

Brain Games

134 Original
Scientific Games
That Reveal How
Your Mind Works

by Richard B. Fisher

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That Reveal How Your Mind Works

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Foreword

The games in this book are designed to entertain. Yet most of them were originally experiments conducted by research workers in their own laboratories. Indeed, it is far more difficult to design an experiment capable of answering a relevant question than it is to carry it out. I am grateful to the experimenters and indebted both to them and to other writers who have described the how as well as the why. Acknowledgements for individual games appear in the References at the end of the book.

Brain Games puts you in the shoes of a research scientist opening up new avenues of knowledge. In the process of playing the games, I hope you will also discover your own brain.

All the games in this book are easy. None of them requires any special training. As the list (p. 6) shows, even the necessary props and materials can be found in your own home. Many of the games need the help of a friend, occasionally more than one, and there is no reason why some of the games should not be fun at a party.

In most, the directions are very short. If the results you get are not those described, try again. In any case, do not allow a short-fall to spoil your enjoyment. Some of the games depend on your own background and personality, and the results may be variable. The important thing is that you see the point behind each game.

You will need a pen or pencil and paper for many of the games. A complete list of the other props and materials required is as follows:

blotter pad
books, about 3 doz. assorted
bookshelves, 2
bowls for water, 3
cellophane, 3 sheets (red,
blue, green)
coffee or tea
coloured paper squares, 2
inch
comfortable chair
electric razor
flashlights, 3
foot rule or equivalent
glasses or vases, 2
lamps, table or standard, 2

metronome (if available)
mirror, hand or wall
pictures from magazines or
papers, 120-150
radio or record player,
separate volume control
spoons, 2
stop watch (if available)
stove, gas, not
automatic
string
toothpicks
washing machine
watch, wrist or pocket

Now, play on!

Brain Games

1 Personality

I

Game 1.1: Answer the following questions quickly, yes or no. Write down your answers, Y for yes and N for no:

- 1 Do you often wish for more excitement in your life?
- 2 Are you often late for appointments?
- 3 Are you impatient with fact-finding by others when you have made up your mind about something?
- 4 Do you prefer phoning to writing letters?
- 5 Do you often say things without thinking?
- 6 Are you generous with money?
- 7 Are you impatient with detailed directions when you think you see the point?
- 8 Do you accept the adage, 'He who hesitates is lost'?
- 9 Are you an organizer, a doer or an activist?
- 10 Do you get excited when you watch competitive sports?
- 11 Are you willing to 'have a go' even when you have no experience of the task?
- 12 Do you like to go out a lot?
- 13 Do you remember the faces of people you have met casually?
- 14 Do you consider that you control your own destiny?
- 15 Are you always in a hurry?
- 16 Do you often get ideas for new projects you want to undertake?
- 17 Are you forgetful?
- 18 Do other people think you are lively?
- 19 Can you get ready to go out within half an hour after receiving an unexpected invitation?
- 20 Do you like to have other people around?
- 21 Do you enjoy gambling?

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- 22 Are you able to accept changes in plans without feeling upset?
- 23 Do you prefer dogs to cats?
- 24 Will you exchange casual glances with strangers rather than avoiding eye contact?
- 25 Are you willing to try out new brands of cosmetics or toothpaste?
- 26 Do you enjoy playing games at parties?
- 27 Do you usually feel well?
- 28 Do you like to meet people?
- 29 Do you like practical jokes?
- 30 Are you inclined to enjoy the drinks tonight without worrying about tomorrow?
- 31 Would you prefer to play drums rather than a flute?
- 32 Do your friends accuse you of never relaxing?
- 33 Are you good in an emergency?
- 34 Do you lose your temper easily?
- 35 Are you always ready to look ahead even when you have real personal problems?

Count up your yes answers and compare the number with your no answers. If you have more yes than no answers, you are extroverted. If you have more no answers, you are introverted. The greater the difference between yes and no answers, the more you are extroverted or introverted.

Extroversion is a trait description, and means that you turn your interest and attention to things, people and events outside yourself. You prefer the passing show to the contemplative life, society to isolation. But if you turn your interest and attention upon yourself, you are introverted.

Now, ask yourself a further question: Do you like spicy food? Does your answer seem to fit your answers to the earlier questions? In theory at least, if your answers were yes, you should like spicy foods, but if your answers were no, you should tend to like food relatively unseasoned.

Extroversion and introversion are extremes on a personality scale invented by the Swiss psychiatrist, C. J. Jung. Like Freud, his one-time colleague in the psychoanalytic

movement, Jung sometimes sought physical explanations for behaviour. He considered that extroverts are more excitable than introverts. Professor H.J. Eysenck, who teaches psychiatry in London, has reversed Jung's physiological hypothesis. Eysenck has pointed out that about half of our brain cells inhibit the sending of messages by other cells. Only the other half excite cells to signal (see Chapter 2). He believes that extroverts are those people in whom the inhibitory activity of nerve cells in their brains overbalances the excitatory cells. Introverts are those in whom excitatory activity overbalances inhibitory activity. Thus, if you like spicy foods, perhaps it is because the nerve cells in your brain that register taste sensations require more excitation to overcome the inhibitory activity of other nerve cells, according to Eysenck, the foundation of an extroverted personality.

Eysenck is, of course, using the word, 'excitable' in a different way from Jung, to refer to the behaviour of cells rather than to the behaviour of the whole organism. His studies, using tests analogous to Game 1.1, indicate that introverts are more likely to become neurotic than extroverts. On the other hand, the old idea that hysteria is associated with extroversion does not appear to be true. Introverts are more easily conditioned than extroverts, presumably because their nerve cells respond more quickly to stimuli. Introverts tend to be less vigilant than extroverts and show less tolerance for pain. Extroverts are slower at rote learning, but introverts are more easily distracted from learning tasks. However, Eysenck recognizes that there is no clear demarcation between the two traits. They tend to blend into each other. Each of us is more or less introverted, less or more extroverted. In Game 1.1, very few if any readers will have all yes answers or all no answers.

As with the other personality traits described in this chapter, extroversion-introversion is a continuum. People differ in an infinite series of stages between one extreme and the other. Sexuality, intelligence and emotionality are each a continuum. No scale of sexuality is commonly agreed, but several stereotypes exist and will be examined in part two