



THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU

The Entrepreneurial Personality
Type (EPT) and
the Future of Everything

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From the very beginning of human society, a part of the population has consistently driven our positive evolution.

They were the first to discover new territories. The first to explore tools and language. The first to form culture and government and technologies. They have made enormous contributions to the world, and yet today they are often the first to be medicated, jailed, or put in rehab.

They are the Entrepreneurial Personality Type (EPT), and until now this subpopulation has been overlooked by society. In order for us to maximize their potential—and that of humanity—we have to better understand these unique individuals, learn how best to protect and support them, and even come to the realization that we may be looking at them in the mirror.

You Are Not Alone

The Entrepreneurial Personality Type (EPT) is a previously unidentified and misunderstood population that has lived among us for generations. Individuals with this personality type have unique abilities and see the world differently.

More specifically, the EPT is a meta-personality type identified by a cognitive and physiological response to momentum, or the sensation of moving forward. As such, the specific attributes of the EPT are highly sensitive to constraint, or anything that limits their momentum.

When protected and supported, EPT attributes develop into unique strengths and abilities, and often create unexpected and impressive outcomes. When suppressed, these same attributes can be destructive or even appear as disorders.

The EPT is not a vision I have for the future or a reflection on what could be. The fact is, the EPT has been evident in the biographies, letters, and writings of famous leaders throughout history. EPTs have specific attributes, and don't be surprised if you begin to see evidence of them in yourself and others, both past and present.

You may find these attributes have been with you your entire life. You may read them and feel a connection to something that was missing in your life. And you may even come to the realization that these attributes have been suppressed for years, based on the negative interactions you've had with others. This is an unfortunate and all-too-common reality for EPTs today.

My primary hope in discovering and sharing the EPT is that it illuminates a singular message for every EPT across the world:

There is nothing wrong with you, and you are not alone.

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Momentum-Based Beings

Entrepreneurial Personality Types (EPTs) are momentum-based beings, meaning they have a mental, physical, and biological response to momentum, or the sensation of moving forward. Conversely, EPTs also have negative responses to constraint, or anything hindering their ability to move forward. Constraint of any kind adversely affect their emotional states and their understanding of where they fit in the world.

When I talk to entrepreneurs about this concept, most of them instantly agree and realize it clarifies their behaviors and reactions to the world around them. But some remain confused by the terminology. This is understandable because for most of our lives we have thought of momentum purely from what we learned in high school physics. So what does that have to do with who we are and how we feel? Perhaps one of these situations sounds familiar to you:

“Feelings of frustration, stagnation and constraint signal the search for momentum in your life.”

- You wanted to move forward, but couldn't. Progress was slow and exhausting. Every step forward was quickly followed by another step backward.
- You wanted to get unstuck, but couldn't. Something was holding you back. You were overwhelmed and became your own biggest obstacle to moving forward.
- You wanted to achieve your goals faster, but couldn't. You didn't know how or what was missing. It felt like the entire universe was against you.

The good news is we've all been there. You are not alone.

These situations and feelings are common, especially among EPTs, and they are the signposts of momentum-based beings. Feelings of frustration, stagnation, and constraint signal the search for momentum in your life. Understanding this will begin to clarify how you make decisions, how you react to challenges, and the reasons behind your behavior (good, bad and neutral).

It may even illuminate the forces behind your emotional states. In fact, many momentum-based individuals identify with the sensations of momentum and constraint more strongly than with traditionally labeled emotions. For example, have you ever found yourself confused or alienated by cartoon "emotion charts" with faces for happy, sad, frustrated, angry, etc.? Everyone feels those emotions, right? Not you, if you are an EPT.

For you, there are just these three states (Not sure what the emoticons for these might be):

1. Moving Forward (fulfilled, elated) | Some refer to this state as Zen, flow, or simply the feeling of being alive. In this state of momentum, we feel like we can accomplish anything; that nothing is out of reach, challenges are easy to overcome and the path to success has been paved before us. This is the state in which we set the world on fire, because we have removed all or most of the constraint from our lives.

