

BAPT CONFERENCE 2018: TRENDING: #TYPE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

12TH -14TH APRIL, 2018, KENTS HILL PARK, MILTON KEYNES

DIARY OF AN INFJ

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Thursday, 12th April

Driving into Milton Keynes on a damp, cold, grey-skied April day, I imagine it was tough for even the most enthusiastic BAPT member to draw comfort from the utilitarian purpose-built surrounds of Kent's Hill. As a self-confessed INFJ, I admit that the Digital Age does not naturally inspire me with notions of romance and hopefulness. Technological developments tend to bring out the Luddite in me, with a preference for secretly wanting to smash it all up rather than embracing its potential ... So it was with a darker, dystopian lens that I eyed the surprising collection of bashed up cars strewn casually to one side of the carpark. Perhaps it was this looming image that disrupted my already limited mental bandwidth, made me jittery about whether I had locked the car and consequently made it impossible to set up a useful mind map of where the Conference room was in relation to my bedroom. Each time forging a new path through uncharted corridors.

After being guided to the Conference by some of the very kind BAPT committee, who had clearly taken better note of the reality of their surroundings, things started to distinctly improve. Once arrived, Conference bagged and watered, I noticed that the Conference was bigger than last year, with a fantastic attendance of up to 72 people from 16 different countries, some familiar faces and some new. From the front of a full Conference room Susan Nash, the Programme Chair, welcomed us brightly into the start of what was to be a fascinating, thought-provoking and engaging few days. A short video-message from AusAPT's Joshua Knight in Australia, underscored the buzzing international feel present throughout the Conference.

Effortlessly starting us off with the Keynote Session: *Finding Focus in the Digital Age*, Jane Kise and Ann Holm propelled us straight into the consequences on our brains of our relationship with the digital world. We experienced first-hand the emotional strength of our relationship with our mobile devices when they asked us to swap mobiles with someone else and, devastatingly, leave it with them for the rest of the session. It was interesting to feel the shock and slight panic of handing this over. Someone commented "but it is more important than my passport!" It was a clever way to illuminate their points about habitual checking behaviour and how interrupted our ability to focus can get by these kind of behaviours.



Ann and Jane described how our brains have a finite amount of energy and we are most effective, engaged and productive if we have “fuelled” our brains with enough sleep, food and exercise. ‘Bandwidth’ relates to the space we have in our brain for thinking effectively, focussing, making choices, patience and managing emotional reactivity. The more bandwidth we have the better; their Brain Energy and Bandwidth Quiz enables them to get a measure of how much bandwidth space is available. They discussed with a case study how this has led to extremely powerful conversations when people are coming out in the lower bandwidth levels where decisions, emotional intelligence and productivity are detrimentally affected. Businesses sit up and listen when they have data demonstrating how much their employees are disengaged and unproductive. The good news is there are practical and simple changes that people can make to increase their bandwidth.



It was interesting to consider that the jumpy-brained, failure to focus that I frequently experience was potentially a reaction to the constant thought interruptions of pings and dings that clamour for attention. Maybe I am not alone in the fact that I have not been able to focus on reading a book for pleasure for the last few years which, by the way, is tantamount to putting yourself in prison for an INFJ. According to the research, there is some evidence that Es, Ns, Ts and Js are generally better at generating broader bandwidth through ‘fuelling’, making their time work well for them and filtering out the amount of possibilities. It was sobering, however, to recognise that we are all so caught up in the pressure and erroneous expectation that ‘always on’ means being more productive. A

huge takeaway from the whole Conference for me was around making the small but significant change to protect workfocus-time by only checking messages and emails at set times.

After a particularly appreciated break, it was on to hear Mette Babitzkow Boje and Torsten Laursen, explore whether we need to adapt to the digital age or whether it should adapt to us. They created a space that allowed us a calm arena in which to explore and share ideas and thoughts together: a perfect demonstration of the ‘Get-Things-Going’ interaction style. There was a particular focus on what our Type preferences need for learning in a virtual or real-world environment. Some interesting points arose from their data. Whilst people with a preference for Extraversion liked virtual meetings more than people with a preference for Introversion, the latter actually do more of them. It was debated whether in fact Introverts are self-selecting into roles that do more virtual working. However, no matter the type, there is a general preference across the board for learning through real-life interaction.



