

Type Dynamics: Another Level of Type

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Background

Following your initial introduction and understanding of psychological type, the next step is often to explore and apply type dynamics. As you probably know, type is more than the sum of its preferences. Otherwise it would be easy to see how, say, an ESFJ differs from an ESFP—one wants closure, Judging (J), the other, flexibility, Perceiving (P). Yet they are very different types with very different characteristics, far more than the difference of one letter in their type formula. Type dynamics helps make sense of those differences.

When we identify and verify someone's personality type, we are really acknowledging the consistent characteristics we are likely to see in that person. Type dynamics identifies the core of the personality or hallmarks of that person. The theory behind the development of a psychological type is complex and beyond the scope of this handout; for those who would like more explanation, your facilitator and the references at the end of this handout can help.

As you learned when you were introduced to type, there are eight preferences, four of which are mental functions. Two of those mental functions, Sensing (S) or Intuition (N) and Thinking (T) or Feeling (F), appear in your type formula. Type dynamics focuses on the middle two letters plus the two mental functions that do not appear in your type formula. For each type (person) there is an order to these four functions:

- (1) The **dominant** function is the one that is most trusted and probably best developed.
- (2) The **auxiliary** function is the one that helps balance the dominant function and is also likely well developed in an adult.
- (3) The **tertiary** or the third function is likely to be less developed than the other two.
- (4) The **fourth** or **inferior** function is the least developed function and opposite of the dominant function.



Dominant



Auxiliary



Tertiary



Inferior



To determine each type's dynamics requires a rather complicated formula and theoretical explanation (see the references at the end). Below, you can review the four levels of each type's configuration of the mental functions using the same 1 through 4 numbering system as shown on the previous page. In order to understand the dynamic system for your type, you'll need to remember the following points.

▶ **Each person has a preferred way of bringing in information:**

Perception using Sensing (S) or Intuition (N).

▶ **Each person has a preferred way of making decisions:**

Judgment using Thinking (T) or Feeling (F).

One of these is the dominant and the other is the auxiliary function, and both functions can be accessed by each person. It's not effective to make decisions without information (using only Thinking or Feeling) or to endlessly gather information and do nothing with it (using only Sensing or Intuition)!

▶ Each person has a preferred way of gaining energy: extraverted for Extraverts and introverted for Introverts. The dominant function is used in that preferred way with the auxiliary in the other mode. Thus each person has a way to connect with the outside world and a way to think things through inside.

▶ The other two functions are the ones opposite of the dominant and the auxiliary; while they do not appear in your four-letter type, they are nonetheless part of your personality, but just not as prominent.

The order of each type's dynamics is shown in this chart. Each function (in capital letters) is accessed in either an extraverted or introverted form (as shown in smaller letters). The exception is the tertiary function because type theorists are unsure if there is a consistency in the extraversion or introversion of this function; it likely appears either extraverted or introverted depending on the situation. Find your type and circle it, noting the order of your functions.

ISTJ 1) S _i 2) T _e 3) F 4) N _e	ISFJ 1) S _i 2) F _e 3) T 4) N _e	INFJ 1) N _i 2) F _e 3) T 4) S _e	INTJ 1) N _i 2) T _e 3) F 4) S _e
ISTP 1) T _i 2) S _e 3) N 4) F _e	ISFP 1) F _i 2) S _e 3) N 4) T _e	INFP 1) F _i 2) N _e 3) S 4) T _e	INTP 1) T _i 2) N _e 3) S 4) F _e
ESTP 1) S _e 2) T _i 3) F 4) N _i	ESFP 1) S _e 2) F _i 3) T 4) N _i	ENFP 1) N _e 2) F _i 3) T 4) S _i	ENTP 1) N _e 2) T _i 3) F 4) S _i
ESTJ 1) T _e 2) S _i 3) N 4) F _i	ESFJ 1) F _e 2) S _i 3) N 4) T _i	ENFJ 1) F _e 2) N _i 3) S 4) T _i	ENTJ 1) T _e 2) N _i 3) S 4) F _i

What the Dominants “Look” Like

There are eight possible dominant functions: extraverted forms of S, N, T and F, and introverted forms of S, N, T, and F. Each dominant function is described in the next sections using the following format:

- ▶ The dominant function and the two types that share it.
- ▶ Activities or hallmarks typically associated with that dominant function.
- ▶ Contributions this type might make in a meeting or work setting.
- ▶ A visual metaphor of the dominant function.

As you read these descriptions, see if you identify with both the dominant and auxiliary functions of your type. Begin to think of situations in which you use those two functions. Having opportunities to utilize these functions may likely lead to increased energy and more enjoyment of your work (and life).

