

Personality Types and the Trinity

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Introduction

This analysis is built on research I conducted early in life, while studying various personality theories. While I personally dislike the idea of personality types, zodiacs, and compatibility charts, it would be dishonest of me to say that they are all wrong. A surprising number of them do seem to reveal an inherent division of personalities, perhaps connected to a person's date of birth, name, or other factors. As a result, I have tried to accept this phenomenon, so that I can better coexist with those who are different from myself. Rather than assuming everyone has a similar human nature at their core, I must accept that God has given mankind various dispositions from birth, and still asks us to love each other.

Personal Touch personality

Imagine a playful trickster deity who flies around with a bag of tricks and trivia, surprising people while spreading his or her fame across the land. This is the irrational impulse of the "Personal Touch" person, who desires to be a source of constant inspiration. They are "easy come, easy go" about social situations, wanting to be more of a celebrity butterfly than a predictable pillar of a group. They like to charm others and mingle, but avoid getting too mushy or vulnerable when one-on-one. They keep some mystique around themselves. They are very quick-witted and adaptable, but not very "deep" about ideas or philosophy either. The less rooted they are, the more they thrive. They make excellent drifters, touring artists, or roaming specialists. They will often defy "the system" (whatever system they are trapped in) and find a way to become an exception to

the rules; then they will help others do the same. They can feel suffocated by expectations and anxious about being “real” with others.

They don't often get along with other Personal Touch people, seeing them as competitors rather than allies. “*This town ain't big enough for the both of us*” suits them when it comes to each other. By contrast, they value the insights and depth of character found in System Logic people, finding their sincerity and stability admirable. They try to win over and borrow credibility from System Logic people to enhance their own carefully constructed personas. When it comes to Tribal Reality people, they make easy friends but end up bored or frustrated by them, since Tribal Reality people offer nothing but loyalty.

Personal Touch people tend to gravitate into the spotlight of drama, because they will act a referees between others. They are instinctively peacekeepers. But they are also secret-hoarders, manipulators, and information brokers, using their many personal connections to build up a protective arsenal of knowledge about the people who might threaten them. They like to gossip, snoop around, and dig up dirt on people when they feel vulnerable. They make for natural artists, salespeople, politicians, managers, or other positions that rely on positive perception by strangers. They make effective con artists if they want to go that direction. They don't care very much about morality and proper rules, except insofar as it harms or helps others; they naturally prioritize feelings more than truth and justice.

As a Personal Touch person gets older, it becomes more difficult to keep up the act. Not only that, but people expect them to settle down and become more pragmatic, and this pressure matters to them. If this goes poorly, they can struggle to deal with commitments and end up feeling trapped, if not “exposed”. Their persona wears thin, they compromise too often to please their partner, and the relationships they form ring hollow. They often need to have several children or pets, as these will inspire them by being sincere, silly, innocent; all of which they wish they still were. As they vicariously enjoy the inspiring journey of life through their dependents, they learn to settle on a less mysterious identity, take on real responsibility, and use whatever skills and knowledge they've accumulated to serve their loved ones.

System Logic personality

Imagine an old hermit in a stone tower, far away from the bustle of city life, with magical autonomous servants who do the chores as he reads books and tinkers with research. This is the irrational impulse of the “System Logic” person, who desires an intellectual life of ease and pragmatism. They don't need any excitement in their life—especially not from other people's drama and feelings—and would rather spend their days comfortably solving puzzles or investigating claims. They want to know what's true and what's right. They piece together insights to try to build a working model of reality, and test these observations by watching what happens around them.

They see a “system” behind everything, and can become fixated on understanding how things interact. They judge people harshly, including themselves, and do not respect people easily. They do not handle surprises very well, and do not adapt quickly to change. They hate being subjected to arbitrary decisions, since they want everything to proceed from rational causes and lead to rational results. And while they are slow to learn compared to others, they are methodical, and this allows them to integrate what they learn more deeply than others do, understanding the second or third level of implications. They learn by observing others, reading, and absorbing knowledge second-hand, not needing to personally experience something. They treat conversations and relationships with other people as a means to improve their knowledge and share insights, not create emotional bonds.

System Logic people tend to shun social events and appreciate other System Logic people. They may appreciate how quickly Personal Touch people pick up on concepts, but see them as shallow when the conversation goes deeper and the Personal Touch person loses interest. The more they interact with Tribal Reality people, the more they either feel sorry for them or hate them, as they display a herd mentality and refuse to learn through evidence and reasoning. They have no need for a tribe, and would prefer that dehumanized systems handle everyone’s needs. In a perfect System Logic world, nobody really needs anybody else.

