Portrait of an ESFP - Extraverted Sensing Feeling Perceiving (Extraverted Sensing with Introverted Feeling)

The Performer

As an ESFP, your primary mode of living is focused externally, where you take things in via your five senses in a literal, concrete fashion. Your secondary mode is internal, where you deal with things according to how you feel about them, or how they fit with your personal value system.

ESFP's live in the world of people possibilities. They love people and new experiences. They are lively and fun, and enjoy being the center of attention. They live in the here-and-now, and relish excitement and drama in their lives.

ESFP’s have very strong inter-personal skills, and may find themselves in the role of the peacemaker frequently. Since they make decisions by using their personal values, they are usually very sympathetic and concerned for other people's well-being. They're usually quite generous and warm. They are very observant about other people, and seem to sense what is wrong with someone before others might, responding warmly with a solution to a practical need. They might not be the best advice-givers in the world, because they dislike theory and future-planning, but they are great for giving practical care.

ESFP is definitely a spontaneous, optimistic individual. They love to have fun. If the ESFP has not developed their Thinking side by giving consideration to rational thought processing, they tend to become over-indulgent, and place more importance on immediate sensation and gratification than on their duties and obligations. They may also avoid looking at long-term consequences of their actions.

For the ESFP, the entire world is a stage. They love to be the center of attention and perform for people. They're constantly putting on a show for others to entertain them and make them happy. They enjoy stimulating other people's senses, and are extremely good at it. They would love nothing more than for life to be a continual party, in which they play the role of the fun-loving host.

ESFP’s love people and everybody loves an ESFP. One of their greatest gifts is their general acceptance of everyone. They are upbeat and enthusiastic, and genuinely like almost everybody. An ESFP is unfailingly warm and generous with their friends, and they generally treat everyone as a friend. However, once crossed, an ESFP is likely to make a very strong and stubborn judgment against the person who crossed them. They are capable of deep dislike in such a situation.

The ESFP under a great deal of stress gets overwhelmed with negatives thoughts and possibilities. As an optimistic individual who lives in the world of possibilities, negative possibilities do not sit well with them. In an effort to combat these thoughts, they're likely to come up with simple, global statements to explain away the problem. These simplistic explanations may or may not truly get to the nature of the issue, but they serve the ESFP well by allowing them to get over it.

ESFP’s are likely to be very practical, although they hate structure and routine. They like to "go with the flow", trusting in their ability to improvise in any situation presented to them. They learn best with "hands-on" experience, rather than by studying a book. They're uncomfortable with theory. If an ESFP hasn't developed their intuitive side, they may tend to avoid situations which involve a lot of theoretical thinking, or which are complex and ambiguous. For this reason, an ESFP may have difficulty in school. On the other hand, the ESFP does extremely well in situations where they're allowed to learn by interacting with others, or in which they "learn by doing".

ESFP’s have a very well-developed appreciation for aesthetic beauty, and an excellent sense of space and function. If they have the means, they're likely to have to have many beautiful possessions, and an artfully

furnished home. In general, they take great pleasure in objects of aesthetic beauty. They're likely to have a strong appreciation for the finer things in life, such as good food and good wine.

The ESFP is a great team player. He or she is not likely to create any problems or fuss, and is likely to create the most fun environment possible for getting the task done. ESFP's will do best in careers in which they are able to use their excellent people skills, along with their abilities to meld ideas into structured formats. Since they are fast-paced individuals who like new experiences, they should choose careers which offer or require a lot of diversity, as well as people skills.

ESFP's usually like to feel strongly bonded with other people, and have a connection with animals and small children that is not found in most other types. They're likely to have a strong appreciation for the beauties of nature as well.

The ESFP has a tremendous love for life, and knows how to have fun. They like to bring others along on their fun-rides, and are typically a lot of fun to be with. They're flexible, adaptable, genuinely interested in people, and usually kind-hearted. They have a special ability to get a lot of fun out of life, but they need to watch out for the pitfalls associated with living entirely in the moment.

