



How To Know A Person

Chapter 13

Personality: What Energy Do You Bring into the Room?

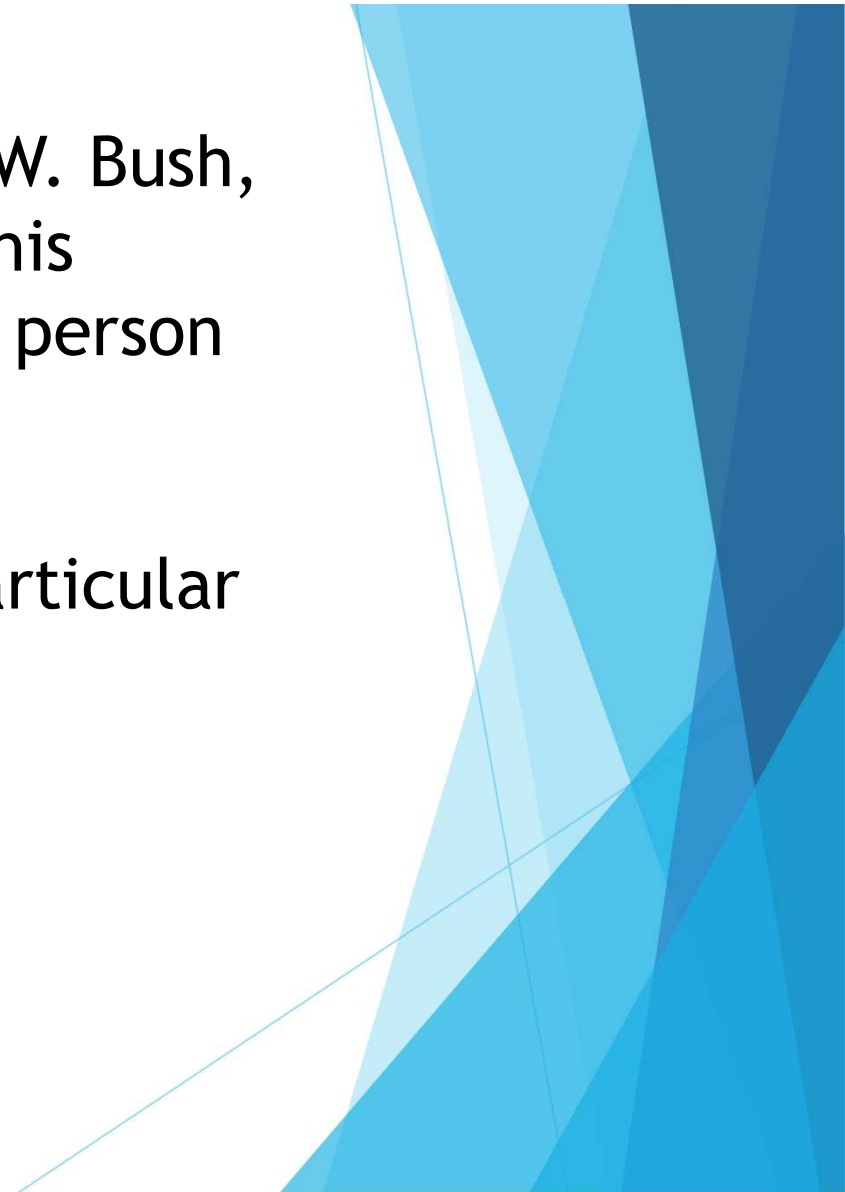
George W. Bush: an extreme extrovert

- ▶ Class clown
- ▶ Ability to eliminate within seconds any distance between him and another person
- ▶ Hugger
- ▶ Called people nicknames
- ▶ Treats everyone with familiarity
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- ▶ **BUT...**
- ▶ He was low on curiosity
- ▶ Didn't pay attention to historic events
- ▶ Read, studied situations little
- ▶ Rarely tried on alternative perspectives = Iraq War according to one psychologist



“If you want to understand George W. Bush, you have to know something about his personality. And that goes for every person you meet.”