Due to their concern with theory and logic, they can become disconnected from reality around them. The very real factors of other people’s feelings and irrational needs barely register to them. They try not to let their own feelings and needs impose on others, and expect others to do the same. They often take matters of principle and truth very seriously, on the other hand, and can devote themselves to entirely theoretical causes with no real-world importance, just to prove a point. They are willing to sacrifice relationships and people in order to stand up for a moral truth. They make strong ideologues.

However, when a System Logic person is mistaken about how things work, their misconceptions lead to more serious consequences than those who always balance their own sense of principle with approval or consensus from others. Their delusions can be more lasting, ingrained, and lead to more damaging implications. They are not as easily manipulated by emotion or charm as others, since they don’t trust people or care much about them, but they can be fooled by what seems to be documented, proven, authoritative, and impersonal. They tend to be disillusioned and cynical about things, whether because they’ve had their worldview proven wrong repeatedly and no longer know what they can trust, or because they’ve learned how wrong and hopeless everything around them is. They tend to invest their effort into smaller and more manageable causes, eventually; this allows them to engineer a system that suits for their own personal family or home. They might join a project or institution in need of help, and let the nonsense of other people pass them by as they focus on a more realistic set of problems to solve.

Tribal Reality personality

Imagine a soldier marching to war with his trusted band of companions in a glorious battle to defend his family, his country, and his king from the opposing side, knowing that he will die for his fellows, and they will die for him. This is the irrational impulse of the “Tribal Reality” person, who desires meaningful comradery and validation from their team. They see everything in terms of sides, factions, groups, and potential threats from rivals. They know that there is strength in numbers, and that the sum of a unified group is much greater than its parts. They view the world in terms of power dynamics, not ideologies or systems; these are convenient lies meant to hide what’s really going on. They are driven by a need to be accepted by the group, and to protect those who protect them. They want to guard their team against outsiders who can’t be trusted—those who refuse to submit to the supremacy of the tribe. They only learn from firsthand experience, not really believing anything they’re told, since ideas are all untrustworthy to them. One person says one thing, another contradicts it; who can say what the truth is, unless one personally goes through it themselves? But when they do go through an experience, no matter how anecdotal and illogical, this becomes their bedrock of certainty they carry with them. They value such experiences. They want to be part of social events, which help forge their team together, while unifying their shared experiences.

When brought together with other Tribal Reality people, they quickly validate each other, reinforcing their sense of potential, and make allowance for each other’s vices and bad habits in order to build up loyalty and solidarity. They would never let lofty ideas get in between them and their mates. They hate how judgmental System Logic people are. They will defend their friends from being judged, even if they know it’s accurate, because the team’s morale is more important than the truth. Accordingly, they will collectively find fault with the System Logic person, and work against them. They know that being cut off from the tribe is the worst fate a person can suffer, and punish System Logic people by devoting themselves to work against whatever ideology the System Logic person upholds. They have no problem sabotaging and lying in order to crush the enemies of the tribe. They don’t easily forgive or forget when it comes to such threats. They refuse to allow systems and policies to override the raw needs and demands of the group, but they can be relatively easily steered by insider leadership, as long as the leader reinforces the unifying mission or bonding basis of the group. Personal Touch people often fill this leadership role, since they are affable and non-judgmental, easy to get along with, and very quick to fuel the Tribal Reality person’s trust, and have few scruples about manipulating others. But even with plenty of bonding experiences and memorable social events, there is little of substance between them, as the Personal Touch person does not want to be lumped in with the tribe and only uses them for their own purposes.

Tribal Reality people can be vicious and relentless in serving their “side”, going much further than anyone else if there is an existential threat, though usually without much of a plan. They will endure rigid training, do hard work, go along with manipulative lies, and even sacrifice themselves for the good of their faction when push comes to shove. They view it as the highest honor, the deepest meaning, and the most fulfilling purpose in life to serve the team; the ideology or cause is secondary at best.

Tribal Reality people can end up feeling betrayed and cynical early in life, as youthful social circles that were built on naive trust eventually succumb to divisions, drama, and a cycle of retaliations. Friends turn against each other, and the individual person finds that they need to be more careful about who they give their trust to next time. This leads to status seeking, since the ability to appeal to every group and quickly join the favored one at a time of crisis is more practical than true devotion to an arbitrary group. Creating “inner circles” within groups is another way to hedge against collapse and betrayal. Marrying and having kids is often attempted as a way to build a theoretically indestructible team, but this never goes according to plan, leaving a fragmented family with outsiders who become the biggest liabilities of all. A successful Tribal Reality person learns to trust only a handful of people, while operating smoothly with everyone if possible, not allowing tribalism to interfere with common interests and pragmatism, even though this is less romantic and satisfying than they would prefer.

