

Blueprints of Friendship: The Influence of Personality Type on Perceived Intimacy and Comfort

Level of Self-Disclosure in Friendship

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish whether a connection exists between Myers-Briggs personality type and friendship. Participants completed the Jung Typology Test to identify personality type as well as a survey regarding their friendship. Social penetration theory and Myers-Briggs personality theory were used as a framework for this study. All participants were from a private east coast university with ages ranging from 18-28 years. Completed surveys resulted in 32 pairs of self-identified close friends. The author analyzed the results to identify any patterns that emerged between personality and perceived intimacy and comfort level of self-disclosure within friendship. Results showed a connection between Myers-Briggs personality similarity and greater perceived intimacy for friendship, as well as increased comfort level of self-disclosure; however, the length of friendship was also an important factor in relation to perceived intimacy. The extraversion/introversion function of personality was specifically shown to be an important factor in perceived intimacy and comfort level of self-disclosure.

*Keywords:* personality type, friendship, Jung, social penetration theory, Myers-Briggs, intimacy, self-disclosure

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## Chapter I - Introduction

“The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances. If there is any reaction, both are transformed.” ~Carl Jung~

Friendships are among the most significant relationships individuals experience. Although people typically have relationships with their families and business acquaintances, friendships are the primary way that many meet their social and emotional needs. Though much research has been done on the “how” aspect of friendships and how they develop, the “why” aspect of friendship relationships has only recently begun to receive any significant attention.

One of the aspects that make friendship relationships unique is that individuals typically choose their friends. Although people have no control over their family, and limited control over the people that they work or interact with in business contexts, friendships are freely developed by choice. There are many factors that could potentially influence communication within a friendship relationship. In this study the researcher examines the role an individual’s personality plays in an individual’s perceived intimacy within a friendship and comfort level of self-disclosure within a friendship.

The purpose of this study is to identify any patterns in the personality type pairing of friends, as well as to identify any links between specific aspects of personality and perceived relationship intimacy and comfort level of self-disclosure. The questions asked by the study included:

**RQ1** Does a pattern exist between the Myers-Briggs personality characteristics of friends?



**RQ2** Does a pattern exist between personality pairings and perceived intimacy within a friendship relationship?

**RQ3** Does a pattern exist between personality and the comfort level of self-disclosure?

This is a qualitative study, designed to understand perceived intimacy and comfort level of self-disclosure to determine if there is any connection between those factors and the personality type combination of the friendship pairs. The source of the data included the results of a personality test taken by participants to identify their Myers-Briggs personality type, as well as a survey regarding their friendship. The survey filled out by the participants included general questions, such as the length of the friendship and amount of contact, as well as questions to indicate the perceived intimacy within the friendship and the comfort level of self-disclosure within the friendship.

There are many different theories in regards to personality, but one of the most well respected and widely recognized is Myers-Briggs personality theory based on the work of Carl Jung. Under this theory of personality type, personality is considered using four dichotomies, the three originally presented by Jung, which included extraversion – introversion, intuitive – sensing, thinking – feeling, and the last dichotomy developed by Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers, judging – perceiving. An individual will have some characteristics of each function, but will prefer one more than the other. These choices place individuals into one of sixteen categories based on the combination of their four function preferences.

This study is relevant to the field of communication because of the potential insight that can be gained by identifying how natural tendencies that exist within personality influence the perceived intimacy and comfort level of self-disclosure within a friendship. If specific connections between friendship and Myers-Briggs personality type can be identified, this can

provide increased understanding of the workings of interpersonal relationships. This understanding can then be used to help individuals develop more intimate and meaningful relationships by developing techniques based on natural relationship maintenance that takes place between specific personality type combinations.

The important role that friendship plays in the lives of individuals has been the focus of many studies, with interesting and sometimes surprising results. One study showed that “socially integrated” individuals or those who actively participate in friendships live longer (Fehr, 1996). Also, in a study in which 250 unmarried, undergraduate students were asked to identify their “closest, deepest, most involved, and most intimate relationship,” 36% identified that person as a friend, second only to romantic relationships, with family coming in a distant third (Berscheid, Snyder & Omoto, 1989, p.794).

The importance of friendships in the lives of individuals is clearly seen, but why do some individuals become friends and develop ongoing relationships, while others meet and can barely stand to be in the same room with each other? Many studies have attempted to answer that question, looking at factors such as similarity in character traits, similarity in interests, and similarity in personality, defining personality in several different ways throughout the studies. Due to the number of factors that influence the formation of friendships, no study will ever be able to answer the question of why conclusively. However, this study seeks to provide further understanding in a complex area of study by using social penetration theory and Myers-Briggs personality theory as a basis.

Social penetration theory, developed by Irwin Altman and Dalmis A. Taylor, is a theory that provides a strong framework for the study of intimacy and satisfaction within friendship.

Social penetration theory has been used in many studies to look at the influences of self-disclosure as well as relationship formation.

For example, research conducted that looked at roommate relationships found that although depth and breadth of self-disclosure increases over time, it didn't mean that positive feelings for the other individual did not necessarily increase (Taylor, 1968). In fact, many like the other individual less. Also, affinity seeking (Rubin, Rubin, & Martin, 1993) and expected length of the relationship (Taylor, Altman, & Wheeler, 1969) were not found to have an influence of self-disclosure. Because of the inconsistency in findings related to actual self-disclosure, this study examines self-reported comfort level in specific topic areas instead of actual content of self-disclosure.

Myers-Briggs personality theory has been studied with Myers-Briggs personality type being recognized as having influence in many different areas of an individual's life. In a study regarding communication apprehension, researchers found that introverted individuals have higher levels of communication apprehension than extraverts (Opt & Loffredo, 2000). The interesting aspect of this study was that it showed evidence of communication apprehension also being biologically based, as Jung theorizes personality type to be (Jung, 1971). A further study looking at personality type and communication found that extroverts had more satisfaction in communication than introverts (Thorne, 1987).

This study is based on research that shows the importance of friendship, as well as the influence of personality in the lives of individuals. Social penetration theory provided a framework for the analysis of self-disclosure and its impact on perceived intimacy in a friendship, and Myers-Briggs personality theory provided a comprehensive way to assess and analyze personality.

## **Chapter II - Literature Review**

The importance of friendship in the lives of individuals justifies the study of the dynamics of friendship. In studying the dynamics of friendship, it is necessary to consider the perceptions of both individuals within the friendship. The study of friendships involves many complicated factors that include understanding how these individuals relate to others, process information, make decisions and prefer to communicate. To simplify the understanding of these various areas, personality, defined for the purposes of this study according to Myers-Briggs personality theory based on the work of Carl Jung, will be used, as the four functions of Myers-Briggs personality type relate to each of these areas. Social penetration theory will also be considered in understanding the perceived intimacy and comfort level of self-disclosure within friendship.

### **Social Penetration Theory and Personality**

Social penetration theory, developed by Altman and Taylor, attempts to break down the process of interpersonal exchange and how relationships are formed. Their theory shows an understanding of the complexity of relationships and that the process of relationship development that occurs over time, yet at the same time understanding that the elements of the process are observable and studying them can provide useful information.

Social penetration theory makes two hypotheses about interpersonal relationships. The first hypothesis states that “interpersonal exchange gradually progresses from superficial, non-intimate areas to more intimate, deeper layers of the selves of social actors” (Altman & Taylor, 1973, p. 6) and the second hypothesis states that “people assess interpersonal rewards and costs, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, gained from interaction with others, and that the advancement of the relationship is heavily dependent on the amount and nature of the rewards and costs”

(Altman & Taylor, 1973, p.6) Most people do not tell the intimate details of their life stories during their first encounter with another person. Revelation comes gradually as they evaluate the advantages and disadvantages to continuing the relationship. This evaluation of the rewards and costs of the relationship is taking place constantly, not only at the beginning of a relationship, but also after the relationship has been established.

The evaluation of those advantages and disadvantages and the decision to continue in the friendship can be influenced by many different factors. In examining the factors that influence the pace of relationship development, Altman and Taylor specify three factors that prove important: personal characteristics, outcomes of exchange, and situational context (1973, p.4). The personal characteristics factor includes an individual's personality features and social need characteristics, which are noted for having an important influence on how a person manages interpersonal relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973, p.4). The similarities between the description of personality given by Altman and Taylor and Myers-Briggs personality theory are worth noting. Altman and Taylor describe two different personalities based on the person's level of self-disclosure:

At one extreme is the person who exposes very few aspects of his personality to another person (low breadth category) and barely reveals himself even within that restricted domain (low breadth frequency). At the other extreme is the person who reveals many facets of his personality (high breadth category) and dwells on each at great length (high breadth frequency) (1973, p.17).

Compare this to the description given of the extraverted and introverted personality types, according to Myers-Briggs personality theory. In describing introverted types, Myers says that they are "subtle and impenetrable, often taciturn and shy, more at home in the world of ideas

than in the world of people and things” (Myers, 1995, p.56), implying that the person who is introverted might have low self-disclosure. She then describes extraverted types as “understandable and accessible, often sociable, more at home in the world of people and things than in the world of ideas” (Myers, 1995, p.56), which indicates that this type of person would naturally be more revealing. There are also similar in that they describe each type as extremes, or opposite ends of a continuum, recognizing that individuals will fall somewhere along that line.

The key differences between the concept of personality according to social penetration theory and Myers-Briggs personality theory is that social penetration theory describes personality as having breadth and depth dimensions that are revealed through interaction, and Myers-Briggs personality is made up of four key areas of personality. Instead of attributing the process that individuals go through as they make decisions about how to interact with the world to personality, the revelations themselves are attributed to personality.

The processes are still recognized as being important, however. According to the theory, the term “social penetration” refers to “(1) overt interpersonal behaviors that take place in social interaction and (2) internal subjective processes which precede, accompany, and follow overt exchange” (Altman & Taylor, 1973, p.5). These are important because personality consists not only of the outward observable behaviors, but also of the internal processes that influence decision making. Myers-Briggs personality theory takes this a step further and actually attributes not just the content of the disclosures made by individuals as indicative of personality, but also the processes by which the person makes the decision of what to disclose and how to disclose it. Myers-Briggs personality theory and how it relates to communication between individuals will be discussed in more detail later in this literature review.

### **Social Penetration Theory and Self-Disclosure**

Self-disclosure has been defined in several different ways by researchers, one definition of self-disclosure being “an interaction between at least two individuals where one intends to deliberately divulge something personal to another” (Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006, p. 411). However, Jourard (1971) defines self-disclosure as “the act of making yourself manifest, showing yourself so that others can perceive you” (p.19), which could be intentional or unintentional. The many dimensions to be considered in connection with self-disclosure are listed by Green, Derlega, and Mathews in their article on self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships, pointing out that self-disclosure is transactional, has reward value, has a level of informativeness, provides accessibility, involves either real or perceived truthfulness, is affected by social norms, and is either effective or ineffective in accomplishing the goals of the discloser or listener (2006, p.412). The numerous elements involved in self-disclosure can be affected by several factors and make it a complex area of study.

