

Cognitive Functions 101

Intro to the 8 functions

Cognitive Functions = Cognitive functions or processes are the mental activities of the mind involved in acquiring, processing, storing, and using information.

This all started in the 1920's with Carl Jung's theory of cognitive functions. He identified four of them, which he labeled as sensation, intuition, thinking, and feeling. He asserted that everyone would have both a primary function and a supporting or auxiliary function and that understanding each would reveal the secrets of how each person absorbed and processed information and used it to evaluate options and make decisions.

Then in the 1940's Isabell Briggs Myers and her mother Katharine Briggs begin developing the Meyers-Briggs Type indicator based on Carl Jung's work on cognitive functions

The point was to increase understanding the way you gather information and make decisions based on the information gathered.

The 4 Cognitive Functions

- S = Sensing
- N = Intuition
- T = Thinking
- F = Feeling

The 2 Polarities

- I = Introverted
- E = Extroverted
 - It does not refer to social behavior like being shy or outgoing
- The direction we focus and express our energy and attention - added by Meyers-Briggs
- The MBTI's **E vs. I** distinction focuses on:
 - **The source of energy** - where you receive energy from and where you direct your energy
 - **Attention** - where your focus is drawn and where you direct your focus

The 2 Priorities

- P = Perceiving - How you gather information about yourself or the world around you
- J = Judging - The filter that you use to make decisions based on the information gathered

The 8 Cognitive Functions with their corresponding Polarities

- Se Extroverted Sensing
- Si Introverted Sensing
- Ne Extroverted Intuition
- Ni Introverted Intuition
- Te Extroverted Thinking
- Ti Introverted Thinking
- Fe Extroverted Feeling
- Fi Introverted Feeling

The 4 Cognitive Functions – What are they?

▪ The 2 Perceiving Functions – Information gathering

○ S = Sensing

- Experiencing through the 5 senses
- Sensing (S) types gather information by focusing on current reality, concrete observable facts, tangible / practical details, and the reality of the present moment as personally experienced
- Concrete and literal: They take information literally and focus on what can be perceived through their five senses.
- Practical and realistic: Sensors are generally more practical and value tried-and-tested methods over experimental concepts.
- Detail-oriented: They notice minor changes and appreciate details, preferring to see immediate results.

○ N = Intuition

- Intuitive (N) types gather information by focusing on abstract concepts, ideas, patterns, meanings, future possibilities, and what that means potentially of the future
- Speculative – uses connecting the dots, pattern recognition, reading behind the curtain to answer questions like where could this be going? Where did this come from?
- Uses sensing data to intuit – can be personally sensed/experienced or sensed/experienced by someone else.
- Abstract and imaginative: They are comfortable with symbolic language and enjoy theorizing for the sake of it, even if it's not grounded in the current reality.
- Big picture thinking: Intuitives tend to see the bigger picture, connecting ideas and exploring new concepts.
- Experimental and future-oriented: They are often excited by new, untested ideas and can be more engaged with the future rather than the present.

○ Key Difference between N & S: How Information is Gathered

- The primary difference lies in the process of perceiving information. Sensors use their direct sensory experience to gather data, grounding themselves in the "what is". Intuitives use their "sixth sense" to grasp underlying connections, interpret potential, and focus on "what could be?"

- The 2 Judging Functions – How decisions are made
 - T = Thinking
 - A natural inclination to use logical, reason, objective, and rational approaches to analyze information and make choices
 - Prioritizes facts, evidence, and a rational, systematic approach.
 - They tend to detach from personal emotions to eliminate bias in decision-making.
 - They value clarity, precision, and structured communication
 - F = Feeling
 - A preference for making decisions based on personal subjective values, emotions, empathy, and the impact on people, aiming for harmony and understanding
 - Value-Driven: Decisions are guided by core personal values and principles.
 - People-Focused: There is a strong emphasis on maintaining interpersonal harmony and ensuring everyone feels valued.
 - Emotionally Attuned: Feelers are sensitive to emotional nuances and subtleties in themselves and others.
 - Qualitative Approach: They may prefer a "colorful" or qualitative approach to situations, rather than purely logical or objective criteria.
 - Caregiving Tendencies: Feelers often have a natural inclination towards nurturing and caregiving.
 - Feeling (F) vs. Thinking (T):
 - Decision-Making: While Thinkers (T) make decisions based on impersonal logic and cause-and-effect, Feelers (F) base their decisions on their internal value system and the feelings of those involved.
 - Focus: Feelers focus on people, harmony, and what is morally "right," whereas Thinkers focus on logic, facts, and what is functionally correct.
 - Empathy: Feelers have a deeper awareness of emotions and are often seen as more empathetic and understanding of others

