
What's New in This Edition

- An expanded explanation of the psychological type approach to understanding personality type in general and the inferior function in particular
- A discussion of the effects of chronic stress on personality type, using work stress as a focus
- A listing of resources and remedies each type uses when dealing with chronic work stress
- A description of what each type experiences as energizing and stressful at work
- The differential effects of the auxiliary function in relation to work energizers and stressors, and chronic stress
- Vignettes illustrating inferior function episodes for all 16 types

About the Author

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For Peggy

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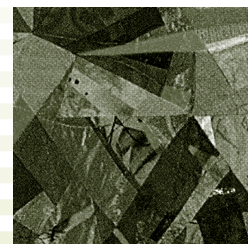
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Introduction



The “other” in us always seems alien and unacceptable; but if we let ourselves be aggrieved the feeling sinks in, and we are the richer for this little bit of self-knowledge.

C. G. Jung, *Civilization in Transition*

We have all experienced that “other” in us. It is the version of ourselves that puzzles us when it emerges from time to time as unusual, out-of-character thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. And we are just as surprised when we see others act in ways that are strange and atypical for them. When people appear very different from usual, such terms as *irrational*, *out of control*, *unstable*, *crazy*, and *abnormal* spring to mind. Sometimes we are amused by and pleased at seeing a very different side of ourselves or another person. More often, however, we are uncomfortable, distressed, and at a loss to explain what the episode might mean.

In the Grip is about the out-of-character selves we all encounter from time to time, particularly in response to fatigue and stress. Experiencing being in the grip of something strange and unfamiliar tends to alarm us because of its “Jekyll and Hyde” character. We may then be forced to reexamine the essence of our character and personality. Who are we, really? Do these occurrences mean we are psychologically weak, emotionally unstable, perhaps even crazy?

In the Grip explains our seemingly aberrant, abnormal experiences of ourselves and others as predictable, adaptive, and necessary expressions of our normal personalities. Knowing that these *grip experiences* are healthy and adaptive enables us to see them as temporary episodes from which we can benefit. We need not worry that we, our spouse, our friend, our boss, or our co-worker are “coming apart at the seams” or emotionally disturbed. Instead, we can appreciate and use the new and unique information we gain about ourselves and others when we or they are in the grip of the other side.

Getting the Most from *In the Grip*

In the Grip is based on the personality type theory of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung. Jung’s theory was refined and put into accessible form by Isabel Briggs Myers and Katharine Briggs, who developed the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) personality inventory.

You will get the most from *In the Grip* if you

- Are familiar with the psychological type approach to understanding personality
- Know your own four-letter personality type from having taken the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® instrument and from receiving feedback that helped you verify your type

If your understanding of the dynamic basis of typology is incomplete, the introductory sections of *In the Grip* will provide a useful grounding for you. If you are not familiar with type theory and/or do not know or remember your psychological type, *In the Grip*:

- Reviews the basic ideas of the type approach
- Provides descriptions that may help you understand the theory and identify your type
- Provides a resource list of introductory materials that will facilitate your understanding of type and the aspect of type that is described here

In the Grip introduces you to a fascinating, valuable, and enlightening part of Jung's typology, the *inferior function*—a usually hidden part of our personalities that emerges most dramatically during times of stress, fatigue, and illness. You will learn the following:

- What the inferior function is—and what it is not
- When it is likely to erupt and what events trigger it
- How it is expressed in different types
- How we return to our usual state and what can facilitate this
- What happens when someone is *in the grip* for an extended period
- Why we need inferior function experiences for our psychological well-being
- How knowledge of our own and others' inferior functions can enhance our personal and professional lives

A Word About the Second Edition

The information in this booklet is based on the book *Beside Ourselves: Our Hidden Personality in Everyday Life* (1993) by Naomi L. Quenk.¹ The first edition of *In the Grip* (1996) presented the highlights of the book in summary form. Many people who have gained understanding of their out-of-character experiences through reading *Beside Ourselves* or *In the Grip* have asked about the effects of long-term stress on expressions of the inferior function. “Can someone be in the grip for months or years?” “Can chronic illness, fatigue, pain, or stress lead to habitually operating in the grip of one's inferior function?” The short answer to both questions is, “Yes.” The longer answer comprises the new material in this revision of *In the Grip*.

The revision retains the basic information of the first edition, which focused on expressions of the inferior function that are relatively infrequent and generally of brief duration. Such deviations from a person's natural personality type are typically adaptive, permitting individuals to add valuable perspectives to their personalities. Recurring exposure to any source of stress, illness, or fatigue is likely to lead to frequent or even habitual out-of-character reactions. Just like their shorter-term counterparts, lengthy periods of living out of one's inferior function provide an opportunity for adaptive awareness and personal growth.

This new edition of *In the Grip* addresses inferior function expressions in response to long-term and persistent stress. The focus is on recurrent and enduring stress in the

workplace, which is general and pervasive, and affects every kind of work, all kinds of organizations, and people at all levels of employment, from entry-level personnel to CEOs of large corporations. The prevailing work ethic requires that workers produce better, faster, and with fewer resources, and that companies maintain constant vigilance so they can anticipate the next major change or development that will influence the competitive edge.

Rapid change, the need to manage vast amounts of information in all areas, and many other societal factors combine to place enormous pressure on us in our work lives. Many people are in a chronically stressed state with unfortunate consequences for both themselves and the organizations for which they work. One consequence is the increased likelihood that employees will operate out of their least developed and most ineffective sides in work situations that require them to be at their best. In the normal, psychologically healthy adults described in *In the Grip*, such chronic inferior function manifestations are likely to be predictable, amenable to positive intervention, and growth promoting.

