

The LAUNCH Podcast – Know Thyself with Alana Adams

[00:00:00] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:00:00] Hi everyone. This is another episode of The LAUNCH Podcast. This is Kayla Hogrefe, Academic Advisor on the Hartford campus for the School of Business. And in this episode we are interviewing Alana Adams, who is the Director of Academic Advising for the School of Business Undergraduate Program. And we are talking to Alana about the Myers Briggs type indicator personality inventory.

[00:00:30] Essentially what that is is a self-report questionnaire that helps people understand their psychological preferences and how they perceive the world around them and make different decisions. So it's normally called the MBTI just to shorten that a whole long name, and it's based on a theory that was put forth by a psychiatrist and researcher named Carl Jung.

[00:00:54] You might hear different people at different times talk about being introverted or being [00:01:00] extroverted or being analytical or being, judgmental in certain ways. And so those are all kind of phrases that the MBTI uses and it measures people on different dichotomies in terms of their personality.

[00:01:17] It's a little bit complicated. You might want to, you know, spend some time researching it. It's really interesting though, and Alana is essentially somewhat of an expert in the MBTI, so she's certified to give this assessment and then she helps people analyze their results and understand how it applies to their lives.

[00:01:39] So she's a great person to listen to as she explains this. And we wanted to interview Alana about the MBTI because it's just a helpful way to get to know oneself and especially in terms of how you interact with people, how you perceive the world, and it might influence things like your career path, or how [00:02:00] you intake information and that sort of thing.

[00:02:02] So please take a listen. hopefully you find this interesting and helpful. Here is Alana Adams.

[00:02:18] Can you tell us your name and your position at UConn?

[00:02:22] **Alana Adams:** [00:02:22] My name is Alana Adams and I am the Director of Academic Advising here in the Office of Undergraduate Advising and the School of Business.

[00:02:31] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:02:31] And can you tell us about where we're interviewing you to learn more about the Myers Briggs type indicator test. So can you tell us what the heck I just said and how it's helpful for students?

[00:02:43] **Alana Adams:** [00:02:43] Sure. So the Myer Briggs type indicator, which is long for MBTI, is an assessment that was developed to help bring a certain theory to life so Jung's personality type [00:03:00] theory, is, is kind of assessed with this tool. And ideally using it, you just learn more about your innate and natural preferences, which will help to become more self aware and a better all around person, I believe.

[00:03:17] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:03:17] And you studied psychology in your undergrad, right?

[00:03:19] **Alana Adams:** [00:03:19] I did. I did. I went to UConn, and I did a dual degree, one in finance in the School of Business. So then my second in psychology, which was really something that I was very interested in. This is always been very intriguing to me. so this fits right in with that.

[00:03:36] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:03:36] So you studied Carl Jung while you were an undergrad.

[00:03:38] **Alana Adams:** [00:03:38] I did, yeah. Yeah.

[00:03:40] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:03:40] That's how you found out about Myers Briggs.

[00:03:41] **Alana Adams:** [00:03:41] Yes.

[00:03:42] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:03:42] So, well, I guess I stole the thunder from my next question, but as someone who studied psychology, what is it about the Myers Briggs that interest and excites you in particular?

[00:03:51] **Alana Adams:** [00:03:51] there's so much that I feel like, we're not aware of [00:04:00] unless you're kind of presented with the information. And so there's, there's a lot that I learned about myself, within a personal context, professional context. After becoming MBTI certified and, and, and really diving in to using the MBTI and a lot of different ways, but specifically within advising.

[00:04:20] there, there are assumptions that we all make, whether we mean to or not. and I think learning more about. Your own kind of preferences that kind of are highlighted by Jung's theory help you to, be more aware of those assumptions that you make and, and try your best to alter them.

[00:04:41] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:04:41] Do you mean assumptions in terms of like how, like when you see something happening. Or when you're sitting in class and somebody says something and you interpret it a certain way?

