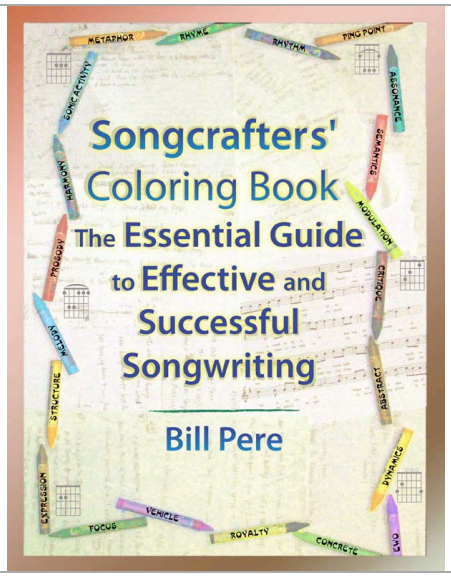

The concepts discussed in this article are a part of the comprehensive analysis of songwriting presented in the complete book "Songcrafters' Coloring Book: The Essential Guide to Effective and Successful Songwriting" , by Bill Pere. For additional information or to order a copy, visit http://www.songcrafterscoloringbook.com

(More on this topic in the complete Songcrafters' Coloring Book)

Songcrafters' Coloring Book --- By Bill Pere

COLLABORATING IS NOT JUST FOR WRITERS

A LOOK AT PREFERENCES IN THE ART, CRAFT, AND BUSINESS OF MUSIC

There may be a great wealth of unrecorded songs sitting on writers' shelves. Many may have received publisher rejections because they did not look like gold or platinum. Perhaps they were the rare, less recognizable precious metal palladium. If one is always on the lookout for gold and platinum, it may take a different pair of eyes or a different awareness to recognize palladium.

Since the old days of tin-pan alley, the music business has undergone steady and significant changes in character, accelerating noticeably since the 1960's. It has become much more of a corporate environment where the the types of notes being discussed have shifted from eighth notes to bank notes. Accompanying this change is an often voiced concern that there appears to be a diminution of the creative force that once was the heart and soul of the fledgling industry. When viewed from a perspective of human preferences and social dynamics, this evolution is not unexpected. The caution however, is that two opposing forces, discussed below, must find balance and harmony to insure the long term health of the industry. The music business shares a fundamental characteristic with high-tech industries like computers, , biotechnology, and novel pharmaceutical medicines... these are industries driven by creativity and inventiveness. Their end products are things that have never existed before, thus, the value of certain creations might not be immediately recognizable.

T he Xerox machine, the quartz watch, and 'sticky-notes' adhesive were all initially dismissed as not useful or too far afield from the way things we re done. In the case of the quartz watch, the irony is that it was invented by the Swiss, who at the time had 80% of the market share in watches. After they dismissed the utility of the quartz watch (and never bothered to patent the technology), it was picked up by Seiko and Texas Instruments, and the Swiss market share plunged to 10%. Fifty thousand Swiss watchmakers lost their jobs. It required a different set of eyes to see that quartz could shine as brightly as the jewels they replaced.

Creativity-driven industries must balance the unstructured, risk-taking environment that generates creativity and discovery with the structured, bottom-line focus that provides an industry with positive cash flow.

If these two opposing forces are out of balance, the industry becomes unhealthy or to say it metaphorically, cash flow is like air to business, but life is about more than just breathing. Good songs have a continual interplay of tension and release to keep us interested. The unsettling tritone of a seventh chord resolves to the comfort of the tonic chord. The dangling of a suspended fourth puts us back on the ground by resolving to the third. Hearing a good rhyme relieves that sense of anticipation as we wait for the ends of lyric lines to find their mates. In life, some tension is good as it can give us a push to take action, but too much tension or too little resolution is counterproductive to creativity and to general well-being. Whether it's an individual, a small business, a large company, or a whole industry, too much unresolved tension will stifle creativity and new initiatives.

The common denominator between writers, performers, publishers, lawyers, producers, managers, studio engineers, record company executives, concert audiences, and record buyers is that they are all people. However, they are people with distinct sets of preferences, perceptions, styles of communication and modes of action which are frequently at odds with each other, and thus cause tension. There are no 'good guys' or 'bad guys'; No one is right, wrong, smarter, stupider, better, or worse. Just different. Recognizing the strengths of those who are different and accepting the differences are as essential to harmony as roots, thirds, and fifths.

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 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 profound 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 following information is based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the most researched and widely used preference profiling tool in the world)

The four dimensions, represented by letters, are:

How we focus our energy:

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

How we make our decisions:

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

How flexibly we respond to new information:

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

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. The fact that these are continuums means that 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. People often doubt the accuracy and importance of these four areas, but as you read the brief descriptions below, think of how many people you know, including yourself, are reflected by them.