In a parallel session, Teresa Moon was promoting the positives of having a Perceiving preference in “Sorry I’m late, but I’m a P!”. She shared her secret Scale of Acceptable Lateness which ranged from things you always needed to be early for, such as funerals and court appearances to the other extreme of things you could always be late for, such as the cinema and music gigs. Teresa called on the Ps to move beyond apologising and see the playfulness, flexibility, adaptability as valuable, especially in this digital changing world. Meanwhile, Susan Nash explained, with her extraordinary clarity, the core drivers and stress responses for each of

the four temperaments. She shared a variety of activities that practitioners could tailor to different learning objectives. It was engaging and useful with lots of practical ways to help clients recognise their temperament and understand the others.





Delegates emerged from these sessions buzzing with conversation. After the afternoon tea break it was on to the last sessions of the day. It was as ever a tough choice, but I plumped for *Images of Resilience*. Robin Hills explored what resilience is and shared the good news that it is Type neutral. One of the most powerful questions he posed was to reflect on what we do and don't share with others about our lives. Discussion around this was very interesting and revealing. He also let us have a go with his Pictures Exercise, a coaching tool with 16 different cartoon images that people can use to discover their own real stories of resilience. On our table there was a mixed response to the pictures but, through letting the discussion run, there was no doubting that they led to in-depth insights.



I found this session to be a great buffer from the general sense of overwhelm that I can get around technology and the digital age. A sort of low level panic that I am lagging behind and a bit lost. Robin had a really positive approach and suggested that as I have made it here today, fully clothed, wearing my glasses and not dragged through a hedge backwards I must be resilient in some ways. Rays of hope filtered in through the dark dystopian trees of my mind.

It is not possible to see every session, but one of my Conference regrets was not getting to hear the eloquent Rob Toomey discuss *AI, Big Data and the World of Type*. He explored the consequences of big companies' ability to use our personal data to create personality profiles and use them for various purposes. In the context of the recent Cambridge Analytica scandal this made the session even more pertinent. Another highlight were the interesting discussions around the finding that there are particular health-risk behaviours, such as smoking, associated with personality type.



In parallel, Jack Aaron, founder of the World Socionics Society on Facebook introduced delegates to Socionics, which is what he describes as "MBTI's Big Eastern Cousin" a session which provoked a fair amount of comment and debate.

After a thought provoking afternoon and early evening, there was dinner and drinks in the bar to chat, catch up and reflect on the day. It was civilized, but merry with a welcoming, accepting feel. A great first day.



Friday, 13th April



Mostly unperturbed by the date ... BAPT delegates were eager and ready to hear the day's Keynote speech, *Dystopia or Utopia – You Decide*, with OPP's Head of Thought Leadership John Hackston and Head of Technology, David Hunt. It was a fabulously energetic and playful session with one of the key questions focused on whether the digital revolution has changed who we are, in terms of personality. In the style of the game show, *Play Your Cards Right*, John Hackston effortlessly embodied the late Bruce Forsyth, demanding "Higher?" or "Lower?" as to whether the frequency of Types had increased or decreased over the last 10 years. From the OPP Assessment platform, it appears that SJs have increased and NTs decreased. As we are now all too aware, we "get things for free in trade for our privacy" and John showed us the 'personality' that Facebook had created about him based on his posts. He revealed that his digital footprint was a youthful "29 ... and the epitome of femininity". That is the John we know! I was quietly relieved at this lack of accuracy. Humans still rule, phew.



More seriously, they outlined the increase in Artificial Intelligence with robots doing more and more human things and, with this increase in automation, suggested that the conditions are set for the fourth Industrial Revolution. John and David sketched the two alternative futures, Utopia where things are "faster, easier, better" or Dystopia "society deeply divided between the haves and have nots ... living under a robot overlord who ignores us". The audience, whilst split, seemed more heavily weighted towards a bright future. I was left feeling John had not fully appreciated the true darkness of our impending dystopia but, in general, the BAPT audience were clearly more buoyant in attitude.

