

# Discover Your Personality

Take this short test to get an understanding of what kind of personality you are. It is based upon Dr. Gary Smalley's book [The Treasure Tree](#). Although it is not a highly scientific test, it serves a way to get in touch with who you are as a leader in ministry and as an open door for dialogue with your ministry team.

**Instructions:** Chose the words that best describe your personality. If you feel a word does not describe you at all, or just kind of describes you, skip it. You want to circle only the words that **best** describe you. Double the number of words you chose in each box and record that number on the blank for each animal. For example, if you circled five words under Lion, then put the number "10" in the box.

## TIPS:

- Do not pick what you want to be. Pick things that best describe you.
- Do not over think it. Move quickly. Don't ask for advice or input from others.
- Think primarily about you in your ministry context. For example, some traits we display at work more than at home and vice-versa.
- Do not pre-conceive any ideas about which one you are. Take it openly.
- There is no formula for correct or incorrect. Some will score heavily in one area. Some will have two that are quite equal. There is no correct pattern, except the truthful one.

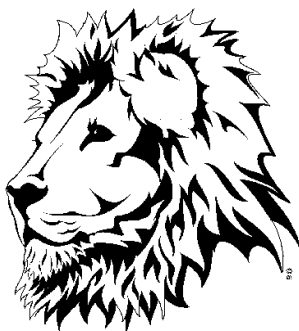
Lion		Beaver	
Likes authority	Takes charge	Enjoys instructions	Accurate
Confident	Determined	Consistent	Controlled
Firm	Enterprising	Reserved	Predictable
Enjoys challenges	Competitive	Practical	Orderly
Problem solver	Productive	Factual	Conscientious
Bold	Purposeful	Perfectionist	Discerning
Goal-driven	Adventurous	Detailed	Analytical
Strong willed	Independent	Inquisitive	Precise
Self-reliant	Controlling	Persistent	Scheduled
Persistent	Action-oriented	Sensitive	Deliberate
<b>Double the number chosen:_____</b>		<b>Double the number chosen:_____</b>	
Otter		Golden Retriever	
Enthusiastic	Takes Risks	Sensitive feelings	Loyal
Visionary	Motivator	Calm	Even keeled
Energetic	Very verbal	Non-demanding	Gives in
Promoter	Friendly	Avoids confrontations	Indecisive
Mixes easily	Enjoys popularity	Enjoys routine	Dislikes change
Fun-loving	Likes variety	Warm and relational	Dry humor
Spontaneous	Enjoys change	Adaptable	Sympathetic
Creative-new ideas	Group-oriented	Thoughtful	Nurturing
Optimistic	Initiator	Patient	Tolerant
Infectious laughter	Inspirational	Good listener	Peace maker
<b>Double the number chosen:_____</b>		<b>Double the number chosen:_____</b>	

## WHICH ARE YOU?

There is no scientific formula here. Some people will score very high as one animal and low in three others. Other people will have two high scores and two low ones. If you have one animal that is much higher than others, you are primarily that trait. If not, you may be more of a mix of a couple of personality traits.

Below are descriptions for each animal/personality trait. Read through them and see where you agree and disagree. More importantly, have others (especially those on your ministry team) share their reactions. You may be surprised. Your personality is the collection of emotional and behavioral traits that characterize you. That is, your personality is how you present yourself to the world. It is how others see you, not how you see yourself.

## Lion



This personality likes to lead. He/she is a powerful leader who loves to be in the driver's seat. The lion is a good decision maker and is very goal-oriented. He/she enjoys challenges, difficult assignments, and the opportunity for advancement. Lions are problem-solvers. They are rarely conversational.

**Their Strengths:** Goal-oriented, strong, direct, produce results, confident, challenge others

**Their Environment:** Lots of projects, awards on the wall, large calendar, office furniture arranged in a formal way

**They Gain Security by:** Control

**Their Pace:** Fast and decisive

**Their Needs:** A climate that responds; want others to be efficient and to the point

**They're Irritated by:** Wasted time, being unprepared, arguing, blocking results

**For Growth They Need to:** Appear less critical, respect people's personal worth, develop tolerance for conflict, pace themselves. Avoid killing morale by being too heavy handed. Be softer and include others in making decisions. Recognize that directness can hurt others. Learn to express grace.

