Portrait of an INTP
Introverted iNtuitive Thinking Perceiving
(Introverted Thinking with Extraverted Intuition)

The Thinker

As an INTP, your primary mode of living is focused internally, where you deal with things rationally and logically. Your secondary mode is external, where you take things in primarily via your intuition.

INTP's live in the world of theoretical possibilities. They see everything in terms of how it could be improved, or what it could be turned into. They live primarily inside their own minds, having the ability to analyze difficult problems, identify patterns, and come up with logical explanations. They seek clarity in everything, and are therefore driven to build knowledge. They are the "absent-minded professors", who highly value intelligence and the ability to apply logic to theories to find solutions. They typically are so strongly driven to turn problems into logical explanations, that they live much of their lives within their own heads, and may not place as much importance or value on the external world. Their natural drive to turn theories into concrete understanding may turn into a feeling of personal responsibility to solve theoretical problems, and help society move towards a higher understanding.

INTP’s value knowledge above all else. Their minds are constantly working to generate new theories, or to prove or disprove existing theories. They approach problems and theories with enthusiasm and skepticism, ignoring existing rules and opinions and defining their own approach to the resolution. They seek patterns and logical explanations for anything that interests them. They're usually extremely bright, and able to be objectively critical in their analysis. They love new ideas, and become very excited over abstractions and theories. They love to discuss these concepts with others. They may seem "dreamy" and distant to others, because they spend a lot of time inside their minds musing over theories. They hate to work on routine things - they would much prefer to build complex theoretical solutions, and leave the implementation of the system to others. They are intensely interested in theory, and will put forth tremendous amounts of time and energy into finding a solution to a problem with has piqued their interest.

INTP’s do not like to lead or control people. They're very tolerant and flexible in most situations, unless one of their firmly held beliefs has been violated or challenged, in which case they may take a very rigid stance. The INTP is likely to be very shy when it comes to meeting new people. On the other hand, the INTP is very self-confident and gregarious around people they know well, or when discussing theories which they fully understand.

The INTP has no understanding or value for decisions made on the basis of personal subjectivity or feelings. They strive constantly to achieve logical conclusions to

problems, and don't understand the importance or relevance of applying subjective emotional considerations to decisions. For this reason, INTP's are usually not in-tune with how people are feeling, and are not naturally well-equipped to meet the emotional needs of others.

The INTP may have a problem with self-aggrandizement and social rebellion, which will interfere with their creative potential. Since their Feeling side is their least developed trait, the INTP may have difficulty giving the warmth and support that is sometimes necessary in intimate relationships. If the INTP doesn't realize the value of attending to other people's feelings, he or she may become overly critical and sarcastic with others. If the INTP is not able to find a place for themselves which supports the use of their strongest abilities, they may become generally negative and cynical. If the INTP has not developed their Sensing side sufficiently, they may become unaware of their environment, and exhibit weakness in performing maintenance-type tasks, such as bill-paying and dressing appropriately.

For the INTP, it is extremely important that ideas and facts are expressed correctly and succinctly. They are likely to express themselves in what they believe to be absolute truths. Sometimes, their well thought-out understanding of an idea is not easily understandable by others, but the INTP is not naturally likely to tailor the truth so as to explain it in an understandable way to others. The INTP may be prone to abandoning a project once they have figured it out, moving on to the next thing. It's important that the INTP place importance on expressing their developed theories in understandable ways. In the end, an amazing discovery means nothing if you are the only person who understands it.

The INTP is usually very independent, unconventional, and original. They are not likely to place much value on traditional goals such as popularity and security. They usually have complex characters, and may tend to be restless and temperamental. They are strongly ingenious, and have unconventional thought patterns which allow them to analyze ideas in new ways. Consequently, a lot of scientific breakthroughs in the world have been made by the INTP.

The INTP is at his best when he can work on his theories independently. When given an environment which supports his creative genius and possible eccentricity, the INTP can accomplish truly remarkable things. These are the pioneers of new thoughts in our society.