After that, I needed a bit of calm ESTJ sense of safety and capability, so I wandered into Sue Blair's session on Archetypes. Before she had even started I gained a sense of serenity just from looking at her neatly prepared, colour coded hand out pile. This was the session for me. It is a rare opportunity to have the complex Beebe Archetypes explained from a more concrete perspective, and Sue has "untangled" the theory into a clear, but accurate description. We focused in on the 'balancer function' (the fourth function) and the 'makes a fool of you' (seventh 'Trickster') and discussed our experiences.



Meanwhile, Angelina Bennet and Gareth English shared their experiences of designing and training Type professionals remotely and discussed what they had considered in its creation. A major concern was how to incorporate the most valuable aspect of type training, learning from different types in action. There is nothing like hearing first-hand how a person with different preferences experiences the world. Having seen the award-winning programme and experienced the Type Pro learning platform they really have delivered the main benefits of real-world Type training, with a clear emphasis on purposeful application. As well as this they attempted to demonstrate a virtual reality team building exercise, using those goggle things, but the technology failed ... I promise I hadn't touched them!

At the same time, Ignas Jensen, a professor at the University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, ran a round table groupsession. He discussed the Type journey that his healthcare students have related to him, both in terms of their growth through learning to embrace their own Type preferences and also recognising and appreciating that others are different. There was a positive thoughtful response from this session circulating in the canteen lunch queue.

After an informal lunch with lots of choice, and too-tempting puddings, I opted to *Access my Superpowers* with the brilliant Markey Read. She is truly captivating in her real, human and hilarious observations of each Type's 'Hero's Journey' from Beebe's Archetype development model. She advocates getting to recognise and know your own "cast of characters" by "taking them out to tea" and in this way grow, develop and actively draw on what they bring. Another sage Conference nugget that made a lot of sense was Markey's observation that we try and parent in the style of our own Type's "good parent" character.



Concurrently Mina Bariminy presented the update to her doctoral research into whether empirical data supports Jung's hierarchy of preferences. She has rigorously analysed the data from Mark Major's Type indicator "Elements" and found some interesting patterns. She generally found that the dominant and fourth function are like "bookends" and consistently come out in the order Jung predicted, but that there is some variation with the auxiliary and tertiary which were sometimes congruent with the Jungian order, but sometimes not. She found they were often the same function but in different attitudes, for example, Auxiliary Fe and Tertiary Fi. As she pertinently described: this 'middle bit' is a bit "soupy", which certainly feels right for me in mid-life.



Catherine Stothart ran an introduction to Linda Berens' Interaction Styles but with a digital age slant. She elaborated on the theme that being 'constantly connected' results in a paradoxical disconnection from real human relationships, with practical suggestions on how to use this with clients to encourage building positive connections. I am really looking forwards to her new publication, *How to Get on with Everyone*. (see photo).



After a spot of re-fuelling, I was whisked into a totally different space-time dimension. No, not through those dodgy goggles and not from any 'special' cookies at break ... but the awesome 'Imaginarium', the inspirational creation of Vicky Jo Varner and Robin Wiley. This session definitely gets my golden BAPT award for Most Memorable session. Walking into the room we returned to Elizabethan times, Vicky Jo sat silently sewing, in character as Signora Mystica, and Robin embodied Dr John Dee, the Mathematician, Queens Advisor, Astronomer and Alchemist. We were his students and he taught us about the alchemical origins of the Digital Age. The essence of it all was about transformation and he explained "there is a spirit in everything longing to become gold". Rumming through the quaternary of Jung's Functions and their alchemical process, Sensing - earth, iNtuition- fire, Thinking-air and Feeling-water, we took each one and visualised our own personal image, drew it out in crayon and then discussed. It was fascinating and meaningful. I took away some thought-provoking personal learning. Leaving us with a parting gift, Dr Dee quoted Shakespeare, reminding us that "You are an alchemist, make gold of that": A useful 'superpower' to help us thrive, whatever the Age we are living through.



Survival strategies for the Digital Age were also being considered with Shirley Blenkinsop. She dramatically highlighted through video clips how different Temperaments are choosing to escape from reality as ways to cope. She demonstrated how technology is both creating the problem and supplying its own solutions. Shirley shared her own personal journey through the survival strategies and discussed positive and negative ways we cope and the importance of recognising these in yourself. By all accounts this was a powerful session.