Introverted Sensing (ISTJ, ISFJ)

Hallmarks

- ▶ Remembering and recalling facts and details
- ▶ Respecting practicalities
- ▶ Being realistic

Contribution

- ▶ Here’s what we already know about . . . (the situation, the people, the issue, the history . . .).



Dominant Introverted Sensing contains the best filing and storage system you’ve ever seen. All the data are stored and just need to be found and utilized. Since this type often feels most comfortable with the tried and true, it is not necessary for them to have the latest computer system for data storage, but just one that works.

Extraverted Sensing (ESTP, ESFP)

Hallmarks

- ▶ Scanning the environment and taking it all in
- ▶ Experiencing the moment with its activity and excitement
- ▶ Looking for the most expedient solution

Contribution

- ▶ What's happening right now? If possible, let's go on-site.
My first instinct is to do this



Dominant Extraverted Sensing is like radar—constantly scanning what is out there, noticing the “blips” on the horizon, and moving on. It pays attention but it does not stop. And it's not just tuning into what is seen, but also what is heard, tasted, smelled, and felt both inside their bodies and in the environment.

Introverted Intuition (INTJ, INFJ)

Hallmarks

- ▶ Visioning an expansive picture of what could be
- ▶ Seeing connections and patterns
- ▶ Focusing on symbols and theories

Contribution

- ▶ I'm seeing a broader issue than the one we've been discussing.
Let me try to paint a picture of it for you.



Dominant Introverted Intuition is like the process of making a stew—all the ingredients go into the pot and they cook together into a delicious dish. It takes time for the ingredients to come together and make something new and different. Each stew is different than the last one. None can be rushed. (And a stew, by the way is far more mundane than the end product the Introverted Intuitive will come up with! And often they cannot tell you the exact ingredients either.)

Extraverted Intuition (ENFP, ENTP)

Hallmarks

- ▶ Enthusiastically generating possibilities
- ▶ Being expansive about life
- ▶ Seeking new directions

Contribution

- ▶ Let's brainstorm. What could we do that's really new and different?



Dominant Extraverted Intuition is like popcorn popping. It seems to happen spontaneously, all of a sudden. Each kernel may go in a different direction. The fun is in the different ideas appearing, almost out of nowhere. There need not be an order or a direction to the intuitive ideas.

Introverted Thinking (INTP and ISTP)

Hallmarks

- ▶ Analyzing information
- ▶ Searching for explanations and principles
- ▶ Finding inconsistencies and irrelevancies

Contribution

- ▶ Wait a minute. Is this really the right question we should be asking? Isn't it really . . . ?



Dominant Introverted Thinking is like going through a maze. There may be false turns, illogical principles to discard, irrelevant information to go through, but it will all get sorted out and the problem solved or the principle discovered.

Extraverted Thinking (ESTJ, ENTJ)

Hallmarks

- ▶ Setting logical goals
- ▶ Structuring and organizing as much as possible
- ▶ Being direct and decisive

Contribution

- ▶ Let's logically analyze what we have so far. Here are the pros and cons. Let's look them over and make our decision today.



Dominant Extraverted Thinking is like a windstorm. When the wind sweeps across the landscape it knocks down what is weak or unworthy and allows what is strong to remain standing. The wind may seem capricious, but it actually has a direction to it. Extraverted Thinking may seem to others like it's knocking down things in its path randomly, but actually what is "good" remains standing and deservedly so.

Introverted Feeling (INFP, ISFP)

Hallmarks

- ▶ Knowing what really matters
- ▶ Being loyal to people and/or values
- ▶ Quietly supporting others

Contribution

- ▶ If we agree to this, what we're really saying to others is "This is what counts, this is what we stand for. Can everyone buy into this?"



Dominant Introverted Feeling is like an active volcano. There's usually a calm, serene exterior, and no one can see the lava (the values) inside. That lava appears only when there is passion about something—either a value has been crossed and an eruption is likely or the value is so important that everyone sees the passion for the issue in the steady, firm approach of the lava as it moves forth.

Extraverted Feeling (ESFJ, ENFJ)

Hallmarks

- ▶ Helping and caring for others
- ▶ Responding to people so they get what they need
- ▶ Seeking and creating harmony between people

Contribution

- ▶ It's important for us to create a positive climate here; people need to treat one another kindly and they need to feel comfortable so that they can grow into their full potential. What can we do together to make this possible?



Dominant Extraverted Feeling is like being on a picnic on a beautiful day with your favorite people and your favorite food. All is in harmony. There's no conflict to spoil the day; everyone is getting along having a good time and building even more positive relationships as a result of their time together!

