

# Portrait of an ENFJ - Extraverted iNtuitive Feeling Judging (Extraverted Feeling with Introverted Intuition)

## *The Giver*

As an ENFJ, your primary mode of living is focused externally, where you deal with things according to how you feel about them, or how they fit into your personal value system. Your secondary mode is internal, where you take things in primarily via your intuition.

ENFJs are people-focused individuals. They live in the world of people possibilities. More so than any other type, they have excellent people skills. They understand and care about people, and have a special talent for bringing out the best in others. ENFJ's main interest in life is giving love, support, and a good time to other people. They are focused on understanding, supporting, and encouraging others. They make things happen for people, and get their best personal satisfaction from this.

Because ENFJ's people skills are so extraordinary, they have the ability to make people do exactly what they want them to do. They get under people's skins and get the reactions that they are seeking. ENFJ's motives are usually unselfish, but ENFJs who have developed less than ideally have been known to use their power over people to manipulate them.

ENFJs are so externally focused that it's especially important for them to spend time alone. This can be difficult for some ENFJs, because they have the tendency to be hard on themselves and turn to dark thoughts when alone. Consequently, ENFJs might avoid being alone, and fill their lives with activities involving other people. ENFJs tend to define their life's direction and priorities according to other people's needs, and may not be aware of their own needs. It's natural to their personality type that they will tend to place other people's needs above their own, but they need to stay aware of their own needs so that they don't sacrifice themselves in their drive to help others.

ENFJs tend to be more reserved about exposing themselves than other extraverted types. Although they may have strongly-felt beliefs, they're likely to refrain from expressing them if doing so would interfere with bringing out the best in others. Because their strongest interest lies in being a catalyst of change in other people, they're likely to interact with others on their own level, in a chameleon-like manner, rather than as individuals.

ENFJs have definite values and opinions which they're able to express clearly and succinctly. These beliefs will be expressed as long as they're not too personal. ENFJ is in many ways expressive and open, but is more focused on being responsive and supportive of others. When faced with a conflict between a strongly-held value and serving another person's need, they are highly likely to value the other person's needs.

The ENFJ may feel quite lonely even when surrounded by people. This feeling of aloneness may be exacerbated by the tendency to not reveal their true selves.

People love ENFJs. They are fun to be with, and truly understand and love people. They are typically very straight-forward and honest. Usually ENFJs exude a lot of self-confidence, and have a great amount of ability to do many different things. They are generally bright, full of potential, energetic and fast-paced. They are usually good at anything which captures their interest.

ENFJs like for things to be well-organized, and will work hard at maintaining structure and resolving ambiguity. They have a tendency to be fussy, especially with their home environments.

In the work place, ENFJs do well in positions where they deal with people. They are naturals for the social committee. Their uncanny ability to understand people and say just what needs to be said to make them happy makes them naturals for counseling. They enjoy being the center of attention, and do very well in situations where they can inspire and lead others, such as teaching.

ENFJs do not like dealing with impersonal reasoning. They don't understand or appreciate its merit, and will be unhappy in situations where they're forced to deal with logic and facts without any connection to a human element. Living in the world of people possibilities, they enjoy their plans more than their achievements. They get excited about possibilities for the future, but may become easily bored and restless with the present.

ENFJs have a special gift with people, and are basically happy people when they can use that gift to help others. They get their best satisfaction from serving others. Their genuine interest in Humankind and their exceptional intuitive awareness of people makes them able to draw out even the most reserved individuals. ENFJs have a strong need for close, intimate relationships, and will put forth a lot of effort in creating and maintaining these relationships. They're very loyal and trustworthy once involved in a relationship.

An ENFJ who has not developed their Feeling side may have difficulty making good decisions, and may rely heavily on other people in decision-making processes. If they have not developed their Intuition, they may not be able to see possibilities, and will judge things too quickly based on established value systems or social rules, without really understanding the current situation. An ENFJ who has not found their place in the world is likely to be extremely sensitive to criticism, and to have the tendency to worry excessively and feel guilty. They are also likely to be very manipulative and controlling with others.

In general, ENFJs are charming, warm, gracious, creative and diverse individuals with richly developed insights into what makes other people tick. This special ability to see growth potential in others combined with a genuine drive to help people makes the ENFJ a truly valued individual. As giving and caring as the ENFJ is, they need to remember to value their own needs as well as the needs of others.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Extraverted Feeling

Auxiliary: Introverted Intuition

Tertiary: Extraverted Sensing

Inferior: Introverted Thinking

**ENFJs generally have the following traits:**

- Genuinely and warmly interested in people
- Value people's feelings
- Value structure and organization
- Value harmony, and good at creating it
- Exceptionally good people skills
- Dislike impersonal logic and analysis
- Strong organizational capabilities
- Loyal and honest
- Creative and imaginative
- Enjoy variety and new challenges
- Get personal satisfaction from helping others
- Extremely sensitive to criticism and discord
- Need approval from others to feel good about themselves

**ENFJ Relationships**

ENFJs put a lot of effort and enthusiasm into their relationships. To some extent, the ENFJ defines themselves by the closeness and authenticity of their personal relationships, and are therefore highly invested in the business of relationships. They have very good people skills, and are affectionate and considerate. They are warmly affirming and nurturing. They excel at bringing out the best in others, and warmly supporting them. They want responding affirmation from their relationships, although they have a problem asking for it. When a situation calls for it, the ENFJ will become very sharp and critical. After having made their point, they will return to their natural, warm selves. They may have a tendency to "smother" their loved ones, but are generally highly valued for their genuine warmth and caring natures.

Most ENFJs will exhibit the following strengths with regards to relationship issues:

- Good verbal communication skills
- Very perceptive about people's thoughts and motives
- Motivational, inspirational; bring out the best in others
- Warmly affectionate and affirming
- Fun to be with - lively sense of humor, dramatic, energetic, optimistic
- Good money skills
- Able to "move on" after a love relationship has failed (although they blame themselves)
- Loyal and committed - they want lifelong relationships
- Strive for "win-win" situations
- Driven to meet other's needs

Most ENFJs will exhibit the following weaknesses with regards to relationships issues:

- Tendency to be smothering and over-protective
- Tendency to be controlling and/or manipulative
- Don't pay enough attention to their own needs
- Tend to be critical of opinions and attitudes which don't match their own
- Sometimes unaware of social appropriateness or protocol
- Extremely sensitive to conflict, with a tendency to sweep things under the rug as an avoidance tactic
- Tendency to blame themselves when things go wrong, and not give themselves credit when things go right
- Their sharply defined value systems make them unbending in some areas
- They may be so attuned to what is socially accepted or expected that they're unable to assess whether something is "right" or "wrong" outside of what their social circle expects.

### **What does Success mean to an ENFJ?**

ENFJs are motivated by external human situations, primarily by other people; their talents, their needs, their aspirations and their cares forming the world in which an ENFJ lives. They thrive when able to "make things right" for others, to enable and empower their co-workers, friends and family through valuing their human strengths and abilities. When gifted with the added ENFJ ability to intuitively adapt their feelings to the way they are affected by others, the ENFJ has a positive drive to find co-operative pathways leading to the best possible outcome for all. Success for an ENFJ comes through involvement in the process of making things happen for people; through the accomplishments and satisfactions of those they have helped to enrich the human world with greater value, and through finding that their efforts on behalf of others have fulfilled their own life as well.

### **Allowing Your ENFJ Strengths to Flourish**

As an ENFJ, 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 ENFJs will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- Making others feel valued and important
- Quickly seeing the positive and negative aspects of a human situation
- Expressing their feelings clearly
- Offering loyalty and commitment to partners, family and work mates
- Trying to always find the solution which works for everyone
- Encouraging humor and self expression in others
- Finding ways to help others fulfill their needs
- Affirming positive community values
- Naturally falling into leadership roles in their community

ENFJs who have developed their Introverted Intuition to the extent that they can see the possibilities within their perceptions will enjoy these very special gifts:

- Understanding and empathizing with the feelings of others; realizing “where they are coming from”.
- A talent for creative expression which can turn ordinary things and situations into something magical.
- An enhanced feeling of connection with and sensitivity to the world around them.
- The ability to see many facets of a problem and the many ways it might be resolved for the best.
- The ability to make creative and valuable use of time spent alone.
- Openness to the spiritual connections between all things
- They become increasingly creative, visionary and empathetic, and are therefore effective and kind managers of businesses, people, and various situations that life presents.

### **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 found in ENFJs are due to their dominant Extraverted Feeling overvaluing what they see as objective values in the external world and thereby judging too much by the needs of others, or by appearances. This is primarily due to the ENFJ having not fully adapted their Introverted Intuitive function sufficiently for them to be able to discern the vast range of ways in which they might be being missing the underlying needs within themselves and being misled by such appearances. The ENFJ naturally looks outward to find value and satisfaction, and whilst it is essential that this direction be taken to fulfill their primary needs of relation and comfort, without the supportive balance of a well developed Intuitive function, ENFJs can overvalue the external world to the point where they lose sight of themselves, becoming fixed in their judgments about people and the world. In such cases, the ENFJ will tend to live in a rigid - and to others, somewhat surreal - world of definite values which often seems “overstated” or obsessively connected to other people or human situations.

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ENFJ problem of wanting to find the “proper” value in everything. If the ENFJ does not learn how to see beneath the appearance of what they quickly judge as good or bad about the people and situations in their external environment, they will only use their introverted intuition to support those judgments they feel are good for them and disregard not only other possibilities but their own quality of inner life as well. The consideration of these less obvious possibilities and their own needs requires that the ENFJ recognize that their own value judgments are indeed subjective, and that it is not appropriate or effective to apply them across the board to all civilized people. The practice of standing back and looking objectively at their own value system is not something that the ENFJ is accustomed to doing; trying to avoid abstract rationalization of problems and the feelings they engender is a natural survival technique for the ENFJ personality. The main driver to the ENFJ personality is Extraverted Feeling, whose purpose is above all to find and discriminate the values in people and human situations. If their ability to find a specific and worthy value in a person or situation is threatened, the ENFJ shuts out the threatening force. This is totally natural, but unfortunately the individual who exercises this type of agenda protection regularly will become more and more rigid in their judgments and expectations of people, but even less concerned with the effect such conditions have upon themselves. Where the unbalanced ENFJ does acquiesce to the images of intuition, these will generally be skewed to support the subjective agenda of dominant Feeling. In this way they always find justification for their determinations and their self sacrifices to people, things and situations, and they will be unable locate the reality of another’s true

feelings, nor be interested in discovering that their seemingly objective judgments miss the reasons and subjectivities underlying both their own and others lives or worldly situation.

Petulance, pensiveness and a sense of being let down by others can often be the end result of this one sided approach to the world, whilst if the ENFJ is in a strong company or relationship position they might become driven to manipulate others and situations to conform to their own feeling needs and value judgments, irrespective of any true value to the situation or for the other persons involved. In this case, the “big picture” valued for its great worth to all, becomes a dominant drive which seeks to blot out or crush any opposition by claiming the moral high ground, even to the point where the ENFJ sacrifices their own life to the “cause”. The inability to recognize the plethora of subjective possibilities their feelings bring into their lives strip the unbalanced ENFJ of their access to both a deeper connection with others and the possibility of refining and developing pathways to the kind of self understanding and self nurturing their finer judgments might otherwise lead them to.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ENFJ needs to focus on paying attention to their inner images. This means they need to be open to the possibilities that lie beneath their judgments and values, rather than just accepting the appearance of values which accord with their sense of rightness. The ENFJ needs to understand that developing their ability to see the subjective possibilities within themselves and others does not threaten their ability to make correct judgments, but rather enhances it, and enhances their personal chances for achieving a measure of success in their lives.

The ENFJ concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to their motivation for accepting values that come to them. Are they trying to see the background of circumstance behind their own and others value judgments, or are they trying to maintain their own image of how things “ought” to be? The goal is to find a balance between what seems correct and valuable and the many possible ways in which such a judgment might be subjective and not necessarily the best for themselves or a situation. Obviously, this is not entirely possible, but it is the exercise to keep in mind. They need to see the many divergent images of values and their conflicts which affect them, without feeling threatened, and without losing their sense of what is right and wrong.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ENFJ**

As can be seen from the above, some strongly expressed ENFJs can have difficulty fitting into society. Their problems are usually due to their Extraverted Feeling function being so dominant that they are so strongly bound to what they see as objective values that they cannot relate to the world except via the objects of their feeling. In such cases the intensity of their judgments can actually drive others away from them, and the resulting lack of close relationship felt as a personal failing for which the ENFJ feels guilty. Such guilt can drive even more strongly affective behavior which leads the ENFJ to ignore their own needs entirely, or it can become a negative drive to manipulate others to conform to their one-sided vision of the world. The ENFJ who consistently tries to see the underlying possibilities and the scope available in each situation will be able to see the right path to take with each person and situation in their life. This will always lead them to toward closer relationships, happiness and great achievements.

The key to personal growth for the ENFJ is competent execution of Introverted Intuition. Because it is often hard to define what this represents subjectively to each person, here are some action-oriented suggestions that will help lead you down the path towards more effective use of the Introverted Intuitive function.

### **Specific suggestions:**

When confronted by a person or situation which seems to be rejecting or rebuffing your value judgments and your mind filling with all the arguments, images and alternatives to the situation, look closely at those you are immediately rejecting as negative or unsuitable ways to proceed. Within these images often lie paths to understanding and agreement if you look more closely. Some of these images hold the key to seeing another’s feelings and point of view more clearly. Remember, what seems positive to you may not be everything or even important to another.

Behind everything of value that you see lies much potential. Try not to be satisfied with just a good result, but let yourself imagine the ways in which a person might fulfill all their creative aspects; the ways in which a situation might become useful to many more than just what it was made for. Try to imagine everything as a source of untapped magic and creative power – let your mind see all the things it might become. Above all, apply this exercise to yourself, as if you were seeing yourself in a mirror: just as you would another person whom you love.

When you are alone try to become fully aware of how it feels to you, try to recognize the emptiness as a place of potential, try to imagine what you might be able to do for others in this empty time, try to realize that you are not truly alone but with this special person who is yourself. What would you do for this person if you could make their private world a better place?

Everything wonderful in life proceeds from the qualities which lie behind it. You can feel these things, these drives and attitudes which seem to come from a place outside, perhaps from the creator expressing himself within people and nature. Letting the sense of these background qualities permeate your drive to life will give you purpose and meaning. Allow yourself to feel the meanings and purposes of the world, let them become a valuable gift which can be expressed in your dealings with others and in the things you strive for.

#### Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ENFJ Success

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Make sure you have opportunities to involve yourself with others in situations where your input is valued.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** Realize and accept that some traits are strengths and some are weaknesses. By facing your weaknesses, you can overcome them and they will have less power over you.
3. **Express Your Feelings.** Understand that your feelings are as important as others are in the overall situation. Without your feelings and needs being valued the best result is not realized, so value and speak to your own feelings as much as you value those of others.
4. **Make Decisions.** Don't be afraid to have an opinion. You need to know show others the qualities and potentials you can see are worthy of action.
5. **Smile at Criticism.** Try to see why disagreement and discord indicate the differences between people, and use this as an opportunity to make your value judgments useful for growth, because that's exactly what they are. Try not to feel responsible for another's criticism, but try to hear it and understand the feelings and images it engenders within you. Then you may see a path not only to agreement but to a shared and truly valuable end.
6. **Be Aware of Others.** Remember that there are 15 other personality types out there who see things differently than you see them. Most of your problems with other people are easier to deal with if you try to understand the other person's perspective.
7. **Be Aware of Yourself.** Don't stint your own needs for the sake of others too much. Realize you are an important focus. If you do not fulfill your own needs, how will continue to be effective and how will others know you are true to your beliefs?
8. **Be Gentle in Your Expectations.** It is easy for you to see the value in others, but stressing this too much can drive them away. Try to show that you understand their fears and limitations and lead them gently to see how you feel: lead them gently into understanding and love.
9. **Assume the Best.** Don't distress yourself by feeling that your values are lost upon others – they are not. Perhaps it just has to sit with them too. Let the situation resolve itself and never stop believing that love is the true answer.
10. **When in Doubt, Ask Questions!** Don't assume that the lack of feedback is the same thing as negative feedback. If you need feedback and don't have any, ask for it.

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

# **Portrait of an ENTJ - Extraverted iNtuitive Thinking Judging (Extraverted Thinking with Introverted Intuition)**

## *The Executive*

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

ENTJ's are natural born leaders. They live in a world of possibilities where they see all sorts of challenges to be surmounted, and they want to be the ones responsible for surmounting them. They have a drive for leadership, which is well-served by their quickness to grasp complexities, their ability to absorb a large amount of impersonal information, and their quick and decisive judgments. They are "take charge" people.

ENTJ's are very career-focused, and fit into the corporate world quite naturally. They are constantly scanning their environment for potential problems which they can turn into solutions. They generally see things from a long-range perspective, and are usually successful at identifying plans to turn problems around - especially problems of a corporate nature. ENTJ's are usually successful in the business world, because they are so driven to leadership. They're tireless in their efforts on the job, and driven to visualize where an organization is headed. For these reasons, they are natural corporate leaders.

There is not much room for error in the world of the ENTJ. They dislike seeing mistakes repeated, and have no patience with inefficiency. They may become quite harsh when their patience is tried in these respects, because they are not naturally tuned in to people's feelings, and more than likely don't believe that they should tailor their judgments in consideration for people's feelings. ENTJ's, like many types, have difficulty seeing things from outside their own perspective. Unlike other types, ENTJ's naturally have little patience with people who do not see things the same way as the ENTJ. The ENTJ needs to consciously work on recognizing the value of other people's opinions, as well as the value of being sensitive towards people's feelings. In the absence of this awareness, the ENTJ will be a forceful, intimidating and overbearing individual. This may be a real problem for the ENTJ, who may be deprived of important information and collaboration from others. In their personal world, it can make some ENTJ's overbearing as spouses or parents.

The ENTJ has a tremendous amount of personal power and presence which will work for them as a force towards achieving their goals. However, this personal power is also an agent of alienation and self-aggrandizement, which the ENTJ would do well to avoid.

ENTJ's are very forceful, decisive individuals. They make decisions quickly, and are quick to verbalize their opinions and decisions to the rest of the world. The ENTJ who has not developed their Intuition will make decisions too hastily, without understanding all of the issues and possible solutions. On the other hand, an ENTJ who has not developed their Thinking side will have difficulty applying logic to their insights, and will often make poor decisions. In that case, they may have brilliant ideas and insight into situations, but they may have little skill at determining how to act upon their understanding, or their actions may be inconsistent. An ENTJ who has developed in a generally less than ideal way may become dictatorial and abrasive - intrusively giving orders and direction without a sound reason for doing so, and without consideration for the people involved.

Although ENTJ's are not naturally tuned into other people's feelings, these individuals frequently have very strong sentimental streaks. Often these sentiments are very powerful to the ENTJ, although they will likely hide it from general knowledge, believing the feelings to be a weakness. Because the world of feelings and values is not where the ENTJ naturally functions, they may sometimes make value judgments and hold onto submerged emotions which are ill-founded and inappropriate, and will cause them problems - sometimes rather serious problems.

ENTJ's love to interact with people. As Extroverts, they're energized and stimulated primarily externally. There's nothing more enjoyable and satisfying to the ENTJ than having a lively, challenging conversation. They especially respect people who are able to stand up to the ENTJ, and argue persuasively for their point of view. There aren't too many people who will do so, however, because the ENTJ is a very forceful and dynamic presence who has a tremendous amount of self-confidence and excellent verbal communication skills. Even the most confident individuals may experience moments of self-doubt when debating a point with an ENTJ.

ENTJ's want their home to be beautiful, well-furnished, and efficiently run. They're likely to place much emphasis on their children being well-educated and structured, to desire a congenial and devoted relationship with their spouse. At home, the ENTJ needs to be in charge as much as he or she does in their career. The ENTJ is likely best paired with someone who has a strong self-image, who is also a Thinking type. Because the ENTJ is primarily focused on their careers, some ENTJ's have a problem with being constantly absent from home, physically or mentally.

The ENTJ has many gifts which make it possible for them to have a great deal of personal power, if they don't forget to remain balanced in their lives. They are assertive, innovative, long-range thinkers with an excellent ability to translate theories and possibilities into solid plans of action. They are usually tremendously forceful personalities, and have the tools to accomplish whatever goals they set out for.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Extraverted Thinking  
Auxiliary: Introverted Intuition  
Tertiary: Extraverted Sensing  
Inferior: Introverted Feeling

**ENTJ's generally have the following traits:**

- Driven to turn theories into plans
- Highly value knowledge
- Future-oriented
- Natural leaders
- Impatient with inefficiency and incompetence
- Want things structured and orderly
- Excellent verbal communication skills
- Dislike routine, detail-oriented tasks
- Self-confident
- Decisive

ENTJ's are especially well-suited to be leaders and organization builders. They have the ability to clearly identify problems and innovative solutions for the short and long-term well-being of an organization. Having a strong desire to lead, they're not likely to be happy as followers. ENTJ's like to be in charge, and need to be in charge to take advantage of their special capabilities.

