



36. CHOICES IN CRISES - PERSONALITY 3

*Do you base your decisions on
logic, or are you driven by
empathy?*

#NCSAMENTALHEALTHDEVOTIONS

CHOICES IN CRISES - PERSONALITY 3

Hebrews 10:24: "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works."

In the previous two presentations, we looked at the different preference pairs within personality types. The first one covered *introversion* versus *extroversion* and the second one *sensing* versus *intuition*. The classification comes from the Myers-Briggs Indicator (MBT).

By now you would have identified your preference in the first two of the four options. When you get into certain situations, especially stressful situations, you are naturally inclined to fall back on your preferred way of acting and feeling.

The first choice we looked at, was being introverted versus extroverted. Where do you get your energy from in times of crisis or during normal times? Do you get your energy from being alone and in your own thoughts, or do you get your energy from being with people and socialising? Where do you fit in?

The second one was how you gather information. Is it by looking at the smaller detail or do you look at the bigger picture of life? Are you sensing, looking at the small things right in front of you and then making a logical deduction; or are you intuitive, looking at the bigger picture and what it means for your life and your goals?

There are two remaining preferences. In this presentation we will look at how choices are made; either through thinking or through feeling.

**THERE ARE TWO PREFERENCES
WHEN IT COMES TO HOW CHOICES
ARE MADE; EITHER THROUGH
THINKING OR THROUGH FEELING.
WHICH IS YOUR PREFERENCE?**

Next we will look at how you live your life. Is it through judging or through perceiving? Specifically how these apply to you when you find yourself in a crisis.

Please do remember that your unique personality type combination is formed through preference. In other words, both these possibilities are inside you. You have introversion and extroversion inside you. You have sensing and intuition, thinking and feeling, judging and perceiving inside you. You tend to fall back on what you feel most comfortable with, or your preference, when you go through tough times or when you need to make an easy and quick decision. Remember, the one is not right and the other one wrong.

You are not called to switch from your preference to the complete opposite side of your personality. You are not required to give up your preference. You are simply required to identify which preferences you are using more and what the strengths and weaknesses of these preferences are. When you've identified the weaknesses of your preference, you can work on them to change them into strengths. Each preference pair will also have times when you overuse them and that will do more harm than good. If you use introversion a lot or you use intuition a lot, it robs you of becoming a holistic person. You need to develop on both sides of the spectrum. Not necessarily fifty-fifty, but so that you can move into the other preference group if need be.

If you understand your predisposition or your preference you have the power to reason when to use your preference and when not to use it. Remember some preferences, when overused in the wrong situation, can get you into a lot of trouble.

IF YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR PREFERENCE YOU HAVE THE POWER TO REASON WHEN TO USE YOUR PREFERENCE AND WHEN NOT TO USE IT. WHEN TO USE THINKING OR FEELING TO MAKE A CHOICE.

Is there a different way to look, feel and act in the world around you? Yes, there is. That is simply a matter of another preference type. A lot of times we get into trouble and arguments with people only because they are different. We get into trouble with our family members because they have different preference types to ours. Let's become more aware of the different types.

By now you should know whether you prefer gaining your energy by spending time alone in your own thoughts or whether you feel energised after a good long visit with friends or family. You should also know how you prefer to receive information. Is it through sensing, looking at the facts and details, or through intuition, looking at the big picture and following your gut?

In this presentation we are going to look at what you do with the information you've gathered. In other words, how you prefer to make decisions. That brings us to the third preference pair which is **thinking** and **feeling**. Please don't get caught up in the words thinking and feeling. This does not mean that there are people who think and people who don't think, or people who feel and people who don't feel. These are just words used to describe the preference pair. I am going to explain to you exactly what the different definitions are.

How do you prefer to make decisions in life? The thinking preference are those people who tend to want to solve problems and they also want to help other people to solve their problems. Do you think of yourself as a problem-solver? When somebody comes to you and shares their sorrows with you, do you jump on board wanting to give them specific details about how they can get through the problem and how to feel better? The way people who are thinkers do this, is by making lists.