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

INTP's generally have the following traits:

- Love theory and abstract ideas

- Truth Seekers - they want to understand things by analyzing underlying principles and structures
- Value knowledge and competence above all else
- Have very high standards for performance, which they apply to themselves
- Independent and original, possibly eccentric
- Work best alone, and value autonomy
- Have no desire to lead or follow
- Dislike mundane detail
- Not particularly interested in the practical application of their work
- Creative and insightful
- Future-oriented
- Usually brilliant and ingenious
- Trust their own insights and opinions above others
- Live primarily inside their own minds, and may appear to be detached and uninvolved with other people

INTP's have a special gift with generating and analyzing theories and possibilities to prove or disprove them. They have a great deal of insight and are creative thinkers, which allow them to quickly grasp complex abstract thoughts. They also have exceptional logical and rational reasoning skills, which allow them to thoroughly analyze theories to discover the Truth about them. Since the INTP is driven to seek clarity in the world, we have a happy match of desire and ability in this personality type. INTP's will be happiest in careers which allow them a great deal of autonomy in which they can work primarily alone on developing and analyzing complex theories and abstractions, with the goal of their work being the discovery of a truth, rather than the discovery of a practical application.

INTP Relationships

INTP's live rich worlds inside their minds, which are full of imagination and excitement. Consequently, they sometimes find the external world pales in comparison. This may result in a lack of motivation to form and maintain relationships. INTP's are not likely to have a very large circle of significant relationships in their lives. They're much more likely to have a few very close relationships, which they hold in great esteem and with great affection. Since the INTP's primary focus and attention is turned inwards, aimed towards seeking clarity from abstract ideas, they are not naturally tuned into others' emotional feelings and needs. They tend to be difficult to get to know well, and hold back parts of themselves until the other person has proven themselves "worthy" of hearing the INTP's thoughts. Holding Knowledge and Brain Power above all else in importance, the INTP will choose to be around people who they consider to be intelligent. Once the INTP has committed themselves to a relationship, they tend to be very faithful and loyal, and form affectionate attachments which are pure and straight-forward. The INTP has no interest or understanding of game-playing with regards to relationships. However, if something happens which the INTP considers irreconcilable, they will leave the relationship and not look back.

INTP Strengths

- They feel love and affection for those close to them which is almost childlike in its purity
- Generally laid-back and easy-going, willing to defer to their mates
- Approach things which interest them very enthusiastically
- Richly imaginative and creative
- Do not feel personally threatened by conflict or criticism
- Usually are not demanding, with simple daily needs

INTP Weaknesses

- Not naturally in tune with others' feelings; slow to respond to emotional needs
- Not naturally good at expressing their own feelings and emotions
- Tend to be suspicious and distrusting of others
- Not usually good at practical matters, such as money management, unless their work involves these concerns
- They have difficulty leaving bad relationships
- Tend to "blow off" conflict situations by ignoring them, or else they "blow up" in heated anger

What does Success mean to an INTP?

People with the INTP personality type are global thinkers. They see everything as one giant Entity that is connected, and seek knowledge about that Entity. They constantly seek the Truth, and have ultimate respect for the Truth. It is not easy for the INTP to reach a conclusion about the Truth. Their auxiliary function of Extraverted Intuition allows them to absorb the many complexities in our world, and they are driven to consider each of these complexities before reaching a conclusion. Once they have reached a conclusion, or discovered a Truth, they are *very* particular about the way that Truth is expressed and understood. They want to know that the principles of their understanding have been understood correctly, and demand absolute precision and correctness from others when describing these principles. They also apply these standards to themselves when communicating their knowledge. If they take the time to develop their communication so that it meets their own approval, they can be extremely good educational writers.

In addition to their immense respect for metaphysical principles, facts, and Truths, the INTP highly respects logic and the way that the mind works logically when seeking to master some subject or situation. They get great pleasure from engaging in logical acts that require quick, spatial reasoning, such as mind games, or time-based IQ tests. The INTP shines in this realm. Introverted Thinking is an "action-based" kind of logic. In the case of the INTP (as opposed to ISTP), the action may or may not occur in a physical place outside of the INTP's mind, but it is experienced with lightning speed in the current moment, based on current objects, using subjectively understood "actions" of reason.

The INTP is happiest in situations in which they can use logic regularly in an effort to uncover Truths about the Entity. Their ability to be effective in these efforts, as well as their ability to deal with people and feel comfortable with their place in the world, will be in large part dependent on the development of Extraverted Intuition. Although they have

more simple needs from interpersonal relationships than most other types have, it's very important that they keep up their extraverted relationships, rather than going it alone. INTP’s who isolate themselves rarely feel happy or successful. The INTP's feeling of success depends upon their opportunities to exercise their active mind, their opportunities to seek and find Truth, and the condition of their relationships and extraverted life.