Correlating Personality Types with church functions

As I said before, this is not the only personality chart that applies to people, which means that there are a variety of forces and influences build into our minds. These forces heavily affect the way we feel about each other, about ideas, and about what matters, but do not strictly control us. We have free will, but our free will is not free from invisible influences. Therefore we must struggle with our own ignorance, temptations, and biases in order to manifest the better parts of our nature.

As a Christian I cannot help but notice how each of these personality types could play a positive role in the Kingdom of God. Personal Touch people seem to be naturally suited to traveling and evangelizing, writing songs, creating art, healing, and peacemaking. They do not overstay their welcome, but pollinate the world with the good news, confident in their ability to adapt and overcome hardship, and thereby set a good example. System Logic people might be suited to organizing the church’s affairs, analyzing what’s happening around them, leading doctrinal investigations, and sorting out matters so that everything can be consistent, efficient, and in conformity to the truth, rather than popular sentiment or what’s convenient. Tribal Reality people might be suited for daily duties, choirs, team projects, and the important role of maintaining and enforcing standards through peer pressure. This is called for by Christ, when he told the churches not to tolerate wicked people and false doctrine, and the combined influence of Tribal Reality people who are aligned with proper doctrine can work wonders.

But each of these personality types also has a dark side, and these are often what come to define Christian churches in our culture. The Personal Touch person can become the wolf in sheep’s clothing, the predator who knows how to manipulate others while maintaining charming appearances or raking in money. The System Logic person can become the lukewarm and uncharitable loner, the misguided ideologue who leads others astray, or the control-freak who tramples people’s valid feelings in the attempt to prevent confusion. The Tribal Reality person can become the inner circle builder, the mindless groupie follower, and the enabler or enforcer for cult

leaders, corrupt factions, and the disobedient, all for the sake of protecting their circle. They can ostracize and cut off people who wish to raise concerns or question the group. So each personality type can be a blessing or a curse.

Correlating Personality Types to the Trinity

It's tempting to surmise that each of the three personality types might have a correlation to the nature of God, since we are made in God's image; and by this we understand that our hearts and natures reflect His, not our physical form. If this is the case, I suspect that the person of the Father would correlate the most with the System Logic personality, since the Father perfectly organizes Creation while remaining outside of it. He determines its physical laws and its fate, while residing far above it. He uses it as His footstool, for His own pleasure. He is in full control, demanding obedience in all things, judging all things, and withholding mysteries from those who cannot be trusted. The Father seems aloof and distant to Creation, because He is too powerful and pure for Creation to behold or comprehend. He is the consuming fire, sparing not the children and the women in His wrath, prioritizing Righteousness and Truth over the feelings of anyone, determining what must happen from the beginning, and bending all things to that end. By nature He is impossible to reach, impossible to please, and impossible to behold.

Yet Creation was not made for the Father, but for the Son; this is because the Son is the Father's projection into Creation. If the Father were to display Himself fully to Creation it would all be annihilated by His power and majesty, since nothing can behold His presence (except the Son). So the Father must make Himself known to Creation through the Son, while keeping Himself distant. By nature, this projection must always be less glorified than the Father, since it must be understood by lesser beings who can only understand things that are less glorious than the Father. The Son is the method by which the Father interacts with Creation. The Son is the only witness of the Father, the only one who testifies of Him and communicates His will, and the only bridge to Him. The Son is symbolized as the Lamb that is sacrificed despite being perfect in nature, caused to be vulnerable, allowed to be attacked, and volunteered to be rejected. It is also symbolized by the Word, which is always being sent forth to spread the misunderstood message which redeems Creation and reconciles it to the Father. The Son/Lamb/Word is therefore always being sent out, always being disgraced, and always being sacrificed; but He is conversely being uplifted and glorified by the Father. The Son/Lamb/Word obtains greater and greater authority as it is subjected to more and more humiliation and rejection, as the Father refuses to let Creation diminish His projected self, which was only allowed to be attacked because it was necessary in order to be comprehended.

