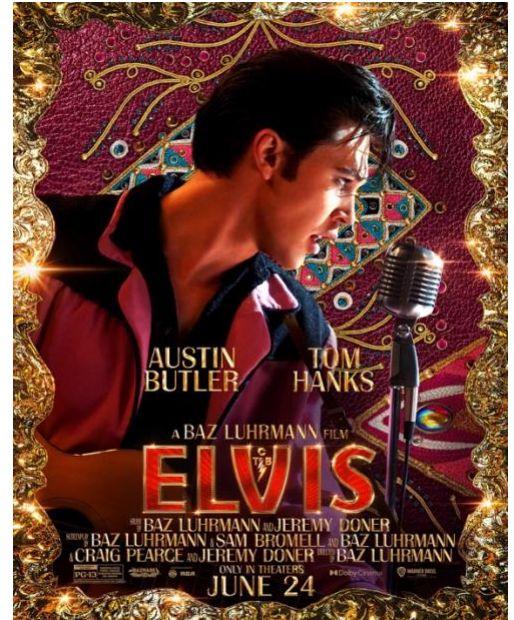


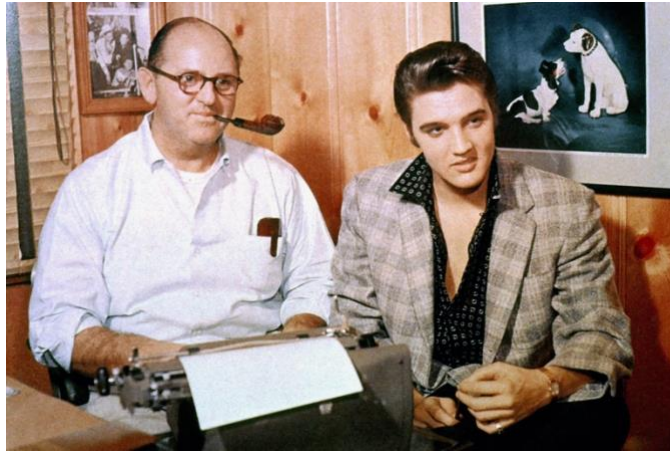
Elvis – Personality and Style

As a compulsive personality watcher, the amazing Baz Luhrmann *Elvis* movie is not only one of the best films I've seen for ages, but also captures the personalities of the main characters with incredible depth and consistency. The film mainly revolves around the relationship between Elvis – played by the 'sure to win an Oscar' Austin Butler, and his manager, Colonel Tom Parker – played by the ever-wonderful Tom Hanks.

Elvis is thought to have the ISFP Personality Type (as analysed by internationally renowned Personality Type expert and Elvis super fan, Mary McGuiness). For people of this type, identity, being guided by their inner values and feeling like they are being true to themselves is fundamental to their being. I often hear people of this type describing it as the need to “feel comfortable in my own skin”. Another frequently seen characteristic of the ISFP type is having a sense of unique style and creatively harnessing the 'zeitgeist' of the time to create a unique identity (think Bowie, Lady Gaga, Hendrix, Rhianna and anyone you know who is quietly super-cool).



Without wanting to give any spoilers (but GO SEE IT YOURSELF!) there are several key points in the film where Elvis' sense of losing his identity and becoming inauthentic seems to be tearing him apart from the inside. Usually quite accommodating, peace-seeking and easy-going, ISFPs will fiercely defend their values when they have been crossed. This is excellently portrayed in a particularly stunningly shot scene where Elvis is being forced to perform with a clean-cut, fake persona. He is seen slowly simmering, contemplating his next move, and then he metaphorically 'turns his true personality up to 11' and defiantly shows his oppressors who he really is. Needless to say, this gets him into rather a spot of bother – but also creates a great impact, which is a real boost for people with this Personality Type. The theme of identity and authenticity is strongly present throughout the film, with other scenes such as the famous 1968 televised 'Comeback Special' showing how essential it was for Elvis to try to recapture his identity while others tried to suffocate it. Another fundamental need for people with the ISFP Personality Type is the need for Freedom; feeling constrained or that they have no choice is painful to the core. Towards the end of the film, Elvis's sense of being 'caught in a trap' becomes overwhelming; watching it you can almost feel his pain and frustration. From where I was sitting, it was this lack of freedom that was a key contribution to his deterioration and depression– finding escape through substance abuse seemed to be one of very few available options in his situation.



Elvis and Colonel Tom Parker

The relationship dynamics between the Elvis and Colonel Tom Parker characters was really fascinating and requires some deep analysis. So I am hoping that next week, once Mary McGuiness has seen the film, we will have a deep discussion together and come back to you with our collective thoughts. Watch this space! And go and watch the film so I can say more without spoilers !!!!!!!