Jungian functional preference ordering:
Dominant: Extraverted Sensing
Auxiliary: Introverted Feeling
Tertiary: Extraverted Thinking
Inferior: Introverted Intuition

ESFP's generally have the following traits:

- Live in the present moment
- Are stimulated and excited by new experiences
- Practical and realistic
- Warmly interested in people
- Know how to have a good time, and how to make things fun for others
- Independent and resourceful
- Spontaneous - seldom plan ahead
- Hate structure and routine
- Dislike theory and long written explanations
- Feel special bond with children and animals
- Strongly developed aesthetic appreciation for things
- Great people skills

ESFP's are good at many things, but will not be happy unless they have a lot of contact with people, and a lot of new experiences. They should choose careers which provide them with the opportunity to use their great people skills and practical perspective, which will also provide them with enough new challenges that they will not become bored.

ESFP Relationships
ESFP's are fun and delightful to be with. They live for the moment, and know how to make the most of each moment. They are genuinely, warmly interested in people, and love to make others happy. They're usually very kind-hearted and generous, and are always going out of their way to do something nice for someone. Their affection is simple, straight-forward and honest. They dislike theory and complexities. They often resist forming relationships which require them to function on a high Intuitive or Thinking level. They prefer for things to be light and happy, although their warmth and affection runs deep. Their potential downfall is the tendency to live entirely for the present moment, and therefore to sometimes be unaware of the direction that their relationship is heading, or to be easily distracted from long-term commitments.

ESFP Strengths

- Enthusiastic and fun-loving, they make everything enjoyable
- Clever, witty, direct, and popular, people are drawn towards them
- Earthy and sensual
- Down to earth and practical, able to take care of daily needs
- Artistic and creative, they're likely to have attractive homes
- Flexible and diverse, they "go with the flow" extremely well
- They can leave bad relationships, although it's not easy
- Try to make the most of every moment
- Generous and warm-hearted

ESFP Weaknesses

- May be frivolous and risky with money
- Tend to be materialistic
- Extreme dislike of criticism, likely to take things extremely personally
- Likely to ignore or escape conflict situations rather than face them
- Lifelong commitments may be a struggle for them - they take things one day at a time
- Don't pay enough attention to their own needs
- Tendency to neglect their health, or even abuse their bodies
- Always excited by something new, they may change partners frequently

What does Success mean to an ESFP?

ESFP's can't help but spontaneously grasp the moment, particularly if it offers a new sensation or experience. And while the ESFP might seem to others to only be interested in piling up new experiences, or reliving old ones just to savor the quality of the sensations or lively enjoyment they bring, the ESFP has in fact a far more subtle relationship to life and the world around them. Indeed, with their curious mixture of Extraverted Sensation and Introverted Feeling, the ESFP can show a wealth of complexity in their ways, even if to the ESFP themselves, considering such matters is felt to be a tedious and - to their way of seeing the world - quite unnecessary task. For this reason, just defining what success means to an ESFP requires more than simply assuming that a life filled with satisfying, quality experiences necessarily fulfills this criteria, as the ESFP's true needs and satisfactions will depend greatly on the strength and refinement of their Sensation and Feeling functions. But there is one thing that defines all ESFP's, and that is their exuberant ability - and need - to engage with other people and express that which grips them. So, whilst success might come through many different paths, and be felt by the ESFP in modes and preferences not necessarily understood as success by other types, the successful ESFP will nevertheless always be found where they can live in full and open engagement with people and able to express their talents, appreciations and joys before the world at large.

Allowing Your ESFP Strengths to Flourish

As an ESFP, you have gifts that are specific to your personality type that aren't natural strengths for other types. By recognizing your special gifts and encouraging their growth and development, you will more readily see your place in the world, and how you can better use your talents to achieve your dreams.

Nearly all ESFP's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- A great ability to understand the objective world, its facts and realities.
- A talent for entertaining and pleasing others with words and actions.
- An aptitude for getting the most out of any situation or place.
- Very skilled at finding the best of things for themselves and others.
- A warm and generous attitude both as a giver and receiver.
- Exceptional natural musical and dramatic skills.
- A detailed and finely nuanced appreciation of the outside world.
- Adept at detecting and recognizing the effects of minute changes to their environment.
- A talent for learning to do practically anything by just watching and doing.
- A reassuring and practical sense of the world which supports others.

