

Self-Awareness

by Dolah Saleh

Have you ever hired anyone whom you thought would be perfect for a job, but they just didn't fit in with the group? Perhaps you have recently taken a job where you don't seem to fit in, but you are uncertain as to whether it is the specific job or the entire career that is all wrong.

What about your relationships? Have you made and maintained successful connections with others?

How about in dating or in marriage? Are you content and at peace with your partner, or do you feel that aspect of your life is in serious disrepair? Is it part of your experience to have been involved in a long-term relationship only to wake up one day and ask yourself, what was I thinking?

Do you believe that there must be some secret or magic formula to making love work, that "true love" is somehow reserved for the lucky few?

Do you have a good relationship with your parents or would you have nothing to do with them were not for a thing called family obligation?

The truth is, there is no magic formula to discovering the life's work to which we are optimally suited, getting along with our parents, or finding a partner that ensures our marital bliss. But we can be assisted in the process. First we need to find out who we really are. What makes us tick, so to speak, how are we motivated as uniquely imperfect and lovable human beings. If it sounds like reading tea leaves, don't stop reading. There is hope and a promise that, if nothing else, you will leave with confirmation of your individual worth, concrete acknowledgment of your needs, and why this knowledge is crucial to making the most critical decisions of your life.

You will agree with this information about you, because somewhere, sometimes deeply buried within us for one reason or another, we did know, or perhaps do still know, but we have forgotten or have been convinced somehow to ignore this self-knowledge. The worst thing about it is that we have now succeeded in living our lives in a less than truthful and authentic way. How can we feel fulfilled and satisfied when we have not heeded the tuggings of our heart, the ruminations of our soul?

There are assessment tools developed by psychoanalysts that may help in this process of self-exploration. They may not provide us with a set number of prescriptive steps but they can conceivably provide an effective blueprint.

The Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) is a psychological assessment instrument that has helped many individuals and corporations around the world by providing a way to understand human behavior and get back in touch with core needs. It measures our preferences on four (4) scales, describing the

way we energize: Extroversion/Introversion; the way we gather information: Sensing/Intuiting; the way we make decisions: Thinking/Feeling; and the way we organize our lives: Judging/Perception. An awareness of our preferences brings acceptance, and acceptance brings peace. We are most natural and at home when we use our preferences; it is like writing with our dominant hand.

The MBTI was the result of original work by the famous Swiss psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, who postulated that our behavior can be measured in generally one of several basic patterns. We have what he referred to as a preferred or dominant style, dictating our basic personality, describing how we go about getting our individual needs met. When our needs are not met, we experience what is called stress. It is the way we react when we feel we are losing control. The MBTI has 3 distinct benefits:

It helps us gain insight and clarity on our unique needs so that we can accept and honor them. Remember, this is about being who we are, loving who that happens to be, and expecting to be loved in return for exactly who we really are.

We gain clarity on the needs of others with whom we are involved so that we might honor and accept their differences. We will be able to better communicate with those who are different from us. Everyone deserves to be accepted and loved for his or her true selves.

Our sensitivities will be raised, including "tolerance" of differences, and better to appreciate the differences, instead of allowing them to get in the way .

Learning about preferences assists in understanding differences so that these differences do not become the wedge that drives two people apart. It may not save every relationship. but it will definitely build a tolerance that minimizes conflict and leads to acceptance.

There are no right or wrong answers on the MBTI, just as there is no one right or wrong way to be. There is only different. When we understand this, it allows for acceptance, to tolerance, and makes compatibility the by-product.

Personal assessment instruments such as the MBTI have been used for decades in helping companies and individuals to build effective teams, manage conflict, and select the most appropriate candidate for the job. It has been successfully used in premarital counseling and by family therapists. Seminars on this subject are presently being offered to assist interested individuals in building and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships, whether they be of love, work, or parent/child

Call 636-7054 to discuss the possibility of taking part in an MBTI session follow-up discussions and interpretations of the results, exercises, and other practical applications

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