Allowing Your INTP Strengths to Flourish

As an INTP, 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 be more content with your role.

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

They have a natural ability to focus and get "into the zone" when working on a problem. They can absorb their minds completely with an issue, and work it through with amazing speed and accuracy. This ability makes them outstanding trouble-shooters. Since their logical abilities are dependent on their experiences, their abilities will increase with time. INTP’s with experience are often seen as the "gurus" of their professions.

Their respect for precision in communication lends them the ability to accurately convey their ideas and discoveries in full.

They are usually quite intelligent and can grasp difficult concepts.

They are often jovial and good-natured, with a good sense of humor.

They are not overly demanding in personal relationships, and have simple daily needs. They are often easy and enjoyable to live with.

INTP’s who have developed their Extraverted Intuition to the extent that they regularly take in information in an objective fashion, rather than strictly to feed Introverted Thinking, will enjoy these very special gifts:

They may be exceptionally intelligent, and make ground-breaking discoveries.

With a well-developed understanding of their environment and the ability to act very quickly, they may good athletes.

They're typically able to communicate their ideas more concisely than the average INTP without sacrificing accuracy.

They understand the benefits of close relationships, and understand how to support and enhance these relationships.

They see the value of principles that are not strictly logical

They have attractive and compelling personalities, and are well-liked and accepted by most people.

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.

Most of the weaker characteristics that are found in INTP's are due to their dominant function of Introverted Thinking overtaking the personality to the point that all of the other functions exist merely to serve the purposes of Introverted Thinking. In such cases, an INTP may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- The INTP gets "stuck in a rut" and only does those things that are known and comfortable to the INTP.
- The INTP resists and rejects anything that doesn't support their own experiential understanding of the world. If they perceive that something is not logical, they reject it as unimportant.
- They reject people who think or live differently than themselves.
- They may be extremely caustic and insulting to others.
- They may become isolated from society.
- They may become overly paranoid about social organizations and institutions trying to control them.
- They may unknowingly or uncaringly hurt people's feelings.
- They may be completely unaware of how to express their inner world to others in a meaningful way.
- They may be completely unaware of the type of communication that is often desirable and (to some degree) expected in an intimate relationship. If they are aware of the kinds of things that are appropriate to say and do to foster emotional bonding, they may be unable to appreciate the value of such actions. They may feel too vulnerable to express themselves in this fashion, and so reject the entire idea.
- If pushed beyond their comfort level to form commitments or emotional bonds, they may reject a relationship entirely.
- Under stress, they may show intense emotions that seem disproportionate to the situation.
- They may not recognize basic social principles, such as appropriate dress and general behavior.

Explanation of Problems
Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common INTP problem of only taking in information that relates to or

supports their own life experience. The INTP is driven to work with and understand his or her world by applying logic (an immediate, spatial, "fuzzy" logic) to the current situation. Although they generally seek to uncover truths, they don't always have a goal in mind to achieve from the logical process. The act or process of using logic is rewarding to the INTP. In their zeal for the satisfaction that comes from mastering a problem or situation, INTP’s often selectively choose to put themselves in situations in which they have the opportunity to exercise these skills. That's certainly not a problem. Most personality types choose to do the things that they're best at most often. Such is the nature of capitalizing upon our strengths. The problem rears its ugly head when the goal of the INTP becomes to achieve their personal satisfaction at all costs.

It is healthy to choose your paths and goals in life so that they coincide with what you find rewarding, and what you're really good at. However, it sometimes happens that we take this approach a bit too far and sacrifice an accurate and objective understanding of the world for a more narrow vision that is easier and comfortable for us to deal with. The INTP affects this problem when they stop taking in information in a truly objective sense, and instead only take in information that can be worked through logically.

