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Personality

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"People go around and say, instead of 'I am Lucinda Wilcox,' 'I am an INTJ,' Wilcox said. "There's more to me than that."

James Dombeck, who led Enneagram workshops as part of the Spiritual Integration Center in Rochester, acknowledged, "Any knowledge can be misused. One of the most obvious is trying to reduce people to nine different types and putting rigid barriers around these people."

Proponents contend that when properly used, the MBTI and the Enneagram serve simply as a jumping off points for further spiritual growth.

"I think it helps people to know what direction to work on in their spirituality," Wilcox observed.

The MBTI is traced back to Carl Jung, the psychiatrist, who published his observations in his 1923 book, *Psychological Types*.

Jung - whom, Wilcox observed, "was a very spiritual person" - believed that human behavior was predictable and classifiable. Broadly speaking, he broke down personalities into three sets of conflicting preferences: People tend to interact either in an extraverted (E) or introverted (I) way; they tend to receive information either through their five senses (S) or intuition (N); and they tend to process that information either through thinking (T) or feeling (F).

Katherine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Myers built on Jung's ideas, adding a fourth set that indicates how people prefer to relate to the world. The two created the categories of judging (J), for individuals who prefer to rely on thinking and feeling; and perceiving (P), for individuals who prefer to receive data through sensing or intuiting parts of their personalities.

Their ideas were published in *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator 1962 Manual*. The manual also explained the test they developed to help individuals determine and label their personality types.

According to their theory, each person's personality is a result of the blending of these preferences. A wide range exists within each preference, allowing for variation in personality. Thus, for example, a person can be mildly extraverted, or strongly so. And a mildly extraverted person may not be very differ-

ISTJ "doing what should be done"	ISFJ "a high sense of duty"	INFJ "an inspiration to others"	INTJ "everything has room for improvement"
ISTP "ready to try anything once"	ISFP "sees much but bears little"	INFP "performing noble services to aid society"	INTP "a love of problem solving"
ESTP "the ultimate realists"	ESFP "you only go around once in life"	ENFP "giving life an extra squeeze"	ENTP "one exciting challenge after another"
ESTJ "life's administrators"	ESFJ "hosts and hostesses of the world"	ENFJ "smooth talking persuaders"	ENTJ "life's natural leaders"

Based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator™

ent from a mildly introverted person.

Moreover, a person is not limited to acting only in accord with his or her four-letter profile.

"It is important to remember, however, that such a profile describes one's preferences or habitual modes of operating in each category; the alternative options are also available to the individual to a greater or lesser degree," noted Robert J. Thesing in his essay, "The Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, and Spirituality." The essay was in the autumn 1990 edition of *The Way Supplement*, a British Catholic publication which explores theological issues.

Proponents of Myers-Briggs contend that these preferences can evolve with time. Thus a "T" individual who relies more on thinking than feeling can choose to develop his or her feeling "function," and gradually become an "F."

Enneagram, on the other hand, is based on Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam. The concept of Enneagram was gradually adapted to Christianity, with Jesuits especially promoting the system beginning in the early 1970s.

It is "less concerned with the overt human behavior than with what motivates that behavior," Dombeck remarked. "It has very ancient and very deep philosophical roots. It's a mode of thinking, a

mode of looking at the universal human experience."

The nine basic personality types - with accompanying subtypes - each manifest a characteristic bias of thought and emotions in perceiving and dealing with the world.

These nine personality types are often given different names, depending on the particular author or teacher. Type one is generally called the perfectionist or reformer; type two is the giver or helper; type three is the performer or motivator; type four is the romantic or artist; type five is the observer or thinker; type six is the questioner or loyalist; type seven is the epicure or generalist; type eight is the boss or leader; and type nine is the mediator or peacemaker.

Each of the types has strong attributes, but also compulsions and limitations. Sister Schlehr noted, for example, that the "type one" person can be a perfectionist - conscientious and well-organized, but also overbearing and demanding.

Thus one goal of discerning one's Enneagram is to be aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses, and to build on the strengths, and to be aware of and deal with weaknesses and compulsions.

Unlike Myers-Briggs, no convenient test exists to help a person discern what

Enneagram type he or she is, Dombeck observed.

That awareness, Sister Schlehr said, often comes only through a lengthy process of prayer and reflection. Very often, it is done with the aid of a teacher or mentor who helps to discern one's type.

Father Richard Rohr, in his 1990 collaboration with Rev. Andreas Ebert, *Discovering the Enneagram: An Ancient Tool for a New Spiritual Journey*, even speculates on the Enneagram types of famous individuals. Some of these individuals can serve as models, he said, because they reveal how to live out the strengths of their types.

For example, he classifies Mother Teresa as the exemplar of a "two," someone who helps others; Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, as a "three" who inspires others to take action on behalf of the poor; and the assassinated archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, as a "six" who overcame a tendency to conform in order to confront injustice.

Sister Schlehr noted that, as opposed to the Myers-Briggs, which deals with conscious preferences, "With Enneagrams, you are dealing with a deeper sort of question. We're bringing motivation to the surface."

Thus one can consciously work to change one's Myers-Briggs profile, but cannot change one's Enneagram type once it is set - generally by the time people reach their 20s, she said.

But while Myers-Briggs and Enneagram differ in what they reveal, proponents contend both personality indicators are useful for helping to develop one's spirituality.

Sister Schlehr, for example, said that increased understanding of one's true nature affects one's relationships with others and with God.

"It's all connected," she said. "This better understanding of self flows out into these other relationships."

"It's a tool (for people) to find out more about themselves and their relationship with God and others," Sister Monahan said of the Myers-Briggs.

In his essay, Thesing pointed out that greater self-awareness can help to move beyond one's self-definition. It can "cross boundaries of perception and action that were previously closed in my experience. I become available for the ongoing conversion that lies at the heart of the Christian spiritual journey that can ultimately bring me to my truest self, my essence before God."

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