The 8 Cognitive Functions Polarities

- Se = Extroverted Sensing – “EXPERIENCING”
 - Like to take in as much sensory information as possible; this makes them very detail-oriented and observant of the world around them.
 - Like to explore and have new experiences.
 - Lives in the moment
 - Relishes new experiences & challenges
 - Attunes to, is receptive of concrete events & opportunities for action
 - Most reference points come from their current experiences
 - Struggles with any vision of the future that doesn’t match their current experiences
- Si = Introverted Sensing – “STABILIZING THRU EXPERIENCE”
 - Stabilizes beliefs and behavior by drawing on past experience & past learning
 - Embraces the tried and true
 - Rely on past experiences to understand present circumstances
 - “Now” is expected to match past experiences
 - Often re-experience the experiences of the past in the moment
 - Tend to think or feel inwardly and in patterns
 - Tend to like traditions and can have more challenges with triggerable traumas
 - Si trusts what it knows. And what it knows is what it recalls from past experience—from memories, traditions, affiliations, established routines, etc.
 - Most reference points come from their past experiences
 - Struggles with any vision of the future that doesn’t match their past experiences

○ Ne = Extroverted Intuition - IDEATING

- Broadly explores and envisions many ideas, concepts, connections and possibilities; often at the same time
- Takes an initial premise and then extrapolating and brainstorming from there Branches outwards generating possibilities, expansive in nature, gets comfort from options and resists being restricted and limited
- Brainstormer – Handles ideas in a creative, collaborative (or individual) way for generating a large volume of ideas in response to a specific problem or prompt, emphasizing quantity over quality during the initial idea generation phase. Key principles include suspending judgment and criticism, encouraging wild or outlandish ideas, and allowing for participants to build on each other's thoughts in a relaxed environment to find innovative solutions
- Open; curious; creative
- Usually strong communicators
- More readily notice patterns in the events and people around them
- More volume of subjects of its curiosity and less depth and breadth than Ni
- They can also articulate these patterns and ideas to others, often making them compelling and trusted figures

○ Ni = Introverted Intuition - SEEING

- Takes many different data points and finding the underlying commonalities between them, often drawing the line of best fit between data points, finding connections between seemingly unrelated things – for them it is mainly about reducing complexity, simplifies things, getting to answers and conclusions, gains comfort from settling on a conclusion
- Generates convergent insights & impressions
 - Convergent = Finds a single, best solution to a problem or question by narrowing down options and evaluating them against logical criteria
- Notices, realizes and understands things quickly
- Penetrates to discern foundational causes and patterns
- Tend to explore a few ideas, concepts, possibilities at the same time
- Use instincts to navigate the world
- Foresight, insight, visionary – tends to form a holistic impression and gain insight into situations
- Less volume of subjects of its curiosity and more depth and breadth than Ne
- Tend to focus inwardly and might find it challenging to articulate the reasons for decisions

- Te = Extroverted Thinking – RATIONAL STRUCTURING
 - Rationally structures & organizes ideas, things and processes
 - Consults established facts & approaches in decision-making
 - Rely heavily on reason and research to make informed decisions
 - Tend to set emotions aside and use logic allowing them to be persuasive
- Ti = Introverted Thinking – LOGICAL REASONING
 - Checks everything against inner logical standard; prefers autonomy in projects, problem-solving and decision making
 - Introverted thinkers are analytical
 - Tend to be quiet ponderers with a belief system based on personal experiences, previous insights, and discoveries
- Fe = Extroverted Feeling - CONNECTING
 - Emotionally connects with others; communicative, offering guidance & feedback; facilitates morale & consensus; desires group harmony
 - Cultural norms and societal mores dictate extraverted feelers' belief systems
 - Social mores are the deeply ingrained customs, behaviors, and conventions of a specific culture or group that are considered essential to its moral and ethical framework. They represent widely held beliefs about what is right and wrong, and violating them often results in serious social disapproval or other negative consequences, such as being ostracized from the community
 - Show empathy and feel others' joy and pain with excellent acuity
 - Tend to make decisions based on what feels suitable for the group & the current moment
 - Use their beliefs to brainstorm and often exhibit great sensitivity and care for others
- Fi = Introverted Feeling - VALUING
 - Reflects on personal feelings and values
 - Champions authenticity and individuality
 - Considers importance and worth; reviews for incongruity; evaluates something based on the truths on which it is based; clarifies values to achieve accord; decides if something is of significance and worth standing up for.