Using Type Dynamics Knowledge

Start to pay attention to how you use your functions. If you always do activities related to your third and fourth functions, you may find your energy drained. See if you can find activities related to your dominant (#1) function. Keep in mind, though, as you mature and experience more of life, your third and fourth functions are likely to come more easily to you and may actually be fun to use.

If you find you are only using your dominant or only using your auxiliary function, try accessing the one you are not using. Doing so will likely help round out your decision-making abilities and even increase your energy. And remember to include your third and fourth functions in the decision-making process as they may help you access information you may not have initially thought of.

Vary also your extraverted and introverted activities. Balance the time you spend alone with time out and about. Only operating in one orientation means you might miss something important.

Stress Reactions (According to Type)

In addition to identifying what might be the hallmarks of our personality, type dynamics can also help us understand ourselves when we are not at our best, for instance, when we are in stressful situations. Here's how that works.

None of us can avoid stress. All types report stress reactions whether caused by overwork, fatigue, illness, or something else. Type dynamics provides a barometer for identifying stress and offers a possible path out so that you do not say or do something you might later regret.

When you are under stress, your available energy is drained and so the strengths you normally rely on may not be up to the task. Your personality responds by first becoming almost a caricature of yourself—you exaggerate your dominant (#1) function and lose access to the balancing features of the other functions.

Perhaps you can begin to recognize this process in yourself. Your personality is trying to tell you to take a break. If you do not do so, you may flip into your fourth function (#4) because your dominant function is really tired. However, you may not use the best aspects of that fourth function when you're under intense stress, so we now call it your *inferior* function. You are more vulnerable to using the worst aspects of it. This process is called being “in the grip” because you feel gripped by something beyond your control.

Following are examples of how it might look for all of the functions. Each type is identified, followed by the exaggerated form of the dominant and then the inferior function. A visual metaphor is also included as part of the example. Keep in mind that these are just some of the forms the inferior function can take under intense stress; there are others!

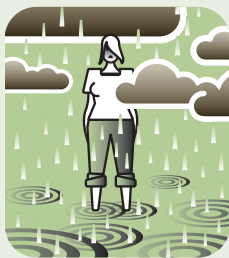
ISTJ and ISFJ (Dominant Introverted Sensing)

Exaggerated Introverted Sensing

- ▶ Fixate on a detail and become sure of what's most important.

Inferior Extraverted Intuition

- ▶ Make sweeping statements about the future which portray coming disaster; act impulsively.



Others may see them as overly pessimistic with a “gray cloud” over their heads. In stressful situations, the ISTJs and ISFJs may say things such as “Nothing will ever work out now. If the company follows this plan, it will lead to disaster. That new program will bankrupt the company!” For the dominant Introverted Sensing type in the grip of their inferior, all possibilities seem fraught with disaster.

ESFP and ESTP (Dominant Extraverted Sensing)

Exaggerated Extraverted Sensing

- ▶ Obsess on a detail or overindulge in physical pleasure.

Inferior Introverted Intuition

- ▶ See only negative possibilities in future; feel confused about what to do next.



Others may see them as stuck and unable to move into their usual action mode. In stressful situations, ESFPs and ESTPs may experience (in their minds) swirls of horrible possibilities. For example, a new baby or a particularly difficult project at work may cause them to lose sleep and their interior dialog can exaggerate otherwise nonexistent problems. Someone with dominant Extraverted Sensing might end up wandering around on a sleepless night worrying, “If the house burns down, there’s no way out.”

INTJ and INFJ (Dominant Introverted Intuition)

Exaggerated Introverted Intuition

- ▶ Have grand unifying theory and arrogance about its correctness.

Inferior Extraverted Sensing

- ▶ Focus on irrelevant details; overindulge in sensory pleasures.



Others may see them as trying to control or focus on unimportant details. However, this types’ expression of inferior Sensing results in obsessive actions such as organizing paperclips by size instead of writing a report. INTJs and INFJs may also become fixated on some sensory experience, such as endlessly watching shows on television, which is quite a different focus than their usual mode of dominant Introverted Intuition dealing with the complexities of their inner worlds.

ENFP and ENTP (Dominant Extraverted Intuition)

Exaggerated Extraverted Intuition

- ▶ Get distracted by so many possibilities and swamped by details, perhaps having manic emotions.

Inferior Introverted Sensing

- ▶ Focus on unimportant details; out of touch with reality.



Others may see them as focused on one detail that just doesn't matter. For example, when in charge of a meeting, moving tables a few inches to the left in the pursuit of the perfect configuration becomes more important in their minds than setting up the audiovisual equipment and registering participants. This inappropriate detail focus may even spill over into health-related issues. Normally, those with dominant Extraverted Intuition rarely tune into personal body sensations. But under stress, ENFPs and ENTPs suddenly notice things about the body in an exaggerated and misguided manner. A bump becomes a cancerous tumor, when actually the bump has always been there—since it is part of the structure of the wrist.

