

## How to interpret the test results

The big ideas for the inclusion of tests in coaching are:

1. No test is 100% accurate. Don't take the results too seriously. The results describe you at a point in time based on your own opinion, so they are subject to idiosyncratic error as well as errors of design in the test items. (Work on about 70-80% accuracy). Idiosyncratic error is any judgment that a person makes that is distorted by the way that person sees the world. For example, it is idiosyncratic error to have a preference for someone on the sole basis that they are similar to you (gender, age, skin colour, sexual preference, style, cultural background) over someone who is different.

2. We like people who are similar to us, and may dislike people who are different. These likes and dislikes are formed in our subconscious, and we tend to behave according to our likes and dislikes, causing them to become actual. We are best able to influence people we like and who like us. (Robert Cialdini: *Influence The Psychology of Persuasion*). Being aware that someone is different from you means that you may have to work harder to overcome your subconscious dislike to build rapport, trust and influence.

3. The test results describe you, they don't define you. This means that you are capable of behaving in ways that are inconsistent with the test results. (For example, an introvert can develop the ability to be extroverted: spontaneous, engaging and animated, even though this behaviour may be a struggle). We tend to behave according to our test results when we are relaxed, stressed, under the influence of a drug, or emotional: happy, sad, angry, afraid, contemptuous, disgusted or surprised. (These are the 7 basic emotions as described by Paul Ekman: *Emotions Revealed*). There is a very good analysis of the OCEAN personality test in a book called *Snoop: What your stuff says about you*, by Sam Gosling.

4. You are better able to build rapport with another person when you behave according to their test results. This can be difficult if you don't have their test results. However, if you study your own test results and the descriptions of the alternatives, it is possible to build a profile of the other person. People with whom we "have a great rapport" are most often similar to us in some of their test results, and so rapport building comes naturally. People who have good rapport building skills usually have strong empathy skills. By placing yourself in the other person's shoes, seeing the world as they see it, experiencing the other person's emotions, you are experiencing what empathy means. If you have strong empathy, you can (perhaps automatically) adjust your behaviour to match the other person, and so rapport is built. Once rapport is established, influence can follow.

People who are naturals at empathy building usually have a Brain Wiring Score above 150 because recognising and working with emotion comes more easily. Those with BWS scores below 100 really have to work to build empathy with people who are different from them because they are uncomfortable with emotions and prefer logic and facts.

If you know the other person's Information Receptor Preference and you use it in communication you will build rapport faster and more easily. (For visual people: use pictures, diagrams, eye contact, imagery, visual words in conversation like see, picture, clear, view).

5. As a general rule, build on and employ your strengths rather than trying to compensate for your perceived weaknesses or gaps in the test results. Choose jobs, partners, recreation activities, lifestyle choices and so on according to your test results for a happier life. Of course, a very affective person will have the self-awareness, skills and confidence to compensate for gaps, or build their range of competencies to employ particular styles in required situations, but generally it is easier to match your results to your life situations. Mostly we do this subconsciously, but some people are surprised when they find that the source of their unhappiness is a bad fit.