The dominant function of the INTP is Introverted Thinking. This function is supported closely and importantly by the auxiliary function of Extraverted Intuition. Extraverted Intuition perceives the world and sends information into the psyche, where it is processed by Introverted Thinking. An INTP who uses their Extraverted Intuition function in a diminished way is one who perceives information for the sole purpose of feeding Introverted Thinking, rather than taking everything in objectively. They are less concerned with understanding something for the sake of understanding than they are with feeding a piece of data into their Thinking function. Information that is not logical is dismissed as unimportant. They may reject information that is not consistent with their logical view of themselves, or with their understanding of a situation. Well-developed Extraverted Intuition perceives situations with depth and global understanding. It recognizes possibilities. Introverted Thinking makes conclusions. If an INTP's psyche is serving the purposes of Introverted Thinking above all else, then logical conclusions become more important than possibilities. In such cases, the INTP picks and chooses information from Extraverted Intuition that is interesting to them from the perspective of reaching logical conclusions. This keeps the INTP focused on reaching logical conclusions, but it prevents them from taking in any information that doesn't work well with their logical functioning. This includes things like love, emotions, social expectations, etc. These things are very important to many people in the world, and cannot be discarded from consideration if one hopes to really understand other people and the society that we live in. When the INTP dismisses the importance of data that can't be handled by their Thinking function, they are dismissing the importance of ideas that are central to half of the personality types' way of life (approximately half of the human population uses Feeling primarily for decision making). An INTP who wants to understand people and wants to recognize value in both logical and non logical ideas will strive to take in as much information as possible about the world for the purposes of improving their understanding,

The INTP who suffers from diminished use of Extraverted Intuition is likely to be very cutting and derisive towards people who express disagreement with the INTP. Without a sufficiently diverse perception of the Extraverted world, the INTP is unlikely to understand the principles of human interaction, and is unlikely to recognize the tremendous value of getting along with others and having good relationships.

For example, an INTP that I know (Bob) and his wife recently adopted a 7 year old girl (Kelly). The family lives in a foreign country and makes it back to the U.S. for Christmas most years. Last year, Bob's relatives from the U.S. spoiled Kelly with lots of Christmas gifts to let her know that she was welcome and valued in their family. When Bob and his family left the country after Christmas, they did not bring any of Kelly's Christmas gifts with them. Bob's relatives were all extremely hurt and upset by this fact. When they confronted Bob about this, he claimed that they were wrong. He said that he had done the packing himself and was sure that nothing had been left behind. Bob's family has a large stack of clothes and toys that were meant for Kelly, but Bob insists to this day that they are wrong. He is not seeing the situation objectively with Extraverted Intuition. Rather, he dismisses the evidence because it doesn't support his own vision of himself or of that particular situation.

The INTP's inferior (fourth) function is Extraverted Feeling. This means that the INTP is not naturally in tune with how other people are feeling, or with social expectations. In fact, the INTP is likely to reject the importance of social rituals, rules, and expectations. This is a natural weak point for the INTP, which no doubt causes strife to the INTP and their love partner. This weakness can be overcome by developing their Extraverted Intuition to the point that they can perceive Feeling type expectations in the external world. They don't have to use Extraverted Feeling to understand how to act in situations. They can perceive the expected behavior from their Extraverted Intuition function. However, if they are restricting their incoming data to only those things that support their existing way of life, then they are not learning from Extraverted Intuition at all. They are not growing their understanding of social and intimate behaviors - rather, they are reducing the importance of this type of understanding to their own life. In these situations, INTP’s shy away from very close personal relationships, and feel more vulnerable and less sure of themselves in situations that involve expressing their emotions. In extreme cases, they reject social interaction entirely. They tend to dislike everyone, and interact with the world with the primary purpose of getting rid of the offending person. Most INTP’s will have bad days during which they don't much feel like dealing with people. The problem occurs when every day becomes a bad day.

Solutions

To grow as an individual, the INTP needs to focus on taking in as much information as possible through Extraverted Intuition. He or she needs to allow themselves to get into situations that they aren't necessarily comfortable with, or that are different from the situations that they would normally choose in life. The INTP learns from experience, so the best way for the INTP to grow as a person is to open him or herself to new experiences. Be aware of the tendency to want to run out and do something "new" that is actually just a different opportunity to exercise a known skill. Your task, as a person

interested in personal growth, is to understand the world in a truly objective fashion, and how you fit into the world, rather than how the world fits into your life.

The INTP should also pay close attention to their motivations when perceiving new information. Are they perceiving with an open mind or with an agenda? Are they seeking to truly understand something, or are they more concerned with turning the information into a logical conclusion? Seek first to understand, then to judge.

