

Keirsey Temperament Sorter: Decode Your Unique Personality

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The Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS) is a self-assessed personality questionnaire designed to help people better understand themselves and others. It was first introduced in the book *Please Understand Me*. The KTS is closely associated with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI); however, there are significant practical and theoretical differences between the two personality questionnaires and their associated different descriptions.

Four temperaments

David Keirsey expanded on the ancient study of temperament by Hippocrates and Plato. In his works, Keirsey used the names suggested by Plato: Artisan (iconic), Guardian (pistic), Idealist (noetic), and Rational (dianoetic). Keirsey divided the four temperaments into two categories (roles), each with two types (role variants). The resulting 16 types correlate with the 16 personality types described by Briggs and Myers.

Artisans are observant and pragmatic. Seeking stimulation and virtuosity, they are concerned with making an impact. Their greatest strength is tactics. They excel at troubleshooting, agility, and the manipulation of tools, instruments, and equipment. The two roles are as follows:

Operators are the directive Artisans. Their most developed intelligence operation is expediting. The attentive Crafters and the expressive Promoters are the two role variants.

Entertainers are the informative Artisans. Their most developed intelligence operation is improvising. The attentive Composers and the expressive Performers are the two role variants.

Guardians are observant and cooperative. Seeking security and belonging, they are concerned with responsibility and duty. Their greatest strength is logistics. They excel at organizing, facilitating, checking, and supporting. The two roles are as follows:

Administrators are the directive Guardians. Their most developed intelligence operation is regulating. The attentive Inspectors and the expressive Supervisors are the two role variants.

Conservators are the informative Guardians. Their most developed intelligence operation is supporting. The attentive Protectors and the expressive Providers are the two role variants.

Idealists are introspective and cooperative. Seeking meaning and significance, they are concerned with personal growth and finding their own unique identity. Their greatest strength is diplomacy. They excel at clarifying, individualizing, unifying, and inspiring. The two roles are as follows:

Mentors are the directive Idealists. Their most developed intelligence operation is developing. The attentive Counselors and the expressive Teachers are the two role variants.

Advocates are the informative Idealists. Their most developed intelligence operation is mediating. The attentive Healers and the expressive Champions are the two role variants.

Rationals are introspective and pragmatic. Seeking mastery and self-control, they are concerned with their own knowledge and competence. Their greatest strength is strategy. They excel in any kind of logical investigation such as engineering, conceptualizing, theorizing, and coordinating. The two roles are as follows:

Coordinators are the directive Rationals. Their most developed intelligence operation is arranging. The attentive Masterminds and the expressive Fieldmarshals are the two role variants.

Engineers are the informative Rationals. Their most developed intelligence operation is constructing. The attentive Architects and the expressive Inventors are the two role variants.

Understanding the sorter descriptions

Although the descriptions of the individual temperaments and role variants were written as a whole, temperament itself can be understood by comparing it to the rings of a tree:

The inner ring: abstract versus concrete

According to Keirsey, everyone can engage in both observation and introspection. When people touch objects, watch a basketball game, taste food, or otherwise perceive the world through their five senses, they are observant. When people reflect and focus on their internal world, they are introspective. However, individuals cannot engage in observation and introspection at the same time. The extent to which people are more observant or introspective directly affects their behavior.

People who are generally observant are more 'down to earth.' They are more concrete in their worldview and tend to focus on practical matters such as food, shelter, and their immediate relationships. Carl Jung used the word sensation when describing people who prefer concrete perception. People who are generally introspective are more 'head in the clouds.' They are more abstract in their world view and tend to focus on global or theoretical issues such as equality or engineering. Carl Jung used the word intuition when describing people who prefer abstract perception.

The second ring: cooperative versus pragmatic (utilitarian)

Keirsey uses the words cooperative (complying) and pragmatic (adaptive) when comparing the differing temperaments. People who are cooperative pay more attention to other people's opinions and are more concerned with doing the right thing. People who are pragmatic (utilitarian) pay more attention to their own thoughts or feelings and are more concerned with doing what works. There is no comparable idea of Myers or Jung that corresponds to this dichotomy, so this is a significant difference between Keirsey's work and that of Myers and Jung.

