Appendix IV

Three Myers-Briggs Personality Types

Hail Fella, Well Met!

This fellow is forty-five years old and a successful executive, who may have founded his own real estate development company. He is worth two million dollars. He is a big, booming, macho-type (he hunts ducks and uses irons only playing golf), he is a joiner of all sorts of clubs, and he enthusiastically chairs the annual Boy Scouts “Elder Pathfinders Last Campsite” Retirement Home appeal.

He is married to a florid, blonde, bosomy mate of two score years (the duration of their marriage, not her age) (she is a closet drinker, but that’s beside the point), and they have three children, two strapping sons who are the image of their daddy, and a brainy, beautiful daughter who is the image of her mother (when her mother could be said to possess any image of her own, having over the years become a kind of female extension of her spouse). The whole family attends church every Sunday, sitting at a pew he fully paid for ten years before he was able to tear up the mortgage on his first house. They play tennis. They jog. They vote whatever can be identified as the moderate ballot. They chew granola. They subscribe to the New Yorker and, daringly, the Village Voice, and they are in innumerable other ways obnoxiously comme il faut.

If one identifies with this character type; or if one’s physique, looks, and platform attitude correspond to this type; or if the audience perceives of one as hewing to this type; herewith (1) the strengths, (2) the weaknesses, and (3) what one should work on.

Strengths

This man (or his female equivalent) steps up smartly to the platform and takes command of the lectern with confidence and some polish. Assumes good stance, good posture, shoulders thrown back slightly, head thrown back from the fulcrum of the neck, and chin raised slightly above the plane of the audience’s heads. He is the personification of an American Success story,
which consciousness radiates from him to the audience. Opens with a pleasant, often cheery, smile, and exudes the impression of being supremely assured that the audience will be interested in what he has to say. The voice is strong and clear; square molars crack his jokes right to the kernel. If he wears glasses, especially bifocals, he tends to peer out at the audience through the lower halves of the lenses. His eye contact is generally as warm and personal as his virile handclasp. It does not occur to him that an audience will find serious difficulty with whatever opinions he expresses, which lends to his pitches a plausibility greater than is perhaps merited, but he steps down from the platform almost invariably satisfied that he has instilled into the audience a packet of good sense for which they are properly grateful.

Weaknesses

This character type tends to assume too much on his (or her) public standing. Audiences are not necessarily hostile, but almost all sit there waiting to be shown. There will be people who are not impressed and not charmed, who react antagonistically to anyone so sure of himself. A certain arrogance—maybe not real, maybe imaginary on the part of the audience—is conveyed, which is reenforced by that strong confident voice, by the (slightly condescending? slightly insincere?) smile, by the hearty jokes and manner. The speaker tends to self-satisfaction, and to be enamored of his platform self, talking too long or belaboring obvious points. He speaks in a single (loud) key that becomes a kind of high-decibel monotone. His C.-of-C. optimism wears, and finally the pith of what he is saying gets lost. Upon reflection, audiences conclude: the speaker is not altogether to be trusted, the speaker is platitudinous, the speaker is a bore, the speaker condescends, the speaker is superficial, the speaker is running for some office.

Deficiencies and Opportunities

This character or personality type should watch out for the big hype impression. His success as an executive or professional in a given career field, he must ever keep in mind, does not necessarily translate to other matters. He must climb right down from the high horse. He comes across too big. He may be used to getting his way, and having other people harken respectfully to the least indication of his will, but on the platform he must tone down the absolute trust in his own judgment that serves him so well in his business, must temper his forcefulness, must compel himself to do some hard thinking not only in the preparation of his speech but on the floor itself, in order to eliminate the glabrous impression. He must be careful to arrange the content of his speech so that he builds evidently (to the audience) from lesser points to points of greater importance and significance, seeking (either from the resources of his own mind, or from reading and carefully pondering the words of eminent thinkers on the subject of his address) the unusual perception or original insight with which to climax his address. (This will surprise the audience, even unto murmuring among themselves: hey, this guy is a lot deeper than we woulda believed!)
This speaker need not fear that he lacks stage presence, nor that his voice may suffer for conviction. He should turn his attention to moderating tone and attitude, keeping careful watch against any trace of condescension or arrogance. He must never make the mistake of attempting to play Hamlet on the stage: this interiorly inquiring attitude will not suit him. On the other hand, he should check himself from assuming that whatever he says is self-evidently correct. If he is good at humor, that which is self-deprecating becomes him.