MANY TIMES WE GET INTO
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MAKING DECISIONS.

They tend to look at the pros and the cons of a situation and they look at the positives and the negatives before making a decision. In other words, thinking preference people make decisions based on logic. When decisions have to be made, they will probably respond with: "I have the right answer, let's get this thing done." So, they want to find solutions based on logical conclusions and information and facts and then making the decision and getting the decision executed.

The feeling preference people on the other hand, are not interested in solving problems. They rather want to support people through listening and through companionship. They just want to be there to listen without necessarily giving answers. In other words, when feeling people come to you and share their problems with you, they won't necessarily want you to solve their problems. They probably just want some companionship, some compassion. So basically, those who fall within the feeling preference **make decisions based on empathy**. They are very much prone to caring and feeling and being sympathetic towards those who are in a difficult situation. They look at how things will affect people around them and then they make decisions based on that.

Feeling types step into the decision. They don't make decisions beforehand by looking at the logic. They go into a problem, they become part of the problem by being present in the problem. When somebody comes to them with a problem, they will sit with the person without necessarily having a solution to the problem.

THE "THINKING" GROUP TEND TO
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DECISION.

They won't necessarily know which decisions need to be made and they haven't considered the facts beforehand, but they know someone is in need or hurting and they will act on this need by consoling, by caring and even giving up some of their resources in order to help the people in their need and in their pain. Once present in the problem, showing empathy, being physically and emotionally available, they may understand the situation better and then come up with solutions on how to overcome. Then they make decisions based on their emotions.

Thus thinkers rely on their heads and their logic. In other words they think through problems and make decisions while those who feel more, rely on their hearts and empathy and care for others. They rely on how their hearts and their feelings move them.

Once again, don't let the words head and heart confuse you into thinking that some follow their heads and the others don't follow their heads or some on the other hand only follow the heart and the other one doesn't follow the heart. We have both inside of us, it is just that we tend to prefer the one over the other.

Think of it as your hand preference. Some are left-handed and lean more heavily on using their left hand. But they also still use their right hand. They don't stop using their right hand, but they do use the right hand less than they use the left. This is how preferences work. It is not an either-or situation. In other words, if I say you are a thinker, I am not saying everyone else are monkeys and they don't use their heads. Or if you are a feeler, you think everybody else are devoid of emotions. That is not true.

**THINKERS RELY ON THEIR HEADS &
LOGIC. IN OTHER WORDS THEY
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MORE, RELY ON THEIR HEARTS.**

The Scientific Innovation Survey has shown that 83% of people with the thinking trait, say it is best to take a scientific approach to problems in their lives, compared to 43% of those with the feeling trait. So there is a bit of a disparity within the world. Some say the majority of females tend to associate more with the feeling preference, while the majority of males tend to associate more with the thinking preference. This would mean that most men make decisions, or so they say, based on logic, whereas most women make their decisions based on their empathy through caring and consideration, using their hearts.

I can really relate to this when I think of my mother. I believe my mum is a feeling preference. She is very empathetic toward people and she makes decisions with her heart. My dad gets very frustrated with her sometimes. He will say to her that she needs to start using her head and to think logically about things, but my mom's heart rules. Some months when they are very low on cash and food, my mum will take her last bit of money so that she can give a little extra to those in need. Or she will go through her food cupboards if she doesn't have money, and take food from the cupboards to give to others, leaving themselves with the bare minimum to survive. My dad gets frustrated with her and would ask her: "What are we supposed to eat and where are we going to dig out money now?" I think my dad is a thinker. He thinks logically through the situations and the problems in life and he thinks before he acts. My mum feels before she acts.

She does the same with their three dogs at home. She will feel sorry for the dogs because they've been eating boring dog food for weeks on end.

