

Welcome to *Self*, a podcast where you join me, Jacob Craig, as I research the areas of self-improvement and self-discovery. I am a researcher and author and my mission with this podcast is to simply share what I am learning in hopes you get as much value as I do. This podcast covers several topics, including health, fitness, motivation, personality types, self-worth, and more so that we can develop ourselves into the person we strive to be and reach new heights both personally and professionally.

This episode will be covering the personality assessment that was at the top of Ray Dalio's list in *Principles* when he talked about just how important it is to get at what people are like when working with them. That test is the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator, or the MBTI for short. The benefits of using assessments like the MBTI extend far past recruiting – I, for instance, found it valuable knowing my own strengths and weaknesses so that I can know what assignments I perform best at and work on my blind spots and weak points. I also found the results very interesting and you'll see why!

On that note, let's get started...

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I feel like all of us have had times where we wonder if we are in the right career. I want you to go back to when you ended high school and had to make a decision on what you wanted to do after that. So much weight is on that decision and it is not any easy one for most of us.

When I graduated high school, I thought that I wanted to be an app or software developer so I went into Computer Science because I had done some computer coding in a C++, did well, and enjoyed learning basic coding and the logic behind it.

...Well, I couldn't have been more wrong. The program I was in wasn't for me – there was no guidance from the professors, no book to follow, and the classmates I had didn't seem to care to help out even going to afterhours sessions and they also seemed to know far more coming in than I possibly could have.

In a way, all of this was a blessing. I realized that I didn't care to have a job working in a typical office workspace, I needed the opportunity to do some work outdoors. So, after talking to friends in different majors, I took my interest in engineering and construction and decided to switch my major to Civil Engineering.

I'm far more fortunate than most. Especially nowadays, during COVID where so many students are not in dorms and most of their classes and meetings with their counselors are online, I don't know what I would have done if I were in that situation, not being able to talk to students in different majors.

Here is a statistic that should scare you – Educationdata.org states that 40% of college undergraduate students in the US drop out. 40%! And 30% of this is during their freshman year. I understand there are other reasons but I have to imagine a large portion of this is due to the struggle with grades as well as the question if their major is right for them.

I have had the pleasure of working with a nonprofit organization called LIT Conversations, where individuals working in various fields talk to high school students about the opportunities in different career paths so that they can make an educated decision. I love what they are doing, plan to talk with more students about my work as a Civil Engineer and Author, and think we absolutely need more programs like this in the US. The more we can do to bring that statistic down, the better our country will be since those students would have a higher potential than they would otherwise and they would also be closer to living their purpose.

A fantastic resource that students can use and I would recommend for anyone, not just students, is personality assessments. One of, if not the most popular and well-acclaimed is the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator, or the MBTI. And after reading up on it and using the assessment myself, I can see why it is such a great resource.

In this episode, I will break down what the assessment is like and walk you through so that you can get a sense of what type you are and the benefits of knowing that. I'll not only be referencing the test itself but also Ray Dalio's book *Principles* (which was reviewed in the previous episode) and *Do What You Are* by Paul & Kelly Tieger and Barbara Barron. *Do What You Are* is a book mainly geared towards those who are thinking of changing careers to find something more suiting but it can also be used to understand your strengths and weaknesses. *Do What You Are* was originally published in 1992 and released again in 2021, and it provides great insight as to what careers are booming and are projected to continue to boom. It explains the MBTI extensively, assists you with figuring out your type, and then describes each type in great detail and provides career suggestions that suit each personality type based on the 1 million + people they have helped in the past.

To give a brief history on the assessment, the research and develop started by Katharine Briggs who then passed it on to her daughter, Isabel Briggs-Meyers. Katharine and Isabel lived in Washington D.C. and spent 20 years before developing the first Type Indicator assessment in 1943. The core of their research was based on the studies of Carl Jung, a Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist who founded

analytic psychology. Carl Jung was a disciple of Sigmund Freud but disagreed with Freud's stress on the importance of sexuality and instead focused on archetypes, dream analysis, nature, the unconscious mind and what he called the "collective unconscious." I plan to do some more research on Carl Jung and report back in a future episode – some of his most admired works include:

1. *Man and His Symbols*
2. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*
3. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*
4. *The Red Book*

In 1921, Jung wrote a book titled *Psychological Types*, and when it was translated to English in 1923, Katharine Briggs (who had already been studying the different types of personalities) realized that Jung had already figured out the core dimensions that set people apart.