When we see the role of the Son throughout the Bible and history—who was presumed to be the Father when revealing Himself to every person, prophet, and king who spoke to God—we realize that God the Father was never known, only the Son projecting forth the will and mind of the Father. The Son is the one who convenes with the council of angels in Heaven; the Son is the one

who chose His tribe from the world, and picked His servants from within that tribe. The Son divides everything into competing sides, and protects His own side from utter defeat. The Son sets His servants against the enemy, and ensures their victory. The Son carries out the blessings and curses, gives the Laws, guides the destinies, sends forth the prophecies, and interferes in worldly events in ways that might seem demeaning for the Almighty Father to do. The Son has boundless mercy on those who are on His side, despite their flaws, so long as they remain loyal. He is not a stickler for rules, laws, and perfection when there is something greater to be accomplished; He is willing to make exceptions, change His mind, listens to special pleas, devise new strategies, and “get His hands dirty” in the direct affairs of heaven and earth. This is more like the Tribal Reality person than the System Logic person.

If these two personalities are correlated with the Father and Son, this would leave only the Personal Touch personality to correlate with the Holy Spirit. This might be appropriate, since the Holy Spirit comes and goes in mysterious ways, inspiring profound change and understanding in people without needing to use logic. It is the most direct, and yet the least understood, way for God to influence the hearts of mankind. It manipulates and transforms those chosen, and does so without their consent or knowledge, imposing the will of the glorified Son. It is not possible for the weak will of mankind to resist the power of the Holy Spirit when it decides to act. The Holy Spirit is what irrationally enables mankind to “hear the Word”, or in other words, to align their mind with the glorified Son, whose purpose is to carry out the will of the Father. The Spirit is far too dynamic, unpredictable, and mysterious to ever be attacked, countered, or prevented from working effectively, which is how a Personal Touch personality operates in theory. The Holy Spirit is the projection of the Son into man’s hearts.

Apology

When I compare God’s divine nature to the personalities of flawed humans, I am by no means ascribing our flaws to Him, but rather seeking to understand some of the mysteries of God’s choices. For example, why does God the Father not enter Creation as His glorified self and face mankind directly? Why does God choose to diminish Himself by taking on various forms in order to communicate to us? Why does the Son of God need to suffer humiliation before He can be glorified and given full authority? Why does the Holy Spirit not speak explicitly to people, or manifest as something that can be predicted and built around for all to see? Why does God always divide people and create factions, choosing His loyal ones, and wade into conflicts personally, rather than treating mankind universally and equitably in all things? Why does He prefer to work through underdog groups and create surprising victories against the odds? For as strange as it may seem, perhaps we can at least vaguely relate to these things by understanding our own instincts as humans. As a System Logic person, I can relate to the instinct to stay removed from the vulgarities of human affairs, to focus on judgment and what’s morally right despite what people want to hear. I understand the impulse to insist on proper submission to the highest principles. And I only engage with the factual reality of life as a projection of myself; I find it demeaning to force myself to be known by others, and so I retain my own private dignity apart from them. When I interact with

people I feel like I am sacrificing myself for the sake of being comprehensible. It takes conscious effort to bother communicating with other humans using our flawed languages; to meet people in the middle and know that whatever I say will be misunderstood. The person that others see is therefore my own sacrificial lamb, interacting with the world and being hated by it. I wish that I could communicate my will and ideas through an instantaneous spirit that would transcend words, even if it was fleeting. But for these reasons, I am happiest when I do feel understood, and I want to promote the part of myself that successfully communicates what I privately knew.

Now if even I, a sinner in the flesh, ignorant in almost everything, biased and tempted and prone to all fallacies and failures, can relate in some small way to the perfect Father above, what can I say? I believe God has created us in His image, not arbitrarily or only in theory, but so that we can have a relationship with Him that is comparable to human parents with their children. Just as a human father sees himself partly reflected in his children and feels connected to them profoundly and personally, God allows us to be an extension or projection of Himself, extremely limited and flawed by comparison, but still having some of Him reflected so that He can love us more profoundly. Ask yourself: does God not see Himself reflected in mankind? And can mankind not see God partly reflected in ourselves? If we are truly made in His image, why should this concept be so blasphemous and offensive? Is it not rather a beautiful appreciation of what He himself tells us? He tells us that He is our Father, and we are His children. Jesus told us to pray to Our Father in Heaven. Children are always reflections of their parents, though some are more pleasing to them than others. I see no reason to reject the possibility that human nature provides insight into God's nature. Of course I fully admit that my own analysis and speculation here could be mistaken and confused. I apologize to God and my fellow man to the extent that I am wrong.