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ISBN 1-56699-113-7

## FINDING YOUR WAY

Personalized Practices for Spiritual Growth

John Ackerman

### About the Alban Institute

The Alban Institute initiates discovery and learning to strengthen congregations in creative, faithful, and effective ministry in the world. The Alban Institute is an ecumenical and interfaith not-for-profit that strengthens congregations by conducting research on the most pressing and critical issues facing congregations; publishing resources; offering educational and training events; providing consulting services; and advocating for the role of congregations in their local communities. The Alban Institute is financed by revenues from fees for products, services, and memberships, by grants, and by contributions.

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Resources for vital congregations

*Let your soul speak for itself. Some souls hold conversation with God in music, and some in the sowing of seed, and others in the smell of sawed wood, and still others in the affectionate understanding of their friends. All souls are not alike. . .*

*Quit dressing your soul in someone else's piety. Most of all, unite your soul, give it room to breathe, let it play, do not be ashamed of it. It is the child of rite eternal and destined for greater things than you dream.*

—Samuel Miller

## INTRODUCTION

There is a great variety of books that discuss the theory or practice of spiritual growth, but very few consider the significance of personality differences or of differences in psychological growth and development. This booklet is different. It is designed to help you find your own unique way to approach the Divine, basing that path on your personality type as defined by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®. Here you will find "hints," not rigid rules or stiff "shoulds," written to fit your personal style and development.

While this book provides specific hints for different personality types, it is not specific to any particular religion. Each reader provides his or her own context, drawing from whatever traditions are familiar to him or her. Spirituality, as used in this guide, is understood in its simplest sense—a person's relationship to the Divine, to other beings, and to his or her own true self.

## THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR®

Throughout the ages of recorded human history, observers have noted differences in personalities and outlined patterns or types that can be used to categorize people. Among countless others, Carl Jung, the noted Swiss psychiatrist, has written on the subject.

In the 1950s and 1960s, an American mother-daughter team, Katherine Myers and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers, developed a self-reporting questionnaire to describe and delineate personality differences along four scales: Extraversion-Introversion, Sensing-Intuition, Thinking-Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving.

The instrument these women developed, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), has been widely tested and researched, both in the United States and abroad. The MBTI is used to understand and appreciate personality differences

in counseling, business, education, vocational guidance, and most recently, spiritual direction and growth.

If you have never taken the MBTI, you may want to schedule an appointment with someone trained in administering this test. (You can find MBTI administrators through the Association for Psychological Type at (816) 444-3500.)

Alternately, you can use the chart on page four to determine your type or read one of the available books that provide self-scoring questionnaires (*Please Understand Me* by David Keirsey and Marilyn M. Bates, *Working Together* by Olaf Isachsen and Linda V. Berens, or *Type Talk* by Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen<sup>2</sup>). While these results may not be as accurate as those provided by a professionally administered MBTI, they can give you place to start.

The best expert about your personality is you. Trust your intuition. If you have a sense that the description fits you most of the time, it's probably "correct." Neither paper-and-pencil tests nor experts can determine our personalities; each of us knows this for ourselves. But because no one knows him or herself perfectly, the descriptions and hints provided here are loose and open-ended.

Some people, enthusiastic about the strengths and uses of the Indicator, fail to recognize the limits of an instrument based on self-knowledge and self-reporting. The MBTI, like any other tool, must be used with care.

An error we have all made from time to time is over-generalizing. Some people, thrilled with their new knowledge of MBTI personality types, start labeling friends, family members, cats, and vegetables. The cats and vegetables are probably not in too much danger, but your family and friends may resent being labeled. Remember, the MBTI is a self-reporting tool; the only expert on your personality type is you and the only expert on your friend's personality type is your friend.

After a while however, old hands at this may talk about labels like old friends with understanding and compassion. Indeed, asking someone whether he or she is an ENTI or an INTIP (or some other combination) may provide a good deal of insight. But beware of giving type tags to people who have no wish to be labeled.

Also, there are people who use the MBTI to defend their weaknesses. "What, me pick up the room? Don't you have any respect for a P style of living?" A sophisticated response may be to ignore this, point out the dirty floor and suggest this is an opportunity for new growth. Maintaining healthy respect for your style and the different styles of others doesn't mean abandoning self-improvement, and in fact, true understanding of differences often requires compromises.

Despite these potential problems, the MBTI is a wonderful asset for people who are developing and refining their religious and spiritual practices. As Samuel

Miller points out in the Preface, we are not all alike. A practice that works for one person may not necessarily work for another. And what works for us at one time may not fit later because we all change and develop over time. The hints that follow for each MBTI type offer you the opportunity to tailor your spiritual practices to your style.

### Personality Preferences

Using a "vacation" frame of mind, that is answering the way you like to be rather than the way you have to be at work or at home, choose the description in each of the four pairs that best fits you. Pick the one that comes the easiest or seems "most right." If you get stuck, remember the way you might have answered when you were a teenager. If you are unable to choose, try the right column.

Write down the letter you choose for each pair and make a note of any pair or pairs that cause difficulty. For example, if you choose Extraversion, Intuition, Thinking and Judging, but had difficulty choosing Intuition over Sensing, record EN/STJ. Then, in addition to reading the hints for ENTJ, you'll want to browse through the hints for ESTJ as well.

#### Extraversion (E)

Energized by the external world  
Likes to share work  
Talks to think and process  
Needs relationships  
Learns by doing  
Usually friendly, talkative  
Scans the environment

#### Introversion (I)

Energized by the inner world  
Works alone contentedly  
Thinks, then talks and acts  
Needs privacy  
Understands before doing  
Usually reserved at first  
Scans inwardly

#### Sensing (S)

Careful about the facts  
Likes the definite and observable  
Learns best by examples  
Lives in the present  
Likes applications  
Prefers using developed skills  
Starts at beginning, takes steps in order

#### Intuition (N)

May make errors of fact  
Likes to imagine possibilities  
Learns by seeing the big picture  
Lives in the future  
Likes concepts  
Prefers learning new ways  
Jumps in anywhere, may skip steps

#### Thinking (T)

Good at analyzing ideas  
Spontaneously finds flaws  
Uses logic to make decisions  
Needs to achieve  
Needs to be treated fairly  
May enjoy arguments

#### Feeling (F)

Good at making others feel good  
Spontaneously praises  
Uses values to make decisions  
Needs to be appreciated  
Needs approval  
Avoids anger and confrontation

#### Judging (J)

Lives by schedules  
Needs structure  
Plans work, works plan  
Decisive, seeks decisions and closure  
Takes on what can be done

#### Perceiving (P)

Lives spontaneously  
Needs variety  
Adapts freely  
Curious, seeks openness  
May over-schedule

### SPIRITUALITY

As mentioned earlier, spirituality as used here doesn't refer only to our relationship to the Divine (by whatever term you use to refer to Him/Her/It/Them), but includes relationships with other beings and ourselves.