ESFP's who have developed their Introverted Feeling to the extent that they can integrate the concrete world of their perceptions with a responsive and healthy system of personal values will find that they enjoy these very special gifts:

- Their refined tastes will make it a joy for others to be in their company and homes.
- Their ability to weigh the value of their actions gives great force to their talent for entertaining people of all tastes.
- They will quickly differentiate between those things which are of greater and lesser importance to a situation.
- They will not just seek entertainment and things for their own sake, but will seek always to find that which they feel will provide the most value and reward for themselves and others.
- The ESFP who augments their ability to recognize opportunities (Extraverted Sensing) with a strong internal value system (Introverted Feeling) will find themselves more likely to attract, and be attracted into, very rewarding relationships with others - particularly with those of the opposite sex.
- They will recognize and promote the talents of others.
- They can be counted on to defend the best and most life promoting aspects of the world.

Potential Problem Areas

With any gift of strength, there is an associated weakness. Without "bad", there would be no "good". Without "difficult", there would be no "easy". We value our strengths, but we often curse and ignore our weaknesses. To grow as a person and get what we want out of life, we must not only capitalize upon our strengths, but also face our weaknesses and deal with them. That means taking a hard look at our personality type's potential problem areas.

ESFP's are kind and creative beings with many special gifts. I would like for the ESFP to keep in mind some of the many positive things associated with being an ESFP as they read some of this more negative material. Also remember that the weaknesses associated with being an ESFP are natural to your type. Although it may be depressing to read about your type's weaknesses, please remember that we offer this information to enact positive change. We want people to grow into their own potential, and to live happy and successful lives.

Most of the weaker characteristics that are found in ESFP's are due to their dominant Extraverted Sensing function overshadowing the rest of their personality. When this function smothers everything else, the ESFP can't use Introverted Feeling to properly judge the value and propriety of their perceptions or actions. The first ten of the following weaknesses derive in varying degrees from this problem alone, whilst the rest are due to the additional effect of the ESFP's unique make up and result from their diminished capacity to use abstract reasoning:

- May be seen by others as unnecessarily coarse in their behavior and life choices.
- May be unable to value or may ignore the preferences and needs of others.
- May perceive even the most careful and objective criticism as simply a ploy to spoil their enjoyment of life.
- May have skewed or unrealistic ideas about the feelings of others.
- May be unable to acknowledge or hear anything that would lead to second thoughts or a more careful appreciation.
- May blame their problems on the world at large, seeing themselves as frustrated heroes battling against the odds.
- May become totally self focused and oblivious to the havoc they wreak on others feelings.
- May uncaringly use totally inappropriate social behavior simply to make a point.
- May be overbearing in their judgments upon the taste and dress of others.
- May come across to others as boastful and rash in their attitudes.
- May rationalize the ways of the world in the most inane or simplistic ways.
- May believe the most extraordinary things about inanimate objects and their workings.
- May feel overwhelmed with tension and stress when driven into a situation which requires deep and careful consideration.

- Under great stress, may feel the world around them is alive with dark, unseen influences.

Another difficulty, which is not so much a problem for the ESFP but for those around them, particularly if Introverted Thinking or Intuitive types, is that even when joyful or in the midst of life, they may be perceived as coldly self absorbed and oblivious to the feelings of others, even when the truth is quite the reverse. Should it somehow matter, then when in the company of such people, the ESFP should take some trouble to express their feelings and value judgments.

Explanation of Problems

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ESFP problem of being overly absorbed by the sensations and immediate apparent facts of the external world. ESFP's are usually very spontaneous and outgoing people who have little time for analysis of the complexities behind the world they live in. They are likely to treat any point of view other than their own rather shortly, waving away in particular the more intellectual and intuitive understandings of others as irrelevant and totally secondary to the obvious realities of life. If the ESFP does not learn how to deal with the tension that arises between, what to them is the most obvious and satisfying way to deal with the world and those deeper intricacies which lie behind its facade, the ESFP will begin to shut out any incoming information which produces this tension. This is a natural survival technique for the ESFP personality. The main driver to the ESFP personality is Extraverted Sensation, whose purpose is solely to perceive the realities of the external world and by which the ESFP orients themselves towards the things they need or desire. If an ESFP's image of the world is threatened by demands for careful judgment or reasoning, the ESFP shuts out the demand in order to preserve and honor their world view. This is totally natural, and works well to protect the individual psyche from getting hurt. However, the ESFP who exercises this type of self-protection regularly will become not only more and more careless of other people's needs and perspectives, but also cut off in a world where the facts and realities which they perceive become interwoven with a belief system which supports only the ESFP's desire driven view. Under such circumstances they will justify their own inappropriate behaviors in the most astounding or rationally simplistic ways, and will always find fault with others for trying to complicate and disturb what ought to be a simple and obvious way of life. It will be difficult for them to maintain close personal relationships because they will not only have unreasonable and simplistically concrete expectations, but will be unable to understand why such expectations cannot be easily met.

