



## Facilitator's Guide

# The Influence of Personal Characteristics

*Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.—Theodore Roosevelt*

### Rationale:

The foundation of leadership begins with the individual, in that our personal abilities to influence others are effected by our unique personality and the impact of environment and culture. To grow as an effective leader you must understand yourself as well as the differences of personal characteristics in others.

### Program Goal:

To recognize the influence of personal characteristics in developing leadership potential

### Program Objectives:

- Differentiate the effect of individual personality characteristics on behavior styles
- Recognize the influence of personal environmental conditions on learning and development
- Compare the influences of different cultural beliefs and values on leadership growth and development

### Pre-Program Preparation:

- Read and become familiar with the publication *The Influence of Personal Characteristics* (CLD1-9) and Chapter 11 of *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., by Peter G. Northouse.
- Have a copy of CLD1-9 available for each participant.
- Make enough copies of *The Influence of Personality Characteristics: Myers-Briggs Exercise* (one for each person).
- Have plenty of pencils, pens, paper for note taking, a flip chart and markers available.
- Be aware of your own personal characteristics.

### Introduction:

Fundamentally, leadership involves human interaction. Thus, understanding ourselves, our temperaments and why we tend to respond in certain ways is important in our development as a leader and in working with others to reach shared goals. The essence of who we are has been shaped by the influence of our culture and personal environment. These factors are reflected in our skills, interests, and abilities, which ultimately help us to reach our leadership potential.

### Introductory Activity:

Pose the following questions to your audience. For each set of questions, have the audience think about how they tend to interact with people and raise their hand for the option they most strongly prefer.

- Are you eager to meet new people? OR Does it take you some time to speak to someone you don't know?
- Do you do everything by the book (always follow the rules)? OR Would you rather write the book (write your own rules)?
- Do you see yourself as Mr. Spock (more logical)? OR Captain Kirk (more emotional)?
- Do you have a to-do list for every day? OR Do you address things as they come along?

Explain that there is no right or wrong answer to each question. Everyone has slightly different answers because everyone has a slightly different personality.

---

This leadership curriculum was developed by Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) agents along with University of Kentucky specialists. Therefore, the examples used in the facilitator's guides are geared toward an ANR/Horticulture audience, such as Master Gardener groups. Please feel free to modify and reproduce the facilitator's guide for any appropriate educational or training purposes with other audiences.

---

Your personality is unique; it makes you who you are.  
Now let's dig a little deeper into your personality.

---

## Objective 1: Differentiate the effect of individual personality characteristics on behavior styles

---

### Learning Activity 1:

Hand out *The Influence of Personality Characteristics: Myers-Briggs Exercise* (found below) and have the audience answer the questions, then score themselves according to the directions. Allow about five to eight minutes for everyone to finish.

Once everyone has finished, go over each MBTI dimension and what it means. Discuss MBTI information below. (You may use any additional information if desired.)

There are four preference scales in the Myers-Briggs Type Instrument, with each scale containing opposite dimensions. The scales are described below.

#### **Extrovert–Introvert: Reflects your orientation to the outer or inner world.**

##### **Extrovert**

- Talkative
- Speaks first, thinks later
- Energized by large numbers of people
- Unloads emotions as he/she goes along

##### **Introvert**

- Thoughtful
- Thinks first, may or may not speak
- Fatigued by large numbers of people
- Bottles up emotions and guards them

Example: The extrovert will help new groups get acquainted and feel comfortable. The introvert will be acquainted through observation and listening

#### **Sensing–Intuitive: How you prefer to take in information**

##### **Sensing**

- Focuses on facts
- Sees details easily
- Knows through experience
- Likes prescribed procedures

##### **Intuitive**

- Likes to use imagination
- Sees the big picture Values hunches
- Likes solving new problems

Example: The sensing person will never make a recipe unless they have all the ingredients. The intuitive person will say, "It doesn't matter, I'll just substitute what I do have."