2. Moving Backward (frustrated, under attack) | When confronted with constraint or challenges, we can feel like we're moving backward, like our goals are moving farther and farther away from us. This feeling is highly frustrating. But while setbacks happen in life, they are most often when we show up, bounce back and overcome adversity. For momentum-based beings, this state can actually turn into a constructive period of realization and positive behavioral change.

3. Standing Still (wasting away, dying) | This is the most challenging state of all because there is often no understanding of how to break free from it. Standing still, hitting a plateau or being stuck drives us crazy. It oftentimes pushes us to drastically change our lives, make challenging decisions and even harm our businesses or ourselves. We express this state cognitively by making poor decisions, and physically through stress and emerging body pains.

It is critical to understand that whether the momentum (or lack thereof) is real or perceived, the sensations and reactions in these states will be the same. It is a fundamental outlook that can cause EPTs to have challenges in environments of constraint, like rigid classroom structures, social relationships or traditional business settings. It has also resulted in the systematic suppression of EPTs through negative reinforcement, behavioral change and even medication, as their attributes and behaviors are often mistaken as disorders. It's a sad truth, but today, more than fifty percent of U.S. adults will be diagnosed with a clinical mental illness. Well-marketed conditions like anxiety, ADHD, depression and bipolar are becoming so commonplace that diagnoses are growing at double-digit rates year after year.

For this reason, as momentum-based beings, it is imperative for EPTs to find ways of not just generating but sustaining momentum in their lives. The EPT has been misunderstood for far too long, rudderless in a world that provides misdirection and bad advice at almost every turn. In your journey to find and build momentum, you will need to understand yourself and the core group of attributes driving your behaviors.

Focus on these attributes and they will expand into great strengths and abilities, helping you generate momentum to make your greatest contribution to the world.

Entrepreneurial Personality Type Attributes

The EPT is defined by a unique set of attributes that, when developed, transform into unique skills and abilities. Some EPTs even appear magical. We wonder how Steve Jobs created the most valuable company in the world. What was Albert Einstein thinking about that led him to change the way we all look at the universe? Did Larry Page and Sergey Brin know that their upstart search platform would turn into the way nearly everyone accesses information online? Throughout history, the EPT attributes have facilitated incredible, transformational achievements.

But when these attributes are suppressed through constraint and negative reinforcement, they can be destructive, turn into challenging behavior or worse, perceived as the symptoms of psychological disorders. For this reason, it is crucial for EPTs and their support systems (friends, families, managers, teachers, therapists, coaches, and more) to have a clear understanding of the attributes driving their behavior and perspectives.

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Let's take a look at those attributes:

ATTRIBUTE #1: High Sensitivity and Awareness | When it comes to high sensitivity and awareness, we need to appreciate that our mood can be different from that of our peers. Beyond mere preference for things like food, fragrance or texture, an EPT's sensitivities can be heightened to the point of distraction. Some EPTs find it difficult to be around certain smells, or to sleep on specific materials. Similarly, our heightened awareness can make us act strangely when we sense changes in environment and behavior. We've mostly learned how to suffer through these sensitivities and situations. However, when understood, embraced, and focused, they can turn into strengths and abilities that set you apart.

Each EPT has their own unique sensitivities and heightened awareness that can seem extra-sensory. In speaking with thousands of EPTs, I've found some great examples: everything from a conductor's perfect pitch, to a marketer's awareness of social dynamics, to a chef's unique taste pairings, to a salesperson's ability to sense their client is dealing with a crisis.

Personally, I have some extreme sensitivities that help me connect visual content with audience perception. Today, I'm regularly consulted to help refine video content before final production, and enhance broadcast opportunities before they go live. But it wasn't always this way.

Looking back, I realize these sensitivities were evident in my early childhood in my reactions to light and the awareness of shadows. They were constantly on my mind. They drove me to be distracted in classrooms and uncomfortable in social situations. Fluorescent lighting would make my vision shaky and cause periodic blind spots. And for a kid being bullied at school—a nice way of saying tortured—these blind spots developed into full-blown panic attacks.

In changing our perception of heightened sensitivities and awareness from deficits to attributes, EPTs can develop them into strengths for achieving success in business and life. It can be valuable to think through your particular sensitivities, and consider how you might leverage them to your benefit. They could quickly turn into points of distinction and greater value.

