

Influencing Others via their Personality Preferences

We know, via personality profiling instruments such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) that people differ in how they operate, what they take notice of, how they decide things and how they organise their lives. Your results from this exercise are being discussed today and they help explain our approach to our work and life.

However we can, and must go further, and suggest that

if you are aware of the ways in which other people differ from you, you can change your way of influencing them so that you meet their needs.

Even if you don't know their exact scores or 'type' simply broadening your approach to appeal to 'other people' you will improve your ability to influence others.

But why is this stuff important? Well, the problem is that most of us either treat other people as if they think and act like we do, or as if they jolly well ought to do and think our way. The former means that we communicate with people using language, images and values they may not share, and the latter approach simply demonstrates a lack of appreciation of the other person and leaves them feeling devalued and bullied into submission. Either way, our influencing is likely to fail in the short term and leave people more wary of our approaches in the future.

Therefore the summary of MBTI preferences is given so that you can think through how to approach people who are different from you. It is not provided so that you can carry out rapid and unreliable profiling of everyone you meet!

Your challenges from this session are three fold.

Firstly, ask yourself, how would I like to be treated by people who want something from me,

Secondly, honestly reflect on how you tend to go about trying to influence people when you are not really thinking about it, and

Thirdly, begin to practice finding out how people differ and then begin to adopt different approaches based on your new 'evidence'.