**ENTJ Strengths**

- Genuinely interested in people's ideas and thoughts
- Enthusiastic and energetic
- Take their commitments very seriously
- Fair-minded and interested in doing the Right Thing
- Very good with money
- Extremely direct and straightforward
- Verbally fluent
- Enhance and encourage knowledge and self-growth in all aspects of life
- Able to leave relationships without looking back
- Able to turn conflict situations into positive lessons
- Able to take constructive criticism well



- Extremely high standards and expectations (both a strength and a weakness)
- Usually have strong affections and sentimental streaks
- Able to dole out discipline

### **ENTJ Weaknesses**

- Their enthusiasm for verbal debates can make them appear argumentative
- Tendency to be challenging and confrontational
- Tend to get involved in "win-lose" conversations
- Tendency to have difficulty listening to others
- Tendency to be critical of opinions and attitudes which don't match their own
- Extremely high standards and expectations (both a strength and a weakness)
- Not naturally in tune with people's feelings and reactions
- May have difficulty expressing love and affection, sometimes seeming awkward or inappropriate
- Can be overpowering and intimidating to others
- Tendency to want to always be in charge, rather than sharing responsibilities
- Can be very harsh and intolerant about messiness or inefficiency
- Tendency to be controlling
- May be slow to give praise or to realize another's need for praise
- If unhappy or underdeveloped, they may be very impersonal, dictatorial, or abrasive
- Tendency to make hasty decisions
- Make explode with terrible tempers when under extreme stress

### **What does Success mean to an ENTJ?**

ENTJ people are realists, in the most basic sense of the word. Not only because their thinking is based upon a clear view of how things actually are in the world around them, but also because their ideas and strategies are structured around those unambiguous, "down to earth", commonsense beliefs which sum up the obvious and undeniable in life. But while ENTJ's might be pragmatic about the immediate situation before them, they are scarcely satisfied with it until it can be made more productive, useful or valuable. The ENTJ's reasoning on such matters is always clear and generally unemotional. If action can improve an item or a situation then it ought to be taken, and the ENTJ will always be found in the midst of such action, organizing, planning and leading the way forward until the best result possible has been realized. This makes success for an ENTJ something that can be clearly seen, a real world result which can be measured. And whether measured in dollars, bricks, bread or just happy people, the successful ENTJ knows the result is due to their belief that it is just plain commonsense to try and make the best of every situation and get the most out of it for the most people.

### **Allowing Your ENTJ Strengths to Flourish**

As an ENTJ, 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 ENTJ's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- Able to cut straight to the chase in any situation and not be sidetracked by non-essential issues.
- A propensity for leadership which follows naturally from their ability to control and manage real time/real world situations.
- A talent for factual analysis unbiased by prejudice or emotion.
- A "can do" approach to life which makes the working environment a positive place for them.
- A strong regard for positive social and economic institutions, structure and government.
- Second to none time and space management skills, everything organized and in its place.
- Able to constantly synthesize and adapt new ideas and concepts into strategies for business, social, financial or environmental development.

ENTJ's who have a well-developed Introverted Intuitive function to complement their dominant Extraverted Thinking will enjoy these very special gifts:

- A talent for creating great benefits through the addressing of social justice issues.

- The ability to recognize and mediate their potentials in accord with the expectations of others.
- An approach to life which includes an awareness of the differences between their needs and those of others.
- Able to know when to stop and take stock of life and recognize the qualities of the moment.
- A talent for showing others the way to get past difficulties in their outer life
- A broadening of their own ambitions which includes rather than excludes others from the decision making and the benefits which flow from their achievement.

### **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.

ENTJ's are strong, right minded and rational people. This should be kept in mind as you read some of the more negative material about ENTJ weaknesses. These weaknesses are natural. We offer this information to enact positive change, rather than as blatant criticism.

Most of the weaker characteristics in the ENTJ stem from their dominant Extraverted Thinking function overtaking their personality, stifling the natural expression and balancing value of the other personality functions. In such cases, an ENTJ may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- May be unable to understand other people's needs where these differ from their own.
- May unwisely assume their ideas are the only right ones and are therefore being fully implemented by others.
- May become childishly petulant or angered when confronted by situations which require feeling judgments.
- May become so engrossed in a plan or ambition that personal needs and the needs of others are forgotten.
- May take every decision not made in agreement with their rational beliefs as a personal rejection.
- May be easily taken in or manipulated by others via agreement with their rational attitudes.
- May become obsessed with small obstructions and difficulties to the point where the overall plan is forgotten
- May believe natural limitations are actually ailments which ought to be eradicated
- May assume others are ever plotting against them.
- May believe only their own view of the world or a situation is correct, even to the point that they make it into a kind of dogma which must be followed by those around them.

### **Explanation of Problems**

Most of the problems described above can be seen as a direct result of a too dominant Extraverted Thinking function ruling the personality. In most cases this is exactly what is happening, but it is also worth recognizing that some of the weaknesses in the ENTJ's personality that are more apparent to other Types, flow not so much from the excesses of the ENTJ's dominant function, but from the natural inferiority of their feeling function and its lack of adaptation. We must also recognize that the level of expression of all functions in all people is variable and that some of the problems discussed here apply only to strongly expressing ENTJ's, where the attitude which flows from using Extraverted Thinking exclusively to guide them through life creates its own particular problems.

The over dominance of Extraverted Thinking leads to an intensely intellectual way of seeing the world, where values such as right and wrong, good and bad, useful and useless are judged only by their applicability to an almost mathematically exact - and to the ENTJ - always rational, attitude to life. Without the balance provided by other ways of seeing or judging, the ENTJ is unable to account for actions based upon the inner views or feeling behavior of others, hence such things are always judged negatively, either as irrelevant - or at best - as being of small consequence. Additionally, with their thinking attitude always turned outward and totally subject to the world beyond their senses, without the balance of some internally

felt objectivity the ENTJ will often follow their ideas and ambitions without consideration for their own physical and emotional needs. Indeed, the ENTJ often feels that if only his project, his work, his outer reality would just fall into line with his own rational views then all would be well within his world and all his needs would be met. Unfortunately such an attitude can never be satisfied, for the world is not only rational, but also full of situations and human behavior which must be appreciated and understood by quite different, and again - to the ENTJ – often seemingly absurd criteria.

A healthy personality needs to have a good balance between its dominant and auxiliary functions. For an ENTJ, dominant Extraverted Thinking needs to be well-supported by their auxiliary Introverted Intuitive function. If Introverted Intuition exists only to support the intellectual rationale created by Extraverted Thinking, then neither function is being used to its full potential.

Introverted Intuition is the ENTJ's access to their inner world, to the information that could tell them how the world is affecting them. Because it is introverted, its images arise from the subjective depths of the mind, and contain all that the ENTJ has not considered within their strictly rational and object oriented view of the world. Introverted Intuition provides the personally biased information the ENTJ needs to balance this world view and protect the ENTJ from being totally swallowed up by their selfless and yet single minded attachment to facts, figures and a rationale they accept only from the world outside themselves. Because this inner information is often opposed to the ENTJ's strongly held ideas it is often rejected, or if accepted, turned outward to make negative judgments about external situations or the behavior of others, rather than seen as a corrective balance to the ENTJ's own attitudes and behavior.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ENTJ needs to recognize the role Intuition plays in their life, and learn to understand its language. In particular the ENTJ needs to realize that their intuitive function is not directed outward to the world, that its images are personal, subjective and relate directly to the way the ENTJ's inner self is being affected by both the outside world and their own behavior.

Introverted Intuition is not an obvious process to understand, and quite unlike the rational, straightforward thinking the ENTJ is used to. Nevertheless, if understood and fully utilized to support thinking, it can make the ENTJ the most outwardly effective and productive of all the personality types. For this reason it is essential to allow this gift to become what it can be, rather than limiting its talents and allowing it only to speak when it seems to agree with the ENTJ's outwardly focused thinking. Below are a few specific suggestions to help you apply Introverted Intuition.

When confronted by a situation which requires an important decision, try to put it off for long enough to be able to sit quietly with it. In doing so allow yourself to feel and see the images which arise in your mind regarding this situation. Try to set aside those which appear immediately as the products of your own beliefs and thinking, and regard the others closely. If these images and ideas were the opinions of people whose judgment you trusted implicitly, try to question them in your mind and find the reasons why they consider things in such a way.

There are some people around you who always seem to know just which way to go or how things work or what the outcome of a certain situation will be without them seeming to have sufficient information to be able to do so. These people are intuitive types and their world is full of possibilities which they can immediately recognize as apt to certain situations. You also have this talent, but you have a habit of not following it, rather you prefer to think it out and find the options which "ought" to be correct. I placed ought in quotes for a very good reason here, for you know yourself how often things have developed in the direction you had an inkling of, but refused to accept without thinking. Try to let these immediate impressions have their moment and recognize them as true possibilities which ought to be examined more closely. Understand that they are not baseless images and ideas but rely upon valid sources of information which you simply screen out of your life by habit.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ENTJ**

Some ENTJ's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are generally associated with a strongly dogmatic and overly rational approach to life, coupled with an almost total lack of ability to

understand the needs of others. Where such a strongly expressing difficulty arises, the ENTJ finds themselves constantly embattled by a world which refuses to conform to their ideals and creates situations in which the ENTJ is out of their depth. Such situations are often met by the ENTJ with such a childish emotionality that others are put off and isolate the ENTJ emotionally. Such ENTJ's often find themselves without friends, and with business partners or employees who are unwilling to engage the ENTJ upon any matter other than strictly task related questions. Such behavior in others only serves to bring out underlying sentiments in the ENTJ which, via their badly adapted intuitive function, speak to them of plots, nastiness and covert obstructive behavior on the part of others. Suffice to say, such suspicions and childish sentiments coupled with dogmatic demands to conform to the ENTJ's own way of seeing the world can soon destroy families and close relationships.

It is incumbent upon the ENTJ to break the circle of such behavior by allowing their Introverted Intuition a place in their life. Through attention to this function the ENTJ can discover a path to understanding and recognizing the effects not only their own behavior has upon others, but also the greater possibilities which lie within themselves for not only a harmonious relationship with others, but also a greater sense of what might be best for themselves.

Understanding the feeling needs and judgments of others is not an easy task for the ENTJ, but through their Intuitive function they can find images and ideas which - whilst not speaking directly to the feeling judgments of others - might allow them to see outside the strictly rational circle of their world view in such a way as to recognize that there is indeed a different perspective which must be taken account of.

#### **Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ENTJ Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Give yourself every opportunity to show others your appreciation of a situation and how you could see it through to a good outcome. Take charge where you can make it count.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** Understand you have limits too. Your careful world view is not the whole deal. How things look and feel may not concern you, but they concern many others. Try and allow such things to be and learn from them.
3. **Talk Time to Find Out How Others Really Think.** You need to drive past your thoughts with others and let their appreciations of a situation reach you at a deeper level. It will then be possible for you to take account of their needs as real world objectives which if included in your ideas will bring greater harmony and quality to life and relationships.
4. **Take Time Out To Let The Whole Situation Speak To You.** Don't dismiss those abstract and seemingly hard to understand or bothersome aesthetic and feeling judgments coming from others or from inside yourself. Drop everything for a while, stop thinking and worrying and just relax into those ideas and let them speak to you. Perhaps they can be accommodated, perhaps something is hiding in there which offers a new way
5. **When You Get Upset, You Lose.** Your energy and rational understandings are strong assets, but can be very harmful if they turn against you and leave you with nothing but emotions you cannot deal with. Remember that others cannot always be expected to fall into your ways of seeing, and when your drive to make them do so fails you will suffer feelings of resentment and even abandonment. You cannot deal with the world like this. Moderate your ideas, allow others their spaces, and you will grow.
6. **Respect your need for intellectual compatibility.** Don't expect yourself to be a "touchy-feely" or "warm-fuzzy" person. Realize that your most ardent bonds with others will start with the head, rather than the heart. Be aware of other's emotional needs, and express your genuine love and respect for them in terms that are real to YOU. Be yourself.
7. **Be Accountable for Yourself.** Don't blame the problems in your life on other people. Look inwardly for solutions. No one has more control over your life than you have.
8. **Be Humble.** Judge yourself at least as harshly as you judge others.
9. **Take a Positive Approach to Differences in People.** Don't distress yourself and others by dwelling on what seem to be their limitations. They need you to guide them and you need them to see things through. Try and recognize who can perform the most ably within certain fields outside your own competence. Let the feelings of others become a strength rather than a hindrance to you.

10. Don't Get Obsessed! Recognize the value that personal world has to you, your friends, your family, your own inner sense of self worth and life. Take pride in just being a good person and don't allow external situations to control you. Try to relax and let the moment belong to the best things you can find in others and yourself. Nothing out there is more important than your own happiness.

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

# **Portrait of an ENFP - Extraverted iNtuitive Feeling Perceiving (Extraverted Intuition with Introverted Feeling)**

## *The Inspirer*

As an ENFP, your primary mode of living is focused externally, where you take things in primarily via your intuition. Your secondary mode is internal, where you deal with things according to how you feel about them, or how they fit in with your personal value system.

ENFPs are warm, enthusiastic people, typically very bright and full of potential. They live in the world of possibilities, and can become very passionate and excited about things. Their enthusiasm lends them the ability to inspire and motivate others, more so than we see in other types. They can talk their way in or out of anything. They love life, seeing it as a special gift, and strive to make the most out of it.

ENFPs have an unusually broad range of skills and talents. They are good at most things which interest them. Project-oriented, they may go through several different careers during their lifetime. To onlookers, the ENFP may seem directionless and without purpose, but ENFPs are actually quite consistent, in that they have a strong sense of values which they live with throughout their lives. Everything that they do must be in line with their values. An ENFP needs to feel that they are living their lives as their true Self, walking in step with what they believe is right. They see meaning in everything, and are on a continuous quest to adapt their lives and values to achieve inner peace. They're constantly aware and somewhat fearful of losing touch with themselves. Since emotional excitement is usually an important part of the ENFP's life, and because they are focused on keeping "centered", the ENFP is usually an intense individual, with highly evolved values.

An ENFP needs to focus on following through with their projects. This can be a problem area for some of these individuals. Unlike other Extraverted types, ENFPs need time alone to center themselves, and make sure they are moving in a direction which is in sync with their values. ENFPs who remain centered will usually be quite successful at their endeavors. Others may fall into the habit of dropping a project when they become excited about a new possibility, and thus they never achieve the great accomplishments which they are capable of achieving.

Most ENFPs have great people skills. They are genuinely warm and interested in people, and place great importance on their inter-personal relationships. ENFPs almost always have a strong need to be liked. Sometimes, especially at a younger age, an ENFP will tend to be "gushy" and insincere, and generally "overdo" in an effort to win acceptance. However, once an ENFP has learned to balance their need to be true to themselves with their need for acceptance, they excel at bringing out the best in others, and are typically well-liked. They have an exceptional ability to intuitively understand a person after a very short period of time, and use their intuition and flexibility to relate to others on their own level.

Because ENFPs live in the world of exciting possibilities, the details of everyday life are seen as trivial drudgery. They place no importance on detailed, maintenance-type tasks, and will frequently remain oblivious to these types of concerns. When they do have to perform these tasks, they do not enjoy themselves. This is a challenging area of life for most ENFPs, and can be frustrating for ENFP's family members.

An ENFP who has "gone wrong" may be quite manipulative - and very good at it. The gift of gab which they are blessed with makes it naturally easy for them to get what they want. Most ENFPs will not abuse their abilities, because that would not jive with their value systems.

ENFPs sometimes make serious errors in judgment. They have an amazing ability to intuitively perceive the truth about a person or situation, but when they apply judgment to their perception, they may jump to the wrong conclusions.

ENFPs who have not learned to follow through may have a difficult time remaining happy in marital relationships. Always seeing the possibilities of what could be, they may become bored with what actually is. The strong sense of values will keep many ENFPs dedicated to their relationships. However, ENFPs like a little excitement in their lives, and are best matched with individuals who are comfortable with change and new experiences.

Having an ENFP parent can be a fun-filled experience, but may be stressful at times for children with strong Sensing or Judging tendencies. Such children may see the ENFP parent as inconsistent and difficult to understand, as the children are pulled along in the whirlwind life of the ENFP. Sometimes the ENFP will want to be their child's best friend, and at other times they will play the parental authoritarian. But ENFPs are always consistent in their value systems, which they will impress on their children above all else, along with a basic joy of living.

ENFPs are basically happy people. They may become unhappy when they are confined to strict schedules or mundane tasks. Consequently, ENFPs work best in situations where they have a lot of flexibility, and where they can work with people and ideas. Many go into business for themselves. They have the ability to be quite productive with little supervision, as long as they are excited about what they're doing. Because they are so alert and sensitive, constantly scanning their environments, ENFPs often suffer from muscle tension. They have a strong need to be independent, and resist being controlled or labeled. They need to maintain control over themselves, but they do not believe in controlling others. Their dislike of dependence and suppression extends to others as well as to themselves.

ENFPs are charming, ingenuous, risk-taking, sensitive, people-oriented individuals with capabilities ranging across a broad spectrum. They have many gifts which they will use to fulfill themselves and those near them, if they are able to remain centered and master the ability of following through.

**Jungian functional preference ordering for ENFP:**

Dominant: Extraverted Intuition

Auxiliary: Introverted Feeling

Tertiary: Extraverted Thinking

Inferior: Introverted Sensing

**ENFPs generally have the following traits:**

- Project-oriented
- Bright and capable
- Warmly, genuinely interested in people; great people skills
- Extremely intuitive and perceptive about people
- Able to relate to people on their own level
- Service-oriented; likely to put the needs of others above their own
- Future-oriented
- Dislike performing routine tasks
- Need approval and appreciation from others
- Cooperative and friendly
- Creative and energetic
- Well-developed verbal and written communication skills
- Natural leaders, but do not like to control people
- Resist being controlled by others
- Can work logically and rationally - use their intuition to understand the goal and work backwards towards it
- Usually able to grasp difficult concepts and theories

ENFPs are lucky in that they're good at quite a lot of different things. An ENFP can generally achieve a good degree of success at anything which has interested them. However, ENFPs get bored rather easily and are not naturally good at following things through to completion. Accordingly, they should avoid jobs

which require performing a lot of detailed, routine-oriented tasks. They will do best in professions which allow them to creatively generate new ideas and deal closely with people. They will not be happy in positions which are confining and regimented.

**Most ENFPs will exhibit the following strengths with regards to relationships issues:**

- Good communication skills
- Very perceptive about people's thought and motives
- Motivational, inspirational; bring out the best in others
- Warmly affectionate and affirming
- Fun to be with - lively sense of humor, dramatic, energetic, optimistic
- Strive for "win-win" situations
- Driven to meet other's needs
- Usually loyal and dedicated

**Most ENFPs will exhibit the following weaknesses with regards to relationship issues:**

- Tendency to be smothering
- Their enthusiasm may lead them to be unrealistic
- Uninterested in dealing with "mundane" matters such as cleaning, paying bills, etc.
- Hold onto bad relationships long after they've turned bad
- Extreme dislike of conflict
- Extreme dislike of criticism
- Don't pay attention to their own needs
- Constant quest for the perfect relationship may make them change relationships frequently
- May become bored easily
- Have difficulty scolding or punishing others

**What does Success mean to an ENFP?**

ENFPs are motivated in everything that they do by a desire to understand the world around them. They are constantly searching about. Mentally and physically, for input that will help them to better understand the Big Picture. They are open-minded to new people and new experiences; they're eager for the opportunity to understand what the new people and experiences are all about. ENFPs use their understanding of the world to serve the agendas of their value systems. An ENFP's value system often includes respect for the needs and desires of individual people over the needs of a social group. Their respect for the individual makes them dislike controlling others, and being controlled by others. ENFPs are passionate about their beliefs, whatever they may be. They often stubbornly adhere to their value system regardless of threats to its validity. They are more concerned with keeping true to what they believe than they are with expectations or demands from the social group that they function within. ENFPs dislike personal criticism, because it threatens their validity as an individual and the validity of their value system. ENFPs may internalize anger rather than express it; their respect for other individuals makes it difficult for them to hurt others. An ENFP's feeling of success depends upon the availability of opportunities to grow their understanding of the world, upon feeling that they're living true to their personal value system, and upon the condition of their closest relationships.

**Allowing Your ENFP Strengths to Flourish**

As an ENFP, 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 ENFPs will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- They're exceptionally perceptive about people and situations. They're often able to quickly and accurately assess where someone is coming from.
- They accept and value people as individuals, and are strongly egalitarian. They believe that individuals have the right to be themselves, and are very tolerant and accepting of most people.



