

**PERSONALITY:
WHAT MAKES YOU
THE WAY YOU ARE**
by Daniel Nettle

Summary & Worksheet

The Book In Three Or More Sentences:

Wondering why two people with the same set of experiences behave differently in a situation? You're not the only one. In this book, Daniel Nettle uncovers the differences between us. According to the researches shared inside, there are five big personality types (a.k.a the Big Five): Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientious, Agreeableness, and Openness. By categorizing them, the author wants to help us spot both our negative and positive sides. This way, we can reduce the amount of stupid decisions we make and improve the chances of bringing the best of us.

The Core Idea:

Understand your personality, don't try to change it. That's the whole concept of the book. Once you figure out what are your advantages, and your biggest flaws, to find an area, and proper surroundings, that will reinforce your positive side, not your worst one.

Highlights:

- *Understanding other people, and yourself, will help you spot behavior patters.*
- *Figuring out your personality type will allow you to find flaws in your "system."*
- *Changing your personality is a dead end. You should try to adjust your behavior.*

6 Key Lessons from Personality: What Makes You the Way You Are:

- *Lesson #1: The Importance of Understanding the Personality Types*
- *Lesson #2: Understanding Extraversion/Wanderers – Main Characteristics*
- *Lesson #3: Understanding Neuroticism/Worriers – Main Characteristics*
- *Lesson #4: Understanding Conscientiousness/Controllers – Main Characteristics*
- *Lesson #5: Understanding Agreeableness/Empathizers – Main Characteristics*
- *Lesson #6: Understanding Openness/Poets – Main Characteristics*

Lesson #1: The Importance of Understanding the Personality Types

We all seem to have different tastes and desires. Yet, when you look closely, the differences are not as big as we anticipated. The five-factor model introduced by Daniel Nettle aims to bring some order and help us predict, or at least partly, our own, and others, actions and motives.

And why do you want to do that?

You can surely survive life without having to spend time understanding the desires and the motives of the surrounding people, right?

Yes, you surely can, but figuring out what fuels others can help you on many occasions like find good-fit partners, avoid unnecessary conflicts with loved ones, spot frauds who want to deceive and take advantage of you, and most importantly: figure out your deepest needs and drives.

“If for each environment there is a best organism, for each organism there is a best environment.” Lee Cronbach

And what happens if you don't know what are your advantages and your disadvantages?

For a long period of time, you won't act in line with your natural instincts. You will try different things, only to find out later that you hate doing them.

For each personality, there are lots of ways of things working badly and only a few ways of things ending on a positive note.

By taking the time to study the different characteristics of the known to man personalities, you'll reduce the time wandering around not knowing what to do. Therefore, focus on improving your most promising skills.

Finally, once you know where your persona is best suited for, head towards there.

Lesson #2: Understanding Extraversion/Wanderers – Main Characteristics

Defining characteristic:

Extraversion – highly responsive towards capturing rewards.

Overview of the personality type:

Relentless. Never quite satisfied. Ambitious. Risk-taker. Easily gets bored and distracted. Always looking for new thrills and excitements.

Downsides:

Quickly loses interest and gets careless of what they already have. This sloppy behavior often gets them in trouble. They spend a lot of money on things in order to feel good. Their relationships are unstable. Prone to activities that, for most people, seem pointless and costly. Going out partying, getting into some crazy new hobby, looking for ways to gain more status, having an affair, or buying a new sports car are just some of the things they might get involved in.

Benefits:

Their go-getting personality is constantly looking for ways to reach new heights. People with a high score of Extraversion are in an endless pursuit of things they don't currently have and are usually the ones who push the world to new achievements. Wanderers are quite good at spotting new opportunities and finding solutions when everything seems lost. Or in other words, they are the ones to count on when not in a favorable environment.

“More than anything, it is evident that he wants to do all

these things not because he actually needs to, but because he gets a tremendously powerful buzz out of taking on challenges and capturing the rewards.” Daniel Nettle

Lesson #3: Understanding Neuroticism/Worriers – Main Characteristics

Defining characteristic

Neuroticism – strongly influenced (emotionally) by threats of all kinds.