So, now I'll begin to break down the test and as I go through this, I will reference a few Figures I've created to help explain further and provide insight on all of the types. To find those Figures, simply go to my blog at [www.twelvepaths.com](http://www.twelvepaths.com) and go to the blog post that shares the title of this episode.

Essentially, the MBTI breaks personality type into four dimensions. They call them dimensions because they are spectrums or scales. Nobody is 100% on one side of the spectrum or the other and every day we use both sides depending on the situations we're placed in and our nature.

As I describe these four dimensions, consider which side of the dimension you fall under. Again, it may just be slightly one way but think deep about your natural inclinations.

The first dimension is between Extraverted and Introverted. If you are more extraverted, typically you thrive in public situations – you gain energy by being around others and find being alone draining. You also like to talk through ideas that you have with others. If you are introverted, typically you thrive in your alone time – you get drained easily when you are around others, especially people you don't know, and gain energy by being alone. You also like to think deeply before you communicate.

If you are Extraverted, note that with the capital letter E and if you are Introverted, note that with the capital letter I.

The second dimension is between Sensing and Intuitive. For this, think about the things you usually notice. Sensors typically look at the facts versus someone who is intuitive reads between the lines and rather than using their senses, interprets with their gut feelings. Consider if you are in a meeting – are

you paying more attention to the content that is being presented or things like moods and facial expressions? Typically, those who are sensing are detail-oriented and pay more attention to the past and present while those who are intuitive are creative and pay more attention to the future.

If you are Sensing, note that with a capital letter S and if you are an Intuitive, note that with a capital letter N.

The third dimension is between Thinking and Feeling. For this, consider how you typically make decisions. If you are a thinker, you make decisions strictly based on logic versus if you are a feeler, you make decisions based on your values. Thinkers work to make the objective and analytical decision while feelers work to make the decision they care about most or what they feel is right.

If you are a Thinker, note that with a capital letter T and if you are a Feeler, note that with a capital letter F.

The fourth and last dimension is between Judging and Perceiving. Judgers typically prefer structure while perceivers prefer spontaneity. Think of when you go on a trip: judgers prefer everything be scheduled or while perceivers prefer to go with the flow. You can also think of the condition of your desk or your car. Judgers typically have everything nice and orderly while perceivers typically have things scattered about but swear they can find anything if they had to search for it.

If you are a Judger, note that with a capital letter J and if you are a Perceiver, note that with a capital letter P.

Now take these four letters and put them together. There are a total of 16 different combinations and therefore Types and since I am an Introverted Sensing Thinking Perceiver, my Type is ISTP.

I want to make a note here that the actual MBTI online assessment and the book I described earlier, *Do What You Are*, go into far more detail than I have here so if you'd like to make sure your resulting Type is accurate, then I highly recommend that you use one of those resources. There are also many other benefits to those resources as well so, regardless I think you should check at least one of them out.

The next part of this episode will make much more sense and be much more beneficial if you visit my blog, [www.twelvepaths.com](http://www.twelvepaths.com), find the post associated with this episode and take a look at Figure 2.

In this Figure, I've gone ahead and broken down each of the 16 types into what are called the Dominant, Auxiliary, Tertiary, and Inferior functions.

These all consist of the two inner dimensions (Intuitive, Sensing, Thinking, and Feeling) and depend on your Type. The way the Dominant, Auxiliary, Tertiary, and Inferior functions are typically described is with a car. The driver of the car is your Dominant function, in the passenger seat is your Auxiliary function, and in the back there is a kid (your tertiary function) and a toddler (your inferior function). You can also just think of them as your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> functions.

These functions fall in rank of what your primary cognitive functions are and really highlight your strengths and weaknesses. For instance, since my Dominant or 1<sup>st</sup> function as an ISTP is Thinking, my biggest strength, is how good I am at thinking logical and weighing evidence. My Inferior or my 4<sup>th</sup> function, my biggest weakness, is Feeling so I sometimes can be seen as cold or heartless since I won't take into account peoples' values or feelings. At the bottom-left of Figure 2, you'll see the biggest strengths and weaknesses you have, based on your dominant function.

