

MBTI Preferences And Meetings In A Thinking Environment

I have been running meetings in a Thinking Environment for the past seven years. During that time, I have experienced a wide variety of reactions to the processes involved and have often wondered why certain aspects are so loved by some and yet present such difficulties and challenges to others.

For example, I wondered why it was that some people struggled with a closing round of Appreciation whilst others looked forward to it. Similarly, why was it that some people so welcomed the lack of interruption and yet others complained of "spark and banter" missing, because they could not interrupt with 'in the moment' jokes and jibes?

I have also been working with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator™ for several years. In bringing these two fabulous development methods together, I have made some observations concerning Type preferences and the possible reasons for certain aspects of a Thinking Environment™ being energisers for some and challenges for others.

MBTI preference does not of course explain everything and it certainly cannot account for what I do not doubt is also many years of conditioning to behave in meetings and groups in certain ways. Nonetheless, I believe Type has some insights to offer.

I have made many more observations than there is room here to share but a few of the main ones follow.

Extraversion

Because Extraverts gain their energy from and focus their energy upon the outer world of people and things:

they are likely to love meetings in a Thinking Environment because:

- they will get the opportunity to think all their thoughts out loud
- they are meeting people face to face

However, they may find meetings in a Thinking Environment a challenge because:

- they cannot interrupt and need to listen to everyone.

Introversion

Because Introverts gain their energy from and focus their energy towards the inner world of ideas and reflection:

they are likely to love meetings in a Thinking Environment because:

- they will not be expected to rush through their contribution nor be interrupted.
- discussions are likely to be explored in depth rather than surface skimmed.

However, they may find meetings in a Thinking Environment a challenge because:

- the spotlight of attention will occasionally be on them and their thinking.

Sensing

Because Sensors prefer to work in a step-wise manner, to use past experience as a trusty advisor, and to work with what is known, factual and real:

They are likely to love meetings in a Thinking Environment because:

- agenda items in the form of questions will provide a tangible focus for discussion.
- a search for factual information is a key component of working in a Thinking Environment.

However, they may find meetings in a Thinking Environment challenging because:

- the Thinking Environment encourages people to think for themselves and may therefore challenge the status quo.

Intuition

Because Intuitives prefer to look forward to the unknown future, enjoy making connections and identifying patterns and trends, and to multi-tasking:

They are likely to love meetings in a Thinking Environment because:

- the use of Incisive Questions transports the thinker to what *might* be possible.
- listening to a variety of views and opinions facilitates new connections and meanings.

However, they may find meetings in a Thinking Environment a challenge because:

- they will need to focus on one item/question at a time rather than several issues at once.

Thinking

Because Thinkers prefer to make decisions based on the logical analysis of information, prize objectivity and are generally task focused:

They are likely to love meetings in a Thinking Environment because:

- there is a logical process to follow for each agenda item
- there are rules and principles to be followed

However, they may find meetings in a Thinking Environment challenging because:

- a Thinking Environment requires a greater level of appreciation of what is good than what needs critiquing and correcting.

Feeling

Because Feelers prefer to focus upon harmony in relationships, personal values in decision making and are generally people focused:

They are likely to love meeting in a Thinking Environment because:

- every individual really counts.
- peoples' feelings are taken into account as facts.

However, they may find meeting in a Thinking Environment challenging because:

- the process searches more readily for the truth than for tact.

Judging

Because Judgers prefer structure, control, planned processes and closure:

They are likely to love meeting in a Thinking Environment because:

- the agenda item questions focus debate on an actionable outcome from the outset.
- the overall meeting is planned and structured before it commences.

However, they may find meeting in a Thinking Environment challenging because:

- they may experience frustration by having to hear everyone's views before a decision is made.

Perceivers

Because Perceivers prefer to operate with flexibility, spontaneity, to keep their options open and enjoy exploring new information:

They are likely to love meeting in a Thinking Environment because:

- they will be given the space to explore their own and others' ideas until they are satisfied.
- the process allows for the agenda to change focus or direction if new information is unearthed.

However, they may find meeting in a Thinking Environment challenging because:

- the structure and process requires them to stay on track and focus upon the subject at hand.