

# SONGCRAFTERS COLORING BOOK

by Bill Pere

## Taking the Labor out of Collaboration

The music business, like any entertainment industry, is a business of people interacting through the products of a creative process. People are of course very complex, but there are four dimensions which, when taken in their various combinations, explain a wide range of human interaction.

These four aspects of our personality have profound effect on how we relate to other people and to the world around us, both as a giver and receiver of communications and actions. For people who communicate through songwriting and/or performing, who give or receive critique, and who interact with any of the business aspects of music, these dimensions play a crucial role.

Each of the four areas is a continuum, and people have a natural preference for being on one side or the other. Many situations in life require acting in a manner that is opposite to our natural preference. The stronger the preference is for one style over the other, the more effort it takes to act the other way, and sometimes it is just not possible, despite our best effort.

The four dimensions, represented by letters, are:

### 1. How we focus our energy:

E = Extravert (75% of the population)  
I = Introvert (25% of the population)

### 3. How we make our decisions and Judgments

T = Thinking (50% of males, 40% of females)  
F = Feeling (50% of males, 60% of females)

### 2. What we pay attention to or Perceive:

S = Sensor (70% of the population)  
N = iNtuitive (30% of the population)

### 4. Which aspect of our life we emphasize (i.e., #2 or 3)

J = Judging (50% of the population)  
P = Perceiving (50% of the population)

Thus, a person's preference profile can be represented by four letters, one from each area. There are sixteen combinations in all. This does not mean there are only sixteen types of people. Since these are continuums, two folks with the same four preferences can be very different if one person has some of them very strongly and another person doesn't. Some people may doubt the accuracy and importance of these four areas, but they are widely researched, and as you read the brief descriptions below, think of how many people you know, including yourself, whom they reflect.

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**Extravert:** - Outward focus; Speaks first, thinks after; Action oriented; Seeks social interaction to re-energize self; At ease in crowds; Does not reflect inwardly; Talks loudly; Deals with conflicts openly; Emphasizes breadth; Many broad friendships; Communicates easily; Prefers talking to writing;

**Introvert:** - Inward focus; Thinks before speaking or acting; Social interaction is draining; Recharges self by turning inward; May be shy; Reflective, has an 'inner voice'; Speaks softly; Deals with conflict privately; Fewer, deeper friendships; May have difficulty expressing self openly; Prefers writing to talking;

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- ensor:** - Pays attention to details; Focus on trees instead of forests; Deals with concrete, specific, down-to-earth things; Precise; Information coming through senses is taken at face value; Follows instructions, recipes, formulas. Likes what's real and tangible. Lives in the present; Prefers small steps to big leaps; Steady and conservative;
- Intuitive:** - Pays attention to 'big picture'; Focus on forests instead of trees; Deals with abstract ideas and concepts; Approximate; Information coming through senses is associated with other information to make new ideas (What if...?); Creates own instructions, recipes, formulas; Likes what's possible. Looks to the future; Takes risks and leaps of faith; Restless and entrepreneurial;
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- Thinker:** - Makes decisions based on logic; Evaluates things rationally; Objective; Justice and Fairness; Words and actions are measured; Must have good reason for doing something; Rules, then circumstances; "What do you think about this?"; Detached; Critiques things; Seeks what is true; Direct;
- Feeler:** - Logic is optional; Evaluates things based on how they or others will feel; Subjective; Compassion and Humaneness; Words and actions show emotion; Will do things if they cause good or happy feelings; Circumstances, then rules; "How do you feel about this?"; Involved; Appreciates things; Seeks what is valued; Tactful;
- Judger** -- Likes planning, and scheduling; Pending things must get resolved; A decision is a decision. Does things sequentially, one task at a time; Makes lists and sticks to them; Draws conclusions, makes decisions, takes action based on available information; Harder to change direction once decided; Needs order, bothered by things out of place; Things may be in piles, but will know what's in each pile; Accurate sense of time, knows when an hour has gone by; Punctual, dislikes being late; Stays focused
- Receiver:** - Needs spontaneity; Likes to leave things 'open-ended'; A decision is not a decision; Does many things at once, bouncing between them; Makes lists and loses them or changes them; Delays drawing conclusions, making decisions, or taking action because new information might change things; Can change direction easily; Not bothered by disorder, or randomness; Things may be in piles and won't know what's where; Elastic sense of time..."You mean it's that late already?"; Easily distracted;
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Sometimes circumstances dictate that we act in a way opposite to our preferred mode, but when there are no external pressures, we all choose one of the two modes in each of the four dimensions. (If at this point, you are still reading this with an open mind, you are acting in a "P" mode, staying open to receive new data; If you have decided already that you agree or disagree with this stuff, then you are acting in a "J" mode, wanting things to be quickly decided and settled).