Lamenting that I couldn't yet digitise myself into more than one being in order to attend every session, à la Hermione Grainger in Harry Potter, I also didn't get to see Richard Owen's session on *Introverted Intuition as Memory* where he set out to radically redefine "the most mysterious function". A fellow introverted intuitive rated Richard's radical view as "making sense", which I took as high praise from an INTJ.

Unbelievably, it was already time for the last session of the day. All back together for Jean-Luc Dupont's plenary on the *Body and Type*. Based on the work of Hippolyte and Theraulaz that our intelligence is distributed in our body and gives clues to our Type, Jean-Luc shared his work using Action Types®. Placing his theme in the context of the

Digital Age he illuminated the deceptive nature of the digital world that seeks to simulate nature, but is the exact opposite, being static and simple and binary. He encouraged us to use our knowledge of Type to help people reconcile opposites in the dangerously growing culture of zero-one reductive thinking. Underscoring his points he demonstrated the natural intelligence, truth and knowing of the body and how we literally embody our preferences and deep motivational drives in our posture and movement. This has practical application in sports coaching as well as personal development. He concluded by appealing to the wisdom of the body as a way of remembering the need for multiple perspectives. Trying it out after the session, he demonstrated how my body 'knew' its intuitive preference by the way my muscles naturally went weak or strong in response to certain postures.



In the short break before the AGM at 6:00pm, I stumbled into Dario Nardi's brain scanning room where delegates could book in to have a brain imaging session. As Dario described, 'it is like peering into your brain to discover more about your personality, upbringing, career and relationships'. It sounded totally intriguing. One delegate who had done it verified it was a painless but fairly tiring hour where she had to complete several different tasks whilst wearing an electrode encrusted hair net; she was very much looking forward to her report.

Wine o'clock struck for the AGM, which was well attended and a chance to hear about the work of the amazing and totally dedicated BAPT committee under the utterly capable and totally lovely President, Sarah Perrot, who was once overheard commenting "Doesn't everyone have everything they need in their bag?" It is always humbling to hear what the committee do on top of their busy work and home lives to make the Conference happen as well as the charitable Type work they do for the community.



Dinner was a buzzing, social, and friendly chance to eat, drink wine and chat. The round tables and good food enhanced the mood. People drifted into table groups but then moved to socialise, just like in a party with friends. After the riotous music making of Conference 2017 there was a slightly tentative apprehension as to what this night would bring, but the large circle of anticipating delegates were not disappointed. There was an unbelievable display of creativity and talent. Several guitars and at least one ukulele started off the tunes, which moved into singing, and before long the entire delegation was in full voice. We were treated to a cabaret of entertainment from comedy, magic tricks, to a beautiful poetry recital. With the most impeccable comedic timing Aldert Oomkens and Ignas Jansen appeared 'stage left' dressed as fire rescue men and had the entire room captivated with their hilarious impromptu sketch. Simply brilliant.



Saturday, April 14th

Unbelievably, by 9:00am the main Conference room was ready and waiting for the Keynote speech *Trending #Consciousness* from Dario Nardi. However, if you looked closely there were a few red-eyed, heavy-headed delegates quietly nursing coffee. Dario Nardi was on good form though as he opened with the arresting statement that “99.9% of everything is empty space” and challenged us to consider what we are and what level of consciousness we use and how ‘awake’ we are ...

With many parallels to the body-mind perspective we heard from Jean-Luc Dupont, Dario also commented that the mind-body traditions, such as yoga and meditation, understand that the raw energy of consciousness starts in the lower body. He referenced Jung’s writing that stated there is a danger to ourselves and society in being one-sided and that we need to actively choose a different perspective: blend the mind and body and move between the different levels of awareness. By experiencing two opposites, for example, through the lenses of the dominant function and the inferior function we may, through the transcendent function, just fleetingly catch a glimpse or get a freeing sense of a third option and in this way open up previously unseen possibilities. To evidence these shifts he showed us EEG images of brain networks that started off looking like an INTJ network but after 30 minutes of meditation had shifted hugely to look like an ISFP brain network.



