sensitivity to criticism may cause INFPs to withdraw, and their idealism can sometimes clash with practical workplace demands.

Tip: INFPs can strengthen psychological safety by balancing their ideals with actionable steps and staying engaged during conflicts.

Tip: Assertiveness: Practice expressing your thoughts and feelings directly and respectfully. This can help you communicate more effectively and build stronger relationships.

Tip: Conflict management: Develop skills to manage and resolve conflicts constructively. This involves understanding different perspectives and finding common ground.

Tip: Effective confrontation: Learn how to address issues directly without being confrontational. This can lead to more open and honest communication.

Tip: Influencing others: Work on your ability to persuade and motivate others. This can enhance your leadership capabilities and help you achieve your goals more effectively.

Tip: Reality testing: Strengthen your ability to assess situations objectively. This involves balancing your idealism with practical considerations, helping you make more informed decisions.

INTP (introverted Thinking with extraverted Intuition)

INTPs' logical and objective approach can help in analyzing situations fairly, which builds trust in decision-making. **Be sure to:**
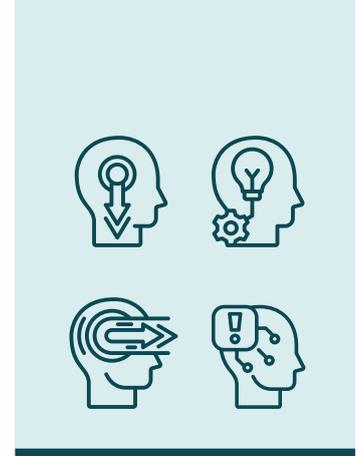
1 **Be curious:** Ask open-ended questions to understand others' perspectives.

2 **Encourage independent thinking:** Support diverse approaches to problems.

3 **Avoid criticism:** Frame feedback constructively.

4 **Respect intellectual contributions:** Validate others' ideas.

5 **Stay open-minded:** Be willing to explore alternative viewpoints.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** INTPs encourage curiosity and innovation, fostering an environment where unconventional ideas are welcomed. They are open to exploring diverse perspectives.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** Their focus on logic can make INTPs seem dismissive of emotions or interpersonal dynamics. They may also struggle with providing consistent feedback or support.

Tip: Developing emotional intelligence and engaging in consistent communication can help INTPs build trust within their teams.

Tip: Develop self-awareness: Focus on understanding your own emotions and how they influence your thoughts and behaviors. This self-awareness is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence and will help you better understand others.

Tip: Actively listen: Practice active listening by truly focusing on what others are saying, observing their tone and body language, and avoiding interruptions. This will help you become more attuned to emotional cues from others.

Tip: Seek feedback: Regularly ask for feedback from colleagues and peers to gain insights into how you are perceived and how your emotional responses impact others. Use this feedback to adapt and grow your emotional intelligence.

Tip: Avoid distractions: When engaging with others, minimize distractions by putting away devices and giving your full attention to the conversation. This will demonstrate your commitment to understanding and connecting with them emotionally.

Tip: Learn about personality types: Explore tools like the MBTI assessment to gain insights into your personality traits and those of others. Understanding different personality patterns can enhance your empathy and ability to manage relationships effectively.

ESTJ (extraverted Thinking with introverted Sensing)

ESTJs' organizational skills and decisiveness provide structure and clarity, reducing ambiguity and anxiety. **Be sure to:**

1 **Set clear expectations:** Provide structure to reduce uncertainty.

2 **Be fair and consistent:** Treat everyone with respect and equity.

3 **Recognize effort:** Acknowledge team members' hard work.

4 **Be accessible:** Ensure others feel comfortable approaching you.

5 **Encourage accountability:** Promote a culture of mutual responsibility.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ESTJs provide clear structure and expectations, which can reduce ambiguity and stress. Their focus on accountability ensures fairness.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ESTJs' direct communication style can come across as harsh or overly critical. They may also prioritize efficiency over emotional considerations.

Tip: ESTJs can improve psychological safety by softening their feedback and showing appreciation for team members' efforts.

Tip: Adaptability: Practice being open to change by seeking out new experiences and adjusting your approach based on feedback. This will help you become more flexible in your thinking and actions.

Tip: Active empathy: Make a conscious effort to understand others' feelings and perspectives. Engage in active listening and ask open-ended questions to gain deeper insights into their emotions.

Tip: Emotional expression: Work on expressing your own emotions more openly and constructively. This will help you connect with others on a deeper level and improve your interpersonal relationships

Tip: Mindfulness: Incorporate mindfulness practices into your daily routine to increase your awareness of your own emotions and reactions. This will help you manage your emotions more effectively and respond thoughtfully to others.

