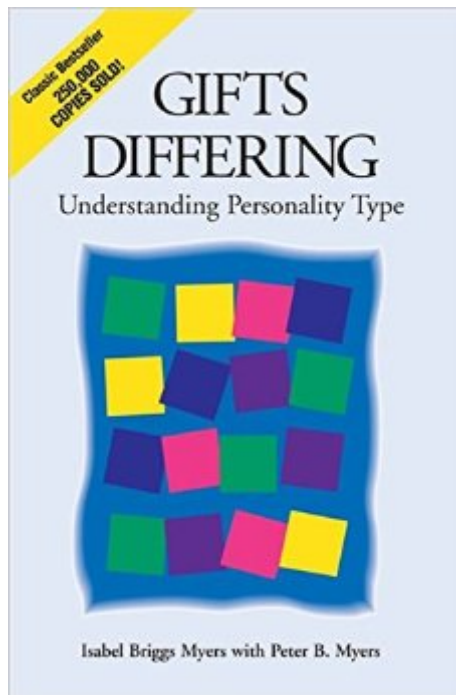


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# Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type



## Synopsis

With over twenty-five years in print and more than two hundred and fifty thousand copies sold, *Gifts Differing* has helped to define our understanding of personality. Written by the creators of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®<sup>®</sup>, this book explains the essential personality types and their practical significance in your daily life; in school, at a job, in a career, or in your personal relationships.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you are at all interested in the Myers-Briggs personality typing system, this book should be number one on your reading list. Unlike 95% of the books on the subject, this one is not a bunch of pop psychology fluff. This is one of the only books on the subject with any depth at all to it. And it's a good thing it does, seeing as it was written by the co-creator of the MBTI herself, Isabel Myers. Unlike other "Please Understand Me" or "Type Talk", this book actually deals with the Jungian basis of personality, and not just the four letters associated with each type. The Jungian personality typing system is based on the concept of dominant functions. ENFPs and ENTPs for instance are both "Extraverted Intuitives", which is what defines the way they think more than anything. (And ENFJ, on the other hand is an "Extraverted Feeler"). You won't be taught these concepts in most other books on the subject. Isabel also eloquently explains why the MB system is different, especially concerning introverts, from Jung's original system. If you're interested in MB personality types and actually wish to read a book by some one who knows what they are talking about and isn't just writing to sell pop psychology best seller, read this book. This is also a must read if you have been

trying to reconcile Jung with the MBTI and have had trouble doing so.

Written with exquisite care, *Gifts Differing* is one of those rare books to be pondered and reread. I first read it in 1980 when it first came out, and my copy is dog-eared and much underlined. It is not for casual reading, or a quick approach to finding out about one's personality type. Wanting to get Carl Jung's ideas of the psychological types out of the psychiatrist's office into general use, she wrote *Gifts Differing* to lay out the theory for general readers, with care and in detail. It is a classic, will never be "out of date," and I strongly recommend it for anyone who has been affected by her instrument, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and wants to go deeper into the ingenious theory she fleshed out from Jung's work.

This book gives an overview of the history and theory behind the widely used Myers-Briggs personality type inventory, and briefly but thoroughly summarizes the characteristics of each personality type as well as the "groups" of related types. This is straight from the horse's mouth: Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother, Katharine Briggs, developed the inventory based on Jung's theory of psychological types, and tested it extensively before it became widely used. The book is generally well organized, easy to read, and clearly written, with occasional touches of humor. But it won't help you identify your type if you don't already know it -- I recommend Kiersey's "Please Understand Me" for that. Still, it's a good resource if you already know your type and want to find out more about it. (Incidentally, you don't have to swallow Jung's psychological theories whole in order to find the Myers-Briggs useful!)

I cannot say enough good things about this book. I finally read it, after letting it sit on my shelf for more than a year. I wish I had read it sooner, and frankly I wish I had read it ten years ago; it would have saved me a lot of grief. On the other hand, would I have understood it ten years ago? I'm not so sure. I absolutely loved the writing style, and another reviewer despised it. I turned out to be the same TYPE as one of the authors, so I wonder if that makes a difference. See? Already I am trying to apply the type theory to the problem of differing points of view. I do agree that the book is very difficult reading, and that the authors did talk very early about some things as if we understood it already, however I was very lucky. I stayed with it and at some point I had an a-ha moment about part of the theory that I didn't quite get. I re-read some of the earlier parts, and all of a sudden they made perfect sense. The theory really is very beautiful, and consistent with itself, and other theories. I really credit the good writing with getting the theory across in a very accessible way, if you stick

with it and are open-minded. Finally I want to mention that I started reading "Do What You Are" by Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger first, before reading this book. I do like that book very much, but one thing I couldn't do with that book was properly figure out my type. I could narrow it down, but not very well, because other close types seemed so attractive. Reading the first sections of Gifts Differing helped me figure out my own type much more quickly and confidently, and by the end of the book I was absolutely sure. It was amazing. Now I've gone back to reading the other book, and I am getting a lot more out of it since I can focus on my proper type. I love it.

I've studied type for years, I am a qualified practitioner of type, and I teach type at the college level. Type exists in its current practical, useable form because of the work of Isabel Briggs Myers, summarized by her in this fine book. Please do not take the advice of the reviewer who recommended Keirsey's book for assessing your own type. Find a qualified practitioner and take the MBTI; discuss your results; and validate your type with an expert. And read and enjoy this wonderful book which is just filled with insightful and useful information about type.

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