[00:04:50] **Alana Adams:** [00:04:50] Yes. So yeah, so like you kind of assume everyone is learning the same way, or assume someone is hearing the words you're saying and interpreting the way, [00:05:00] interpreting them the way that you intend and them being interpreted. But that isn't always the case. And I think we can all think of situations where you realize after the fact that maybe it didn't get interpreted the way you mean. And I think a lot of that has to do with these kind of underlying preferences. So yeah,

[00:05:14] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:05:14] it's like nature versus nurture, but it's like a combination of both

[00:05:17] **Alana Adams:** [00:05:17] it well, so that's an interesting thing that you brought up.

[00:05:20] So as like a little bit of background, so Jung used to be a disciple of Freud. So Freud was very much on like the, the. The nurture side of things. So everything was your

mother's fault, right? Yes. Right. It was very like based on the, the nurturing side, and then that's where Jung and Freud kind of went their separate ways when young said, well, there's something in our nature that is determining our personality.

[00:05:48] So that's, Jung's theory is very much, um. The, the nature side of the debate. You're born with these preferences, whether you like it or not, you, you can't change them. [00:06:00] your type isn't, doesn't change over time. You're, you were born with a certain type. You certainly learn how to flex into these other kind of nonpreferred um dichotomies. That's kind of part of becoming a healthy adult is learning about what those non preference items are and, and, and getting better at them. But your type doesn't change, says the theory.

[00:06:26] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:06:26] So when you say, like somebody who's a certain type, you're talking about like introverted versus extrovert.

[00:06:32] **Alana Adams:** [00:06:32] Yes.

[00:06:32] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:06:32] And what are the other

[00:06:33] **Alana Adams:** [00:06:33] So there's, so there's four sets of dichotomies, which comes out to 16 different, four letter types. So I am an I N T J, so I prefer introversion, intuition, thinking and judging. The opposites are, this is going to be a good test. Extroversion, sensing, feeling, and perceiving.

[00:06:58] So those are the [00:07:00] two sets of the four dichotomies. And so you can, everyone has a natural preference for one or the other, and that ends up indicating what your four letter type is

[00:07:12] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:07:12] But you're not, what you were just saying. It's like you're not holed into that. It like exists on a spectrum?

[00:07:18] **Alana Adams:** [00:07:18] So it's not, it's actually not a spectrum because, with type theory, it's, it's, you're, you're sorting people into group and group B, so you have a preference. It's either A or B. It's not like, well, kind of a, but sometimes B, it really strips it down to like, okay, your preference is a, but it doesn't mean you can't behave like a B every now and then, but your preference, your go to kind of knee jerk natural inclination is always a. but that's what I also meant about becoming like an adult.

[00:07:53] Over time, you learn how to flex into those other areas that maybe you don't prefer to [00:08:00] live in, but it's part of your job and you got to do it and you can be really good at it. But it is contrary to what your natural preference is. other thing that's important to like always make sure, and I talk about this to students, that let's say you kind of get your type, what you want to make sure is that you're never identifying behaviors.

[00:08:24] You don't want to try to predict someone's behavior because now you know their type or you know your type, and now that's predetermined assumptions. Correct. Right. So it's kind of getting to the fact that you have a preference. You're born with it, but it's no way to try to. Predict what someone's going to do or how they're going to behave.

[00:08:43] We always can behave contrary to what our personality might say, but

[00:08:50] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:08:50] So along those lines, how does understanding your own MBTI profile and maybe knowing somebody else's like helps you in different [00:09:00] facets? How does that help you different facets of your life?

[00:09:02] **Alana Adams:** [00:09:02] Well. I think it's been helpful to illuminate that people have different preferences and that, you know, I have a strong preference for call it intuition, or that's where it's, I kind of prefer to see things in a big picture way and I pay less getting bogged down by the detail, even though I love details.