#### **Thinking–Feeling: How you make judgments about what you have perceived.**

##### **Thinking**

- Wins people with logic
- Decides impersonally
- Doesn't need harmony
- Responds to words such as "objective," "criteria" and "justice"

##### **Feeling**

- Wins people with persuasion
- Makes decisions based on human value
- Gets upset with arguments and conflict
- Responds to words such as "values," "harmony" and "appreciate"

Example: If forced to choose between truthful and tactful, the thinking person will choose truthfulness. If forced to choose between truthful and tactful, the feeling person will choose tactfulness.

#### **Judging–Perceiving: How you deal with the outer world.**

##### **Judging**

- Lives in a decisive, planned, orderly world
- Takes pleasure in finishing projects
- Tries to avoid last-minute stress
- Establishes deadlines and takes them seriously

##### **Perceiving**

- Lives in a spontaneous, flexible way
- Takes pleasure in starting projects
- Feels energized by last-minute pressure
- Sees deadlines as mere alarm clocks

Example: The judging person has the report completed two weeks before the deadline. The perceiving person starts the night before the report is due (if that early).

Once you have gone over the four MBTI dimensions and everyone has a good grasp of their own personality, have a flip chart ready and ask them to list those personality characteristics that they think will help a leader be effective (i.e. being more extraverted will help a leader communicate with their constituents, develop customer relationships, etc.). Note that sometimes the most effective personality traits for leaders depend on the situation. Again, emphasize there are no right or wrong answers. Leave the list visible to refer to.

---

## Objective 2: Recognize the influence of personal environmental conditions on learning and development

---

### Learning Activity 2:

Ask the audience to share some of their background

in education (both formal and informal) and the environments in which they lived during their formative years. For example: One person may put more emphasis on formal education (“book learning”) whereas another person may believe informal education (“street smarts”) is more important. Also, some will argue that certain personal environments are not conducive to learning, while some believe that each environment is unique to a learning experience. (Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.) You may want to share some of your own experiences to help stimulate the discussion. List on a flip chart some of the major differences between learning experiences and environments. Using both flip chart lists you have made and the pre-planned examples of environmental impact on education experience split the class into smaller groups (three to five members each) and let each group determine how the different personality characteristics, learning experiences, and environmental conditions may affect each scenario. You may choose to use the following scenarios or come up with some of your own.

- **Scenario 1:** A child grows up in a lower income home with parents who encourage and help with learning. Home is kept neat and clean, time is always made for child(ren) no matter how busy the parents are. No specific demands are made upon child(ren) but responsibility, integrity, and industry are both taught and exhibited by the parents, both of whom have jobs away from home. Child(ren) are not allowed every desire, but do not lack either. Parents are involved in school activities and take child(ren) to museums, historical sites, libraries, etc., when they have the time and money to do so.
- **Scenario 2:** A child grows up in a middle-class income, single parent home. The child spends more time with assorted babysitters and child care professionals than with parent. Home is clean, but cluttered. Parent has high expectations for child. Formal education is highly regarded by parent, as long as someone else is responsible for supplying it to the child. Parent is devoted to career, has little time for anything else.
- **Scenario 3:** A child grows up in a wealthy home. Every want and desire the child has is fulfilled. The parents spend much of their time involved in charity work, leaving the child with other family members or family friends. Good grades and a college education are expected of the child, as well as an elite social status. Being wealthy is prized above all else.

---

### Objective 3: Compare the influences of different cultural beliefs and values on leadership growth and development

---

#### *Learning Activity 3:*

Keeping the class in the smaller groups, have them discuss and list on a flip chart some cultural differences they can identify. To get them started, point out the examples given in *The Influence of Personal Characteristics* (CLD1-9). Be sure to emphasize that this is not a debate on being right or wrong, just a sharing session of beliefs and customs, such as one person drinks tea in the mornings, another has coffee; one person attends a Baptist church, another goes to Catholic services. Give each group a leadership scenario and have them decide how best to handle each situation based on the individual personality characteristics, learning experiences, environmental conditions, and cultural beliefs and values listed on the flip charts. You may choose to use the scenarios below or create your own.