THERE IS A BELIEF THAT THE MAJORITY OF FEMALES TEND TO ASSOCIATE MORE WITH THE FEELING PREFERENCE, WHILE THE MAJORITY OF MALES TEND TO ASSOCIATE MORE WITH THE THINKING PREFERENCE. .

She will then take the last bit of money she has left and she will buy a big box of chicken for the dogs to eat because she feels sorry for them and she has empathy with them. She acts with her heart and it seems as if she does not reason from course to effect. But this is not true.

The feeler reasons that God will provide. There will be a way out. "We've always survived in the past and we will survive again." Material things are not as important as the human life and the empathy, love and care that go with it.

Thinkers on the other hand tend to see the world more in a black and white kind of way. They don't like the fuzziness of the in-between, so once they've considered their options and they've made a decision, it is final. **Characteristics of the thinkers** are that they like what is logical within a situation, they tend to go with the objective and don't get emotionally involved in the decision. They decide with their heads, they want the truth, they are rational and they may come across as very impersonal and not really interested in the person behind the decision-making. They can also come across as critical, thick-skinned and firm with people.

There is a saying by William Blake which sort of gives a warning to thinkers. It goes: "*A truth that is told with bad intent, beats all the lies that you can invent.*" Be careful of overusing your thinking abilities. You might come to the conclusion that this is the way to act and that it is the right way.

THERE IS A SAYING BY WILLIAM BLAKE WHICH SORT OF GIVES A WARNING TO THE "THINKING GROUP". "A TRUTH THAT IS TOLD WITH BAD INTENT, BEATS ALL THE LIES THAT YOU CAN INVENT." YOUR MOTIVE MATTERS JUST AS MUCH AS THE TRUTH.

Be careful, because sometimes when you tell the truth with bad intent, in other words, if you make decisions that are logical, but you don't have the best interest of others at heart, it is basically a lie. It becomes useless.

Characteristics of feelers on the other hand are that they decide with their hearts. They dislike conflict. They move with passion and are driven by emotion. They are very gentle and easily hurt. They are very empathetic towards others. They are caring and warm. Audrey Hepburn, I believe, was a feeling type. She said: *"Nothing is more important than empathy for other human beings who are suffering. Not a career, not wealth, not intelligence and certainly not status. We have to feel for one another if we are going to survive with dignity."* She had empathy that moved her heart into action. Money, wealth, status or her own well-being didn't matter to her in terms of the well-being of others around her. Whether you are going to need somebody who is more prone towards thinking and logic or somebody who is more prone to emotion and empathy when decisions need to be made will depend on what situation you find yourself in. Certain types of situations call for certain preferences to come to the foreground.

If I would ever be in an emergency situation, let's say a car crash, and a paramedic comes upon my path, I would prefer my paramedic to be a thinker. A person who uses logic and gets down to business and makes decisions and just doing his job to the best of his ability. I would not need a person who has empathy, who is going to rub my arm and maybe starts crying because he understands my pain.

**"NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT
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I would just want the person to get the ventilator hooked up and I want him to do CPR on me and get me to the hospital.

On the other hand, when I arrive at the hospital and I am stabilized, I would like the nurse and the doctor to be more empathetic and understanding towards my situation. Putting themselves in my shoes and supporting me emotionally. Maybe putting their hands on me and praying with me.

Both preferences can be put to good use in the right situation. This statement brings us to the conclusion that both preferences can then also be put to bad use in the wrong situations. So we need to be careful.

There is an example in the Bible of somebody who put his **thinking** preference to bad use. This is the man called **Saul of Tarsus** who later became known as Paul. By the way, he wrote many of the Bible books. He probably was a thinker. You first meet him in the book of Acts, consenting to the stoning of the first Christian martyr called Stephen. In his mind it made logical sense to kill Stephen, because Christians were sects. According to the Jewish rules and traditions, Christians were doing things they were not supposed to do. In Paul's mind it made logical sense that Stephen should die and that the Christian church should be persecuted. We find him breathing out threats of slaughter against the disciples of the Lord in Acts chapter 9. If ever there was a description of a raw thinker, I think it's him. He made decisions purely based on what he thought was logic, with no empathy for those around him and the hurt it would cause in the process.

