

## BAPT MIDLANDS GROUP

### “A POWERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH”

#### *Negotiating Mid Life Jungian Theory and MBTI®, a dialogue with Alex Volcansek*

#### Report by Penny Osborne (INTP)



*Penny Osborne is a self-employed change consultant who uses the MBTI® instrument as a tool for team building, professional development and leadership coaching in a variety of manufacturing settings, trains, planes and automobiles and others! Her recent work has involved supporting the turnaround, alongside some very capable engineers, of a failing factory in Germany; senior team development within a business unit supporting Jaguar Landrover, Nissan and Toyota in first tier supply and mediation in a complex financial arena. She believes the MBTI® liberates stuck thinking and can drive effective change through understanding self and others.*

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On 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 13 MBTI® enthusiasts gathered at Colmore Row, Birmingham. Our spirits were not dampened by the weather outside, (very heavy rain) but excited to be together to listen and engage with Alex Volcansek.

Alex, an independent occupational psychologist, who provides leadership and team development and one to one coaching, introduced herself. She had worked for Oxford Psychologists Press, Career Management Consultants, Personnel Decisions International, NSPCC, RBLI and CPAS. With 17 years of experience and 8 years serving the Church Pastoral Aid Society, she had coached 171 clergy to date.

We are a group of interested people with a wealth of MBTI® experiences, as trainers, coaches, and practitioners, working in a variety of settings. I guess all of us are very interested in midlife work; either because we have found ourselves there, or we are working with clients who are there!

We were reminded that in reality midlife transition can start as early as 35 years of age, and continue into our sixties. The age at which we experience the different stages of midlife varies across individuals. Alex listed how different people experience the beginnings of midlife in different ways; a gentle nudge; a tap on the shoulder; a full blown hunger or longing; a sledgehammer through the soul. It is often a time when our unmet emotional needs of

childhood rise up, or our disappointments with life or career, (unmet goals from adolescence), are sorely felt. States of disinterest, feeling unfulfilled or stale and bored, and of profound loss are all common. Midlife brings ‘a deep questioning’: Who are we really? What do we do with the time that we have left to us? Alex gathered our ideas about *external* life events that had ‘forced us to adapt to change ready or not’. This included death of a spouse, loss, retirement. She saw similarities with midlife transition, as it still ‘forces us to adapt to change ready or not’ but, by contrast, the change is an *internal* developing of the psyche that is much less apparent to us.

Alex explored the notion of the U, which when put on its side, presents a bend. Placed along the top part of the U sit the dominant and auxiliary functions and round the bend, on the underside, can be found the tertiary and the inferior or least preferred functions. We feel the bend as Separation, the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of midlife. Next is Liminality, where everything feels up in the air (a no man’s land, the wilderness). Here we have low energy and there is a sense that it is hard to make decisions.

This point, Alex suggested, was the time to tap into the personal unconscious and ‘risings’ from the shadow, where expressions of the tertiary and inferior functions can be found. The ‘fog’ of the wilderness clears as we distinguish between our Persona, our Ego, and our True Self. Here can be found individuation and integration, a

place to find understanding of our different parts, where we can synthesise and balance our opposites as we turn down the volume on the dominant function.

She suggested that the following might help in the process. For example, if you have Sensing as your dominant function, reflect on what role poetry or psychology, (or similar activities that are typically associated with using Intuition), have played for you at Midlife. New found sparks of energy and joy can be found using our inferior function.

Alex shared how using the tertiary function can be a gateway to accessing the inferior function, which can then generate a sense of “God given” experience.

At this point we were asked to share some of our experiences of this awareness and our mid life experience. As an INTP it was at this point that an emotional state rose up with a mighty Ah ha! My ESFJ partner told her story too with her own Ah ha’s. Our collective 40 years of MBTI® understanding took a giant leap forward and we both realised the potential of our new found awareness.

This event acted as a reminder to me, and maybe to all of us, that revisiting Jungian theory and its relationship with MBTI® is a very valuable activity. I, for one, am grateful for Alex to have shared her knowledge and experiences with us on that damp day in Birmingham.



Alex Volcansek

<p><b><u>Sensing</u></b></p> <p>Poetry</p> <p>Psychology</p>	<p><b><u>Intuition</u></b></p> <p>Money is real</p> <p>Lazer Quest</p>
<p><b><u>Thinking</u></b></p> <p>Intimacy</p> <p>What is ‘touching’</p>	<p><b><u>Feeling</u></b></p> <p>What I want for me</p> <p>Competence and questions</p>

## THE TYPE AND MOVIE BOOK

**By Peter Malone**

There is one copy of Peter’s book still available to purchase from BAPT at a discounted price of £15.00 plus p & p.

If you wish to buy this item then please contact Angelina Bennet at: [Angelina@ipotential.co.uk](mailto:Angelina@ipotential.co.uk).

Once this copy has gone, further copies may be obtained direct from the publisher at: Inkshed Press Pty. Ltd. – Email: [publisher@inkshed.com.au](mailto:publisher@inkshed.com.au) – they will be able to give you a price plus p & p from Australia to the UK.

A review of this book by BAPT member, Steve Price, appeared in the Summer issue of *TypeFace* which may be viewed on the BAPT web site.