- **Scenario 1:** A small group of like-minded livestock producers have an interest in getting a building erected to serve a small county’s need for events such as occasional livestock sales, livestock and horse shows (both adult and youth), a place for the local farmer’s market to set up with cover and electricity, and that the community at large may rent for various functions. They have building plans and commitment for land to be donated; now they need to gain commitment from the county fiscal court, local cattlemen’s association, saddle club, etc. to help with funding, ownership concerns, maintenance, insurance, and event scheduling.
- **Scenario 2:** Many youth in a small county have an interest in livestock and horse shows and shooting sports events. The 4-H program offered by the local extension office cannot provide much support for these activities due to a lack of adults willing to serve as volunteer club leaders. Many offer to help, but none are willing to lead. Recruiting leaders has become very difficult and the agents and 4-H Council are reaching out to other local organizations to help find individuals willing to be club leaders.
- **Scenario 3:** The local farmer’s market is a small, barely organized group of part-time producers, most of whom are retirees with extra produce from home gardens. Only recently have a few new members joined with intent toward actually

earning a substantial income as a market member. This, along with new federal and state rules for accepting WIC and senior produce voucher checks has caused disagreement on a variety of subjects, such as market location and set-up requirements, member fees (there have not been any until now), how much reselling should be allowed, and several other issues. There is a high demand for fresh produce from consumers in the community.

### Discussion Question:

What do you think is the best way for an individual to interact with and influence others to attain a shared goal?

### Summary:

We have all been shaped by our personalities, our environment and our culture. Our ability to serve as leaders is a direct result of how we apply our knowledge of ourselves, our personality and our temperament; the environments in which we have lived; and the cultures that influence our lives. The choice to be a leader is yours.

### References:

- Covey, Stephen R. (2004). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Northouse, Peter G. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

---

Developed by: David Embry, Edmunson County ANR agent

---

# The Influence of Personality

## Characteristics: Myers-Briggs Exercise

**Instructions:** Using the key, rate the degree to which you feel each of the following eight sentences describe you on a scale of 1 to 6. The way the sentences are paired, your rating for each pair should add up to 7. For example, if you rate sentence #5 as a 2 then you should rate sentence #6 as a 5.  $2 + 5 = 7$ .

**Key:** 6 = Always true    5 = Often true    4 = Usually true    3 = Sometimes true    2 = Rarely true    1 = Never true

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am sociable, outgoing, expressive, a people person, and talkative.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. I am reflective, deep, internally focused, an idea person, and quiet. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. I am practical, realistic, and factual, and I like details.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. I am conceptual, theoretical, future oriented, and a generalist.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. I am firm, just, clear, and detached in decision making.              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. I am humane, harmonious, and subjective, and I like many inputs.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. I am structured, scheduled, planned, and in control.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. I am adaptable, flexible, spontaneous, and open.                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

**Scoring:** Circle your ratings for each sentence on the following chart.

- |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sentence 1: Extrovert (E) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sentence 2: Introvert (I) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sentence 3: Sensor (S)    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sentence 4: Intuitor (N)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sentence 5: Thinker (T)   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sentence 6: Feeler (F)    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sentence 7: Judger (J)    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sentence 8: Perceiver (P) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

**Scoring Interpretation:** Your psychological type consists of four out of the eight paired preferences: E or I, S or N, T or F, and J or P. Begin with E and I. Whichever one you gave a higher rate to is part of your type. Based on the scores from the chart above, pick one of the two letters in the following pairs:

- |                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Sentences 1 and 2: | E | I |
| Sentences 3 and 4: | S | N |
| Sentences 5 and 6: | T | F |
| Sentences 7 and 8: | J | P |

Your ratings in some pairs may be very different. For example, your rating for S might be 6, which makes your rating for N 1. That is a strong indication that you prefer the sensing function. On the other hand, some ratings may be closer together. For example, you may have given the thinker sentence a score of 4 and the feeler sentence a score of 3. That is not a strong preference, so your type could include either T or F.