**YOU SHOULD KNOW WHEN TO BASE
YOUR DECISIONS ON THINKING OR
FEELING OR PERHAPS A
COMBINATION OF THE TWO.
CERTAIN SITUATIONS CALL FOR WISE
THINKING AS APPOSED TO YOUR
PREFERENCE.**

A good example of both the thinking and the feeling preference comes from the Bible story of the Good Samaritan. Here we find two types of people, thinkers and feelers. The parable of the Good Samaritan was told by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. The story is about a traveller on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. He was attacked and stripped of his clothing, beaten and left half-dead alongside the road. First a priest passed him and then a Levite. Both those men saw the man lying there, bleeding and destitute and in need of help, but both avoided him. They turned away and walked further. The Bible doesn't tell us what went on in their minds, but I think they probably logically thought that the incident was none of their business. "What if we get attacked too? We don't know what happened to this man, why should we help him. What is in it for us? We are on our way to Jericho. We just finished a hard day's labour and we want to be with our families. Someone else will take care of him." I think they were probably scared and they used their logic to make a decision.

Finally the Samaritan arrived and he found the traveller. Samaritans and Jews despised each other, but the Samaritan ended up helping the injured Jew. If he had to think logically, he would have kept walking also. He would have said something like: "Jews and Samaritans don't help each other." But instead, he bandaged him up, put him on his donkey and took him to an inn. He paid the innkeeper to take care of the man. He said upon his return he would settle any expense that the innkeeper had in taking care of the man.

He was moved by compassion, by his heart and his care for people. That is why a man who logically should have kept walking didn't.

**THE SAMARITAN IN THE BIBLE WAS
MORIVATED BY FEELING WHEN HE
HELPED THE MAN THAT WAS
ATTACKED.**

He stopped. People, on the other hand, who logically should have stopped, kept walking because they used their thinking and their logic. Luke 10:33 tells us why the **Samaritan** stopped. *“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.”* In other words, he was moved with empathy, he had the feeling preference and he was moved by his heart to act and to make a decision. He made a decision based on his feelings.

I believe Jesus **exercised both preferences**. He came to this world and put aside His own needs and died in our place. It was compassion and empathy and care that made Him put aside His own comfort to be sacrificed on our behalf. Philippians 2:6 sums it up very well: *“Who being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death even the death on the cross.”*

I believe Jesus is very concerned about our welfare. He even put our welfare above His own. He was moved by His heart and His compassion but some days on the other end, it seemed as if He was very determined and it appeared as if He didn't have any compassion. I'm specifically saying it seemed and it appeared as if He made a decision and He went for it.

I am reminded of the story of Jesus and Peter when Jesus foretold that He was going to die. Peter said that he will never let them kill Jesus.

**THE PRIEST IN THE STORY OF THE
GOOD SAMARITAN USED LOGIC,
AND WALKED PAST THE INJURED
MAN, IT WAS LOGICAL BUT WAS
IT THE RIGHT CHOICE?**

"I will never let You down, You will not die." Then Jesus turned to Peter and in a very harsh way He said to him: *"Get behind me Satan."* It seemed as if Jesus would make decisions and would do things and say things in a very harsh way, a very logical type of way.

With Judas, Jesus said: "The one who takes the bread with Me, will betray Me." After Judas took the bread, he turned to Jesus and asked: "Lord is it me that is going to betray You?" Instead of being moved with compassion (in our human eyes) and telling a little white lie, Jesus said: "Yes, it's you." It seems very harsh, very cutthroat, and upfront. It seems as if there is a lack of empathy, almost just decision-making based on logic, thinking, "This man needs to know he is going to betray Me, that he is being the agent of Satan by telling Me that I will not die." But with Jesus it is different. Jesus cares in a way that a strict parent would care. Seemingly not caring for your emotions by being strict, but actually behind the strictness there is a lot of care and concern.