Attributes in Action: Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group and its empire of successful businesses, does not hide his dyslexia. In fact, it's one of his more prominent distinctions as a global business leader. But many don't know that Branson was unable to fully understand his revenue statements until he was 50 years old, well after he had become a billionaire. His success did not come from simply working harder. Branson's dyslexia resulted in greater sensitivities to the simplicity of processes, and heightened awarenesses of business trends, the dynamics of people and markets, and the core motivations of his customers.

ATTRIBUTE #2: Future Focused | The Future Focused attribute often goes by another term: visionary. This label has become a badge of honor for successful EPTs. Struggling EPTs, however, get a different label: hopeless dreamer. The only true distinction between the two is how much protection and support the EPT has around them, helping to make their dreams a reality.

Put another way, dreaming is not unique. It is unique to have a vision, see exactly how it can happen, and then be compelled to make it happen.

I say it often: Entrepreneurs are always called crazy, until they start making money. Then they're brilliant.

As EPTs find ways of enhancing their future focus with the right teams, resources and support systems, their "dreaming" will quickly transform into the brilliance of visionaries.

“ An EPT’s high processing capacity is often their most distinct differentiator in business.

Attributes in Action: Steve Jobs, the legendary EPT behind Apple and Pixar (and also NeXT), had a persistent focus on the future, following his dream to change the world. He lived by the mantra: “The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.” In this case, “crazy” is simply how the present describes someone trying to make the future a reality. While this perspective often made Jobs difficult to deal with or work for, his future focus rallied teams, customers, partners, investors, markets and eventually the entire world around his vision.

ATTRIBUTE #3: High Processing Capacity | An EPT’s high processing capacity is often their most distinct differentiator in business. They can seem like machines able to consume and retain information faster and in greater quantities than anyone else.

I often see this in EPTs who sound like experts in history, philosophy, physiology, engineering or mechanics, despite their lack of formal training, even when they’re among college professors and thought leaders in those fields.

As behaviors, this particular attribute presents itself in two ways.

First, when looking to achieve a desired outcome, EPTs seek out and collect large amounts of data, regardless of physical or cognitive limitations, like deafness or dyslexia.

Second is an EPT's ability to process this information in order to cast a clear vision, take action and make constructive decisions over time.

What differentiates EPTs from those simply able to read fast or memorize large amounts of information, is that they are driven to analyze the data they consume and apply insights to achieve a result.

Attributes in Action: Beloved EPT Elon Musk was profiled on “60 Minutes” around the time he founded SpaceX. Interviewer Scott Pelley asked what qualified him to start and run a space exploration company, given that Musk had no history or training in the field. “I read a lot of books,” Musk replied. As an EPT, his ability to consume data through books and apply the learnings allows him to realize his vision of SpaceX ... and Tesla Motors ... and SolarCity ...

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ATTRIBUTE #4: Persistent Adaptability | EPTs maintain a persistent adaptability to take on new tasks or careers. No, they're not chameleons, able to adapt to any situation. In fact, many EPTs have difficulty adapting to certain situations like school structures or social environments. They may actually avoid or resist those situations.

In reality, this attribute is a persistent adaptability to new tasks and careers that help EPTs achieve their vision or desired outcome. This often leads EPTs through non-traditional (or multiple) career paths, gathering diverse skills along the way.

Throughout my career, I've been everything from a car cleaner to a payment processor to an executive recruiter to a technology sales consultant to an on-air personality. Every step along the way brought new challenges, but I was anchored by my desired outcome and future focus. I persistently adapted to different situations, and the skills needed to address my challenges.

This is a story echoed among so many EPTs who often feel lost due to their varied professional histories. What's interesting is that the feeling of being lost is actually a reaction to the desire for a new outcome, not the frustration with constantly changing direction. It's helpful to look back at your various careers and jobs through the lens of progressive adaptation. As you adapted to each situation, you built and developed new skills, new perspectives and new capabilities, all of which add up to enormous value for any organization you build.

