

Keirsey Temperament Sorter

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The **Keirsey Temperament Sorter** (KTS) is a self-assessed personality questionnaire designed to help people better understand themselves, first introduced in the book *Please Understand Me*. 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.

Historical development

[David Keirsey](#) developed the Temperament Sorter after being introduced to MBTI by a friend; however, Keirsey traces the idea of temperament back to the ancient Greeks. [Hippocrates](#), a Greek physician who lived from 460-377 B.C., proposed the [four humours](#), which are related to the [four temperaments](#). These were named and promoted by [Galen](#): [sanguine](#), [choleric](#), [phlegmatic](#), and [melancholic](#). Keirsey developed a modern temperament theory in his books *Please Understand Me* (1978) and *Please Understand Me II* (1998). By reading Isabel Myers' very brief portraits of sixteen types of high school students, which were based on Isabel's observations of real individuals in conjunction of her understanding of Jung's eight types, Keirsey found that by combining Sensing with the perceiving functions, (SP and SJ), and iNtuition with the judging functions, (NF and NT), he had descriptions similar to his four temperaments. Keirsey originally named the temperaments after Greek gods [Dionysius](#), [Apollo](#), [Prometheus](#), and [Epimetheus](#). Recognizing the temperaments from Ernst Kretschmer's descriptions of four forms of madness, he developed the positive aspects and named the temperaments after the mythological gods, but later renamed them, for clarity, as [Artisan](#), [Idealist](#), [Rational](#), and [Guardian](#) in his book *Portraits of Temperament* (1987).

The chart below compares modern and ancient aspects of the theory:

c. 400 BC	Hippocrates's four humours <i>Organ:</i> <i>Characteristics:</i>	blood liver courageous, amorous	yellow bile spleen easily angered	black bile gall bladder despondent, sleepless	phlegm brain/lungs calm, unemotional
c. 325 BC	Aristotle's four sources of happiness	hedone (sensuous pleasure)	ethikos (moral virtue)	propaitari (acquiring assets)	dialogike (logical investigation)
c. 190 AD	Galen's four temperaments	sanguine	choleric	melancholic	phlegmatic
c. 1550	Paracelsus's four totem spirits	changeable salamanders	inspired nymphs	industrious gnomes	curious sylphs
c. 1905	Adicke's four world views	innovative	doctrinaire	traditional	skeptical
c. 1912	Dreikurs' four mistaken goals	Retaliation	Recognition	Service	Power
c. 1914	Spränger's four value attitudes	artistic	religious	economic	theoretic
c. 1920	Kretschmer's four character styles	hypomanic	hyperesthetic	depressive	anesthetic
c. 1947	Erich Fromm's four orientations	exploitative	receptive	hoarding	marketing
c. 1958	Myers's Jungian aspects of sixteen types	SP - sensory perception	NF - intuitive feeling	SJ - sensory judgement	NT - intuitive thinking
c. 1978	Keirsey/Bates four temperaments (old)	Dionysian	Apollonian	Epimethean	Promethean
c. 1998	Keirsey's four temperaments	Artisan	Idealist	Guardian	Rational

Keirsey, David [1978] (May 1, 1998). *Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, Intelligence*, 1st Ed., Prometheus Nemesis Book Co. [ISBN 1885705026](#).

About the Sorter Descriptions

Temperament can be seen like the rings of a tree ^[1]. At the inner ring a person is either introspective or observant. The second ring determines whether or not an individual is cooperative or is pragmatic. The third ring indicates whether an individual is directive or is informative. And the fourth ring indicates whether an individual is expressive or attentive.

- **The inner ring - Abstract versus Concrete**

According to Keirsey, everyone can both observe and introspect. When people touch objects, watch a basketball game, taste food, and in short perceive the world through their senses they are being observant. When people reflect, introspect and pay attention to what is going on inside their heads they are being introspective. Keirsey also believes that someone cannot observe and introspect at the same time. And he believes the extent to which people are being observant or are being introspective has a direct effect on their behavior.

People who are primarily observant are more 'down to earth', are more concrete in their worldview, and tend to focus on practical matters such as food, shelter and their immediate relationships. Keirsey likened these concrete people to Earthlings. Carl Jung used the word [sensing](#) to describe concrete people. People who are primarily introspective are more 'head in the clouds', are more abstract in their world view, and tend to focus on global issues. Keirsey likened introspective people to Martians. [Carl Jung](#) used the word [intuition](#) to describe abstract people.

- **The second ring - Cooperative versus Utilitarian (Pragmatic)**

Keirsey uses the words pragmatic and cooperative 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 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, hence this is a major difference between the work of David Keirsey versus Isabel Myers and Carl Jung.

This ring determines a person's temperament. The pragmatic temperaments are [Rationals](#) (pragmatic Martians) and [Artisans](#) (pragmatic Earthlings). The cooperative temperaments are [Idealists](#) (cooperative Martians), and [Guardians](#) (cooperative Earthlings).

- **The third ring - Directive versus Informative**

The third ring distinguishes between people who primarily communicate by informing others versus people who primarily 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 Reserved (Attentive)**

The fourth ring describes how people interact in with their environment. Individuals who primarily say and do before they listen and watch are described as expressive whereas people who primarily listen and watch before they say and do 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 reserved role variants are: [Crafters](#) (reserved Operators), [Composers](#) (reserved Entertainers), [Inspectors](#) (reserved Administrators), [Protectors](#) (reserved Conservators), [Counselors](#) (reserved Mentors), [Healers](#) (reserved Advocates), [Masterminds](#) (reserved Coordinators), and [Architects](#) (reserved Engineers).

