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Personality traits

Enduring dispositions in behavior that show differences across individuals, and which tend to characterize the person across varying types of situations.

Three requirements for something to be a trait:

1. **Consistency.** People have to exhibit a characteristic behavior at least somewhat consistently across situations. *If there is no consistency in how talkative a person is, then talkativeness is not a trait.*
2. **Stability** over time. *If people change (completely) in how talkative they are as they age, then talkativeness is not a trait.*
3. **Individual Differences.** People need to differ from one another. *Whether or not someone talks is not a trait because (pretty much) everyone talks.*

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Personality =

Answer to the “who are you?” question.

Is it possible to even get a valid answer?

- A. Yes people have a lot of experience with themselves
- B. Not sure
- C. No people have limited self-awareness and plenty of biases

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How to assess personality?

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Projective Tests



- Respondents look at unclear images and tell the test administrator what they see
 - example: Rorschach inkblot test
- Test administrators then score the responses and use those scores to make inferences about the individual's personality and mental state
 - example: a slow response to the picture is said to mean that the person has difficulty with relationships
- **Drawback:** expensive to administer, yields information that tends to be redundant with simpler, self-report assessments
- **Benefit:** does not depend on the self-awareness of respondents
 - is limited self-awareness even a problem?

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Lexical Hypothesis

the idea that the most important differences between people will be encoded in the **language** that we use to describe people. Therefore, if we want to know which personality traits are most important, we can look to the language that people use to describe themselves and others.

Early personality psychologists (Allport & Odbert, 1936) mined the dictionary for terms that describe people.



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Goals:

1. **Simplicity** "...as simple as possible". Reduce the number of traits that people needed to rate to the fewest number possible.
2. **Comprehensiveness** "...but not simpler" (than possible). Cover the entirety of what differentiates people.

Strategy:

- have lots of people rate themselves on all of the traits
- use a fancy statistical tool called Factor Analysis to identify the essential few traits
- led to the "discovery" of five major dimensions of personality: the "Big Five"

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restaurant example of factor analysis

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vibe	price	taste
quiet	expensive	disgusting
no wait	if you're rich	barf
busy	cheap	devoured
loud	affordable	delicious
long line		

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Factor analysis
 A statistical technique for grouping similar things together according to how highly they are associated.

it produced the...

Five-Factor Model
 (also called the Big Five) The Five-Factor Model is a widely accepted model of personality traits. Advocates of the model believe that much of the variability in people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors can be summarized with five broad traits. These five traits are **OCEAN**: **O**penness, **C**onscientiousness, **E**xtraversion, **A**greeableness, and **N**euroticism.

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Openness to New Experiences (AKA Intellect or Imagination)	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Have a vivid imagination	Get chores done right away	Am the life of the party	Sympathize with others' feelings	Have frequent mood swings
Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas	Like order	Talk to a lot of different people at parties	Feel others' emotions	Get upset easily
Am not interested in abstract ideas	Often forget to put things back in their proper place	Don't talk a lot	Am not interested in others	Am relaxed most of the time
Do not have a good imagination	Make a mess of things	Keep in the background	Am not in other people's problems	Seldom feel blue

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Can people accurately self-report their personalities?

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It looks like a duck,
swims like a duck,
and quacks like a duck...
then it's probably a duck

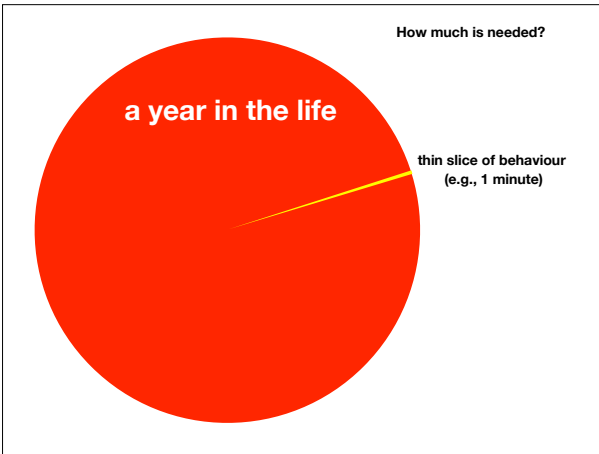
Is this a duck?