Attributes in Action: As a boy, real estate mogul Dean Graziosi had a goal to become financially independent and take care of his mother. So when his family needed to increase their income by renovating a rental property, Graziosi quickly picked up an understanding of electrical wiring, plumbing and even operating a backhoe. Neighbors and contractors would stop by and ask, “Who taught your son to do those things?” His father would have to admit that no one did. Graziosi figured it out on his own. With a clear outcome setting his course, he persistently adapted to the skills necessary to move forward, all before he even turned 13.

ATTRIBUTE #5: Intense Focus on Results or a Single Outcome | Thomas Edison’s 10,000 attempts to invent the lightbulb. Steve Jobs’ dogmatic drive to perfect the Macintosh. Bill Gates’s never taking a vacation day.

There are myriad examples of EPTs with singularity of focus, often at the expense and exclusion of all other things, in order to make their mark on the world. Oftentimes, they pulled back and isolated themselves (even the extroverts) in order to get things done. But the key to this attribute is that it centers around the pursuit of clear results or outcomes.

When not accompanied by success, this is rarely thought of as a positive attribute. In fact, when out of control, an intense focus on results can make EPTs appear obsessive, compulsive, combative and antisocial. However, throughout history, this focus on results or outcomes has driven EPTs to change the world.

Attributes in Action: Robert De Niro is among the most famous and accomplished American actors today, garnering two Academy Awards and seven total nominations. A lauded method actor, De Niro prepared for roles by immersing himself in his characters, their cultures and languages. He's perhaps best known for moving to Sicily to learn how to play a young Vito Corleone in Francis Ford Coppola's "The Godfather Part II." There he not only learned Italian but perfected different Sicilian accents, much to the amazement of his voice coaches. De Niro knew the lengths to which he needed to isolate himself to fully focus on accomplishing his goals, and he was rewarded with an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor.

ATTRIBUTE #6: Bias for Improvement | As future-focused individuals, EPTs see the world not as it exists but as it should be. They see what should be modified, improved or evolved. Given the choice between keeping things as they are or changing them for the better, they will almost always choose the latter. EPTs are innately driven to, and biased toward improvement.

Without structure or support, pressure and noise can lead EPTs to question their improvements, which leads to more and more changes. We see this kind of "improvement paralysis" in the architect whose designs are never quite done, the manager who's never ready to ship his product and the writer whose manuscript collects dust on the bookshelf, never submitted to a publisher.

When nurtured and mentored to see the fundamental principles for moving initiatives forward, EPTs can turn their vision for improvements into realities.

I've personally struggled to direct this attribute in a positive direction, finding myself in situations where my focus on improvement has become a constraint on my momentum. Perhaps you've been here too. Ultimately, I've found that reminding myself of the intended outcome allows me to set proper priorities and focus on the improvements that actually move me and my business forward.

Attributes in Action: Tim O'Brien has authored some of the most influential pieces of American literature, helping shape national policy and public recognition of the atrocities of the Vietnam War, and winning a National Book Award for his novel "Going After Cacciato." Despite the numerous recognitions and acclaim for his works, O'Brien still insists on editing his books each time they are reprinted (he has nine novels with numerous reprints). What some might call perfectionism, an EPT understands as a necessary bias toward improving what they send out into the world.

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ATTRIBUTE #7: Experimental/Experiential Learning | Yes, EPTs learn through books and by consuming large amounts of data, but they truly seek the application of those learnings, the experiences, and experiments; otherwise they don't feel momentum.

Many EPTs relate to this attribute in the context of sports, debate, contests, or other types of competition. These environments set clear outcomes and timeframes, forcing participants to try, learn, and adapt quickly. This is why we see the EPT attributes evident in so many professional athletes. Over the years, we've watched people like Roger Staubach, Michael Jordan, George Foreman, Shaquille O'Neal, and Steffi Graf make the transition from athletic success to great achievements outside of stadiums and arenas.

Unfortunately for EPTs as children, this attribute can make the traditional classroom and learning structures challenging. When a greater focus is placed on memorization and standardized testing, EPTs lose interest or even skip established processes altogether to look for more practical applications.

Experiences and experiments give EPTs confidence to push further, validate what they've learned and enhance belief in their visions of the future.