- They're often deep and intelligent, and may be quite brilliant in their ability to tie things together. They're wired to look for connections in the external world, and so they may mentally put things together more easily than others.
- Their interest in understanding the world usually makes them in tune with what's socially acceptable and what isn't. This may help them to be popular and likeable.
- They're highly creative. This ability may be used in an artistic way, or may be used to generate ideas and new ways of thinking.
- ENFPs who have developed their Introverted Feeling to the extent that they apply judgment to all of their perceptions will enjoy these very special gifts:
  - They will have the ability to follow through on projects they've begun.
  - They will be less gullible and malleable, and generally more able to discern between "good" and "bad", rather than accepting everything without question.
  - They may be highly artistic.
  - They will have the ability to focus and concentrate deeply on tasks. This enhanced ability to think and process information internally will make them more capable on many levels.
  - They will balance out their desire to meet new people and have new experiences with the desire to put their understanding to use in some way.
  - They will find more meaning and purpose in their lives.

### **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 found in ENFPs are due to their dominant Extraverted Intuition overshadowing the personality to the extent that they don't apply judgment to anything. Or, they may use their primary judging function (Introverted Feeling) to support the agenda of Extraverted Intuition, i.e. to rationalize and support the idea of welcoming all experiences and accepting all individuals. In such cases, an ENFP may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degree:

- May be what many would call a "sucker"; vulnerable to schemers and con artists.
- May get themselves into dangerous situations because they're too eager to push the envelope of their understanding, and not willing to apply judgment to anything.
- May feel intense anger towards people who criticize them or try to control them. But will be unable to express the anger. Left unexpressed, the anger may fester and simmer and become destructive.
- May blame their problems on other people, using logic and ration to defend themselves against the world.
- May develop strong negative judgments that are difficult to unseat against people who they perceive have been oppressive to them.
- May get involved with drugs, alcohol, or promiscuity, and generally seek mindless experiences and sensations.
- May skip from relationship to relationship without the ability to commit.
- May start projects but be unable to finish them.
- May be unable to stick to a career or job for any length of time.

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ENFP problem of wanting to understand and experience everything at any cost. If the ENFP does not learn how to discriminate things and people in their external environment, the ENFP will begin to use their judging function (Introverted Feeling) as solve a "rubber stamper" to support their agenda to seek out experiences. This is a natural survivalist technique for the ENFP personality. The main driver to the ENFP personality is Extraverted Intuition, whose purpose is to understand the world as one Big Picture, seeking

connections and meaning in everything. If their ability to seek understanding is threatened, the ENFP shuts out the threatening force. This is totally natural, but unfortunately the individual who exercises this type of agenda protection regularly will become more and more unable to apply judgment to anything. When the unbalanced ENFP does apply judgment, it will generally be skewed to support their subjective agenda. They will always find justification for their own inappropriate behavior. They will be unable to finish anything that they start, and generally wander through life from experience to experience.

It's very common for ENFPs to resist applying judgment until they feel they truly understand a person or situation. However, part of the understanding process includes using discernment to classify qualities. If the ENFP shuts judgment off entirely, he or she will not achieve their ultimate goal of understanding; rather they will jump from experience to experience in a purposeless fashion.

Anger can be a problem for anybody, but may be especially so for ENFPs who have not sufficiently developed their Introverted Feeling. The desire to keep everything non-judgmental, combined with the tendency to use Introverted Feeling as justification rather than true judgment is a recipe for suppressed anger. These are very contradictory forces. "I hate you for judging me" is an ironic feeling, but is unfortunately common. The inability to apply judgment or to accept negative judgment prevents the ENFP from expressing negative judgment, and therefore causes them to stew in their anger, rather than deal with it.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ENFP needs to focus on applying judgment to all of their perceptions. This means they need to decide how they really feel about people, places and things, rather than allowing their feelings to hang open indeterminately. The ENFP needs to understand that developing their ability to discern qualities does not threaten their ability to understand the world, but rather enhances it, and enhances their personal changes for achieving a measure of success in their lives.

The ENFP concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to their motivation for making a judgment. Are they trying to really determine the objective value or merit of something, or are they trying to defend their individual right to not be judged or controlled? The goal when judging something is to not let your personal agenda influence your opinions. Obviously, this is not entirely possible, but it is the exercise to keep in mind. You want to open your mind to judgment without feeling threatened, and without using your own judgment in a defensive, rationalizing mode.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ENFP**

As can be seen from the above, some ENFPs can have difficulty fitting into society. Their problems are often due to feeling different from others because of their dominant Intuition, and being unable to stick to anything long enough to feel a sense of accomplishment. They feel like they don't fit in, and can't find the place where they belong in the world. The ENFP who consistently makes decisions and applies classifications to their ideas will be able to turn their ideas into reality, and experience the feelings of accomplishment and success that accompany being effective.

The key to personal growth for the ENFP is competent execution of Introverted Feeling. It's difficult for most to understand what this means, much less incorporate that directive into your life. I have created some action-oriented suggestions that will help lead you down the path towards more effective use of the Introverted Feeling function. Specific suggestions:

When you feel angry or resistant towards someone who you feel is criticizing you, take this as a cue that you are not judging effectively. When that happens, take a step back from your anger and try to really hear what the person is saying objectively. Rather than expending mental energy in defining how the other person is wrong, try to judge what the person is actually saying.

Periodically make lists of goals and accomplishments. Revisit your goals and accomplishments as often as you'd like to maintain a sense of direction.

Spend time alone regularly for the purpose of thinking through issues in your life.

### **Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ENFP Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Make sure you have opportunities to have new experiences to feel your quest of understanding the world.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** Realize and accept that some traits are strengths and some are weaknesses. By facing your weaknesses, you can overcome them and they will have less power over you.
3. **Express Your Feelings.** Don't let anger get bottled up inside you. If you have strong feelings, sort them out and express them, or they may become destructive!
4. **Make Decisions.** Don't be afraid to have an opinion. You need to know how you feel about things in order to be effective.
5. **Smile at Criticism.** Try to see disagreement and discord as an opportunity for growth, because that's exactly what it is. Try not to become overly defensive towards criticism; try to hear it and judge it objectively.
6. **Be Aware of Others.** Remember that there are 15 other personality types out there who see things differently than you see them. Most of your problems with other people are easier to deal with if you try to understand the other person's perspective.
7. **Be Aware of Yourself.** Don't stint your own needs for the sake of others too much. Realize you are an important focus. If you do not fulfill your own needs, how will you continue to be effective and how will others know you are true to your beliefs?
8. **Be Accountable for Yourself.** Don't waste mental energy finding blame in other's behavior, or in identifying yourself as a victim. You have more control over your life than any other person has.
9. **Assume the Best.** Don't distress yourself by assuming the worst. Remember that a positive attitude creates positive situations.
10. **When in Doubt, Ask Questions!** Don't assume that the lack of feedback is the same thing as negative feedback. If you need feedback and don't have any, ask for it.

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

## **Portrait of an ENTP - Extraverted iNtuitive Thinking Perceiving (Extraverted Intuition with Introverted Thinking)**

### *The Visionary*

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

With Extraverted Intuition dominating their personality, the ENTP's primary interest in life is understanding the world that they live in. They are constantly absorbing ideas and images about the situations they are presented in their lives. Using their intuition to process this information, they are usually extremely quick and accurate in their ability to size up a situation. With the exception of their ENFP cousin, the ENTP has a deeper understanding of their environment than any of the other types.

This ability to intuitively understand people and situations puts the ENTP at a distinct advantage in their lives. They generally understand things quickly and with great depth. Accordingly, they are quite flexible and adapt well to a wide range of tasks. They are good at most anything that interests them. As they grow and further develop their intuitive abilities and insights, they become very aware of possibilities, and this makes them quite resourceful when solving problems.

ENTP's are idea people. Their perceptive abilities cause them to see possibilities everywhere. They get excited and enthusiastic about their ideas, and are able to spread their enthusiasm to others. In this way, they get the support that they need to fulfill their visions.

ENTP's are less interested in developing plans of actions or making decisions than they are in generating possibilities and ideas. Following through on the implementation of an idea is usually a chore to the ENTP. For some ENTP's, this results in the habit of never finishing what they start. The ENTP who has not developed their Thinking process will have problems with jumping enthusiastically from idea to idea, without following through on their plans. The ENTP needs to take care to think through their ideas fully in order to take advantage of them.

The ENTP's auxiliary process of Introverted Thinking drives their decision making process. Although the ENTP is more interested in absorbing information than in making decisions, they are quite rational and logical in reaching conclusions. When they apply Thinking to their Intuitive perceptions, the outcome can be very powerful indeed. A well-developed ENTP is extremely visionary, inventive, and enterprising.

ENTP's are fluent conversationalists, mentally quick, and enjoy verbal sparring with others. They love to debate issues, and may even switch sides sometimes just for the love of the debate. When they express their underlying principles, however, they may feel awkward and speak abruptly and intensely.

The ENTP personality type is sometimes referred to the "Lawyer" type. The ENTP "lawyer" quickly and accurately understands a situation, and objectively and logically acts upon the situation. Their Thinking side makes their actions and decisions based on an objective list of rules or laws. If the ENTP was defending someone who had actually committed a crime, they are likely to take advantage of quirks in the law that will get their client off the hook. If they were to actually win the case, they would see their actions as completely fair and proper to the situation, because their actions were lawful. The guilt or innocence of their client would not be as relevant. If this type of reasoning goes incompletely unchecked by the ENTP, it could result in a character that is perceived by others as unethical or even dishonest. The ENTP, who does not naturally consider the more personal or human element in decision making, should take care to notice the subjective, personal side of situations. This is a potential problem area for ENTP's. Although their logical abilities lend strength and purpose to the ENTP, they may also isolate them from their feelings and from other people.

The least developed area for the ENTP is the Sensing-Feeling arena. If the Sensing areas are neglected, the ENTP may tend to not take care of details in their life. If their Feeling part is neglected, the ENTP may not value other people's input enough, or may become overly harsh and aggressive.

Under stress, the ENTP may lose their ability to generate possibilities, and become obsessed with minor details. These details may seem to be extremely important to the ENTP, but in reality are usually not important to the big picture.

In general, ENTP's are upbeat visionaries. They highly value knowledge, and spend much of their lives seeking a higher understanding. They live in the world of possibilities, and become excited about concepts, challenges and difficulties. When presented with a problem, they're good at improvising and quickly come up with a creative solution. Creative, clever, curious, and theoretical, ENTP's have a broad range of possibilities in their lives.

#### **Jungian functional preference ordering for ENTP:**

Dominant: Extraverted Intuition

Auxiliary: Introverted Thinking

Tertiary: Extraverted Feeling

Inferior: Introverted Sensing

#### **ENTP's generally have the following traits:**

- Project-oriented
- Enjoy generating ideas and theories
- Creative and ingenious
- Bright and capable
- Flexible and Diverse
- Excellent communication skills
- Enjoy debating issues with other people
- Excellent people skills
- Natural leaders, but do not like to control people
- Resist being controlled by people
- Lively and energetic; able to motivate others
- Highly value knowledge and competence
- Logical, rational thinkers
- Able to grasp difficult concepts and theories
- Enjoy solving difficult problems
- Dislike confining schedules and environments
- Dislike routine, detailed tasks

ENTP's are fortunate in that they have a wide range of capabilities. They are generally good at anything which has captured their interest. ENTP's are likely to be successful in many different careers. Since they have a lot of options open to them, ENTP's will do well to choose professions which allow them a lot of personal freedom where they can use their creativity to generate new ideas and solve problems. They will not be completely happy in positions which are regimented or confining.

#### **ENTP Strengths**

- Enthusiastic, upbeat, and popular
- Can be very charming
- Excellent communication skills
- Extremely interested in self-improvement and growth in their relationships
- Laid-back and flexible, usually easy to get along with
- Big idea-people, always working on a grand scheme or idea
- Usually good at making money, although not so good at managing it
- Take their commitments and relationships very seriously

- Able to move on with their lives after leaving a relationship

### **ENTP Weaknesses**

- Always excited by anything new, they may change partners frequently
- Tendency to not follow through on their plans and ideas
- Their love of debate may cause them to provoke arguments
- Big risk-takers and big spenders, not usually good at managing money
- Although they take their commitments seriously, they tend to abandon their relationships which no longer offer opportunity for growth

### **What does Success mean to an ENTP?**

ENTP personalities are motivated by possibilities. They love the outside chances; the new or unusual combinations lurking within the ordinary everyday world of things and ideas. For them, something is always on the up, something is always tantalizing their desire to re-orchestrate life into new patterns and shapes; new ways of fulfilling what can be as strong as a never ending desire to beat the odds and win at every game in town, or as mild as a quirky personal need for constant variety and change. With their thinking tied to the myriad possibilities they see in the world, they act swiftly and decisively upon those angles, choices and combinations scarcely noticed by other types, but through which they can build whole new frameworks or completely redefine an existing external situation in such a way that it appears new, revitalized and once again full of promise. Sameness, stasis, conservatism - even daily routine - can be loathsome to fervent ENTP's, whose drive is always to be into something new, different and full of fresh possibilities, and who, given the opportunity, will always be the first to show others a new path to success in a venture, or to find a way of doing something that no-one has done before.

ENTP people measure their success by their "aha" moments, by the sense of satisfaction which comes as they spread their newly written maps before them and contemplate the new adventure, design, investigation or conquest which has now become their road ahead. What has gone before, previous achievements, ways of living - even people met along the way - are often now forgotten or considered passé, mere steps along a path which has now brought a new frontier to be exploited for its gifts. Whether it is the search for knowledge, money, power, fame or pleasure, the ENTP will be found at the frontline, gazing into the distance and discovering new avenues toward, bigger, better or more satisfying outcomes.

ENTP's are the great problem solvers, discoverers and re-inventors of the world. Their insights into the world around them, their ability to see new ways of putting things together and making them work can bring them great success in virtually any industry or human pursuit that interests them. For this reason the ENTP is happiest in situations where they can use their intuitive powers freely and have the space in which to think upon the aspects and angles which come to them. Without fulfilling work and the freedom to use their mind most productively, ENTP's can quickly tire of a limiting situation. For this reason an open road toward success is an extremely important factor in the ENTP's life. Some, given a little opportunity, will clear one for themselves, but of all the types, it is the ENTP who has most need to be aware of the life and career situations they might commit to without sufficient thought for the future.

### **Allowing Your ENTP Strengths to Flourish**

As an ENTP, 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 ENTP's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- The ability to hold many points of view in mind and see their differing merits.
- Seeing ways to do things others have not thought of.
- Able to give quick and diverse answers to any question of interest.
- Seeing the other side of a situation and making it known.
- Being able to juggle many differing jobs or processes at the one time.
- Easily capable of holding your own in any argument or discussion.

- The ability to quickly find the best or most useful side of others.
- Seeing the many connections between events and things which are not immediately obvious to others.

ENTP's who have developed their Introverted Thinking to the extent that they regularly and carefully interpret the information their Extraverted Intuition brings to them will enjoy these very special gifts:

- The ability to solve puzzles and problems that have no obvious way to resolution.
- The ability to define schematically a new structure or design and know it will work.
- Knowing and giving to others the very thing they need when they are not sure themselves.
- A talent for innovative creation in writing, music or the visual arts.
- The gift of knowing which new ideas or changes will enhance rather than detract from their relationships with others

### **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 ENTP's are due to their dominant function of Extraverted Intuition overtaking the personality to the point that the other functions exist merely to serve its purposes. In such cases, an ENTP may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- The inability to maintain a comfortable situation or relationship once its possibilities have been realized or exhausted.
- A tendency to consider careful or meticulous thinkers as unworthy plodders or time wasters.
- Blindness to the needs and feelings of others not directly involved in the ENTP's current area of interest.
- A lack of sensitivity to the feelings and ways of those who might need reassurance, security or commitment.
- The inability to deal carefully and calmly with the finer details of a situation or work in progress.
- Becoming overly annoyed by minor setbacks or small things that have to be set right before the goal can be realized.
- A tendency to be arrogant or boastful, or to demean those who cannot see the same answers.
- Can often find themselves in bad situations by too quickly taking a big step forward or by being "too smart for their own good".

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ENTP problem of being so fascinated with their Extroverted Intuitions that they fail to develop a careful thinking process sufficient to balance it. Leaps of perception, new ideas and strange but fascinating juxtapositions are wonderful for the potential freshness and possible success they might bring. But if not carefully appraised and chosen wisely they can also take us far from the right path in life, take us from our friends, spoil our relationships and even bring personal or financial disaster. Without a well developed thinking function, the ENTP is always in danger of leaping over social, financial and personal constraints for the sake of following a new vision. This might be as simple as arousing the wrath of ones partner by suddenly deciding to by an expensive gadget or change something around the house without being concerned for their input or feelings, or as complex as allowing an ill considered entrepreneurial idea lead them into financial and social disaster, simply because the one sided vision of Extroverted Intuition does not recognize or count the amount of small but important details which need to be right before such ideas can be realized.

Without a solid thinking function, the ENTP can easily discount or fail to notice the essential ethics of social and interpersonal relationship, often considering themselves "above" or untouched by such limiting

values and often discounting the possibility that their actions might be or hurtful or seen as unethical by others. It is not that the one sided ENTP is deliberately hurtful, but simply ignorant of the effects which can flow from their often compulsive need for change or need to show how clever or individual they are. In the ENTP, the lack of a well developed Feeling Function means that they must learn to “understand” feeling in both themselves and others and come to terms with its affects. This understanding can only come from thinking carefully about the ways feeling affects not only themselves, but others, and the importance others place on this function. The ENTP has a feeling function more or less global in character and one which does not judge fine differences. This inability to discriminate feelings can allow the ENTP to say and do much that leaves others in the cold, so an effort to think about the feeling process can be essential. Without the understanding this brings, the ENTP can separate themselves from the ground of their life, from the constancy of their friends and family and, without even realizing it, they can easily find themselves in untenable positions where, without support, they wonder why they are suddenly alone and lost.

Another significant problem arises where the ENTP has grown within or is locked by circumstances to an environment which limits their freedom or their ability to utilize their specific abilities. This forces the ENTP to narrow down their intuitive process to the point where it retains at least some freedom to operate within their life. Under such conditions however, the intuition is free only to range over a small and limited field of vision, a field which usually consists only of the very things the ENTP is normally unconcerned about: the small details of life and its familiar objects. Without the ability to take stock and apply careful thought to the ways they might expand their horizons, the ENTP in such situations can become morose, niggardly and obsessed with the most minor or intangible details – to the point where such minutiae fill their life and each day becomes a frustrating process of eliminating again and again the little problems which ever seem to stand in the way of the “big” picture – a picture which, as those around them know only too well, will never be realized.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ENTP needs to focus on carefully analyzing the information they receive via their Extraverted Intuition. They need to allow themselves sufficient time and space to relax with the ideas and possibilities they can see. It is all too easy for the ENTP to assume that what they see is what they need. Careful thinking can allow the ENTP to figure out the best possible ways to proceed out of all the possibilities that come to them. At the same time, even if they are not able to share them, ENTP’s need at least to understand the joys and satisfactions that others derive within those situations the ENTP would not normally choose in life. Awareness of the ways and needs of others can be the key to understanding the most life affirming way ahead for the ENTP, for there is always a danger that they might choose paths without regard to the feelings and needs of others close to them. The ENTP learns from analyzing his experience, so the best way for the ENTP to grow as a person is to develop his thinking capacity. Thus, that while the desire to run out and do something “new” is an ENTP pattern of need, this need must be integrated into a whole way of life in which the rest of our human needs and those of others who rely upon our presence are also satisfied. Your task, as a person interested in personal growth, is to understand yourself in a truly objective fashion, and how you can best give to the world, rather than just exploit the possibilities it bring to you.

The ENTP should always pay close attention to why they are acting upon new information. Are they acting out of a carefully considered motive to realize something truly worthwhile for themselves and others? Are they really seeking to improve life, or concerned with just making the next play, proving the point, showing others the moves or climbing the mountain just because it is there to climb, regardless of the consequences?  
Living Happily in our World as an ENTP

The problems ENTP’s might have fitting into the world are not usually directly related to friends or relationships. Rather, the ENTP has trouble maintaining a stable and consistent lifestyle. While this can affect love relationships, the ENTP usually has such an endearing and capable “way” about them that others tend to follow their lead, even in the most trying of situations. The problems the ENTP generates in life are those associated with their constant need for individuality, excellence and new experiences which test their talents. While this can place great demand upon relationships, tensions are usually only apparent where the ENTP has made a love match with a person whose security needs are greater than their ability to allow their ENTP partner the freedom they need. The self aware ENTP must therefore not only be careful



in considering their career choices, but also in choosing a life situation with a partner. Of all the types, the ENTP is most uncomfortable with compromise and ought not to place themselves in situations which demand it. Most importantly the ENTP must become aware, through careful analysis of experience, just what kind of changes for the good or bad have been the direct result of their need for constant refreshment of life. Only through this awareness will the ENTP be able to focus on those perceptions which promise a better and more fruitful life.

