JUNGIAN FUNCTIONS

INTP

Understand, explore, connect



Ti

Ne

Si

Fe

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FREE EXCERPT

One question leads to another

You read an explanation and one detail stops you. A word seems obvious, but does it mean the same thing in both examples? You retrace the reasoning, find another possibility and notice a question nobody has asked. That pleasure in understanding may feel familiar. It can also become tiring when every answer postpones the moment to act.

This book makes room for that curiosity, including its momentum and its limits. You need not be a scientist, excel at logic puzzles or identify with the absent-minded thinker stereotype. The little character holding a geometric shape simply represents the enjoyment of examining things.

We will follow an idea from its first formulation to the point where someone else can use it. There will be detours, disagreements and imperfect trials. Notice what fits your experience, as well as what the description leaves out.

Keep a real situation beside you as you read. A pending decision or a misunderstood conversation will often make the concepts more useful than searching for a perfect definition of your personality.



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The encounter with Freud

Jung began corresponding with Sigmund Freud in 1906. Their relationship quickly became important to the psychoanalytic movement. Jung defended Freudian ideas in a medical community often hostile to them; Freud regarded him as a major ally. [1]

Their surviving letters offer something more revealing than a legend. Admiration is intense, then the tone changes. By the end of 1912, intellectual and personal tensions had become difficult to contain. Their break took shape in 1913. [2]

It is tempting to reduce this to a story about a teacher and his pupil, or to explain their disagreement through personality labels. That shortcut would erase the substance of the debate. They differed over fundamental ideas, including the meaning of libido and the nature of the unconscious.

This history suggests a useful rule for the rest of our journey: understanding a difference requires more than assigning a label to each person. We still need to listen to arguments, examine experience and accept that a disagreement may concern the substance of a question.



Myers and Briggs change the scale

Katharine Cook Briggs was already interested in personality differences when she encountered Jung's work in English. She studied and applied it, passing that interest to her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers. Myers spent decades developing a theory of types into an assessment instrument. [6]

The first research version of the MBTI, known as Form A, appeared in 1943. [7] The project continued through successive versions and work on questions, scoring and interpretation. The MBTI therefore has its own history; it is not a questionnaire written by Jung.

The change in scale was substantial. Moving from theoretical descriptions to standardised responses requires choices about wording, calculations and categories. None is neutral. They make an instrument usable while raising questions about measurement.

In the following pages, "model" means the interpretive framework. "Instrument" means the official questionnaire and its procedures. An independent online test may borrow ideas from the framework without sharing its questions, research or measurement qualities.

Why Ti-Ne-Si-Fe?

1. N and T indicate the perceiving and judging preferences in the INTP code.

2. P indicates an extraverted perceiving function: N becomes Ne here.

3. I indicates an introverted dominant. Extraverted Ne takes the auxiliary position; Ti becomes dominant.

4. The convention used places Si, opposite Ne, third; Fe, opposite Ti, takes the fourth position. [10, 12]

Ti	Examine an explanation's coherence
Ne	Explore other possibilities
Si	Compare with a specific experience
Fe	Make the exchange understandable

These phrases are reading aids developed for this book. They are neither exhaustive definitions of the functions nor a test that can prove your type. Their usefulness will be explored through the situations that follow.

Meeting the INTP profile

Understanding an explanation, opening up its possibilities and finding ways to share it: a description to compare with your own experience.



The pleasure of understanding how it works

An explanation may work without satisfying you. You can apply a rule but want to know why it applies here and when it would stop being valid. In the reading offered here, that search for coherence provides a useful entry into Ti.

Noah hears that objects at the repair workshop should be sorted by “repair difficulty.” He asks what the category measures: time, equipment or the volunteer’s experience? The question seems to complicate the sorting. Yet it reveals that three people use the same word for different criteria.

The benefit appears when clarification helps someone act. The team can distinguish expected duration from equipment requirements. Volunteers can then allocate objects more easily.

Notice when your question becomes useful and when it extends a discussion with little at stake. A distinction deserves an explicit purpose: which mistake will it prevent, or which decision will it enable? Precision can then find its place within the situation.



Ti

Examining what holds together

Defining terms, examining connections and allowing an explanation to meet what could contradict it.



What “thinking” means here

For Jung, thinking is a judging function. It establishes conceptual relationships and seeks to determine what things mean within a line of reasoning. Its introverted orientation gives an important place to the subjective factor, the inward development of an idea. [5] “Subjective” does not simply mean arbitrary or false.

Contemporary accounts of Ti often emphasise internal coherence, precise distinctions and examination of principles. We will use these as practical questions without claiming to summarise Jung’s entire description.

An idea may be coherent within its assumptions and still be wrong about the world. If you assume every participant has the same tools, your organisation may be perfectly logical and fail when the first beginner arrives. Assumptions therefore need to become visible.

When you say “that makes no sense,” identify where the reasoning breaks. Is there a contradiction, an ambiguous word or missing information? You turn a general verdict into a question people can examine together.



Being right and understanding the objection

An objection may concern something other than the validity of your reasoning. Someone may agree that a method works and reject the time it requires. Another person may accept your analysis while objecting to how you spoke about them. Answering only the logical point leaves the disagreement unresolved.