- A. not sure
- B. possibly
- C. maybe
- D. probably
- E. definitely

Called the "Duck Test"
Abductive Reasoning: drawing the most probably and simplest explanation for a set of observations

Applied to self-reports of personality
• if they are stable over time
• if they predict behavior
• and if they predict observers' impressions,
then they probably measure a person's actual personality

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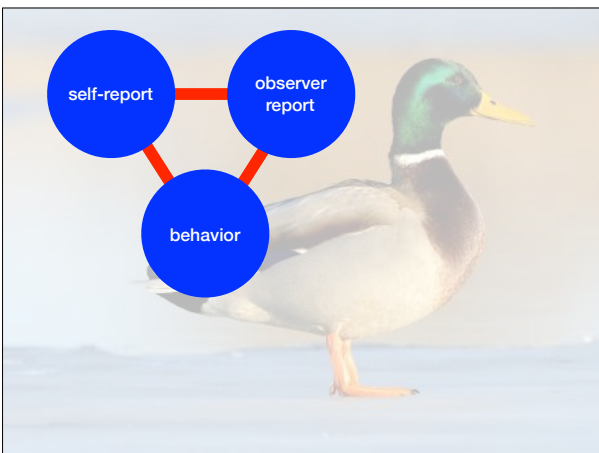
Was the class accurate?

did self-reports and observers' reports converge?

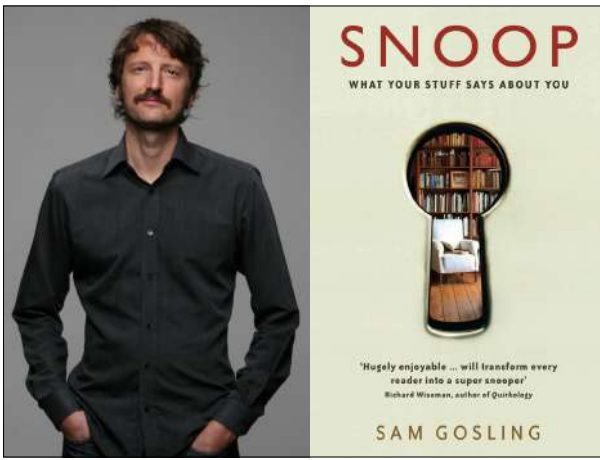
	Self- and Observer-Report Correlation
Openness	0.35
Conscientiousness	0.51
Extraversion	0.52
Agreeableness	0.31
Neuroticism	0.34

Donnellan et al. (2006)