This ring, in combination with the inner ring, determines a person's temperament. The pragmatic

temperaments are Rationals (pragmatic and abstract) and Artisans (pragmatic and concrete). The cooperative temperaments are Idealists (cooperative and abstract), and Guardians (cooperative and concrete). Neither Myers nor Jung included the concept of temperament in their work.

The third ring: directive (proactive) versus informative (reactive)

The third ring distinguishes between people who generally communicate by informing others versus people who generally communicate by directing others. Each of the four temperaments is subdivided by this distinction for a result of eight roles.

The directive roles are Operators (directive Artisans), Administrators (directive Guardians), Mentors (directive Idealists), and Coordinators (directive Rationals). The informative roles are Entertainers (informative Artisans), Conservators (informative Guardians), Advocates (informative Idealists), and Engineers (informative Rationals).

The fourth ring: expressive versus attentive

The fourth ring describes how people interact with their environment. Individuals who tend to act before observing are described as expressive, whereas people who tend to observe before acting are described as attentive.

Each of the eight categories can be subdivided by this distinction, for a total of 16 role variants. These 16 role variants correlate to the 16 Myers-Briggs types.

The expressive role variants are Promoters (expressive Operators), Performers (expressive Entertainers), Supervisors (expressive Administrators), Providers (expressive Conservators), Teachers (expressive Mentors), Champions (expressive Advocates), Fieldmarshals (expressive Coordinators), and Inventors (expressive Engineers).

The attentive role variants are Crafters (attentive Operators), Composers (attentive Entertainers), Inspectors (attentive Administrators), Protectors (attentive Conservators), Counselors (attentive Mentors), Healers (attentive Advocates), Masterminds (attentive Coordinators), and Architects (attentive Engineers).

Four interaction roles

In his book *Brains and Careers* (2008), Keirsey divided the role variants into groupings that he called "four differing roles that people play in face-to-face interaction with one another."

There are two Proactive Enterprising Roles:

Initiators (expressive and directive): Field Marshal (ENTJ), Supervisor (ESTJ), Promoter (ESTP), Teacher (ENFJ)--Preemptive

Contenders (attentive and directive): Mastermind (INTJ), Inspector (ISTJ), Crafter (ISTP), Counselor (INFJ)--Competitive

There are two Reactive Inquiring Roles:

Coworkers (expressive and informative): Inventor (ENTP), Provider (ESFJ), Performer (ESFP), Champion (ENFP)--Collaborative

Responders (attentive and informative): Architect (INTP), Protector (ISFJ), Composer (ISFP), Healer (INFP)--Accommodative

The roles were implied in the informing/directing factor introduced in Portraits of Temperament.

Myers-Briggs types versus Keirsej's temperaments

The type descriptions of Isabel Myers differ from the character descriptions of David Keirsej in several important ways:

Myers primarily focused on how people think and feel; Keirsej focused more on behavior, which is directly observable.

Myers' descriptions use a linear four-factor model; Keirsej's descriptions use a systems field theory model.

Myers, following Jung's lead, emphasized the extraversion/introversion (expressive/attentive) dichotomy; Keirsej's model places greater importance on the sensing/intuition (concrete/abstract) dichotomy.

Myers grouped types by 'function attitudes'; Keirsej, by temperament.

Myers grouped types according to cognitive function: the 'thinking type' grouping for those with dominant thinking; the 'intuitive type' grouping for those with dominant intuition; the 'feeling type' grouping for those with dominant feeling; and the 'sensing type' grouping for those with dominant sensing. Keirsej's temperaments correlate with Myers' combinations of preferences: Guardians with sensing plus judging (SJ); Artisans with sensing plus perceiving (SP); Idealists with intuition plus feeling (NF); and Rationals with intuition plus thinking (NT).

Myers paired ESTJs with ENTJs, ISFPs with INFPs, INTPs with ISTPs, and ENFJs with ESFJs because they share the same dominant function attitude. ESTJs and ENTJs are both extraverted thinkers, ISFPs and INFPs are both introverted feelers, INTPs and ISTPs are both introverted thinkers, and ENFJs and ESFJs are both extraverted feelers. Keirsej holds that these same groupings are very different from one another because they are of different temperaments. ESTJs are Guardians whereas ENTJs are Rationals; ISFPs are Artisans whereas INFPs are Idealists;

INTPs are Rationals whereas ISTPs are Artisans; and ENFJs are Idealists whereas ESFJs are Guardians.

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