It should not be surprising that people at opposite ends of these continuums may have a hard time dealing with each other. Introverts will say extraverts talk too much, are draining, and don't mind their own business. Extraverts will say introverts are snobs, unsociable, paranoid or just plain strange.

Sensors will say iNtuitives are impractical and have their head in the clouds. Intuitives will say Sensors are hung up in trivia, boring, full of 'small talk' and have no vision; The S/N difference can drive the greatest wedge between people... how can they communicate if they don't see the same things to begin with, and both are right in what they see?

Feelers will say that Thinkers are cold, distant, aloof and uncaring. Thinkers will say that Feelers are irrational, illogical, emotional, inconsistent, and try hopelessly to please everybody.

For Judgers and Perceivers, just think of The Odd Couple, Oscar Madison and Felix Ungar.

It is known that people with similar preferences interact most easily with each other. Of successful marriages, only 4% have no preference in common, while more than two-thirds have 2 or 3 preferences in common. Before being too quick to criticize someone who is your opposite, keep in mind that if they are weak in an area where you are strong, then they are strong in an area where you are weak. For example, all “J” and no “P” is a ship with a charted course but no wind in the sails. All “P” and no “J” is a ship at full sail with no rudder. It takes all eight facets to write good songs and to live a balanced life. !

The lifeblood of the music business is a great song. It takes parts of all eight qualities to take a great song from initial inspiration to finished product.

- Introversion** provides the internal reflection that allows ideas to form and a song to be born.
- Extraversion** provides the drive to share that song with others and to want others to relate to it.
- Sensing** provides information about the world that gives us subject matter for songs. It provides the detail that makes a lyric accessible to the senses.
- Intuition** provides the creative association for presenting a topic in a new and fresh way, for giving a lyric depth of meaning, and for providing a coherent overarching metaphor. Intuition is the wellspring of the creative process.
- Feeling** provides the emotion that is a centerpiece of most lyrics and is a universal form of communication, despite its subjective imprecision.
- Thinking** provides the analysis and crafting needed to give polish and impact to the lyric and music. It lends precision and clarity to lyrical communication.
- Judging** provides the desire for structure and order in the song, and the drive to want to get it done.
- Perception** provides the openness to new ideas and the ability to change and rewrite as better words, phrases and grooves come along.

Many writers like Tom Chapin, Bill Staines, and Bill Harley, in describing their creative process, talk about these qualities all being in play, sometimes fighting internally with each other for attention. But take away any one quality, and an intangible “something” is missing. Can one person do all eight things effectively? This is extremely rare. We inevitably do four of them better than the other four, and usually one of those four emerges as our primary strength. This explains why the self contained good singer-songwriter is such a rare commodity (let alone just a good songwriter...) Usually it requires collaboration to get all of the eight elements.

When all four dimensions are taken together, a person’s preference profile can be represented by four letters, one from each area. For each of the sixteen combinations of preferences, there is a quintessential persona associated with it, as the four dimensions act together. Let’s look at some combinations which are of particular relevance to a business driven by creative and performing artists:

An INTJ is the quintessential scientist. A person of this type is driven to know why things are, and lives to shape abstract ideas, symbols, and concepts (including words and metaphors). This does not mean that an INTJ will become a chemist or physicist or other ‘typical’ scientific professional. An INTJ can be anything...musician, screenwriter, businessman, or plumber; It just means that all aspects of his or her pursuits will be approached scientifically, conceptually, and inventively, according to their own rule book. This is not a matter of good, bad, right or wrong. It is simply how this kind of person is made inside.

The direct opposite is ESFP...a quintessential entertainer. An ESFP is always 'on stage', no matter what he or she is doing. Performing is as natural as breathing. ESFP's live for each moment and squeeze all they can from it. Stage and screen careers are natural magnets for these folks. The electrifying performances of Janis Joplin or Tina Turner exude energy (E), are sensual (S), are spontaneous (P), and are filled with feeling (F). These people are just being themselves. Since they're always running at full speed on high octane, we can't help but notice how many of them we've lost prematurely...

If an INTJ is to act like an ESFP or vice-versa, it requires a complete inversion of each aspect of their personality. Remember that the stronger the preference is, the more energy it takes to switch to the other side for any period of time. Thus for a strong INTJ to act like Janis Joplin is just not going to happen very often. For an action-oriented ESFP to ponder theories and methodically figure out why something is a certain way is as likely as midnight coming at noon.

If we exchange the first two and second two preferences, we get another opposite pair... ESTJ and INFP. Ask yourself what the key qualities are for a successful business manager... interacting with others, focus on practical, 'real' issues, quick and objective decision-making, and a preference for order, scheduling, planning, and closure. It is no coincidence that 60% of business managers are TJ's, and ESTJ's are the quintessential "administrators of life" (e.g., Harry Truman). E's and S's make up the vast majority of the population, outnumbering I's and N's by more than three to one.

