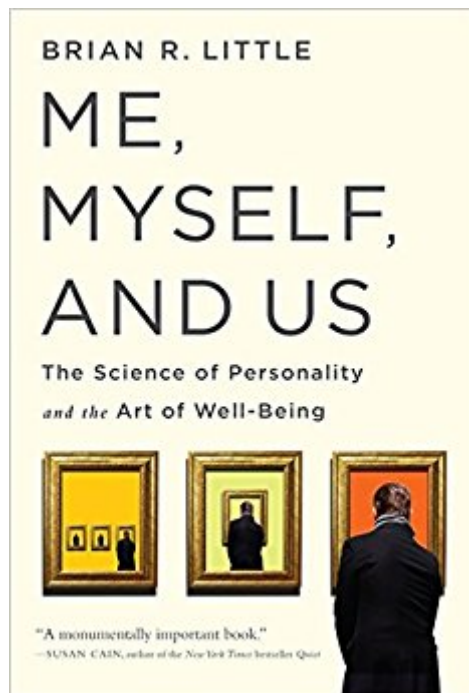




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# Me, Myself, And Us: The Science Of Personality And The Art Of Well-Being



## Synopsis

How does your personality shape your life and what, if anything, can you do about it? Are you hardwired for happiness, or born to brood? Do you think you're in charge of your future, or do you surf the waves of unknowable fate? Would you be happier, or just less socially adept, if you were less concerned about what other people thought of you? And what about your Type A spouse: is he or she destined to have a heart attack, or just drive you to drink? In the past few decades, new scientific research has transformed old ideas about the nature of human personality.

Neuroscientists, biologists, and psychological scientists have reexamined the theories of Freud and Jung as well as the humanistic psychologies of the 1960s, upending the simplistic categorizations of personality types, and developing new tools and methods for exploring who we are. Renowned professor and pioneering research psychologist Brian R. Little has been at the leading edge of this new science. In this wise and witty book he shares a wealth of new data and provocative insights about who we are, why we act the way we do, what we can and can't change, and how we can best thrive in light of our nature. *Me, Myself, and Us* explores questions that are rooted in the origins of human consciousness but are as commonplace as yesterday's breakfast conversation, such as whether our personality traits are set by age thirty or whether our brains and selves are more plastic. He considers what our personalities portend for our health and success, and the extent to which our well-being depends on the personal projects we pursue. Through stories, studies, personal experiences, and entertaining interactive assessments, *Me, Myself, and Us* provides a lively, thought-provoking, and ultimately optimistic look at the possibilities and perils of being uniquely ourselves, while illuminating the selves of the familiar strangers we encounter, work with, and love."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Insightful” –New York Times Book Review; A researcher who is both a scholar and an experienced motivational speaker makes the subject of personality psychology come to life; Entertaining, enlightening and refreshingly light on psychobabble. “Kirkus Reviews; Humorous and wise” –Acadiana Lifestyle Magazine; Brian Little is one of the wisest, funniest, kindest, and most erudite people I have ever met, and in this book you’ll be treated to a generous helping of all these personality traits. A monumentally important book for anyone who wants to understand their colleagues, their loved ones; and their very own selves. “Susan Cain, author of the New York Times bestseller *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*; Insightful, clever and practical. Professor Little is a genius, making personality psychology not only relevant but essential knowledge in the modern world. This book is one “aha” moment after another, each rocking your world and upending the way you think about your coworkers, your relationships and your life. “Shawn Achor, New York Times bestselling author of *The Happiness Advantage* and CEO of GoodThink --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Professor Brian R. Little is an internationally acclaimed scholar and speaker in the field of personality and motivational psychology. He is a fellow of the Well-being Institute at Cambridge University, where he also lectures in the Department of Psychology and the Cambridge Judge Business School. He is a distinguished research professor emeritus at Carleton University. Little has taught at Carleton, McGill, Oxford, and Harvard Universities. He was elected as a Favorite Professor by the graduating classes of Harvard for three consecutive years. He lives in Cambridge, England, and Ottawa, Canada. For more information, visit [brianrlittle.com](http://brianrlittle.com) or follow him on Twitter @DrBrianRLittle."

I've been enjoying this book very much. It gives you a new perspective on the subconscious process we go through when meeting new people or dealing with tough situations. Would highly recommend it to anyone with social anxiety.

This book answers that question in a humorous, yet scholarly way. For those of us who know who

we are and wish to be different, Dr. Little explains how and if this should be achieved. For those of us who have no clue, he provides a few assessments to assist in determining our personality. And for those of us who know who we are and are completely content with that person (I'd love to meet you): Dr. Little will aid you in understanding yourself in relation to others.