Most ENTP's will experience career/life frustration and some relationship difficulties through their lives. The ENTP with well-developed Introverted Thinking will find these times easier to deal with. Accordingly, we offer some general suggestions for dealing with these difficulties, as well as some advice that will help the ENTP develop their Introverted Thinking.

### **Specific suggestions:**

Take time to really listen to the thoughts of others and try to see how they understand the world. Think about the ways in which your view of the world and your needs can mesh with theirs.

Don't expect others to simply follow you or expect that they should see what you can see as a worthy goal. A good exercise is to imagine yourself as a blind or severely disabled person. Try to get the feel of what it would be like to have to organize your life from such a different perspective. Would your goals still be valid? Would they need re-thinking? Consider the possibility that while your way of thinking leads you to see other types as having limited vision or ability, the truth is that they are no more limited than yourself, but simply have a differing focus in life and differing needs.

Realize and accept that for you a satisfying relationship will require you to attend to the small details of life and show an awareness of your partner's feelings. You might find this difficult, but it will pay the biggest dividends in return for your effort.

Expanding your appreciation of the differences between people 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 listen to what people express within different social and work situations. Notice the different ways they go about their dealings with others or solving their problems. Do not try to compare or judge their ways against your own, simply try to recognize the many ways it is possible to be at peace in the world.

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 passions, satisfactions and needs. Try to visualize what that person is doing, and narrow down to how they are feeling at this moment; to one thing they might be thinking about. Don't pass judgment, just consider and reflect on why they might think or feel in just such a way.

### **Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ENTP Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Realize your gift of seeing past the obvious brings you a great capacity to reward yourself and others through your cleverness. Make sure you engage in activities and which can expose this potential at its most valuable level.
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 Through Your Perceptions.** Discussing what you see with others will them understand where you are coming from, and offer you the chance to discover the ways in which their input can balance your ideas.
4. **Relax and Enjoy the View.** Take the time to consider what you have, the gifts life has already brought to you. Try and discover the value and importance of those constant day to day things which support and nourish you.
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 Norms and Structures Are Necessary.** Remember that without the support and constancy of others, no-one can follow their dreams. The path you walk was laid by others, each of its stepping stones created to fulfill a different part of the human need for constancy and security. Without this support structure, you cannot go far.
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 feeling uncomfortable in situation because it seems to be going nowhere, that's good! That's an opportunity for growth.
8. **Identify and Express Your Feelings** You may have a hard time understanding your feelings. It's important that you try to figure this out. Don't let people down. If you determine that you value a 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, But Be Wary.** Your positive attitude nearly always creates positive situations. Just remember: to make them lasting and worthwhile you must build them on solid, carefully planned foundations.

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

# **Portrait of an ESFJ - Extraverted Sensing Feeling Judging (Extraverted Feeling with Introverted Sensing)**

## *The Caregiver*

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

ESFJ's are people persons - they love people. They are warmly interested in others. They use their Sensing and Judging characteristics to gather specific, detailed information about others, and turn this information into supportive judgments. They want to like people, and have a special skill at bringing out the best in others. They are extremely good at reading others, and understanding their point of view. The ESFJ's strong desire to be liked and for everything to be pleasant makes them highly supportive of others. People like to be around ESFJ's, because the ESFJ has a special gift of invariably making people feel good about themselves.

The ESFJ takes their responsibilities very seriously, and is very dependable. They value security and stability, and have a strong focus on the details of life. They see before others do what needs to be done, and do whatever it takes to make sure that it gets done. They enjoy these types of tasks, and are extremely good at them.

ESFJ's are warm and energetic. They need approval from others to feel good about themselves. They are hurt by indifference and don't understand unkindness. They are very giving people, who get a lot of their personal satisfaction from the happiness of others. They want to be appreciated for who they are, and what they give. They're very sensitive to others, and freely give practical care. ESFJ's are such caring individuals that they sometimes have a hard time seeing or accepting a difficult truth about someone they care about.

With Extraverted Feeling dominating their personality, ESFJ's are focused on reading other people. They have a strong need to be liked, and to be in control. They are extremely good at reading others, and often change their own manner to be more pleasing to whoever they're with at the moment.

The ESFJ's value system is defined externally. They usually have very well-formed ideas about the way things should be, and are not shy about expressing these opinions. However, they weigh their values and morals against the world around them, rather than against an internal value system. They may have a strong moral code, but it is defined by the community that they live in, rather than by any strongly felt internal values.

ESFJ's who have had the benefit of being raised and surrounded by a strong value system that is ethical and centered around genuine goodness will most likely be the kindest, most generous souls who will gladly give you the shirt off of their back without a second thought. For these individuals, the selfless quality of their personality type is genuine and pure. ESFJ's who have not had the advantage of developing their own values by weighing them against a good external value system may develop very questionable values. In such cases, the ESFJ most often genuinely believes in the integrity of their skewed value system. They have no internal understanding of values to set them straight. In weighing their values against our society, they find plenty of support for whatever moral transgression they wish to justify. This type of ESFJ is a dangerous person indeed. Extraverted Feeling drives them to control and manipulate, and their lack of Intuition prevents them from seeing the big picture. They're usually quite popular and good with people, and good at manipulating them. Unlike their ENFJ cousin, they don't have Intuition to help them understand the real consequences of their actions. They are driven to manipulate other to achieve their own ends, yet they believe that they are following a solid moral code of conduct.

All ESFJ's have a natural tendency to want to control their environment. Their dominant function demands structure and organization, and seeks closure. ESFJ's are most comfortable with structured environments. They're not likely to enjoy having to do things which involve abstract, theoretical concepts, or impersonal analysis. They do enjoy creating order and structure, and are very good at tasks which require these kinds of skills. ESFJ's should be careful about controlling people in their lives who do not wish to be controlled.

ESFJ's respect and believe in the laws and rules of authority, and believe that others should do so as well. They're traditional, and prefer to do things in the established way, rather than venturing into uncharted territory. Their need for security drives their ready acceptance and adherence to the policies of the established system. This tendency may cause them to sometimes blindly accept rules without questioning or understanding them.

An ESFJ who has developed in a less than ideal way may be prone to being quite insecure, and focus all of their attention on pleasing others. He or she might also be very controlling, or overly sensitive, imagining bad intentions when there weren't any.

ESFJ's incorporate many of the traits that are associated with women in our society. However, male ESFJ's will usually not appear feminine at all. On the contrary, ESFJ's are typically quite conscious about gender roles and will be most comfortable playing a role that suits their gender in our society. Male ESFJ's will be quite masculine (albeit sensitive when you get to know them), and female ESFJ's will be very feminine. ESFJ's at their best are warm, sympathetic, helpful, cooperative, tactful, down-to-earth, practical, thorough, consistent, organized, enthusiastic, and energetic. They enjoy tradition and security, and will seek stable lives that are rich in contact with friends and family.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Extraverted Feeling

Auxiliary: Introverted Sensing

Tertiary: Extraverted Intuition

Inferior: Introverted Thinking

**ESFJ's generally have the following traits:**

- Organized
- Loyal
- Can be depended on to follow things through to completion
- Enjoy creating order, structure and schedules
- Enjoy interacting with people
- Warm-hearted and sympathetic
- Tend to put others' needs above their own
- Very good at giving practical care
- Very cooperative, good team members
- Practical and down-to-earth
- Value peaceful living and security
- Enjoy variety, but work well with routine tasks
- Need approval from others
- Receive satisfaction from giving to others
- Live in the here and now - dislike theorizing about the future

The ESFJ has two primary traits which will help define their best career direction: 1) they are extremely organized and enjoy creating order, and 2) much of their self-satisfaction is gotten through giving and helping others. Accordingly, they will do well at tasks which involve creating or maintaining order and structure, and they will be happiest when they are serving others.

**ESFJ Relationships**

ESFJ's are warm-hearted individuals who highly value their close personal relationships. They are very service-oriented, and their own happiness is closely tied into the happiness and comfort of those around

them. They are valued for their genuine warm and caring natures, and their special ability to bring out the best in others. They usually do not handle conflict well, and may tend to be very controlling or manipulative. Relationships are central to their lives, and they put forth a great amount of energy into developing and maintaining their close interpersonal relationships. They expect the same from others.

### **ESFJ Strengths**

- Put forth a lot of effort to fulfill their duties and obligations
- Warm, friendly and affirming by nature
- Service-oriented, they want to please others
- Take their commitments very seriously, and seek lifelong relationships
- Responsible and practical, they can be counted to take care of day-to-day necessities
- Generally upbeat and popular, people are drawn towards them
- Generally very good money managers
- Traditionally minded and family-oriented, they will make family celebrations and traditions special events

### **ESFJ Weaknesses**

- Generally uncomfortable with change, and moving into new territories
- Extreme dislike of conflict and criticism
- Need a lot of positive affirmation to feel good about themselves
- May be overly status-conscious, and interested in how others see them
- Have very difficult time accepting the end of a relationship, and are likely to take the blame for the failure onto their own shoulders
- Have difficulty accepting negative things about people close to them
- Don't pay enough attention to their own needs, and may be self-sacrificing
- May tend to use guilt manipulation as a way to get what they want

### **What does Success mean to an ESFJ?**

The ESFJ is called the “caregiver”, and for good reason. Caring is the very nature of their personality; a personality driven by feeling judgments and supported by a strong sense of the world around them. The ESFJ not only sees how situations affect themselves and others, they are concerned about it. Everything that makes them feel valued and successful is bound inextricably to the value and concern they need to exchange with others. “Give and ye shall receive” is the motto of the ESFJ, whose gifts serve the most important function in all communal human processes, from the family to the wider world of care giving such as hospitality, primary teaching, nursing, aged care, social services, human resources and so on. Whilst their judgments might be bound by a somewhat conventional moral code, the ESFJ always stands up for what they are certain is the best for others. In some situations this trait can lead them into disaster, particularly if they are thrust into an unsuitable role. The ESFJ thrives best where they can make the decisions and organize things to suit their own way of seeing the world. Regardless however of their particular station in life, the ESFJ is at their best when it involves caring for and about others, measuring their success by the happiness and gratitude which is reflected back to them from the people in whose lives they play a part.

### **Allowing Your ESFJ Strengths to Flourish**

As an ESFJ, 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 ESFJ's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- A strong sense of what is right and wrong
- Easily empathizes with another person
- Able to share feelings with other people
- Cares greatly about the welfare of others
- Open, honest and forthright about the way they see things

- Sensitive to the needs of others, particularly those judged to be less fortunate.
- Strongly upholds traditional and safe ways of living

ESFJ's who have a strongly expressed Introverted Sensing function will find they also enjoy these very special gifts:

- Very sensitive to how any situation might be inwardly affecting another person
- Able to see the potential in any human environment for enabling the comfort and safety of others
- A flair for dramatic illustration and story telling which makes them excellent teachers of the young
- Able to make strong, people oriented administrative decisions
- A skill with fashion and decoration which makes people feel good about themselves
- Able to see outside the "square" and adjust their values to the facts of a situation.

### **Potential Problem Areas**

With any gift of strength, there is an associated weakness. The strong expression of any function can overshadow others, whilst at the same time its own associated and unexpressed inferior function can mine the unconscious mind and throw up annoying resistances and unsettling emotions. We value our strengths, but we often curse and - even more limiting to our potential development - 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.

ESFJ's are kind, steady and responsible beings with many special gifts. I would like the ESFJ to keep in mind their many positive traits as they read on, and remember that the weaknesses associated with being an ESFJ are natural to your type. Although it can 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.

Many of the ESFJ's weaker characteristics arise because their dominant and Extraverted Feeling function can overshadow the rest of their personality. This generally results in two notable effects. With their Introverted Sensing function unable to provide sufficient balance to their sharply defined feeling judgments, they often miss the relativities and contingencies of the real world. This very often leads them into conflict with those who believe a situation needs to be properly analyzed before its realities can be seen and acted upon. Secondly, with their sense of the world controlled by feelings alone, the narrowly defined ESFJ will nearly always find themselves at odds with any view of the world that does not see their own clearly held judgments to be primary, or which does not accord them the "feeling toned" responses they expect. This can produce a range of effects, every one of which ends in conflict for the ESFJ, either with others or with their own feelings.

Without a sound appreciation of the concrete world, an ESFJ may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- May be unable to correctly judge what really is for the best
- May become spiteful and extremely intractable in the face of clear logical reasoning.
- May be unable to shrug off feelings that others are not "good people".
- May be unable to acknowledge anything that goes against their certainty about the "correct" or "right" way to do things
- May attribute their own problems to arbitrary and improvable notions about the way people "ought" to behave.
- May be at a loss when confronted with situations that require basic technical expertise or clear thinking.
- May be oblivious to all but their own viewpoint, valuing their own certainties to the exclusion of others.
- May be unable to understand verbal logic, and quickly cut off other's explanations
- May be falsely certain of the true needs and feelings of others.
- May be extremely vulnerable to superstitions, religious cults and media manipulation.

- May react too quickly and too emotionally in a situation better dealt with in a more pragmatic fashion.

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the ESFJ's externally mapped, feeling based view of the world not being successfully coupled to an appropriate level of Introverted Sensation. Without this internal balance, the ESFJ's perceptions and ideas are determined by feeling judgments which are not in always a valid basis for understanding.

ESFJ's are usually stable, certain, reliable and caring in their approach to life, but if unbalanced they are likely to treat any point of view other than their own with a kind of amused indifference or a tendency to keep those with differing attitudes and opinions at a distance. Whilst this is natural survival behavior for the strongly expressed ESFJ personality, if they do not learn how to deal with the wide range of differing viewpoints they come into contact with, ESFJ's can find themselves waging a self created war against all that opposes their own. This conflict often expresses itself in various unambiguous and simplistic "Us verses Them" generalities, or a penchant for smugly and narrowly defining other people by arbitrary or superstitious belief systems, which often actually symbolize and define their own conflict. At its worst, this conflict with the obstinate and unfeeling contingent realities of the world creates a situation where the ESFJ retreats to a kind of psychological castle where, not only none but those who have the "right" or "nice" approach can enter, but also where the ESFJ's feeling based and often tortured logic, attitudes and judgments reign supreme and cannot be questioned; a place where: "give and you shall receive" can ironically twist quickly into: "off with his head!"

The main driver to the ESFJ personality is Extraverted Feeling, whose function is to judge the relative human value of the ideas, behaviors, situations and objects they perceive. The resulting world view is tidy, and ordered according to its worth to the ESFJ's own particular character: "Everything has its place and everything in its place". If this picture of the world is threatened by external influences, the ESFJ generally tries to shut such new information out of their lives. This is totally natural, and works well to protect the individual psyche from getting hurt. However, the ESFJ who exercises this type of self-protection regularly will find they can only connect and relate with those who do not actively disturb their increasingly narrow and rigid world view. They will always find justification for their own inappropriate behaviors, and will always find fault with the outside world for problems that they have in their lives. It will be difficult for them to maintain the flexibility needed for a healthy relationship with the messy world outside because the differing ways others value things is a constant affront to their personal judgments.

It is not an uncommon tendency for the ESFJ to support their feeling judgments by selectively using only their immediate perceptions of a situation and how it appears to them. However, if this tendency is given free reign, the resulting ESFJ personality is too self-centered to be happy or successful. The ESFJ's auxiliary function of Introverted Sensing must be allowed to grow beyond this limit, where it is used only to support Extraverted Feeling judgments. If the ESFJ uses Introverted Sensing only to serve this purpose, then the ESFJ is not using Introversion effectively at all. As a result, the ESFJ does not sufficiently recognize and understand the vast number of contingent and differing ways in which the world is perceived by others. They see nothing but their own perspective, and deal with the world only so far as they need to in order to support their perspective. These individuals usually come across as somewhat illogical and full of fixed and often rather staid or conventional ideas about the world. Other people are often surprised by the simplicity, ambiguity and often unrelenting vehemence of their ideas.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ESFJ needs to focus on opening their perspective to include a more accurate picture of the world and its ways. In order to be in a position in which the ESFJ is able to perceive and consider data that is foreign to their value system, the ESFJ needs to recognize that their world view is not threatened by the new information. The ESFJ must consciously tell himself/herself that the judgments of others are not unrelated to reality; that the ideas of others are also just and valid within a wider and less rigorous vision of the world.

The ESFJ who is concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to the way things appear to them. Do they try to find the basic connections between the elements of a situation? Or, do they appreciate only those elements which accord them a feeling of worth? At the moment when some connection or relationship between things is perceived, is the ESFJ only concerned with whether that perception supports something they value? Or is she/he concerned with becoming truly appraised of how things fit together in the world? To achieve a better understanding of others and the world in which they live, the ESFJ should try to put themselves into the minds of others, to locate and recognize how others see things, before making judgments. They should consciously be aware of their tendency to discard anything that doesn't agree with their carefully adjudicated system of relative worth, and work towards lessening this tendency. They should try to see the way others might see situations, without making personal judgments about how others ought to feel. In general, they should work on exercising their Sensation in a truly introverted sense. In other words, they should use Sensation to recognize that all parts of a situation are necessary for its functionality and that valuing one function or objective connection over another narrows their ability to deal with the real world as it truly is. The ESFJ who can successfully envision the world as a realm of functioning and connected parts which are all necessary to its balance can be quite a powerful force for positive change.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ESFJ**

Some ESFJ's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are often a result of an inability understand the connections and relationships necessary to each situation, a too conventional and dogmatic set of values which limits the way others can relate to them, or an unrealistic and illogical view of the world. These issues mostly stem from using Introverted Sensation in a diminished manner: the lack of a strong internally focused viewpoint allowing an often ambiguous and yet strongly defended set of values to control the personality. An ESFJ who attempts to envision a more accurate and impartial view of the world for the sake of understanding the ways of others, rather than quickly deciding how things alone affect them, will have a clearer, more objective understanding of how society is dependant not only upon adherence to values and care for others, but also how the world relies upon structure and laws which function regardless of their human value. He or she will also be more comfortable and less likely to demand that the world and the behavior of others conform to values of right and wrong, good and bad, worthy and worthless etc. Such well-adjusted ESFJ'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 Sensation in an unambiguous and totally introverted direction. It's difficult to even understand what that means, much less to incorporate that directive into your life. With that in mind, I am providing some specific suggestions that may help you to begin exercising your Introverted Sensation more fully:

Take care to try and discover how others see things. Try to notice the connections they make between ideas and objects. Don't immediately compare your own vision of things to theirs; simply accept that for them the world fits together in a valid way.

Think of those times and situations in your life when you felt misunderstood or disregarded by others. Now try to understand how one or two other people would see the situation. Don't try to assume they would judge as you do: "she would have to feel the same way if that happened to her", or "he would change his tune if he saw things from my point of view". Rather, try to understand how they would truly see the situation. Would they analyze it through a code of values, or see it as an opportunity to grasp a wider perspective in which a solution can be found? Would it affect them personally or would they view it impartially? Try to determine their point of view without passing judgment or comparing it to your own.

When having a conversation with a friend or relative, dedicate at least half of your time to finding out how the other person sees the world around them. Concentrate on really sensing the relationships within what they describe. Tell them how you see the world and compare. Ask questions about why things seem so to them.

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 seeing right now. What connections are they making or enacting, what thoughts are they having? Don't pass judgment, or compare their situation to your own.

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 ESFJ Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Let your talent for caring and giving spill out into the world around you, show your gifts to the world. Allow yourself to take opportunities to nurture and develop situations in your home and work environments which bring value for yourself and others. Find work or a hobby which allows you to realize these strengths.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** Realize and accept that some things are never going to be how you would like them to be. Understand that other peoples need to deal with the world regardless of how it seems. Facing and dealing with discord or differences in others doesn't mean that you have to change who you are; it means that you are giving yourself opportunities to grow. By facing your weaknesses, you honor your true self and that of others.
3. **Discover the World of Others.** Don't let yourself fall into the trap of thinking you always know what is right for others. Open your heart to the possibility of understanding that their true needs are something that must be discovered through recognition that their view of the world might be very different, yet just as valid as your own.
4. **Don't be too hasty.** Try to let things settle before you make a judgment, allowing others to discover the best for themselves while you try to see all the variables and contingencies in a situation.
5. **Look Carefully at the World.** Remember, things are not always what they seem on the surface. You might need to look deeper to discover the truth, particularly when it seems you are sure of your first quick judgment. There are layers of meaning and truth beneath everything.
6. **Try to Let Others Take Some of the Load.** By letting others make their own judgments, you are not letting things get out of control, but are validating their own need to be a part of your life. Remember, it is better to guide another to see your point of view than keeping them out of the picture.
7. **Be Accountable to Others.** Remember that they need to understand you and your needs too. Express your doubts and difficulties as well as your reasons and let them become partners to your goals.
8. **Don't Hem Yourself in.** Staying in your comfort zone is self defeating in the end. Try to make every day one where you get out and discover a little something different about the world and others. This will broaden your horizons and bring new ideas and opportunities into focus.
9. **Assume the Best and Seek for it.** Don't wait for others to live up to your expectations. Every person has a goldmine of worth in them, just as every situation can be turned to some good. If you let yourself believe this, you will find yourself discovering ways to make it true for you.
10. **When in Doubt, Ask For Help!** Don't let your fears leave you on the horns of a dilemma or lead you into disaster. If you are uncertain of something or someone then get input from others who have greater experience in dealing with this difficulty.

