Brandy Gibbons ENGR 408 Personal Profile Analysis

In order to be an effective leader, I need to be cognizant of my strengths and weaknesses. I should use my strengths to my advantage and work to strengthen my weaknesses to become influential. In order to understand myself better, I’ve taken a series of personality tests along with some self inflection. In my evaluation, I will be soul searching for my leadership qualities, the attributes I need to change, and my core values.

Keirsey temperament theory has been used for years for psychology, education, and religion. Since, it has expanded all over the world being used by large organizations such as the military, the government, educational institutions, as well as businesses, including over half of Fortune 500 companies. The KTS-II, through 72 personal questions, came to the conclusion that I am a Guardian, which I felt was consistent with my temperament. According to Keirsey, a Guardian is trustworthy, dependable, hard-working, and disciplined. Guardians prefer to follow schedules and believe in following the rules. They welcome law and order and proponents of respect. They are cautious individuals that believe that change is good, but like to take it slow. Keirsey believes Guardians to be “loyal mates, responsible parents, and stabilizing leaders.” In both of my performance reviews for my co-ops with Marathon Oil, my strongest asset was “trustworthy.” I’m very keen on helping others and allowing others to depend on me. I like to carry a lot of responsibility and I almost always finish a task, especially if someone is relying on me to successfully complete that task. I like to have a routine and follow a schedule. I’m currently training for the Pittsburgh Marathon, which is a 26.2 mile race on May 15, 2011. It is understood that intensive training is required to complete a marathon. This training includes 20 weeks of running 5 days a week up to 40 miles a week in some cases. I follow this schedule very closely; I admit, sometimes I feel more comfortable following a strict schedule.

A Guardian would be a good leader because of their trustworthiness and dependability. Whoever is being led would feel a sense of comfort with a Guardian. According to Keirsey, a Guardian is hesitant about change even when they know it can be good, which might hinder them as a leader. In times of desperation, leaders need to step up to the plate and do what others might be afraid or nervous to do. This could be an issue for a Guardian, who likes to follow a strict structure.

Guardians and Idealists would work well together because of their belief in trust. Both a Guardian and an Idealist like to create positive relationships with those around them, which would work well in a group environment. They might, however, compete with one another being that they are so similar. Artisans are unconventional and love to try new things. This might hinder the cooperation between a Guardian and an Artisan because an Artisan may be too liberal for a Guardian. If they two could somehow work together, an Artisan and a Guardian could also quite easily fill the gaps that the other can’t fill. An Artisan could be the leader of change while the Guardian could keep the change from becoming too extreme. A Rational is very cautious and skeptical, which is similar to a Guardian. Rationals work very hard, which might compliment a Guardian who doesn’t like to disappoint those around them. The two could keep the very liberal Artisan in check.

Carl Jung classified people into three categories: Extraverted or Introverted, Sensing or Intuition, Thinking or Feeling, and Isabel Briggs added a fourth category: Judging or Perceiving. The Jung Typology test established that I’m 44% extroverted, 62% intuitive, 25% feeling, and 22% judging, or an ENFJ, which is an Idealist, or a Teacher specifically, when compared to Keirsey’s temperaments. A Teacher is someone who, quite easily, comes up with ways to extend knowledge to individuals. They are able to see potential in people and never give up on their students because of that foreseen potential. This is similar to a Guardian because of their desire to help others. A Teacher is enthusiastic and bubbly, and they voice their passion and feelings quite often. Organization and strict schedules are qualities both Teachers and Guardians possess. Both Guardians and Teachers take pride in being trustworthy and maintaining positive relationships. Teachers relate to others very well because of their intuitive feelings. They have a deep understanding of who they are and can easily and accurately understand others. Teachers are very closely connected with the people around them, so much so that they will pick up the habits, emotions, and ideas of those around them. These characteristics are very accurate of my personality and characteristics. I see potential in people and try my hardest to maximize that potential. I sometimes try a little too hard and find myself controlling a situation, which is counterproductive. The Guardian and the Teacher personality types complement each other. They are very similar to one another, and their differences are very subtle.

According to the “Big 5 Personality Test,” I am in the 53rd percentile for Openness to Experience/Intellect. I’m in the middle between creative, curious, complex and down-to-earth, conventional, with narrow interests. This is similar to Keirsey’s description of me as a Guardian because Guardians are hesitant to change, even when it’s good. I’m not too liberal, but not too conservative either. I scored in the 58th percentile for Conscientious. I’m “neither organized nor disorganized.” This is somewhat conflicting with Keirsey because a Guardian is someone who takes pride in being dependable and loves structure and organization. In order to be more consistent with Keirsey, I would need to be in the lower percentile with the people that are well-organized, self-disciplined, and careful. I would say that I am well-organized, but I struggle with self-discipline. For the category of Extraversion, I scored in the 93rd percentile, meaning I’m “extremely outgoing and energetic.” This complements the Jung Typology test, or the Keirsey Teacher. It is very true of my personality. It neither contradicts nor complements the Keirsey description of a Guardian because level of energy and enthusiasm of a Guardian was not addressed. In terms of agreeableness, I scored in the 79th percentile. I’m on the higher end of “good natured, sympathetic, forgiving, courteous,” which is true to the way Keirsey describes my personality as someone who is loyal and dependable. It is very consistent with the Jung Typology test, which claimed that I was very in-tune to other people’s emotions. Finally, in the Neuroticism category, I scored in the 84th percentile, meaning I’m more nervous and high-strung. This isn’t very consistent with the Keirsey Temperament description because it claims I’m more down to earth. In terms of liking a structure and organization, it could be considered accurate because when life doesn’t go according to plan, I become very anxious and on edge, which leads me to my discussion of emotional intelligence.

