

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MYERS-BRIGGS

So, you've been invited to participate in a Myers-Briggs session with your team or organization. You probably have questions that people in your office may or may not be able to answer, but they are questions that you still want answered. Hopefully this FAQ sheet will help and at the same time let you know what you can expect during the workshop.

## WHAT IS MYERS-BRIGGS?

It is a personality profiling theory that is based on the work of a mother and daughter team of Katherine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers, who based their work on the theories of Swiss psychologist Carl Jung. It contains 8 elements of core personality patterns, and even though we are capable of doing all 8, we have a natural preference for 4. These four preferences tell us how we prefer to: 1) get our energy and where our attention goes 2) take in information 3) make decisions and 4) structure our lives in the outside world. Myers-Briggs does NOT measure how much you have or how well you use these preferences, only what your preferences are and how clear you are about that. It's also NOT a test. There are no right or wrong answers. All personality types are valuable and have their own strengths and weaknesses associated with them and this concept is only a small part of what makes up our whole *personality*. It's also not a label, an excuse or justification... it's an explanation.

## WHAT IS THE MBTI®?

The acronym stands for *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* and it is the name of the 93-item questionnaire that is used to determine your *Reported Type*. Katherine & Isabel developed it in the 1940's in order to make Jung's theory of human personality understandable and useful in everyday life. It is regularly revised and updated.

## WHAT IS REPORTED TYPE, AND HOW MANY TYPES ARE THERE?

In the work that I do, we will talk about your Reported Type, your Best Guess Type and your Verified Type. Your reported type is the one that is determined based on the way you answered the questions when you completed the MBTI®. Your best guess type is the one that you will choose during the workshop based on discussions and activities that we do together. Your best guess type and your reported type may or may not agree with each other, and that's okay. As with any assessment tool of this nature, it's not an exact science, and anyone who tries to tell you that it is, is trying to pull the wool over your eyes. Your verified type is the one that you feel best represents the real you based on the discussions you have at the workshop or with your coach. Sometimes people leave the workshop not entirely convinced they've found their verified type, and that's perfectly fine.

## CAN I TRUST IT?

The MBTI® is the most trusted instrument of its type in the world. It's been around for a long time and is not something someone just cooked up in their kitchen. It is statistically valid and reliable and you can get more specific information about this by visiting [https://www.cpp.com/Pdfs/MBTI\\_FormM\\_Supp.pdf](https://www.cpp.com/Pdfs/MBTI_FormM_Supp.pdf). I'm sure this document will satisfy the statistical analyst in you, and you will even see it compared against other similar tools. As a side note, it was the only tool, and one of only two theories, taught in my MA(Leadership) program. The other theory was the Big Five, and if you visit this document, you'll see it mentioned. Reality is, when it comes to stuff like this, people are sceptical. And we should be. People selling snake oil have been around forever and it's natural to be sceptical about something we don't understand. All I ask is that you give it a chance. Learn about it and understand it, and then decide if it's something that helps you or not.

I find that often people are sceptical about Myers-Briggs because of past experiences either with this tool or with something similar. Reality is that Myers-Briggs has been around for a long time. Most people use it properly, but some don't. That's unfortunate because people can be led down the garden path and can experience all kinds of negative effects of unethical use of a tool like this. Everyone who is allowed to use the MBTI® has agreed to a set of ethical guidelines and all we can do is hope they follow them. **That's why you're being asked to attend a workshop with me.** Part of the ethical use of this tool is that each person must go through a debrief. In other words, each person should have a chance to get an explanation of what this all means, ask questions, and understand what it means to them personally. No one wants to be labelled and no one wants to face unpleasant consequences in their job because they've taken the risk and given personal information. It's the assumptions people make that cause a lot of the trouble, so I work hard to make sure we address that issue.