**In Dealing With Them:** Avoid attacking their character, telling them what to do, presenting win-lose scenarios. Provide them with options, the freedom to act. Be efficient and competent. If you disagree – argue facts, not personal feelings. Be precise, time-disciplined, and well-organized. Do not waste their time. They don't need a lot of information to make a decision.

**Examples:** The Apostle Paul, Lucy (Charlie Brown), Donald Trump.

**For Youth/Young Adult Ministry:** Comfortable with being in front of the group. Great at providing direction, casting vision, and driving the ministry. Do not get bogged down by decisions. Kids like a sense of purpose and direction. Lead kids into challenges. Parents have confidence in a ministry led with vision and purpose.

# Beaver



Beavers are very organized. They think that there is a right way to do everything, and they want to do it exactly that way. They are perfectionists. Beavers keep all the T's crossed and the I's dotted. They desire to solve everything and take their time to do it right. Beavers do not like sudden changes and often need reassurance.

**Their Strengths:** Hard-working, detailed, accurate, focused on quality. Have high-standards.

**Their Environment:** Structured and organized, charts and graphs, functional decor, formal seating arrangement

**They Gain Security by:** Preparation

**Their Pace:** Slow and systematic

**Their Needs:** A climate that describes and focuses on accuracy and preciseness

**They're Irritated by:** People who do not know what they are talking about, lack of attention to detail, surprises, unpredictability

**For Growth They Need to:** Make faster decisions, tolerate conflict, learn to compromise, adjust to change and disorganization. See the optimistic side of things. Learn to relax and don't expect others to do things just like they do.

**In Dealing With Them:** Avoid criticizing, blunt personal questions, incomplete or inaccurate recommendations. Provide them with evidence that what you say is true and accurate. Give frequent progress reports and reviews. Avoid gimmicks and don't rush decision making.

**Examples:** Moses, Martha, Eeyore, Linus.

**Youth/Young Adult Ministry:** Never sloppy in organization. Kids and parents know events will run smoothly and efficiently. Keep people informed and stick to budgets diligently. Their stability and faithfulness is comforting and inspiring to participants.

# Otter



Otters are very social creatures. They are the life of the party. This personality loves people. They enjoy being popular and influencing and motivating others. Otters are sometimes hurt when others do not like them. They love to goof-off and are notorious for having messy rooms. Otters like to hurry to finish jobs. They are always ready to have fun and create a fun environment for others. They are energized by being around a lot of people.

**Their Strengths:** Ability to rally troops to achieve goals or desired outcome. Open and positive attitude.

**Their Environment:** Cluttered, awards and slogans on the wall, personal pictures, friendly

**They Gain Security by:** Flexibility

**Their Pace:** Fast and spontaneous

**Their Needs:** A climate that collaborates

**They're Irritated by:** Too many facts, too much logic, boring tasks, same old approach, routine, being alone, people who are ignoring their opinions

**For Growth They Need to:** Respect priorities, more logical approach, follow through, get better organized, remember commitments, concentrate on the task at hand. Think before they speak and consider consequences before acting or making a decision.

**In Dealing With Them:** Avoid negativism, rejection, arguing. Be interested in them. Support their dreams, feelings, and opinions. Do not hurry the discussion – give them a chance to talk. Don't deal with details. Put everything to them in writing. Everyone likes to spend time with Otters, except Beavers.

**Examples:** Peter, Tigger, Snoopy

**Youth / Young Adult Ministry:** Makes sure every kid in the ministry feels good. Creates a positive atmosphere that attracts youth and is comfortable. Fills youth with energy and life. Participants feel good about the group and their involvement in it.



# Golden Retriever

**GOLDEN RETRIEVER:** Golden Retrievers are great at making friends. They are very loyal. This personality type does not like big changes. They look for security and can be very sensitive. Retrievers are very caring and have deep relationships. A Golden wants to be loved by everyone. He looks for appreciation and works best in a limited situation with a steady work pattern. They are known as peaceful leaders. The love to care for others and be cared for.