Tip: Listening generously: Focus on truly listening to others without interrupting or planning your response. This will demonstrate respect and understanding, fostering stronger connections and enhancing your social intelligence.

ESFJ (extraverted Feeling with introverted Sensing)

ESFJs' ability to build strong interpersonal relationships and ensure everyone feels included can significantly enhance team morale and cohesion. **Be sure to:**

1 **Show emotional support:** Be attentive to others' needs and feelings.

2 **Foster team harmony:** Mediate conflicts and promote understanding.

3 **Be inclusive:** Ensure everyone feels heard and valued.

4 **Provide encouragement:** Boost morale with positive reinforcement.

5 **Recognize contributions:** Publicly celebrate team achievements.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ESFJs excel at creating harmonious and inclusive environments. They are highly empathetic and attentive to the needs of others.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** Their desire to maintain harmony may lead ESFJs to avoid addressing conflicts directly. They can also become overly concerned with pleasing others, neglecting fairness.

Tip: Encouraging ESFJs to address issues constructively and maintain fairness can strengthen psychological safety.

Tip: Embrace emotional expression: Practice articulating your emotions clearly and effectively. This helps in understanding your own feelings and communicating them to others, fostering deeper connections.

Tip: Active empathy: Focus on truly understanding the emotions and perspectives of others. This involves listening with intent and showing genuine concern for their feelings, which can enhance your interpersonal relationships.

Tip: Develop impulse control: Work on managing your immediate reactions to situations. Take a moment to pause and reflect before responding, which can lead to more thoughtful and constructive interactions.

Tip: Listen generously: Cultivate the habit of listening without interrupting, ensuring you fully understand the speaker's message and emotions before responding. This can build trust and respect in your relationships.

Tip: Practice mindfulness: Engage in mindfulness exercises to stay present and aware of your emotions and surroundings. This can help you maintain emotional balance and respond more effectively to challenges.

ENFJ (extraverted Feeling with introverted Intuition)

ENFJs are naturally empathetic, people-focused leaders who create a warm, inclusive, and supportive team environment. **Be sure to:**

1 **Build trust through openness:** Share your own experiences to create connection.

2 **Champion team members:** Advocate for others' ideas and contributions.

3 **Be empathetic:** Listen deeply and validate others' emotions.

4 **Facilitate collaboration:** Create opportunities for teamwork.

5 **Celebrate growth:** Acknowledge and encourage personal and professional development.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ENFJs excel at building trust and fostering collaboration. They are empathetic and deeply invested in others' growth.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** ENFJs' tendency to overextend themselves can lead to burnout. They may also struggle to balance harmony with addressing tough issues.

Tip: ENFJs should prioritize self-care and develop strategies to address conflicts constructively without sacrificing relationships.

Tip: Enhance active empathy: Focus on truly understanding and sharing the feelings of others. Practice putting yourself in others' shoes to better connect and respond to their emotional states.

Tip: Improve emotional self-control: Work on managing your own emotions, especially in challenging situations. This will help you remain calm and composed, which is crucial for effective leadership and decision-making.

Tip: Practice mindfulness: Develop the ability to be present in the moment and aware of your own emotions and those of others. This awareness will help you navigate interpersonal dynamics more effectively.

Tip: Engage in listening generously: Make a concerted effort to listen actively and attentively to others. This involves not just hearing words but also understanding the emotions and intentions behind them.

Tip: Develop patience: Cultivate the ability to wait calmly and considerately in various situations. Patience can lead to more thoughtful responses and better relationship management.

ENTJ (extraverted Thinking with introverted Intuition)

ENTJs are strategic, decisive individuals who contribute to psychological safety through structure, clarity, and empowerment. **Be sure to:**

1 **Lead by example:** Model respectful and constructive behaviors.

2 **Encourage innovation:** Support bold ideas and initiatives.

3 **Provide constructive feedback:** Focus on growth and improvement.

4 **Recognize individual strengths:** Leverage team members' unique skills.

5 **Promote inclusivity:** Ensure everyone has a voice in decision-making.

6 **Use strengths for psychological safety:** ENTJs provide clear direction and inspire confidence in their teams. They encourage innovation and value competence, creating an environment where contributions are respected.

7 **Address challenges to psychological safety:** Their focus on results can make ENTJs appear dismissive of emotions. Their assertiveness may come across as domineering.

Tip: ENTJs can foster psychological safety by actively listening to team members and demonstrating empathy in their interactions.