Before defending the idea, restate the question being raised. “Are you challenging the calculation, or saying that this result is not enough to decide?” This avoids offering another proof to someone asking something else.

You can acknowledge a consequence without abandoning a valid argument: “The calculation still holds, but I had not considered the extra work it creates for you.” A real element enters the discussion.

If you feel compelled to answer immediately, pause to identify what you are protecting. Is it the idea’s precision, your image of competence or a decision already made? These concerns can overlap. Distinguishing them helps you choose a less automatic response.



Case study: the perfect set of rules

Noah is writing rules for a repair workshop. Each reading reveals an exception: an object without its owner, a missing part or a repair that takes too long. After three evenings, the document has eight pages. The team is still waiting for two sentences to put on the poster.

Lina asks, “What does a visitor need to know before coming?” Noah says they must avoid misunderstandings. She agrees but wants to separate public information from guidance for volunteers.

They divide the documents. The poster explains accepted objects, opening hours and the session’s limits. An internal sheet retains special cases. Unfamiliar situations will be discussed with the person responsible on the day.

Noah’s precision was useful: it anticipated several difficulties. The change concerns the audience and level of detail. Giving exceptions a different place finally lets the team share usable information.

FICTIONAL SCENE

Ti workshop: making an idea discussable

Choose a statement you often use in a project: “This method is simpler,” “This request is urgent,” or one of your own. Work with a single example.

1. Define · What does the decisive word mean here? Give one case that fits your definition and one that does not. If you hesitate, record the ambiguity rather than hiding it.

2. Connect · Write the assumption, available information and conclusion. Which connection have you not checked? What information is still missing?

3. Challenge · Imagine a fact that would require you to revise the statement. Look for a real example or specify how you could obtain the information without disproportionate effort.

4. Share · Summarise the idea in three sentences for someone unfamiliar with your reasoning. Ask which question remains open. Finish with a limited decision or a dated check.

A routine that frees attention

A routine may sound unappealing if you associate it with empty repetition. Yet it can spare you from making a fresh decision about the same small difficulty every day. The question is what it protects or makes easier.

You repeatedly lose track of a project because notes are scattered. A five-minute end-of-session habit could record the current question, next action and location of documents. It does not decide your ideas; it helps you recover them.

Choose something light enough to try during an ordinary week. If it requires a complicated tool, multiple reminders and exceptional motivation, simplify it. Then observe which problem it actually solves.

A routine can be revised. Keep what prevents an omission or makes restarting easier; remove tasks with no clear benefit. The aim is not perfect regularity but a few reliable supports for what matters in your life.



Four questions around a decision

You are preparing a change in a shared project. These questions offer four complementary perspectives. They are not a typing questionnaire.

Ti
Which distinction or assumption supports my reasoning?

Ne
Which alternative deserves a trial before concluding?

Si
Which specific experience can provide a reference, and what differs?

Fe
Who will be affected, and what information needs to be shared with them?

Then choose a limited action, a person responsible and a moment to review what happened. You need not give every question equal time: the situation determines the work required.

Sources: history and foundations

The links below are clickable. Sources accessed 27 October 2026. Summaries were written for this book; no extended quotations are reproduced.

[1] International Association of Analytical Psychology (IAAP). *Carl Gustav Jung*. Psychiatric career and relationship with Freud. Read the account.

[2] IAAP / ETH Zurich archives. *C. G. Jung's Letters to Sigmund Freud*. Introduction to the digitised correspondence. Read.

[3] IAAP. *Volume 5: Symbols of Transformation*, abstract "The concept of libido". Read.

[4] Jung, C. G. *Psychological Types*, editorial note on origins and publication history. Publisher's preview.

[5] Jung, C. G. (1921/1923). *Psychological Types*, chapter X, translated by H. G. Baynes. York University archive. Read the chapter.

[6] Myers & Briggs Foundation. *Our Legacy*. Read.

[7] Myers & Briggs Foundation. *About the Research Grant Program*. Date of Form A, 1943. Read.

Sources: dynamics and critical reading

[8] IAAP. *The Red Book*. Context for individuation and limits of reducing it to self-improvement. Read.

[9] Myers & Briggs Foundation. *The Preferences*. Read.

[10] Myers & Briggs Foundation. *Type Dynamics: Overview*. Relationships between letters, orientations and functions. Read.

[11] Myers & Briggs Foundation. *Ethical Use of the MBTI Assessment*. Preferences, skills and uses. Read.

[12] Myers & Briggs Foundation. *The Processes of Type Dynamics*. Hierarchy and the tertiary-orientation qualification. Read.

[13] McCrae, R. R. and Costa, P. T. (1989). "Reinterpreting the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator from the perspective of the five-factor model of personality." *Journal of Personality*, 57(1), 17-40. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.1989.tb00759.x. Read the abstract.

Reading note: the scenes, practical questions and workshops are original suggestions. Function language organises them; their usefulness does not validate the theory.

Understand, then take a next step

An idea can open many doors. This book invites you to examine which ones deserve exploration, how to check what you think you understand and how to share the journey with others.

Ti · Ne · Si · Fe: four references for examining an explanation, trying a possibility, returning to experience and making an intention understandable.

Return to a workshop, reread a scene or pick up one question. The journey remains open to what your life adds next.

To continue: explore the profiles, try the free quick test or the free in-depth test.