The Sensitive Neurotic

This woman is thirty-five years old and looks as though she just lost her job, her lover, her husband, her car keys, her Tums, and her Bi-Lo Char jwt-Card all at one fell swoop. A body might imagine of her that were she one-handed she would shut the door of her car on the good hand in the parking lot of a Los Angeles shopping center the morning of New Year's Day. Her presence reeks of the impression of desperately desiring some hole into which to crawl and hide. She is plain. (Her male counterpart continues to erupt in adolescent spots.) She is too young to show the symptoms of osteoporosis, but she stoops terribly just the same, hunching her narrow shoulders toward each other, not because she is big-breasted (she is the reverse), but because she feels she deserves to be deprecated, insulted, or actually struck by any total stranger, and is almost certain that she will be. (Her male counterpart is pigeon-breasted, also narrow-shouldered, prematurely balding, prone to dandruff, and habitually wears a worried frown, regarding the other males in the office with trepidation when not fear.)

She possesses a laser-sharp mind, but one would never know it, anxiety having seared on her features and possessed her psyche with such force of habit that she can actually seem retarded, her replies to simple questions come so hesitantly, so apologetically, and are so slow in issuing forth. She is miserably conscious that she provokes the greatest impatience in her contacts with fellow human beings, a kind of pitying contempt from men who can boast one quarter her perceptions, merciless contempt from good-looking women with a quarter her brains. By dint of midnight labor she has risen in her company to Board status—not as a manager, needless to say, but in a consultant capacity; her written reports are as though drafted by another person, but she is mortified by her ineptitude in phrasing what she wants to say, or articulating and defending her point of view, and when she opens her mouth no one can find the experience more painful than she.

Strengths

From a forensic point of view, this person (along with her male equivalent) is a hard case. This speaker must concentrate on content, relying upon the intelligence of what she has to say to carry her. Mind is her principal strength. From it she must develop a platform personality that with practice grows in confidence.

There is something else for her to exploit, if she can bring herself to do it:
the sensitivity to suffering that her intimate personal experience potentially has taught her. Not every shy, sensitive, introverted person learns to extrapolate from his or her experience with suffering: major effort must be bent on eliminating morbidity, and thus the cocoon-prison of total engrossment with self, which can prevent anyone from profiting from one’s experience. This person must cultivate both qualities, keen intelligence and tender feeling: speaking humbly to the audience out of her own awareness of inadequacy, but very directly to each individual in that audience, conveying in the most intimate fashion her personal distress, or commitment, which will mitigate that perception of inadequacy (in herself as well as respecting others) and enlist the audience’s sympathy; complementing that fine sensibility with the superior intellectual faculties of her mind, subjecting her arguments to its critique, so that the content of her speech is flensed of any trace of sentimentality.

Weaknesses

Oh, they are legion! Her posture on the platform will be dreadful. She will stoop. She will clout the lectern as the capsized sailor clutches an orange crate. Her voice will be tremulous, falling sometimes to a whisper, with many glottal stops. Her eyeballs will jump about like Mexican beans in a heated pan, never fastening on anyone, her gaze fleeing to the rafters. Her expression of purest misery will incite in the mercifully-minded the desire actually to put her out of it—to commit on her some kind of forensic euthanasia, maybe by pulling the plug out of the public address system, or shorting the lights—and in the sadistically inclined the desire to crush her like a bug. Any statement she makes will invite contradiction; not even hard facts, tumbling from her lips, will command the conviction of their indubitable existence. (Her attitude invites these responses, understand.) She will flounder desperately through her talk, not so much terminating as, at the end, or what passes for an end, collapsing. Yet would she be a public speaker!

Deficiencies and Opportunities

To put it mildly, this lady (or gent) needs help, and some of it may have to be sought from a psychologist, depending on how profoundly rooted the trauma has become. Saving that recourse, some elementary steps can be taken. This person must make the conscious effort to cultivate her (or his) confidence by first cultivating both the attitudes of, and a real basis for, confidence. She must (shades of Dale Carnegie!) train herself to wake up in the morning and think, God-damnit to Hell, I am Somebody, and that Somebody I am ain’t half bad! She isn’t deceiving herself, remember. She has a basis: that good mind. She has to earn for it the respect it deserves by herself according it respect. Her market analyses are pretty good, after all—if she says so herself. Didn’t she first spot the weakness in the sales potential of that new skin lotion, though she got no credit for it? Even though somehow she was unable to argue successfully for a scentless soap at the last meeting of
the market research staff, did not her written analysis of trends clearly call attention to this unexploited niche?—that ass Joe Ferguson putting her down, ridiculing her arguments as though they were without foundation, which somehow they came out sounding when she articulated them, becoming (as usual) flustered, though in their written form they were closely reasoned. Damnit, her analyses stood on their own. Upper management did recognize that, as her private file of letters of appreciation attested, though somehow the writers of those warm testimonies never offered to take her out to lunch, not even once. (She kept the letters in a manila folder at her Ninety-seventh Street apartment, tucked under the Yellow Pages tome of the Manhattan telephone directory; when she was feeling a little weepy, she embarrassed herself by pulling it out, poring over the contents.)