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

# **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.***



# **Portrait of an ESTJ - Extraverted Sensing Thinking Judging (Extraverted Thinking with Introverted Sensing)**

## *The Guardian*

As an ESTJ, your primary mode of living is focused externally, where you deal with things rationally and logically. Your secondary mode is internal, where you take things in via your five senses in a literal, concrete fashion.

ESTJ's live in a world of facts and concrete needs. They live in the present, with their eye constantly scanning their personal environment to make sure that everything is running smoothly and systematically. They honor traditions and laws, and have a clear set of standards and beliefs. They expect the same of others, and have no patience or understanding of individuals who do not value these systems. They value competence and efficiency, and like to see quick results for their efforts.

ESTJ's are take-charge people. They have such a clear vision of the way that things should be, that they naturally step into leadership roles. They are self-confident and aggressive. They are extremely talented at devising systems and plans for action, and at being able to see what steps need to be taken to complete a specific task. They can sometimes be very demanding and critical, because they have such strongly held beliefs, and are likely to express themselves without reserve if they feel someone isn't meeting their standards. But at least their expressions can be taken at face-value, because the ESTJ is extremely straightforward and honest.

The ESTJ is usually a model citizen, and pillar of the community. He or she takes their commitments seriously, and follows their own standards of "good citizenship" to the letter. ESTJ enjoys interacting with people, and likes to have fun. ESTJ's can be very boisterous and fun at social events, especially activities which are focused on the family, community, or work.

The ESTJ needs to watch out for the tendency to be too rigid, and to become overly detail-oriented. Since they put a lot of weight in their own beliefs, it's important that they remember to value other people's input and opinions. If they neglect their Feeling side, they may have a problem with fulfilling other's needs for intimacy, and may unknowingly hurt people's feelings by applying logic and reason to situations which demand more emotional sensitivity.

When bogged down by stress, an ESTJ often feels isolated from others. They feel as if they are misunderstood and undervalued, and that their efforts are taken for granted. Although normally the ESTJ is very verbal and doesn't have any problem expressing themselves, when under stress they have a hard time putting their feelings into words and communicating them to others.

ESTJ's value security and social order above all else, and feel obligated to do all that they can to enhance and promote these goals. They will mow the lawn, vote, join the PTA, attend home owner's association meetings, and generally do anything that they can to promote personal and social security.

The ESTJ puts forth a lot of effort in almost everything that they do. They will do everything that they think should be done in their job, marriage, and community with a good amount of energy. He or she is conscientious, practical, realistic, and dependable. While the ESTJ will dutifully do everything that is important to work towards a particular cause or goal, they might not naturally see or value the importance of goals which are outside of their practical scope. However, if the ESTJ is able to see the relevance of such goals to practical concerns, you can bet that they'll put every effort into understanding them and incorporating them into their quest for clarity and security.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Extraverted Thinking  
Auxiliary: Introverted Sensing  
Tertiary: Extraverted Intuition  
Inferior: Introverted Feeling

**ESTJ's generally have the following traits:**

- Natural leaders - they like to be in charge
- Value security and tradition
- Loyal
- Hard-working and dependable
- Athletic and wholesome
- Have a clear set of standards and beliefs which they live by
- No patience with incompetence or inefficiency
- Excellent organizational abilities
- Enjoy creating order and structure
- Very thorough
- Will follow projects through to completion
- Straight-forward and honest
- Driven to fulfill their duties

ESTJ's have a lot of flexibility in the types of careers that they choose. They are good at a lot of different things, because they put forth a tremendous amount of effort towards doing things the right way. They will be happiest in leadership positions, however, because they have a natural drive to be in charge. They are best suited for jobs which require creating order and structure.

**ESTJ Relationships**

ESTJ's are very enthusiastic people who are driven to fulfill their obligations and duties, especially those towards their families. Their priorities generally put God first, family second, and friends third. They put forth a tremendous amount of effort to meet their obligations and duties, according to their priorities. They are dedicated and committed to their relationships, which they consider to be lifelong and unalterable. They like to be in charge, and may be very controlling of their mates and children. They have high esteem for traditions and institutions, and expect that their mates and children will support these as well. They have little patience and need for dealing with people who see things very differently from the ESTJ.

**ESTJ Strengths**

- Generally enthusiastic, upbeat and friendly
- Stable and dependable, they can be counted on to promote security for their families
- Put forth a lot of effort to fulfill their duties and obligations
- Responsible about taking care of day-to-day practical concerns around the house
- Usually good (albeit conservative) with money
- Not personally threatened by conflict or criticism
- Interested in resolving conflict, rather than ignoring it
- Take their commitments very seriously, and seek lifelong relationships
- Able to move on after a relationship breaks up
- Able to administer discipline when necessary

**ESTJ Weaknesses**

- Tendency to believe that they are always right
- Tendency to need to always be in charge
- Impatient with inefficiency and sloppiness
- Not naturally in tune with what others are feeling
- Not naturally good at expressing their feelings and emotions
- May inadvertently hurt others with insensitive language
- Tendency to be materialistic and status-conscious

- Generally uncomfortable with change, and moving into new territories

### **What does Success mean to an ESTJ?**

People with the ESTJ personality type have a high value for social order and structure. Throughout his or her life, the ESTJ develops a set of judgment standards that they use to order events and impressions that exist in the world. These standards are essentially social principles. The ESTJ believes very strongly in their principles, and strongly disapproves of any violation. The ESTJ believes that their principles define appropriate behavior and attitudes, and therefore should be followed unconditionally. Just as they naturally create rules, and are therefore natural leaders, ESTJ's also believe in following existing social rules. They often lead, but can follow easily if they trust the authority of the system they're following. The ESTJ can be quite harsh about the violation of a principle. It is more important to the ESTJ that the principle is honored than that they consider the position or feelings of the individual who transgressed against the principle. Their harshness of manner may damage personal relationships, until the ESTJ incorporates standards for behavior within personal relationships into their system of social rules. The ESTJ truly enjoys being around other people, and wants to promote traditional relationships. An ESTJ may feel successful if they are able to live their lives within their defined system of principles, but their true and lasting success will come from the ability to create and sustain good and lasting principles, and thus to address all situations in their life adequately and consistently.

### **Allowing Your ESTJ Strengths to Flourish**

As an ESTJ, 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 ESTJ's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- They believe strongly in doing their duty, and perform out of a sense of duty, rather than an expectation of getting something in return.
- They usually have a good memory.
- They're natural leaders.
- They are usually good strategists and "game" players.
- They are generally law-abiding and hard working.
- They are Loyal -- to their family, friends, country, etc.
- ESTJ's who have developed their Introverted Sensing to the extent that they regularly use their tremendous inner stores of data when forming their principles for behavior enjoy these very special gifts:
  - They understand and create effective and fair principles that are unconditional, and in so doing, they perform a great social service.
  - They may make outstanding Judges and Politicians.
  - They live their life in a highly ethical and moral manner.
  - They are great strategists, and may make great military commanders.
  - They're able to create systems for behavior to meet all of the needs that they encounter in life. In such a way, they are satisfied because their world is organized in a principle-centric way that is effective and enduring.

### **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 ESTJ's are due to Extraverted Thinking taking over the personality to the extent that other functions work only to serve Extraverted Thinking's agenda. In such cases, an ESTJ may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- May be unaware or uncaring of how they come across to others.
- May deliberately bully people into behaving a certain way (with the justification that they're enforcing a principle.)
- May quickly dismiss input from others without really considering it.
- May have difficulty communicating their thoughts and feelings to others.
- Maybe have difficulty understanding the importance of considering people's feelings, and trying to meet their emotional needs.
- May hold grudges, and have difficulty forgiving people.
- May have an intense and quick temper.
- May be highly controlling towards others.
- May be unable to place value on individual life.
- May be unable to see the long-term impact of their behavior.

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed to the common problem of Extraverted Thinking overtaking the ESTJ personality to the point that all other personality functions exist only to serve Thinking's needs. A healthy and successful personality needs to have a good balance between its dominant and auxiliary functions. For an ESTJ, dominant Extraverted Thinking needs to be well-supported by the auxiliary Introverted Sensing function. If Introverted Sensing exists only to support the agenda of Extraverted Thinking, then neither function is living up to its potential, and the subject ESTJ is not reaching their potential in their job or their personal relationships.

In the case where auxiliary Sensing is underused, the ESTJ will live entirely within the boundaries of their existing principles. They will hold up their own set of principles as an inalienable representation of the Right Thing To Do, and apply everything they encounter in life to this principle system. If they perceive behavior that does not fit into their set of principles, they will ruthlessly judge it and shut down any alternative view of the violation. In being so tied to their Extraverted Thinking process, they lose the ability to truly consider incoming information, and therefore lose the ability to synergize with other people and solve problems in an effective way. Perhaps most importantly, the ESTJ loses the ability to connect with their own Self. They become out of touch with their own personal needs, and dissociated from their core self. The net effect of these happenings is an ESTJ leader who expects absolute adherence to his or her demands; who lacks the ability to see long-range implications associated with these demands; who is unwilling to consider alternate solutions or plans; and who is dissociated from any personal priorities or value system. Such a leader is unlikely to be effective and successful in their job or personal life, although are likely unaware of the reasons for their problems.

It is quite common for people to allow their dominant function to overrule their personality. In the case of the Extraverted Thinker, allowing Thinking to dominate without counter-balance can have great impact on the social interactions of the ESTJ. Female ESTJ's may be viewed as overbearing, controlling, or masculine, and may not be as readily accepted by social standards. This may cause low self-esteem in the female ESTJ. Male ESTJ's are somewhat worse off, because social stereotypes may encourage them that they are entitled to be domineering. They may have no interest in growing beyond their limited outlook.

Extraverted Thinking is a personality function that creates structure by identifying and adhering to logical principles. It is a social form of judgment, in that it is defined by the external world, rather than by an inner sense of right and wrong. The true strength of Extraverted Thinking is its highly ethical nature. It is not swayed by individual appeals -- it believes wholeheartedly in the merit of the Principle. If the Principle exists, then it should be followed. Once the Extraverted Thinking type has identified the principle, it is their business to enforce that principle. The Extraverted Thinker does not expect anything back for living by that principle. It expects that the principle should be respected without condition. In other words, the ESTJ believes that you should do what's right because it is what's right, rather than doing what's right because you want something in return. In this ideal sense, Extraverted Thinking judgment is the cornerstone of laws and legal systems. Extraverted Thinking has much to offer our society, in its purity of intention.

Introverted Sensing, the auxiliary function of the ESTJ, is the means of observing data and storing it for future reference. Introverted Sensing is capable of considering and storing huge amounts of data. When this data is fed into the dominant Thinking function, the personality uses real data to form principles and enforce structure upon the world. In the case where the ESTJ has an overly-dominant Thinking function, the importance of the auxiliary Sensing function is reduced. Data cannot be seen outside of its context within a principle. The ESTJ will not be able to see beyond the fact that a principle has been violated. They will be unable to see the data objectively.

### **Solutions**

An ESTJ who is interested in coming into his or her own potential should consciously try to suspend judgment until all of the facts are known. An effective ESTJ is not afraid to redefine principles when information cannot be understood or dealt with effectively within their known systems. Practicing this sort of behavior will help auxiliary Introverted Sensation to flourish, and thereby allow the entire personality to become a more effective and positive force.

For example, an ESTJ friend recently told me that he was convinced that his mother's cleaning lady was a con-artist. I asked him why he thought so, and he said "because she takes money and does absolutely nothing." Apparently the house was not being cleaned to his standards. He believed that the cleaning lady was paid to do a certain job, and he expected that it would be completed to a certain standard for a certain fee. This was his principle. She violated that principle by not doing the job well enough. The fact that she took money for a job that she didn't do was nothing less than criminal behavior to him. When I asked him if the cleaning lady had been given directions on what specifically to clean, he said he didn't know, but that she was a cleaning lady so she should know what to do (another principle.) We soon discovered that the cleaning lady was paid about half the going rate for her job. When I explored this situation a bit further (out of concern for my friend's mother) I discovered that the cleaning lady had almost no guidance on what to clean, but that she was busy the entire time that she hired, and that she was perhaps not the cleanest of cleaning ladies. When she was given more direction, she performed to a better standard. My assertion that the cleaning lady kept busy the whole time that she was hired was flatly rejected by my ESTJ friend. He would not consider that piece of information, nor would he consider the fact that she was paid much less than the standard rate for cleaning ladies. Within his principle system, she was a con-artist, and he did not consider data that might offer an alternate explanation.

Rather than simply rejecting the new information that became available, my ESTJ friend could have altered his principles slightly to allow for differences in personal capabilities and results amongst individuals, and to allow for the fact that the cleaning lady getting a lower rate of pay did offset the lower quality of service at some level. Using the new data (made available by Introverted Sensing) to tweak and redefine his principles would allow him to create a more effective system of principles that would be better able to handle similar future challenges.

In general, developing Introverted Sensing is the ESTJ's key to optimizing the effectiveness and resiliency of their principles. It will also improve their general balance of character, and therefore open the door to growth within other aspects of their psyche.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ESTJ**

Some ESTJ's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are often associated with being controlling of others, having unreasonable expectations for others' behaviors, failing to consider others' needs and ideas, and generally coming across too strongly. These issues stem primarily from the common ESTJ habit of using Extraverted Thinking in a mode in which it quickly and automatically applies existing principles against the external world, rather than taking the time to weigh their inner data against their principles for behavior. ESTJ's need to be able to use their rich store of internal data to feed their principles. Insisting on adherence to steadfast principles while ignoring factual information is a recipe for trouble, such as we have seen with various dictatorships throughout history. In order to flourish in a healthy way, the ESTJ has to recognize the importance of their inner data stores, and needs to use all available data to form good principles. In order to accomplish this, the ESTJ needs to recognize the importance of Introversion, and develop the use of their highest introverted function, Introverted Sensing.

### **Specific suggestions:**

Try to gather all available facts before you pass judgment. Ask questions if necessary. Make sure that you understand the idea that is being communicated. After you understand the idea, figure out how it fits into your principle system.

- Be willing to create new principles and change existing principles based on new facts.
- If you become angry, walk away. When you allow anger to control your actions, you lose, and quite possibly somebody else loses too. After you have dealt with your anger and calmed down, continue with what you were doing.
- Try to identify the personality type of everyone that you encounter frequently in your life. Remember that Intuitives sometimes speak in an indirect, wandering way. Try to have patience with this, and remember that everyone has something to offer.
- Remember that you have the most to learn from those people who are very different from you. They have something to offer you, no matter how difficult it may be for you to see it at first.

### **Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ESTJ Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** You have been given the great ability to create logical, ethical principles that transcend personal experience. Allow these principles to be as good as they can be by creating them with consideration for all available data.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** See your weaknesses for what they are, and seek to overcome them. Especially, resist the tendency to judge too quickly, and remember the importance of considering other people's feelings.
3. **Talk Through the Facts or write them down.** You need to step through the facts in order to define good principles to live by. Verbalizing them or putting them down on paper may be a valuable tool for you.
4. **Take in Everything.** Don't dismiss ideas prematurely because you think you already know the answer. Seek first to understand, and then to be understood.
5. **When You Get Angry, You Lose.** Your passion for your principles is admirable, but becomes destructive when you fall into the "Anger Trap." Remember that Anger is destructive to personal relationships, and can be extremely hurtful to others. Work through your anger before you unleash it upon others. Disagreements and disappointments can only be handled effectively in a non-personal and dispassionate manner.
6. **Be Yourself in Relationships** Don't expect yourself to be a "touchy-feely" or "warm fuzzy" person. Realize that your most ardent bonds start with the head, rather than the heart. You expect your actions to speak for themselves to your loved ones. This may not be enough for some. Be aware of other's emotional needs, and express your genuine love and respect for them in terms that are real to YOU. Be yourself.
7. **Be Accountable for Yourself.** Don't blame the problems in your life on other people. Look inwardly for solutions. No one has more control over your life than you have.
8. **Be Humble.** Judge yourself at least as harshly as you judge others.
9. **Resist the Urge to Control Others.** You can't force others to adhere to your ways of thinking. You may think that you know what's best for others, but you really only know how they can best act according to your ideas of what is right. Just as you are entitled to live as you see fit, so are they. Instead of judging and controlling others, focus on using your judgment to create better impartial principles.
10. **Spend Some Time Alone.** Encourage the development of your introverted side. You'll find many tangible benefits to becoming a better-rounded person.

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

## **Portrait of an ESTP - Extraverted Sensing Thinking Perceiving (Extraverted Sensing with Introverted Thinking)**

### *The Doer*

As an ESTP, 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 rationally and logically.

ESTP's are outgoing, straight-shooting types. Enthusiastic and excitable, ESTP's are "doers" who live in the world of action. Blunt, straight-forward risk-takers, they are willing to plunge right into things and get their hands dirty. They live in the here-and-now, and place little importance on introspection or theory. They look at the facts of a situation, quickly decide what should be done, execute the action, and move on to the next thing.

ESTP's have an uncanny ability to perceive people's attitudes and motivations. They pick up on little cues which go completely unnoticed by most other types, such as facial expressions and stance. They're typically a couple of steps ahead of the person they're interacting with. ESTP's use this ability to get what they want out of a situation. Rules and laws are seen as guidelines for behavior, rather than mandates. If the ESTP has decided that something needs to be done, then their "do it and get on with it" attitude takes precedence over the rules. However, the ESTP tends to have their own strong belief in what's right and what's wrong, and will doggedly stick to their principles. The Rules of the Establishment may hold little value to the ESTP, but their own integrity mandates that they will not under any circumstances do something which they feel to be wrong.

ESTP's have a strong flair for drama and style. They're fast-moving, fast-talking people who have an appreciation for the finer things in life. They may be gamblers or spendthrifts. They're usually very good at story telling and improvising. They typically make things up as they go along, rather than following a plan. They love to have fun, and are fun people to be around. They can sometimes be hurtful to others without being aware of it, as they generally do not know and may not care about the effect their words have on others. It's not that they don't care about people; it's that their decision-making process does not involve taking people's feelings into account. They make decisions based on facts and logic.

ESTP's least developed area is their intuitive side. They are impatient with theory, and see little use for it in their quest to "get things done". An ESTP will occasionally have strong intuitions which are often way off-base, but sometimes very lucid and positive. The ESTP does not trust their instincts, and is suspicious of other people's intuition as well.

The ESTP often has trouble in school, especially higher education which moves into realms where theory is more important. The ESTP gets bored with classes in which they feel they gain no useful material which can be used to get things done. The ESTP may be brilliantly intelligent, but school will be a difficult chore for them.

The ESTP needs to keep moving, and so does well in careers where he or she is not restricted or confined. ESTP's make extremely good salespersons. They will become stifled and unhappy dealing with routine chores. ESTP's have a natural abundance of energy and enthusiasm, which makes them natural entrepreneurs. They get very excited about things, and have the ability to motivate others to excitement and action. They can sell anyone on any idea. They are action-oriented, and make decisions quickly. All-in-all, they have extraordinary talents for getting things started. They are not usually so good at following through, and might leave those tasks to others. Mastering the art of following through is something which ESTP's should pay special attention to.

ESTP's are practical, observant, fun-loving, spontaneous risk-takers with an excellent ability to quickly improvise an innovative solution to a problem. They're enthusiastic and fun to be with, and are great

motivators. If an ESTP recognizes their real talents and operates within those realms, they can accomplish truly exciting things.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Extraverted Sensing

Auxiliary: Introverted Thinking

Tertiary: Extraverted Feeling

Inferior: Introverted Intuition

**ESTP's generally have the following traits:**

- Action-oriented
- Live in the present moment
- Dislike abstract theory without practical application
- Like to see immediate results for their efforts
- Fast-paced and energetic
- Flexible and adaptable
- Resourceful
- Seldom work from a plan - make things up as they go
- Fun to be around
- Highly observant
- Excellent memory for details
- Excellent people skills
- Good-natured
- Excellent ability to see an immediate problem and quickly devise a solution
- Attracted to adventure and risk
- May be flashy or showy
- Like initiating things - not necessarily following them through to completion

ESTP's have some advantageous traits which are unique to their personality type. Their skills of observation make them extremely good at correctly analyzing and assessing other peoples' motives or perspectives. Their people skills allow them to use this knowledge to their advantage while interacting with people. For this reason, ESTP's are excellent salespeople. They also have a special ability to react quickly and effectively to an immediate need, such as in an emergency or crisis situation. This is a valuable skill in many different professions, perhaps most notably in action-oriented professions, such as police work. ESTP's enjoy new experiences and dealing with people, and dislike being confined in structured or regimented environments. They also want to see an immediate result for their actions, and don't like dealing with a lot of high-level theory where that won't be the case. For these reasons, they should choose careers which involve a lot of interaction with people, and do not require performing a lot of routine, detailed tasks.