Christians might call the quality of these relationships "love," so spirituality for them might be seen in the tradition of loving the Lord, their neighbors and themselves. To put it simply, spirituality is a different way of seeing things.

The suggestions and insights offered by this booklet do not rely on any particular religion. We do, however, draw from three basic spiritual practices recommended by Twelve Step programs (such as Alcoholics Anonymous). Readers may not be members of Twelve Step groups; these practices are recommended by many other spiritual or religious groups. The language used here is designed to be inclusive so that anyone can apply these suggestions.

The three recommended practices or disciplines are prayer, meditation, and personal evaluation or inventory as outlined in Steps Ten and Eleven. Step Ten is "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it." Step Eleven is "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out." Daily or regular

application of these three practices is suggested.

At first it may seem that these disciplines are devoted to the relationship with the Divine, but with further consideration we can see how passionate prayer, for example, breaks through shame and helps heal us (relationship to self), how meditation helps us see others for the wonderful gift they are (relationship to others) and how taking a personal inventory moves us to understanding ourselves more fully, teaches us how to respond to guilt and shame, and brings us closer to others (relationships to self and others). Examining each of these disciplines in more depth will reveal why this is so.

### What Is Prayer?

Prayer is, at its simplest, a cry of the heart. It may be something simple like "Help!" or "Thanks," or "Wow!" or "I'm sorry," or "Please bless Mommy and Daddy and make them good." All of these are cries of the human heart. In prayer we direct these thoughts to the Divine, the Universe, or God. Our hearts are probably always saying something, but much of the time we are too out of touch to recognize it. One benefit of group or individual spiritual guidance is the recognition that we are usually prayerful and need only to make that conscious and intentional.

It is this "conscious contact with a Higher Power" that we usually mean by prayer. Since words alone cannot express the totality of our feelings, we have songs, psalms and other poetry, gestures, dance and art whatever helps us put the ineffable into some kind of language, trusting that the Divine understands all languages of the heart.

Prayerfulness is an attitude, a way of being centered, aware, and alive. We don't need to make it happen. We need only ask for it and do things to encourage it.

Generally, Extraverts orient themselves outward and find it easier to focus on mountains, lakes, candles, or something else out there. Introverts, on the other hand, appreciate quiet time and prefer to be by themselves so that they can focus inwardly.

Sensing types may prefer specifics to focus on, such as a rosary, an icon, or the Bible, Koran, or other text. They often prefer spoken prayer that comes from their tradition. Conversely, Intuitives may like new forms of prayer and feel closest to God in being aware.

Feeling types often like the sense of having their hearts warmed and prefer singing or listening to music. Thinking types instead prefer something in writing, ideas that touch their mind and help them focus.

Judging types usually prefer a familiar pattern, while Perceiving types are usually

on the lookout for new ways to be open for prayer.

Once we recognize that different personality types have different prayer preferences and remember that the Divine is capable of understanding them all, we can easily see that the best course is to approach the Divine with our own characteristic language, whatever that is.

If we find that practices that once were effective lose something as we approach middle age or begin to take our spiritual journey more seriously, we are encouraged to stretch ourselves to find ways of praying that don't come so easily. These may be just what we need to develop and to ask for help in developing. Eventually, the Divine will lead us to a simple, integrated kind of prayerfulness that human spiritual advisors cannot chart, but only vaguely point at.

Paradoxically, the answers to prayers or the kinds of prayer that have the most impact are often the ones that don't fit our personality type or preferred style. A strong Intuitive may be moved by really "seeing" an icon. A Sensing type may have possibilities open and not be threatened by the lack of closure. In some conversions, people held in by their thinking and judging may have their hearts unexpectedly touched. Or Feeling types may have the Truth overwhelm them.

Prayer is not a ladder with holiness, sanctity, and closeness to God at the top. So forget trying to achieve. Instead speak of your longing and yearning for communion and coherence. A helpful image may be to think of two parallel rivers in your life. The one on the surface is what you are aware of. The other, the underground river, is the deep stream of your unconscious, your heart, and God. As we mature, we become more aware of the hidden river and are able to dip into it and allow it to flow into our consciousness until the two become almost one. It is not a matter of striving and achieving as much as it is a matter of becoming.

### What Kind of Meditation?

"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact..."

Prayer is speaking to the Divine, and meditation is simply the listening part of the conversation. Some people listen after they speak to the Divine, some people before. Eventually we may come to a point where the conversation continues without knowing or caring who spoke first.

Traditionally, people listen by reading from the Torah, Bible, Upanishads or other religious text. In the Twelve Step tradition, people often use daily meditation guides. What makes this different from reading the morning newspaper is that this is not reading for information; it is reading for inspiration. This is thoughtful, receptive, even prayerful reading.

Inspiration for meditation is not limited to written materials. Some people med-

itate with music or with silence. Some use their imagination to get into a story. Others repeat a word or phrase slowly until it goes from their minds to their hearts. Many meditate with nature: sitting outside, being still without falling asleep may be a form of meditation called contemplation. Noticing the details of a forest and feeling delight and praising God is certainly meditation, as Eugene Peterson points out below.

Annie Dillard is an exegete of creation in the same way John Calvin was an exegete of scripture...She reads the book of creation with the care and intensity of a skilled textual critic, probing and questioning, teasing out, with all the tools of mind and spirit at hand, the Author's meaning.

As with prayer, we usually follow the meditation practices of our family or group, or find meditation practices that fit our personality patterns.

Extraverts are often encouraged by meditating with a group. And while introverts often need the quiet space of meditating alone, almost all of us are encouraged by some sort of accountability and support.

Since sensing people usually focus on details, they are quite good at going over words slowly and carefully. Intuitives, on the other hand, are often off and improvising before they've even finished reading a passage.

And while thinking types like to mull over ideas and then make practical sense of them, feeling types often go straight to the meaning and value.

Generally meditation moves us from ideas to meaning to being and acting. The important thing for all of us is to learn to slow down so that we give the Divine time to respond. All types can benefit from a journal to record results, to give structure and specifics to meditation. There is no one "best" way to meditate. If your meditation never leads you to action, you might want to try other methods.

