



april-may, 2009 issue number 524

Personality and Creativity: Extroversion vs. Introversion?

Social scientists believe that introversion-extroversion is a basic way of responding to our environment, produced by polygenetic influence and interaction.

by

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According to Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology, an introvert is, briefly, someone who is sensitive and is continually subjecting his



Carl Jung

thoughts and actions to self-analysis and criticism. He tends to be quiet, low-key, deliberate, and disengaged from the social world.

Preferring the world of fantasy and imagination, the introvert generally is a loner. Jung also coined the term

extroversion (or extraversion). The extrovert, the introvert's polar opposite, is assertive, more open, places a higher value on the objective world, and generally participates in social and practical affairs instead of reverie and self-imposed solitude.

Jung referred to the libido as the general activity and drive of the individual, thus removing it from the sexual character ascribed by Sigmund Freud.¹ The control of the libido can be easily lost by the extrovert; carried beyond a "safe limit" when his feelings are acted out. Extreme introverts, on the opposite end of the scale, can succumb to fantasies that give libidinal satisfaction and have more meaning than objective reality. Severe introversion is characteristic of autism and some forms of schizophrenia. Although all of us have tendencies in each direction, Jung did not strictly classify using the terms introvert-extrovert.

There are advantages as well as drawbacks to both introversion and extroversion. The introvert is usually comfortable with his feelings when

alone. Less noticeable than the sometimes boisterous and jolly extrovert, the introvert is not as likely to be embarrassed and criticized as is the extrovert. He has a tendency to enjoy deep, meaningful conversations and, in addition, finds it easier to meditate and is less "antsy" than his extroverted counterpart. The introvert is oftentimes more capable of keeping himself entertained, occupied, and productive than the extrovert.

Positive aspects to extroversion are the general tendency to have more friends and acquaintances than the introvert and, in studies "...published in the 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,' William Fleeson, Ph.D., an associate professor of psychology at Wake Forest University, found that acting extroverted makes people happier (even those who are introverted at heart)".² Some believe extroversion leads to personal growth, while others are certain that only through introverted and solitary practices progress is made.

Creative people manipulate introversion-extroversion to grow further into their talents. "Of all human activities creativity comes closest to providing the fulfillment we all hope to get in our lives... Creativity is the central source of meaning in our lives. Most of the things that are interesting, important, and human are the result of creativity."³ While actively creative, the individual feels fully alive and able to adapt himself to the task of being productive in almost any situation. Creativity is a personal trait and is not necessarily a question of superior genes, rather a higher-focused mind. Creativity, itself learned through trial and error, is a strategy for achieving goals.



Creative types tend to be endowed with superior intelligence, yet many psychologists believe there is a limit below which exceptional creativity is difficult, and above which a person's creativity is not significantly different from her lesser endowed peers. Most agree that IQ 120 is that magic number. Granted, those who "see further" do so because they stand upon the "shoulders of giants."⁴ Throughout history creative geniuses have been the innovators; they are the fountain or source of modern-day art, language, and scientific/technological breakthrough.

It is difficult to determine if one is, in fact, more of an introvert or an extrovert. I recently had a telephone interview with autodidact psychometrician Dr. Greg A. Grove, a PhD in Education and a Music History professor at Santa Rosa Junior College in Northern California. Dr. Grove is the author of a test called the I-E Scale.⁵ He created the I-E Scale to determine personality type (introvert-extrovert) and at the same time give the examinee an indication of his or her creativity and predicted IQ.

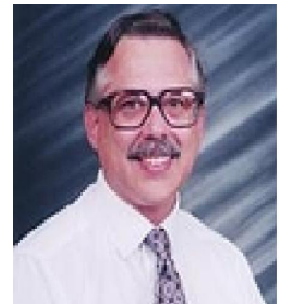
Dr. Grove constructed a raw-score IQ prediction scale to cover IQs 115-150. The I-E Scale is composed of 12 seemingly innocuous statements, arranged in three sections of four questions each. The examinee is told to choose the degree to which a statement applies on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 indicating "Doesn't Apply" and 5 = "Almost Always." The I-E Scale is then self-scored and tendencies towards thinking and emotional introversion and extroversion are explained; IQ range is predicted in Table B. Of those who participated in Grove's study, the average IQ was 138.8 with the median IQ at 137.