Her written professional work stood on its merits. And if this was so, why, the content of her speeches should be—easily ought to be—just as impeccably researched and cogently constructed, so what was there for her to fear about them? She need not be embarrassed by the content of her speech, by what she had to say and how, on paper, she said it. She simply had to keep in mind when rehearsing a talk that she should ruthlessly strike out the niggling little qualifications of fearful humility that creep in, instead trusting in the cogency of her thesis and expounding her arguments in a sequence of unflinching declarative sentences. Her written texts could stand on their own, could they not? Of course. Well, so can she stand on her own two feet! The same intelligence for which she need apologize to no one was the architect, and the same intuitions, deriving from her extreme sensitivity, acted on the arguments to illuminate them.

Come to think of it, that sensitivity of hers is an asset. It need not embarrass her, and she need not apologize for it. She brings perception to the evidence she derives from statistical tables. What did that old rascal Montaigne have to say about this? “In truth, knowledge is not so absolutely necessary as judgment; the last may make shift without the other, but the other never without this.” Sure: she possesses a gift that in itself is of rare value.

This is the way for a person of such a character type to go, building on active and latent strengths. She must never try to emulate Mr. Hail Fella, Well Met. She will never be naturally so smooth, nor naturally so self-assured. The traces of tentativeness and hesitancy may never desert her; she may never contain her blushes, nor master her shyness, nor fully conquer her suspicions of personal inadequacy, but she can profitably raise her self-esteem by recognizing what is truly estimable about herself, and her humility can be tremendously attractive to audiences, at once bringing them over on her side. Few such personalities—admittedly, not without a lot of help—are going to make it this far; but if this woman is able to convince her psyche (remember: she is not deceiving herself) of the objective reality of her strengths, then it is less difficult for her to extrapolate from her confidence in the written text to the “speaking situation.” She will find it easier always, true, to bang out a confident text (thanks to that good mind) than to acquire the ability of self-confidently delivering that text, but the first itself will
nonetheless aid her cultivate the second. As her proficiency in the written argument increases, so will her self-esteem, helping her take courage in the delivery.

Mental attitude necessarily comes first, but it can be reenforced by such physical matters as posture. To enhance her new frame of mind this character type must also practice before the mirror throwing her shoulders back, standing as tall as God gave her the inches, lifting her chin, and—thick and smeared though her trifocals be—forcefully gazing out on the (imagined) audience. A woman especially is advised to consult specialists in such matters as the most becoming hair style, make-up, and clothes; but let not the male of this personality type neglect consultations in this order. The right clothes, a new hair style (for the male maybe a toupee) can do wonders for the appearance and for inner serenity.

Attention must also be paid to the ring and clarity of the voice, using a tape recorder. She is now fully conscious that what she has to say is worthy of being heard; she must concentrate on doing her text justice by articulating the sentences in a fashion as lucidly clear as their sense. The lectern must no longer be something to clutch for survival, or to hide behind: it is her—this is the attitude she has to cultivate—bully pulpit. She deserves to occupy the lectern, possessing it as her own for twenty, thirty, forty minutes, because she by God has something worthwhile to say, and is standing there by right of merit. She therefore steps up to it familiarly, takes possession of it by tranquilly (she is never going to be that tranquil) placing her text on its surface and maybe adjusting its tilt or height, takes a half step back from it, drops her hands to her sides, comes to an easy, erect stance, and . . . we trust she will begin, not collapse in an epileptic seizure. (Nothing, Dale, in this valley of pain, is dead sure.)

Eeyore

Audiences dread this sad creature. He is the doleful, mournful soul, who climbs on the stage with weary step and shambles to the lectern with hands hanging lassitudinously from the wrists, shoulders slumped, eyes downcast. He is forty years old. He is dressed in black. If he were a she (as plenty are), never would some Spanish gallant say of her, “Who has died in Paradise, that the Virgin goes dressed in mourning?” Maybe he is an accountant on the staff of the Long Island Railroad. He is not an undertaker, because they are a cheerier breed. (Actually, he is a physicist.) Is that a text he is extracting from his jacket’s inside breast pocket? Oh, how it seems to weigh in his hand; oh, what a weight he lays on the lectern, and what distaste he seems to have for it himself. He has difficulty peering through his glasses, which he rubs between thumb and index finger. The lenses reflect greasy smears. He has difficulty seating his spectacles on the insufficient bridge of his long droopy nose, they keep sliding down perilously to the upper tip of the nostrils, his left hand lifting only just in time to nudge them back up that thin ridge, whence they at once recommence their downward slide. He hawks. He gargles. He goes “Huh,” and “Ahem,” and finally he croaks, “Good morn-
ing.” The morning has by now quite gone dull and gray. The audience prophetically suspects that the Law of Entropy will make the next thirty or forty-five minutes well-nigh unendurable. This is Ichabod. This is Enderby. (In female form, she is Hepzibah.) This person is that weight on the spirits that never lifts.