The Emotional IQ test established that I have satisfactory emotional intelligence with an IQ of 110 out of 155; I scored above average in the 77th percentile. It suggested that I am relatively successful at controlling my emotions, but I definitely have room for improvement. If I could improve my emotional intelligence, I could potentially better deal with the difficulties in my life while also motivate myself more to accomplish my goals. I could also become more intimate and empathetic with others in order to better support those around me. In terms of what I understand about myself, I am very easily influenced my emotions. I have accepted that this is a major weakness of mine. My awareness has somewhat allowed me to realize and accept that I’m being emotional or high-strung, but I always know that it will soon pass, and I will return to my normal motivated self. The difficulty is keeping the emotions from controlling me. In search of some ways I could improve and better control my emotions, I found this quote by Marcus Aurelius, “If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.” The problems that trigger me to become emotionally distraught are only a result of my analysis of them. If I can remind myself that after Monday evening at 6pm, which is very short term in the whole scheme of my life, I’ll no longer have to be concerned about the ENGR 408 Paper 1, I may not become as stressed. This could improve my focus in accomplishing the current task at hand, which might help me to complete it early and have extra free time. If I could better control my emotions, I might be able to optimize and increase the efficiency of my life. In an article titled “Emotion Control” from the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Jane Richards claims that something called cognitive reappraisal can help one to control his or her emotions. The strategy is to put a positive spin onto something that might negatively affect one’s emotion. Although this might be hard for a traumatic experience, it should work relatively well for every day stresses. For example, if someone were to say something to me in a rude tone, instead of becoming anxious that they might be upset with me or be angered that they were so rude to me, I should tell myself that the person probably had a negative thought on their mind or were having a rough day when they spoke to me and that they were inadvertently being rude to me. In Dr. Richards words, “I think one lesson is that if you are in a situation where you are emotional and you want to get a grip, try to think about it in a way that makes it less upsetting. That is the strategy that really can make you look and feel better.” To summarize, I need to focus on the more positive aspects of life so that I can minimize emotional control and maximize my productivity.

The poet Archilochus wrote that “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.” This concept seemed a little undefined to me so I researched it a little more. The phrase refers to two types of people: people that focus on life as a big picture with one specific result or central vision and people that focus on the little results throughout a lifetime. In Jim Collins’ book “Good to Great,” he talks about how a hedgehog can take all the complications and dilemmas of the world and simplify them into “hedgehog ideas.” The whole idea behind being a hedgehog is simplicity. The three circles of the Hedgehog Concept are what makes you money, what you are passionate about, and what can you be best in the world at. I’d say that I tend to be a hedgehog. I became a civil engineering student because I am great at problem-solving and the like, which would be what I can be the best in the world at. Since I have been studying here at Penn State, I have realized my passion for humanity and helping the world, so I have redirected my path to the environmental focus in civil engineering, hoping to help the world with their water issues. I have also realized that the water crisis is a growing focus and that it is and will be a profitable occupation in the future. This is essentially the way I think in terms of the “business” of my life. I am structuring my life off of these three ideas to make an even balance. In terms of the daily tasks I encounter, I tend to look at the task as a whole and come up with a focused plan to get the task done. I like to keep it simple and easy in order to be more efficient.

In order to be successful, I need establish a set of core values and passions. I have a strong belief in honesty and integrity. I do believe that people should not lie and should work as hard as they can to create the best outcome or product. I also believe that the people are students for life. “Never stop learning” is a belief of mine. Many people leave college and don’t try to find ways to better themselves or their lives. People become very engulfed in reality TV or popular media, but what can really be learned or gained in this type of entertainment? We are only given a certain amount of time in this life, so I feel that we should take full advantage of what is available to us. I believe that the meaning of life is to reach our potential as people, as communities, as countries, and as those that inhabit Earth.

I’m truly passionate about bettering the lives of others, whether it be my sister, my community, the state of Pennsylvania or the whole country of Haiti. I seek for ways to help others. I sacrifice my time to talk distressed friends through their current issues in order to help them maintain their composure. I also sacrifice my time for a bigger picture through Engineers Without Borders and the Engineering Leadership and Development minor. I also donate blood when possible and give money to charitable organizations through 5k races, bake sales and the like. I want to better the world and help to create “world peace” so to speak.

I want to touch on Deresiewicz ‘s article “Solitude and Leadership,” which discusses the problem with leadership. Sometimes leaders fall into routine of finding ways to get things done without questioning if that task is even worth doing in the first place. He talks about how people don’t know how to think for themselves; they lack the courage to rise above what is popular. I believe this to be very important. I definitely tend rebel against the popular media and conformity; I like to ask questions about the things I am doing to be sure there’s a purpose. I want to find a purpose in everything I do. Along with the discussion of the growing technology, I think technology does hinder this need for uniqueness. People no longer spend time with themselves, sorting through their own knowledge to figure out what their goals, values, and beliefs are because they are so consumed by television, internet, and video games. Many successful people were “nerds” or “outcasts” when they were younger. Could the reasons for this be that those people were able to find their passions and values and maintain focus in accomplishing those goals? I think this might have a lot to do with it. Friends and family tell me I’m odd, but personally, I strive for this. I strive to be unique and maintain focus on what makes me tick in order to be successful.

Now that I have taken a deeper look into what makes me, I know what strengthens me as a leader and also what hinders me as a leader. I need to be more open-minded and willing to change and lead change. I need to take a hold of my emotions and learn to find the positive in situations because positivity motivates people to do better. My understanding of others and my intuitive feelings tend to help me to better connect with people, which would enhance me as a leader. If I can understand those that I am leading, I can understand the best ways that I can lead them.