In their theory Altman and Taylor propose that discovering information about a person is like peeling away the layers of an onion (Gouran, 1994, p.185). This characterizes the personality of the individual being revealed by breadth and depth of self-disclosure. The breadth is the number of topics and interest areas the individual’s knowledge base consists of, while the depth is the layers of that information (Gouran, 1994). Individuals may be willing to share certain details of their lives with just about anyone because it is not particularly significant or revealing, and yet will only share information that they consider private with someone once trust is established in a relationship. The question becomes: What makes someone feel comfortable allowing layers to be peeled back so that they can reveal important, personal information with others?

In a study designed to determine whether there are differential rates of increase over time in intimate and nonintimate levels of mutual activities and exchanges between roommates, researchers found that while depth and breadth of the self-disclosure increased over time, the esteem of the roommate decreased (Taylor, 1968). There are many potential causes of this, one of them being that self-disclosure in this instance would be a natural result of living in close proximity and unrelated to the level of esteem held for the roommate.

Another aspect of social penetration theory is the idea that people make decisions regarding their relationships on a cost/rewards basis, meaning that individuals want to maximize rewards and minimize personal cost (Sabatelli, Buck, & Dreyer, 1982). This would indicate that in making choices about what to reveal, when to reveal it, and how to reveal it, individuals are considering the potential negative effects or positive outcomes; however, research indicates that this can change as friendships develop.

The type of self-disclosure that individuals engage in has also been related to image management. In a study that examined the amount and type of self-disclosure related to affinity seeking, Rubin, Rubin and Martin found that individuals who are competent at affinity seeking (descriptive of the process by which individuals attempt to get other people to like them) do not self-disclose more than other individuals. However, they do self-disclose more positive information about themselves (Rubin et al., 1993). This was found to support the social penetration theory claim that people strategically consider rewards/costs of self-disclosive messages according to their own expectations and goals of the relationship (Rubin et al., 1993). Individuals are likely to intentionally choose self-disclosive messages that allow them to present themselves in the best possible light.



However, in relationships that were previously intimate and in the process of deteriorating, the reverse was found to be true. In a research study that focused on marriages in crisis situations, Tolstedt and Stokes (1984) found that as intimacy decreases, breadth of self-disclosure decreases, but depth of self-disclosure increases. These results seem to indicate that individuals in happy, satisfying relationships may restrict depth of self-disclosure in order to maintain the relationship; however, when circumstances indicate that there is nothing left to lose, individuals are more concerned with gaining a deeper understanding of the situation than with saving face.

A further study looked at developing relationships to consider whether the expectancy of continuing the relationship plays a role in self-disclosure and surprisingly found that it does not. The researchers state that “expectations of a long or short (6 mo. vs. 3 wk.) association with the other person did not affect verbal disclosure” (Taylor et al., 1969); however, whether the interpersonal experiences were favorable did influence how much someone was willing to talk.

In a similar research study superficial self-disclosure was shown to be more closely related to proximity, while self-disclosure in intimate topic areas was more closely related to friendship (Rubin & Shenker, 1978). This study reported intimate self-disclosure as having a more prominent role in the friendships of women than of men; however, the researchers attributed this to different patterns of socialization rather than gender differences.

In order to study the different levels of self-disclosure within friendship, Derlega, Wilson and Chaikin worked with 48 female subjects in an experiment to test communication processes. The participants exchanged notes back and forth with either a friend that they had brought with them to the experiment or a stranger. The friend or the stranger initiated each communication process with a note that was either high or low in intimacy. The results showed that when a

stranger initiated communication, the participants responded based on the intimacy level of the communication; however when the friend they had brought with them initiated communication, the participant responded with a low to moderate level of intimacy, regardless of whether the communication initiated by the friend was low or high in intimacy (Derlega, Wilson, & Chaikin, 1976). The researchers caution against using these results as a basis to claim that strangers disclose more than friends but instead to view these results as verification of their view that the obligation to reciprocate high-intimacy input during the same encounter may be stronger between strangers than between friends (Derlega et al., 1976, p. 581).

As these studies show, there are many different approaches to the study of self-disclosure. Within friendship, the amount and type of disclosure that has taken place will vary based on how long the pair has been friends as well as other environmental factors. Because the content or amount of disclosure is not specifically relevant to the purpose of this study, this research instead focuses on the comfort level of disclosure of the individuals and considers it in relation to their personality type.

### **Friendship and Personality**

Even though people participate in many different types of interpersonal relationships at any given time, friendships are the relationships in which individuals freely choose to invest their time and energy. According to Rawlins, “Friendship cannot be imposed on people; it is an ongoing human association voluntarily developed and privately negotiated” (Rawlins, 1992, p.9).

The question of what attracts people to each other and influences them to choose one individual over another for friendship has also been focused on in various research studies. Miller, Campbell, Twedt and O’Connell had members of fraternities rate themselves and each other on 27 different personality traits, and then had the participants list their five closest friends

within the living group. From the responses pairs were formed of individuals who had selected each other (Miller, Campbell, Twedt, & O'Connell, 1966). After comparing the results of both the self-description and the reputation scores, the researchers found that friends had similar reputations, but there was no significant similarity in self-descriptions. The researchers conclude that these results suggest that “‘true’ similarity in personality does not affect choice of the persons with whom one develops friendships” (Miller et al. 1966 p.11). However, the fact that reputation scores completed by other participants showed similarity between self-identified friends is worth noting.

A different approach to looking at how friendships are formed was taken by Fink and Klaus in their study of the effects of selection and socialization on the way that people choose friendships. The focus was specifically on the similarity of content-specific leisure activities and interest domains, asking the question of whether people choose friends who have similar interests, or similar interests arise over the course of the friendship (Fink & Klaus, 1995). The results suggest that friends are not selected because of similar interests, but that similar interests develop over the course of the friendship. This also seems congruent with other research that seems to reflect that actual similarity in interests is not necessary in friendship.

Personality similarity has also been studied in relation to friendship, with personality being defined in many different ways. In a research study completed at Vanderbilt University in 1960, Izard had over 200 students from a high school and a private college list their personal, close friends in rank order. They were then asked to complete the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (PPS), a personality inventory that measures 15 manifest needs (Izard, 1960).

From that sample the researchers were able to identify and select 30 pairs who chose each other as best friends. They also chose 60 random participants and paired them in a way that

mirrored the 30 pairs of best friends. Analysis was then done to attempt to show support for the hypothesis that 1) mutual friends have similar personality profiles and 2) there would be significant positive correlations on some of the separate personality characteristics that made up the profile (Izard, 1960). The results showed support for both hypotheses, with analysis showing pairs of friends to be significantly more similar than random pairs, and the pairs of friends having significant positive correlations on three of the 15 categories, while random assignments showed no significant correlations (Izard, 1960).

Complementarity of personality needs, based on the idea that an individual's choice of friends are related to aspects of personality that are different but complementary, has also been studied using the PPS profile and the Allport-Vernon Study of Values. The purpose of this research study was to test the following two hypotheses: 1) A person high in one need would be attracted to someone low in that need, and 2) A person high in one need would be attracted to someone high in the opposite need (Reilly, Commins, & Stefic, 1960, p. 292). In this study Reilly, Commins and Stefic used volunteers of mutual friendship pairs (25 sophomore pairs and 25 junior pairs) at a Catholic college. A control group was also established to mirror the friendship pairs. All of the pairs were female.

The participants were asked to fill out the PPS profile for themselves and fill it out according to how they thought their friend would respond. They were then asked to complete the Allport-Vernon Study of Values. The results showed no consistent complementary relationship of self-perceived personality needs or any evidence of mutual need satisfaction between friends (Reilly et al., 1960). Also, the evidence did not support the idea that friends see themselves as more complementary than similar, or that there was a relation between similarity of friends. The study did show that friends lean towards being slightly similar in values (Reilly et al., 1960).

The most appropriate type of personality assessment to use depends on the level of friendship being considered, according to a research study conducted at the University of Lancaster, in Lancaster, England (Duck, 1973). This study used the CPI (California Psychological Inventory), along with a Reptest (in which the subjects created their own constructs), to determine which more accurately differentiated between friendship pairs and nominal pairs. As hypothesized, the CPI was able to differentiate between newly acquainted friendship pairs based on the establishment of personality similarity; however the Reptest was more accurate in differentiating between friendship pairs and non-friendship pairs (Duck, 1973). This is evidence that the type of personality test used to evaluate friendships is important.

When considering the complexities of individual characteristics researchers have to decide what traits to consider as part of personality analysis and how to classify individuals as a result. One of the weaknesses in existing studies of friendship is the lack of consistency in the tools of analysis. It is difficult to compare results from studies because of the different personality assessments used. Also, the assessments typically focus on observable, outwardly displayed traits, rather than on internal processes used by individuals. Both the outward and the inward are relevant in regards to personality. This researcher will now review the importance of personality in understanding individuals as well as how personality influences relationship development.

One of the well-respected theories of personality was developed by Carl Jung. Carl Jung was born in Switzerland in 1875. Early in his career he embraced the ideas of Freud, but Jung rejected Freud's idea of pansexualism, and this disagreement ended their professional relationship and personal friendship. (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). Jung's theory of personality is normally considered a psychoanalytic theory, because it focuses on unconscious preferences

(Hall & Lindzey, 1978). One of the most interesting aspects of Jung's theory is that he proposes that all humans share the same "collective unconscious," memories from the ancestral past of all individuals (Hall & Lindzey, p.119). Jung's theory focuses on the preferences of people in their orientation to the outside world, the way they process that information, and the way they make decisions. This led him to develop three categories, that when combined form the entire personality:

To Jung, individuals are of two basic types of attitudes, introverted and extroverted. Each of these can be further subdivided according to the dominance of one of four psychological functions: thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting. And in addition, each subtype can be seen as operating at conscious or unconscious, or both, levels of the personality. Considerations of consciousness involve primarily the concepts of ego and persona. The unconscious subdivides into the personal unconscious, with its incorporated complexes, and the collective unconscious, containing primordial thought forms and archetypes. Finally, the dynamic interaction of conscious and unconscious over time produces the self, the fully integrated, fully functioning personality (Smith & Vetter, 1982, p. 90).

In Carl Jung's theory, individuals have certain preferences for the way they view, respond and interact with life that are part of who the individual is. Although he respected that each individual was unique, he believed that there are similar behavior responses in people:

One is inclined, at first, to regard such differences as idiosyncrasies of character peculiar to individuals. But anyone with a thorough knowledge of human nature will soon discover that the contrast is by no means a matter of isolated individual

instances but of typical attitudes which are far more common than one with limited psychological experience would assume (Jung, 1976, p.179).