The opposite of the business manager is the INFP who represents the quintessential idealist. These folks, like Joan of Arc, are always committed to a noble cause, and to performing noble service to aid society. A hallmark of the INFP is to reflect endlessly on the all-important question "Who am I?" (e.g., Am I an artist?, Am I a writer? Am I a parent? Am I a lover? Am I a good person? I am all of these, but what does that mean? Who am I?) . Like INTJ's, the INFP's also are natural wordsmiths, writing in many fields. Think of how many song lyrics are based on the question "Who am I?" It is of interest to note that in almost all walks of life, people with the "F" preference are frequently underpaid.

Thus, ESFP entertainers and ESTJ agents make a good collaboration, The ES qualities allow for easy communication, and the SP/TJ differences each apply strengths to the areas where they are most effective and compensate for each other. This assumes of course that Oscar Madison and Felix Ungar can keep from strangling each other.

The music business thrives only through the interaction and cooperation of writers, performers, engineers, managers, businessmen, lawyers, agents, producers, promoters, roadies, consumers, etc. Each of these have prevalent traits. The good side of this is that people are naturally drawn to positions which use their special gifts and talents. The challenge faced by the industry is that true collaboration, acceptance, and communication among certain types is difficult because they are so different. It is not a question of right/wrong, better/worse, good/bad, smart/stupid, and there are no good guys or bad guys (although we frequently perceive it that way or judge it to be so...) There are only people acting according to the strengths they have developed and following the natural tendency of "birds of a feather....".

Each of the sixteen profiles has very specific gifts and strengths which lead them like magnets into certain areas of endeavor where success will come from those strengths. Just as INFP idealists cannot turn off the need to champion a cause, whether good ones or misguided ones, their opposite, ESTJ corporate managers, cannot turn off the need to make decisions...good ones and misguided ones. Just as an INTJ scientist cannot turn off the need to discover things...some memorable and some forgettable, their opposite, an ESFP entertainer cannot turn off the need to give performances...some memorable and some forgettable.

The magnetic attraction between professions and preference profiles is extremely strong. An overwhelming percentage of lawyers have the "T" preference. Public school teachers and administrators are overwhelmingly "J"... which makes it very difficult for strongly "P" folks to

do well in school. In fact many ESFP's have such trouble with the "J" environment that they have a high dropout rate.

Think of relationships between writer and writer; Between artist and recording engineer; Between record company executive and writer; between lawyer and writer; between agent and artist; And the group dynamics of critique sessions; Each of these interactions has the potential to be mutually strengthening if the opposite preferences are appreciated and recognized, or mutually antagonistic if either party thinks the other isn't the kind of person they "should" be.

In writer-writer collaborations, S/N pairs are perfect for each other because both perspectives -- concrete references and an overarching metaphor -- are needed for an enduring lyric. But it sometimes difficult for S's and N's to talk easily with each other. In a T/F collaboration, the T provides the analysis of structure, meter, language and logic, while the "F" input provides effective communication through emotion and attention to the human condition. Introverts usually don't collaborate with other introverts, because they have an inner voice which they'd rather listen to, but in so doing, may limit their sources of input, ideas, and feedback. Extraverts love to collaborate with others, but two extraverts collaborating miss the dimension of quiet introspection, so important to adding depth to meaning and emotion in a song. An E/I team can produce great results if each respects the needs and quirks of the other, but it's not easy. J/J collaboration is usually the type where a specific time and agenda are decided in advance. A P/P collaboration means that either party can call the other at any hour of the night when an inspiration strikes. Both of these methods seem to work well. In a J/P collaboration, assuming Oscar and Felix can get along, the J forces the P to focus their energy on the task of writing, and usually drives to get things finished. The P opens the J to the possibilities of developing inspirations outside of the appointed time and topic, and is more open to rewriting and revising.

Collaboration is more than just two writers getting together. It's any people who share a mutual goal, be it artistic, business, legal, or technical, getting together in a way so that each can use their strengths to shine a light where the others might have a blind spot. Viewed in this way, reaching the pinnacle of art, craft, and commercial reward will be far less of the emotionally draining battle that it so often is. The music industry will be healthier for it, and the world will be richer for what will be produced.

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The information presented here on preferences is based on the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), a well researched and globally used indicator of personality preferences. Millions of people worldwide have been profiled. The MBTI was developed in 1942 by a mother and daughter who, amid the backdrop of World War II, wanted to know why people could not accept differences among each other. For more information refer to: **Gifts Differing** by Isabel Briggs Myers, CPP Books; **Type Talk** by Otto Kroeger and Janet Thuesen, Delta/Tilden Press; and **Please Understand Me**, by Kiersey and Bates, Prometheus Books.

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