**ESTP Relationships**

ESTP's are gregarious and fun-loving individuals who want to make the most of every moment. They love action, and always seem to be doing something. This enthusiasm is carried over to their personal relationships, which they approach with the desire to make the most of their relationships on a daily basis. They tend to get bored easily, and may be prone to switching relationships frequently unless they find an outlet for their boredom elsewhere. They approach life on a day-by-day basis, so long-term commitments are not naturally comfortable for the ESTP. They may feel tremendously committed, but they want to take their commitments day by day.

**ESTP Strengths**

- Can be quite charming
- Witty, clever, and popular
- Earthy and sensual
- Not personally threatened by conflict or criticism



- Excellent and clear-headed dealing with emergency situations
- Enthusiastic and fun-loving, they try to make everything enjoyable
- As "big kids" themselves, they're eager, willing and able to spend time with their kids
- Likely to enjoy lavishing their loved ones with big gifts (both a strength and a weakness)

### **ESTP Weaknesses**

- Not naturally in tune with what others are feeling
- Not naturally good at expressing feelings and emotions
- May inadvertently hurt others with insensitive language
- May be very good with money, but highly risky with it as well
- Living in the present, they're not usually good long-range planners
- May fall into the habit of ignoring conflict, rather than solving it
- Don't naturally make lifelong commitments - they take things one day at a time
- Prone to get bored easily
- More likely than other type to leave relationships quickly when they get bored
- Likely to enjoy lavishing their loved ones with big gifts (both a strength and a weakness)

### **What does Success mean to an ESTP?**

With a dominant function of Extraverted Sensing, and an auxiliary function of Introverted Thinking, people with the ESTP personality type have a heightened need for sensory experience and for tactile engagement with their physical environment. The ESTP is most comfortable when they can treat life as a big game in which they must be quick to use their skills in order to win. In such a game-playing scenario, the ESTP is most likely to be the winner, as no other personality type is as quick on their feet as the ESTP.

ESTP's have an amazingly ability to size up people in an instant and come up with an accurate ballpark understanding of where they are coming from. The ESTP cannot help using this skill, it is natural for them, but it brings them great satisfaction to be able to use this skill to enact some personal gain, or to "win the game." The ESTP is also strongly driven to tangibly interact with their immediate physical environment. This need manifests itself in many ways, most commonly as an attraction to sports or physical challenges, and as a desire to always be doing something. ESTP's are the great Doers. If you want to make something happen quickly, ask an ESTP. These inherent skills make the ESTP likely to find success professionally as salespeople or professional athletes. However, any career that capitalizes on their people skills or their ability to maneuver within their physical world AND gives them immediate feedback is likely to be a good fit for the ESTP.

The ESTP's need to be engaged with their immediate, external world makes success on a personal level more challenging. They feel happiest when they are outside of themselves, but personal success requires going within to get to know the self. However, once these needs are recognized, they are not mutually exclusive. The ESTP who feeds their constant drive for new sensory experiences as well as their need for real reflection upon those experiences and impressions will find a deeper level of personal satisfaction than the ESTP who allows his immediate needs for sensory experiences to yank him about.

However, even those ESTP's who have developed their ability to reflect on matters will always be connected at some base level to the strong desire for new experiences, and will get their "bread and butter" feelings of success from conquering challenges in their physical environment. ESTP's need to know they've got the goods, won the moment, done the job. Once given a task that intrigues them, or having discovered something new to be tried, very little will stop them from doing all they can to meet the challenge, and thereby achieve what they consider to be a personal success. Success to an ESTP is usually not measured in ongoing terms, but in transient moments of achievement, moments which bring the ESTP the needed feeling of having won the day.

### **Allowing Your ESTP Strengths to Flourish**

As an ESTP, 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 ESTP's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- A great talent for reading people and knowing "where they're at" by just watching their behavior and mannerisms.
- The ability to draw upon an extremely detailed and ready knowledge of the physical world around them at a moment's notice.
- A competitive flair which drives them to win out in difficult situations. ESTP's love to have the odds stacked against them, which makes them great troubleshooters or the type of salespeople who can cold canvass a winning deal from the hardest client.
- A mental toughness which makes them extremely hard to beat. In any contest, the ESTP will almost always be the last man standing.
- A strong, "get after it" mentality that causes them to get things done.
- ESTP's who have developed their Introverted Thinking to the extent that they consider what their perceptions mean to them and discriminate carefully between the options available rather than simply flowing with the process of the moment, will enjoy these very special gifts:
- The ability to recognize when others are uncomfortable or in trouble and deal with their problems.
- The ability to realize that there is value in meeting other people's needs in a real way.
- An understanding that other people may have a different perspective on life, and those other perspectives may be useful and valid.
- An ability to make the most of their winning capabilities over a long term.
- A special talent for showing others how to make the most of situations. Such ESTP's can be extraordinary teachers of positive life skills.
- A knack for showing not only how certain things can be done, but how they can be done in a far more valuable or efficient way. Such ESTP's are an asset to any company involved in manufacturing.
- A skill for understanding the behavior of people and predicting patterns. ESTP's can make very good detectives or analysts.

### **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 or simply ignore our weaknesses. To grow as a person and get what we want out of life, we must certainly exploit our strengths, but we must also face our weaknesses and deal with them. That means taking a hard look at the potential problem areas in our personality type.

It is important to realize that type weaknesses are just the blind spots behind our stronger character traits, and that the more undesirable characteristics specific to a type are usually limited to those people whose type is heavily expressed, and then only if circumstances have combined to narrow or circumvent that person's natural development. So in reading what follows, it is worth remembering that, in describing these typical tendencies and the negative patterns of behavior which can flow from them, we are building an understanding for positive development. Every person is differently made, and we must always remember that these so called "weaknesses" are the unavoidable, understandable and natural characteristics of our type.

Most of the weaker characteristics found in ESTP's result from Extraverted Sensing dominating their personality and co-opting the usefulness of their other functions, whilst some other difficulties stem directly from the ESTP's inability to use their less adapted functions of Extraverted Feeling and Introverted Intuition. Either singly or in combination, these ESTP traits cause most or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- Can become morose or even antagonistic in situations offering little promise of advantage or the possibility to "do something."
- May be manipulative, taking advantage of other people's weaknesses for their own gain.
- May be unwilling or unable to plan anything in advance themselves, or to follow other's careful plans.

- Can be overconfident of their own cunning or ability, ignoring problems which eventually catch up with them on their blind side.
- May find it difficult or be actually unwilling to follow through where an ongoing commitment is expected.
- In relationship situations may be overbearing, demanding and/or uncaring of the feelings of their partner.
- When alone or in reduced circumstances may be subject to dark or morbid feelings about themselves.
- May be unable to maintain employment for any length of time, losing credibility with potential employers or clients by job hopping.
- May become so engrossed in challenging activities that they lose all sense of proportion, neglecting themselves and their relationships.
- Without challenges of their own, may become focused on the behavior of others, particularly that of family or employees, insisting that they live up to what the ESTP sees as the proper code or level of accomplishment.

### **Explanation of Problems**

Because the ESTP is driven to experience the world through concrete sensation, their need for sensual experience combines with the possibilities of the moment to provide everything they feel is necessary to life. Using Introverted Thinking only to justify or enhance their sensual needs, the ESTP can easily flow with the world in a reckless manner, their own behavior mapped and justified by a ruling grid locked only to the objective action of the moment. Many of the difficulties described above flow from this common ESTP trait of attending only to the world and the people around them for the sake of satisfying their constant need for fresh experiences and new conquests. For the ESTP who lacks the support of a well adapted rational, judging function, the objective world remains an endlessly fascinating playground, where the constantly changing rules of the game often provide the only real codes of conduct they live by.

Without a well developed Introverted Thinking function enabling the ESTP to reflect upon the consequences of their actions and desires, the feelings and needs of others can seem of little concern to them. Often, those who cannot match the ESTP round for round are considered persons of little consequence, or valued only as useful pawns in an endless game of one-upmanship where the gratification of the ESTP's needs is the only object. In addition to this, because Feeling is the ESTP's tertiary function, its judgments tend to be colored by the unconscious background, which means that it is often used negatively. In responding to the ESTP's sense driven thinking assessments, such a feeling function plays down empathy and enhances the maintenance of negative feelings about others, particularly when they do not "go along" with the ESTP's primary function driven ways and needs.

Under such conditions the strongly expressing ESTP, whose auxiliary Introverted Thinking function serves only to make biased, supportive, "correct" judgments about their own behavior, will often "stand outside the circle", their biased judgments reducing others to a mere audience, expected to support the ESTP's notions without question. In relationships this can be a danger, for it means the ESTP will rarely accede to the feeling based demands of others, nor give credit to those ideas which arise from an intuitive outlook on life. Their behavior in this regard often borders on outright contempt or a sullen refusal to accept anything outside their own purview.

Such strongly expressing ESTP's can sometimes find themselves without any truly close relationships, for their behavior often provides a strong signal to others, who sense that "here be dragons", and consequently offer as little as possible of their personal feelings or worldly knowledge as grist to the ESTP's one-upmanship mill. Under these circumstances, whilst the ESTP may have lots of acquaintances and partners in fun, there will be very few who will befriend them at any truly supportive, emotional level.

Apart from the reasons given above, some narrowly expressing ESTP's can sometimes find themselves isolated because of the unusual things they believe about people and the world - particularly in regard to the reasons they believe certain things happen. The ESTP is extremely familiar with the workings of the immediate, rational world of the senses, but because their Intuition is a virtually unconscious function, their

ideas about things outside their ken can quite often be extraordinarily quaint, superstitious or just downright bizarre, and their thinking can weave some amazing logic to support these beliefs. This rarely affects their day to day life, for these ideas and superstitions quite often support their keenness and abilities, but in a situation where truly intuitive or theoretical notions are considered relevant and important, the ESTP can find themselves very much the odd man out.

Of all the personality types, the strongly expressing ESTP can be the hardest to convince that their world view is not the only valid one; that it does not necessarily spring from the best and only way to be; that everyone else in the world that is “normal” does not approach life in the same way as the ESTP.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ESTP needs to focus on freeing their thinking from the control of Extraverted Sensing and allow them the space to make careful, rational judgments. Not only about the immediate, external situation, but also about the ways in which it can be managed to create a more valuable, long term result. The ESTP's capacity to do this is innate; it hides just beneath the surface and takes only a few deliberate moments to allow it to work. All the ESTP needs to do is to recognize the difference between thinking with the moment, with the subject of their immediate sense impressions, and the thinking they do when nothing else grasps their attention. The ESTP needs to recognize that the second kind of thinking, this “alone with self” space, is full of potential for careful judgment of their actions and consideration of the best course for the future. Introverted Thinking is in truth the ESTP secret weapon. It is Introverted Thinking working in the background of their life which makes the ESTP such a potent personality. Bringing it into the foreground, allowing its power to be no longer a secret to them is the key to ESTP development.

I want to offer the ESTP some specific suggestions and advice here, for bringing the value of introspection into focus it isn't just a matter of flipping a switch in the head. One of the reasons for this is that, when uncoupled from the fascinations of the outer world and reality, the ESTP's Introverted Thinking tends to get caught up in the negative judgments and images which flow from their feeling and intuitive functions; all too easily falling into a cloudy, uncertain world of anxieties and sinister implications. The ESTP's inner space needs to be cleared of this often childish and ill-informed miasma of negativity. So it is necessary to reassure yourself, to calmly and decisively insist upon quiet in your inner mind, and have faith that all concerns will be taken care of by the “adult of the household” (the mature version of Introverted Thinking.)

Turning off the world and getting into your own space can be difficult at the beginning, but it provides the greatest rewards. For the ESTP doesn't need to learn how to think, they already do it extremely well – they just need to turn their thinking upon themselves. They need to measure and evaluate their usefulness, their actions, their relationships in ways that look for quality, and in ways to offer value to all things and people in their lives.

Challenge yourself. Challenges are simple stuff for the ESTP, and all it really takes is a few moments of reflection each day. Ask yourself regularly: “What am I doing? Why am I doing it? Who benefits from it?” Ask these questions in every type of situation, and discover how the answers begin showing a path toward not only greater understanding of self and others, but also show ways to include others in a relationship with your whole self. Soon you will discover your feelings and intuitions coming on board with a more positive and inclusive force. Growing yourself soon becomes easy, because it just takes the simple routine of letting your innate power of considered thought work upon your own life, rather than only using it to support what's going on outside. Think about it. ☺

### **Living Happily in our World as an ESTP**

ESTP's usually have a strong group of supporters, both at work and socially. They are often popular, their appeal is magnetic and they attract those who would like to do the things they can do. The problems the ESTP has fitting into the world tend to be related to the flip side of this attractive and challenging exterior, for the deeper and more intimate side of people tends to avoid them, just as the ESTP tends to avoid the deeper connections. ESTP's have no trouble attracting lovers and admirers, they simply have trouble keeping them, for once relationships begin to demand constancy and deep, feeling based connections, the ESTP is often left wondering what the fuss was about. Their inadequacy in this regard can often make

others feel they are lacking any real feelings or desire for commitment, whilst the truth is that they simply do not know the path to such things without a long and difficult learning period. They are more frightened of feelings rather than unable to feel, they are more timid of commitment rather than unable to commit. In relationships the ESTP needs reassurance, but all too often their needs are unspoken and interpreted as inabilities.

### **Specific Suggestions:**

Ask yourself what you want from a long term relationship. Now turn this around and see how your requirements compare with others. Are you being realistic? Have you forgotten to include the needs of others in your ideal relationship? Are you afraid of the things you need to offer, or are you just afraid that in offering them you will lose something?

Always remember, that a relationship which adds to your personal skills and life is a valuable one, while a relationship which limits your ability to be yourself is not going to work. Now try to see how your own demands and needs might add to another, and what they might take away from them.

Don't be afraid of letting your feelings show, even if they frighten you for their weakness or showing your own vulnerability. More often than not, such honesty is the beginning of the kind of relationship that can lead you to grow.

Your best partner is going to be the one who fills your private space, your thinking space, as well as your senses. Try to talk to others about what you think. Discover yourself in your thoughts and let relationships grow through your letting the other person into your inner world. Discuss your fears and limits and discover the strength available to you from the support of another who may have what you need.

### **Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ESTP Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Give yourself every opportunity to show your innate skills. If you are not in a relationship or a job which allows this to happen, it might be time to discover ways to change this. Remember, your strengths derive from being able to deal with the world, with situations where getting things done, where opportunities to surmount difficulty exist.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses.** Try to be straight up with yourself. You have limitations others find as strengths. So what? You don't have to hide behind a curtain of fear just because you have difficulty with feelings or sorting out your inner perceptions. Allow yourself to be who you are and at the same time let others help you be more honest with your limitations.
3. **Talk About Your Thoughts.** Discussing your ideas and perceptions with others will help you to develop your separate, inner reality, make you a "real" person to them even without all that external activity. How well you use your auxiliary function is very important to your overall health and happiness.
4. **Don't Be Afraid to Show Emotion.** Your inferior functions want you to be still a child inside, and that makes you run, that makes you want to prove yourself even more. You don't have to prove anything to anyone in this regard. Everyone feel emotion and everyone is a little child inside. Find those people whose eyes tell you that you are not alone, and let them hear your child's voice.
5. **Respect Your Need for Action.** Understand that you need to be actively working with your environment to be "in the groove" with life. Don't chastise yourself for not being the sort to sit around and read a book or watch a movie. Choose a partner and companions who value active lifestyles, but remember to allow yourself time out to consider how their input into your life will change it. Don't just follow your nose – life is not an endless party or expedition.
6. **Recognize the Differences in Others.** Realize that everyone is different, not just a little different, but very different. Everyone has their place and value. You need to notice those values and places, places where you cannot easily fit. You can learn from these people, for they have gifts you can use, gifts they offer simply by being who they are. Try figuring out their psychological type for yourself and notice how certain types can lift you out of negative feelings just by being who they are
7. **It's OK to 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 figuring out exactly how you feel about someone that you're involved with. 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 Aware that You can Fail, and that it is OK. Not every mountain can be climbed, not every customer will be satisfied, no matter how hard you try or no matter what tricks you bring to bear. Getting beaten is an opportunity to reflect upon what is important, what really matters in life. Next time you will take up a challenge more worthy of your skills, and more valuable to others. You can be a champion, and it will be at your own game. Try to let it be a game of life, where everyone wins if you do.
10. Assume the Best. Don't distress yourself with fear and dark imaginings. Expect the best, and the best will come.

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

# **Portrait of an INFJ**

## **Introverted iNtuitive Feeling Judging**

### **(Introverted Intuition with Extraverted Feeling)**

#### *The Protector*

As an INFJ, your primary mode of living is focused internally, where you take things in primarily via intuition. Your secondary mode is external, where you deal with things according to how you feel about them, or how they fit with your personal value system.

INFJ's are gentle, caring, complex and highly intuitive individuals. Artistic and creative, they live in a world of hidden meanings and possibilities. Only one percent of the population has an INFJ Personality Type, making it the rarest of all the types.

INFJ's place great importance on having things orderly and systematic in their outer world. They put a lot of energy into identifying the best system for getting things done, and constantly define and re-define the priorities in their lives. On the other hand, INFJ's operate within themselves on an intuitive basis which is entirely spontaneous. They know things intuitively, without being able to pinpoint why, and without detailed knowledge of the subject at hand. They are usually right, and they usually know it. Consequently, INFJ's put a tremendous amount of faith into their instincts and intuitions. This is something of a conflict between the inner and outer worlds, and may result in the INFJ not being as organized as other Judging types tend to be. Or we may see some signs of disarray in an otherwise orderly tendency, such as a consistently messy desk.

INFJ's have uncanny insight into people and situations. They get "feelings" about things and intuitively understand them. As an extreme example, some INFJ's report experiences of a psychic nature, such as getting strong feelings about there being a problem with a loved one, and discovering later that they were in a car accident. This is the sort of thing that other types may scorn and scoff at, and the INFJ themselves does not really understand their intuition at a level which can be verbalized. Consequently, most INFJ's are protective of their inner selves, sharing only what they choose to share when they choose to share it. They are deep, complex individuals, who are quite private and typically difficult to understand. INFJ's hold back part of themselves, and can be secretive.

But the INFJ is as genuinely warm as they are complex. INFJ's hold a special place in the heart of people who they are close to, who are able to see their special gifts and depth of caring. INFJ's are concerned for people's feelings, and try to be gentle to avoid hurting anyone. They are very sensitive to conflict, and cannot tolerate it very well. Situations which are charged with conflict may drive the normally peaceful INFJ into a state of agitation or charged anger. They may tend to internalize conflict into their bodies, and experience health problems when under a lot of stress.

Because the INFJ has such strong intuitive capabilities, they trust their own instincts above all else. This may result in an INFJ stubbornness and tendency to ignore other people's opinions. They believe that they're right. On the other hand, INFJ is a perfectionist who doubts that they are living up to their full potential. INFJ's are rarely at complete peace with themselves - there's always something else they should be doing to improve themselves and the world around them. They believe in constant growth, and don't often take time to revel in their accomplishments. They have strong value systems, and need to live their lives in accordance with what they feel is right. In deference to the Feeling aspect of their personalities, INFJ's are in some ways gentle and easy going. Conversely, they have very high expectations of themselves, and frequently of their families. They don't believe in compromising their ideals.

INFJ is a natural nurturer; patient, devoted and protective. They make loving parents and usually have strong bonds with their offspring. They have high expectations of their children, and push them to be the

best that they can be. This can sometimes manifest itself in the INFJ being hard-nosed and stubborn. But generally, children of an INFJ get devoted and sincere parental guidance, combined with deep caring.

In the workplace, the INFJ usually shows up in areas where they can be creative and somewhat independent. They have a natural affinity for art, and many excel in the sciences, where they make use of their intuition. INFJ's can also be found in service-oriented professions. They are not good at dealing with minutia or very detailed tasks. The INFJ will either avoid such things, or else go to the other extreme and become enveloped in the details to the extent that they can no longer see the big picture. An INFJ who has gone the route of becoming meticulous about details may be highly critical of other individuals who are not.