The 2 Priorities

- P = Perceiving
 - How you gather information about yourself or the world around you
 - The lens through which you view yourself or the world
 - The Perceiving Functions are N (intuition) and S (sensing)
 - Prefers a flexible and spontaneous approach to the world
 - Prefers to be open to new experiences, adapts well to change, and prefers to keep their options open rather than making premature decisions or adhering to strict plans
 - Desires large amounts of information to use in making decisions
 - Key characteristics of a Perceiving (P) preference
 - Flexibility and Adaptability:
 - P types are known for their ability to adjust to new circumstances and "go with the flow".
 - Spontaneity: They enjoy being spontaneous and prefer to react to challenges as they arise rather than strictly adhering to pre-made plans.
 - Openness: Perceivers tend to be open-minded, responsive to new information, and comfortable with uncertainty.
 - Information-Gathering: They often prioritize gathering more information and exploring various options before committing to a decision.
 - Working Towards Deadlines: Instead of working far in advance, P types might work closer to deadlines, improvising and finding alternatives as needed
- The “P” – Figuring Things
 - People with the Perceiving (P) trait are much more flexible when it comes to dealing with unexpected challenges. This flexibility helps them seize unexpected opportunities as well. These personality types tend to react to their environments rather than try to control them, helping them to make their own luck in whatever the world delivers. People with this trait hold that life is full of possibilities.
 - All this opportunism can lead to impulsive decision-making, though. At the same time, they can be overwhelmed by the sheer number of options on their radar. People with the Perceiving personality trait can be slow to commit to something because of uncertainty or the potential of everything else. If they don't moderate this trait, indecision or a lack of conviction can be a problem. They can seem unfocused. What was important to them one week may be forgotten the next.
 - Despite those concerns, this personality trait can offer a great deal of creativity and productivity. Theirs is almost a stream of consciousness quality. In many ways, it's like these types are constantly brainstorming as their minds create a web of options. This can be a powerful tool for finding solutions. And if they aren't satisfied with something in their lives, it's easier for them to let go of it and choose something else. This can lead to serial passions that keep “Perceiving” individuals stimulated as they explore the buffet of choices always before them.

- J = Judging
 - The filter that you use to make decisions
 - The Judging Functions are T (thinking) and F (feeling)
 - Prefers being organized and decisive
 - Feels most comfortable when the course ahead is well-marked
 - Key characteristics of a Judging (J) preference:
 - Preference for order and structure: Prefers a well-organized life with clear plans and schedules.
 - Decisive: Are inclined to make decisions quickly and stick with them.
 - Goal-oriented: Focuses on setting specific goals and seeing them through to completion.
 - Sense of control: Gains a feeling of control by managing their life in an orderly way.
 - Valuing clarity and closure: Appreciates a defined path and prefers to have tasks finalized.
- The “J” - Making Things as They Ought to Be
 - People with the Judging (J) personality trait feel most comfortable when the course ahead is well-marked. They would rather come up with five backup plans than deal with events as they come. Preferring to consider their options ahead of time, personality types with this trait prefer clarity and closure, sticking with the plan rather than going with the flow. It’s as if Judging types always keep a mental checklist. When they cross something off their list – or even start an item on their list – they consider it complete and not open to reconsideration.
 - The downside is, if they take this too far, those with the Judging trait sometimes come across as rigid. However, most are not unreasonably stubborn. It’s important to remember their need for structure always is a preference and reality often calls on them to respond in unforeseen ways. Too many surprises in a row can leave these personality types frustrated and stressed. When this happens, they can still be relied on to develop a plan (and a contingency plan), but however well they handle the unexpected, they rarely enjoy it.
 - Judging individuals tend to have a strong work ethic, putting their duties and responsibilities above everything else. To them, rules, laws, and standards are the key to success. They can be too dependent on these measures, whether applied to themselves or others. But the intent is almost always one of fairness and results.
- How J differs from P (Perceiving)
 - J types (Judgers) prefer to make decisions and finalize plans, which is how they interact with the external world.
 - P types (Perceivers), in contrast, prefer to stay open to new information and keep options available, showing flexibility and adaptability.