Much of the new information in this revision is based on the reported experiences of employees of different types. This experiential information is supported and enhanced by research results attained from a stratified national sample of adults in the United States. Interested readers can find detailed descriptions of these research results in Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer (1998). Generalizations about specific individuals must always be made with caution when interpreting the results of both experiential and empirical research information. Readers are therefore advised to view the information in this booklet as suggestive rather than prescriptive and as food for thought and further observation rather than as firm and definitive.

Questions to Explore

Before you begin your exploration of the material in this booklet, take a few minutes to answer the questions in the list on page 3. Your spontaneous responses will help you identify some thoughts and behaviors that may be aspects of your natural personality type as well as your inferior function. This will help you better understand and make use of the material that follows. You may wish to jot down your answers to the questions so you can refer to them later.

There are probably times when you feel or behave quite differently from the way you usually do—when the way you see and react to everyday events is so unlike you that you might be described as “out of character,” “beside yourself,” or “in the grip” of something. Think about how you are when you are most like yourself and how you are different when you are least like yourself. Answer the following questions:

- What are you like when you are *most* yourself? That is, what qualities best describe you or define you as an individual? For example, you might describe yourself as typically optimistic, careful with details, concerned about others, future oriented, and so on.
- What are you like when you are *not* yourself—how are you different from your usual way of being?
- What events or circumstances are likely to provoke the reactions and changes you experience?
- What can you or others do to help the return process?
- What can you or others do to hinder the return process?
- What aspects of your work life are most satisfying and energizing?
- What aspects of your work life are most dissatisfying and stressful?
- How do you typically deal with chronic stress?
- What new things have you learned about yourself as a result of your out-of-character experiences?



Extraverted Sensing Types: ESTP and ESFP

Dominant Extraverted Sensing
Inferior Introverted Intuition

Important Features of Dominant Extraverted Sensing

Extraverted Sensing types typically use their favorite perceiving function in the outside world, focusing it on people, things, and activities. Perhaps more than any other type, they are “in the world” and experience sensory data from the environment purely and directly. As a result they tend to

- Cut to the heart of a situation and implement an effective solution
- Ignore hidden implications, hypotheses, past traditions, and future possibilities
- Demonstrate an economy of effort in whatever they do
- Feel optimistic, not dwelling on problems outside of their control
- Accept others as they are and take people and situations at face value
- Have a natural affinity for sensual and aesthetic experience
- Appear shallow in their pursuit of sensual pleasure at times
- Evoke admiration and often envy for their carefree enjoyment of everyday living

Work Energizers and Stressors

Dominant Extraverted Sensing types are energized by work environments that allow them maximum freedom to control their time, work at their own pace, and do their work in their own way. They like variety in the tasks they perform on a daily basis, and although they prefer working in a setting in which structures are clear and they can be part of an active team, they also like working and achieving independently. They enjoy having some leeway to move outside the boundaries of the system. Their focus is on directly experiencing the world around them and therefore on work that permits active involvement in concrete projects with tangible results. Perhaps as a result of this active, hands-on approach to concrete tasks, they may be passed over for promotion to managerial and administrative positions. This can be a source of dissatisfaction for them, even though they may not find the work required by the promotion to be appealing or enjoyable. Stressful work environments for Extraverted Sensing types are those that require rigid adherence to someone else’s schedule, inflexible work hours, and little freedom of choice in what is done and how it is accomplished. The work energizers and stressors that are shared by ESTPs and ESFPs are largely the result of the present-oriented focus on sense experience that is characteristic of dominant Extraverted Sensing types. These are summarized in Table 20.

In addition to the common features shown in Table 20, ESTPs, whose auxiliary function is Thinking, are energized by opportunities to lead and direct others and to achieve tangible goals and economic success. They also place a high value on their own autonomy. Autonomy appears to be less important for ESFPs. Their auxiliary Feeling function is revealed in their emphasis on friendly and compatible team relationships. ESFPs generally report being satisfied with the people they work with, in spite of their general dissatisfaction with promotions, job security, work stress, salary, and the extent to which they accomplish what they want. Although ESTPs report fewer work dissatisfactions than do ESFPs, there are no outstanding ways in which they find work satisfying. They are even more likely than ESFPs to report disliking working in vague and poorly defined settings that lack precise guidelines. ESFPs do not mind toeing the line at work as long as there is no expectation of working extra hours and their jobs are made relatively simple and straightforward. They tend to devote much energy to relationships and activities outside of their work lives. For some, work is secondary to their other responsibilities and relationships and is a practical means of providing the money and freedom to pursue nonwork interests.

Triggers for the Inferior Function

Extraverted Sensing types report the following type-specific factors that are likely to provoke a grip experience:

Excessive focus on the future. Spending a great deal of time with people who are very serious about or quite

Table 20 Energizers and Stressors for Extraverted Sensing Types

Energizers	Stressors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety and flexibility in tasks required and use of available time • Freedom to interact with people • Being able to make good use of their memory for specifics • Having options in the ways tasks are accomplished • Clear structures, specific tasks and goals • Working as part of a team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadlines • Having to conform to a rigid routine with little free time • Long-term planning • Inability to control circumstances • Vague directions and unclear guidelines • Binding commitments with no allowance for contingencies