The INFJ individual is gifted in ways that other types are not. Life is not necessarily easy for the INFJ, but they are capable of great depth of feeling and personal achievement.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Introverted Intuition

Auxiliary: Extraverted Feeling

Tertiary: Introverted Thinking

Inferior: Extraverted Sensing

**INFJ's generally have the following traits:**

- Intuitively understand people and situations
- Idealistic
- Highly principled
- Complex and deep
- Natural leaders
- Sensitive and compassionate towards people
- Service-oriented
- Future-oriented
- Value deep, authentic relationships
- Reserved about expressing their true selves
- Dislike dealing with details unless they enhance or promote their vision
- Constantly seeking meaning and purpose in everything
- Creative and visionary
- Intense and tightly-wound
- Can work logically and rationally - use their intuition to understand the goal and work backwards towards it

The INFJ is a special individual who needs more out of a career than a job. They need to feel as if everything they do in their lives is in sync with their strong value systems - with what they believe to be right. Accordingly, the INFJ should choose a career in which they're able to live their daily lives in accordance with their deeply-held principles, and which supports them in their life quest to be doing something meaningful. Since INFJ's have such strong value systems, and persistent intuitive visions which lend them a sense of "knowing", they do best in positions in which they are leaders, rather than followers. Although they can happily follow individuals who are leading in a direction which the INFJ fully supports, they will very unhappy following in any other situation.

**INFJ Relationships**

INFJ's are warm and affirming people who are usually also deep and complex. They're likely to seek out and promote relationships that are intense and meaningful. They tend to be perfectionists, and are always striving for the Ultimate Relationship. For the most part, this is a positive feature, but sometimes works against the INFJ if they fall into the habit of moving from relationship to relationship, always in search of a more perfect partner. In general, the INFJ is a deeply warm and caring person who is highly invested in the health of their close relationships, and puts forth a lot of effort to make them positive. They are valued by



those close to them for these special qualities. They seek long-term, lifelong relationships, although they don't always find them.

### **INFJ Strengths**

- Warm and affirming by nature
- Dedicated to achieving the ultimate relationship
- Sensitive and concerned for others' feelings
- Usually have good communication skills, especially written
- Take their commitments very seriously, and seek lifelong relationships
- Have very high expectations for themselves and others (both a strength and weakness)
- Good listeners
- Are able to move on after a relationship has ended (once they're sure it's over)

### **INFJ Weaknesses**

- Tendency to hold back part of themselves
- Not good with money or practical day-to-day life necessities
- Extreme dislike of conflict and criticism
- Have very high expectations for themselves and others (both a strength and weakness)
- Have difficulty leaving a bad relationship

### **What does Success mean to an INFJ?**

People with the INFJ personality type are intense and often are perfectionists. They have deep insights into many aspects of life, and usually have very high standards for their own understanding and accomplishments, as well as those of others. They are service-oriented and empathetic to other individuals. The INFJ strives for the ideal in every aspect of their life. An INFJ's feeling of success is centered on their own level of understanding and accomplishment, their usefulness or service to others, and the condition of their personal relationships. The INFJ feels successful when they have used their very deep understanding of something to do a real service for someone. We often see INFJ personality types as counselors and teachers, or in the medical and health fields.

### **Allowing Your INFJ Strengths to Flourish**

As an INFJ, 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 INFJ's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- They're extremely insightful, and see things that are not obvious to others. This ability to see patterns and meanings in the world can help the INFJ in many different ways. INFJ's usually have a great deal of insight into different people and situations.
- When given a goal or context, an INFJ is able to generate all kinds of possibilities. They're able to see the problem from many different angles.
- They understand how others are feeling, and are genuinely concerned with others. This natural empathy and caring helps to be really effective at helping others through problems. In this manner, they make great friends, counselors, teachers, and mates.
- An INFJ has a "stick to it" attitude. They're not afraid of hard work, and will put forth a great deal of effort towards something that they believe in. This persistence will help the INFJ to achieve an identified goal.
- Perfectionistic and idealistic, they always strive for the best.
- Usually intelligent and able to concentrate and focus, the INFJ can usually grasp difficult ideas and concepts.

INFJ's who have a well-developed Extraverted Feeling function to complement their dominant Introverted iNtuition will enjoy these very special gifts:

- They can turn their insightful understanding about a situation into a successful plan of action.

- The INFJ with well-developed judgment will be able to grasp and process concepts that are beyond what their natural intelligence appears to be able to handle.
- They may achieve a level of understanding that makes them appear wise.
- The INFJ's perfectionism and idealism, when combined with their empathy and genuine concern for others, can cause them to be true servants for people in some fashion. They may be great doctors or ministers or counselors. If they have also achieved a good amount of life wisdom, they can become powerful forces.

### **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.

INFJ's are rare and intelligent people with many special gifts. This should be kept in mind as you read some of the more negative material about INFJ weaknesses. Remember that these weaknesses are natural. We offer this information to enact positive change, rather than as blatant criticism. We want you to grow into your full potential, and be the happiest and most successful person that you can become.

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

- May be unaware (and sometimes uncaring) of how they come across to others
- May quickly dismiss input from others without really considering it
- May apply their judgment more often towards others, rather than towards themselves
- With their ability to see an issue from many sides, they may always find others at fault for any problems in their lives
- May have unrealistic and/or unreasonable expectations of others
- May be intolerant of weaknesses in others
- May believe that they're always right
- May be obsessive and passionate about details that may be unimportant to the big picture
- May be cuttingly derisive and sarcastic towards others
- May have an intense and quick temper
- May be tense, wound up, have high blood pressure and find it difficult to relax
- May hold grudges, and have difficulty forgiving people
- May be wishy-washy and unsure how to act in situations that require quick decision making
- May have difficulty communicating their thoughts and feelings to others
- May see so many tangents everywhere that they can't stay focused on the bottom line or the big picture

### **Explanation of Problems**

Most of the problems described above are a result of Introverted iNtuition overtaking the INFJ's personality to the point that all of the other functions become slaves to Introverted iNtuition. A healthy personality needs to have a good balance between its dominant and auxiliary functions. For an INFJ, the dominant Introverted iNtuition needs to be well-supported by the auxiliary Extraverted Feeling function. If Extraverted Feeling exists only to support the desires of Introverted iNtuition, then neither function is being used to its potential.

Introverted iNtuition is a personality function that constantly gathers information, and sees everything from many different perspectives. As the dominant player in a personality, it has the effect of constantly bombarding the psyche with new information to consider. Introverted iNtuition is sort of like a framework for understanding that exists in the mind. As something is perceived, it is melded into the existing intuitive framework. If an entirely new piece of information is perceived by the Introverted iNtuitive, that person

must redefine their entire framework of reference. So, Introverted iNtuitives are constantly taking in information about the world that needs to be processed in a relatively lengthy manner in order to be understood. That presents quite a challenge to the INFJ. It's not unusual for an INFJ to feel overwhelmed with all of the things that he or she needs to consider in order to fully understand an idea or situation.

When Introverted iNtuition dominates the INFJ such that the other functions cannot serve their own purposes, we find the INFJ cutting off information that it needs to consider. If the psyche is presented with information that looks anything like something that Introverted iNtuition has processed in the past, it uses Extraverted Feeling to quickly reject that information. The psyche uses Extraverted Feeling to reject the ideas, rather than taking the information into its intuitive framework, and therefore potentially causing that framework to be reshaped and redefined.

Using Extraverted Feeling in this manner may effectively serve the immediate needs of Introverted iNtuition, but it is not ideal. It causes the INFJ to not consider information that may be useful or critical in developing a real understanding of an issue. It may cause the INFJ to come off as too strongly opinionated or snobbish to others.

The better use of Extraverted Feeling for an INFJ would be to use it to assess the INFJ's rich insights and weigh them against the external world. When the INFJ personality uses Extraverted Feeling to cut off incoming information, rather than to judge internal intuitions, it is effectively cheating itself. It's like getting the answers to a test without having to really understand the questions. It's easier to get the answer right away, rather than to have to figure everything out. For the INFJ, who has a tremendous amount of information and "studying" that needs to be done, it's very tempting to take shortcuts. Most INFJ's will do this to some extent. The real problems occur when an INFJ personality has become so imbalanced that its owner is extremely self-important and rarely consider anyone else's opinions or ideas.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the INFJ needs to focus on applying their judgment to things only after they have gone through their intuition. In other words, the INFJ needs to consciously try not to use their judgment to dismiss ideas prematurely. Rather, they should use their judgment against their own ideas. One cannot effectively judge something that they don't understand. The INFJ needs to take things entirely into their intuition in order to understand them. It may be necessary to give your intuition enough time to work through the new information so that it can rebuild its global framework of understanding. INFJ's need to focus on using their judgment not to dismiss ideas, but rather to support their intuitive framework.

An INFJ who is concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to the subject of their judgments, and their motivation for making judgments. Are they judging something external to themselves, or are they judging something that they have sifted through their intuition? Is the motivation for judging something to be able to understand its usefulness in the world, or to dismiss it? Too often, an INFJ will judge something without properly understanding it, and with the intention of dismissing it. Seek first to understand, then to judge.

### **Living Happily in our World as an INFJ**

Some INFJ's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are generally associated with not knowing (or caring) how they come across to others, and with having unreasonable expectations for others' behaviors. Both of these issues stem from using Extraverted Feeling primarily to dismiss external ideas, rather than to sort through their own intuitions.

An INFJ who uses Extraverted Feeling in this diminished manner may become so strongly opinionated that they form rigid and unreasonable expectations for others. They may feel so strongly about things that they become very passionate and agitated when they feel that something has gone wrong. In these cases, it's not uncommon for the INFJ to express their displeasure with biting sarcasm. They become so emotionally upset that they are generally not aware of how their behavior comes across to others. Even if the consequences of their attitude and behavior are pointed out to them, they may be agitated to the point that they don't care. This kind of situation can be devastating to the INFJ on many levels, and should be avoided. There isn't much that can be done once the INFJ has reached the point where they are too upset to

care about others, but the INFJ can prevent this problem from occurring by ensuring that they never get to that point.

How can you, as an INFJ, ensure that you won't get that upset? It probably seems to you that these kinds of upsets are caused by external circumstances and situations. Well, that's not really true. It's true that things will happen over which you have no control. But you certainly have control over how you perceive these things, or more appropriately, how you *\*judge\** these things.

#### **Specific suggestions:**

Take care to listen to someone's idea entirely before you pass judgment on it. Ask questions if necessary. Do whatever it takes to make sure that you understand the idea. Try not to begin judging anything about the idea until you have understood it entirely.

Before you begin talking to another person, pause for a moment and look at that person. Take in that person's attitude and feelings at that moment. Be aware of the person with whom you're speaking.

If you become upset, walk away immediately. DO NOT express anger. When you get angry, you lose. After you have calmed down, apologize for leaving and continue with what you were doing.

Try to identify the personality type of everyone that you encounter frequently in your life. Remember that people with the Sensing preference need to be communicated with in a direct, concise manner. Speak plainly and simply with Sensors, giving "yes" or "no" answers.

Try to be on good terms with all people, even those that you consider beneath you. Try to understand that everybody has something to offer.

#### **Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve INFJ Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Do things that allow your brilliant intuition and service-oriented manner to flourish.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** See your weaknesses for what they are, and seek to overcome them. Especially, strive to use your judgment against your internal ideas and intuitions, rather than as a means of disregarding other people's ideas.
3. **Talk Through Your Thoughts.** You need to step through your intuitions in order to put them into perspective. Give yourself time to do this, and take advantage of discussing ideas with others. You'll find externalizing your internal intuitions to be a valuable exercise.
4. **Take in Everything.** Don't dismiss ideas prematurely because you don't respect the person generating the ideas, or because you think you already know it all. After all, everybody has something to offer, and nobody knows everything. Steven Covey says it so well when he says: "Seek first to understand, and then to be understood."
5. **When You Get Angry, You Lose.** Your passion and intensity are strong assets, but can be very harmful if you allow yourself to fall into the "Anger Trap". Remember that Anger is destructive to your personal relationships. Work through your anger before you impress it upon others, or you will likely find yourself alone. Disagreements and disappointments can only be handled effectively in a non-personal and dispassionate manner.
6. **Keep Your Eye on the Big Picture** Watch out for your tendency to become obsessed with details. If you find yourself feeling very, very strongly about a small detail, take a big step back and make sure that you can still see the goal. You're not going to get there if you get mired in the details.
7. **Be Accountable for Yourself.** Don't blame the problems in your life on other people. Look inwardly for solutions. No one has more control over your life than you have.
8. **Be Humble.** Judge yourself at least as harshly as you judge others.
9. **Assume the Best.** Don't distress yourself and others by dwelling on the dark side of everything. Just as there is a positive charge for every negative charge, there is a light side to every dark side. Remember that positive situations are created by positive attitudes. Expect the best, and the best will come forward.

10. Relax! Do yourself a favor and learn how to effectively unwind. Get exercise and restful sleep. Take vacations. Engage in relaxing activities. Take care of yourself and your loved ones by learning to let go of your passion and intensity for a respite.

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

## **Portrait of an INFP - Introverted iNtuitive Feeling Perceiving (Introverted Feeling with Extraverted Intuition)**

### *The Idealist*

As an INFP, your primary mode of living is focused internally, where you deal with things according to how you feel about them, or how they fit into your personal value system. Your secondary mode is external, where you take things in primarily via your intuition.

INFP's, more than other iNtuitive Feeling types, are focused on making the world a better place for people. Their primary goal is to find out their meaning in life. What is their purpose? How can they best serve humanity in their lives? They are idealists and perfectionists, who drive themselves hard in their quest for achieving the goals they have identified for themselves

INFP's are highly intuitive about people. They rely heavily on their intuitions to guide them, and use their discoveries to constantly search for value in life. They are on a continuous mission to find the truth and meaning underlying things. Every encounter and every piece of knowledge gained gets sifted through the INFP's value system, and is evaluated to see if it has any potential to help the INFP define or refine their own path in life. The goal at the end of the path is always the same - the INFP is driven to help people and make the world a better place.

Generally thoughtful and considerate, INFP's are good listeners and put people at ease. Although they may be reserved in expressing emotion, they have a very deep well of caring and are genuinely interested in understanding people. This sincerity is sensed by others, making the INFP a valued friend and confidante. An INFP can be quite warm with people he or she knows well.

INFP's do not like conflict, and go to great lengths to avoid it. If they must face it, they will always approach it from the perspective of their feelings. In conflict situations, INFP's place little importance on who is right and who is wrong. They focus on the way that the conflict makes them feel, and indeed don't really care whether or not they're right. They don't want to feel badly. This trait sometimes makes them appear irrational and illogical in conflict situations. On the other hand, INFP's make very good mediators, and are typically good at solving other people's conflicts, because they intuitively understand people's perspectives and feelings, and genuinely want to help them.

INFP's are flexible and laid-back, until one of their values is violated. In the face of their value system being threatened, INFP's can become aggressive defenders, fighting passionately for their cause. When an INFP has adopted a project or job which they're interested in, it usually becomes a "cause" for them. Although they are not detail-oriented individuals, they will cover every possible detail with determination and vigor when working for their "cause".

When it comes to the mundane details of life maintenance, INFP's are typically completely unaware of such things. They might go for long periods without noticing a stain on the carpet, but carefully and meticulously brush a speck of dust off of their project booklet.

INFP's do not like to deal with hard facts and logic. Their focus on their feelings and the Human Condition makes it difficult for them to deal with impersonal judgment. They don't understand or believe in the validity of impersonal judgment, which makes them naturally rather ineffective at using it. Most INFP's will avoid impersonal analysis, although some have developed this ability and are able to be quite logical. Under stress, it's not uncommon for INFP's to misuse hard logic in the heat of anger, throwing out fact after (often inaccurate) fact in an emotional outburst.

INFP's have very high standards and are perfectionists. Consequently, they are usually hard on themselves, and don't give themselves enough credit. INFP's may have problems working on a project in a group, because their standards are likely to be higher than other members' of the group. In group situations, they may have a "control" problem. The INFP needs to work on balancing their high ideals with the requirements of every day living. Without resolving this conflict, they will never be happy with themselves, and they may become confused and paralyzed about what to do with their lives.

INFP's are usually talented writers. They may be awkward and uncomfortable with expressing themselves verbally, but have a wonderful ability to define and express what they're feeling on paper. INFP's also appear frequently in social service professions, such as counseling or teaching. They are at their best in situations where they're working towards the public good, and in which they don't need to use hard logic.

INFP's who function in their well-developed sides can accomplish great and wonderful things, which they will rarely give themselves credit for. Some of the great, humanistic catalysts in the world have been INFP's.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Introverted Feeling

Auxiliary: Extraverted Intuition

Tertiary: Introverted Sensing

Inferior: Extraverted Thinking

**INFP's generally have the following traits:**

- Strong value systems
- Warmly interested in people
- Service-oriented, usually putting the needs of others above their own
- Loyal and devoted to people and causes
- Future-oriented
- Growth-oriented; always want to be growing in a positive direction
- Creative and inspirational

- Flexible and laid-back, unless a ruling principle is violated
- Sensitive and complex
- Dislike dealing with details and routine work
- Original and individualistic - "out of the mainstream"
- Excellent written communication skills
- Prefer to work alone, and may have problems working on teams
- Value deep and authentic relationships
- Want to be seen and appreciated for who they are

The INFP is a special, sensitive individual who needs a career which is more than a job. The INFP needs to feel that everything they do in their lives is in accordance with their strongly-felt value systems, and is moving them and/or others in a positive, growth-oriented direction. They are driven to do something meaningful and purposeful with their lives. The INFP will be happiest in careers which allow them to live their daily lives in accordance with their values, and which work towards the greater good of humanity. It's worth mentioning that nearly all of the truly great writers in the world have been INFP's.

### **INFP Relationships**

INFP's present a calm, pleasant face to the world. They appear to be tranquil and peaceful to others, with simple desires. In fact, the INFP internally feels his or her life intensely. In the relationship arena, this causes them to have a very deep capacity for love and caring which is not frequently found with such intensity in the other types. The INFP does not devote their intense feelings towards just anyone, and are relatively reserved about expressing their inner-most feelings. They reserve their deepest love and caring for a select few who are closest to them. INFP's are generally laid-back, supportive and nurturing in their close relationships. With Introverted Feeling dominating their personality, they're very sensitive and in-tune with people's feelings, and feel genuine concern and caring for others. Slow to trust others and cautious in the beginning of a relationship, an INFP will be fiercely loyal once they are committed. With their strong inner core of values, they are intense individuals who value depth and authenticity in their relationships, and hold those who understand and accept the INFP's perspectives in especially high regard. INFP's are usually adaptable and congenial, unless one of their ruling principles has been violated, in which case they stop adapting and become staunch defenders of their values. They will be uncharacteristically harsh and rigid in such a situation.

### **INFP Strengths**

- Warmly concerned and caring towards others
- Sensitive and perceptive about what others are feeling
- Loyal and committed - they want lifelong relationships
- Deep capacity for love and caring
- Driven to meet other's needs
- Strive for "win-win" situations
- Nurturing, supportive and encouraging
- Likely to recognize and appreciate other's need for space



- Able to express themselves well
- Flexible and diverse

### **INFP Weaknesses**

Most INFP's will exhibit the following weaknesses with regards to relationship issues:

- May tend to be shy and reserved
- Don't like to have their "space" invaded
- Extreme dislike of conflict
- Extreme dislike of criticism
- Strong need to receive praise and positive affirmation
- May react very emotionally to stressful situations
- Have difficulty leaving a bad relationship
- Have difficulty scolding or punishing others
- Tend to be reserved about expressing their feelings
- Perfectionist tendencies may cause them to not give themselves enough credit
- Tendency to blame themselves for problems, and hold everything on their own shoulders

### **What does Success mean to an INFP?**

INFP's are creative, sensitive souls who take their lives very seriously. They seek harmony and authenticity in their relationships with others. They value creativity, spirituality, and honoring the individual self above all else. They are very tuned into inequity and unfairness against people, and get great satisfaction from conquering such injustices. An INFP is a perfectionist who will rarely allow themselves to feel successful, although they will be keenly aware of failures. INFP's also get satisfaction from being in touch with their creativity. For the INFP, personal success depends upon the condition of their closest relationships, the development of their creative abilities, and the continual support of humanity by serving people in need, fighting against injustice, or in some other way working to make the world a better place to be.

### **Allowing Your INFP Strengths to Flourish**

As an INFP, 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 INFP's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- Highly creative, artistic and spiritual, they can produce wonderful works of art, music and literature. INFP's are natural artists. They will find great satisfaction if they encourage and develop their artistic abilities. That doesn't mean that an INFP has to be a famous writer or painter in order to be content. Simply the act of "creating" will be a fulfilling source of renewal and refreshment to the INFP. An INFP should allow himself or herself some artistic outlet, because it will add enrichment and positive energy to their life.

