Dreamtime Personalities

Many of us are familiar with the work of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961). He noticed that much of our seemingly random behaviour is actually very predictable and follows certain patterns, based upon some basic differences in our personality. These differences have major influence on the way we behave in private and in groups, on the way we talk with ourselves and others and on our ways of looking at the world. Why, for instance, does one person prefer to be at home, reading books and reflecting on them, while another person desires to constantly be amongst people all the time, talking, interacting and having fun? Or why does one person have an interest in facts and figures and not in people, while another cares more about the consequences for the people involved in decision making? All this can be explained by examining some common personal characteristics, Jung stated.

Now Jung wasn't the first one to notice differences in people, and certainly not the last one to research the topic. The ancient Greeks already had a notion about different behaviour preferences in the time of Hippocrates (about 450 BC). And the Native American Indians had understanding of personal preferences too

A well-known contemporary version of personality type profiling is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Still used by millions all over the world for many purposes, the MBTI, as it is called, distinguishes between 16 different personality types, based upon a person's preference for focusing energy (introverted or extraverted), taking in information (sensing or intuition), coming to conclusions (thinking or judging) and for dealing with the outside world (perceiving or judging).

The Myers-Briggs system is very comprehensive and detailed. After taking the test, you are given a four-letter combination (for instance ESTP, or INFJ, which is mine), by which you can very accurately describe and predict how you live your life and look at your life!
Once a person knows which preferences are "theirs" it is easy to find out what sort of work that person will generally prefer, what working environment will be best, whether this person likes to be around people or not, what this person enjoys doing in his spare time, whether this person is more analytical or more a "feeler", etc. Liken it to writing with your right hand. If you are right handed, but your boss expects you to write with your left hand, you will be in trouble. Even worse would it be when he wants you to write with your left foot. You do not prefer that!

The Ancient Greeks and Native American Indians had a system of using four basic temperaments, patterns in our behaviour that describe and predict our behaviour. The Greeks called them Sanguine, Melancholic, Phlegmatic and Choleric. The Indians divided people in Buffalos, Eagles, Bears and Mice. Modern day scientist David Keirsey distinguished between the Idealist, the Rational, the Guardian and the Artisan.

In 2005 a new **Australian-made** model of typology came to the fore, formulated by Michael White. He designed his *Dreamtime Personalities* around four native Australian animals: the eagle, the dolphin, the wombat and the kangaroo.

White's type indicator was originally designed for use with Primary School children in Australia; later on a set of test questions was composed for use with High School children, which list can also be used for adults.

The **Eagles** (NT's, in Myers-Briggs) amongst us are the future-focused, strategic and analytical independent thinkers. They value knowledge, like models and theory, enjoy science and technology, and are seeking objective justice and fairness. They have a great need for mastery of any topic, and can sometimes be seen as slightly "cold-hearted", as more importance is given to competence than interpersonal values.

The **Dolphins** (NF's) are the imaginative, future-focused, authentic and empathetic catalysts for growth. They seek harmony, approval and cooperation, and they make their decisions mainly based on feelings and on the possible repercussions of any decision to other people. They enjoy helping others to reach their potential, and they trust their inspiration and intuition. They can be considered "dreamers", as personal values and future possibilities are considered higher than present competence.

The **Kangaroos** (SP's) are the "do-ers", the realistic and present-focused, impulsive hands-on and fun loving go-getters. They are spontaneous, love doing a variety of things, and are good at solving problems and negotiating. They want immediate feedback, and take feedback well. They are physically active, love to do things where movement is involved, and are optimistic in nature. Kangaroos can sometimes be regarded as "superficial"; they don't seem to really care about "tomorrow" or the deeper meaning behind life.

The **Wombats** (SJ's), in conclusion, are the past-focused, responsible and traditional, service-minded practical people. They love routine, predictability, and value authority and rules highly. They trust empirical data, as it is based on past experience, which they relate to. They value awards and prizes, and are often attracted to ceremonies. Wombats endeavour to maintain institutions and order, and will strive to keep things "the same". They can be regarded by the other types as "boring", because they don't enjoy change and "the unknown".

Now each and every one of us carries parts of every temperament. We are "all". On the other hand, it has been proven that we all have preferences. We prefer some aspects over others. It doesn't mean we don't use the non-preferred aspects. It only means that if we have the choice, we will probably prefer our most "natural" strength (like using one dominant hand for writing).