If you are the opposite from me, an ENFJ, you are the complete opposite with your dominant function being Feeling and your Inferior being Thinking. This means that your biggest strengths are that you are empathetic and compassionate and your biggest weakness is that you can be seen as overemotional.

*Do What You Are* gives some very interesting insights into how these functions develop over time. They state that from ages 0-6, it is very difficult to distinguish a Type preference since their personalities are just developing and so are their communication skills. Between ages 6 and 12, you can expect to start to see the dominant function shine through. They say that it is crucial for parents and teachers to encourage children use this function since it is the foundation of their natural strengths and so it strengthens their confidence and capability. From ages 12-25, the auxiliary function starts to strengthen in order to balance the dominant function. By age 25, our personality types are distinct and it is quite clear what our strengths (or our dominant and auxiliary functions) are and what our weaknesses (or our tertiary and inferior functions) are.

To me, this is where the development process gets very interesting. They go on to say that between ages 25 and 50, we start to develop your 3<sup>rd</sup> or Tertiary function. They state that this is because of a mid-life crisis sense and/or an increase in the realization that life is short and so we search for a challenge. This is so interesting to me because right around the age of 25, I really did start to develop what would be my tertiary function – my intuition by working on creative projects like writing, publishing, starting my own small businesses, educating myself on innovation, and making goal-setting a part of my life which shows how I think of the future more when making decisions. Lately, one of my good friends called me a “creative” and I've found it very beneficial to strengthen this area of my life. It's stated in *Do What You Are* that this stage hits at different ages for different people and it usually is not until later in

this age range of 25 to 50 but by strengthening your tertiary function, you become more competent in your abilities and can also find life more enjoyable.

Finally, we typically are drawn to start developing our 4<sup>th</sup> or inferior functions after we have reached age 50. If we have put in the work and did a decent job developing all of these functions, our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, or dominant and auxiliary, functions are still our greatest strengths but the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> can develop to where they are less of a challenge for us and we can be much more well-rounded.

So, by figuring out your type and using Figure 2 in my blog post, you can find out what your dominant, auxiliary, tertiary, and inferior functions are so that you can use your strengths more often and get to work improving your weaknesses.

If you do happen to be a student listening to this or someone looking to make a career change, this can really help you describe yourself on a resume and in an interview and, if you reflect, you will likely remember situations that really show off your strengths to use as examples.

There are many things that the MBTI assessment and *Do What You Are* include that I can't provide in this podcast episode. For instance, after taking the MBTI, they provide you with training guides on your strengths and weaknesses – the power of knowing them, what you can do to improve, and specific tips to help you with motivation, improving relationships, reducing stress, and building confidence. And *Do What You Are* has a chapter designated toward each type so that you can confirm which type suits you best, hear examples of people who have found satisfying lifestyles that fit their personalities, learn/confirm the aspects of a career you need in order to feel satisfied, details so that you can better understand your strengths and weaknesses, and what career paths typically complement your personality type the most.

With all of that, I can't share it all but I'll share traits that really connect with who I am, tips that it provided me that I find helpful, and just interesting things that stuck out to me from both the MBTI and *Do What You Are* based on the fact that my Type is an ISTP.

By far, the biggest trait that I connect with shows up in the first line of the ISTP Description Report that I received from the MBTI, stating "ISTPs carefully observe what is going on around them." I've noticed personally that I am far more observant than most people. I feel a need to take in everything that's happening around me and be aware of literally everything. This trait stands out and doesn't seem to really relate to any of the other characteristics so it is interesting to think of why that is but I really can't say.