Carl Jung's ideas were found and embraced by Katherine Briggs, who had been interested in human development from a very young age. After coming across his ideas in his book *Psychological Types*, she adopted his framework and spent the rest of her life focused on studying them and working on a way to apply his ideas in a practical way (myersbriggs.org). In addition to the areas of extraversion/introversion, sensing/intuitive, and thinking/feeling developed by Jung, Katherine Briggs added a fourth component, perceiving/judging, which looked at how a person structured their life. Katherine Briggs' daughter, Isabel Myers worked tirelessly to create a paper and pencil questionnaire that could be used to assess type, despite the fact that she had no educational background or professional experience in psychology (Myers, 1995, p.xiii). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is now one of the most respected types of personality assessment.

In her book, *Gifts Differing*, Isabel Myers discusses the different personality types and how understanding them can lead to greater understanding in the everyday interactions of individuals. Although the personality assessment has four different categories by which an individual is analyzed, it is the way the aspects of personality work together that makes personality so fascinating as well as useful in understanding human behavior. In *Gifts Differing*, Isabel Myers states, "In combination, the four preferences determine type, but the traits that result from each preference do not combine to influence an individual's personality by simple addition of characteristics; instead, the traits result from the interaction of the preferences" (Myers, 1995, p.77) .

The theory of personality based on the work of Carl Jung as presented in Isabel Briggs Myers' book *Gifts Differing* states that personality is "structured by four preferences concerning the use of perception and judgment" (Myers, 1995, p. 8). This theory of personality does not consider one preference to be better or provide for more success than the other, rather, "the kind of excellence toward which they are headed is determined by the inborn preferences that direct them at each fork in the road" (Myers, 1995, p. 8).

Although personality has been more commonly used in psychological research, it clearly has an influence on communication. Each of the four preferences reflects how a person gathers information or makes decisions. The sensing/intuitive preference reflects whether a person conducts the process of collecting information in a way that is more literal (sensing) or in a way that is more figurative (intuitive). Sensors prefer information to be presented in logical and orderly fashion, focusing on the details and facts of what is being communicated. Sensors (S) rely primarily on their five senses to gather information (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p. 28). Intuitive (N) individuals prefer to look at the big picture idea of the information being presented, considering it for potential meanings and possibilities (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p. 28). The potential for communication problems as a result of differing preferences in this area is significant. Kroeger & Thuesen present a potential sensing/intuitive conversation to demonstrate the contrast:

Sensor: "What time is it?"

iNtuitive: "It's late!"

Sensor (somewhat surprised): "What time is it?"

iNtuitive (insistent): "It's time to go!"

Sensor (getting impatient): "Hey, read my lips! I asked, 'What *time* is it?'"



iNtuitive (equally impatient): “It’s past three.”

Sensor (exasperated): “Close, but no cigar! I shouldn’t have to ask a simple question four times to get a close answer.”

iNtuitive (perturbed, because he believes he answered correctly the first time): “You shouldn’t be so picky” (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p. 29)

The above exchange demonstrates how the sensor’s focus on detail and specifics as the intuitive focuses on ideas and concepts can create misunderstandings between individuals.

“Sensors focus on ‘what is’ and find ‘what can be’ unsettling; iNtuitives focus on ‘what can be’ and find ‘what is’ depressing” (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p. 69). This basic but fundamental difference in approaching life can be source of tension in interpersonal relationships.

After individuals gather information they must make a decision about that information. This involves the thinking/feeling preference. Those who prefer thinking (T) as a way of making decisions are objective throughout the process, remaining logical, detached, and analytical as they come to conclusions (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p.32). Individuals who prefer the feeling (F) preference in making decisions will consider how a person’s feelings (whether their own or someone else’s) will be affected by the decision. Feelers prize harmony in relationships and have difficulty making a decision that would upset that balance. This does not mean that thinkers or feelers will always reach different conclusions but that the processes by which they reach these conclusions are clearly different. In an example concerning whether to let a teenage daughter drive a car, if the thinker and feeler are both in favor of her being able to drive the car, the arguments might look something like this:

Thinker: “We can each learn a lesson from this. Parenting involves learning how to take risks and growing up requires learning how to take responsibility. Parenting involves

training yourself to let go and this will be good practice for letting go when she is no longer under this roof. According to my calculations, the risks here are outweighed by the benefits of the learning experience.”

Feeler: “How would I feel if the car was indiscriminately snatched out from under me without any regard for my personal feelings? She will feel embarrassed if she has to call her friends and ask for a ride when she was going to be one of the drivers. If I were she I would be crushed and understandably so. There is no way I could be so insensitive” (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p. 33).

In certain situations it may appear as if thinkers are uncaring or unfeeling towards others; however, both thinkers and feelers have emotional feelings. Thinkers, however, will consider the situation objectively; whereas, feelers will have a people orientation as they make decisions (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998). Differences of this preference can lead to interpersonal tension that will often be centered on goals and motivation.

The third preference focuses on the source of an individual’s energy. An extravert is energized by the outer world of people or things; the introvert is energized by the inner world of ideas. Communication is affected in many ways by this particular preference. Extraverts (E) speak more loudly, with a more rapid pace, often overstating and repeating their points and introverts (I) think before they speak, often appearing more aloof and reserved (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p.65). Communication problems can occur when there is a lack of respect for these differences. For example, introverts need time alone in order to reflect and recharge. “Extraverts not only invade that time, they may actually try to take it away” (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p. 38). If introverts are put in the position of having to protect their time, they may end up being resentful of the extravert’s pushiness, while the extravert feels rejected and

unappreciated. The relationship will suffer as a result, not because of a lack of good intentions but because of a lack of understanding.

The final preference, judging and perceiving, is regarded as the greatest source of interpersonal tension out of the four. Judgers desire a structured environment, and want to have things planned and ordered. They are deliberate in making decisions and operate under the assumption that there is a 'right' way and a 'wrong' way to do everything (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p.40). Perceiving individuals prefer to be flexible and spontaneous in their approach to life, responding to situations as they come. Perceivers would rather continue taking in new information than draw conclusions. The judgers' tendency to be convinced that they are right combined with the perceivers' tendency not to say what they mean, and share only their perceptions instead of their opinions (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998), can create tension and conflict in relationships.

Although there are four different parts of an individual's personality, the four parts are not necessarily equal. According to the temperament theory, developed by David Keirsey and based on Myers-Briggs personality theory, the most significant personality factor is whether an individual is sensing or intuitive (Keirsey, 1998, p.18). Once that is determined, for a sensing individual, the next consideration is whether they perceiving or judging; for an intuitive individual, whether they thinking or feeling. The result of this is four different groups of personality:

The Artisans, or SPs:

Having the freedom to act on the spur of the moment, whenever or wherever an opportunity arises, is very important to SPs. No chance is to be blown, no opening missed, no angle overlooked – whatever or whoever might turn out to be exciting,

pleasurable, or useful is checked out for advantage. Though they may differ in their attitude toward tough-mindedness (T) and friendliness (F) in exploring options, and though some are socially expressive (E) and some reserved (I), all of them make sure that what they do is practical and effective in getting what they want (Keirsey, 1998, p.18).

#### The Guardians, or SJs:

For SJs, everything should be in its proper place, everybody should be doing what they're supposed to, everybody should be getting their just desserts, every action should be closely supervised, all products thoroughly inspected, all legitimate needs promptly met, all approved ventures carefully insured. Though SJs might differ in being tough-minded (T) or friendly (F) in observing their schedules, and though they can be expressive (E) or reserved (I) in social attitude, all of them demand that ways and means of getting things done are proper and acceptable (Keirsey, 1998, p.19).

#### The Idealists, or NFs:

Conflict in those around them is painful to the NFs, something they must deal with in a very personal way, and so they care deeply about keeping morale high in their membership groups, and about nurturing the positive self-image of their loved ones. Indeed, while they might differ from each other on how important judging schedules (J) or probing for options (P) is in acting on their friendly feelings, and while their social address can be expressive (E) or reserved (I), all NFs consider it vitally important to have everyone in their circle-their friends, family, and colleagues-feeling good about themselves and getting along with each other (Keirsey, 1998, p.19).

#### The Rationals, or NTs:

NTs require themselves to be persistently and consistently rational in their actions. Though they may differ in their preference for judging schedules (J) or probing for options (P) as they tackle problems, and though they can seem expressive (E) or reserved (I) around others, all NTs insist that they have rationale for everything they do, that whatever they do and say makes sense (Keirsey, 1998, p.20).

While there are variations within each temperament, the four personality types that share those specific preferences have similarities that relate to the motivation. McAdams, Healy and Krause (1984) had participants take the Thematic Apperception Test that divided the subjects into high intimacy motivated and high power motivated groups. They then had the subjects describe ten friendship episodes (defined as interactions with friends that lasted at least 15-20 minutes) that had occurred in the past two weeks. The research showed that subjects high in intimacy motivation reported more dyadic friendship episodes, more self-disclosure, more listening, and more concern for their friends than low intimacy motivated individuals (McAdams et al., 1984). However, intimacy motivation seems to be better understood within the context of being an aspect of personality instead of the center of focus. Temperament has been shown to influence the motivations of the individual. In contrasting the last step in Maslow's hierarchy of needs to other theories, Keirsey explains how each theory is really describing temperaments that apply to some, but not all:

Thus it is not that self-actualization is a step beyond self-esteem; rather, it is but one path to self-esteem. There are other paths. Freud, for instance, was right when he said that physical pleasure is the way. But not for everybody, as he supposed, and not as an end in itself, but as a means to self-esteem. Those of the SP temperament prize themselves more when they live sensually and hedonically. Harry Sullivan was also right. The security of

social status is important – for some at least, and in the service of self-esteem. Those of the SJ temperament hold themselves in higher regard when they attain a reputation as pillars of society. Likewise, Alfred Adler was right in that the quest for power motivates us – some of us – and those of the NT temperament look upon themselves with pride as their technological powers increase. It is unfortunate that Maslow, himself an NF, saw the aims of the other three character types as merely arrested attempts at the NF goal of self-actualization (Keirsey, 1998, p.21).

The value in understanding personality type is in how the information of the ways in which personality influences an individual can be used to provide greater understanding and potentially more satisfying relationships. In the book *Type Talk: The 16 Personality Types That Determine How We Live, Love, and Work*, the authors take the information about the characteristics of each of the personality types and breaks it down to a practical level of what it means in everyday life. One of the many examples given in the book reflects how personality type affects communication of opposite types.

I'm an ENFP and my husband is an ISTJ. He says that the inside of my mind is like a swirling cloud where everything is connected. His, on the other hand, is like a long corridor with many different rooms and they all have doors; each door has a different name on it, such as RELATIONSHIPS, WORK, KIDS, HOUSE, RECREATION, PRAYER, THINGS TO BE DONE, etc. When we have a conversation and I keep changing subjects (which I don't see as changing subjects because it's all related to me), he has to keep running up and down the corridor trying to find the right room-and as soon as he gets the door open, he discovers I'm in another room (Kroeger & Theusen, 1988, p.124).