I almost neglected further to relate that this speaker has a set of heavy black eyebrows and (in the male version) wears a full (and very black) beard that almost entirely masks his features except for the red lips, the nose, and the luctual dark eyes.

**Strengths**

Are you kidding? Actually, there do exist exploitable virtues. Audiences tend to believe gloomy folk and gloomy prognoses. (One guesses from our experience in the human condition, though eco-freaks should make note that audiences soon lose patience with professional doomsayers.) The melancholy temperament is attractive to us; it can be romantic; we tend to assume that anyone who has evidently suffered, or who appears to bear the scars of suffering, has gained in wisdom, has cast off foolish illusions. (Actually, damn fools persist in being damn fools all their lives long, but this is beside the point.)

**Weaknesses**

The audience is depressed by the speaker, whose doleful looks and voice put it to sleep. Further, the audience can scarcely make out the features of the speaker behind bushy black eyebrows and the black barricade of beard, not to speak of any welcome variation in his expression.

**Deficiencies and Opportunities**

A person of this character type must make a conscious effort to gladden his appearance, put bounce into his step, pep up his voice, and in general imbue his entire being with energy. This speaker really must dig for that first species of temperament—the nervous temperament—we have been talking about. He must develop a sense of urgency about what he is saying, which not only communicates itself to the audience but which instills his own person with a sorely needed kind of nervous apprehension. The subject for such a speaker can never be bland: it has to matter. If he is blessed with a sense of humor (such personality types often are, possibly because they play the Mercutio in their own gardens), he should capitalize on it for wry, mordant commentaries. But he must be vigilant against his temperamental laziness, which will undo him. He must look himself in the mirror with an attitude more constructive than the dissatisfaction most of us experience when we first get up to greet the grisly morning, made more grisly by the sight of our unkempt, unwashed, untoothbrushed visages as we film the very surface of the bathroom mirror with our matinal halitosis. We wipe conscious sight of ourselves out of our minds as we plunge into our ablutions, but the
speaker of this character type must practice making faces at himself, by turns (though the exercises will pain him) gay, comic, eager, hopeful, optimistic—compelling his facial muscles into these, for him, unnatural contortions (he will look to himself as though he is grimacing absurdly) until the muscles are actually sore. He must nevertheless persist: every morning, until his cheeks feel stretched to the point of cracking. (One might prescribe that he Lear at himself, might one?) (Moan. Groan.)

Using a tape recorder, he must also consciously—self-consciously—force expression into his tone of voice, practicing a passage from any text over and over again until the appropriate modulations in tone of voice resound in his own ears as less and less forced. This person will never come off like a Willard Scott, whose effervescent exuberance was made in Heaven. But it is within the possibilities for him to teach himself to sound a little like William Cosby. That wry, semi-cynicism (graced always by transparent goodness of heart), is the platform personality to strive for.

None of this will avail if he remains in the chronically hirsute state. This speaker must either rid himself of his beard or trim it away from the lips and down the cheeks as far as he can bring himself to do so. It is commonplace to remark that a heavily-bearded man resembles a bear. That’s because he, like the bear, is immutable in expression. The bear is feared by animal trainers more than the big felines because the beast lacks those thousands of tiny subcutaneous nerves and muscles that alter expression: the lion will look bad tempered; when the bear attacks, it is without warning. Much of the expressiveness of the human face resides in the zygomatic cheek muscles and below—in the lips, near the lips, at and around the chin. A bearded speaker, especially if the beard be dark brown or black, has an almost insuperable task in attempting to convey to the audience whatever expressiveness he is able to endow his face with, other than the stern or gloomy expressions that come naturally to the bushy state. He can lift his eyebrows in surprise, or in quizzical alarm, but there is not much else he can do there either if he permits his brows to grow so thick that they obscure the audience’s vision of the eyes and brow. (When spectacled, such men typically compound matters by wearing thick black or tortoise-shell frames.) (The woman whose face tends to disappear into her hairdo—heavy bangs, the cape buffalo look—has similar problems.) A speaker, unless he is Vincent Price, or Mephistopheles, is at an advantage clean-shaven. (See Chapter 10.)