So interesting and you'll be analyzing all your friends.

Fascinating and easily accessible information.

Helped me to understand why people react differently

I branched out in reading this book. I recently joined the productive readers of the world and have been striving to find wisdom and well-being through opening my eyes to the ideas out there. Admittedly, on a couple occasions I found myself a bit lost. My mind wanders as it does to so many of us. However, many ideas I found here were intriguing and just rang true in my mind. They made sense. Little is a very sharp man than has really refined his thoughts. A few of my favorite ideas of his include the following: 1) We have specific self-beliefs and constructs of ourselves and they inevitably affect our well-being. Acknowledging this, Little states that "it is possible to change our personal constructs, and this gives us hope." But with this he includes that "sometimes escaping from them can be difficult." 2) High vs Low Self Monitoring 3) Seeking to see deeper than the frames people put on at first meeting. In other words, giving others a chance to show their strengths or not being fooled by an impressive manner. 4) Hostility and how it affects the Type A's of the world. 5) The power of "latent inhibition" and its upsides. 6) A few final ideas on well-being: A Few intimate relationships Clearing the deck The Sustainable Pursuit of Core Projects Self-Reflection and Reconciling - Dancing with ourselves

Great read...learned lots about myself.

Review of Me, Myself, and Us: The Science of Personality and the Art of Well-Being by Brian R. Little About once a year you read a book that both confirms your beliefs and introduces you to new ways of thinking. Me, Myself, and Us is the book for 2015. It is a pleasure to read a book that is clearly written and humorous yet full of insights. Thankfully it gives neuroplasticity a miss and tries to explain how you can have a happy life without morphing into a sermon on new-age spirituality.

Instead Little takes as his mantra that happiness is derived by understanding who we are and what we do and then spends 288 pages explaining how it can be achieved. The first insight by Little is that there are three sources of our personality traits: 1. Biogenic referring to the aspects of our personality sourced genetically. (50%) 2. Sociogenic, those aspects learned from social and cultural factors (25%), and 3. Idojenic, referring to the aspects of our personality best accounted for by (idiosyncratic) individual factors such as personal values, goals, projects and commitments. (25%) Personally I think the London Twins study makes the percentages more like 66%-17%-17% but it still is a very useful model. With regard to Biogenic factors Little begins by dumping on Myers-Briggs saying the test lacks both reliability and validity. In addition he makes the point that it is not Type that counts in personality but traits. I must confess as someone who regards MBTI as a waste of time I enjoyed this section. Instead Little recommends the reader adopt the Big Five model. The five-factor model (FFM) identifies 5 core traits: 1. openness to creativity 2. conscientiousness 3. extraversion 4. agreeableness 5. neuroticism OCEAN is often used as a mnemonic to remember the traits. Each trait is distributed normally in the population. In other words 67% of the population fall within plus or minus 1 standard deviation and have an average level of the trait. So one sixth of the population would be classified as Extravert, one sixth as Introverts, and two-thirds as Ambiverts. The MBTI says you are either an Extravert or Introvert. Personally I prefer the Humm-Wadsworth with its seven factors to the FFM; however the five most common factors in the Humm are identical to the FFM. Little then goes on to both list a number of secondary factors and provide for each factor a simple questionnaire. Unfortunately he then slips into the same error as the MBTI by saying you are at one end of the spectrum or the other. For example Self Monitoring refers to the individual's trait sensitivity and responsiveness to social factors. High Self Monitors are highly responsive to needs and perspectives of others and are apt to avoid conflict at all costs. Low Self Monitors stick to their own beliefs and attitudes which can make them unconscious and boorish but they are not afraid of healthy conflict. The reality is that two-thirds of us are clustered around the mean. Similarly with locus of control which refers to the extent to which individuals believe are in control of the events affecting them. A person's locus is either internal (the person believes they are primarily in control of their life course) or external (meaning they believe their life course is primarily controlled by external factors which they cannot influence). Again two-thirds of us cluster around the mean. However the part of the book I found really illuminating is when Little described the idojenic contribution to our behaviour. Little uses himself as an example. He describes as an introvert who when he is lecturing projects himself as a pseudo-extrovert. I myself have had the same experience. People are often surprised to hear according to the MBTI that I am an introvert. But I

am. I have simply adapted my personality to meet the demands of the situation. People do behave "out of character" or counter to their typical disposition. Little makes great play about how important it is for your own happiness to be doing projects that are congruent with your genetic traits. According to Little most of us have up to 15 projects on the go. He refers to a website 43.com which had been operating since 2005 and collects list of projects from people. Top of the list is losing weight followed by going to write a book. Unfortunately for Little the website closed down in March 2015. Nevertheless his book is first class and well worth purchasing.

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