I had heard of the test and decided to give it a go. I took the I-E Scale prior to speaking with Dr. Grove and the results correlated with other such tests that I have taken, like as the Keirsey

Temperament Sorter,⁶ and the Jung Typology Test.⁷

www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp

My general tendencies towards introversion and extroversion were, indeed, similar. The "trick" seems to be to play no tricks and answer the questions as honestly as possible. Although introverts have been shown to have the advantage over extroverts when it comes to long-term memory and problem solving, truly creative people tend to be both extroverted and introverted, and extreme positions are rare, since most of us are ambiverts, having a balanced disposition intermediate between extroversion and introversion. The I-E Scale and the Jung Typology Test differ greatly in length. The I-E Scale asks the right questions, is brief, informative, and fun. I would suggest taking both tests to continue your journey into self-discovery. There is no fee.



Greg Grove

Long ago a Greek sage once advised "Know thyself!"

¹ C.G. Jung, *Psychological Types* (1921); H.Eysenck, ed., *A Model for Personality* (1981).

² findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0846/is_5_23/ai_111518927

³ **Fleeson, W.** "Towards a Structure-and Process-Integrated View of Personality: Traits as Density Distributions of States." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, (2001):1011-1027.

⁴ www.psychologytoday.com/articles/pto-1095.html From *Creativity: The Work and Lives of 91 Eminent People*, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, published by HarperCollins, 1996.

⁵ Sir Isaac Newton.

⁶ Those interested can find the I-E Scale at www.mysteriumsociety.org

⁷ www.keirsey.com/sorter/register.aspx

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Purpose is to get together whenever and wherever to sail, race, or cruise with other Ms.

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Contact: michelestpierre@hotmail.com
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Seeking Editor Applications

Applications will close on April 30, 2009 for the position of Editor of the new publication that will begin soon. Please see the MIL website for details and application, or write to Stacey Kirsch, Director of Administration, at admin-mil@mensa.org.

MERF

Applications/nominations for Mensa Education and Research Foundation scholarships - in the United States and internationally - close on **May 1**. See www.mensafoundation.org, then follow the link to 'Scholarships'.

IBD Meeting 2009

September 10-13

Meeting of the International Board of Directors, Gothenburg, Sweden. All members welcome. More info at <http://ibd2009.mensa.se/>

Europe in late July, 2009

Will you be in Western Europe end of July 2009? **Mensa France** organizes the traditional Summer University during the last week of July (25th-August 01st) in the French Alps at LA TOUSSUIRE, near Saint-Jean de Maurienne.

Drop in for an hour, a day or a week. The more Mensans, the more fun ! All types of accommodation are available from camping to hotel. Info and booking on www.la-toussuire.com. Daily animation and various workshops.

Contact : Jean-Marc Baggio:
+33 612368392 jmbaggio@wanadoo.fr

EMAG 2009 - From 29 July to 2 August 2009 in Utrecht, Holland

In 2008 over three hundred Mensans from over twenty countries attended the European Mensas Annual Gathering (EMAG) in the German city of Cologne. This first ever EMAG was a big success. Not only did it host a wide range of workshops and cultural activities, but – most importantly – it provided an opportunity to meet & socialize with other Mensans. EMAG 2009 is open to Mensans from all over the world.

Check www.mindmeeting.eu for more information

To access the Members'-only area of www.mensa.org:
Username: IntMensaMem
Password: 1nt
(numeral one not capital 'i' in the password)



May 21-24, 2009 - Mensa France AG will take place in Metz-Amneville during the week-end including Ascension Day. Metz has been listed by the NY Times in the 44 places to go in 2009 and is 50 km south of Luxembourg. Nearby Amneville is a thermal and touristic resort hosting the world's longest indoor ski track. Contact: Jean-Marc BAGGIO +33612368392 jmbaggio@wanadoo.fr

July 1-5, 2009 United States US Annual Gathering - "AMFM AG -The AG About Mensans and For Mensans" in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. <http://www.ag2009.us.mensa.org>

August 5-9, 2009 Denmark Braindance - Sankt Helene Conference Centre, in Tisvilde, 60 km north of Copenhagen, Denmark. Details: <http://braindance.mensa.dk>

August 28-31, 2009 Scottish Mensa Annual Gathering, Orkney. Overseas members will be able to book on-line at www.mensa.org.uk. Click on 'Mensa Events' on the home page. Alternatively, contact Rowena M Love for more details at orkneysmag09@googlemail.com or write to 16 Yorke Road, Troon, Ayrshire KA10 6LB Scotland.

September 11-13, 2009 Mensa Calgary Regional Gathering, Banff. More info at www.mensabanffrg.com. or contact Patricia Almost at almostp@shaw.ca

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