It's not an uncommon tendency for the ESFP to look to their inner world only for feelings that justify their desires and perceptions. However, if this tendency is given free reign, the resulting ESFP personality is too self-centered to be happy or successful. Since the ESFP's dominant function is Extraverted Sensing, they must balance this with an auxiliary Introverted Feeling function which is sufficiently refined to make reasonably objective judgments about the value of the ESFP's actions and the people and things in their life. The ESFP makes value judgments via Introverted Intuition. This is also the ESFP's primary way of dealing with their own internal subjective world. If the ESFP uses Introverted Feeling only to serve the purposes of Extraverted Sensing, then the ESFP is not using Introversion effectively at all. As a result, the ESFP does sufficiently consider the effects of their actions and perceptions sufficiently for a strong value system to arise in their personality. They see nothing but the joys, satisfactions and sensations of the world outside themselves, and deal with feeling only so far as it supports their need for constant stimulation and gratification. These individuals can often come across as coarse and lustful, although can just as easily seem the complete opposite, as refined and tasteful connoisseurs who, nevertheless, at closer quarters reveal their complete indifference to anything but the satisfaction of their own desires.

At this point, I would like the reader to understand that, as with all personality types, serious problems are usually only encountered by those whose dominant function is unusually strongly expressed against the other functions. Such situations are rare and although the problems discussed here can indeed be felt to some level by all ESFP's, most people regardless of their personality type tend toward a balance within both their personal and worldly relationships which occurs despite differences in personality preference; a balance driven by the need for comfort in others and the human capacity for love. So whilst it is essential for us to fine tune our relationships through knowledge and understanding of our differences and peculiar needs, it is also good for us to remember that the most simple and childlike longings of the heart can also be most powerful guides to happiness.

Solutions

To grow as an individual, the ESFP needs to focus on increasing their self understanding to allow a rational and more objectively reasoned value system to arise within themselves. In order for the ESFP to more validly judge the value of their desires, actions and the things they allow into their world, the ESFP needs to know that their world view is not being threatened but qualitatively reinforced by the strength and objectivity of their judgments. The ESFP must consciously tell himself/herself that a feeling that does not agree with their desires or perceptions of the world is not an indictment of their character but a clue to greater understanding.

The ESFP who is concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to their motivation for valuing certain actions, interests and possessions over others. Do they attend to their feelings to judge such things according to a strong set of values which accords also with the needs of others? Or, do they judge only to support a personal desire? At the moment when something is felt, is the ESFP concerned with adjusting that feeling to fit in with what appears to them as the most important things in the world? Or is she/he concerned with allowing their feelings to be fully realized? To achieve a better understanding of their feelings, the ESFP should try to allow feelings their full force, before setting them against their strong desires. They should be consciously aware of their tendency to discard anything that doesn't agree with their immediate sense of appearance, and work towards lessening this tendency. They should try to see situations from other people's perspectives, without making personal judgments about the situations or the other people's perspectives. In general, they should work on exercising their Feeling in a truly Introverted sense. In other words, they should use Feeling to understand how the world of their perceptions affects their inner life, using it to discover the values that truly matter, rather than simply to support their wishes. The ESFP who successfully creates a strong value system can be quite a powerful force for positive change.

Living Happily in our World as an ESFP

Some ESFP's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are often a result of an uncaring attitude to anything other than the moment, an unawareness of the needs of others, or too simplistic a set of expectations. All of these issues stem from using Introverted Feeling in a diminished manner. An ESFP who uses feeling to judge the value of their perceptions and actions, rather than one who uses it only to support their desires, will have a clearer, more refined appreciation of the world and what it can offer. He or she will also be more aware of how others may feel, and will have more realistic expectations for others' behavior within a relationship. Such well-adjusted ESFP's will fit happily into our society.