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;
Introvert: - Inner 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;

Sensor: - 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. Lives in the present;
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;

Thinker: - Makes decisions based on logic; Evaluates things rationally; Objective; What's just is fair; Words and actions are measured; Must have good reason for doing something; Rules and Laws; "What do you think about this?"; Detached; Critiques things;
Feeler: - Logic is optional; Evaluates things based on how people will feel; Subjective; What's humane is fair; Words and actions are emotional. Will do things if they cause good or happy feelings ; Circumstances; "How do you feel about this?"; Involved; Appreciates things;

Judger: - Likes planning, and scheduling; Pending things must get resolved; 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; Stays focused;
Perceiver: - Likes spontaneity; Likes to leave things 'open-ended'; 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;

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 and don't mind their own business. Extraverts will say introverts are snobs, unsociable, paranoid or weird.

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;

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 Oscar Madison and Felix Ungar.

When all four areas 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 person is the quintessential scientist. A person of this type is driven to know <u>why</u> things are, and lives to shape abstract ideas. 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. 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. The electrifying performances of Janis Joplin and the engaging performances of Harry Chapin exude energy (E), are down-to-earth (S), are spontaneous (P), and are filled with feeling (F). These people are just being themselves.

If an INTJ is to act like an ESFP or vice-verse, 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 the way it is is also unlikely.

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 executive... interacting with others, focus on practical, 'real' issues, rational 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).

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?)

It is of interest to note that in almost all walks of life, people with the "F" preference are frequently underpaid. (It is also significant that most of them are female, but that's a whole separate topic...).

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.

The lifeblood of the music business is a great song. It takes parts of all eight qualities to make a great song.

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 life that gives us subject matter for songs. It provides the detail that makes a lyric real for a listener.
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.
Feeling provides the emotion that is a centerpiece of most lyrics.
Thinking provides the analysis and crafting needed to give the lyric polish and impact.
Judging provides the desire for structure and order in the song, and the drive to get it done.
Perception provides the openness to new ideas and the ability to change and rewrite as better words and phrases 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 with each other for dominance. But take away any one quality, and an intangible "something" is missing. Can one person do all eight things effectively? This is extremely rare, and explains why the self contained <u>good</u> singer-songwriter is such a rare commodity (let alone just a good songwriter...) Usually it will require collaboration to get all of the eight elements.

The Product Pipeline of the Music Industry Starts in the "IN" Mode.

Songs start with ideas and inspirations. This is the "IN" mode of thought, as introverted intuition is the wellspring of new ideas. Even when two Extraverts are brainstorming aloud, that moment of "aha!" occurs when for a split second, someone reaches inside themself to make a new association of ideas. Sheila Davis' work with songwriters and the four preferences shows us that the use of metaphor, irony, puns, and wordplay in lyrics comes from the 'N' mode of thinking. Universal themes and overarching metaphors are Intuitive. Fantasy and new ways of expressing things are iNtuitive trademarks.

Add the quality of introversion, and you now have the process that gives rise to new ideas, creative associations, and a love of solving puzzles and problems (e.g., fitting lyrics to meter). Great inventions, discoveries, philosophies and song ideas come from the Introverted iNtuitive mode of thought (Albert Einstein was an INTP). Remember that anyone, even an ES Extravert-sensor can tap into the IN mode, but it takes alot more effort. That's why many ESFP's are great performer's but not necessarily great writers, while the opposite INTJ's can be great creators though not necessarily great entertainers. Thus, the folks who most easily can write from the IN perspective are the natural IN's...but there aren't that many of them, **AND** they are at a clear disadvantage in the business arena of music. They may have incredibly creative, moving, and well crafted lyrics piled up on their shelves which will never be heard outside the curtain of their shower stall.

Is the "IN" Crowd the OUT Crowd ?

When we recall the fact that Extraverts outnumber Introverts by 3 to 1 and Sensors outnumber iNtuitives by more than 2 to 1, it doesn't take much math to see that more than 90% of the world are Extraverts and Sensors...lots of managers (ESTJ), and lots of entertainers(ESFP). The Introverted Intuitives are quite a minority, with INTJ's, INFP's, INTP's and INFJ's each accounting for around 1-2% of the population. They are rare, and not well understood (because of the introversion, what is shown to the world sees is not a real view of the person). Thus, Introverted iNtuitives are often frustrating and annoying to the Extraverted-Sensors who are running the show.

The music business is very much an ES world. Contacts are made by schmoozing and "being there". This not easy for an introvert who much prefers to communicate by mail. Even something as simple as talking on the phone may not be trivial for an introvert. INtuitives have a hard time attending to details. All those buttons in the recording studio and on the computer may drive the intuitive writer/artist to shy away from equipment that could really enhance their demos and creative process. Intuitives are far more concerned with content than with form... they will ask "If a song is a great song, why does it have to be presented in a fancy envelope with fancy stationery and labels in order to get heard, when none of those things have anything to do with the song itself?"

The answer of course, is that in an ES world, visual sensory input counts. The "look" is as important to an act as the sound (some would say more important...).