### Why Evaluate Our Consciousness?

"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Examining and evaluating our behavior, called taking inventory of ourselves in the Twelve Step tradition and by various names in other traditions, is resisted by most of us. Few of us want to look at the things that we feel shame or guilt about. And many of us have just as much trouble seeing our virtues clearly. Yet the deliberate practice of examining the positive and negative aspects of ourselves is precisely what we need to do to know how to rid ourselves of the shame that keeps us from entering fully into relationships with the Divine, other beings and ourselves that are the core of spirituality.

Most people deny the pain they are in and cause others. Taking inventory means asking Who have I hurt and how? Who hurt me and how? What's good, what's working? What isn't? This universal practice of evaluation is invariably followed by taking action to make amends, heal the wounds, and correct the situations that are ours to correct.

This practice becomes more profound when it includes searching not only for our vices and virtues, but also searching for evidence of the Divine in our daily lives. It is fairly easy to do this by recognizing all the things we have to be grateful for and the people and situations we want to pray for. We can also look for hints of God inside us, in our feelings. Then we learn to sort our feelings, eliminating those that are not of God and keeping those that are.

Just as they do in prayer and meditation, people with different personality patterns will approach evaluating themselves differently. Introverts are usually better at looking inward first, while extraverts may find it easier to begin examining external relationships.

Sensing people are good with the facts and at seeing the Divine in ordinary things when they look with faith. Intuitives are usually off following possibilities and may miss the ordinary details, but are often good at being aware of God's presence.

Thinking types may find it easiest to begin with nothing God of Truth. Frequently, they then need to strive for greater awareness of their feelings. Feeling types are more likely to be in touch with their emotions, sometimes to the point that they are overwhelmed by them. Often, feeling types need to use their thinking function to detach from and sort out their emotions.

Judging types appreciate a regular format, but may need to guard against getting so enamored with it that they ignore the content. Perceptives, who are quite willing to explore content, often need the supporting structure of a format, but struggle against it.

Taking inventory often overlaps with the practice of prayer and meditation because we find we need to pray about our shortcomings and listen for inspiration. It takes work and conscious effort. Yet it is in weaving these three practices together that we improve our conscious contact with a Higher Power and with other beings. We find ourselves more aware; spiritual awakening or consciousness grows.

As we develop our abilities to practice this spiritual discipline, we need to remember that we aren't doing this to get rewards for our "achievements," nor are we put down or punished for our "failures." There is no one right way to be in relationships with ourselves, other beings, and the Divine.

We can all work with our natural gifts, follow our natural inclinations and pray as

we can, not as we think we "should" because that's the way we read about or saw someone else doing it. Since spiritually is being in relationships and since we are all individuals entering into those relationships, spirituality is unique for each individual.

## THE HINTS

The hints on the following pages are suggestions only, not prescriptions, predictions, or assignments. Indeed, these cannot be more than hints, because while the applications of the MBTI have been well researched in many areas, there is little data on how it applies to spirituality.

In preparing these hints, I have drawn from my experience as a spiritual director. I have had direct experience with some of the types: for the others, I extrapolated from the general theory and what I've read. For the most part, people have told me that the hints are uncannily correct and therefore affirming and supporting. If this is not true for you, remember the old adage, "Take what you can use and leave the rest." Even better, please let me know what fits and what doesn't. (Send responses to John Ackerman, 2833 E. Lake of the Isles Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55408-1055.)

There are those who find that their MBTI type doesn't affect the form of their prayer so much as it influences the style or "flavor" of it. My experience has been that, as a reflection of an individual's unconscious, the MBTI type is like a cookie cutter, which affects the shape of a cookie but not the content of it. The purpose of the hints is to provide insights and suggestions that may fit you. They are not rigid rules for what is and should be a very personal experience. Whether a suggestion applies to you should, of course, be prayed over. Ask the Divine about all this; He/She/It is always your best spiritual guide.

There are hints for each of the sixteen possible MBTI personality patterns. For each pattern, the first paragraphs describe some of the characteristics of how this type of person relates to other people and work and gives some idea of what might go on inside this kind of person's head. This information has been well researched, and if it doesn't fit you fairly well, you may be looking at the wrong pattern and should look at another description.

Following the description of the type you will find suggestions this kind of person can use to develop his or her spiritual practices in prayer, meditation, and personal inventory. After the spiritual suggestions, there is a description of the changes and suggested action this type should consider at mid-life and maturity or in other times of transition.

From the MBTI perspective, mid-life is the time when the ego strengths of young adulthood should be complemented with other styles. From a spiritual point of view, mid-life may be when a person moves beyond being a beginner, when the

things that were once appropriate and helped you feel connected to your Higher Power, other beings, and yourself no longer seem effective. People usually describe this time as one of conversion or surrender. It means that we no longer identify ourselves with the ego of our youth and are willing to grow in new directions. Jung said that the things that worked in the first part of life don't work in the second. This usually brings the pain that leads us to making the shift.

Maturity is the time in our lives when we move beyond complexity to a new, deeper simplicity. Psychologically, in MBTI terms, maturity is a time of integrating secondary styles and attitudes with the ones that have always come most naturally. The result is a deeper, simpler sense of self and connection to others. It is very difficult to describe this mature style. Yet there are some hints that can be offered.

Spirituality is living in unity and communion. It leads to contemplative living and learning to become a wise, old person. It is surrendering to Divine Providence, living integrated in the spirit. Spirituality is the final "amen."

It is my sincere hope that this information will assist you in making this spiritual journey.

## Hints for an ENTI: Extraverted Thinking with Intuition

### Description

People with the ENTI pattern are logical and have a passion for leading. If you are an ENTI, life unfolds through confrontation and arguing, and you may be impatient in learning and living. You are stimulated by problems and are able to grasp the big picture, but you may make decisions too quickly. You need ideas and recognition for your own nurturing.

You need to work at feeling values more seriously and at appreciating others. You need to encourage others so that they are engaged, rather than intimidated by you. You may also need to remember to praise other people and to be sensitive to their styles.

Male ENTI's find that society rewards their style, but female ENTI's often do not. Males find "failure" difficult, while females often find social censure causes them to become a loner, a difficult role for any extravert.

### Spiritual Suggestions

You may want to start by praying for the spiritual gift of gentleness. A good discipline for ENTI's is unhurried listening to another person or to the Divine. Cultivating silence and stillness is advised. Praying regularly for other people would be excellent for your spiritual growth.

Your prayer tends to be structured and you probably enjoy a classical liturgy that

is well crafted. You tend to come to God through thinking and may need to transcend through a sense of wonder at the mystery of life and the Divine.

You may naturally focus your meditation by reflecting on scripture or other books. You will most likely find meditation easier when done in the company of other people who engage your interest and respect.