Need “to be able to describe the particular energy they bring into the room.”



Society has a wide variety of personality types

- ▶ Why?
 - ▶ It helps society deal with different needs:
 - ▶ Leaders
 - ▶ Organizers
 - ▶ Inventors
 - ▶ Those who warn of danger
 - ▶ People to care for sick and ill
-
- ▶ “EVERY PERSONALITY TRAIT IS A GIFT - IT ENABLES ITS BEARER TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY IN SOME VALUABLE WAY.” (177)

1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

- ▶ “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.”





How do you assess personality?

The Myers-Briggs test?
It has proven flaws...



The Big Five traits - a more reliable, well-researched assessment

Extroversion

Conscientiousness

Neuroticism

Agreeableness

Openness



EXTROVERSION

- ▶ Drawn to positive emotions
- ▶ Excited by chance to experience pleasure, to seek thrills, to win social approval
- ▶ Motivated by the lure of rewards more than fear of punishment
- ▶ Tend to dive into most situations looking for what goodies can be had
- ▶ Warm, gregarious, excitement seekers
- ▶ More sociable than retiring
- ▶ More fun-loving than sober
- ▶ More affectionate than reserved
- ▶ More spontaneous than inhibited
- ▶ More talkative than quiet



Extroversion, according to Brooks, is generally a good trait to have but...

Studies show disadvantages as well.

May be quick to anger

More likely to abuse alcohol in adolescence

Less likely to save for retirement

Live lives as a high-reward/high-risk exercise



CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

- ▶ These are the people you want running your organization
- ▶ Excellent impulse control
- ▶ Disciplined
- ▶ Persevering
- ▶ Organized
- ▶ Self-regulating
- ▶ Ability to focus on long-term goals and not get distracted
- ▶ Less likely to procrastinate
- ▶ Tend to be perfectionists
- ▶ High achievement motivation
- ▶ Stick to fitness routines



Conscientiousness has a downside too...

Feel more guilt

Prefer predictable environments to anything
that requires fluid adaptation

Can be workaholics

Can have an obsessive-compulsive quality



NEUROTICISM

- ▶ Respond powerfully to negative emotions
- ▶ Feel fear, anxiety, shame, disgust, and sadness very quickly and acutely
- ▶ Sensitive to potential threats
- ▶ More likely to worry than be calm
- ▶ More highly strung than laid-back
- ▶ More vulnerable than resilient
- ▶ More emotional ups and downs - even over the course of a day
- ▶ Quick to see threats and negative emotions
- ▶ Interpret events more negatively
- ▶ The world is a dangerous place
- ▶ Higher rates of depression, eating disorders, stress disorders
- ▶ Go to the doctor more often
- ▶ Have a lot of negative emotions about themselves and think they deserve what they get.



But neuroticism has an upside...

The prophet who spots danger early
on in a community

Calls for society to change

“In a world in which most people are overconfident about their abilities and overly optimistic about the outcomes of their behavior, there’s a benefit in having some people who lean the other way.” (183)



AGREEABLENESS

- ▶ Good at getting along with others
- ▶ Compassionate, considerate, helpful, and accommodating toward others
- ▶ Trusting, cooperative, kind, good-natured, soft-hearted, polite
- ▶ Forgiving more than vengeful
- ▶ Naturally prone to paying attention to what's going on in other people's minds
- ▶ High emotional intelligence