Other traits that are 100% me that are described both in *Do What You Are* and the MBTI report of ISTPs are:

1. ISTPs tend to be quiet, reserved, tough to read, and only comfortable socially with their closest friends. As much as you may not think it because I have a podcast and I've done livestreaming, and I do my best to connect with people who I can be of service to, I will painfully admit that this is me. I wish I could be more comfortable in more situations but knowing that this is a common trait for ISTPs does ease my mind a bit. These are things that I am always trying to work on but I do realize there are some serious benefits to being introverted as well. If anyone is an introvert and wants to learn more about yourself or even if you're an extravert and want to understand the brains of introverted people more, I HIGHLY recommend the book *Quiet* by Susan Cain. I will put a link in the show notes – you won't regret picking up this book or purchasing the audiobook and listening.
2. ISTPs are known to be the most adventurous and willing to take risks. This is an interesting combination for someone who is a logical thinker but it absolutely speaks true to me. Skydiving is on my bucket list and I love thrill rides and taking calculated risks.
3. Something that ISTPs value most is autonomy or independence. This rings true for me both at work and in my relationships. When I gauge people on how much I respect and admire them, the number one thing I look at is how independent they are. I've noticed that independence usually comes with intelligence and confidence. And on a personal work level, I think it's important for me to have a boss/manager who can lead me in the right direction but allows me to work independently and use the skills that I've acquired in order to learn and grow.

Some other things that *Do What You Are* states that ISTPs require for job satisfaction that are accurate for me are that:

#1. I need a job that provides a substantial amount of enjoyment and is continually challenging.

#2. I need a job to be fun and active, where I can frequently be out of the office and outdoors.

And #3. I need to be able to have time to pursue my interests and hobbies. And this speaks to me because if I'm demanded to work 60-70 hours and have no time to myself or with my family, I can only do that for so long before I burn out. Working 40-50 hours allows me to work on things on the side like this podcast, which is very important to me.

An interesting thing to point out is that when *Do What You Are* gave recommendations on career paths that appeal to ISTPs most, Civil Engineer and Construction Worker were two that were mentioned. And that's me, I am a Civil Engineer/Construction Manager and I thoroughly enjoy my job, especially the Construction Management. It is continually challenging, enjoyable, allows me to work independently and use a number of different skills, and also requires me to act logically, despite how the contractor might feel about situations.

Other career paths that I feel I would be good at that were recommended by *Do What You Are* are: Private Investigator/Detective, Emergency Medical Technician (or an EMT), Robotics Engineer, and a Coach/Trainer. It is wild how different these careers are but how I can see myself in any of these roles.

As for the MBTI, I really like the advice that it gave me based on my blind spots. It stated that in order to improve my relationships, I should:

1. Stop avoiding disagreement because I find the emotional side to them uncomfortable. Many times I stop disagreeing because I see the logical side of it and believe it is pointless to continue. But that is inconsiderate to the other person.
2. Prompt people to tell you about situations and listen to their responses while showing interest in things that are important to them. I am often told in closer relationships that I act like I don't care enough about things and this is a way I can improve that weak spot.
3. Work on expressing appreciation in both personal and work relationships, which I agree is something I can always improve.

The MBTI also gave me some helpful advice on reducing stress, including:

1. If stressed, I should talk to someone. It helps to share with people so they can see my perspective and I can see theirs to see if it is something worth stressing about and what I should do to resolve it.
2. When in stressful situations, I should take notes and reflect on it, then plan what I can do differently next time. This is wonderful advice which I've found helpful and if you recall Ray Dalio's Pain Button app that was described in the previous episode, this is exactly what it forces you to do. This is something I feel all of us can improve on because we all deal with stressful situations and it is important we know how to deal with stress well.

So, I know this has been a lot of information, this episode is twice the length I planned for it to be but I hope you can see just how valuable these tools can be in order to understand yourself and others better.

To show just how versatile of a tool this is, I will wrap up with a quote from *Do What You Are*:

"We've used personality type to: help managers motivate and communicate with their employees, teachers to reach very different types of students, work teams to understand their strengths and blind spots and to communicate more productively, and (of course) we've used it to train thousands of career counsellors and outplacement consultants."

The authors of this book have also written other books, geared to showing how personality type can help us as parents, with our significant others, and to speed-read people so we can change the way we look at ourselves and others.

I appreciate you for listening, hope that you found this episode valuable, and hope you will continue this journey with me as I continue my research in the worlds of self-improvement and self-discovery because I have some exciting episodes planned for you that are coming up!

If you would like to check out any of the resources mentioned in this episode, be sure to check the show notes. It's all there.

Thank you, I hope you have an awesome day – let's go crush it and think about what we can do to be just a bit better than yesterday.

Alright, I'm out.