Living Happily in our World as an INTP

The problems that INTP's have with regards to fitting into our world are not usually related to platonic friendships. Usually, the INTP has trouble finding and maintaining a love relationship. The INTP usually has relatively simple needs and expectations from their mates, and they're surprised and confused to find that their mates have more complex demands. They don't understand their mate's needs, and may feel inadequate to meeting them. They get very uncomfortable with a situation as they perceive that they are expected to do something that it unknown to them. They back away from the relationship. They generally mask their fear and discomfort by reducing the importance of the relationship to themselves and others, or by putting the failure off onto the ridiculous expectations of their ex-mate. Outside of a relationship, they feel more unloved and unappreciated, but are afraid to commit to a relationship because they fear rejection and hurt.

Most INTP's experience relationship difficulties at some point in their lives. The INTP with a well-developed Extraverted Intuition will find relationships more satisfying and easier to deal with. Accordingly, we offer some general suggestions for dealing with relationships, as well as some advice that will help the INTP develop their Extraverted Intuition.

Specific suggestions:

Figure out how you feel about the other person. Do not falsely express love, or lead someone on with your ambivalence.

Don't expect yourself to be a master at the "touchy-feely" game. Be yourself, but remember that there is a basic assumption of human decency that must be adhered to in relationships. If you're not sure what that means, take special care to observe how people in "good" committed relationships behave towards each other, so that you can determine where the lines are drawn.

Pair yourself with an Extraverted Thinker (ESTJ or ENTJ) who is less likely to assume that the lack of feedback is the same thing as negative feedback.

Realize and accept that for you a satisfying relationship will start with the head, and move on towards the heart.

Expanding your world and experiences will expand your understanding of human expectations. Try to figure out the personality type of people that you know and encounter in your life.

Take care to notice what people look like in different social situations. Notice their hair, makeup (or lack thereof), the condition of their clothes, their shoes, their facial expressions. Don't compare others to your own appearance, simply take notice of it.

When having a conversation with a friend or relative, spend at least half of the time talking about them. Concentrate on really understanding where the person is coming from with their concerns. Ask questions.

Think of the people who are closest to you. Remember that they have their own lives going on. Try to visualize what that person is doing, and imagine what kinds of things that person is thinking about. Don't pass judgment, just think about it.

Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve INTP Success

1. Feed Your Strengths! Realize your gift at mastering logical problems and situations, and give yourself plenty of opportunities to exercise your abilities. Much of your sense of well-being will come from these experiences.
2. Face Your Weaknesses! We all have weaknesses. Recognizing your weaknesses for what they are (without beating yourself up) will give you the power to change your life for the better.
3. Talk About Your Thoughts. Discussing your ideas and perceptions with others will help you to develop your Extraverted INtuition, and thus your understanding of the world. How well you use your auxiliary function is very important to your overall health and happiness.
4. Listen to Everything Try not to dismiss anything immediately. Let it soak in, and then apply judgment. Try not to dismiss things that are illogical - they are not illogical.
5. Be Aware of Others Understand that everyone has their own lives and their own perspectives. Everyone has something to offer. Try to identify people's personality type.
6. Recognize Social Principles. Realize that our society functions around some basic social principles, and that our society would fail unless those principles are recognized and upheld. In a democracy, people vote. At a red stoplight, people stop. If people stopped voting because it wasn't important them, who would be in power? If people stopped stopping at red stop lights because it didn't fit into their plans, how could we drive safely? Your priorities and plans are important, but you must recognize that the external world's agenda is also important. Don't dismiss the importance of principles that don't affect your life directly.
7. Get Out of Your Comfort Zone Understand that the only way to grow is to get outside of your comfort zone. If you're uncomfortable with an idea or situation because you're not sure how to act, that's good! That's an opportunity for growth.
8. Identify and Express Your Feelings You may have a hard time understanding how you feel about someone. It's important that you do figure this out. Don't lead

someone on with your ambivalence. If you determine that you value the person, tell them so every time you think of it. This is the best way to make them feel secure in your affections, and so to promote a long-lasting relationship.

9. Be Accountable for Yourself Remember that no one has more control over your life than you have. Don't be a victim.
10. Assume the Best. Don't distress yourself with fear and dark expectations. Remember that a positive attitude often creates positive situations.

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