For ENTJs, personal examination or the discovery of God often begins from the outside, perhaps as a result of conflicting ideas and experience. You may find it useful to notice where you feel connected and where you don't. Where are you lonely, alienated? Where are you part of a group? What people do you care for?

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

Mid-life development for ENTJs may mean turning inward and learning to tolerate, perhaps even enjoy, quiet times. You may develop the Sensing side of your personality. You might start putting energy into non-work related activities, and develop more ways to play. Family, vacations and hobbies become more important to you over time. You may even find your dreams providing useful hints and revelations about the Divine.

As they mature, ENTJs get in touch with their feelings and with God's feeling for them. You'll find ways of expressing compassion for others and yourself. There will always be challenging ideas and confrontation, but there will be more receptivity to other people and God.

#### **Hints for an INTJ: Introverted Intuition with Thinking**

##### *Description*

People with the INTJ pattern have a gift for seeing possibilities and analyzing them. You are among the most independent of all the types and excel at original thinking, seeing the big picture and improving what is.

Your tendency is to learn by arguing and so you may have trouble with others who see you as aloof or resist your demands for improvements. Still, you are very sensitive to the feelings of those you are close to and your own feelings are deep and powerful.

Female INTJs frequently depart from the stereotype of femininity. Male INTJs may be out of touch with their feelings.

##### *Spiritual Suggestions*

Prayer for the INTJ often begins with thinking. You usually pray independently of others or tradition. You are reluctant to pray in groups, particularly groups that express emotions.

Reflecting on a classic book, symbols or the mystery of the limits of human

thought may be the most natural way for you to begin meditation,

Personal examination can be initiated by noticing your thoughts and what is True. You will begin to notice your feelings very slowly. You may appreciate aesthetic harmony or beauty and this may also be a route you can take to examine your consciousness.

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

As you move into mid-life, you will gradually become more aware of feelings. Intimacy and sharing your life with others will also increase and you will become more flexible. You'll learn to slow down and enjoy life and you may gain new appreciation for the spiritual.

As INTJs continue to mature, they appreciate their deepening sense of the details and simplicity of creation. You may develop deep relationships with several people and find God in feelings and details, in fact, in all things.

#### **Hints for an ESTJ: Extraverted Thinking with Sensing**

##### *Description*

ESTJs are efficient administrators who have a great sense of the here-and-now and need to impose order on the world around them. You probably have an earthy sense of humor. Business and applied mechanics come naturally to you. You are decisive and have no time to waste.

Parents with this pattern are often super-responsible, but may be impatient, make decisions too fast, or have trouble listening. You have such a need to come to a decision; you may neglect getting all the facts, particularly the values other people hold.

Male ESTJs tend to be macho and may have a tendency to be sexist and racist.

Female ESTJs are often torn between their style and what the world expects from women.

##### *Spiritual Suggestions*

Prayer may not make sense to you unless duty is stressed. Logical or well organized, traditional forms, such as the daily office or other patterned sets of prayer will likely have the most impact for you.

By meditating on the lives of others or the scripture, you may be able to apply the lessons to your own life. You might enjoy walking through the woods or by a lake, using your senses as a way of receiving grace.

Personal examination will probably start with the outside world of events and slowly come around to people you know and then yourself. You may help yourself by thinking about the needs of others.

### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

You may find yourself slowing down in mid-life, learning to listen, reflect and see the bigger picture. There may be more time for relationships. You need to have everything in order may relax and you may learn to listen with your heart.

With maturity you may try other prayer styles, turning to prayer that fosters intimacy. You are likely to rest on your well-deserved laurels, receiving the rest God promises. Sabbath rest is a time of grace, of being rather than doing.

### **Hints for an ISTJ: Introverted Sensing with Thinking**

#### *Description*

The ISTJ pattern makes for the most private of all types. If you are an ISTJ, you are probably responsible and hard working and likely to be impatient with those who aren't. Loyalty is one of your virtues and you honor your commitments. You are decisive and dependable.

However, your sterling qualities might tempt you into trying to reform those who are less responsible than you, sometimes to everyone's dismay. You think that those who play by the rules win. You value having a neat home and office, which others might see as austere traditionalism.

Male ISTJs may enjoy men-only programs where they can express machismo. Female ISTJs may find inner conflicts between their organized, objective nature and the idealized feminine role of wife and mother. The actions of both men and women with the ISTJ pattern will speak their love better than their words.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

If you have the ISTJ pattern, you probably have a strong desire for prayer, particularly structured prayer. Your tendency is to establish a favorite time and place for this necessary response to God. Using some of the patterns developed by spiritual guides such as Ignatius of Loyola and others may be helpful.

Abstract meditation holds little appeal for ISTJs. Instead, down to earth reflections on the significance of the day's events and the Truth of scripture will help you focus. Or you may prefer to reflect on priorities for action and offer this to God.

Because you tend to have difficulty accessing your feelings, traditional forms of personal examination may not work well for you. You'll probably do better to start outside, noticing where you sensed God's presence and asking for guidance in processing Truth.

### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

ISTJs in mid-life discover increased ability to examine their feelings for responses to God and to share those feelings with God. You'll probably also

develop one or two close friends to share with intimately. As you become more spontaneous and fun loving in this transition, you may indulge in new behavior. With time, you'll become aware of possibilities for the future and begin to see the big picture. You'll grow more playful without sacrificing responsibility and eventually learn to "enjoy God forever."

### **Hints for an ENFJ: Extraverted Feeling with Intuition**

#### *Description*

ENFJs usually radiate affection and concern for others. You are warmed by approval yourself and so you do well in jobs that call for building cooperation and working with others. Still, you need to take time to check what other people are feeling so you don't let your "shoulds" dominate.

Your pattern as an ENFJ may involve you in leadership roles, but you may have problems being at the upper level of hierarchies because you need support and affection rather than conflict. When there is conflict or resistance, you may take it personally and become depressed. You are a good candidate for burnout.

Female ENFJs may rise to the top, only to find themselves resented for being there. Male ENFJs may be accused of being insincere or seductive.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

As an ENFJ, your prayer often begins for and with others. You find it easy to be faithful in your discipline of personal devotion. Yet, you may have grave doubts when you're in trouble or your feelings are negative. Then you may find the psalms and the act of surrendering to God helpful. Your usual style is to pray from your heart, expressing your concern and passion and discovering God's concern and passion in return.

Reflecting on stories in books and scripture may be the easiest way for you to meditate. The drama outside may help you reflect on the drama inside you.

Examining your consciousness may begin with recognizing God's presence in your interpersonal relationships. You need to get past your idealism to what is. And you need to remember to surrender your concerns about others to God.

### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

With the mid-life shift, you are likely to grow in your awareness of your inner life. Details may appeal to you then, and your senses will drink in the grandeur of God. You may learn to enjoy just being in the here-and-now.

As you mature, you may begin to reflect on principles or the Truth. You may also become more gentle with yourself, combining a surgeon's sure touch with a mother's compassion.



## Hints for an INFJ: Introverted Intuition with Feeling

### Description

If you are an INFJ, you may feel lonely because your type is so rare. You want unanimity and value helping people develop themselves. When you are with other people, you appear reserved and excessively committed to harmony. Internally, you often suffer from your high ideals. You are usually gentle and compassionate until your dearly held values are challenged; then you can become very stubborn. You can be a great innovator but need to receive positive feedback from others.

While you may very sure of what God has called you to do, you need to work at listening to others. While your intuition, your "N," is sophisticated, your "S" is just the opposite and you may suffer from the temptations of your sensing nature: wine, sexual attraction, food, or song. You may also suffer from over-doing whatever project you're working on.

Female INFJs may find their values supported by society, yet, because of their introversion, others may be frustrated that INFJs don't project more. Male INFJs may have trouble because their type doesn't conform to the stereotypes for men.

### Spiritual Suggestions

Prayer may come quite natural to you, particularly quiet prayer. You tend to find the stillness of prayer a deepening and inspiring experience. You may find praying with images or symbols of God attracts you. You may insightfully insist on following your own style, resisting the techniques found helpful by others. Still, you need a pattern as well as freedom.

Meditation may also come easily for you as you reflect on relationships, dreams, images or poetry. You probably need variety in prayer and meditation, yet at the same time, you need stability and faithfulness to the process. Journaling may be very helpful in your effort to make sense of things.

For INFJs, personal examination and finding God naturally starts by looking within. You are able to discern the motions of God in your feelings. You need encouragement to go beyond surface feelings and thoughts to the deepest movements of the spirit within. Growth for you might be learning to hear God in the truth outside, particularly in the truth of those who are different.

### Mid-Life and Maturity

INFJs find their thinking employed more in mid-life, as a healthy complement to their feeling natures. Objective truth is as necessary as personal truth, and you may come to delight in theory. You may also learn to relax and follow dreams, to set limits and say no.

Over time, simplicity and unity will come as INFJs find God in their senses and in the here-and-now. Play and prayer that appeal to the senses may ground you as

you mature. Noticing the presence of God may include being more aware of the here-and-now, and you'll grow to have a more focused quality, a sense of being in the present moment more than was evident in your original prayerfulness.

## Hints for an ESFJ: Extraverted Feeling with Sensing

### Description

People with the ESFJ pattern are the most sociable of all the types and make wonderful service-oriented people. You seek harmony and approval from others, especially from your parents and supervisors. In fact, you may not take care of yourself because you are so focused on others. You base decisions on the facts and tend to jump into decisions too fast because you have a long list of do's and don'ts.

If you're an ESFJ, you may have trouble facing difficulties and may be afraid of change. You need a cause, praise, and order. It is important for you to grow in your ability to deal with conflict and anxiety. You also need to learn the limits of your ability to meet other people's needs and how to say no.

Male ESFJs might have trouble with their masculine identity since their feeling function puts them at odds with the male stereotype. Female ESFJs, on the other hand, may be so in synch with the female stereotype that they have problems discovering who they really are.

### Spiritual Suggestions

Prayer for ESFJs is often orderly and traditional in the beginning. You tend to pray for others. You are attracted to praying in groups, particularly groups where feelings are openly expressed.

Meditation in an intellectual, abstract style will be difficult for you. Instead, you prefer to listen to God's voice in your feelings and in the hearts of others. A journal may give you a place to express your feelings and thoughts.

You probably find personal examination very trying because while you find it easy to look at facts, meanings are difficult to see. Also, you are more comfortable looking outside yourself than focusing your glance inward. Learn to pay attention to the simple facts and details of life; you may find God there. Try working from the exterior to the interior and eventually you will become aware of God's communications inside.

### Mid-Life and Maturity

People with ESFJ patterns may develop their intuition and ability to see possibilities in mid-life. You may enjoy working with art. As you learn to work on your own priorities, you learn to be kind to yourself. You may also develop objectivity.

As you mature, the principles you have lived your life by might be articulated. You might become involved in social justice. Others will always be important to you, but you may grow comfortable being by yourself, practicing the presence of God and delighting in the ordinary and in the people you love.

### Hints for an ISFJ: Introverted Sensing with Feeling

#### *Description*

ISFJs are super-responsible and have a high need to be of service. Others may take you for granted or take advantage of you. You function best with a cause, harmonious relationships, and appreciation. Your sense of loyalty may make you seem very serious; play comes only when work is finished. You tend to like practical and organized jobs.

Young ISFJs need to develop the judging aspect of their personalities, otherwise they will have only inner impressions. They tend to be afraid of imagination and project the worst, which they are always ready for. They share the Boy Scouts' motto, "Be Prepared!"

Female ISFJs fit the stereotype beautifully and may be critical of women with other styles who don't. Male ISFJs, however, may have a good deal of trouble exercising their masculinity.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

Prayer, especially silent or quiet prayer, is very appealing to ISFJs. You prefer to pray by yourself. You may be fond of prayers of praise and thanksgiving and of traditional forms of prayer.

You tend to meditate from your heart, evaluating the meaning of scripture or a story with your feelings. Abstract intellectual ideas probably won't appeal to you, but stories that affect people might. Journaling may help you become clear and focused.

As an ISFJ, you can begin examining your consciousness by looking at your feelings and sorting out those that come from God. An orderly, systematic way of doing this, such as suggested by Ignatius, will be helpful.

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

In mid-life, you may find more appreciation of your analytic thinking. You'll probably want to take time off for yourself. As you learn new ways to pray, you might find the use of symbols helpful for the first time in your life.

As you mature, you may accept service from others and ask more directly for your own needs to be met. You may finally be able to hear "Well done, good and faithful servant!" from others and God and take it in.

### Hints for an ENTP: Extraverted Intuition with Thinking

#### *Description*

People with the ENTP pattern are ingenious at seeing new possibilities. Since you get bored easily, even with your own projects, you enjoy going from one activity to the next. You are superb at understanding others, but dismiss standard routines as boring.

Others tend to see you as either effervescent and charming or arrogant. People in relationships with you find you interesting but tiring. You might find yourself in frequent clashes with those in authority over you. You probably need to develop self-discipline. It is important that you learn to further develop your thinking so you can set priorities.