Jesus knew He had to die and Peter needed to know that he could be a stumbling block in the way of God's plan. Judas needed to know that he was about to do something which was irreparable to his salvation and Jesus had to warn him. He said to Judas it would have been better for that person if he wasn't born. So Judas still had a chance to change, but he didn't. Peter, however, listened to the reprimand and he later understood why the Lord reprimanded him.

The overuse of something can get you into trouble, but you also need to understand that there will be times when you are called upon to be more rational and logic.

BE CAREFUL OF OVERUSING YOUR PREFERENCE SIMPLY BECAUSE ITS A PREFERENCE. IT CAN CAUSE IRREPARABLE DAMAGE. THINK BEFORE YOU FEEL, AND MAKE SURE TO FEEL AFTER YOU HAVE THOUGHT.

Times to say and do things without getting emotionally involved instead of getting emotionally involved to the extent where it does no good. You need to ask yourself whether you are overusing your preference. Are you sticking to logic in such a way that even in small matters where it really doesn't matter, you are doing things your way and making decisions your way? Do you end up forcing your logic onto other people and destroying the love and the care that could exist between you and your family? Be aware of this during the time of lockdown. Ask yourself if you are using logic so much that you end up destroying the hope and love inside your family members. Or are you using caring so much that you throw all logic out of the window even to the detriment of your children and your family?

Let me give you an example of how this can happen in the family context and how parents usually do this with their children. There are some parents who allow their children to do anything under the guise of "we love them and we care for them and we don't want to hurt them. We worry when they are sad and we don't want them to be sad. We have empathy towards them so we allow them to act and think for themselves and sometimes even break rules that are generally kept." Parents care so much that they let the children get away with murder. This is not truly caring.

Proverbs 13:24 tells us that those who spare the rod of discipline, hate their children. Sometimes we need to put aside that 'we don't want to hurt our children empathy' and say, "My logic is going to save them from a greater hurt later if I discipline them now." Those who love their children, care enough to discipline them.

**ARE USING LOGIC SO MUCH THAT
YOU END UP DESTROYING LOVE? OR
ARE YOU USING CARE SO MUCH THAT
YOU THROW ALL LOGIC OUT OF THE
WINDOW EVEN TO THE DETRIMENT OF
YOUR CHILDREN & YOUR FAMILY?**

Thinking and feeling can be taken to the extremes. There is a saying by Albert Camus: *'There are crimes of passion and there are crimes of logic. The boundary between them is not always clearly defined.'* You need to be careful. Your logic and your empathy can be used for good, but it can also be used for bad. Have both in a healthy way, is the recommendation.

In the past two presentations, it came across that Jesus used most of the character traits in both ways. He developed both and He was 'ambi' in everything. He was an ambivert. He could call upon His logic and He could look at the smaller picture as well as the bigger picture. This is what we need to be – well-balanced people of God.

Motivational speakers say, "If you want to be a driven person or motivate others in your family, give them logic and give them empathy, because tapping into their empathy is going to ignite them emotionally and create movement and action. But emotions wear off, and you have to have something more concrete to fall back on to keep them moving forward. Logic plays the role of creating the foundation for emotion."

The verse in Hebrews 10:24 that we started off with, says it so beautifully: *"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works."*

The Bible illustrates that we need to think, we need to use our logic and then we can be motivated. We also need to care and feel empathy towards others. That will be good works in the eyes of God. So today, think deeply, love broadly, care systematically and may your life keep moving in the direction of hope and peace.

**IF YOU WANT TO MOTIVATE OTHERS
GIVE THEM LOGIC & EMPATHY,
EMPATHY IS GOING TO IGNITE THEM
EMOTIONALLY & CREATE MOVEMENT
WHILE LOGIC DRIVE THEM WHEN
EMPATHY FAILS.**

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