Some may be willing to dismiss these types of misunderstanding as gender related; however, the thinking/feeling preference could possibly be the root cause of what some consider gender differences. This is the only aspect of personality type preference in which results show a clear gender bias. Approximately two thirds of men are reported as being thinkers, while two thirds of women are reported as being feelers (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1988, p.34). Some gender stereotypes can actually be a result of personality preference. In fact, in the research study previously noted concerning high intimacy motivation (defined in terms very similar to the description of individuals who have a NF personality preference) showed no sex-differences when the motivational scores were taken into account (McAdams et al., 1984). These results would seem to provide some support to the idea that personality is a stronger influence than gender.

Although this researcher was not able to discover any research studies considering friendship in relation to Myers-Briggs personality theory, a study was conducted with married couples, which found that the majority of couples were alike on the majority of their personality preferences (for example, if the husband is an ENFJ and the wife INFJ, they are alike on the NFJ aspects of their personalities). The exact percentage distribution of the couples showed 9% were alike on all personality preferences, 35% were alike on three personality preferences, 33% were alike on two personality preferences, 19% were alike on one personality preference, and only 4% were not alike on any (Myers, 1995, p.124). These results show a clear tendency toward similarity in at least some aspects of personality, with the preference area with the most frequent similarity being the SN preference.

Myers-Briggs personality theory has also been linked to communication apprehension. It was found that participants who preferred introversion or sensing had higher levels of

communication apprehension than those that prefer extroversion or intuition. The findings of the study were said to support the assumption that communication apprehension is biologically based (Opt & Loffredo, 2000). This also supports the assumptions made by personality theory that preference is something that a person is born with, not something that a person develops as they grow older. Jung presents as evidence for this claim the fact that two children, raised in the same family by the same parents, will have two completely different ways of interacting with the world:

Although nothing would induce me to underrate the incalculable importance of parental influence, this familiar experience compels me to conclude that the decisive factor must be looked for in the disposition of the child. Ultimately, it must be the individual disposition which decides whether or not the child will belong to this or that type despite the constancy of external conditions (Jung, 1976, p.181).

One of the important relevancies of personality type is how it impacts communication between individuals. In looking at how introverts and extroverts interact, a researcher had participants take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and then called them back at a later time. When the participants were called back they were divided into different dyads, with extroverts being paired with introverts, as well as extroverts being paired with extroverts and introverts being paired with introverts. The results were interesting. When analyzing the response of the participants, Thorne (1987) found that introverts paired with introverts reported less satisfaction with the conversations; however, extroverts enjoyed both conversations. Other interesting results of this study showed that introverts place themselves in the role of interviewer or advisor to avoid having to express their own interests or concerns, while extraverts made a point of



assuming similarity and looking for common ground during the interactions (Thorne, 1987, p.724).

In this literature review studies related to social penetration theory, self-disclosure, and personality have been reviewed. The importance of friendship in the lives of individuals, combined with the potential influence of personality provides justification for this study. In this study the influence of personality type is considered in relation to the perceived intimacy and comfort level of disclosure within friendship. The intention of this study is to identify patterns that emerge from the personality pairings of friends, and how these naturally occurring patterns can be used to help individuals develop more intimate and fulfilling relationships.

### Chapter III - Methodology

Participants for this study were recruited from a private east coast university as well as through online social networking sites. Recruitment took place between February 1 and March 17, 2010. Some participants received extra credit in their classes for participating in this study. This study was conducted in three parts. Participants were given a set of research instructions<sup>1</sup> that gave them directions for completing the study. The first aspect of the study required the participants to identify the close friend that they would be referring to in the friendship survey as well as choose a code word that was entered by both individuals on the survey form to categorize them as a pair. The pairs of friends then completed the Jung typology test<sup>2</sup> on [humanmetrics.com](http://humanmetrics.com), which provided them with their Myers-Briggs personality type. This personality test was chosen because of the ease of accessibility as well as the extensive nature of the test. After completing the personality test, participants completed the friendship survey<sup>3</sup> on [surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com) regarding their comfort level of self-disclosure within the friendship, as well as their perceived intimacy within the friendship. The responses were then analyzed according to the research questions of the study.

#### Participants

This study was open to individuals between the ages of eighteen and thirty years of age who were currently enrolled in college courses at the university. There were no other specific demographic characteristics for participants. Participants were recruited from lower level communication courses and were offered extra credit for their participation. Data were collected through the use of online surveys. Institutional Review Board approval was gained prior to beginning this study. The original goal of this study was to have 100 participants, which would

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C

have resulted in 50 pairs. A total of 98 individuals participated in the study. This resulted in a total of 40 paired friendships, with 18 of the completed surveys having no matching pair. The surveys with no pair were not considered in this research. Of the 40 pairs, eight were also not considered because either the length of friendship was less than six months, or the age of the participants fell outside of the considered group of 18-30 years of age. The remaining 32 pairs were analyzed according to the research questions of this study. There were nine pairs of mixed gender, 18 female/female pairs, and 5 male/male pairs. The average age of participants was 19.

## Methods

**Jung typology test.** The Jung typology test is based on the personality theory of Carl Jung that was further developed by Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers. The test is made up of 72 questions that ask respondents to reply yes or no to indicate whether a statement describes them or if they view the statement as being true. Examples of questions include: “You are more interested in a general idea than the details of its realization” and “You are inclined to rely more on improvisation than on careful planning” (humanmetrics.com). The description of the test as provided by humanmetrics.com explains how they view the criterion for each of the dichotomies:

- The first criterion, Extraversion - Introversion defines the source and direction of energy expression for a person.
- The second criterion, Sensing - iNtuition defines the method of information perception by a person.
- The third criterion, Thinking - Feeling defines how the person processes information.

- The fourth criterion, Judging - Perceiving defines how a person implements the information he or she has processed (humanmetrics.com).

This test resulted in responses that included fourteen of the sixteen potential personality types, with only the INTP and ESTP personality type not being reported.

**Friendship survey.** In order to identify the connection between personality and the role that it plays in the perceived intimacy and comfort level of self-disclosure within friendship, the participants were asked to complete a survey asking specifically about their perceptions and communication within the friendship. The survey asked background questions that include the age and gender of the participant, and the length of the friendship. The participants were also asked the number of times they communicate per week, either in person or on the phone, with their friend. They were given four possible answers, either 1-3 times per week, 4-6 times per week, 7-9 times per week, or 10 times or more.

The participants were also asked to state how comfortable they were discussing the following issues with their identified friend: romantic concerns, personal problems, goals and aspirations, past traumatic experiences, spiritual concerns, and everyday concerns.

For each of these issues the response set included: very comfortable, comfortable, neutral, uncomfortable, and very uncomfortable. No additional commentary was asked for or provided in connection with these responses.

Participants were also asked how intimate they consider their relationship to be, choosing between very intimate, intimate, neutral, distant, and very distant. There were no definitions given for the term intimate; however, the context of the survey implied a definition of closeness of relationship.

## Analysis

After receiving the results of the completed surveys, the friendship pairs were analyzed according to following four research questions:

**RQ1:** Does a pattern exist between the Myers-Briggs personality characteristics of friends?

**RQ2:** Does a pattern exist between personality pairings and perceived intimacy within a friendship?

**RQ3:** Does a pattern exist between personality pairings and comfort level of self-disclosure within a friendship?

The purpose of **RQ1** was to establish whether a pattern of either similarity or difference in personality emerged from the responses of the pairs. The information gained from this analysis was then used in consideration of **RQ2** and **RQ3** to determine if the responses of friendship pairs appeared to be in any way connected to the personality type pairings and to see if certain pairings indicated greater amounts of perceived intimacy or comfort level of disclosure.

By examining patterns that exist among the friendship pairs that are very comfortable in areas of disclosure or that consider their friendship to be very intimate, potential understanding of how Myers-Briggs personality theory can be used to improve interpersonal relationships can be gained.

## Chapter IV - Results and Discussion

A total of 98 individuals participated in the study. Recruitment for participants took place between February 1 and March 17, 2010. Participants were recruited through online social networking sites, as well as communication classes at a private east coast university. Some participants were offered extra credit in their classes for participating. Out of the 98 participants, there were a total of 40 paired friendships, with 18 of the completed surveys having no matching pair. The surveys with no pair were not considered in this research. Of the 40 pairs, eight were also not considered because either the length of friendship was less than six months, or the age of the participants fell outside of the specified group of 18-28 year olds. The remaining 32 pairs included 9 mixed gender pairs, 18 female/female pairs, and 5 male/male pairs. The average age of participants was 19. The pairs were analyzed according to the research questions of this study.

The responses according to the Jung Typology test included 44 extraverts, 20 introverts, 40 sensing, 24 intuitive, 49 feeling, 15 thinking, 53 judging, and 11 perceiving personality types. These actual complete personality types included 21 ESFJs, 9 ISFJs, 9 ENFJs, 4 INTJs, 3 ESTJs, 3 ENTJs, 3 ENFPs, 3 ESFPs, 2 ISTJs, 2 ENTPs, 2 INFJs, 1 INFP, 1 ISFP, and 1 ISTP. There were no INTP or ESTP responses.

These responses generally supported the balance of personality type that is found in the general population. In the general population extraverts outnumber introverts 3 to 1 (Myers, 1995, p.54), and the results in this study consisted of 69% extraverts and 31% introverts. Sensing individuals also outnumber intuitive individuals by the same ratio (Myers, 1995, p.58), and the results in this study consisted of 63% sensing and 37% intuitive responses. Although the ratio of thinkers and feelers are balanced in the general population, this is the only aspect of personality with a gender bias, with two thirds of men being thinkers and two thirds of women being feelers

(Myers, 1995, p.66). The majority of participants in this study were female, which explains the high responses of feeling type (77%), and only 23% thinking. The only aspect that did not fit the normal profile was the judging and perceiving responses, with 83% of participants responding as judging and only 11% of participants responding as perceiving. This aspect of personality is typically balanced; however, the participants in this study were all college students, and judging personality types are more prevalent in higher education (Myers, 1995).

This study did not use a statistical analysis of responses, but rather a comparison of the personality type pairings and the responses given. Throughout this section, tables are used to display friendship pairs side by side, allowing the functions of personality that are the same or different for each pair to be clearly seen. In Table 1, each pair is assigned a number to identify it from other pairs, and this number remains the same for each friendship pair in each of the subsequent tables.

## **Results**

### **RQ 1: Does a pattern exist between the Myers-Briggs personality characteristics of friends?**

Table 1 displays the personality types of each friendship pair side by side, as well as which aspects of personality the pair shares. For example, if both of the participants in the pair are extraverted, there is an E in the preference agreement column. In Table 1 it is seen that nine of the 32 pairs are exactly the same personality type, sharing the same preference in every aspect, 10 pairs are the same on three of the preferences, nine are the same on two of the preferences, and four are the same on only one preference. None of the pairs in this study are different on all preferences.