Attributes in Action: Fail fast; fail forward. Silicon Valley encapsulates this mantra, and no one better embodies this spirit than Mark Zuckerberg, who turned a college dorm-specific registry site (which would have struggled for any type of profitability) into the most powerful social network in the world. In the early days of Facebook, Zuckerberg held hackathons for talented developers to take on tough programming challenges, which amplified creativity and sped up innovation. As the company grew, these innovations turned into new offerings, platforms and services rolled out to its users. Some worked, some failed horribly. These failures caused some early investors to call for Zuckerberg's removal as CEO, but he remained committed to experience and experiment with new applications for what he and his team learned. This resulted in Facebook becoming a highly profitable social platform with more than one billion users and a stock price that has grown 143% over the past three years.

ATTRIBUTE #8: Perceive Unique Connections | When the majority of people are united in one belief, it takes a certain type of person to offer contradictions or alternatives.

An EPT's ability to perceive unique connections in the world—through their experiences, experiments, focus on the future, and high sensitivities—brings different perspectives to any situation. They are able to see situations, problems, solutions, and processes from different angles, leveraging new resources or moving in new directions.

Sometimes this can appear to be divergent logic or the combination of conflicting ideas. However, an EPT's unique connections are driven by a focus on outcomes and the search for momentum, which provides context and guidance for these connections.

Especially in marketing, I've seen countless examples of EPTs making unique connections between audience interactions and the subtle shifts of language, color, positioning or timing in their messages. As a sales consultant for Fortune 500 and global 100 brands, it was my job (and expertise) to identify and execute on unique connections between products and the new markets and territories they sought to enter.

Think about that. In these two instances, big business pays a premium for access to an EPT's ability to perceive unique connections. They do this because they know unique connections can result in huge sales numbers, and can spark trends, galvanize consumers and move entire industries in new directions.

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Attributes in Action: Elizabeth Holmes is revolutionizing the medical testing industry. While studying at Stanford University, Holmes made the unique connection between the “lab-on-a-chip technology” (LOC) used for chemical engineering and the blood tests millions of Americans rely on every day. LOC performs multiple tests based on tiny amounts of liquid, and she thought the same could be done with blood at neighborhood pharmacies, rather than the traditional vials drawn at clinics. She patented this idea and turned it into Theranos, the company she founded at 19, which has now developed tests helping detect medical conditions, including cancer, based on just a few drops of blood. Today, based on her ability to perceive unique connections, Holmes’s company employs 700 people and has made her the youngest self-made billionaire in the world.

ATTRIBUTE #9: Drive for Gained Advantage | An EPT’s drive for gained advantage often begins with a single question: “How do I get ahead?” Do you remember asking this of yourself?

This question consistently drives EPTs through life to find an advantage or the means to get ahead. Most of us think of this as finding ways to increase income. This is valid and often our first motivation to understand business, finance and people. But the drive for gained advantage can also mean escaping to a place that lowers pressure and noise. It could be the software developer retreating to a secluded room to code more effectively, the athlete putting in one more workout, or the realtor leveraging new marketing platforms.

In general, EPTs gravitate toward activities with a scoreboard (physical or perceived) as a way to measure their advantage, because they are driven to win. The scoreboard also provides a frame of reference and validation for their momentum.

However, this attribute can turn EPTs into cutthroat individuals. As children, angling for a gained advantage can make it hard to collaborate with classmates or make close friends. It can also help EPTs of all ages understand not only how to turn their visions into reality but, upon starting a business, realize how to increase the contribution of their teams.

This is perhaps the most recognizable, yet misunderstood EPT attribute. How often do you hear yourself or other entrepreneurs talked about as being “only out for themselves” or “looking to win at all costs?” I’m not going to lie, I’ve heard this more than a few times about myself.

The truth is, the drive for gained advantage is a competitive attribute that enables EPTs to seek out new and unique solutions to shared challenges. While it is difficult for us to control how others react to this, EPTs have a responsibility to support and enable each other in our pursuit of these advantages. They are the foundation for how we move mountains, and by increasing awareness for how valuable this attribute can be, we can hope to positively change the overall perception of EPTs.

