

Pockets of Pleasure Episode 9

Hello and welcome to this week's episode of Pockets of Pleasure.

In today's episode we're going to be exploring a life changing piece of information, The Sensory Types.

Woah, hang on, life changing? That's rather a big promise isn't it?

Yes it is, and I stand by it! I truly believe, because of my own experience and that of the many people I've shared this information with, that what you're going to discover today will change the way you think about yourself and those around you. It will give you a whole new perspective on so many aspects of your life and relationships, that, I don't think it's over egging the pudding to say that your life might never be the same again!

There is so much to cover about the sensory types that it would make this a very long episode, so instead of hitting you with information overload, I'm going to split it into two episodes. This week is the over view and next week we'll look in more depth at each of the types, exploring how they work in relationship with each other.

Right then let's get to it!

We might know on some level that everyone experiences the world in their own unique way, but for most, if not all of us, this is kind of an academic knowing. We see the world through our own eyes and assume everyone else sees it the same.

There are many reasons why this wouldn't be the case - from colour blindness and other visual disparities to the total loss of sight or other senses. But underneath all of that is the way our brain processes sensory stimuli which is where the sensory types come in.

Current research tells us that there are four sensory types, these are:

The Seeker

The Sensor

The Avoider

and The Bystander

Which are decided by two factors:

Your threshold for sensory stimuli - how much sensory stimuli your brain needs in order to be happy, and your mode of self-regulation - how you deal with sensory stimuli.

You will have either a high or low threshold and either an active or passive mode of self regulation - if this isn't making much sense right now, don't worry, it will all become clear, but first... I'm going to throw something extra into the mix...

It's currently agreed that we have 8 senses, however, there are scientists who believe we have as many as 33! Yes, really!

Whilst probably very unlikely, it IS potentially possible for our brains to process information from each of the senses differently. The other year I worked out (with a little mathematical help!) that this means, working on us having 8 senses, that there are a possible 36 thousand possible sensory permutations, but if we have 33 senses.... well, I can't even begin to imagine what that number would look like! But I think it's safe to say that we all experience the world in unique ways!

As I've said, it's unlikely that each of our senses gets processed differently, but it's definitely something worth considering if it helps us to better understand the potential for someone else to be experiencing the same thing we are in a markedly different way.

Now you have all that potential difference in mind, let's circle back to the 4 types.

We'll start with the threshold for sensory stimuli - in my workshops I like to help people visualise this by using a bucket and a thimble. The bucket represents the high threshold, whilst the thimble represents the low. If we imagine water representing sensory stimuli, it's easy to picture how little it would take before the thimble reached full capacity, vs how much more the bucket would take.

The ideal situation for both bucket and thimble would be to maintain a steady 3/4 fullness - that way there's capacity to deal with any extra input without the bucket or thimble (aka the brain) becoming overloaded.

Seekers and Bystanders are the metaphorical buckets - they have a high threshold for sensory stimuli, whilst Sensors and Avoiders are the thimbles with a low threshold.

The second aspect of sensory typing is your expressed mode of self regulation which will be active or passive.

This means that you will either actively create your ideal levels of sensory stimuli OR you will passively experience sensory stimuli until it reaches a point at which you have to do something to change it in order to be comfortable.

So to go back to the bucket and thimble - if your self-regulation is passive, this would be like pouring water from a jug and only stopping once the water was spilling all over the table.

If you have active self regulation you'd keep an eye on the water levels and stop pouring once the container was about 3/4 full.

Bystanders and Sensors have passive self regulation - they're the ones cleaning up the spilt water, whereas the Seekers and Avoiders have active self-regulation - they're the ones who are keeping an eye on and controlling the water levels.

So what does this all mean?

Well, to put it into a Pockets of Pleasure perspective, understanding your sensory type can help you to own your pleasure without any sense of shame or embarrassment. It can help you to feel more confident and comfortable in your own skin, bringing a greater acceptance of the fact that, what you find pleasurable may look different to the way society, your friends, family and social media portrays the 'right way' to enjoy life.

It can have an even more profound impact on your life when you use this information to improve your relationships, your work and home environments, basically, every element of your life can benefit by being viewed through the filter of your sensory type.

But we'll begin exploring that after we've taken a little brain break....

MUSIC

Welcome back.

If you've ever taken a personality test such as Myers Briggs or even the Love Languages test, you'll have discovered just how useful your type can be when navigating jobs and relationships. These are more or less commonly accepted methods of self discovery, but sensory typing is still unheard of in the wider population, it tends to be something those in the Autistic communities know about, as Autistic people struggle so much with sensory input.