Decoding the MBTI letters

- The first letter indicates the polarity of your dominant function - Extroverted or Introverted
- The fourth letter indicates which of your 2 functions is expressed through extroversion
- The second letter is your perceiving function
- The third letter is your judging function
- The second and third letters are understood through the 1st and 4th
- The 4 letter MBTI code only deals directly with 2 of the 8 cognitive functions the Dominant and Auxiliary

Let's decode ENTP

- E = Extroverted = Dominant will be the extroverted function
- P = Perceiving = the perceiving function is extroverted
- N = Ne or extroverted intuition
- T = Ti or introverted thinking

Let's decode ISFJ

- I = Introverted = Dominant function will be the introverted function
- J = Judging = the judging function is extroverted
- S = Si or introverted sensing
- F = Fe or extroverted feeling

Let's decode ENTJ

- E = Extroverted = Dominant will be the extroverted function
- J = Judging = the judging function is extroverted
- T = Te or extroverted thinking
- N = Ni or introverted intuition

Let's decode ISFP

- I = Introverted = Dominant function will be the introverted function
- P = Perceiving = the perceiving function is extroverted
- S = Se or extroverted feeling
- F = Fi or introverted sensing

The Cognitive Stack – Takes the known Dominant and Auxiliary and infers the Tertiary and Inferior

- Dominant Driver Hero
- Auxiliary Co-pilot Parent
- Tertiary 10 yr. old Child
- Inferior 3 yr. old Inferior

The Car Model

Driver	Co-Pilot
3 yr. old	10 yr. old

The 16 Meyers Briggs Personality Types

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|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| ▪ ENTP | ENFP | ESTP | ESFP | ENTJ | ENFJ | ESTJ |
| ▪ ESFJ | INTP | INFP | ISTP | ISFP | INTJ | INFJ |
| ▪ ISTJ | ISFJ | | | | | |

The 4 Types Holistic Model

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|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ▪ Ego | Default Type |
| ▪ Subconscious | All letters opposite |
| ▪ Unconscious – Shadow | Ego outside letters opposite |
| ▪ Super Ego | Subconscious outside letters opposite |

The relationship between the Ego and the Subconscious, Shadow/Unconscious and Super-ego

- Ego – Subconscious connected – 4 functions
 - Same polarities – function stack reversed
- Ego – Shadow / Unconscious connected – 8 functions
 - Same function stack – polarities reversed
- Ego – Super Ego connected – 8 functions
 - Function stack reversed – polarities reversed

4 Relational Groups

○ 1

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|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| ▪ Ego | ENTP | ISFJ | INTJ | ESFP |
| ▪ Subconscious | ISFJ | ENTP | ESFP | INTJ |
| ▪ Shadow | INTJ | ESFP | ENTP | ISFJ |
| ▪ Super-Ego | ESFP | INTJ | ISFJ | ENTP |

○ 2

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|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| ▪ Ego | ENFJ | ISTP | INFP | ESTJ |
| ▪ Subconscious | ISTP | ENFJ | ESTJ | INFP |
| ▪ Shadow | INFP | ESTJ | ENFJ | ISTP |
| ▪ Super-Ego | ESTJ | INFP | ISTP | ENFJ |

○ 3

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|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| ▪ Ego | ENTJ | ISFP | INTP | ESFJ |
| ▪ Subconscious | ISFP | ENTJ | ESFJ | INTP |
| ▪ Shadow | INTP | ESFJ | ENTJ | ISFP |
| ▪ Super-Ego | ESFJ | INTP | ISFP | ENTJ |

○ 4

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|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| ▪ Ego | ENFP | ISTJ | INFJ | ESTP |
| ▪ Subconscious | ISTJ | ENFP | ESTP | INFJ |
| ▪ Shadow | INFJ | ESTP | ENFP | ISTJ |
| ▪ Super-Ego | ESTP | INFJ | ISTJ | ENFP |

J's – Dominant Functions

- Ni
- Si
- Te
- Fe

P's – Dominant Functions

- Ne
- Se
- Ti
- Fi

Final Points:

- You have all 8 cognitive functions
- They are either functioning , not functioning, malfunctioning, or dysfunctional
- The goal is to be able to have them all function effectively situationally as needed

The Functional Stack

- S Data
- T and F Feelings and Thoughts about the data
- N What the data tell us, means, connects, points to, etc.