Table 1

*Friendship Pair Response Comparisons*

Pair #	Personality		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality		Identical Personality Function
	Type 1	Type 2			Type 1	Type 2	
1	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J	17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	18	ISFJ	ENFP	F
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	19	ISFJ	ISTJ	I – S – J
4	ISTJ	INTJ	I – T – J	20	INFJ	ENFJ	N – F – J
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
6	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	22	ENTP	ISFP	P
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	23	ISTP	ESFJ	S
8	ENTJ	ESFJ	E – J	24	INFJ	ENFP	N – F
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J
11	ENFJ	ESFJ	E – F – J	27	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	29	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	30	INFP	ISFJ	I – F
15	ENFP	ESFJ	E – F	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
16	ENTP	ENFJ	E – N	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – F – P

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

In examining the way that personalities are paired together, there are 17 extravert/extravert pairs, five introvert/introvert pairs, and 10 mixed extravert/introvert pairs. There are 14 sensing/sensing pairs, six intuitive/intuitive pairs, and 12 mixed sensing/intuitive pairs. There are 19 feeling/feeling pairs, only two thinking/thinking pairs, and 11 mixed feeling/thinking pairs. There are 23 judging/judging pairs, two perceiving/perceiving pairs, and seven mixed judging/perceiving pairs.



The personality type most represented in this study is the ESFJ, and ESFJs are paired together four times, and ESFJs and ISFJs are paired together three times. ESFJs are also paired with ENTJs three times, ENFJs twice, and are paired once each with the ESFP, INTJ, ENFP, ISTP, and ESTJ personality types.

The second most represented extraverted personality type is the ENFJ, and ENFJs are paired with other ENFJs twice, ESFJs twice, and once each with the INFJ, ESTJ, and ENTP personality types. There were only three ESTJs, and they are paired with a ESFJ, a ENFJ, and a ISFJ. All three ENTJs are paired with ESFJs. The three ENFPs are paired with a ESFJ, a ISFJ, and an INFJ. Of the three ESFPs, two are paired with each other and one is paired with a ESFJ. The two ENTPs are paired with a ENFJ and a ISFP.

The largest sample of introverted personality type in this study is the ISFJ type. It is paired with another ISFJ once, with the ESFJ type three times, and then once each with the ENFP, ISTJ, ESTJ, and INFP types. The INTJ is paired with another INTJ once, and then an ISTJ and an ESFJ. The ISTJ is paired with the ISFJ and the INTJ. The INFJ is paired with the ENFJ and the ENFP. The INFP is paired with the ISFJ, the ISFP is paired with the ENTP, and the ISTP is paired with the ESFJ.

In the extraverted/introverted function of personality, 69%<sup>4</sup> of pairs were the same, in the sensing/intuitive function of personality 63%<sup>5</sup> of pairs were the same, in the thinking/feeling function of personality 66%<sup>6</sup> of pairs were the same, and in the judging/perceiving function of personality 78%<sup>7</sup> of pairs were the same. The length of friendship also had an effect on the similarity of personality functions, with pairs who had been friends between 6-12 months being

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<sup>4</sup> 22 out of 32 pairs

<sup>5</sup> 20 out of 32 pairs

<sup>6</sup> 21 out of 32 pairs

<sup>7</sup> 25 out of 32 pairs

the same in the extraverted/introverted function 80%<sup>8</sup> of the time, and yet pairs of friends who had been friends for 18 months through six years were the same only 50%<sup>9</sup> of the time.

Similarly, in the thinking/feeling function of personality, pairs who had been friends between 6-12 months are the same 75%<sup>10</sup> of the time, and pairs who had been friends between 18 months through six years are the same 50%<sup>11</sup> of the time. The judging/perceiving function of personality also showed a difference based on length of friendship; however, the difference was not as great. Pairs that were friends between 6-12 months were the same 80%<sup>12</sup> of the time, and pairs that were friends between 18 months and six years were the same 75%<sup>13</sup> of the time.

The sensing/intuitive function of personality was the only aspect in which pairs with a longer length of friendship were the same more often than pairs with a shorter length of friendship. Pairs with a length of friendship of 6-12 months were the same 60%<sup>14</sup> of the time, and pairs with a length of friendship between 18 months and six years were the same 67%<sup>15</sup> of the time.

These results show a pattern of personality function being similar more often than different in friendship pairs, with the personality function in which pairs were similar most often being the judging/perceiving function of personality.

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<sup>8</sup> 16 out of 20 pairs

<sup>9</sup> 6 out of 12 pairs

<sup>10</sup> 15 out of 20 pairs

<sup>11</sup> 6 out of 12 pairs

<sup>12</sup> 16 out of 20 pairs

<sup>13</sup> 9 out of 12 pairs

<sup>14</sup> 12 out of 20 pairs

<sup>15</sup> 8 out of 12 pairs

**RQ 2: Is there a relation between personality pairings and perceived intimacy within a friendship?**

The responses given for the question “How intimate do you consider your friendship to be?” included very intimate, intimate, and neutral. No participants responded that they considered their friendship to be distant or very distant. In Table 2 the responses are listed as well as the friendship pairs that responded that way. The identical aspects of personality are also listed. The majority of pairs considered their friendship to be very intimate or intimate, with only two pairs in which one person considered the friendship to be intimate while the other was neutral about the intimacy, and two pairs in which both participants were neutral about their friendship intimacy. All nine of the pairs with the exact same personality type considered their friendship to be very intimate or intimate, and nine of the 10 pairs with three of the same preferences also considered the friendship to be very intimate or intimate. However, all four of the pairs that are the same on only one preference also considered their friendship to be very intimate or intimate. Although this would be a reason for caution in generalizing the results, it must also be noted that the 28 pairs that consider their friendship to be very intimate or intimate are still similar 70%<sup>16</sup> of the time.

Also the only two perceiving/perceiving pairs also considered their friendship to be very intimate. Only one intuitive/intuitive pair considered their friendship to be very intimate. The four other intuitive/intuitive pairs considered their friendship to be intimate, and the remaining intuitive pair had a mixed response, with one considering the friendship to be intimate and the other being neutral about the intimacy of their friendship.

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<sup>16</sup> Percentage of similarity calculated by taking the number of areas in which pairs had the same preference (79) and dividing it by the number of areas in which the same preference was possible (112).

Table 2

*Intimacy Responses*

Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function
Very Intimate/Very Intimate Responses							
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	23	ISTP	ESFJ	S
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	29	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	30	INFP	ISFJ	I – F
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – F – P
22	ENTP	ISFP	P				
Very Intimate/Intimate Responses							
4	ISTJ	INTJ	I – T – J	17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J
11	ENFJ	ESFJ	E – F – J	19	ISFJ	ISTJ	I – S – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
Intimate/Intimate							
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	18	ISFJ	ENFP	F
6	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
8	ENTJ	ESFJ	E – J	24	INFJ	ENFP	N – F
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	27	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J
16	ENTP	ENFJ	E – N				
Intimate/Neutral Responses							
1	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J	20	INFJ	ENFJ	N – F – J
Neutral/Neutral Responses							
15	ENFP	ESFJ	E – F	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

Of the two pairs in which one person considered the friendship to be intimate, and the other person was neutral about the friendship, the first pair was an ESFJ/ENTJ friendship, with

the ESFJ considering the friendship to be intimate, while the ENTJ was neutral about the intimacy of the friendship. The second pair with an intimate/neutral response was an INFJ/ENFJ pair, with the INFJ considering the friendship to be intimate, and the ENFJ being neutral about the intimacy of the friendship. The only opposite preference of this pair was the E/I preference. The two pairs that responded as being neutral about the intimacy of the friendship were both opposite on two preferences. The first one was an ENFP/ESFJ pairing, with the opposite preferences being sensing/intuitive and judging/perceiving. The second pair was an ESTJ/ENFJ pair, with differences in the sensing/intuitive and thinking/feeling functions.

These results do not show a relation between personality and perceived intimacy, with the majority of pairs responding that they consider their friendship to be very intimate or intimate, regardless of whether their personality types were more similar or different.

**RQ 3: Is there a relation between personality and comfort level of disclosure?**

In responding to the question, “How comfortable do you feel discussing the following concerns with your identified friend” participants’ responses included feeling very comfortable, comfortable, neutral, or uncomfortable, depending on the area of concern. There were no responses of very uncomfortable in any area of concern.

*Friendship pairings that are very comfortable in all areas of concern.* Out of the 32 pairs, 17 pairs responded as feeling very comfortable in every area of disclosure. In Table 3 those 17 pairings are listed, showing the personality type as well as the aspects of personality the pair was identical in.

Table 3

*Very Comfortable in All Areas of Concern*

Pair #	Personality		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality		Identical Personality Function
	Type 1	Type 2			Type 1	Type 2	
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	18	ISFJ	ENFP	F
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – F – P
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J				

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

Out of the nine pairs in this study who were identical on every aspect of personality, eight of them reported feeling very comfortable in every area of disclosure. Also, all four of the ESFJ/ESFJ pairings reported being very comfortable in all areas of disclosure, and two of the three ESFJ/ISFJ pairings reported being very comfortable in every area, and yet none of the three ESFJ/ENTJ pairings fell into this category. This category included 12 of the 22 pairs that were identical on the extraverted/introverted preference, 13 of the 20 that were identical on the sensing/intuitive preference, 13 of the 21 pairs that were identical on the thinking/feeling preference, and 15 of the 25 pairs that were identical on the judging/perceiving preference.

*Friendship pair responses in the area of romantic concerns.* In regards to the area of romantic concerns, participants responded as either being very comfortable, comfortable, or neutral. There were no uncomfortable or very uncomfortable responses.

Out of the 32 pairs, 23 were very comfortable discussing romantic concerns, seven were a mixed response of very comfortable/comfortable, two responded as being comfortable, two were a mixed response of comfortable/neutral, and two responded as being neutral.

Table 4 displays how each pair responded, as well as the aspects of personality they were identical in.

Table 4

*Romantic Concerns*

Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function
Very Comfortable/Very Comfortable Responses							
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	18	ISFJ	ENFP	F
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	19	ISFJ	ISTJ	I – S – J
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	20	INFJ	ENFJ	N – F – J
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	23	ISTP	ESFJ	S
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	29	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – P
17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J				
Very Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
6	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	22	ENTP	ISFP	P
8	ENTJ	ESFJ	E – J	27	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J
11	ENFJ	ESFJ	E – F – J	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
15	ENFP	ESFJ	E – F				
Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
4	ISTJ	INTJ	I – T – J	16	ENTP	ENFJ	E – N
Comfortable/Neutral Responses							
1	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J	24	INFJ	ENFP	N – F
Neutral/Neutral Responses							
21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J	30	INFP	ISFJ	I – F

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

The 23 pairs that were very comfortable discussing romantic concerns included 14 of the 22 pairs that were identical in the extraverted/introverted function, 17 of the 20 pairs that were



identical in the sensing/intuitive function, 15 of the 21 pairs that were identical in the thinking/feeling function, and 19 of the 25 pairs that were identical in the judging/perceiving function. Also interesting is the fact that 7 out of the 10 mixed extravert/introvert pairs, and 8 of the 11 mixed thinking/feeling pairs are very comfortable discussing romantic concerns as well. All nine of the identical pairs were very comfortable or comfortable discussing romantic concerns.