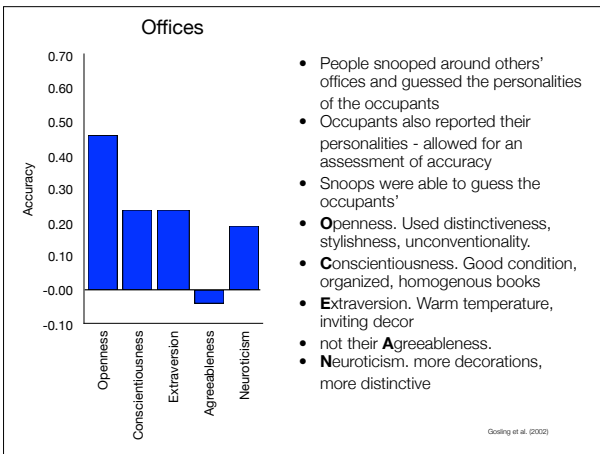
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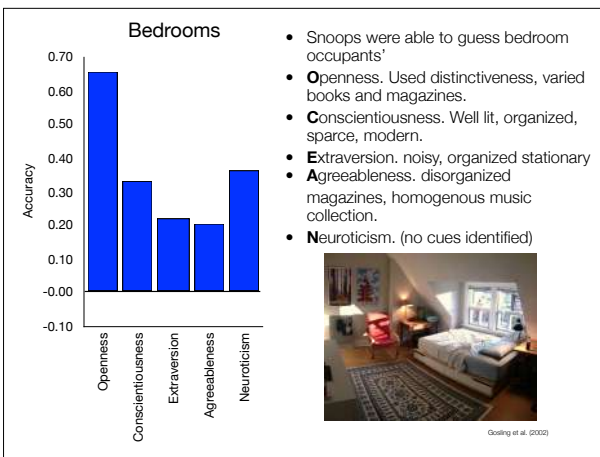
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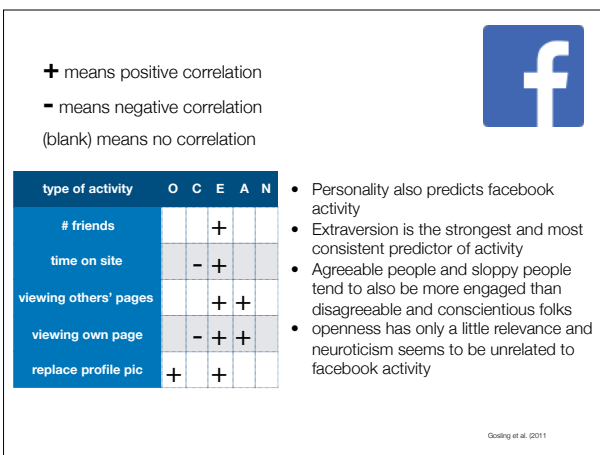
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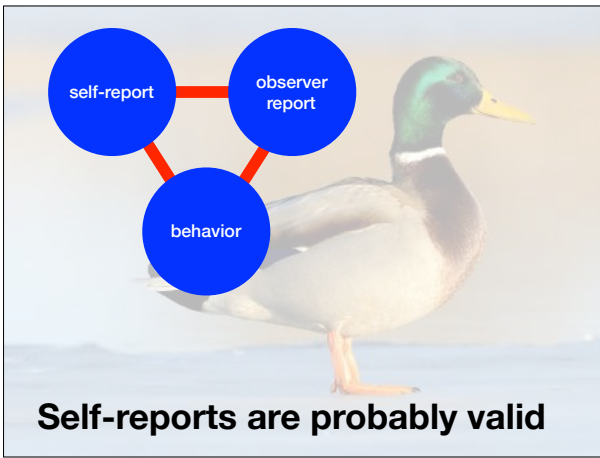
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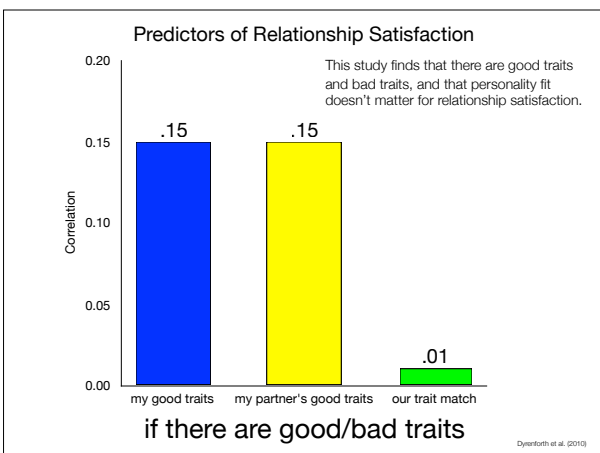


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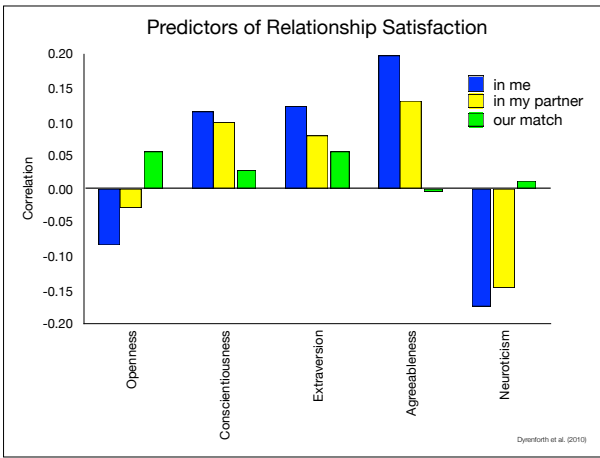
In romantic relationships

