**How to Improve Communication With Different Personality Types**

*by Brenda Scottsdale*



According to the MBTI, there are four basic personality types.

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People with different personality types prefer different communication methods. Personality types tend to be classified among four basic dimensions, extroversion-introversion, sensing-intuition, thinking-feeling and judging-perceiving. Effective communication to an extrovert looks entirely different than what is preferred by an introvert. Misunderstandings due to personality-driven communication preferences can lead to hurt feelings, avoidance and simmering tension even amongst couples in love. It is important to know both your own and others' personality types to facilitate optimal communication. Learning skills to communicate with each personality type will improve your ability to communicate with personalities even vastly different than yours.

Take the The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality test as a way to learn more about your own personality type and how you may interact with different types. The Myers-Briggs is a well validated personality test that has been in use for over 50 years. It is easy to take and understand.

Observe others for clues on their motivations. People who are more stimulated internally are called introverted. By contrast, those who are more motivated by the external world, social situations and others' opinions are extroverted. Introverted people generally talk less, speak in a quieter tone and are less socially interactive. Communication between two people of the same type is most effective, however, extroverts can communicate well with introverts if they allow the introvert time to respond and are not "put off" by their air of social indifference. Introverts should practice "chit chat" to appeal to extroverts, practice initiating conversations and use phrases such as "I feel" or hand gestures when talking with extroverts.

Respect decision-making styles. People who are more sensation-dominated depend on external information and want to have all the facts and details before making a decision. Intuitive people, however, are more impulsive and guided by instincts and internal factors when decision making. Respect a sensation-oriented person's need to hear minute facts and details. When communicating with an intuitive person, do not bore them with minutia they are not interested in hearing. Using feeling words and phrases such as, "What does your gut tell you?"

Assess whether the person you are communicating with is predominantly a thinker or a feeler. You can recognize a thinker because they will talk about detail, often without a lot of emotional expression. By contrast, a feeler will talk about the "bigger picture," using feeling words and can habitually stray off topic. Connect with a thinker by using phrases such as "does this seem logical?" and with a feeler with phrases such as "how does this feel to you?"

Interpret a person's preference for acting on decisions. In the language of the MBTI test people are judgers or percievers. Positive characteristics of judgers include that they tend to use schedules, prepare in advance, emphasize structure and complete tasks. On the negative side, they can be rigid, lack spontaneity and are "too serious." By contrast, perceivers are described as flexible and can adapt to the situation more readily. On the negative side, they can be disorganized, indecisive and ineffective. When a judger is communicating with a perceiver, they should work at being more flexible and open to new ideas, slow down and enjoy the process and restrain their need to organize and control. Perceivers communicating with judgers should try to be more specific, decisive and oriented toward concrete conclusions.

**Items you will need**

* The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test (MBTI)

**References**

* [Personality Pathways; Myers Briggs Test \* What is your Myers-Briggs Personality Type?](http://www.personalitypathways.com/type_inventory.html)
* [Marketing Tools for Real Estate: Communicating with Different Personality Types](http://www.marketing-tools-for-real-estate.com/personality-types.html)

**About the Author**

Brenda Scottsdale is a licensed psychologist, a six sigma master black belt and a certified aerobics instructor. She has been writing professionally for more than 15 years in scientific journals, including the "Journal of Criminal Justice and Behavior" and various websites.

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