



Task/Relationship and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator

The Task/Relationship value continuum also shares some commonalities with the Myers Briggs Type Indicator's (MBTI) Thinking/Feeling dichotomy. For instance, Task/Relationship and Thinking/Feeling both have to do with decision-making. Feelers focus on how people will be impacted by a decision, as do Relationship-value cultures. Thinkers and Task-value persons will tend to focus on more objective or detached criteria. However, it should be noted that the MBTI uses dichotomies—i.e., a forced choice of either/or—while cultural values are visualized on a continuum in which the value preference of an individual, organization or culture is represented as a point on a line between two poles. The MBTI is a measure of individual temperament or personality and is more fixed over the lifetime. Conversely, the cultural value of Task/Relationship can be applied both individually or corporately (for an entire culture or organization), and cultural values on the individual and corporate level can change over time.

In understanding temperament and culture, it is also helpful to keep in mind that a Thinking client functioning in a Relationship-value culture will present differently than one from a Task culture. For instance, my South Asian client, Serena, was very much a thinking judger on the MBTI. However, her culture values Relationship over Task. It took time to get to know Serena and to understand her milieu and priorities; much longer than it normally would with a similar temperament from a Task culture. Serena also consistently prioritized tasks that involved serving or relating to others over ones that were satisfying to her individually or did not involve people. Her culture influenced how her individual personality presents.