Attributes in Action: Jeff Hays' drive for gained advantage has taken him across industries. He's achieved success doing everything from selling encyclopedias to broadcasting on local television to creating patents and finally establishing Capstone Entertainment, an award-winning film production company. Labeled a genius as a child, Hays always had supreme confidence in his abilities and would put himself first to get ahead, clinging to every advantage he could find. But after an awakening to the power of his work to make a real difference and change minds, he began leveraging all his resources to produce movies that create movements and reveal hard truths. Hays has channeled his drive for gained advantage to lead him down a path to change the world.

ATTRIBUTE #10: Innate Motivation | Most EPTs can pinpoint the time in their lives when an innate motivation kicked in and they couldn't turn it off. For me it was around age six (and my parents have confirmed it). For others, it can hit in their twenties or thirties. I've known some EPTs who talk about it happening even later as they approached retirement.

Typically, EPTs have no idea where this "fire" comes from. It appears suddenly and it transforms them. Their friends and family see a different person, someone capable of achieving anything. Some view this attribute as mere ambition, but I'm not talking about a desire to climb corporate ladders or collect awards and recognition. Innate motivation is an engine with no off-switch,

a constant drive to accomplish tasks, achieve goals and contribute to the world. All of a sudden, the EPT realizes there are more opportunities and possibilities to grow. There are standards that need to be changed, expectations that need to be reset. Naturally, innate motivation can also make EPTs restless, impatient and combative, especially around people who either lack the same kind of motivation or become obstacles to their momentum.

Attributes in Action: It's no secret: Bill Gates has become one of the most successful entrepreneurs in history. What many don't know is that his drive to succeed started at a very young age. In his teen years, the potential for computers was only just being realized, so Gates would sneak into the computer lab of a local university to learn more about these fascinating machines. Beyond mere curiosity, his innate motivation compelled him to break rules, investigate, learn more, and enhance his skills, leading eventually to the creation of Microsoft. But early success didn't satisfy his innate motivation. In his twenties, Gates continued his relentless pursuit of innovation, and never took a day off in that 10-year span. Today, having given up leadership of Microsoft, his innate motivation has led him to establish the Gates Foundation, which has grown to become the largest transparently operated private foundation in the world.

The Implications

This discovery has far-reaching implications across business, education, psychology, medicine, politics, parenting, and more. Simply knowing that there are legions of untapped talent and driven people who could change the world, just might actually change the world. But, for that to happen, there will have to be systemic changes that provide the right kind of protection and support for these people.

For example, it's no secret that Thomas Edison was one of the world's greatest and most prolific inventors. But this almost wasn't so. As a boy struggling with dyslexia—a condition not understood in the 1850s—Edison was labeled “addled” or incapable of learning by his teacher. Frustrated by how this teacher forced education on his students, Edison's mother withdrew him from school to educate him at home. It was under that kind of protection and support that he truly became Thomas Edison. Later in life, Edison wrote: “My mother was the making of me.

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She was so true, so sure of me: and I felt I had something to live for, someone I must not disappoint.”

She had saved him, as mothers often do. She gave him the protection and support he needed to grow and emerge as a great inventor. In short, he became Thomas Edison, and he then had the ability to change the world dramatically.

How many more Edisons are out there today who need protection and support? How could the world change for the better if society’s systems were set up for their support, rather than their suppression? What if we recognized Entrepreneurial Personality Types and, rather than constrain them, nourish and help them grow into what they were destined to be?

If that were to happen, the potential for humanity would be limitless. 🌍

Info

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Alex is co-founder and CEO of CHARFEN, a training, education and consulting organization for entrepreneurs and small businesses. He has dedicated his life to answering the question, “How do you make business grow?” As a personal consultant to billionaires, the Fortune 500, and some of the most successful individuals in the world, his pursuit evolved into a larger calling to understand “How do you help people grow?” For the past two decades, Alex has created and curated proven business philosophies, models, and strategies geared specifically to entrepreneurs. An internationally recognized speaker and business consultant, Alex has helped tens of thousands of entrepreneurs grow and scale their business.

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