*Friendship pair responses in the area of personal concerns.* In regards to discussing personal concerns, participants responded as being very comfortable, comfortable, or neutral. There were no uncomfortable or very uncomfortable responses. Table 5 displays how each pair responded, as well as the functions of personality in which they were identical in. Out of the 32 pairs, 22 are very comfortable discussing person concerns, seven were a mixed response of very comfortable and comfortable, two were comfortable, and one pair was a mixed response of very comfortable and neutral.

Table 5

*Personal Concerns*

Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function
Very Comfortable/Very Comfortable Responses							
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	19	ISFJ	ISTJ	I – S – J
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	20	INFJ	ENFJ	N – F – J
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	22	ENTP	ISFP	P
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	23	ISTP	ESFJ	S
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	27	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
18	ISFJ	ENFP	F	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – F – P
Very Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
6	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	16	ENTP	ENFJ	E – N
8	ENTJ	ESFJ	E – J	24	INFJ	ENFP	N – F
11	ENFJ	ESFJ	E – F – J	29	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
15	ENFP	ESFJ	E – F				
Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
4	ISTJ	INTJ	I – T – J	30	INFP	ISFJ	I – F
Very Comfortable/Neutral Responses							
1	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J				

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

The 22 pairs that were very comfortable discussing personal concerns included 14 of the 22 that were identical on the extraverted/introverted function, 16 of the 20 that were identical on the sensing/intuitive function, 14 of the 21 that were identical on the thinking/feeling function and 19 of the 25 that were identical on the judging/perceiving function. All nine of the pairings

with identical personality types were very comfortable or comfortable discussing personal concerns.

*Friendship pair responses in the area of goals and ambitions.* The majority of pairs were very comfortable discussing goals and ambitions. Out of the 32 pairs, 26 were very comfortable, four are a mixed response of very comfortable/comfortable, and two pairs were comfortable discussing goals and ambitions. The 26 pairs that were very comfortable discussing goals and ambitions includes 18 pairs that were identical in the extraverted/introverted function, 17 pairs that were identical in the sensing/intuitive function, 17 pairs that were identical in the thinking feeling function, and 22 pairs that were identical in the judging/perceiving function. All nine of the pairs with identical personality types were very comfortable or comfortable discussing goals and ambitions. Table 6 displays the responses of the pairs as well as the functions of personality in which they are identical.

Table 6

*Goals and Ambitions*

Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function
Very Comfortable/Very Comfortable Responses							
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	18	ISFJ	ENFP	F
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	19	ISFJ	ISTJ	I – S – J
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	20	INFJ	ENFJ	N – F – J
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
8	ENTJ	ESFJ	E – J	22	ENTP	ISFP	P
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J
11	ENFJ	ESFJ	E – F – J	27	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	29	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	30	INFP	ISFJ	I – F
16	ENTP	ENFJ	E – N	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – F – P
Very Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
4	ISTJ	INTJ	I – T – J	15	ENFP	ESFJ	E – F
6	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	23	ISTP	ESFJ	S
Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
1	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J	24	INFJ	ENFP	N – F

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

*Friendship pair responses in the area of past traumatic experiences.* The area of past traumatic experiences received the greatest variety of responses, including very comfortable, comfortable, neutral and uncomfortable. This was the only area of concern to receive an uncomfortable response. There were no very uncomfortable responses. Out of the 32 pairs, 18 pairs were very comfortable, five pairs were a mixed response of very comfortable and comfortable, one pair was a mixed response of very comfortable and neutral, four pairs were comfortable, two pairs were a mixed response of comfortable and neutral, one pair was a mixed response of comfortable and uncomfortable, and one pair was neutral in discussing past traumatic experiences. Table 7 displays the friendship pairs according to how they responded, as well as the functions of personality they share.

Table 7

*Past Traumatic Experiences*

Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function
Very Comfortable/Very Comfortable							
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	18	ISFJ	ENFP	F
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	27	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – F – P
Very Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
6	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	24	INFJ	ENFP	N – F
20	INFJ	ENFJ	N – F – J	29	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
1	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J	16	ENTP	ENFJ	E – N
8	ENTJ	ESFJ	E – J	30	INFP	ISFJ	I – F
Comfortable/Neutral Responses							
4	ISTJ	INTJ	I – T – J	15	ENFP	ESFJ	E – F
Very Comfortable/Neutral Responses				Neutral/Neutral Responses			
11	ENFJ	ESFJ	E – F – J	23	ISTP	ESFJ	S
Comfortable/Uncomfortable Responses							
19	ISFJ	ISTJ	I – S – J				

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

Of the 18 pairs that responded as being very comfortable discussing past traumatic experiences, 13 were identical in the extraverted/introverted function, 13 were identical in the sensing/intuitive function, 13 were identical in the thinking/feeling function, and 16 were

identical in the judging/perceiving function. All nine of the pairs that have identical personality types were very comfortable or comfortable discussing past traumatic experiences.

*Friendship pair responses in the area of spiritual concerns.* The responses given in the area of spiritual concern included very comfortable, comfortable and neutral. There were no uncomfortable or very uncomfortable responses. Out of the 32 pairs, 24 pairs were very comfortable, three pairs were a mixed response of very comfortable and comfortable, four pairs were comfortable, and one pair was neutral in discussing spiritual concerns. The 24 pairs that were very comfortable includes 17 pairs that were identical on the extraverted/introverted function, 17 pairs that were identical on the sensing/intuitive function, 18 pairs that were identical on the thinking/feeling function, and 20 pairs that were identical on the judging/perceiving function. All nine of the pairs with identical personality types were very comfortable discussing spiritual concerns. Table 8 displays the friendship pairs according to their responses and their identical personality functions.

Table 8

*Spiritual Concerns*

Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function
Very Comfortable/Very Comfortable							
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	18	ISFJ	ENFP	F
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	19	ISFJ	ISTJ	I – S – J
6	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	22	ENTP	ISFP	P
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	24	INFJ	ENFP	N – F
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
11	ENFJ	ESFJ	E – F – J	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	29	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
15	ENFP	ESFJ	E – F	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – F – P
Very Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
23	ISTP	ESFJ	S	30	INFP	ISFJ	I – F
27	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J				
Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
1	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J	8	ENTJ	ESFJ	E – J
4	ISTJ	INTJ	I – T – J	16	ENTP	ENFJ	E – N
Neutral/Neutral Responses							
20	INFJ	ENFJ	N – F – J				

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

*Friendship pair responses in the area of everyday concerns.* The responses in the area of everyday concerns included very comfortable, comfortable, and neutral. There were no uncomfortable or very uncomfortable responses. Table 9 displays the friendship pairs according to their responses and their identical personality functions.



Table 9

*Everyday Concerns*

Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function	Pair #	Personality Type		Identical Personality Function
Very Comfortable/Very Comfortable Responses							
2	ESFJ	ENFJ	E – F – J	17	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J
3	ESFJ	ESFP	E – S – F	18	ISFJ	ENFP	F
5	INTJ	INTJ	I – N – T – J	19	ISFJ	ISTJ	I – S – J
6	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	20	INFJ	ENFJ	N – F – J
7	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	21	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
8	ENTJ	ESFJ	E – J	22	ENTP	ISFP	P
9	ESFJ	INTJ	J	23	ISTP	ESFJ	S
10	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	25	ESFJ	ESTJ	E – S – J
11	ENFJ	ESFJ	E – F – J	26	ESTJ	ENFJ	E – J
12	ENFJ	ENFJ	E – N – F – J	28	ISFJ	ESTJ	S – J
13	ISFJ	ESFJ	S – F – J	29	ESFJ	ISFJ	S – F – J
14	ESFJ	ESFJ	E – S – F – J	30	INFP	ISFJ	I – F
15	ENFP	ESFJ	E – F	31	ISFJ	ISFJ	I – S – F – J
16	ENTP	ENFJ	E – N	32	ESFP	ESFP	E – S – F – P
Very Comfortable/Comfortable Responses							
1	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J	27	ESFJ	ENTJ	E – J
4	ISTJ	INTJ	I – T – J				
Neutral/Neutral Responses							
24	INFJ	ENFP	N – F				

*Note.* E = Extraverted; I = Introverted; N = Intuitive; S = Sensing; T = Thinking; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving

This area had 28 out of 32 pairs that were very comfortable discussing everyday concerns, the largest number of very comfortable pairs out of any category. The four remaining pairs included three pairs that were mixed responses of very comfortable and comfortable and one pair that was neutral about discussing everyday concerns.

Out of the 28 pairs that were very comfortable discussing everyday concerns, 19 were identical in the extraverted/introverted function of personality, 19 were identical in the sensing/intuitive function of personality, 19 were identical in the thinking/feeling function of personality, and 22 were identical in the judging/perceiving function of personality. All of the pairs that were identical in personality responded as being very comfortable discussing everyday concerns.

### **Discussion**

In regards to **RQ1**, which asks, “Does a pattern exist between the Myers-Briggs personality characteristics of friends?” results show a pattern of personality function being similar more often than different in friendship pairs.

The reason for the high percentage of pairs that are the same in the extraverted/introverted function of personality can be understood by considering some of the consequences of having opposite preferences. The fact that an extravert is energized by the external world and the introvert is energized by their internal world can be a source of conflict if the extravert attempts to invade the introverts’ needed reflection time, or if the introvert does not provide the extravert with the external assurances and affirmations that they need. According to Baron (1998), “To an Extravert, Introverts can seem withholding, antisocial, boring or uninterested. To an Introvert, Extraverts can seem pushy, intrusive, hyper, and too talkative” (p.14).

Although the percentage of pairs that are the same in the sensing/intuitive function of personality indicates similarity with 63% of pairs having identical personality function preferences in this area, it is somewhat surprising that this number is not higher. According to

Kroegeer and Thuesen (1998), the sensing/iNtuitive difference is one of the most important differences because it relates to how people gather information. They state that

“Without some understanding of ‘where someone is coming from’ (as far as information-gathering goes), communication is extremely difficult, as each individual believes his or her own data are the data. If I see a tree and you see a forest, each of us believes we’re right- and we are- and distrusts the other’s information-gathering process” (p.50).

Baron also points out that because sensors and iNtuitives see the world so differently “communication can be difficult between them because they see things so differently, and each believes that his or her information is more accurate, valid, and real” (1995, p.21).

Although only slightly, the similarity in this function is higher among pairs that have been friends for longer periods of time; this could indicate that similarity in this function becomes more important as a friendship progresses.

The high percentage of pairs that are the same in the judging/perceiving function of personality (78%) was the highest of the four functions. This is interesting considering this function of personality is known as the preference that most affects how individuals interact with others (Kroegeer & Thuesen, 1998, p.42). Because this function of personality relates to how individuals prefer to structure their lives, the difference in preferences could potentially cause a great deal of conflict and stress in relationships as “Perceivers can feel boxed in and pressured by a Judger’s need for plans and orderly surroundings. Judgers can feel anxious and strung out by a Perceiver’s tendency to leave things unplanned and scattered about” (Baron, p.34). Therefore, it makes sense that this would be the function of personality in which pairs are the same most often.

