

The Tandem Principle New Insights for Clarifying Type Part 1

The Tandem Principle New Insights for Clarifying Type—Part 1

Adapted from an article by Linda V. Berens in the *Bulletin of Psychological Type*, Vol. 26, No. 4, Fall 2003.

I've been studying psychological type for over 25 years and seeking to understand Jung's definitions of the cognitive processes (aka 8 functions). Most of my client population is well over 30 and many of them find that describing types in terms of preferences doesn't help clarify their type. They don't see themselves and others don't see them as one sided as preference-based descriptions might indicate.

The Tandem Principle

Over the years I began to notice that the cognitive processes (aka function-attitudes) seem to work in tandem with each other, often making it difficult to recognize a type pattern by looking at functions alone. The type code stands for a pattern of organization of the cognitive processes, which don't randomly combine like ingredients in a recipe. Difficulties often arise in understanding these patterns because we don't recognize this tandem nature of the processes.

I described the tandem nature of the auxiliary and the tertiary early on, but hadn't extended it to all of the processes¹. However the importance of the idea was crystallized when I heard John Beebe² talk about the spine of the personality and how the inferior is often a very powerful aspect of the personality. He also spoke about the various axes along which the two opposing functions in opposite attitudes lie (such as Te and Fi). The more I looked at type this way, the more sense it made to me that, contrary to these being truly opposite, they seemed to be in necessary complementarity and in some way related.

Think of a tandem bicycle. Both people propel it, but one is in the front and one is in the back. If the front person does all the work, it is more tiring. If the back person does all the work, it is without the steering mechanism and a good view of the road. Both are connected and they work in tandem. The tandem principle is that a perceiving cognitive process (function) of one attitude is intimately connected to the opposite perceiving cognitive process of the other attitude and they often work together to the same purpose. Likewise with the judging processes. This article focuses on the judging processes.

The Tandem Principle

New Insights for Clarifying Type

Part 1

The tandem principle is most evident if we have a common set of definitions of the cognitive processes. The following table attempts to get at the essence of each process, not what it looks like when it is dominant, auxiliary, or in the context of the whole type. Definitions with an asterisk have been updated with Dario Nardi's definitions.

Judgment	
<p>Extraverted judgment Organizing</p> <p>Usually externally ordered and specific to the group or situation, more here and now</p>	<p>Introverted judgment Evaluating</p> <p>Usually internally ordered and specific to the individual or universally applicable to everyone, more past, future, or across time</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">extraverted Thinking</p> <p>Te: Ordering; segmenting; organizing for efficiency; systematizing; applying logic; structuring; checking for consequences; monitoring for standards or specifications being met; setting boundaries, guidelines, and parameters; deciding if something is working or not. Measure and construct for progress.*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">←→</p> <p style="text-align: center;">introverted Feeling</p> <p>Fi: Valuing; considering importance and worth; reviewing for incongruity; evaluating something based on the truths on which it is based; clarifying values to achieve accord; deciding if something is of significance and worth standing up for. Stay true to how you really are.*</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">extraverted Feeling</p> <p>Fe: Connecting; considering others and the group—organizing to meet their needs and honor their values and feelings; maintaining societal, organizational, or group values; adjusting and accommodating others; deciding if something is appropriate or acceptable to others. Nurture trust in giving relationships.*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">←→</p> <p style="text-align: center;">introverted Thinking</p> <p>Ti: Analyzing; categorizing; evaluating according to principles and whether something fits the framework or model; figuring out the principles on which something works; checking for inconsistencies; clarifying definitions to get more precision. Gain leverage with a framework.*</p>

Te with Fi or Fi with Te

If Te is in the foreground then sequencing and prioritizing are based on objective outcomes as well as evaluating the importance (Fi) of various actions. With Fi in the foreground, the relative importance of one thing over another is apparent and informs the sequencing of actions (Te).