Tip: Enhance emotional self-control: Work on managing your emotions effectively, especially in high-pressure situations. This will help you respond more thoughtfully rather than reacting impulsively.

Tip: Practice active empathy: Make a conscious effort to understand and share the feelings of others. This involves listening generously, asking open-ended questions, and being genuinely interested in their perspectives.

Tip: Improve impulse control: Develop the ability to pause and think before acting or speaking. This can prevent misunderstandings and promote more thoughtful interactions.

Tip: Engage in mindfulness: Incorporate mindfulness practices into your routine to increase your self-awareness and presence. This can help you better manage your emotions and be more attuned to others.

Tip: Foster openness to others: Cultivate a willingness to consider others' viewpoints and be open to feedback. This can enhance your understanding of different perspectives and improve your interpersonal relationships.

The integrated whole of each type code, as noted above, points to a specific pattern of behavior. We rarely know how our pattern affects others, even when the pattern is pointed out. We often need to talk it through with others to learn how our stylistic home base may unintentionally prevent others from being involved. Fortunately, personality type gives a handy, pragmatic, and instructive tool to address difficult interpersonal challenges.

For the intended purpose of giving a newly organized team of eight managers a stretch opportunity, senior leadership assigned this new team the task of developing a strategy for addressing various diversity recruitment issues. The eight managers knew this challenge was outside of their wheelhouse and that it was very real. In the first team meeting, Jerry said, "As I look around the room, we don't have the competencies needed to address this problem. I don't see how we attack this without hiring some experts," which the team had been told they could not do.

Immediately, Janice, Amber, and Terry responded with, "What do you mean we don't have the competencies needed to address this challenge? You don't even know us, so how do you know what competencies are here!" They said this with a great deal of heat.

Jerry nearly shouted back, "We have four people from IT and four people from operations, and no one from HR or talent management!"

Amber pointedly said, "But I supervise people and know what is needed to do well here."

The team was off to a rough start. Interchanges were terse and nothing the team lead—Robert—attempted to do could get any creative initiatives moving. Problem-solving various issues simply could not be jump-started and team meetings were a boring report of the last meeting's discussions.

Robert visited the leadership development staff member he had known for a long time to ask for ideas about how to get the team rebooted. The two agreed that there had to first be a recognition of how team members were feeling and an exploration of what was needed to boost teamwork. Second, they decided to use the MBTI approach as a way to get the team to realize that their various points of view could all be coming from a place of positive intention and different enough to create lots of misunderstanding.

So, using a confidential process, the team members identified all the barriers to being an effective team and what they needed from team members to build

trust. After summarizing the trends and facilitating a discussion, Robert introduced the strategy of taking the MBTI assessment. Some team members reported having taken it before, while others had not. He explained that he wanted everyone to feel supported for their natural way of approaching things and everyone needed to identify their stretch opportunities to facilitate team effectiveness. The team and the chosen theme for their teamwork looked like this:

Robert, ENTJ, *"Let's build a robust system in our solution."*

Jerry, ISTJ, *"Let's get the details right."*

Amber, ESFJ, *"Let's be clear how our work helps others."*

Janice, ESTJ, *"Let's make sure we are efficient and thorough in our planning."*

Terry, INFJ, *"Let's be sure to make room for valuing differences."*

Sam, ENFP, *"Let's be sure to be open to new and different ideas."*

Eric, ESTP, *"Let's make time for fun and action."*

Olivia, INTJ, *"Let's make sure we have a well-founded model in our solution."*

The team explored how their natural take on things had been showing up in meetings and how they could see that their approaches could rub others wrong and inadvertently contribute to misunderstanding. Each team member could identify what they needed to feel safer and more open in working on the problem they had been given. They developed 10 team rules for working together and creating a safe environment to do so.

Building on the improved environment, Robert slowly introduced some additional team practices on problem-solving and collaboration. He made attending to the psychological safety of the group primary while building robust team performance indicators.

Psychological safety is affected by the degree of fear people have about their engagement with others. W. Edwards Deming said that the key element of effective management is to "drive out fear."[13] Deming noted that quality performance in any organization could not be achieved with workers fearful of speaking their minds, sharing their observations, or asking for clarification. He predicted what researchers would later confirm about the role of psychological safety—an absence of fear, and the presence of support—in achieving the highest standards of performance and work-related satisfaction. To utilize psychological safety, an individual must have the courage to share, commit, and provide important observations and insights. Poet Maya Angelou noted that the highest human virtue was courage: "the courage to be yourself, to bear witness, to speak your truth without blame or judgment, and to stand for justice."[14] Personality type invites owning your perspective and appreciating the perspective of others, working collaboratively with others to find the most effective way forward courageously.

