

Presents for (not quite) all

This is a fun exercise, based on Myers-Briggs Company research into type and email preferences that helps create a conversation about email communication.

The exercise focuses on the process pair of T and F. This process pair is particularly useful when exploring communication between the different MBTI® personality types.

Applications

- Communication
- Email

Type preferences studied

- Thinking and Feeling

Time required

- 30 minutes

Materials required

- Packages for approximately 75% of the participants. Each package should contain something that can be shared (e.g. a bag of sweets, a bunch of grapes, a pad of sticky notes etc.). Wrap each package attractively.
- Write the following instructions on two sheets of paper:

These packages contain presents for you. They are yours to keep. Sorry there are not enough to go around. I know you will figure something out.

Instructions

- Work out how many Thinking and how many Feeling types there are in the group. For this exercise each T and F group will work together, and will need a syndicate room or area to work in. Put the instructions and packages in these areas – make sure that you do not set out enough packages for the people in each group.
- Divide the group into Thinking and Feeling types. Tell them that their instructions are in their designated working area. Ask for one person to record what is said in the group.
- Allow participants about 10 minutes to work on the task and then ask them to reassemble to talk about what happened in each group, and explore the differences between the groups for 5–10 minutes.

Debrief

- Feeling types often express some anxiety about the exercise since they want to protect everyone's feelings and allow everyone to have a voice. They typically take a long time to open the packages and can find it difficult deciding how the presents will be divided/awarded. They generally want to reach a true consensus before they open the packages. Often they spend all their time discussing these issues and working to ensure that everyone feels included and the group is harmonious.
- Thinking types typically finish the task before the Feeling types. They usually decide to open the packages quickly so they can see what there is and decide logically how it might be split up. They rapidly come up with some criteria that most people can agree on, divide the presents and eat the sweets!