Whenever I talk about my work, most people assume I work in the special needs field, as there is this assumption that 'sensory' equals either special needs or babies, but we all have senses and unique sensory needs, and so, from the very start of The Sensory Coach it's been my goal to bring the senses into the mainstream.

The Sensory Types add an extra layer to the standard psychometric tests, offering a depth of self understanding that, in my opinion, is unparalleled in it's ability to change your life for the better.

And, on top of the difference it can make to your own life, I truly believe that, the more people who have this knowledge, the more compassion and acceptance of difference there will be in the world.

I'm going to give you a quick run through of the four types now. As you listen, see if anything jumps out at you as sounding rather familiar..

Seekers

If you were to describe a seeker with just one word it would be **MORE!!** in bold capitals with all the exclamation marks!

Seekers actively seek out sensory stimulation, their brains need lots of input to feel happy and they're not afraid to hunt it out. They love vibrant colours, intense flavours, tactile textures, strong scents and lots of movement, light and sound. They are the thrill seekers, the people who'll make a party go with a bang, although some of the other types can find their zest for life exhausting.

Sensors

If you were to describe a sensor with just one word it might be overwhelm.

The sensors are the overflowing thimbles, their brains quickly become overloaded, needing only a little sensory stimulation to keep them on an even keel.

They tend to have highly sensitive sensory equipment so will be fantastic at noticing the small details and nuances most people miss, but they're not very good at keeping themselves at a comfortable level and can quickly become overwhelmed. Because of this they can appear to be short tempered or demanding when they quickly need to reduce the sensory stimulation in their surroundings.

Avoiders are similar to sensors in that they are thimbles, needing very little sensory input to satisfy them, but, unlike the sensors, they have active self regulation, so will create a comfortable environment for themselves in order to avoid the feeling of sensory overwhelm.

If you were to pick one word to describe an avoider you might choose precision.

They can be perceived as being a bit boring or set in their ways by their more sensation loving friends and colleagues, but that's the way of life that feels good to them, no amount of pushing, teasing or cajoling will turn them into a wild seeker, they're not that way and they know it.

Last but not least we have the Bystanders. Now, in my experience, people often find the name of this Sensory Type rather insulting, often denying that this is their type. But Bystanders are great people to have around due to their easy going nature.

If you were to choose one word to describe them it would be oblivious.

They have a large capacity for sensory input but, because, unlike the seekers, it's coupled with passive self regulation, they can move through the hustle and bustle of life without noticing very much about what's going on around them. This means they tend to be laid back and not prone to getting stressed out, but it can also mean they move through life in a bit of a dream like state. Their sensory systems need IN YOUR FACE stimulation in order to be aware of their surroundings. This can make them seem insensitive, and to an extent that's exactly what they are, but it's not a deliberate act, they just need things pointing out to them.

Now don't forget, it's possible to experience a mixture of the types across the senses.

As an example, my key type is The Sensor but within that I have seeker tendencies particularly for taste and visual stimuli. My eyes have always needed a lot of stimulation for me to be happy - so a zen, minimalist style home would feel like a padded cell to me, whereas for another sensor that environment would be blissful.

That's probably plenty of information to take in for now so we're going to have another quick brain break before digging into this week's pocket challenge.

MUSIC

Welcome back! This week's Pocket Challenge is super simple, in fact, it'll take you less than 2 minutes to do!

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to discover your sensory type.

How? Well, I've made it super easy for you - all you need to do is take the sensory types quiz which you can find

I'll pop a link in the shownotes for this episode but you can also find the quiz by going to the homepage of my website thesensorycoach.com and simply clicking the button that reads....

Once you've discovered your main type you can start to explore how this plays out in your daily life, and, if it doesn't feel like the full sensory story, you can begin noticing where a different type might be more in line with a particular sense.

If you want to explore this even further, you might want to get yourself a copy of my 28 sensory journal, which will guide you through the process in greater detail. I'll pop links to both the digital and analogue versions in the shownotes which you can find by going to thesensorycoach.com/shownotes and clicking on episode 9.

I would love to hear how you get on and if you have any aha moments when you find out your sensory type so do feel free to leave a comment on my site or send me a DM on instagram @thesensorycoach

In next week's episode we'll look in more detail at how the sensory types can look in relationships, which is the point at which so many people suddenly have light bulb moments of realisation!

We'll also explore how this knowledge can help you in the workplace, at home and how it can even save you money!

Until then, have a lovely week exploring your senses and looking out for more pockets of pleasure!

MUSIC