Overview of the personality type:

Careful. Negative. Moody. Usually the ones who will consider all the options before making a decision.

Downsides:

Worrying all the time – as the name of this personality type suggests. Doubt in their work and in who they are is common for them. This group of people gets depressed by things others won't even notice. They have low-self esteem and respond strongly to negative life events. For them, negative life events happen all the time. Not because they're unlucky, but because everything that happens is viewed through a destructive prism.

“Sufferers take on many new life plans, often unrealistic, and make many short-term marriages, often unsuitable. They seem to do this as a consequence of chronic doubt about who they are, what could make them happy, and what they are really worth.” Daniel Nettle

Benefits:

When used correctly, their strong sensitivity toward negative events can be beneficial – evade dangerous situations and spot opportunities. Their alarmed personality helps them avoid destructive behavior and unnecessary risk. The obsessive carefulness allows them to think more deeply on a subject. Worriers seek to find meaning in everything and look for ways to solve big problems.

Lesson #4: Understanding Conscientiousness/

Controllers – Main Characteristics

Defining characteristic

Conscientiousness – disciplined, organized, self-controlled.

Overview of the personality type:

People with a strong level of conscientiousness like things to be in order - to have everything organized. They possess the ability to rule their emotions. In contrast, people with low-level of this same factor are the opposite – impulsive and spontaneous.

Downsides:

Due to their impulsiveness, they can get highly addicted to drugs or alcohol – or both. On another note, Controllers get so obsessed about being in control that they often develop OCPD – an extreme preoccupation with rules, lists, and schedules. People with OCPD get stuck on a simple task for days because of their attention to detail. If things don't go as planned, they freak out and have difficulties adjusting to change.

Benefits:

Perfectionism, when used properly, can propel them towards amazing achievements. Even if they get involved in destructive deeds, they usually quickly find reasons to stop and never do these things again. They thrive in stable and predictable surroundings and get things done quickly and efficiently.

“Addictions are really about the failure to inhibit a once-rewarded behaviour, not about the degree of euphoria that is created.” Daniel Nettle

Lesson #5: Understanding Agreeableness/Empathizers – Main Characteristics

Defining characteristic

Agreeableness – The ability to understand the mental state of others.

Overview of the personality type:

This group of people can literally imagine how others feel. They have a large network of friends and do well in conversations. Empathizers with

high-score of Agreeableness love to cooperate and are people who you can trust.

Downsides:

Problem forming friendships. Low-level of Agreeableness can lead to egocentric and dishonest behavior. They start to use the insights they gathered about others to manipulating and deceive. If they lack empathy, and when combined with the absence of consideration, this might lead to psychopathic behavior – hurting others. On the other hand, the other downside, if they become too obsessed with other people’s happiness they’ll forget about their own joy.

Benefits:

Forgive quickly. Caring. Compassionate. Have harmonious relationships. Don’t let anger consume them. People with a high-level of Agreeableness have the ability to understand others, bond more easily with the people they have just met, and form long-lasting connections.

*“Theory of mind allows us to represent the mental state of another individual. Through theory of mind, we can appreciate that the individual in the cubicle opposite feels hungry, wants the food, believes that we should help to get food, and so on.”
Daniel Nettle*

Lesson #6: Understanding Openness/Poets – Main Characteristics

Defining characteristic

Openness – a tendency towards exploring, everything.

Overview of the personality type:

Imagine artists or poets who are kind of lost in their own minds. They show interest in various domains. And have the ability to connect pieces of information from different sources and explain them metaphorically.

Downsides:

Always exploring, searching, trying different things. Sadly, this inability to “stuck” on one particular interest costs them a lot of nerves, mon-

ey, and relationships. Their dreamy personality often leads to aimless wandering – losing touch with reality. Or put simply, Poets are usually irresponsible and foolish. Depression and schizophrenia are common for this group.

Benefits:

Deep thinkers who, thanks to their different interests, can create unique art. Burning with desire to explore and invent. Their carefree mind is not interested in the physical forces and limitations imposed by society. Poets can imagine things differently. Out-of-the-box thinking is the default way of how they look at situations.