[00:09:25] But the details make no sense to me until I know what the big picture is. And so just knowing how others' preferences are, that can help me to adjust how I explain something to somebody. Cause my natural way to explain something would be to start with a big picture and then like, just drop in details here and there, but to someone who prefers s or sensing that may be really hard to put together where you may want to reverse it and start with some of the really concrete details and work towards building a bigger picture.

[00:09:57] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:09:57] Wow. So like, like our whole office has taken [00:10:00] this assessment. And so do you have those in your head of like what our types are?

[00:10:05] **Alana Adams:** [00:10:05] I don't have them in my head, but I, I have, I used to, I used to have it on the wall, but I took it down.

[00:10:09] I have it somewhere.

[00:10:09] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:10:09] Like you're used to communicating with each of us

[00:10:12] **Alana Adams:** [00:10:12] I try and try. It's not easy. It's like, it's kind of like that whole preference piece where it's like you're, you're, you're very inclined to just act without thinking about something. And then if you take some extra time to say, okay, if I need to, if I need to achieve X, like here, I can take a step back and try to figure out what's the best way to get there. And that may be including what people's preferences are.

[00:10:40] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:10:40] What are some common misconceptions? Cause I know that there's a lot.

[00:10:43] **Alana Adams:** [00:10:43] There are so many yes.

[00:10:46] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:10:46] Especially like the introversion versus extroversion one.

[00:10:50] **Alana Adams:** [00:10:50] One of my like biggest challenges that I feel like it needs to be addressed is, like the introversion, extroversion, like you were talking about, because [00:11:00] that those words, unlike any of the other dichotomies, I feel like those words are so commonly used in our culture that they've kind of assumed other definitions that are outside of the MBTI use of it, but within the MBTI, it's really about where you get your energy and how you use your energy. It has nothing to do with being outgoing or shy. Like I always get really frustrated. Yeah. When people assume, Oh, you're shy, you're an introvert, or if you're an introvert, you're shy.

[00:11:29] And same thing with extrovert. It doesn't mean you're outgoing. There can be an outgoing introvert and a shy extrovert. It's really more about. Where do you get your energy from? So someone who's in, who prefers introversion, and that's something else I try to say, try not to like label people with introvert or extrovert, but just say I prefer introversion and I prefer extraversion cause again, it's not necessarily a definition, it's just a preference.

[00:11:53] but if someone is preferring introversion, it just means that their energy [00:12:00] is more directed inwards. And that's how they gain energy is by going inwards, like spending more time in that inner world, where someone who prefers extraversion has a natural preference for the outer world and gains energy by spending time in the outer world, and recharges that way.

[00:12:21] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:12:21] So would you say someone who has a preference for introversion, they would be like, like if they went to a big party or a concert or something, like they would feel drained after that and like want to be as far away from people as possible.

[00:12:34] **Alana Adams:** [00:12:34] Yes. And as someone who's strongly prefers, introversion, that is exactly how I feel after. And I know, which can be so much fun. So it's not saying that someone's not enjoying their time out. It can be a blast, but when that time is done, it's like I need to retreat and just kind of have some quiet time where others, my husband, for instance. He is someone who prefers extraversion after that kind of event. You want to kind of talk about it and like [00:13:00] stay in the moment. And it's just like, it's, it's, it can be really hard, but we'd be like, you've talked, you asked about, you know, on a personal or professional level, but so on a personal level, and this has also been helpful too, because like we've talked, we talk about what our natural preferences are and kind of being able to say like, Nope, I need like quiet time for now. And knowing it's nothing personal. It's just how, how my personality is built, you know? And it's, it's been, ha, it's helpful.

[00:13:27] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:13:27] So. can you think of any other big misconceptions surrounding, maybe not necessarily even a misunderstanding between the types, but maybe how people apply it or what people think it is?

