

TITLE: *Surrounded By Idiots* (2019)

Author(s): Thomas Erikson

My Story:

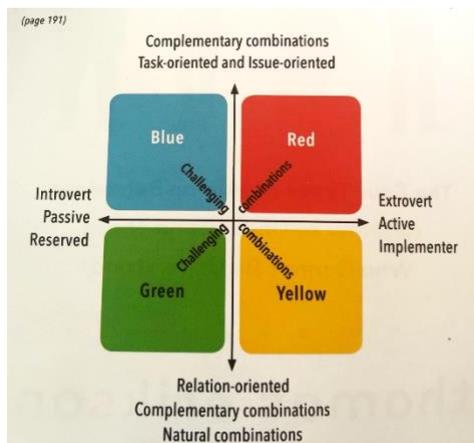
As a coach, I listen to what’s going on behind the words. I listen to the emotion, and very often, frustration with colleagues. It’s my job to help people become aware of their own subconscious beliefs and behaviours which are getting in their way of enjoying productive and warm working relationships. Using a communication profiling tool allows us to have that conversation without judgement or criticism, of themselves or others. It allows them to celebrate their preferences and talents, in a positive light, but also recognise how these can lead to poor relationships if others are starting from a different set of personality and communication traits. At Leadership Edge, we are all about developing school culture, community and success for all. Relationships are at the heart of that. And to relate well to others, you need to know yourself first. What makes you tick? What makes you annoyed?

Why do I think this is a great book?

This book is so easy to read. Erikson uses animated and real-life examples to create an entertaining introduction to human behaviour and communication. He includes detailed descriptions of the four colour types and how to apply this knowledge:

- How to recognise them
- Their Strengths
- Their Limitations
- How to adapt to get the best out of them
- How to give feedback to them
- Likely stress factors

In the second half of the book, we learn more about the psychology of group dynamics, as Erikson explains which combinations are likely to work well together, and those which may be challenging:



There is also a chapter on the development of personality theory over time, for those who want to know more theory and detail and to finish, he includes some interviews from leaders about what they've learnt through using colour profiling in their organisations.

The Key Learning

- Self-awareness: know your personality preferences and be proud of them (but also be aware of how they can be perceived less positively)
- Relationships: recognise the preferences of others and respect them
- At work: be tactical with how you distribute different types of tasks
- In groups: anticipate where there may be challenging combinations

Final comment

This book takes an approach which will appeal to everyone: theoretical and practical, light-hearted and poignant, personal and universal. The title is, of course, a nod to the unaware in our schools who see themselves as "right" and others as "wrong". This book encourages everybody to be themselves through self-awareness, respect for each other and, my key passion, active listening to see things from other people's perspectives. By the end of the book you may want to suggest a new title, for example, "Surrounded by colourful gifts".