A. It's all about good traits
 B. more about good traits than fit
 C. both equally
 D. more about fit than good traits
 E. It's all about fit

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Predictors of...	Relationship Satisfaction			Relationship Duration		
	within partners	match	ratio	within partners	match	ratio
being in a relationship	0.070	0.070	1.0	0.221	0.014	15.8
having children	0.060	0.060	1.0	0.173	0.008	21.6
career	-0.060	0.025	2.4	-0.129	0.007	18.4
hobbies	-0.045	0.010	4.5	-0.010	0.004	2.5
social contacts	-0.045	0.010	4.5	-0.007	0.001	7.0

Becker (2012)

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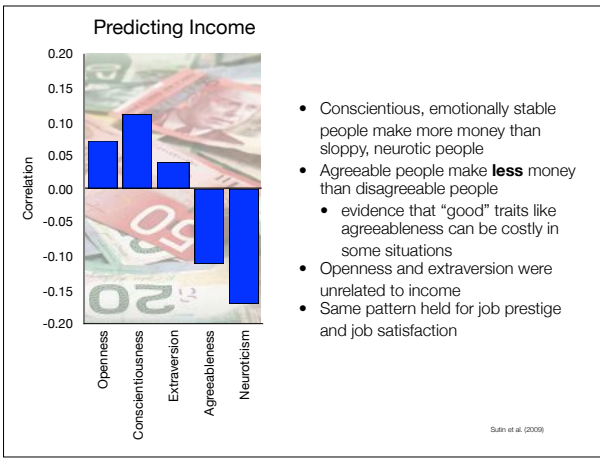
A theory on why people are different in the first place

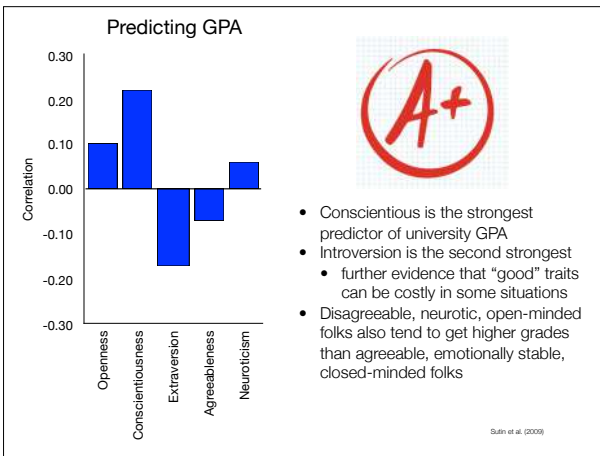
readiness and adaptation

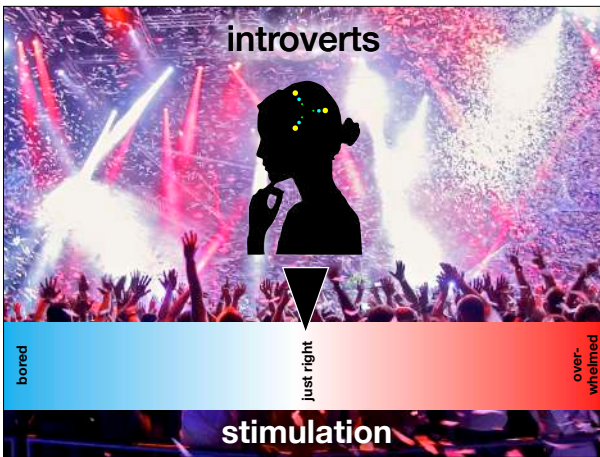
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High	Low
O penness to Experience, Inventive, Unpredictable, Lack of Focus, Risk-taking	Consistent, Cautious, Practical Dogmatic, Closed-minded
C onscientiousness, Efficient, Organized Stubborn	Easy-going, Flexible Sloppy
E xtraversion, Energetic, Talkative Attention-seeking, domineering	Introverted, Reflective Aloof, Self-Absorbed
A greeableness, Compassionate, Cooperative Naive, Submissive	Competitive, Questioning Argumentative, Untrustworthy
N euroticism, Unstable, Insecure Excitable, Dynamic	Emotionally Stable, Calm Uninspiring, Unconcerned

