

Typing others

Russ Hudson

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People often ask me about the ethics of **typing** other people, and I really appreciate it when we stop to consider the implications of this. For one thing, we may recognize that it is not easy to type ourselves, let alone others. The significant chances of being wrong about it ought to give us pause about offering a quick diagnosis of other people's personality--especially to them. My sense too is that when we are more certain we know who someone else is, we really might want to do some introspection in that moment. What are WE up to? What are we trying to prove? But I think even if we are correct, there is another problem. Originally, the task of self observation was central to inner work, and the effort to find the key elements of our personality structures develops a muscle of attention in us that does not otherwise develop. In other words, the search for our type can teach us new ways of seeing how we actually are, not as we wish or fear to be, and strengthens our ability to observe ourselves. **When we tell someone their type, we deprive them of that journey.** It is rather like recommending a great novel to a friend and then blurting out the ending. Sometimes friends or clients will ask us outright to "type" them, but here too, I think we are on much more solid ground if we initiate the person into the process of self observation by asking them questions to help them discriminate their core pattern themselves.