ENTP women may have a good deal of trouble with men. The cultural norm for women is not natural for NT women, who may feel compelled to hide their intelligence. ENTP men, on the other hand, seem to fit the cultural pattern and may have trouble growing for this reason.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

For the ENTP, prayer starts with thinking and tends to move in a logical manner. You often praise God in the symbolic or metaphorical. You may appreciate brief moments of silence as revelatory. You seek new approaches to prayer and enjoy reading about spiritual giants.

Reflecting on the odd or unexpected in scripture or life may lead you to meditation. Even in meditation you enjoy being challenged by the new. New ways of seeing things will come easily for you, since you habitually look at things from a fresh viewpoint.

Personal examination of your consciousness may come from reflecting on Truth and noticing God there. You can also learn to hear God in the challenges of those who disagree with you.

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

In mid-life you may heed a call to slow down and set priorities at a deeper level. You may learn to recognize your feelings and the feelings of others. You might start a new hobby or sport and even learn to stick with one project at a time.

As they continue to mature, ENTPs come to sense God in the details. You'll increase your appreciation for books on the present moment and simplicity. Maturity also increases your ability to have deep relationships with people other than your spouse.

## Hints for an INTP: Introverted Thinking with Intuition

### *Description*

If you are an INTP, you prize intellectual consistency and accuracy and find it difficult to understand why others don't. To you, the world exists to be understood. You are intensely curious and usually quiet and reserved.

You may overlook what others care about and even what you yourself care about. You may need to develop your intuition to balance your thinking. On the other hand, if one of your values is violated, you tend to erupt. You demand intellectual challenge in your relationships.

Female INTPs have difficulties since they often find themselves at variance with the behavior and roles society expects of them as women. Male INTPs may be out of touch with their feelings, and others may perceive them as arrogant.

### *Spiritual Suggestions*

Prayer may begin spontaneously with an awareness of the mystery of life. INTPs have a great concern for truth and justice, and often feel pain at violations of both. Your search for conceptual harmony is a lifetime passion. You may grow from using prayer that involves music or other stimuli to evoke your feelings.

Meditation may center on the truth of sermons, classical texts, in music, or the truth beyond intellectual statements. You may find it helpful to meditate with a focusing prayer.

INTPs find that personal examination of consciousness for hints of God begins within for "whatever things are true." In Truth, you may find God. Reflecting on the mystery of this may give you a sense of reverence.

### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

At mid-life, you may shift to seeing God in the details and seeing the glory of God in nature. You may begin to recognize God in scenery, in people, in students. Your prayer might focus on details and revel in the real. You'll become more willing to stretch in the specifics and details you ignored earlier in life.

As they mature, INTPs become aware of their feelings and are able to express them verbally. Your passionate heart and mind will become more and more aligned with the heart and mind of the universe.

## Hints for an ESTP: Extraverted Sensing with Thinking

### *Description*

ESTPs are great realists who have a flair for being objective and flexible. You are action oriented and have little use for theory. Your parents might have seen you as hyperactive. Your type excels in negotiation and small business, anywhere in

fact, where you can be center stage.

ESTPs tend to have trouble with authority because they so often ignore it. You also have trouble with procedures and following through. The organizations you are a member of may have to devise ways to use your talents constructively or you may devise your own outlets. Others may find, to their dismay, that relationships with you are provisional or conditional.

Female ESTPs experience problems because they seem more like tomboys. Other types see male and female ESTPs alike as mysteries.

### *Spiritual Suggestions*

For ESTPs, prayer needs to be practical and action oriented. Your natural inclination is to pray as you do things. Quiet, formal prayer does not come easily for you.

Like prayer, you prefer meditation that is practical and active. You might try walking meditations. You may also find it useful to reflect on your life and to share your faith and journey with others. Belonging to a sharing group will foster reflective and receptive activity for you. Your focus is often the practical Truth of God and Reality.

Since you are external in your Orientation, examination of life comes rather easily for you. What you find difficult is focusing inward, particularly on your feelings. Still, looking at life, nature, action, or others, can fill you with gratitude to focus your attention on.

### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

ESTPs find themselves growing more aware of their feelings and more sensitive to the feelings of others at mid-life. With this increased awareness, you may come to appreciate introverted, quiet prayer more. You may even be able to sit still.

As you continue to mature, you'll be able to see more possibilities. The inner journey will become more worthwhile and satisfactory. God and Reality may be one with you, not ideas "out there." Truth may dwell within you.

## Hints for and ISTP: Introverted Thinking with Sensing

### *Description*

ISTPs are logical and geared for action. If you are an ISTP, you can be quite shy, particularly if you are working on a project. You tend to be very good dealing with concrete reality, including sports and skills that require an artisan. You prefer activity and are easily bored. You are bothered by restrictions, social requirements and resent being told what to do.

You may need to work at expressing your feelings and paying attention to the

feelings of others. You may also need to see the possibilities beyond the simple facts.

Female ISTPs are usually trained in childhood to consider the feelings of others, which can enhance type development. Yet female ISTPs are so different from the stereotypical woman, they may hide their thinking. Male ISTPs have no such trouble, but often appear aloof because they have trouble developing and expressing their feelings.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

Prayer for you is usually focused on the practical and engages your thinking. It may be difficult for you to express your feelings to God and in this you may need help finding your way. One approach is to use feeling words in your prayers, or to repeat the psalms or the verses from hymns, or even to sing the hymns. You may find that a prayer that helps you focus, such as observing your breath, will come easiest for you.

Meditation will probably engage your thinking side. You tend to observe things that are going on. Reflecting on God in the practical suits you well. It may be difficult for you to stick to a discipline, but you can benefit from a daily practice. You might want to try walking meditations.

Examining life and looking for God's presence may come easily for you since you are a detail-oriented person who likes to think and keep life orderly. But again you might find maintaining a regular discipline difficult. You may need to design your practice with plenty of freedom built in.

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

Mid-life for people with the ISTP pattern presents the opportunity to get in touch with their intuition and feelings. You may have more time to spend with others and start developing closer relationships. Life or God may call you to stretch yourself to do things that are uncomfortable.

As you mature, you may finally learn to complete one project before starting another. With time you'll have some order in your life and delight in finding God in the details.

### **Hints for an ENTP: Extraverted Intuition with Feeling**

#### *Description*

People with the ENFP pattern are usually enthusiastic and actively inspire and affirm other people. And they need to be affirmed in turn. You strive for authenticity, spontaneity and emotional intensity. If you're an ENFP, you see possibilities, sometimes interpreting negative motivation when there is none.

You can be hypersensitive and hyperalert, are easily bored with routine and

fiercely independent. People with this pattern may work too hard to please others. You need to learn to relax.