Actionable Notes:

- Find your personality type: We all possess parts of the five personality types mentioned in the book. The idea is that one of the qualities is dominating. Which one? That's something you need to figure out. Understanding your behavior traits can help you in a lot of different ways. Raging from finding a cause to pursue to finding the right partner.
- Avoid harmful mutations: We love symmetry. We're naturally drawn to things with the right proportions. But do you know why? From a biological standpoint, a species with fine measures whispers that it is mutation-free. This is important for others because mutations usually make the system work a bit less well. A new feature, in any organism, needs a lot of time to become beneficial. That's why female peacocks choose the male with the nicest feathers. This entails that it's not carrying any harmful genes. How this can be helpful for us? Well, except for visiting the gym to get in shape, you can also bring harmony and balance in your life and in the things you create. This will make others oddly drawn to everything you do.
- The effect of the family environment is low: In the book, the author argues that your parenting skills don't matter much. Meaning that even if you lecture your kid on a daily basis, he'll grow with understandings of the world based on his personality – which is something predetermined. This finding contradicts with everything we know about raising a child but offers something else to think about – What's the personality type of your child? Once you know, you can treat your kids based on their personalities and try to steer them towards their good qualities.
- Reframe the story: “Can we change our personalities, or are we just stuck with them?” According to the author, we can't change them. But that shouldn't bother you much. Instead of comparing yourself

to others and failing in despair because Jim has a better front yard, find what's unique about you. The good stuff. Once you know, double down on these qualities.

- Change your behavior: The above may not always work. If you've spent your last year gambling and losing money, you can't reframe it to make it look good - or at least you shouldn't try. You need to change your behavior. See, we're not talking about changing your personality, the author says in the book, "change your behavior." There's a difference. The idea here is to find the bad seed that is forcing you to do stupid stuff and alter your attitude based on this.

Commentary and My Personal Takeaway

Understanding yourself and others is not so difficult. Thanks to Daniel Nettle, we have a clear agenda of the Big Five personality types: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientious, Agreeableness, and Openness.

Amazing book I must say. Backed with scientific research, easy to grasp stories and the personal view of the author.

Sadly, the formatting of the different personality types was kind out of order. Instead of defining sections of the pros and the cons, the information is kind of everywhere. I felt obligated to fix it for clarity in my summary above.

Apart from recognizing the key components of the main personality types, there's something else important inside the book (my key takeaway).

The book is promoting the concept that you need to understand your personality, not try to change it. Once you figure out your skills, your advantages, and your disadvantages, to find the area, based on your top qualities where you can go crazy – in a good way. Also, find a supportive network that will reinforce your positive sides, not your worst traits.

Or in short, don't try to change who you are. Throttle yourself, and your closed ones, to their key hallmarks while burying the negatives shades of your persona.

Notable Quotes:

"The opposite of joy and excitement is not fear and sadness. The opposite of joy and excitement is simply the absence of joy and ex-

citement—emotional flatness, if you will.” Daniel Nettle

“You would have to say that the family environment has an effect, but that effect varies from person to person according to idiosyncratic factors other than the child’s pre-existing personality or age, such that its average effect is zero.” Daniel Nettle

“That is, everyone has all of the five factors of personality, just as everyone has a height and a weight. Where we differ is the magnitude of the height and the weight, or the score along each of the five dimensions.” Daniel Nettle

What to read next:

- Actionable [Book Summary: Quiet](#) by Susan Cain
- Actionable [Book Summary: Mindset: The New Psychology of Success](#) by Carol S. Dweck
- Actionable [Book Summary: Grit](#) by Angela Duckworth

INTERACTIVE SHEET FOR NOTE-TAKING

Reading alone won't help you understand the actionable notes. You need to engage with the content. Answer the question below (just type inside the boxes) to outline your future steps:

1. What's your personality type? Add some facts to support your decision:
2. Think of ways to add more symmetry in everything you do:
3. Take some time to figure out the personality types of the people around you:
4. Find what's unique about you:
5. How can you change your behavior to bring out the best in you?

Don't forget to save your changes.