We know that music is usually enhanced by collaboration. S and N writers can each contribute their strengths to compensate for the other's blind spots. The E and J qualities of a good

manager/agent can compensate for the I and P qualities of a good writer or artist, resulting in good creative product and good business practice.

The SJ recording engineer, right at home with electronics, can make a great demo for the NFP artis who hates all the buttons and techno-babble. But each must accept the other's strengths and differences.

All people can learn from and benefit from the perspectives of opposite types. The example of the Swiss watches given at the start of this article show a blind spot in the SJ mode of operation. Not enough focus on the 'big picture', and not enough adaptability to try something new. An NP perspective might have saved the jobs of 50,000 Swiss watchmakers. Introverts need Extraverts to draw out the ideas, the thoughts, and the creative gems that are hiding within. Would our Declaration of Independence have been written if Thomas Jefferson (INFJ) didn't have the Extraverted John Adams to encourage him to write it?

But perhaps the strongest and most critical collaboration must come between the ESTJ business managers of the music industry, the ESFP entertainers, and the "IN" crowd of writers (INTJ/INTP/INFJ/INFP) who are a tremendous source of new approaches and new twists on timeless themes. These are the people who, with their eyes to the future, are writing quartz watches and Xerox machines, which instead of gold and platinum records, can be the even more valuable palladium. But they will get nowhere without the encouragement and teaching of the ESTJ administrators.

The music industry is well known for being like a revolving door with their executives. There are probably many reasons for this, but a probable factor is the that when people who are good as writers, artists, musicians, contract negotiators, etc. are asked to function in a corporate ESTJ mode, one or more of the dimensions won't fit, tension builds without resolution, and something has to give. Remember, anyone can act in any mode, but it takes more effort, energy, and discipline for those who do not have the natural preferences. And people always act best and achieve the most when they are in their natural state of being. Their energy goes into creativity or productivity rather than to conformity.

The Product Pipeline of the Music Industry Starts in the "IN" Mode.

Lyrics start with ideas and inspirations and they use words, which are really abstract symbols for things. This is the "IN" mode of thought, as introversion and intuition are the source new ideas and the world of symbolic abstraction.. Even when two Extraverts are brainstorming aloud, that moment of "aha!" occurs when for a split second, someone reaches inside themself to make a new association of ideas. Sheila Davis' work with songwriters and the four preferences shows us that the use of metaphor, irony, puns, and wordplay in lyrics comes from the 'N' mode of thinking. Universal themes and overarching metaphors are Intuitive. Fantasy and new ways of expressing things are iNtuitive trademarks. Add the quality of introversion, and you now have the process that gives rise to new ideas, creative associations, and a love of solving puzzles and problems (e.g., fitting lyrics to meter). Great inventions, discoveries, philosophies and song ideas come from the Introverted iNtuitive mode of thought (Albert Einstein was an INTP). Remember that anyone, even an ES Extravert-sensor can tap into the IN mode, but it takes alot more effort. That's why many ESFP's are great performer's but not necessarily great writers, while the opposite INTJ's can be great creators

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The answer of course, is that in an ES world, visual sensory input counts. The "look" is as important to an act as the sound (some would say more important...). To an ESTJ executive, a song submitted in a sloppy envelope means that the writer doesn't care about their product, so why should the executive bother with it. This is a prime case of giving a bum rap to a writer based on a type difference.

The more likely case is that the writer, if an IN, cares very deeply about the content of their song, and knows that the package doesn't affect it. What they need to be gently taught, instead of criticized for, is that since their package is probably being received by an Sensory oriented person, putting it in a nice package and having a clean sounding demo shows consideration for the person who's receiving the package, not the song contained therein. That approach addresses the needs of S, N, T and F people.

The information presented here on S-N perception is based on the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), a well researched and globally used indicator of personality preferences. For more information and to learn how to determine if you are a sensory or intuitive perceiver, refer to: Type Talk by Otto Kroeger and Janet Thuesen, Delta/Tilden Press, and Please Understand Me, by Kiersey and Bates, Promethius Books.

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Bill Pere was named one of the "Top 50 Innovators, Groundbreakers and Guiding Lights of the Music Industry" by Music Connection Magazine. With more than 30 years in the music business, as a recording artist, award winning songwriter, performer, and educator Bill is well known for his superbly crafted lyrics, with lasting impact. Bill has released 16 CD's , and is President of the Connecticut Songwriters Association. Bill is an Official Connecticut State Troubadour, and is the Founder and Executive Director of the LUNCH Ensemble (www.lunchensemble.com). Twice named Connecticut Songwriter of the Year, Bill is a qualified MBTI practitioner, trained by the Association for Psychological Type. He is a member of CMEA and MENC, and as Director of the Connecticut Songwriting Academy, he helps develop young talent in songwriting, performing, and learning about the music business. Bill's song analyses and critiques are among the best in the industry. Bill has a graduate degree in Molecular Biology, an ARC Science teaching certification, and he has received two awards for Outstanding contribution to Music Education.

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