The results clearly support the idea that personality similarity can play a role in friendship. The fact that these data indicate that personality preference similarity decreases overall as the length of friendship increases seems to be contradictory and could possibly support a more complementary idea of friendship attraction. Myers, in her book *Gifts Differing*, points out several ways in which opposite preferences can provide benefit to a relationship. For example, Myers points out the advantages of opposite preferences in the sensing/intuitive preference, which is the most common area of difference in these results:

Intuitive Types Need Sensing Types - To bring up pertinent facts, to apply experience to problems, to read the fine print in a contract, to notice what needs attention now, to have patience, to keep track of essential details, to face difficulties with realism, and to remind them that the joys of the present are important.

Sensing Types Need Intuitive Types - To bring up new possibilities, to supply ingenuity on problems, to read the signs of coming change, to see how to prepare for the future, to have enthusiasm, to watch for new essentials, to tackle difficulties with zest, to show that the joys of the future are worth looking for (Myers, 1995, p.119).

These results could indicate that preference similarity is an important factor in friendships as they begin to develop; however, long term friendships find value in balance between the preferences.

Concerning **RQ2**, which asks, “Does a pattern exist between personality pairings and perceived intimacy within a friendship?” the results do seem to show that similarity in personality is related to a greater perceived intimacy in friendship. In the grand scheme of things the difference between very intimate or intimate is minuscule and does not reveal significant patterns related to personality; however, length of friendship seems to play a role in whether a

participant marked very intimate over intimate. Of the 20 pairs that have been friends between 6-12 months, only six (30%) considered their friendship to be very intimate; in contrast 7 of the 12 pairs that have been friends between 18 months and six years (58%) considered their friendship to be very intimate. This information, considered in light of the decrease in similarity as friendships progress, is particularly relevant. The opposing preferences could potentially lead to conflict in the relationship, and according to social penetration theory conflict can lead to greater intimacy in relationships. Altman and Taylor (1973) state that “hostility, disagreement, and conflict seem to be unavoidable and are even essential components of the growth of a relationship” (p.168). This could explain the fact that friendship pairs that have been friends longer but are less similar in personality consider their friendships to be very intimate more so than pairs who have been friends for shorter periods of time but have greater personality similarity.

Another trend that emerged from the results is that out of the eight friendship pairs whose length of friendship was between 12-18 months, there were no pairs in which both individuals consider the friendship to be very intimate. One possible reason for the pairs whose friendship lengths fell between 12-18 months not considering their friendship to be very intimate could be that as the friendship is progressing, the individuals are reassessing the rewards and costs of the relationship. According to Altman and Taylor, this could lead to a pause in the relationships development as individuals make decisions about how to progress. They state that “with an uncertain decision interactions may continue at about the same level until the relationship becomes clarified” (1973, p. 38). This apparent pause does not appear to be specifically related to personality, as the patterns of personality among these eight pairs are not different from the overall personality patterns established. The only difference is the length of friendship.

Another area in which there appeared to be distinction between the very intimate and intimate responses was in the intuitive friendship pairs. Out of the six iNtuitive/iNtuitive pairs, only one pair considered their friendship to be very intimate, four pairs considered their friendship to be intimate, and one pair had a mixed response of intimate and neutral. This could be because intuitive personality types are naturally oriented towards possibilities, influencing them to have the perception that the relationship could always be more intimate than it is at the moment.

Insight can also be gained from examining the pairs that did not consider the friendship to be intimate, but had a mixed response of intimate and neutral or neutral and neutral. The two pairs with a mixed response included an ESFJ/ENTJ friendship and an INFJ/ENFJ friendship. The two preferences that are opposite in the first pair are the sensing/intuitive function and the thinking/feeling function. These differences provide some explanations for why they might view their friendship differently. The sensing personality focuses on the details, the trees instead of the forest. The intuitive personality is inclined to focus on the possibilities and may be neutral about the intimacy of the friendship because in their mind greater intimacy is always possible. The thinking/feeling difference would have a great impact as well. Kroeger and Thuesen consider it to be the function that is most clearly related to how intimacy is defined, stating, "An F wants to experience intimacy, a T wants to understand it" (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p. 35). In this case, the pair has only been friends for six months. This time frame would be long enough to allow time for the pair to experience a level of closeness but perhaps not enough time for the T to have a clear grasp of how the friendship is developing and why, which would be very important, especially when combined with the N preference.

The extraverted/introverted difference of the second pair would also provide explanation for the differing views of their friendship, as “extraverts want verbal feedback; introverts want to keep their thoughts to themselves” (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1998, p. 155). In this case, the introverted personality would be able to observe the extravert’s feelings and is aware of its own, but the extravert may be neutral about the friendship intimacy because of not receiving the external display of feeling and emotion that is expected and needed from the introvert.

The pairings that responded as being neutral about the intimacy of their friendship were an ENFP/ESFJ pair and an ESTJ/ENFJ pair. The sensing/intuitive difference seen in the first pair could serve as a barrier in communication and could be the source of uncertainty that led the pair to respond as neutral about the intimacy of the friendship. The judging/perceiving difference of the second pair can also have implications for the relationship. The judging/perceiving function is based on how individuals structure their lives, and when one individual prefers for life to be organized in a logical and structured way, and the other prefers to be flexible and open, there is the potential for the relationship to experience conflict and tension, which would affect the level of closeness or intimacy the individuals could achieve.

The second pair has differences in the sensing/intuitive and thinking/feeling functions, which are the same differences as the first intimate/neutral pair, but instead of a SF and a NT, this pair includes a ST, and a NF, which makes a big difference. An SF combination will be interested in facts, but facts about people, and will tend to be sociable and friendly. The ST individual prefers to collect facts about things and tends to be practical and matter of fact (Myers, 1995, p. 5). Likewise, an NT individual is typically known for logic and ingenuity, and a NF individual is usually known for enthusiasm and insight (Myers, 1995, p.6). These differences

could play a role in the perception of the friendship and the individual's decision to remain neutral about the intimacy of the friendship.

Although there does not appear to be any relation between personality pairings and perceived intimacy beyond the already established pattern of similarity between friendship pairs, there does appear to be a connection between the degree of perceived friendship intimacy and length of friendship.

Considering **RQ3**, which asks, "Does a pattern exist between personality pairings and comfort level of self-disclosure?" the results still show a clear pattern of personality function similarity in each aspect of disclosure. It is interesting to note that out of the 15 pairs that had mixed responses depending on the area of disclosure, that four of the pairs still consider the friendship to be very intimate, and that these four pairs have all been friends for at least two years. The area of disclosure in which the greatest number of pairs are very comfortable is the area of everyday concerns, followed by goals and ambitions, then spiritual concerns, romantic concerns, and personal concerns, with the area of past traumatic experiences being the area of disclosure with the least amount of pairs that are very comfortable discussing. The area of past traumatic experiences is the only area in which a participant is uncomfortable discussing the topic with the friend. The participant is an ISTJ paired with an ISFJ. The ISFJ is comfortable discussing this topic; however, both the ISTJ and ISFJ are very comfortable in every other area of disclosure. The ISTJ also considers the friendship to be very intimate, despite not being comfortable in this area of disclosure. This could mean that although the personality function difference of thinking/feeling may play a role in comfort level of disclosure, the topic area is the greater factor in this situation.



The friendship pairs that were very comfortable in all areas of disclosure show a strong pattern of personality similarity, as well as a connection to length of friendship. These 17 pairs included eight pairs that were identical in personality type, and five pairs that were the same in three functions of personality.

It is also interesting to note that all four of the ESFJ/ESFJ pairs were very comfortable in every area of disclosure, as well as two of the three ESFJ/ISFJ pairs; however, all of the ESFJ/ENTJ pairs had mixed responses for the areas of disclosure. This seems to indicate that the pairing of certain personalities is related to a greater comfort level of disclosure within friendship.

Interestingly, a total of seven pairs in this study considered their friendship to be very intimate and were very comfortable in every area of disclosure. Out of these seven pairs, six of the pairs were identical on the extraversion personality function preference, with the remaining pair consisting of an extravert and an introvert. Out of the five introverted pairings in this study, only two considered their friendship to be very intimate, and none of the pairings were comfortable in every area of disclosure. This would seem to show that extraverted pairings have greater levels of intimacy and comfort level of disclosure than introverted pairings.

The findings of this study show a connection between Myers-Briggs personality characteristics being similar between friendship pairs, with pairs having the same preference in at least one area of personality function, and the majority of pairs having the same preference in many areas of personality function. This study also shows that the majority of friendship pairs consider their friendship to be either intimate or very intimate. Although the intimacy of the friendship did not seem to be related to personality type, friendship pairs with a length of friendship of 18 months or more consider their friendship to be very intimate more often than

pairs with shorter lengths of friendship. The findings of this study related to the comfort level of disclosure show that the majority of pairs are either very comfortable or comfortable in disclosing within the friendship, and there is limited evidence to suggest that specific personality pairings is related to the comfort level of disclosure.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

### **Limitations**

In this study data were collected from an online personality test because it was easily accessible and did not have a fee; however, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator would have been the ideal assessment tool in conducting this study if time and resources would have allowed. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is the primary research tool used in determining Myers-Briggs personality type and has been used in many research studies relating to business, education and counseling (Quenk, 2009, p. 175). Another limitation is that the friendship survey did not allow for participants to make comments or explanations that would have provided a greater understanding of their responses.

Participants for the study were recruited primarily from a private east coast university and included college students whose ages fell between 18–28 years old, which is a limited segment of the population and does not allow for analysis of longer term friendships. Also, as the friends that the surveys were completed with were chosen by the participants, the actual closeness of the friendship cannot be verified. There is no way to verify if friends who chose to take the survey together were really close friends, or merely chose to take the surveys together out of convenience.

This study also includes same gender as well as mixed gender pairs. While gender does not necessarily influence personality type, certain personality types are more common among specific genders because two thirds of women prefer the feeling function and two thirds of men prefer the thinking function. This was not controlled for in this study, resulting in an imbalance of feeling and thinking personality preferences. Moreover, only 14 of the possible 16 Myers-Briggs personality types are included in this study, with one third of participants being ESFJ

personality types. In order to draw strong conclusions about the dynamics between personality pairings, all personality types would need to be balanced in representation.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Myers-Briggs personality theory has many potential implications in the discipline of communication. Its unique understanding of personality allows for not only interpretation of an individual's external communication, but the internal processes that may motivate that communication. In attempting to conduct this study in the future, this researcher would recommend using the actual Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or recruiting participants who have previously taken the actual test. Although the Jung Typology test is based on Myers-Briggs personality theory, the test has not been used widely and thus limits the verifiability of results. Also in order to be able to generalize results, a larger sample size would be recommended, as well as participants from various age groups.