The following table shows how the four steps relate to each other and to the various temperaments.

Temperaments and Intelligence Types			
	Temperament	Role	Role Variant
Abstract or Concrete?	Cooperative or Utilitarian?	Directive or Informative?	Expressive or Reserved?
Martian (N) Introspective	Idealist (NF) Diplomatic	Mentor (NFJ) <i>Developing</i>	Teacher (ENFJ): <i>Educating</i> Counselor (INFJ): <i>Guiding</i>
		Advocate (NFP) <i>Mediating</i>	Champion (ENFP): <i>Motivating</i> Healer (INFP): <i>Conciliating</i>
	Rational (NT) Strategic	Coordinator (NTJ) <i>Arranging</i>	Fieldmarshal (ENTJ): <i>Mobilizing</i> Mastermind (INTJ): <i>Entailing</i>
Earthing (S) Observant	Guardian (SJ) Logistical	Engineer (NTP) <i>Constructing</i>	Inventor (ENTP): <i>Devising</i> Architect (INTP): <i>Designing</i>
		Administrator (STJ) <i>Regulating</i>	Supervisor (ESTJ): <i>Enforcing</i> Inspector (ISTJ): <i>Certifying</i>
	Artisan (SP) Tactical	Conservator (SFJ) <i>Supporting</i>	Provider (ESFJ): <i>Supplying</i> Protector (ISFJ): <i>Securing</i>
		Operator (STP) <i>Expediting</i>	Promoter (ESTP): <i>Persuading</i> Crafter (ISTP): <i>Instrumenting</i>
		Entertainer (SFP) <i>Improvising</i>	Performer (ESFP): <i>Demonstrating</i> Composer (ISFP): <i>Synthesizing</i>

The Four Temperaments

- **Artisans** are observant and pragmatic. **Composers**, **Crafters**, **Performers**, and **Promoters** are the role variants contained within this temperament. Their greatest strength is tactical variation. Their most developed intelligence operations is either expediting or improvising.
- **Guardians** are observant and cooperative. **Protectors**, **Inspectors**, **Supervisors**, and **Providers** are the role variants contained within this category. Guardians seek membership or belonging and are concerned with responsibility and duty. Their greatest strength is logistical intelligence. They excel at organizing, facilitating, checking, and supporting.
- **Idealists** are introspective and cooperative. **Healers**, **Counselors**, **Champions** and **Teachers** are the role variants contained within this category. Idealists seek meaning and significance and are concerned with finding their own unique identity. Their greatest strength is diplomatic intelligence. They excel at clarifying, unifying, individualizing, and inspiring.
- **Rationals** are introspective and pragmatic. **Architects**, **Masterminds**, **Inventors** and **Fieldmarshals** are the role variants contained within this category. Rationals seek mastery and self-control and are concerned with their own knowledge and competence. Their greatest strength is strategic intelligence. They excel in any kind of logical investigation such as engineering, conceptualizing, theorizing, and coordinating.

The Eight Roles

- **Operators** are observant, pragmatic, and directive. **Crafters** and **Promoters** are two of the four role variants of the directive Artisans.
- **Entertainers** are observant, pragmatic and informative. **Composers** and **Performers** are two of the four role variants of the informative Artisans.
- **Administrators** are observant, cooperative, and directive. **Inspectors** and **Supervisors** are two of the four role variants of the directive Guardians.
- **Conservators** are observant, cooperative, and informative. **Protectors** and **Providers** are two of the four role variants of the informative Guardians.
- **Mentors** are introspective, cooperative, and directive. **Counselors** and **Teachers** are two of the four role variants of the directive Idealists.

- [Advocates](#) are introspective, cooperative and informative. [Healers](#) and [Champions](#) are two of the four role variants of the informative Idealists.
- [Coordinators](#) are introspective, pragmatic and directive. [Masterminds](#) and [Fieldmarshals](#) are two of the four role variants of the directive Rationals.
- [Engineers](#) are introspective, pragmatic and informative. [Architects](#) and [Inventors](#) are two of the four role variants of the informative Rationals.

Myers-Briggs Types versus Keirsey's Temperaments

Isabel Myers type descriptions and David Keirsey character descriptions have several differences between them. One of the primary differences between the two models is that Myers was primarily focused on how people think and feel whereas Keirsey is focused more on how people behave. Keirsey notes that one cannot directly observe what people think or feel. A second important difference is that the Myers used a linear four-factor model in her descriptions whereas Keirsey uses a systems field theory model in his descriptions. A third important difference is the emphasis Keirsey and Myers place on certain dichotomies or preferences. Keirsey believes that whether someone is observant or is introspective is a much more important distinction than whether someone is expressive (somewhat correlated to extroverted) or attentive (somewhat correlated to introverted). On the other hand, Jung, and hence Myers, placed the most emphasis on whether or not someone is extraverted or introverted. A fourth difference is the difference between 'function attitudes' in Myers-Briggs and temperament types in Keirsey's models.

To compare the two models, Myers-Briggs types were grouped by function types. Introverted thinkers and extroverted thinkers were placed into the grouping 'thinking type', introverted and extroverted intuitives were placed into the grouping 'intuitive type', introverted and extroverted feelers were placed into the grouping 'feeling type', introverted and extroverted sensors were placed into the grouping 'sensing type'.

Myers considers ESTJs and ENTJs, ISFPs and INFPs, INTPs and ISTPs, and ENFJs and ESFJs to be very similar because they are of 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. Keirsey believes 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.^[2]

References

1. [^ Keirsey Temperament versus Myers-Briggs Types](#)
2. [^ The Four Dimensions of Myers](#)