**Their Strengths:** Accommodating, calm, affirming. Possess a great amount of compassion. Listening.

**Their Environment:** Family pictures, slogans on the wall, personal items, relaxed friendly decorations

**They Gain Security by:** Close relationships

**Their Pace:** Slow and easy

**Their Needs:** A climate that processes

**They're Irritated by:** Pushy and aggressive behavior, insincerity, being put on the spot, disrupting the status quo

**For Growth They Need to:** Take risks, delegate to others, confront, develop confidence in others, learn to change and adapt. Work on internal motivation as they are hard to motivate and frustrate the other personality types. Practice saying no. Making firm decisions.

**In Dealing With Them:** Avoid conflict, sudden unplanned risky changes, overloading or confusing concepts. Give them assurances, reliability, and assistance in presenting to others. Be non-threatening and sincere. Show interest in their feelings. Don't push. Assure them you will stand behind their decision.

**Examples:** Abraham, Mary, Pooh, Charlie Brown.

**Youth/Young Adult Ministry:** Great at being there for those they serve. This is especially important during adolescence. Offer time and much needed listening. Concerned personal needs of participants are met. Youth/YA feel they have a friend and a sense of connectedness.

## Results

Knowing and understanding your personality traits are extremely important to your ministry. Why?

1) Your personality will draw or repel kids and adult team members. You must be aware of what traits are dominant in your personality. Not everyone will like you. You must be prepared and willing to surround yourself with others in ministry who complement your personality in order to be most effective in ministry.

2) Personality can both open and close doors. Softening the rough edges and working on your weaknesses can open doors for you that can expand and grow your ministry. It can help you enroll supporters and cheerleaders for your ministry. Understanding your personality traits and when to let them shine and when to tone them down a bit is a huge asset to surviving the political atmosphere of the church. It can also allow you to help your ministry gain support and the trust of others.

3) Personality is the catalyst that enrolls followers. Most people follow the person before they follow a plan, idea, or cause. To bring others on board with your vision and passion for your ministry, you must first have them buy in to you as a person. They need to believe in you, trust you, and for a lot of people, like you. Then they will be open to receive your message and fall in line with your vision and mission.

### Is There a Winner?

In a study Len Kageler did for his book *The Youth Ministry Survival Guide*, youth workers identified themselves as:

Lions, 25%      Otters, 32%      Golden Retrievers, 30%      Beavers, 13%

No one personality is better across the board than another in growing and leading a ministry. Each will lead differently, but not necessarily better. The key is to lead in your style. Know your personality's strengths and weaknesses. This allows you to let your personality flow naturally and use your strengths, but also to surround yourself with those who complement you and fill in where you are weak.

**Take It as a Team:** The real power is to have your entire ministry team take this test and discuss the results. It will help you begin to understand one another and the "whys" behind many of your behaviors. This will aid in being sensitive to others' differences and see them not as being less than your traits, but simply different. I first took this test with the other staff person in the youth ministry in which I served. I am a Lion; he is an Otter. As we discussed the results, we began to think back to times we were annoyed with each other and to differences we had. We realized immediately that the majority of the problems we had were not the fault of anyone, but were due to our differing personalities. What a door it opened for understanding and dialogue!

**An example from the Bible:** Luke 10 tells the story of Martha the Beaver and Mary the Golden Retriever. Read it and watch their personality traits shine through as they host Jesus.

**Prayer:** Read the following Psalm, focusing on the fact that God made you the way that you are. Your personality is a gift and a blessing from the Creator of all good things.

### Psalm 139

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, you have searched me  
and you know me.

<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

<sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue  
you, LORD, know it completely.

<sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.

- <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.
- <sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?
- <sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- <sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
- <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.
- <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,"
- <sup>12</sup> even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.
- <sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- <sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.
- <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place.  
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
- <sup>16</sup> your eyes saw my unformed body.  
All the days ordained for me  
were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.

-- Psalm 139, [TNIV, International Bible Society](#)  
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