Male ENFPs often feel as if they are outside the male establishment and work hard to prove they are men, sometimes using seduction as a way of establishing it. Because of their feeling natures, female ENFPs fit the feminine stereotype, sometimes so well that they have trouble establishing their identity and standing up for what they believe.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

You pray best in groups or outdoors. You prefer variety and may struggle to keep a regular time and place for your practice. Introverted, quiet prayer will probably be difficult for you, but some restful balance is needed.

Meditation may occur as you scan the variety of things you have experienced or read and begin to focus and null over the ideas. Again, you may require discipline in keeping this practice regular. You may also enjoy dialogues and journaling.

Since you are externally oriented, examination of your consciousness will almost always come from the outside inward. You can be a penetrating observer; learn to look for God's hints.

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

Mid-life may bring the balance of more rational judgment. You'll probably learn to slow down a bit and take care of your body, particularly learning to reduce muscular tension. You may start limiting the number of projects you undertake.

With maturity, you are likely to become more centered and quiet. You'll increase your ability to listen to God and find holy simplicity in your everyday life.

### **Hints for an INFP: Introverted Feeling with Intuition**

#### *Description*

INFPs are motivated to serve humanity and yet often hold harsh judgments about themselves. If you're INFP, you are a strong idealist and most happy when expressing your passionate convictions, even though it may be difficult to express those feelings to others. Outwardly, you may appear shy or easy-going, which belies the intense, perhaps compulsive, feelings you hold inside.

People with the INFP pattern work very hard to please others. You tend to take on too much and frequently struggle with self-doubt and questions. You need to work at being more independent and gentle with yourself.

Male INFPs might be seen as weak until their ideals are threatened and then others might perceive them, perhaps correctly, as perfectionist. Female ENFPs

are often perceived as feminine and shy, which may give them problems.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

Prayer comes quite naturally for you because people with this pattern seem to be "natural" mystics. In all likelihood, you prefer the quiet prayer that gives you a strong sense of experiencing God within. Many INFPs constantly search for new and better ways to feel intimacy with God. You might find journaling very helpful.

Reflecting on stories of people in scripture or in life is a natural way for you to begin meditation. You might also profit from recording your dreams to seek guidance there.

Examining your consciousness will be almost effortless for you because you naturally look inward. You can start easily by sorting out your feelings for hints of God. This can lead you to the valuable practice of filtering your self deprecation from God's affirmations.

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

The transitions for you at mid-life can bring you greater awareness of your senses. You discover God's handiwork in nature and in the simplicity of your life. With time you may find grace more important than the drivenness of your youth.

As you mature, you develop logic and rational evaluations of situations. A small community of friends can give you the grounding you need. You will learn to accept yourself, imperfections and all, and become grace-full.

#### **Hints for an ESFP: Extraverted Sensing with Feeling**

##### *Description*

The ESFPs are adaptable realists, who have a flair for living and relating with people right here and now. You are often the life of the party and can be generous to a fault. You are so impulsive that you're vulnerable to seduction of many sorts. You tend to shy away from the dark side of life. You learn from experience, not books or lectures.

You need to develop your judgment. Other people may see you as inconsistent and want more concrete, dependable plans from you.

Female ESFPs might be seen as "air heads," and males might find their masculinity suspect. ESFPs, in general, have a harder time establishing their identity and might be seen as being hyperactive.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

Saint Francis may be your patron saint and you may start prayer by appreciating nature and praising its source. Or you may see prayer as doing your work and giving. You'll probably find it easier to pray with others than alone. You'll also

benefit from learning a variety of forms of prayer.

A traditional style of meditation will probably be difficult for you since SPs usually prefer to do rather than reflect. You might try to reflect on what you have experienced instead. Writing in a journal will help you focus and summarize what you're learning.

Examining your consciousness will usually be focused outside yourself, at least in the beginning. You can start with remembering the facts of the day, the details where God seemed to be, and the places where your heart was warmed.

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

At mid-life, you may begin to develop the thoughtful side of yourself. As you grow quieter, you grow deeper. You may perceive more than surface events and begin to recognize the multiple levels of reality.

Maturity will lead you to exercising your intuition more. You will sense the presence of God in your inner life. You might find yourself involved in fewer, but deeper, relationships as you learn to better care for yourself and others.

#### **Hints for an ISFP: Introverted Feeling with Sensing**

##### *Description*

People with the ISFP pattern are the least understood and most envied of all the types. You are free spirits, showing warmth and compassion for all of creation. You live in the present moment and want your work and relationships to be personally gratifying. Because you have little need to control others, you may be overlooked or undervalued.

Your free-spirited tendency to neglect priorities, preparation, and time constraints may irritate others. You often want to incorporate music, color, and texture into your life, and you need to find practical ways to realize your ideals.

Male and female ISFPs alike are seen as nurturers, and your natural inclination is to do this very well.

#### *Spiritual Suggestions*

ISFPs usually have a strong sense of God within and a personal relationship with the Divine. Practicing awareness of God's presence and a Franciscan love of the world makes prayer easy for you. You might also find music and art important in expressing your heart.

Meditation in the sense of thinking about things probably won't be effective for you. Instead, consider internal dialogues with characters from scripture, dreams, or myths as sources of insight and inspiration.

Since your natural tendency is to look to your feelings, examination of consciousness comes easily for you as you notice God's presence in your feelings and your sense of when you are connected and when you aren't.

#### *Mid-Life and Maturity*

Mid-life for ISFPs often provides opportunities for getting in touch with possibilities. If you haven't found satisfaction in your work and relationships, you may feel tempted to rid yourself of all responsibilities and leave on an adventure. This may be a time for you to set goals.

Further maturation brings an appreciation for logic that can provide stability. As a master of the art of living one day at a time, you may be able to teach this to others by both example and explanation. This kind of sharing with others brings gifts to you and them.

#### PERSONALIZING THE HINTS

After reading the hints and description for your type, ask yourself what elements fit where you are now and which hints you sense will help you get where you want to be. Don't expect the description to fit like a pair of socks or jeans that mold themselves to you. Think of it as a general description, like your ZIP code.

If you have trouble seeing how the spiritual suggestions for your type relate to your own spiritual patterns and practices, you may want to talk this over with someone. Usually there are compelling reasons for any discrepancies. Discussing this with a spiritual advisor will not only help you discover the cause, but help you develop alternate responses as well.

For example, if you were raised in a family, tradition, church or order that stressed a particular way of being spiritual, you may have learned that there was only one way to be spiritual and therefore abandoned your own natural tendencies. Try the suggestions provided here to see if they don't fit as well or better. You may discover you have several patterns of spiritual practice that you can choose from.

