

changes achieve remarkable results lifts their own self-esteem in a new way.

A similar indicator exists which can be used with children of reading age seven and above to identify their emerging preferences. Its rather long title, the Murphy-Meisgeier Type Indicator for Children, is usually shortened to MMTIC. A 'European English' version is currently being validated for use in Britain. It seems that the personality preferences we can reliably indicate in adults begin to be determined by children as young as six or seven. Infant teachers notice that they have more difficulty identifying the type preferences of the children

they work with than teachers further up the school, which seems to bear out this belief. The use of this indicator as one part of the resource bank that teachers can call on could change the way in which achievement and learning are seen in schools, and help both teachers and children appreciate their own individual giftedness in a new light.

One teacher's comment at the end of a workshop sums up many people's discovery: 'It was interesting to learn that what I had regarded as my particular failings were probably characteristics of type — good for self-esteem.'

Further Reading

Alice M. Fairhurst, *Effective Teaching, Effective Learning*, Davies-Black Publishing, 1995

Elizabeth Murphy, *The Developing Child*, CPP Books, 1992

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and MBTI are trade marks of Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.

A Look Back into Childhood

Debbie Raymont

I always thought that I came from a really happy family. The youngest of four, with two older brothers and an older sister, I was the baby and consequently indulged to a degree. There's nothing from my childhood I could really point to that made my life hard. I did well at school and was an extremely good little girl. Perhaps that gives a clue to where my lack of self-esteem was fostered.

I was expected to be good and always do as I was told, without regard to what I was feeling or thinking or wanting. I enjoyed the praise I received, but what did it cost me then and now, to go against my own inclinations for the sake of love, affection, appreciation from another? I did it as a child to survive, but I'm still doing it now.

When they told me to be good I was,

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with all my strength. I was so good that even before reaching school age I would sit for over an hour at my Mum's Mothers Union meeting without anyone knowing I was there. Is it natural for a child to be so still? When they said 'don't be angry' I tried to hide my anger, only to have it explode later. It earned me the nickname 'Dynamite Deb'. They told me not to be sad, and then called me 'Cod Face' because I pouted. They told me not to be afraid, encouraging me to get up on the stage and sing in a pantomime, but at the same time gave warnings to watch out in the dark because people might attack me. I was taught not to take any initiative of my own but to ask permission first. Even food wasn't my own choice. I had a very small appetite. A boiled egg looked the size of a football to me. I could not understand how my Mum expected me to eat it, but eat it I must, all in the name of 'being good'. It was miserable. As I grew up my Mum never talked straight about sex, or love and marriage. She never told me about periods, it just happened one day. Each month it was a secret embarrassment which I tried to hide from everyone.

Something fundamental happened in my very early childhood, or maybe even before I was born, that made me unconsciously realise that I couldn't depend on unconditional love and support from my parents. Perhaps it was that I was a 'mistake' (a happy one of course) or that I got stuck being born, or that I cried so much

one day that my Mum wanted to throw me out of the window. Perhaps it was that my parents just didn't have enough of their own self-esteem, or love themselves enough, to be able to be there for me when I really needed them. Those feelings of having to rely on myself, not trust other people, feelings of fear and abandonment, set me up to feel very alone and to do anything to win my parents' love.

I'm sure my Mum loves me and did her best within a system that taught children not to think for themselves, not to know or go for what they want, that the world is a dangerous place and to do what other, stronger, 'wiser' people say. The message was that as a child you were 'worth less' than anyone else, especially adults. I wish that my parents could have held an attitude that directly and indirectly told me 'We love and support you just the way you are. You are a unique and precious individual.' I would have liked a great deal more support in having my feelings accepted and named so that I could recognise, understand and accept them myself; to have been encouraged in thinking and doing things for myself, not for approval. To have been praised for all my accomplishments, not only those my parents wanted or expected, and taught to accept praise from myself. I would like to have been shown the world as a positive place full of opportunities and love, and to know in myself that what ever happened in life I would be all right.