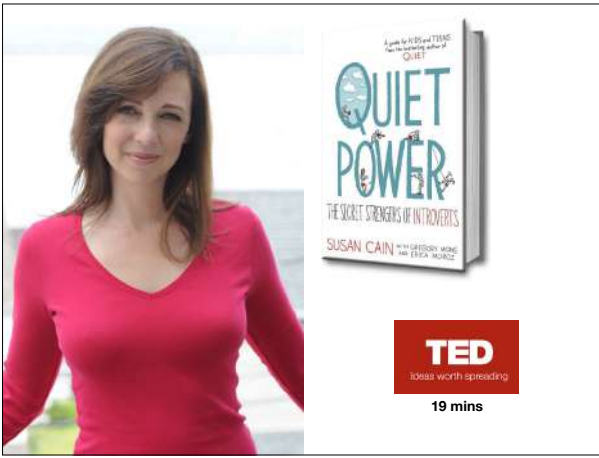
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Person-Situation Debate
 an historical debate about the relative power of personality traits as compared to situational influences on behavior.

The situationist critique of personality suggested that people overestimate the extent to which personality traits are consistent across situations.

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Cashier Friendliness

Factor	Correlation with Friendliness, r
Extraversion	~0.18
Emotional Stability	~0.14
Busy Store	~0.13
Early in the Day	~0.30

- Are some cashiers friendly because of their **personalities?** Or because of the **situation in the store?**
- Researchers assessed two personality dimensions and two situational factors and coded how friendly cashiers were toward customers
- **personality mattered.** Extraverted and emotionally stable cashiers were more friendly than introverted and neurotic cashiers.
- **situational factors mattered too.** Cashiers were friendlier in the morning than the afternoon, and were friendlier when the store was busy

Tan et al. (2003)

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Effects on Behaviour

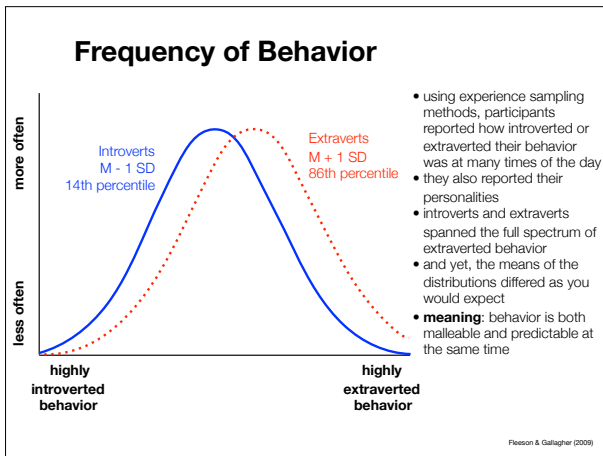
Factor	Correlation with Behaviour, r
Personality	0.21
Situation	0.23

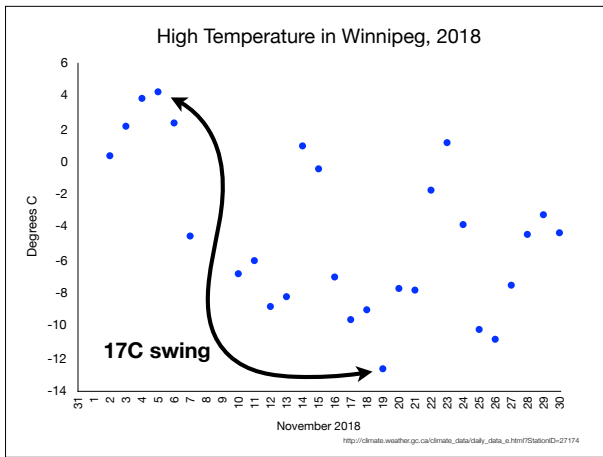
- A person's personality might influence their behavior
- Situational factors might also influence behaviour
- Which has a greater influence?
- a review of 100 years of psychological research (25,000 studies with 8 million participants) found that... they are they are very similar

