

Personality

We've talked about Spiritual Gifts and Natural Abilities, and we've discovered that we have a lot in common. But look closer: we aren't as similar as we seem. You have distinct likes and dislikes in how you live, in how you relate to your friends, and in how you make decisions. Those are the kinds of preferences that make up our "personality."

Remember that our human nature is more complex than a simple assessment can determine. While you ARE a personality (an individual made of a great diversity of characteristics), you also have a personality—a way in which you view and interact with the world around you. While your personality is unlike anyone else's, you do tend to view the world, react to situations, and interact with people in some generalized ways that help us understand ourselves and others. We call these personality preferences, or temperaments. Some of these are in-born, placed within you by God, while others are nurtured and/or developed through your upbringing and life circumstances.

Remember that we are created in God's image, but we are also marred by sin and corruption. That means our personalities carry inherent strengths, but also come with weaknesses. We must submit all of our selves, including our personality, to Christ's lordship and the Spirit's transforming work.

The Personality preferences exercise in this SHAPE material measures natural preferences in five general areas. The areas are:

Social—Reflects preference for and behavior in social situations.

Change—Reflects openness to change, flexibility, and interest in new experiences.

Organized—Reflects how organized and persistent a person is in daily life and world as well as persistence in pursuing goals.

Pleasing—Reflects how considerate and cooperative one is in their interactions with others.

Emotionally Steady—Reflects the tendency to stay relaxed and calm when faced with stress.

Talents and Gifts tell you WHAT you're good at. Personality helps you focus your search on HOW you do things and WHERE you'll use your talents and gifts. For example: If you are gifted with Teaching, your personality type will influence whether you teach best through writing or face-to-face, whether you tutor 1 or 2 students or teach a big class. If you're good in Leadership, personality can determine in what settings you best lead, how you deal with relationships, goal-setting, vision, etc. If your gift is Helping, your personality may help you decide whether you'd do better committing to a long-term, set role or just helping with things as they come along.

SCOPE is an acronym for the five factor model of personality, consisting of five scales: Social, Change, Organized, Pleasing, and Emotional Stability. The following descriptions come from the PREPARE/ENRICH counseling material which uses these scales to help couples understand how best to relate to one another in a marriage relationship.

Social

Includes characteristics such as excitability, assertiveness, sociability and emotional expressiveness. High social scorers seek out stimulation and the company of others, and are often energetic and talkative. They have a tendency to draw attention to themselves, and are enthusiastic about opportunities for excitement. Those scoring low on the social scale lack such social exuberance. Their quiet demeanor is not necessarily indicative of shyness, but rather signifies that they need less social stimulation and more time alone.

Change

Refers to characteristics such as imagination, insight, curiosity, emotion, unusual ideas and variety of experience. It is a trait which distinguishes between idealists and realists. Those who score high in change tend to be creative, aware of their feelings, intellectually curious, and appreciative of art and beauty. Those who score low in change are more likely to hold traditional beliefs and prefer the plain and obvious over the complex and ambiguous.

Organized

Is commonly associated with self-control, goal oriented behavior and thoughtfulness. This trait influences how we control and implement our impulses. Those who score high in organization typically prefer planned rather than spontaneous behavior; they also pay attention to details in their plans. Those who score low in organization generally are described as thrill-seekers or impulsive, often paying less attention to detail.

Pleasing

Is characterized by compassion, trust, kindness, altruism, affection, and other prosocial behaviors. Pleasing individuals tend to be cooperative and considerate of others. They generally have an optimistic view of human nature. Those who score low on this scale are often suspicious and antagonistic and thus place self-interest above compromise with others. They do not place high value in being friendly or helpful.

Emotional Stability

Refers to an individual's emotions and mentality. Emotionally stable individuals do not often experience negative emotions, such as anxiety, moodiness, irritability, or depression. Those who score low in emotional stability are particularly vulnerable to stress and tend to react emotionally; they also have a generally negative perception of situations. Individuals who score high in emotional stability are often easy-going and are not typically upset easily.