

MBTI – types in coaching

By Angus McLeod, PhD

Anne Robinson of People Developments facilitated a fun event looking at Meyers-Briggs preference types and their influence on the coaching dynamic. Someone must have told Anne that we like to play and have fun because she brought lengths of twine and coloured glasses in red and blue!

Psychological type is a theory developed by Carl Jung to explain some apparently random differences in people's behaviour. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator, is designed to make Jung's theory understandable and useful in everyday life. It gives ideas of eight basic preferences (rather than our skill set) around four main dimensions.

The preferences shed light on how we prefer to gather information from the world, make decisions; whether we get our energy from within (or from the outside world) and the so-called 'life style' factors; how we perceive or make judgements.

Like all models, MBTI is neither complete or true. It presents one of many realities with which to learn and move forward. Within the scope of coaching we explored the differences in rapport between coach and coachee. We worked with people of similar and different types in the 'information gathering' and 'deciding' dimensions which are the prime 'decision making' factors. This exercise gave many of us new insights into our individual weaknesses and strengths, especially where NLP had painted only some of the picture.

We were fortunate in having a considerable amount of expertise in the room in both MBTI and NLP. The general consensus is that although there are apparent overlaps between NLP (and particularly metaprogrammes) and MB types, actually the links do not fully integrate. Both models of the world have their independent uses but are not mutually coherent. This underlines my widely-shared philosophy about the importance of multiple skills in coaching. Those who read me will also know that I value flexibility highly, and this event further underlined the importance of flexibility in the context of coaching. Anne recognises this, and the work we did with the MBTI decision factors showed that flexibility to work away from our natural preferences is critically important to the excellent coach. If you wish to contact Anne, drop one of us a line, as below.

The structure of meetings is to have a visiting guest who will provide some input to coaching which may or may not be NLP. We also like to include practical work and fun learning which can be facilitated by the guest or the organisers. If you are interested to join the group (for free) and/or interested to facilitate, then do please contact Steve Breibart or Angus McLeod as below. We are Not-for-Profit and charge a basic rate for all our events. The next meeting is on the 3rd May in Bray and will be led by Lynne Kerry of Vievolve. The subject will be 'Aligning The Inner Coach'. Cheques for £17.50 payable to Steve Breibart are needed now to reserve a place. Contact details below. We will have a full day meeting on September 6th with Sir John Whitmore and David Hemery. Provisional price (at cost) is £150. Better book now!

Angus McLeod