## CAN I TRUST YOU?

Yes, you can. I've been working with this tool for many years and I am a certified Master Practitioner. That means I've done some extra things to go above and beyond the regular consultant to ensure my knowledge, skill and ethic is at a high level.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MYERS-BRIGGS

## *THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS DONE ON THE INTERNET!?!*

Unfortunately we are in the era of Internet hackers and cyber-thieves. Well, I can't do anything about that, but my guess is that none of those people work for your organization. As much as can be expected, this is a secure tool. You will log onto a special website that has nothing to do with your organization – it's totally separate. You'll complete your questionnaire in the privacy of any place you choose that has Internet access. Then, your report will be printed by me and sealed in an envelope by me, where it will remain until I hand it directly to you when you come to the workshop. If there's an emergency and you can't make it to the workshop, I'll keep it for you for six months, after which I'll shred it. And before you ask, no, you can't just get the report and not have a debrief with me.



## *I'M STILL NOT SURE I WANT TO DO THIS. DO I HAVE TO?*

No, you don't. This is a free country and you don't have to do anything you don't want to do. But think about it. Your organization wouldn't ask you to do something they didn't believe was safe and reliable. Not only that, but you've been asked to participate because someone believes it can benefit you and the organization. If you insist, you can participate in the workshop without doing the MBTI®. Or, you can do the questionnaire and participate in the workshop but keep your MBTI® results private. I find that when people resist, it's not because of the tool or the process, but because they're worried about how it will be used and what the consequences might be. This is a sign of low trust and may be one of the reasons I've been invited to do the workshop.

## *HOW WILL IT BE USED?*

At the workshop you'll receive a sealed envelope with your printed report. No one at your organization has received a copy of it, or any information about what your report includes. At the workshop you'll go through a series of activities and/or discussions that will help you better understand your own personality and how it impacts your own life and the lives of those around you. While it is likely you are participating in this workshop in a corporate environment, there is applicability to your non-work life as well. You can use this understanding to improve relationships in your family, in your community, and anywhere you come in contact with people.

## *WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING?*

The greatest benefit of understanding personality theory is that you have a deeper understanding of yourself and how you interact with others, and that can help you be happier and more successful in life. In a work environment, it helps people understand individual personality type and its relationship to performance and team dynamics. It helps create an atmosphere of understanding, clear communication, and mutual respect. It helps improve individual and team performance and reduce workplace conflict.

On a personal level, this information can help you reduce your stress, learn faster and even help you with your career choices. Understanding your core personality preferences can also help you deal more effectively with change, and who these days isn't faced with having to deal with unrelenting change. It can also help you solve problems and make decisions.

## *I'VE DONE DISC OR SOMETHING ELSE. HOW DOES THIS COMPARE?*

There are a lot of tools like Myers-Briggs out there and they each have their own perspective and benefit. It's great if you've done other assessments and you can now add the MBTI® to the mix of your personal understanding and development. There are a lot of great tools out there and I would encourage you to try different things. Myers-Briggs doesn't answer everything; nothing does. Think of it like a carpenter's tool belt. There are lots of different types of tools that a carpenter uses, and each one is designed for a specific job. Same goes for assessments and tools of this nature. The best comparison between MBTI® and DISC I've heard is that DISC tells you what you do, MBTI® tells you why you do it. And that in a nutshell is why I choose to use the MBTI® instrument. When we understand the *whys* of human behaviour, it's easier to make use of that knowledge on a practical level. Myers-Briggs isn't about remembering labels or lists of things in boxes. It's about understanding human nature so we can all get along better, be happier and achieve what we want out of life.

## *WHAT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?*

I would be happy to answer any additional questions you have if you find your leader or organization is not able to answer them for you. Or maybe you'd just rather call me. Feel free to do so! Of course, the Internet is full of information about this topic. Here are a few websites you may find helpful.

[www.cpp.com](http://www.cpp.com)

Consulting Psychologists Press has exclusive publishing rights for the MBTI®

[www.psychometrics.com](http://www.psychometrics.com)

Psychometrics Canada is the only authorized Canadian distributor of the MBTI®

[www.myersbriggs.org](http://www.myersbriggs.org)

The Myers Briggs Foundation is the official website of the organization dedicated to the continuation of the work started by Katherine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers

[www.capt.org](http://www.capt.org)

Centre for the Application of Psychological Type is a US distributor of the MBTI®