Unless you really understand Psychological Type and the nuances of the various personality functions, it's a difficult task to suddenly start to use Feeling in an Introverted direction. It's difficult to even understand what that means, much less to incorporate that directive into your life. For the ESFP, the most important thing is to recognize and understand that Feelings must not be confused with sensations or the emotions they unleash. Quite often we say "it feels good" when we really mean that the sensation we are experiencing is good. The sense of "Feeling" from a psychological viewpoint is that it underlies that rational, judging factor which discriminates rightness or applicability from wrongness or misapplication, guilt from pride etc. With this in mind, I am providing some specific suggestions that may help you to begin exercising your Introverted Feeling:

When a new prospect enters your life and stirs your appetite, sit with it for a moment in your mind and allow yourself to notice whether you have a lurking judgment about it. Try to allow this judgment to come forward on its own behalf and do not try to rationalize it nor be afraid of it. Imagine that you are hearing this judgment from the lips of another person, or perhaps from God, anything to let it be felt objectively within your mind. What is your Feeling function saying about what your exciting new prospect really means to you?

Think of a situation in your life in which you are sharing your joys and enthusiasms with others, perhaps entertaining them. Perhaps you are an entertainer. Watch the looks and body language of others as you speak or perform and notice that not all seem to be offering the same emotional responses to your words or actions. Each one is feeling you a different way, judging you a different way. Try to notice the same function within yourself now, the responsive person within you who is also judging your words and actions. How is he/she reacting to you?

When having a conversation with a friend or relative, dedicate at least half of your time to discovering their values and reasons. Concentrate on really understanding why they feel as they do. Ask questions, and take some time later to ask those same questions of yourself.

Think of the people who are closest to you. As you think of each person, tell yourself "this person has their own life going on, and they are more concerned with their own life than they are with mine." Remember that this doesn't mean that they don't care about you. It's the natural order of things. Try to visualize what that person is doing right now. What are they feeling, what judgments are they possibly making about what is happening to them? Don't compare their situation to your own; just try to discover how you would feel in their situation.

Try to identify the personality type of everyone that you come into contact with for any length of time.

Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ESFP Success

1. Feed Your Strengths! Encourage your natural expressive abilities and hands-on talents. Nourish your appreciation of the world. Give yourself opportunities to enjoy life to the full.
2. Face Your Weaknesses! Realize and accept that some traits are strengths and some are weaknesses. Facing and dealing with your weaknesses doesn't mean that you have to change who you are; it means that you want to be the best you possible. By facing your weaknesses, you are honoring your true self, rather than attacking yourself.
3. Express Your Feelings. Don't let worries build up inside of you. If you are troubled by doubt or fear, tell those close to you who will listen and offer counsel. Don't make the mistake of “blipping over it” or “sorting it out” some quick fix way.
4. Listen to Everything. Try not to accept everything at face value. Let everything soak in and listen to your feelings.
5. Smile at Criticism. Remember that people will not always agree with you or understand you, even if they value you greatly. Try to see disagreement and criticism as an opportunity for growth. In fact, that is exactly what it is.
6. Be Aware of Others. Remember that there are 15 other personality types out there who see things differently than you see them. Try to identify other people's types. Try to understand their perspectives.
7. Be Accountable for Yourself. Remember that your every word and action affects those around you, so it is important for you to be fully responsible for your self, and to the values you hold.
8. Be Gentle in Your Expectations. You will always be disappointed with others if you expect too much of them. Being disappointed with another person is the best way to drive them away. Treat others with the same gentleness that you would like to be treated with.
9. Assume the Best. Don't distress yourself by assuming the worst. Remember that a positive attitude often creates positive situations.
10. When in Doubt, Ask Questions! If something seems to be wrong and you can’t put your finger on it, maybe someone else can. Remember, there are many ways of seeing the world, and perhaps someone else’s way will reveal the truth.

This content comes from: http://www.thepersonalitypage.com/, and much of it was written by Robert Heyward.