After a thoughtful break time, it was time for something different. I opted for Jane Kise’s update on two years of research with a fellow Type expert, Jill Chivers and stylist Imogen Lamport, to create the *Sixteen Types of Style*, now available on-line. I admit I was intrigued about this session as I have often attempted to Type-spot based on clothing styles. Jane took us through the research with some great stories about the Type differences that emerged from the interviews. There was the ISTJ who read out her typed up her interview responses and commented that she would “die” if she was “inappropriately dressed” to the ESFP who grabbed her laptop to ‘take’ Jane through the camera into the actual wardrobe. Jane was clear that the overall purpose is to help people with the impact they make and that if you follow your Style Type you can increase your impact with authenticity. The reports generated are packed full of interesting information, hints and tips. We had a look at the style essences which link the characteristics of each type with how they style themselves, e.g. an ENFP interacts with warmth and enthusiasm and likes their style to help them create quick connections, although a style challenge for them is likely to be around expressing too much style variety or perhaps lacking consistent polish.



Meanwhile, Torsten Laursen and Aldert Oomkens were using the deep democracy process to explore what inclusive leadership means in the Digital Age and the contribution of different personality types. This is a powerful and moving process that helps find a common ground whilst hearing and respecting all perspectives. In another session, Sterling Bates was demonstrating and discussing his digital best fit process that uses activities and game-like options to achieve an accurate best-fit for clients.



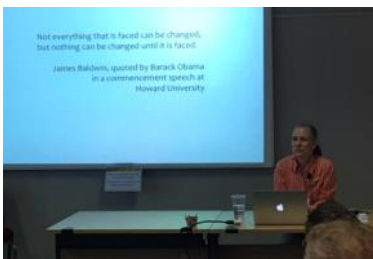
On our way to the last lunch, I was shown a short cut by Markey Read, who had learnt the back routes of the Nightingale Building like the back of her hand. This was very exciting. I gleefully attempted to share this knowledge on the return journey, until I realised that it had evaporated by the time I had finished my indulgent chocolate cake dessert. Gah, these infernal corridors, I am sure they move! Either that or my meagre bandwidth had not had enough fuelling ... sleep fuelling ... obviously, cake fuelling was fine.

Back for the penultimate session, there was a growing awareness of the time flying by. Markey Reads session on the *Trickster Archetype, Fiend or Friend* was illuminating, I finally understood through discussion how my Trickster worked and how the 'eternal child' tertiary provides the playful gateway to the mercurial fool; both of them sharing the same function, but in the opposite attitude, bringing together both sides.



In concurrent sessions, Sue Blair was running an interactive session on the highs and lows of the hi-tech era and what 'need' each of the dominant functions is meeting on the hamster wheel of keeping connected.

Whilst Sarah Perrott explored how to use your Type, energy and heart intelligence to develop resilience. When I popped in, she was discussing the model of social concerns that drive behaviour which describes Relatedness as our most evolved strategy for keeping safe. She described how the part of the brain that is activated in pain, also lights up when we feel excluded.



Everyone was invited to the last plenary session though, and Katherine Hirsh spoke to a packed audience. Her parting gift, clearly and calmly presented, was a reminder that the work we do as Type practitioners gives us the opportunity to create a more active space for diversity. We can move beyond the usual diversity and inclusion definitions that focus on divisive demographic differences, to a diversity definition that looks 'within' ourselves and use Type as a starting point to surface invisible diversity. This is especially useful within the dominant/privileged group who may appear more homogeneous in terms of gender, ethnicity and age.

Katherine reminded us that through Type exercises we can demonstrate how the workplace is not supporting the needs of certain people, and provide ways to make positive changes that see difference as both useful and essential to overcoming challenges and achieving business goals.

It was a positive and quietly empowering call to action and a great way to close a fantastic Conference. I left blinking into the surprisingly warm spring sunshine. So many thoughts, ideas, people, laughter and inspiration on which to reflect. At the beginning of the Conference the Digital Age loomed terrifyingly large but, through the sessions, I had looked at it from different perspectives and realised that whilst I cannot change it, I can cope with it and recognise my own resilience. In the words of James Baldwin, quoted by Barack Obama and subsequently, Katherine Hirsh "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced" and there is a lot we can do as Type Practitioners to increase the quality of human lives through these ever increasing digitised times ... We are alchemists "make gold of that". Hope to see you at Conference 2019.

[Note: BAPT would like to express its sincere thanks to its sponsors: OPP Limited, Type Pro, Differentiated Coaching Associates and Radiance House, for their generous support towards this Conference.]

