

APPENDIX 3: JUNG'S THEORY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPES

Jung's Theory Of Psychological Types

As well as discovering such a fertile ground for understanding my own unusual and often “highly-charged” inner experiences and seeing that they could sometimes be leading beyond the purely subjective, I also learnt more about myself and other people, at a more concrete level, from Jung’s “Theory of Psychological Types”. This came about when I spent a morning on a Heads Management Course on “The Myers-Briggs Indicator Test”. This, apparently, was a development of Jung’s theories about personality types and was being used extensively at the time for managers and such like all over Europe and America. We learnt from this course something about what it was like to be the personality-types we were and something about the way we would be likely to react to other personality-types and they to us. In management terms this could be very useful as explaining some of the so-called “personality clashes” that we all encountered, helping us to be prepared for them, in fact and, more, it could help us to select a team of people with varying strengths and gifts which could balance and give a more complete perspective on things to do with our work.

I learnt that I was an “Introverted Intuitive Thinker” which meant I was more interested in the inner world than the outer and that I was likely to be excited more by *ideas* than things. Yes, I could certainly agree with that. I would also have a tendency to go for “grand theories” (like these Jungian ones?) I needed time on my own (introverts are energised by Solitude; extraverts by people and actions in the world); I liked tidiness and order and was good at organising things logically. My type would have trouble with the world and was not very practical (I did not like dealing with ordinary worldly necessities-food, money etc and D.I.Y., well!!!) Being impractical and having difficulties in adapting to the world meant that I could easily be “exploited” especially by a “worldly woman” (Did the palmist not say that- goodness had he been reading Jung?!) Successful introverted thinkers frequently have someone to look after worldly things for them (oh, if only!) Intuitives have a “nose for the future and can usually sniff out new trends before they become apparent to most people.”(

I.J.p.101) So, you better listen to my ideas in this book, eh? They might truly be of the future!! The people that I would tend to have most trouble with were those with opposite traits to myself.

Extraverts, especially “extraverted sensation types,” with their orientation out to the world rather than to ideas, would give me the most trouble and I them. Sensation is seen as the opposite of intuition just as extravert is the opposite of introvert. Introverted sensation types are the ultimate realists firmly based in this world of physical things; they never tire of things like physical data but will soon tire of talk about ideas and, worse for my type, they will tend to dismiss intuition as complete nonsense. They are able to accept the world as it is and adjust calmly and easily to it in a way that introverted intuitives can’t. They make good computer programmers, for example! Now I think you can see that for a manager, say, to have a team of only one personality type could be seriously limiting to his business. For me, in my work at school, it was said even by those who knew very little, if anything, of Jung, that a successful Head would need a Deputy who “balanced” his own qualities. And I think that is absolutely true. So, we looked for a Deputy who was more “sensate” than me because that person would see the school physical environment with a keener eye than me and, hopefully, too, would be more careful and concerned about how to implement practically some of my “big ideas” (I soon got bored with that bit!) Hopefully, too, that person, more grounded in physical reality, would be a good balance to my rather butterfly mind tending to flit from one new idea to another. A good balance to me would then make it easier for things to get done and physically completed! As it was my new Deputy Head fulfilled this role brilliantly and after some initial struggle learnt just how to handle me, so we worked very successfully- and with humour- together.

More than this, though, Jung believed that each type should work to develop its own “inferior function” (its opposite) because that tends to become unconscious through lack of use.

“Our inferior function thus *becomes* our gateway to the unconscious and the unconscious is the source of everything that is magical and wonderful in life.”
(I.J.p78)

We also need to do this in order to grow into wholeness and balance, which is the whole aim of Jung’s path of individuation. So for me, as an intuitive thinker, I need to look especially at integrating the sensate and the feeling functions. Thinking can tell us what something means but it is the feeling function that tells what it is *worth* i.e. that evaluates it. In our information-conscious culture we can often seem to be drowning in information: what the feeling function does is to prioritise it and sort out what is really important in it. Thinking deals with black and whites; feeling with the grey areas that thinking cannot cope with (the “fuzziness of life”). Feeling is about *values*. I am also always going to have trouble with the physical realities of life but to Jung it is extremely important that I, as an introvert, continue to actually experience the outer world as it is and not from “behind a screen of inner experience”(I.J.p.87). And, of course, this has been the exact advice given to me by the latihan- no going to the forests or mountains for me! So, as well as giving me practical guidance for my professional –and other- relationships, Jung once again has given confirmation to, and understanding of, my latihan experience.