[00:13:40] **Alana Adams:** [00:13:40] the other one that I could say is that it changes over time. And according to the theory, it does not. Jung's theory was that you're born with these preferences, they don't change. Like I said, maybe you're. You get used to flexing into a non-preferred dichotomy, but that doesn't change what your [00:14:00] preferences are, what, what you were born with.

[00:14:02] the only explanation there can be is if you're taking the real MBTI, if you're, if you're, if your types are changing, it means you've answered questions differently. So when we have students take the MBTI, we always prep them with like a mindset. Exercise to really get them in the right mindset because that's going to determine the answers to your questions, but it's really about trying to like strip everything down. You know, not thinking about you as a son or daughter or sibling or an employee or a student or you know, we might have different preferences in those different environments, but really trying to get to

the bottom of what you as a person naturally prefer. If you could have the world just the way you wanted it, like what would those preferences be?

[00:14:49] Cause then that would get you what your, your, your true preference according to young is. And then that would only serve to just help understand [00:15:00] and learn more about how that impacts your daily life.

[00:15:04] How

[00:15:06] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:15:06] do you think that understanding your profile and understanding other people's profiles can be beneficial specifically for college students?

[00:15:15] **Alana Adams:** [00:15:15] I think for college students, there's like, there's so much change happening, during that period of your life. And I think, I know for me a lot of it was just learning more about myself and trying to figure out you know, what major was right for me, or what career path was right for me. And I think the more information that you can learn about yourself and what that might mean, within a professional or personal context, I think is just super helpful, uh, to just make decisions, knowing that information. you know, and I think there's, you know, relationships are obviously a very important part of anybody's life. I think that can be really helpful too, is just learning more about how [00:16:00] someone's preferences might be different than yours. And that's why, that's why we're not seeing eye to eye on something, because we're not. We're speaking two different languages right now. so I think that just that awareness factor is really important. so it just like self awareness I think is just generally important for, for being like a healthy human being. So I think it helps you become way more self aware of what maybe you weren't even thinking of.

[00:16:24] You know, it's those, it's like subconsciously happening. And then hopefully MBTI helps bring that stuff to light. And that it can become more conscious.

[00:16:33] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:16:33] And I think it does sound like it helps students even specifically in terms of academic success, because it helps you understand how you process your environment and your worldview and how you intake information.

[00:16:46] You know, when you're learning a concept in a classroom, does it help you to understand the details or like, the greater historical context

[00:16:53] **Alana Adams:** [00:16:53] Or if, if you're finding yourself exhausted all the time, is it because you prefer introversion and you're not giving yourself [00:17:00] enough time to recharge or. You know, so planning your day, if you know you're going to have a big day, you would prefer introversion give yourself time to have that recharge moment or, or vice versa. You know, I think there's even like roommate kind of, if you, if you and your roommate are two different preferences and that way, kind of come to an agreement about how, and you know where things can kind of work.

[00:17:23] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:17:23] So what do you think a first year college student in particular could take away from this conversation about MBTI? Especially in terms of like their educational path and academics.

[00:17:33] **Alana Adams:** [00:17:33] Sure. well, I, I hope if you're listening, you're finding this to be very interesting and that you might want to learn more about it, but I think more specifically it might be able to really help the awareness factor, especially when it comes to learning style, your, your preferred, learning style and also identifying teaching styles. And so being able to [00:18:00] identify when those match really well and adjust or maybe not having to adjust so much when it comes to studying, or identifying when maybe they're not matching as well as you had liked, and identify ways that you can either, you know, flex out of your preference a little bit, or identify other resources on campus that could help fill the holes a little bit and just help students be a little bit more aware and proactive in seeking out ways to, uh, academically succeed instead of having kind of a more reactive plan where you kind of noticed after the fact that things aren't going so well and making changes, but kind of really on the front end identifying when, it's, it looks like it's going to work and when it looks like you might need a little bit extra assistance,

[00:18:50] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:18:50] I imagine it's healthy and encouraged to try to challenge oneself to explore like the opposite

[00:18:58] **Alana Adams:** [00:18:58] For sure. Well, and that's, you [00:19:00] know, I think I said it before where it's like becoming a successful adult is kind of learning how to successfully flex into those non-preferred dichotomies where, you know, if you just live in your preference forever, it's not like you're going to miss out on a lot of, as a person.