Let's apply the tandem principle to clarifying type by looking at an entrepreneur who reported INTJ on the Indicator. In exploring which type was the best fit for him, he found the ISFP description to be a very good fit and settled on that type as his best fit type. His executive team described him as setting boundaries and breaking things down into steps (Te). This all seems NTJ-like and if we were looking only at the use of the processes, we would indeed see him using Te a lot on the job. He is masterful at prioritizing. Yet when we look closer, we see that Fi is really in the foreground and Te is in the background. He says everything has a value (or

The Tandem Principle

New Insights for Clarifying Type

Part 1

worth) and he holds them all in constant relation to one another so what gets attention next is obvious. He helps his associates set their priorities by keenly tuning in to what is important and of value (Fi) and feeds that information back to them about which project to start on first and what consequences are likely if they do something else (Te).

I noticed those who prefer Te (__TJ) seem to have a strong sense of belief behind their actions. It seems that strong sense of “this is the right way to do it” comes not only from Te, but also from Fi with a sense of “value” to it. It seems that both Te and Fi are engaged almost simultaneously, but with Te in the foreground.

Ti with Fe or Fe with Ti

With Ti in the foreground, decisions are based on objective principles that are often related to the welfare of others or the good of the collective (Fe). Likewise, with Fe in the foreground connecting with others (Fe) is often backed up with some rules (Ti principles) about appropriateness.

Prioritizing is a different story with these tandem processes. With Ti in the foreground there is an array of principles and models to be considered and then the requests and even unspoken needs of others to honor. For example, when I (INTP) write and train, I balance my tendency to refine the models and use precise, technical language (Ti) with considering the experience of others (Fe) to produce something they will understand and find useful, so using both Ti and Fe help me produce a better result. This constant consideration of the impact on others while adhering to principles makes prioritizing take longer.

I’ve also noticed that Fe concern for others is often backed up with the principles (Ti) of how to treat people, which factor in to the caretaking that often accompanies Fe. It also factors into how critical (Ti analyzing and critiquing) those who prefer Fe (__FJ) can be when someone violates one of those principles.

Noticing the tandem qualities of the processes can help make sense out of what seems to be a contradiction. I hope you find these essential definitions helpful and that you try out *the tandem principle* in your observations. In the next Bulletin, I’ll address the perceiving processes.

The Tandem Principle

New Insights for Clarifying Type

Part 2

The Tandem Principle

New Insights for Clarifying Type—Part 2

Adapted from an article by Linda V. Berens in the *Bulletin of Psychological Type*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Winter 2003.2004.

In the last Bulletin, I wrote about the Tandem Principle in terms of the Thinking and Feeling cognitive processes. This article offers a brief review of the principle and covers examples of how it operates with Sensing and iNtuiting.

The Tandem Principle

In trying to understand the cognitive processes (aka functions) we have to separate the processes from the type pattern in which they are expressed. This is one of the problems in trying to understand the processes. Another problem is that any one behavior or even a single thought involves more than one process. The expression of the processes in mature individuals is even more complex. I found that when I looked at the processes by themselves, there seemed to be a tandem relationship between the processes that are opposite in function and in attitude, for example, Se and Ni. This relationship is more apparent with the dominant—inferior and the auxiliary—tertiary functions.

To repeat from the last issue: think of a tandem bicycle. Both people propel it, but one is in the front and one is in the back. If the front person does all the work, it is more tiring. If the back person does all the work, it is without the steering mechanism and a good view of the road. Both are connected and they work in tandem. I see the dominant process intimately connected with the inferior¹. This is much like the spine of the personality that John Beebe² talks about. I also see the auxiliary intimately connected with the tertiary. But more than that, I see the cognitive processes themselves linked together as on a continuum, especially when more developed.

If introverted iNtuiting is in the foreground there is an image of a future reality and then a drive to gather data and physically manifest that vision (extraverted Sensing). If extraverted Sensing is in the foreground there is a sense of being very tuned in to the environment and an anticipation of what is coming up next (introverted iNtuiting).

With introverted Sensing in the foreground there is a keen awareness of what came before and a linking to emerging possibilities (extraverted iNtuiting). With extraverted iNtuiting in the foreground there is often an interpretation fed by images from the past (introverted Sensing).

The Tandem Principle

New Insights for Clarifying Type

Part 2

Some Definitions

The tandem principle is most evident if we have a common set of definitions of the cognitive processes. The following table attempts to get at the essence of each process, not what it looks like when it is dominant, auxiliary, or in the context of the whole type.

