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The Four Humors and Carl Jung

Personality Type Theory and Trait Theory are two opposite sides of how psychologists view Personality. Trait Theorists have probably won this battle in modern times. Type theorists generally believe that each one of us belong to a distinct type of personality.

Because of the differences and similarities we have, the personality type theory has been developed in order for us to determine our personality during a certain point in time. This theory is crucial to understand because some personality types need to be dealt with for a person to be mentally and emotionally healthy.

Under the personality type theory, there are personality type taxonomies and subtypes. The two most common of these taxonomies are the Four Humors, which were credited to the ancient Greeks, and the eight personality types outlined by Carl Jung.

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Ancient Greeks: The Four Humors

Two of the noblest ancient Greek philosophers, Hippocrates (400 BC) and Galen (140 AD) were among the first ones to logically classify the personality types of people, which they called “humors”. The ancient Greek believed that each of the 4 humors was a result of an

excess of one of the 4 bodily fluids. For them, the excess amount of fluids determined a person's character. The 4 humors included choleric (yellow bile), melancholic (black bile), sanguine (blood) and phlegmatic (phlegm). Below is a table showing the character that each humor or fluid represents.

Character	Humor	Fluid	Produced by	Element
Irritable	Choleric	Yellow bile	Spleen	Fire
Depressed	Melancholic	Black bile	Gall bladder	Earth
Optimistic	Sanguine	Blood	Liver	Air
Calm	Phlegmatic	Phlegm	Lungs	Water

Carl Jung: Eight Personality Types

The Personality Type Theory of Carl Jung was founded in his ideas on what attitude means. For Jung, attitude is a person's predisposition to act in a certain manner. He said that there are two contrasting attitudes- extroversion and introversion, which are often depicted as the classic yin-yang symbolism.

The introvert person is one that is more conscious of his inner world than his environment. Although he still perceives the things going on around him, he is more concerned of what's going on inside himself. He focuses on his own fantasies, ambitions, feelings and actions. Subjectivity for this kind of person is greater than objectivity. Typically, the "shy" personality is under the introvert type of attitude. On the other hand, the extrovert person gives more attention of what's happening outside his inner world. His inner cognitive processes are often set aside as he gets influenced by his environment. Objectivity for this kind of person is greater than subjectivity. In layman's term, the "outgoing" personality is synonymous to extroversion.

Another important concept in Jung's theory is the four functions of personality. The first function is "feeling", which is when a person recognizes the worth of conscious activities. The second one is "thinking", which makes a person learn the meaning of something. The third one is "sensation", which allows the person to know that a particular thing exists. The last one is "intuition", which gives him knowledge about something without having a conscious understanding of where that knowledge originated. When these 4 functions are combined with one of the two types of attitudes, the result would be eight varying types of personality. The table below shows the eight different personality types:

Function	Attitude	
	Extrovert (objective)	Introvert (subjective)

Feeling	Comfortable in social circumstances and give opinions based on social norms, values and generally accepted beliefs	Often defies social norms of thinking and speaks of internally-established beliefs
Thinking	Learns abstract concepts that are taught by his environment	Interprets environmental stimuli
Sensing	Recognizes the world just the way it is and gives perceptions in a matter-of-fact manner	Views the world based on internal reflections and own attitudes.
Intuitive	Perceives things based on what society dictates, disregarding the perceptions brought about by his senses	Greatly influenced by internal drives although he doesn't have a full understanding of these motivations.

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