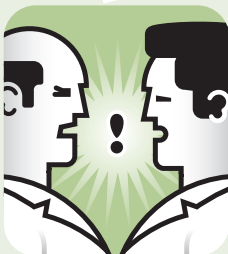
ISTP and INTP (Dominant Introverted Thinking)

Exaggerated Introverted Thinking

- ▶ Obsessive insistence on the truth and arrogant dismissal of other perspectives.

Inferior Extraverted Feeling

- ▶ Personal, unreasonable attack in an emotional manner; devaluing own worth.



Others may see that the usual objectivity is gone for them under stress. Inexplicably dominant Introverted Thinking types may become overly concerned with relationships, deciding that others are unconcerned with their well-being. ISTPs and INTPs under stress may plaintively say, “You just don't care!” Inside, they may believe that their principles don't matter and that they “have contributed nothing to this world.”

ESTJ and ENTJ (Dominant Extraverted Thinking)

Exaggerated Extraverted Thinking

- ▶ Coldly dissecting and analyzing everything and being rigid about organization.

Inferior Introverted Feeling

- ▶ Hypersensitive, reacting in childlike, emotional ways, feeling like a martyr.



Others may see them as taking things too personally and reacting with emotional outbursts. That one negative evaluation becomes the reason to quit a job. Suddenly the weight of the world is on the shoulders of those with dominant Extraverted Thinking, and they feel martyred to the cause, even if they don't understand what that cause is. Inside, the ESTJs and ENTJs are likely saying, "Nobody cares about how hard I've worked, let alone who I really am."

ISFP and INFP (Dominant Introverted Feeling)

Exaggerated Introverted Feeling

- ▶ Becoming rigid in beliefs to the point of being an embattled martyr.

Inferior Extraverted Thinking

- ▶ Aggressively criticizing others often in vulnerable areas, feeling incompetent.



Others may see them as zeroing in on the mistakes of others. When under stress those with dominant Introverted Feeling may throw the weaknesses of others into their faces. And the vulnerabilities of ISFPs and INFPs come to the fore as well and they may begin to feel incompetent themselves. Something they may say to others is "How could you!" They may then say to themselves "I must be at fault too."

ESFJ and ENFJ (Dominant Extraverted Feeling)

Exaggerated Extraverted Feeling

- ▶ Being self-righteous about what is good for others and forcing it upon them.

Inferior Introverted Thinking

- ▶ Using biting, unreasonable criticism; want only the "right" answer.



Others may see them turning cold and unreasonable in demanding only the right answer. If you are an expert or in charge, you are expected to provide that answer to them in no uncertain terms. When under stress, those with dominant Extraverted Feeling may criticize anything in their way. ESFJs and ENFJs may say something such as, “So why don’t you know the answer! Send me to someone who clearly knows more than you do!”

How to Ward off Stress

- ▶ Pay attention when you feel the caricature coming or the “grip” reaction taking over; these are signals that you need a break. Stop what you are doing since this likely isn’t working well. Take some time for yourself and try the steps below.
- ▶ Use other aspects of your personality to restore balance.
- ▶ Refer to your own type dynamics and recognize that your dominant (#1) and inferior (#4) functions are not working well. Try using the strengths related to your auxiliary (#2) and tertiary (#3) functions.
- ▶ Forgive yourself. You are human. You can only do so much.
- ▶ Analyze yourself to see what you can learn.
- ▶ What are the triggers that set you off? Can you avoid those situations in the future?
- ▶ Can you recognize impending “grip” feelings and head them off by taking breaks sooner the next time?

Working with Others Who Are Under Stress

- ▶ Resist trying to reason with them; their normal functions are not working.
- ▶ Do not make jokes as this may increase their stress or make them feel belittled.
- ▶ Suggest a break.
- ▶ An Extravert might want to talk with a trusted colleague.
- ▶ An Introvert might want to reflect in private.
- ▶ Remember this is the other person’s issue, not yours.
- ▶ Realize type is only part of the problem.
- ▶ If you are in a position to lessen the stress on others, do so.

Resources

- Kummerow, J. M., Barger, N. J. and Kirby, L. K. (1997) *WORKTypes*. New York: Warner Books.
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- Quenk, N. L. (2000) *In the Grip* (2nd edition). Mountain View, CA: CPP.
- Quenk, N. L. (2002) *Was that Really Me?* Mountain View, CA: CPP.

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