This researcher would also recommend conducting this study using a mixed methods research design in order to allow participants to expand on given responses. Despite the comprehensiveness of Myers-Briggs personality theory, it does not take into account character or individual background, both of which could prove useful in interpreting results. It would also be beneficial to ask questions relating to how much an individual has disclosed to the friend in the past, or if there is anything that an individual would not be comfortable self-disclosing and why. This information could then be analyzed for emerging themes and whether those themes had any relation to personality type.

Because personality function similarity seems to decrease in longer term friendships, it would be appealing to study Myers-Briggs personality theory and friendship using relational dialectics theory as a framework. Relational dialectics theory, developed by Leslie Baxter and

Barbara Montgomery, suggest that the needs of individuals create tension within relationships. The three tensions that they discuss are between connectedness and separateness, certainty and uncertainty, and openness and closedness (Griffin, 2003, p. 160). Specifically, the tension of connectedness and separateness involves opposing needs for intimacy and independence (Griffin, 2003, p. 161). The tension of certainty and uncertainty is based on the idea that although people want predictability in their relationships they also want to have an element of mystery and excitement (Griffin, 2003, p. 162). The amount of information a person shares or does not share is related to the tension of openness and closedness, and can vary according to an individual's changing perception of the relationship (Griffin, 2003, p. 162).

The use of this theory as a framework could form a basis to determine if there is a connection between the three tensions and specific functions of personality. For instance, could the tension of certainty and uncertainty be related to the sensing/intuitive function, or the tension of openness and closedness be related to the extraversion/introversion function of personality. This theory could possibly help explain the complementary nature of some friendships and would serve as a strong framework to study further the indication that personality similarity decreases in longer friendships.

To further understanding of communication problems between personality types, a study designed to examine how each personality type approaches problem-solving could help in pointing out specific areas of misunderstanding. In order to conduct this study, a researcher would need to find pairs who are alike on all preferences, pairs who are opposite on all preferences, and mixtures in between and give them the same problem to solve within a certain amount of time. The dialogue that takes place in attempts to solve the problem could be examined to see if similar pairings have similar success or difficulty.

To attempt to understand the perceptions that individuals have of friendship, a study asking individuals to recount past experiences within friendships could also provide potentially useful information. For example, researchers could ask individuals to recount an experience in which they were able to support a friend in a difficult time as well an experience in which they feel that they let a friend down, and the responses could be analyzed to determine if specific themes emerge using narrative analysis.

It would also be interesting to conduct a qualitative study related to friendships that have been terminated compared to friendships that have been maintained for long periods of time. Determining the reasons why friendships end or continue could also provide valuable information related to interpersonal relationship maintenance.

Based on the findings from this study that extraverted pairings are more likely to perceive intimacy and have a higher comfort level of disclosure within their friendships than introverted pairings, further research into the way extraverts and introverts communicate in interpersonal relationships could also prove beneficial. Although the preference for extraversion or introversion does not necessarily indicate that one or the other is more prone to share personal or revealing information, the tendency for extraverts to process verbally (Baron, 1995, p. 14) in contrast to the introverts' internalizing may have implications on the self-disclosure that takes place within their close relationships and is worth studying. Kroeger and Thuesen give an example of the difference in processing between the extravert and introvert:

A true blue Extravert can walk into the room, present a situation, ask for an opinion, arrive at his own conclusions, thank anyone who happens to be in the room, and walk out, while never interrupting his own thought process. Introverts are not only amazed (and sometimes amused) by such behavior, they often wonder whether the Extravert ever

really wanted an answer in the first place. An Introvert reverses the process- he works inwardly, explores a number of possible scenarios, reaches some kind of conclusion about them, and never says a word to anyone. Moreover, if confronted, he may even swear-in all good faith- he told the Extravert what he decided. The Introvert does this because, having rehearsed the issues so thoroughly inside his head, including imagining what the other person might have said in return, it seems clear to him that he has communicated his thoughts-without his actually ever having spoken a word on the subject” (1988, p. 39).

In regards to extraverted pairings having greater perceived intimacy, a study into the different ways that extraverts and introverts define intimacy within a friendship could provide information that would allow researchers to understand what extraverts and introverts value most in their relationships and is worth consideration.

### **Conclusion**

The key role of friendship in the lives of individuals should not be underestimated, and understanding the way in which personality type influences friendship is relevant to helping individuals develop mutually beneficial and fulfilling relationships. Altman and Taylor’s social penetration theory lists individual personality characteristics as one of the three central aspects that directly influences the development and maintenance of relationships. Myers-Briggs personality theory provides a way to understand personality that seeks to explain not only the outwardly observable behaviors but also the internal processes that lead to those behaviors. Self-disclosure within relationships is also central to relationship development; however, the inconsistencies within self-disclosure research led this researcher to consider instead the comfort level of disclosure of the individuals within the friendship.

In this study self-reported close friends were studied in pairs to determine if patterns exist between the Myers-Briggs personality characteristics of friends, as well as if these patterns impacted the perceived intimacy and comfort level of self-disclosure within the friendship. The results of this sample group show that there is a pattern of friends often sharing the same Myers-Briggs personality characteristics. These results also show that length of friendship is connected to perceived intimacy within friendship. The preference for the extraversion function of personality is shown to be related to pairs considering the friendship to be very intimate and being very comfortable in every area of disclosure.

The findings of this study provide a foundation that can be built on in future research and it is the hope of this researcher that recognizing the influence of Myers-Briggs personality characteristics within relationships will lead to more research considering Myers-Briggs personality theory beyond its psychological applications and focusing instead on the implications within the field of communication. The relationships that individuals develop are important not only in terms of each individual, but also in the way the individuals interact as a pair. Because of the tendencies discovered in this study it would be beneficial if in the future, Myers-Briggs personality theory is used in more scholarly research in the discipline of communication, allowing further discoveries to be made that can aid in helping individuals experience deep and lasting relationships.



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## Appendix A

Personality and Friendship Thesis Research

**Step one** Choose a friend who you are close to and is willing to complete the surveys with you

**Step two** Choose a code that will allow your responses to be identified as a pair. Both of you will enter the exact same code on Surveymonkey.com

Suggestions: Both of your initials and birthdays EBMH12181125

Middle names and birthdays AnnMarie12181125

**Step three** Go to [www.humanmetrics.com](http://www.humanmetrics.com) and complete the Jung typology test. Write down your results to enter on surveymonkey.com

Example: INFP, ESTJ

**Step four** Go to [www.advisorsteam.org](http://www.advisorsteam.org) and complete the Kiersey temperament sorter. Write down your results to enter on surveymonkey.com

Example: Idealist, Guardian, Rational, or Artisan

**Step five** Go to the following link and complete the survey about your friendship

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JNB75XB>

**Step six** Provide the code used to complete the survey to your instructor to receive extra credit.

## Appendix B

Questions from Jung typology test - [www.humanmetrics.com](http://www.humanmetrics.com)

All questions require a yes or no response.

1. You are almost never late for your appointments.
2. You like to be engaged in an active and fast-paced job.
3. You enjoy having a wide circle of acquaintances.
4. You feel involved when watching TV soaps.
5. You are usually the first to react to a sudden event: the telephone ringing or unexpected question.
6. You are more interested in a general idea than in the details of its realization.
7. You tend to be unbiased even if this might endanger your good relations with people.
8. Strict observance of the established rules is likely to prevent a good outcome.
9. It's difficult to get you excited.
10. It is in your nature to assume responsibility.
11. You often think about humankind and its destiny.
12. You believe the best decision is one that can be easily changed.
13. Objective criticism is always useful in any activity.
14. You prefer to act immediately rather than speculate about various options.
15. You trust reason rather than feelings.
16. You are inclined to rely more on improvisation than on careful planning.
17. You spend your leisure time actively socializing with a group of people, attending parties, shopping, etc.
18. You usually plan your actions in advance.
19. Your actions are frequently influenced by emotions.
20. You are a person somewhat reserved and distant in communication.
21. You know how to put every minute of your time to good purpose.
22. You readily help people while asking nothing in return.
23. You often contemplate about the complexity of life.
24. After prolonged socializing you feel you need to get away and be alone.

25. You often do jobs in a hurry.
26. You easily see the general principle behind specific occurrences.
27. You frequently and easily express your feelings and emotions.
28. You find it difficult to speak loudly.
29. You get bored if you have to read theoretical books.
30. You tend to sympathize with other people.
31. You value justice higher than mercy.
32. You rapidly get involved in social life at a new workplace.
33. The more people with whom you speak, the better you feel.
34. You tend to rely on your experience rather than on theoretical alternatives.
35. You like to keep a check on how things are progressing.
36. You easily empathize with the concerns of other people.
37. Often you prefer to read a book than go to a party.
38. You enjoy being at the center of events in which other people are directly involved.
39. You are more inclined to experiment than to follow familiar approaches.
40. You avoid being bound by obligations.
41. You are strongly touched by the stories about people's troubles.
42. Deadlines seem to you to be of relative, rather than absolute, importance.
43. You prefer to isolate yourself from outside noises.
44. It's essential for you to try things with your own hands.
45. You think that almost everything can be analyzed.
46. You do your best to complete a task on time.
47. You take pleasure in putting things in order.
48. You feel at ease in a crowd.
49. You have good control over your desires and temptations.
50. You easily understand new theoretical principles.
51. The process of searching for solution is more important to you than the solution itself.
52. You usually place yourself nearer to the side than in the center of the room.
53. When solving a problem you would rather follow a familiar approach than seek a new one.
54. You try to stand firmly by your principles.

55. A thirst for adventure is close to your heart.
56. You prefer meeting in small groups to interaction with lots of people.
57. When considering a situation you pay more attention to the current situation and less to a possible sequence of events.
58. You consider the scientific approach to be the best.
59. You find it difficult to talk about your feelings.
60. You often spend time thinking of how things could be improved.
61. Your decisions are based more on the feelings of a moment than on the careful planning.
62. You prefer to spend your leisure time alone or relaxing in a tranquil family atmosphere.
63. You feel more comfortable sticking to conventional ways.
64. You are easily affected by strong emotions.
65. You are always looking for opportunities.
66. Your desk, workbench etc. is usually neat and orderly.
67. As a rule, current preoccupations worry you more than your future plans.
68. You get pleasure from solitary walks.
69. It is easy for you to communicate in social situations.
70. You are consistent in your habits.
71. You willingly involve yourself in matters which engage your sympathies.
72. You easily perceive various ways in which events could develop.



## Appendix C

**Friendship Survey**

## 1. Assessment Results

Code between you and friend

Personality type as given by humanmetrics.com

## 2. Background Information

Age

Gender

Length of Friendship

## 3. Number of times you communicate in person or on the phone per week with your identified friend.

1-3 times per week

4-6 times per week

7-9 times per week

10 times or more

## 4. How comfortable do you feel discussing the following concerns with your identified friend?

Very Comfortable   Comfortable   Neutral   Uncomfortable   Very Uncomfortable

Romantic Concerns

Personal Problems

Goals and Aspirations

Past Traumatic Experiences

Spiritual Concerns

Everyday Concerns

## 5. How intimate do you consider your relationship to be?

Very Intimate   Intimate   Neutral   Distant   Very Distant