Or you may be so unique that you are off the chart, or so led by God that you are beyond the beginner's description and well on your way to becoming your spiritual self in your own unique ways. Or you may be in the process of a major change or between patterns.

INFPs and ENFPs are often likely to have trouble with the descriptions and hints. If you're an INFP or an ENFP, you may be so creative that it is difficult to fully describe your spirituality.

#### Intentional Practice

Whenever we want more intimacy with God, others, and our true selves, we can use intentional practice to help. The tricky part is that while intention is necessary, we can't control the outcome. In fact, the more desire and intent slip over into control, the less likely the practice is to be truly spiritual or helpful.

Intentional practices include prayer, meditation, and inventory on a regular basis. Most people find they need to practice these on a daily basis, perhaps with extra time spent on the weekend for more intense prayer, quiet time or examination. Almost any activity, including your work, can be a spiritual practice if you intend it that way and dedicate it to spiritual purposes. Still, it is a good idea to avoid trying to do too much too soon. It's better to build a solid framework of spiritual practice that will allow you to grow in your awareness without feeling overwhelmed by zealous commitments you can't keep on a regular basis.

Start by listing the things you already do that help you get centered and feel connected to God, your true self and others. I also find it useful to make a brief journal entry about when I felt connected, how aware I felt and where I fell into additive or destructive thinking or behavior.

Once you have a sense for what your present spiritual practices are and how those affect how you feel, re-read the suggestions for your MBTI type and consider what you'd like to add or subtract to your daily and weekly practice.

It's also useful to notice who gives you support in your spiritual practice. Most of us find it extremely beneficial to have a friend or group that will encourage us and hold us accountable for following through on our commitments.

Many people find that completing a form that lists their daily and weekly spiritual intentions and who they can count on for support and then posting this form where they can see it everyday reminds them of their commitment to themselves and to God. You might want to make copies of this Spiritual Intention Form to complete and post. Periodically reviewing these can show you how you're developing.

#### Spiritual Intention Form

Date:

I intend to do this daily:

I intend to do this weekly:

I intend to get support from:

## Spiritual Response to Stress

In a very practical sense, the MBTI helps me apply my time and energy to being in contact with God and others in a variety of ways. But when push comes to shove and I'm feeling particularly stressed, hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, I need to remember a few simple practices that help me stay centered.

Several of my guides have advised me that the one practice I should hold on to even during stressful periods, sickness, or vacations is personal inventory. But this isn't an inventory focused on where I went wrong, but rather on where I am connected.

Being connected to ourselves means being in a relationship with who we really are, being awake, centered, and not acting out of addiction. Being connected to others means being with them in loving, healthy ways and speaking and listening about the meaningful things we share. Being connected to God means establishing conscious contact with our Higher Power and practicing awareness of the presence of God through prayer and gratitude.

Connection Inventories work best when written and shared with others. But during stressful times, it is sometimes enough to consider the questions on the way to bed or first thing in the morning.

Here's a recommended Connection Inventory:

### Connection Inventory

I felt connected to God, to others and myself when:

I am also thankful for:

I felt disconnected, absent, compulsive or not aware when:

I am also sorry about:

Right now, I need to change:

Right now, I need to accept:

After noting when you felt connected and what you are grateful for, offer a prayer of thanks. After you note when you felt disconnected and what you feel remorse about, admit where you are and ask for forgiveness.

When you're noting what you need to change or accept in the present, pay attention to specifics. What are you powerless over? What do you need to let someone else or Someone Else handle? Notice the clues your body gives you. What does your gut tell you? What is your heart's deepest desire? Consider

whether you need to make amends or tell someone that he or she hurt you.

### Learning More

Most of us need time to process a new idea. We need to talk about it and explain it to others to discover if we really understand and appreciate the idea.

The MBTI is more than just an idea, however. It is a paradigm, a way of perceiving and interpreting reality. Think of it as a grid we can place over reality that helps us see things we wouldn't notice otherwise.

Unlike the personality quizzes you find in magazines and newspapers, the MBTI is so sophisticated that you could spend a lifetime learning more and more about it. A good way to get started is to find a group or person who specializes in the MBTI. In most cities, there are people trained to administer the MBTI who offer workshops.

There are also many good books you can use to deepen your understanding of the Myers-Briggs. It's a matter of finding the ones that speak to you. You might try these:

*Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types* by David Keirsey and Marilyn M. Bates (Del Mar, Calif: Prometheus Nemesis Book Co., 1984) is the most popular book. It has chapters on applying the MBTI to leadership issues, marriage, and children.

*Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type* by Isabel Briggs Myers (Palo Alto, Calif.: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1995) is a succinct yet elegant book for those who want a more technical approach.

*Personality and Spiritual Freedom* from Robert and Carol Ann Faucett (New York: Image Books, 1987) offers a very good discussion on spiritual growth from a Roman Catholic perspective.

### Sharing What You Learn

As you become excited about the insights and benefits you're gaining from your awareness of the MBTI, you will naturally want to share this with others. But discretion is advised.

Anything good can be perverted to be destructive. It is possible for people who understand the MBTI and who are in a position of power to slip into abusing that power by telling others what they should do, how they should work or pray, or by giving inappropriate marital advice based on the MBTI. In the area of spiritual

growth, advising someone that because of his or her personality type, he or she should practice spirituality in one way and not another is an abuse of power and knowledge.

Only those who are certified by the national organization should administer the tests or base professional advice on MBTI. Also, if you are going to teach others, you have an obligation to study with someone who can help you see and avoid the dangers.

But even people who are not teaching or in positions of power can become a pain in the neck when they go on and on about the MBTI. Use your new understanding of personality types and differences to affirm others and to remind yourself to be patient with your own tendencies.

Using the MBTI properly will enhance self-knowledge and self-acceptance. Learning that you are all right just as you are and that your style and differences are acceptable is a tremendous benefit that will help you leave shame and guilt behind on your spiritual journey into freedom and delight.

#### NOTES

1. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and MBTI are registered trademarks of Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. For further information on the MBTI please contact: Center for Applications of Psychological Type, Inc. (CAPTI), 2815 NW 13th Street, Suite 401, Gainesville, FL 32609, Telephone (904) 375-0160; FAX (904) 378-0503.
2. David Keirsey and Marilyn M. Bates, *Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types* (Del Mar, Calif: Prometheus Nemesis Book Co., 1984); Olaf Isachsen and Linda V. Berens, *Working Together: A Personality Centered Approach to Management* (Coronado, Calif.: Newworld Management Press, 1988); Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, *Type Talk* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1988).