

Teamwork Intelligence 2016

By Susan Presto

Why? Wellbeing

What? Jung

How? Poethics

A Poethical philosophy, one that takes responsibility for the unknowability, must be the starting point when considering the creation of an environment in which to flourish. To do this, there must be promotion of a curiosity that leaves no stone unturned. A quest such as this has led The Southport School to becoming a leader in the world of wellbeing in education. In 2015, the wider international community responded enthusiastically to these innovations through invitations to spread the word about how and what we were doing. For the TSS, enhancing wellbeing and unlocking potential for the individuals and teams, it all started with Jung.

Carl Jung's publication of *Psychological Types* in 1921 was the foundation upon which Myers and Briggs based the profiling tool, MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator), in 1940. All three, Jung, Briggs and Meyers took their own steps towards taking responsibility for what had been previously considered unknowable, or had been previously unexplained about human nature. Myers and Briggs believed this knowledge would bring about world peace. The power of this information comes from understanding more about oneself and others, how this can affect the choices we make and unlock previously untapped potential simply by knowing *why*. Jung explained that "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate."

For the last five years the entire grade 10 cohort at TSS have been given the gift of this information using the MBTI. In 2016 we are still finding new and innovative ways to learn more of what can be known about ourselves, and how to make the most of what we have discovered.

Since beginning work with the sporting teams in 2011 the focus has been on; team dynamic, decision making, and dealing with stress. However every year coaches, managers and players, marvel over the insights which reveal themselves in unexpected places. It is clearly liberating for all stakeholders to take responsibility for what had previously been considered unknowable or not considered at all. The most tangible outcome has been the creation of a more harmonious environment in which everyone feels safe to flourish.

During game-time all three focus point come into play. The coaches needed to be able to access individual information, at a glance, that would enhance communication with that player on the spot, in the most effective format. If it isn't instantly available, it isn't any use. Each year I created 'booklets' specific to each team and player. As I printed these pages and stapled them carefully in the specific order I'd envisioned as user friendliest, I had a pretty good idea where these pages wouldn't be during the game. The question then became, how to provide maximum information with minimum information. There was no precedence for what we needed, no one had published a format for this sort of use.

Clearly the success of the MBTI profiling was its downfall as far as my research for enhancing teamwork was concerned. Big companies found it incredibly successful in creating work

teams and in managing office dynamics. So much so that most of the currently available information includes expected outcomes for each of the sixteen types with regard to statistics gathered on topics such as education, family life, social life, job satisfaction etc. According to this research, an interpretation of the MBTI manual for my own four letter type could be that it would not be surprising if I was educated in degrees I never used, was divorced, alcoholic or in jail.

There seemed no positive use in our school or team context in predicting an outcome according to statistics on type. To use this information to enhance wellbeing, it had to be invented. No one else had asked the same questions and no research had tried to use the information in the same way as we wanted to use it. Jung *did* say, 'thinking is difficult, that's why most people judge.' It is as if he predicted the paradox of the potential to flourish monetarily from this information when statistically analysed, as opposed to using the information to flourish as a race.

Stepping away from anything that has been done before with MBTI profiling, I finally realised that I didn't need to look for outside research to show how this information could be most useful to what we were doing. Looking back at the origins of the system and focusing on our specific purposes, a seed took root and grew.

By establishing a basic understanding of the Myers Briggs dichotomies and which energies they represent, the four letter code produced by the MBTI becomes much more potent information when colour coded according to percentage of preference. The information suddenly becomes much more individually specific.

In the context of a basketball game, a four letter colour code for each player provides reminders to coaches about ways to deal with situations that arise, specific to the player. The coach is also under pressure during the game, so his natural preferences need to be taken into consideration when presenting this information.

A thorough coach knows other very important information about his players as well with regards to ethics, culture, intelligence, traits etc. This, combined with what MBTI can tell us, can take a team beyond the sum of its individual parts.

For TSS basketball, the results are tangible. This knowledge has led to the creation of a warmer, safer, more trusting team environment. Understanding and trusting differences has expanded the environment to the point where there is room for everybody's ego to grow without encroaching on another's. The point has become more than creating an environment, but making sure the environment has no edges or limits.

This overlaps into everything, everyday. The team dynamic dribbles out beyond the court, further into the wider context of the basketball community, the classroom, the office, the school, home. Understanding and appreciating individuality will inevitably lead to more peaceful environments in which to grow big courageous dreams into possibilities. Carl Jung said it so long ago, 'Who looks outside dreams, who looks inside awakens.'