[00:19:16] Right. Yeah. So I think the first step is kind of becoming aware that you even have a preference and then, yeah. Challenging yourself a little bit. too. To develop in those areas. Like I'm, I've said I strongly prefer introversion, but I wouldn't be able to do my job if I didn't extrovert on like an every other day basis in my job.

[00:19:37] And I just know how to then, you know, self care is very important on those days. which is another thing a first year student can be aware of too - self care is so important. Even within an academic context, you know, being able to perform at your best academically is really related to how you are taking care of yourself.

[00:19:55] and so knowing what that looks like for you specifically, cause it's gonna look [00:20:00] different from person to person and friend to friend, and making those decisions for yourself on how to properly care for yourself is going to lead to, the best academic performance that you can, that you can accomplish.

[00:20:13] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:20:13] Great. So just wrapping up your how, how can students learn more about MBTI and how could they actually take this assessment? What does it maybe, what does the assessment entail even?

[00:20:23] Sure,

[00:20:25] **Alana Adams:** [00:20:25] it is, it's usually takes a, I want to say about a half an hour. I think it's. 144 questions, it might be less than, they're all multiple choice.

[00:20:34] again, there's sorting, you know, it's questions that sort your preferences. the MBTI does have a cost associated with it. You know, it's, uh, it's based on a theory which.

You can kind of Google and find out a whole bunch about online, but the MBTI itself, the real one, is not available, for free. But it's super exciting that we have, here in the school of business workshops, in our [00:21:00] LAUNCH Your Leadership series that we make available to all UConn undergrad students.

[00:21:05] and if you aren't already getting our launch emails, you can always opt in on our website.

[00:21:11] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:21:11] I'll put a link in the episode notes so students can get there.

[00:21:14] **Alana Adams:** [00:21:14] Perfect. Perfect. Yep. So we try to do them a couple across the campuses, every year. So that's the best way to gain access to that if you're a student here at UConn.

[00:21:28] and then. Our advisors here in the school of business are all very prepared to kind of talk through how a student's type might be affecting their academics or career decisions. We're happy to kind of have those discussions,

[00:21:42] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:21:42] And if one was to Google the research of Jung, it is Carl j. U. N. G. right?

[00:21:52] **Alana Adams:** [00:21:52] Yes. Yep.

[00:21:53] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:21:53] Thank you so much.

[00:21:54] **Alana Adams:** [00:21:54] Thank you for having me.

[00:22:04] [00:22:00] **Emma Bjorngard:** [00:22:04] So there you have it. That was Alana Adams. Director of Academic Advising, talking to Kayla about the MBTI personality test. I'm Emma Bjorngard, Academic Advisor in Stamford, and I just wanted to share some of my thoughts around the MBTI. One thing that stood out to me in Kayla's and Alana's conversation, uh, was when Alana was talking about how knowing different preferences that people have can actually be helpful. You know, dealing with living with people you haven't lived with before in college and having conversations about, you know, topics that you might be disagreeing about that he could actually be a benefit to know, like how they process information. that was definitely something I wish I had known about my roommates. I think I would have made some of our interactions, more, I don't know, easier to process, I guess. Um. [00:23:00] Another thing that speaks to me was how she was talking about that. Sometimes you just might feel exhausted after having been in certain environments. Say if you're an introvert. Um, I, myself have a preference towards introversion. So that definitely is true for me, and it has helped me, you know, knowing my MBTI profile, you know, to just be more understanding of why I do certain things, and not kind of beat myself up about it.

[00:23:31] so with that, I hope that you read more about the MBTI, and participate in one of our workshops on campus.