Creating psychological safety at work and home requires significant intentional effort and provides incalculable rewards. The MBTI® framework, backed by the practical and handy assessment, invites recognizing and celebrating differences in thought and behavior. When used effectively, personality type invites a journey toward self and other awareness that leads to what Myers referred to as our deepest aspirations of health and well-being, and overall effectiveness.[15]

Endnotes

1   Edmondson, A., and Bransby, D. (2013). Psychological safety comes of age: Observed themes in an established literature. *Annual review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 10,* 55-78. Patil, R., Raheja, D. K., Nair, L., Deshpande, A., and Mittal, A. (2023). The power of psychological safety: Investigating its impact on team learning, team efficacy, and team productivity. *The Open Psychology Journal*.

2   The term "psychological safety" was first used in 1965 by Edgar H. Schein and Warren G. Bennis and has since garnered the focus of researchers and practitioners.

3   Newman, A., Donohue, R., and Eva, N. (2017). Psychological safety: A systematic review of the literature. *Human Resource Management Review*.

4   Pearman, R., and Eichinger, R. (2018). *Develop it yourself: Guide for developing the knowledge, skills, and attributes of effective teams*. Winston-Salem, NC: TalentTelligent, LLC. We cannot overstate the importance of helping a team develop specific drivers and practices for team success which accelerate effectiveness in the condition of psychological safety.

5   Pearman, R., and Albritton, S. (2020). *I'm not crazy, I'm just not you: Using personality insights to work and live effectively with others* (3rd ed.). Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publisher. Pearman, R., Lombardo, M., and Eichinger, R. (2006) *You: Being more effective in your MBTI® type*. Winston-Salem, NC: Leadership Performance Systems, Inc.

6   The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment has gone through four different periods of validation studies. Revised in 1994 using the strongest statistical method known to psychology and social sciences, item response theory (IRT), and more recently latent trait analysis, the assessment shows some of the highest measures of reliability and validity in psychological measurement. It has been highly criticized and repudiated by multiple researchers who consistently ignore the IRT analysis in their critical reports. A consistent error in critical analysis is the treatment of the MBTI assessment as a trait-like tool, which it is not. Further, the application of the same standards for reliability and validity have not been used when comparing the stability of the MBTI assessment with other tools. Additional developers of psychological type tools have established similar validity estimations from entirely different independent research teams. These independent publishers built psychological type tools using Jung's theory with additional considerations to such factors as stress and psychological agility.

7   Personal communication from Mary McCaulley, PhD, in 1981, and reported in various biographies on Isabel Briggs Myers.

8   Personal communication from Jim Neuman in July 1989.

9   Myers, I. B., and Myers, P. (1995). *Gifts differing* (2nd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

10 Jung, C. G. (1921). *Psychological types*. Princeton: Bollingen Press.

11 Pearman, R. R., and Fleenor, J. (1996). Differences in observed and self-reported qualities of psychological types. *Journal of Psychological Type, 39,* 3-17. This research compared each of the 16 MBTI types with 75 independent variables, including two multi-rater tools. The research showed significant differences between types consistent with type theory.

12 Using a curated and research-based database, an independently licensed AI engine analyzed all of the material to provide suggestions. The 16 pattern descriptions were created in response to examining how each type contributes to psychological safety and learning tips for each type to foster enhanced contributions to psychological safety. Individual type and an expert panel were asked to review, confirm, or adjust the descriptions of how the types and psychological safety interact. For details, contact pearman@talenttelligent.com

13 Deming, W. E. (1982). *Out of the crisis*. Boston: MIT Press.

14 Personal communication in 1975 and 1991 from Maya Angelou when asked, "What is the highest human virtue?" As a student at Wake Forest University, the author asked Angelou, a visiting professor of poetry, the same question in 1991 when the author arranged for her to be the keynote speaker of the biennial conference of the Association for Psychological Type, held in Richmond, Virginia.

15 Myers, I. B., and Myers, P. (1995). *Gifts differing* (2nd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

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The **Myers-Briggs** Company

GET IN TOUCH WITH US.

Contact Us

Tel: 650 969 8901
Toll free: +1 800 624 1765
Fax: 650 969 8608

Our Location

The Myers-Briggs Company
123 N. Main Street
Suite 204
Dublin, PA 18917, USA

Connect

www.themyersbriggs.com
www.linkedin.com/Themyersbriggscompany