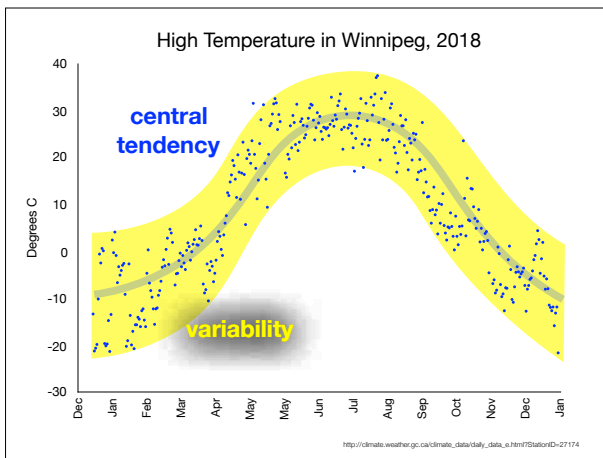
Richard, Bond, and Stokes-Zoota (2003)

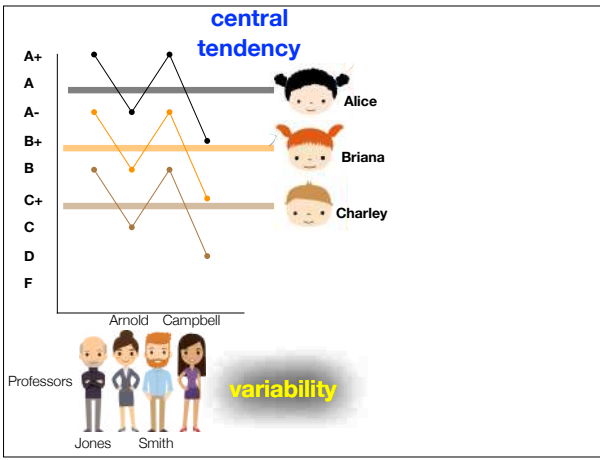
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the existence of variability does not negate the possibility of differences in central tendencies





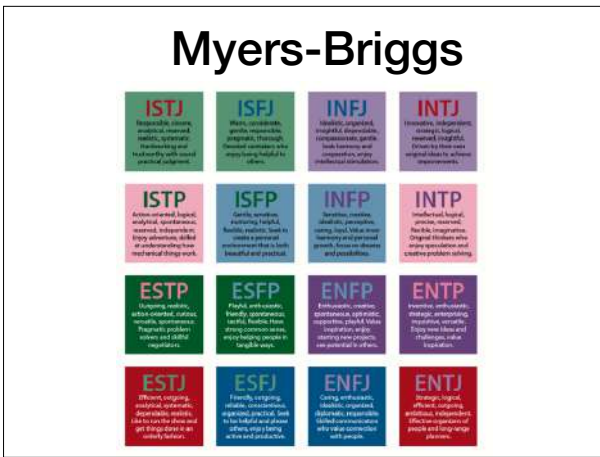




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Domain	Variability	Central Tendency
Temperature	Weather jet stream, polar vortex shifts, warm fronts, cold fronts	Climate seasons, climate change
University Grade	Professors some professors give easier tests than others	Student some students tend to score higher on tests than others
Human Behaviour	Situational Factors how many people are there, what is happening?	Personality Traits O.C.E.A.N.

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Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

- Four factor personality model used in business setting
- 1. **EI** = **Extraversion** vs. **Introversion**
 - learning through **talking with others** or through **introspection**
 - correlates strongly with Big 5 **Extraversion** ($r = -.74$)
- 2. **SN** = **Sensing** vs. **Intuition**
 - detailed** or **abstract** thinking style
 - correlates strongly with Big 5 **Openness** ($r = .72$)
- 3. **TF** = **Thinking** vs. **Feeling**
 - focus on **objective truth** or **people's feelings and stories**
 - correlates strongly with Big 5 **Agreeableness** ($r = .44$)
- 4. **JP** = **Judging** vs. **Perceiving**
 - structured and systematic** or **unstructured, fluid** approach to understanding the world
 - correlates strongly with Big 5 **Conscientiousness** ($r = -.49$)
- not popular among personality psychologists
 - doesn't capture neuroticism
 - questionable validity
 - dimensions, not types

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