Perception	
Extraverted perception—Gathering Information Usually random, emerging, here and now	Introverted perception—Accessing Information Usually already patterned or sequenced, past, future, or across time
Sensing—Tangible, experiential awareness	
extraverted Sensing	introverted iNtuiting
Se: Experiencing the immediate context; noticing changes and opportunities for action; being drawn to act on the physical world; accumulating experiences; scanning for visible reactions and relevant data; recognizing “what is”. Immerse in the present context.*	Ni: Foreseeing implications and likely effects without external data; realizing “what will be”; conceptualizing new ways of seeing things; envisioning transformations; getting an image of profound meaning or far-reaching symbols. Transform with a meta perspective.*
iNtuiting—Symbolic, conceptual awareness	
extraverted iNtuiting	introverted Sensing
Ne: Interpreting situations and relationships; picking up meanings and interconnections; being drawn to change “what is” for “what could possibly be”; noticing what is not said and threads of meaning emerging across multiple contexts. Exploring the emerging patterns.*	Si: Reviewing past experiences; “what is” evoking “what was”; seeking detailed information and links to what is known; recalling stored impressions; accumulating data; recognizing the way things have always been. Stabilize with a predictable standard.*

Some Examples

Let’s apply the tandem principle to clarifying type by looking at our entrepreneur from the last article. He reported INTJ on the Indicator, yet after an interactive self-discovery with multiple models and multiple sources of descriptions, he settled on ISFP as the best-fit type for him. Yet his behavior looks on the surface to match INTJ. When he talked about his business he described his strategy for the long term and the actions needed to get to this long-term goal. He continually brought his executive team back to a strategic focus. Additionally his team described him as setting boundaries and breaking things down into steps (Te). This all seems NTJ-like and if we were looking only at the use of the processes, we would indeed see him using Ni and Te a lot on the job. However, Se is in the foreground when he constantly scans business journals for useful market information about the current environment and is very tuned in to opportunities to take advantage of. He seems to be using Ni in more of the background role of reading what will be in the future. Using only type indicator results and observable behaviors could be

The Tandem Principle

New Insights for Clarifying Type

Part 2

very misleading. Having an understanding of the Tandem Principle can help see why these results and behaviors make sense in the context of his full best-fit type.

When Ni is in the foreground, there are often complex conceptualizations (especially in the INTJ type pattern) with a drive to make them manifest in the real world (Se). When working on a project with an INTJ, I found him continually insisting that we had to look at what was really going on, not just what was theoretically accurate. In this way, Se was engaged to back up the conceptualizations about our final product.

With my own (INTP) experiences, I used to be astounded that in meetings I bring up what happened before (Si), when I thought Ne would have been more at play than any references to the past. Then I realized that using Ne, I see potential possibilities and I use my large data bank of experiences to support those possibilities or I see connections (Ne) to contexts outside the current one (often from the past). I also experience the tandemness of Ne—Si when conducting a workshop. I seem to “read” the group and detect a need without any evidence (Ne), then the story or example from my past presents itself (Si). I don’t consciously think about what story I need, but it just comes forward instantly.

I’ve noticed Ne supporting Si in my ESTJ colleague who is an excellent facilitator. She prefers to prepare for a new workshop by watching someone do it, seemingly storing up the experience inside and making notes. Then when she presents the material she has such a strong sense of what went before (Si) that she easily adapts her responses to the emerging needs of the group, which is more like Ne in a backup role.

I hope these few examples help you discover that you do indeed use your less preferred processes. I also hope they help you see the type patterns more clearly so you can better assist your clients with their own type identification.

¹ Berens, Linda V. *Dynamics of Personality Type, Understanding and Applying Jung’s Cognitive Processes*. Los Angeles, CA : Radiance House, 1999. www.radiancehouse.com

² Beebe, John. Workshop in Oakland, CA, October, 2001, and APT Great Lakes conference in Columbus, OH, September, 2003.

³ Nardi, Dario. *8 Keys to Self-Leadership*. Los Angeles, CA: Radiance House. 2005. www.radiancehouse.com