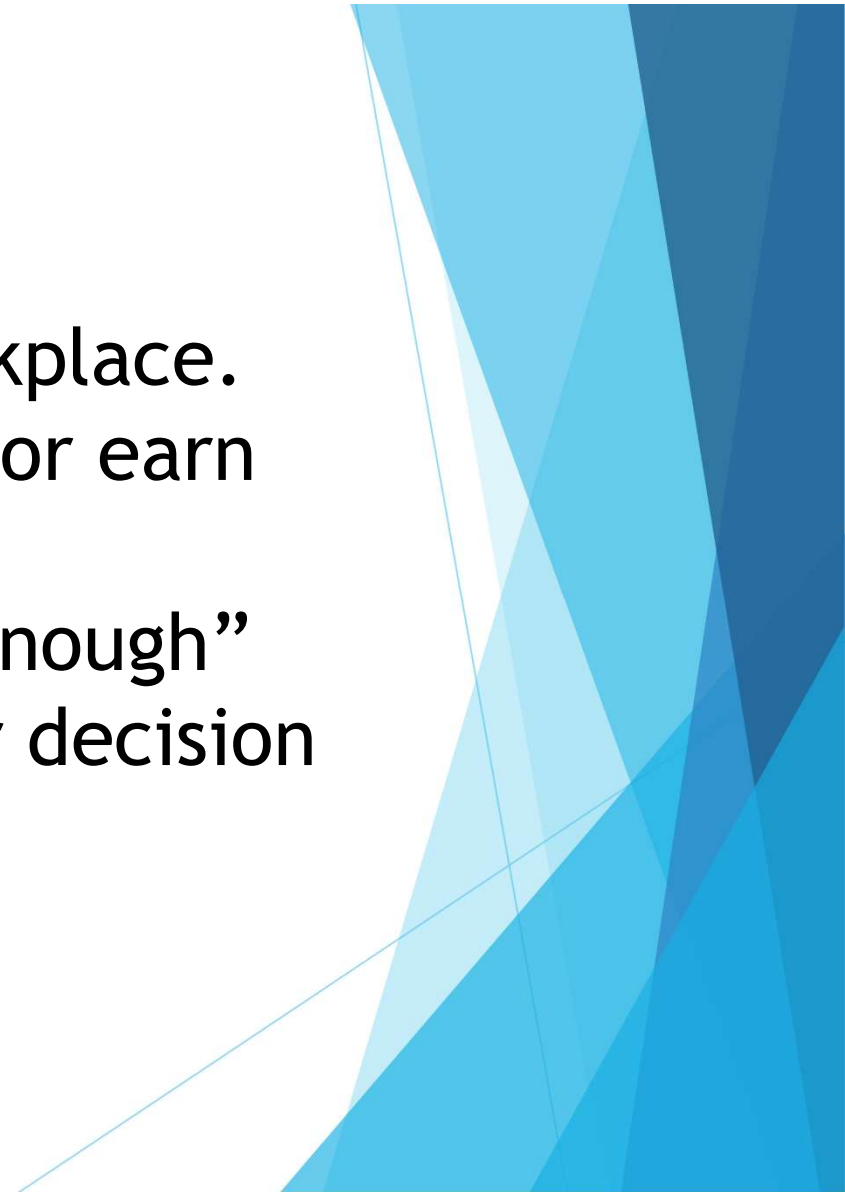


But agreeableness can have a downside...

Can be a mixed trait in the workplace.

May not get the big promotions or earn more money

May not be considered “tough enough” or unable to make an unpopular decision



OPENNESS

- ▶ Describes a person's relationship to information
- ▶ Motivated to have new experiences and try on new ideas
- ▶ More innovative, imaginative, curious
- ▶ Don't imposed a predetermined ideology on the world
- ▶ Enjoy exploring ideas, subjects, personas
- ▶ Artists, poets are “quintessential practitioners of openness” (185)
- ▶ Report having more transcendent spiritual experiences and more paranormal beliefs
- ▶ Appreciate a wide array of artistic forms - especially something new



David Bowie

The downside to openness:
Can't stand to be bored
Anything moderately familiar may be boring

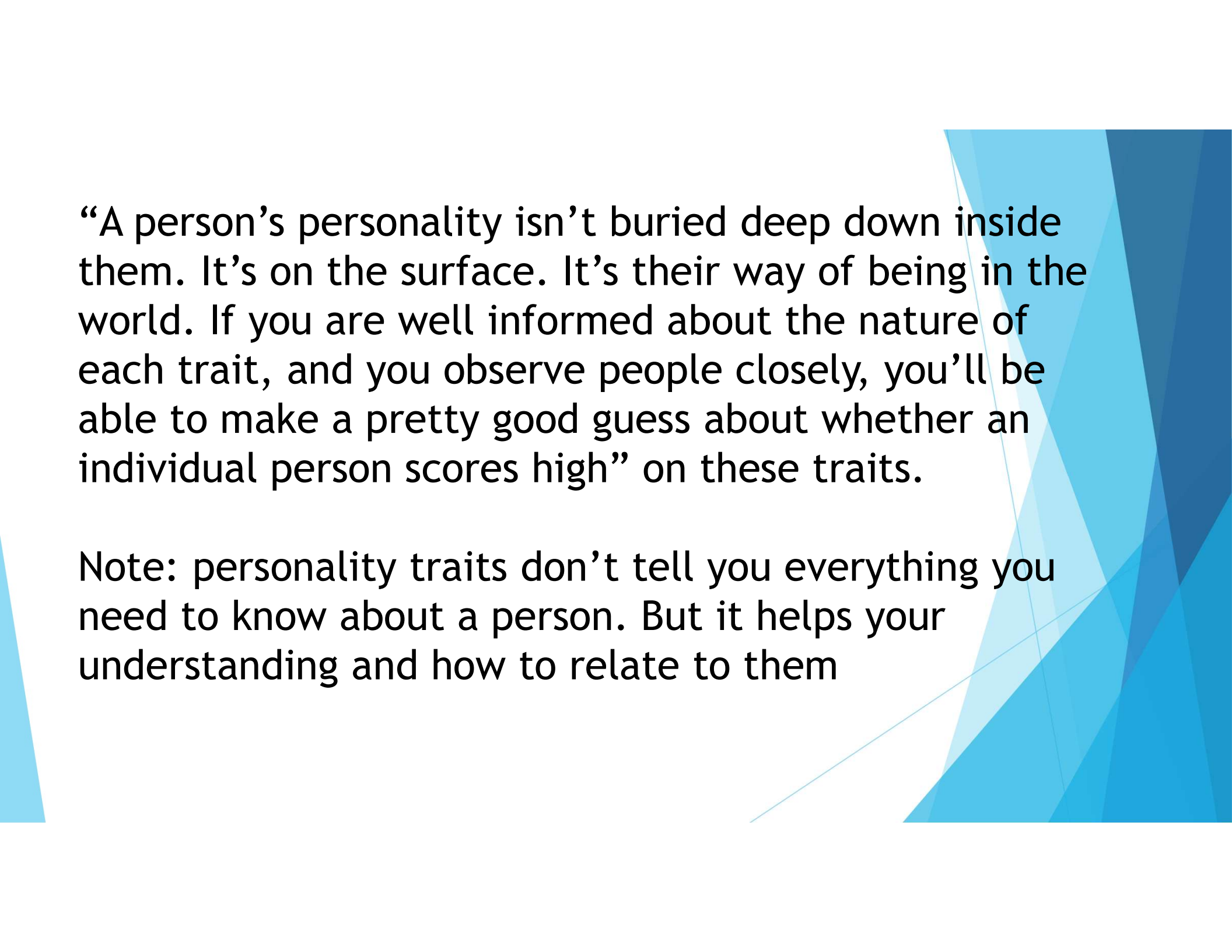


The Big Five Traits

Anyone's ratings may change as you pass through different stages of life

People get more open as they enter young adulthood and find different life opportunities

Those who retire early often become more open to new experiences - travel, gardening, carpentry, art...

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“A person’s personality isn’t buried deep down inside them. It’s on the surface. It’s their way of being in the world. If you are well informed about the nature of each trait, and you observe people closely, you’ll be able to make a pretty good guess about whether an individual person scores high” on these traits.

Note: personality traits don’t tell you everything you need to know about a person. But it helps your understanding and how to relate to them

“Personality traits are not only gifts, they are gifts you can build over your lifetime.”

New research indicates that some traits can be modified and, in general, “people get better as they age.” (189)



Me: Conscientiousness + openness +
menopause. Evolving through the
years...

How about you?