- They're more spiritually aware than most people, and are more in touch with their soul than others. Most INFP's have strong Faith. Those that don't may feel as if they're missing something important. An INFP should nourish their faith.
- INFP's are very aware of social injustice, and empathize with the underdog. Their empathy for the underdog and hyper-awareness of social injustice makes them extremely compassionate and nurturing towards disadvantaged members of our society. INFP's will feel most useful and fulfilled when they are fighting to help people who have been misfortunate in our society. They may be teachers, ministers, writers, counselors or psychologists, but they will most likely all spend extra time trying to help people with special problems. An INFP can find a tremendous amount of satisfaction by enacting some kind of social change that will help the underdog.
- They're usually good listeners who genuinely want to hear about someone's problems, and genuinely want to help them. This makes them outstanding counselors, and good friends. An INFP may find great satisfaction from volunteering as a counselor.
- They accept and value people as individuals, and are strongly egalitarian. They believe that an individual has the right to be themselves, without having their attitudes and perspectives brought under scrutiny. Accordingly, they have a great deal of tolerance and acceptance dealing with people who might encounter negative judgment from society in general. They can see something positive in everyone. They believe in individuals. If they give themselves the opportunity, an INFP can become a much-needed source of self-esteem and confidence for people who cannot find it on their own. In this way, they can nurture a "sick soul" back to health.
- Usually deep and intelligent, they're able to grasp difficult concepts with relative ease. They usually do quite well academically, and will find that educating their minds nourishes their need to think deeply.

INFP's who have developed their Extraverted iNtuition to the extent that they can perceive the world about them objectively and quickly will find that they enjoy these very special gifts:

They will have a great deal of insight into people's characters. They will quickly and thoroughly understand where a person is coming from by assessing their motives and feelings. These well-developed INFP individuals make outstanding psychologists (such as Isabel Briggs Myers herself) and counselors. They might also be great fiction writers, because they're able to develop very complex, real characters.

They will quickly understand different situations, and quickly grasp new concepts. They will find that they're able to do anything that they put their mind to, although they may not find it personally satisfying. Things may seem to come easily to these INFP's. Although they're able to conquer many different kinds of tasks and situations, these INFP's will be happiest doing something that seems truly important to them. Although they may find that they can achieve the "mainstream" type of success with relative ease,

they are not likely to find happiness along that path, unless they are living their lives with authenticity and depth.

The INFP who augments their strong, internal value system (Introverted Feeling) with a well-developed intuitive way of perceiving the world (Extraverted iNtuition) can be a powerful force for social change. Their intense values and strong empathy for the underprivileged, combined with a reliable and deeply insightful understanding of the world that we live in, creates an individual with the power to make a difference (such as Mother Teresa - an INFP).

### **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.

INFP's are rare, intelligent, creative beings with many special gifts. I would like for the INFP to keep in mind some of the many positive things associated with being an INFP as they read some of this more negative material. Also remember that the weaknesses associated with being an INFP 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 INFP's are due to their dominant Feeling function overshadowing the rest of their personality. When the dominant function of Introverted Feeling overshadows everything else, the INFP can't use Extraverted iNtuition to take in information in a truly objective fashion. In such cases, an INFP may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- May be extremely sensitive to any kind of criticism
- May perceive criticism where none was intended
- May have skewed or unrealistic ideas about reality
- May be unable to acknowledge or hear anything that goes against their personal ideas and opinions
- May blame their problems on other people, seeing themselves as victims who are treated unfairly
- May have great anger, and show this anger with rash outpourings of bad temper
- May be unaware of appropriate social behavior
- May be oblivious to their personal appearance, or to appropriate dress
- May come across as eccentric, or perhaps even generally strange to others, without being aware of it
- May be unable to see or understand anyone else's point of view
- May value their own opinions and feelings far above others
- May be unaware of how their behavior affects others

- May be oblivious to other people's need
- May feel overwhelmed with tension and stress when someone expresses disagreement with the INFP, or disapproval of the INFP
- May develop strong judgments that are difficult to change against people who they perceive have been oppressive or suppressive to them
- Under great stress, may obsess about details that are unimportant to the big picture of things
- Under stress, may obsessively brood over a problem repeatedly
- May have unreasonable expectations of others
- May have difficulty maintaining close relationships, due to unreasonable expectations

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common INFP problem of only taking in data that justifies their personal opinions. INFP's are usually very intense and sensitive people, and feel seriously threatened by criticism. They are likely to treat any point of view other than their own as criticism of their own perspective. If the INFP does not learn how to deal with this perceived criticism, the INFP will begin to shut out the incoming information that causes them pain. This is a natural survivalist technique for the INFP personality. The main driver to the INFP personality is Introverted Feeling, whose purpose is to maintain and honor an intensely personal system of values and morals. If an INFP's personal value system is threatened by external influences, the INFP shuts out the threatening data in order to preserve and honor their value system. This is totally natural, and works well to protect the individual psyche from getting hurt. However, the INFP who exercises this type of self-protection regularly will become more and more unaware of other people's perspectives, and thus more and more isolated from a real understanding of the world that they live in. They will always find justification for their own inappropriate behaviors, and will always find fault with the external world for problems that they have in their lives. It will be difficult for them to maintain close personal relationships because they will have unreasonable expectations, and will be unable to accept blame.

It's not an uncommon tendency for the INFP to look to the external world primarily for information that will support their ideas and values. However, if this tendency is given free reign, the resulting INFP personality is too self-centered to be happy or successful. Since the INFP's dominant function to their personality is Introverted Feeling, they must balance this with an auxiliary Extraverted iNtuitive function. The INFP takes in information via Extraverted iNtuition. This is also the INFP's primary way of dealing with the external world. If the INFP uses Extraverted iNtuition only to serve the purposes of Introverted Feeling, then the INFP is not using Extraversion effectively at all. As a result, the INFP does not take in enough information about the external world to have a good sense of what's going on. They see nothing but their own perspective, and deal with the world only so far as they need to in order to support their perspective. These individuals usually come across as selfish and unrealistic. Depending on how serious the problem is, they may appear to be anything from "a bit eccentric" to "way out there". Many times other people are unable to understand or relate to these people.

## **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the INFP needs to focus on opening their perspective to include a more accurate picture of what is really going on in the world. In order to be in a position in which the INFP is able to perceive and consider data that is foreign to their internal value system, the INFP needs to know that its value system is not threatened by the new information. The INFP must consciously tell himself/herself that an opinion that does not concede with their own is not an indictment of their entire character.

The INFP who is concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to their motivation for taking in information. Do they take in information to better understand a situation or concept? Or, do they take in information to support a personal idea or cause? At the moment when something is perceived, is the INFP concerned with twisting that perception to fit in with their personal values? Or is she/he concerned with absorbing the information objectively? To achieve a better understanding of the external world, the INFP should try to perceive information objectively, before fitting it into their value system. They should consciously be aware of their tendency to discard anything that doesn't agree with their values, 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 iNtuition in a truly Extraverted sense. In other words, they should use iNtuition to take in information about the world around them for the sake of understanding the world, rather than take in information to support their own conclusions. The INFP who successfully perceives things objectively may be quite a powerful force for positive change.

## **Living Happily in our World as an INFP**

Some INFP's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are often a result of an unawareness of appropriate social behavior, an unawareness of how they come across to others, or unrealistic expectations of others. Any one of these three issues stem from using Extraverted iNtuition in a diminished manner. An INFP who takes in information for the sake of understanding the world around them, rather than one who takes in information only to support their own ideas, will have a clearer, more objective understanding of how society values social behaviors and attitudes. He or she will also be more aware of how they are perceived by others, and will have more realistic expectations for others' behavior within a relationship. Such well-adjusted INFP'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 iNtuition in an Extraverted direction. It's difficult to even understand what that means, much less to incorporate that directive into your life. With that in mind, I am providing some specific suggestions that may help you to begin exercising your Extraverted iNtuition more fully:

Take care to notice what people look like in different social situations. Look at their hair, their skin, their makeup (or lack thereof), their clothes, the condition of their clothes, their

shoes, their facial expressions. Don't compare others to your own appearance, or pass judgment on their appearance, simply take in the information.

Think of a situation in your life in which you weren't sure how to behave. Now try to understand how one or two other people would see the situation. Don't compare their behavior to your own, i.e. "she would know better than me what to do", or "why is it so easy for her, but so hard for me". Rather, try to understand how they would see the situation. Would it be seen as a problem, or as an opportunity? Would it be taken seriously or lightly? Try to determine their point of view without passing judgment or comparing it to your own.

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

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 things are they encountering, what thoughts are they having? Don't pass judgment, or compare their situation to your own.

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 INFP Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Encourage your natural artistic abilities and creativity. Nourish your spirituality. Give yourself opportunities to help the needy or underprivileged.
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 unexpressed emotions build up inside of you. If you have strong feelings, sort them out and express them, don't let them build up inside you to the point where they become unmanageable!
4. **Listen to Everything.** Try not to dismiss anything immediately. Let everything soak in for awhile, and then apply judgment.
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 YOU have more control over your life than any other person has.
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! Don't assume that the lack of feedback is the same thing as negative feedback. If you need feedback and don't have any, ask for it.

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

# **Portrait of an INTJ**

## **Introverted iNtuitive Thinking Judging**

### **(Introverted Intuition with Extraverted Thinking)**

#### *The Scientist*

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

INTJ's live in the world of ideas and strategic planning. They value intelligence, knowledge, and competence, and typically have high standards in these regards, which they continuously strive to fulfill. To a somewhat lesser extent, they have similar expectations of others.

With Introverted Intuition dominating their personality, INTJ's focus their energy on observing the world, and generating ideas and possibilities. Their mind constantly gathers information and makes associations about it. They are tremendously insightful and usually are very quick to understand new ideas. However, their primary interest is not understanding a concept, but rather applying that concept in a useful way. Unlike the INTP, they do not follow an idea as far as they possibly can, seeking only to understand it fully. INTJ's are driven to come to conclusions about ideas. Their need for closure and organization usually requires that they take some action.

INTJ's tremendous value and need for systems and organization, combined with their natural insightfulness, makes them excellent scientists. An INTJ scientist gives a gift to society by putting their ideas into a useful form for others to follow. It is not easy for the INTJ to express their internal images, insights, and abstractions. The internal form of the INTJ's thoughts and concepts is highly individualized, and is not readily translatable into a form that others will understand. However, the INTJ is driven to translate their ideas into a plan or system that is usually readily explainable, rather than to do a direct translation of their thoughts. They usually don't see the value of a direct transaction, and will also have difficulty expressing their ideas, which are non-linear. However, their extreme respect of knowledge and intelligence will motivate them to explain themselves to another person who they feel is deserving of the effort.

INTJ's are natural leaders, although they usually choose to remain in the background until they see a real need to take over the lead. When they are in leadership roles, they are quite effective, because they are able to objectively see the reality of a situation, and are adaptable enough to change things which aren't working well. They are the supreme strategists - always scanning available ideas and concepts and weighing them against their current strategy, to plan for every conceivable contingency.



INTJ's spend a lot of time inside their own minds, and may have little interest in the other people's thoughts or feelings. Unless their Feeling side is developed, they may have problems giving other people the level of intimacy that is needed. Unless their Sensing side is developed, they may have a tendency to ignore details which are necessary for implementing their ideas.

The INTJ's interest in dealing with the world is to make decisions, express judgments, and put everything that they encounter into an understandable and rational system. Consequently, they are quick to express judgments. Often they have very evolved intuitions, and are convinced that they are right about things. Unless they complement their intuitive understanding with a well-developed ability to express their insights, they may find themselves frequently misunderstood. In these cases, INTJ's tend to blame misunderstandings on the limitations of the other party, rather than on their own difficulty in expressing themselves. This tendency may cause the INTJ to dismiss others input too quickly, and to become generally arrogant and elitist.

INTJ's are ambitious, self-confident, deliberate, long-range thinkers. Many INTJ's end up in engineering or scientific pursuits, although some find enough challenge within the business world in areas which involve organizing and strategic planning. They dislike messiness and inefficiency, and anything that is muddled or unclear. They value clarity and efficiency, and will put enormous amounts of energy and time into consolidating their insights into structured patterns.

Other people may have a difficult time understanding an INTJ. They may see them as aloof and reserved. Indeed, the INTJ is not overly demonstrative of their affections, and is likely to not give as much praise or positive support as others may need or desire. That doesn't mean that he or she doesn't truly have affection or regard for others, they simply do not typically feel the need to express it. Others may falsely perceive the INTJ as being rigid and set in their ways. Nothing could be further from the truth, because the INTJ is committed to always finding the objective best strategy to implement their ideas. The INTJ is usually quite open to hearing an alternative way of doing something.

When under a great deal of stress, the INTJ may become obsessed with mindless repetitive, senseless activities, such as over-drinking. They may also tend to become absorbed with minutia and details that they would not normally consider important to their overall goal.

INTJ's need to remember to express themselves sufficiently, so as to avoid difficulties with people misunderstandings. In the absence of properly developing their communication abilities, they may become abrupt and short with people, and isolationists.

INTJ's have a tremendous amount of ability to accomplish great things. They have insight into the Big Picture, and are driven to synthesize their concepts into solid plans of action. Their reasoning skills give them the means to accomplish that. INTJ's are most always highly competent people, and will not have a problem meeting their career or

education goals. They have the capability to make great strides in these arenas. On a personal level, the INTJ who practices tolerances and puts effort into effectively communicating their insights to others has everything in his or her power to lead a rich and rewarding life.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Introverted Intuition

Auxiliary: Extraverted Thinking

Tertiary: Introverted Feeling

Inferior: Extraverted Sensing

**INTJ's generally have the following traits:**

- Able to absorb extremely complex theoretical and complex material
- Driven to create order and structure from theoretical abstractions
- Supreme strategists
- Future-oriented
- See the global, "big picture"
- Strong insights and intuitions, which they trust implicitly
- Value their own opinions over others
- Love difficult theoretical challenges
- Bored when dealing with mundane routine
- Value knowledge and efficiency
- Have no patience with inefficiency and confusion
- Have very high standards for performance, which they apply to themselves most strongly
- Reserved and detached from others
- Calm, collected and analytical
- Extremely logical and rational
- Original and independent
- Natural leaders, but will follow those they can fully support
- Creative, ingenious, innovative, and resourceful
- Work best alone, and prefer to work alone

More so than any other personality type, INTJ's are brilliant when it comes to grasping complex theories and applying them to problems to come up with long-term strategies. Since this type of "strategizing" is the central focus and drive of the INTJ, there is a happy match between desire and ability in this type. Accordingly, the INTJ is happiest and most effective in careers which allow this type of processing, and which promote an environment in which the INTJ is given a lot of autonomy over their daily lives.

**INTJ Relationships**

INTJ's believe in constant growth in relationships, and strive for independence for themselves and their mates. They are constantly embarking on "fix-up" projects to improve the overall quality of their lives and relationships. They take their commitments seriously, but are open to redefining their vows, if they see something which may prove

to be an improvement over the existing understanding. INTJ's are not likely to be "touchy-feely" and overly affirming with their mates or children, and may at times be somewhat insensitive to their emotional needs. However, INTJ's are in general extremely capable and intelligent individuals who strive to always be their best, and be moving in a positive direction. If they apply these basic goals to their personal relationships, they likely to enjoy happy and healthy interaction with their families and friends.

### **INTJ Strengths**

- Not threatened by conflict or criticism
- Usually self-confident
- Take their relationships and commitments seriously
- Generally extremely intelligent and capable
- Able to leave a relationship which should be ended, although they may dwell on it in their minds for awhile afterwards
- Interested in "optimizing" their relationships
- Good listeners

### **INTJ Weaknesses**

- Not naturally in tune with others feelings; may be insensitive at times
- May tend to respond to conflict with logic and reason, rather than the desired emotional support
- Not naturally good at expressing feelings and affections
- Tendency to believe that they're always right
- Tendency to be unwilling or unable to accept blame
- Their constant quest to improve everything may be taxing on relationships
- Tend to hold back part of themselves

### **What does Success mean to an INTJ?**

People with the INTJ personality type are serious, analytical and often perfectionist. They look at a problem or idea from multiple perspectives and systematically analyze it with objective logic, discarding things that turn out to be problematic, and evolving their own understanding of something when new information turns out to be useful. There is no other personality type who does this as naturally as the INTJ. They are natural scientists and mathematicians. Once given an idea, they are driven to understand it as thoroughly as possible. They usually have very high standards for their own understanding and accomplishments, and generally will only value and consider other individuals who have shown that they meet or surpass the INTJ's own understanding on a given issue. INTJ's value clarity and conciseness, and have little esteem for behaviors and attitudes that are purely social. Social "niceties" often seem unnecessary and perhaps even not genuine to the INTJ, who is always seeking to improve their substantive understanding. INTJ's highly value social interaction that is centered around the meaningful exchange of ideas, but they usually dismiss the importance of being friendly or likeable in other social contexts, and they are likely to be uncomfortable with interactions that are primarily emotional, rather than logical. INTJ's value structure, order, knowledge, competence, and logic. Above all, they value their own ideas and intuitions about the world. An INTJ's feeling of success depends primarily upon their own level of understanding and

accomplishment, but also depends upon the level of structure in their life, and their ability to respect the intelligence and competence of those who share their life.

### **Allowing Your INTJ Strengths to Flourish**

As an INTJ, 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 INTJ's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

The INTJ's mind is naturally geared towards systematically analyzing information from many contextual perspectives, and rejecting or retaining information as they become aware of its usefulness or validity. They probably do very well in school, and in any pursuit that requires serious analytical thinking.

They're extremely insightful, and see things that are not obvious to others. This ability to see patterns and meanings in the world can help the INTJ in many different ways.

When given a goal or context, an INTJ is able to generate all kinds of possibilities. They're able to see the problem from many different angles, and come up with a solution that fits the needs of the current situation.

They don't take criticism personally, and are open to changing their opinions when they're shown a better idea or better way of doing something.

An INTJ has a "stick to it" attitude. They're not afraid of hard work, and will put forth a great deal of effort towards something that they are interested in. This persistence will help the INTJ to achieve any identified goal.

Usually intelligent and able to concentrate and focus, the INTJ can usually grasp difficult ideas and concepts.

INTJ's who have a well-developed Extraverted Thinking function to complement their dominant Introverted iNtuition will enjoy these very special gifts:

They can discriminate well amongst their intuitions and build ingenious systems to meet identified goals, or determine a successful plan of action to meet an identified need. In such a way, they may be brilliant scientists, doctors, mathematicians, or corporate strategists.

Their deep understanding, logical abilities, and persistence may enable them to make discoveries or uncover new ways of looking at something. In such a way, they may perform a great service to society. For example, an INTJ is the likely personality type to discover the cure for cancer.

The INTJ with well-developed judgment will be able to grasp and process concepts that are beyond what their natural intelligence appears to be able to handle.

If they have achieved a good amount of life wisdom, an INTJ can become a powerful political force.

### **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.

INTJ's are rare and intelligent people with many special gifts. This should be kept in mind as you read some of the more negative material about INTJ weaknesses. Remember that these weaknesses are natural. We offer this information to enact positive change, rather than as blatant criticism. We want you to grow into your full potential, and be the happiest and most successful person that you can become.

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

- May be unaware (and sometimes uncaring) of how they come across to others
- May quickly dismiss input from others without really considering it
- May apply their judgment more often towards others, rather than towards themselves
- With their ability to see an issue from many sides, they may always find others at fault for problems in their own lives
- May look at external ideas and people with the primary purpose of finding fault
- May take pride in their ability to be critical and find fault in people and things
- May have unrealistic and/or unreasonable expectations of others
- May be intolerant of weaknesses in others
- May believe that they're always right
- May be cuttingly derisive and sarcastic towards others
- May have an intense and quick temper
- May hold grudges, and have difficulty forgiving people
- May be wishy-washy and unsure how to act in situations that require quick decision making
- May have difficulty communicating their thoughts and feelings to others
- May see so many tangents everywhere that they can't stay focused on the bottom line or the big picture

## **Explanation of Problems**

Most of the problems described above are a result of Introverted iNtuition overtaking the INTJ's personality to the point that all of the other functions become slaves to Introverted iNtuition. A healthy personality needs to have a good balance between its dominant and auxiliary functions. For an INTJ, the dominant Introverted iNtuition needs to be well-supported by the auxiliary Extraverted Thinking function. If Extraverted Thinking exists only to support the desires of Introverted iNtuition, then neither function is being used to its potential.

Introverted iNtuition is a personality function that constantly gathers information, and sees everything from many different perspectives. As the dominant player in a personality, it has the effect of constantly bombarding the psyche with new information to consider. Introverted iNtuition is sort of like a framework for understanding that exists in the mind. As something is perceived, it is melded into the existing intuitive framework. If an entirely new piece of information is perceived by the Introverted iNtuitive, that person must redefine their entire framework of reference. So, Introverted iNtuitives are constantly taking in information about the world that needs to be processed in a relatively lengthy manner in order to be understood. That presents quite a challenge to the INTJ. It's not unusual for an INTJ to feel overwhelmed with all of the things that he or she needs to consider in order to fully understand an idea or situation.

When Introverted iNtuition dominates the INTJ such that the other functions cannot serve their own purposes, we find the INTJ cutting off information that it needs to consider. If the psyche is presented with information that looks anything like something that Introverted iNtuition has processed in the past, it uses Extraverted Thinking to quickly reject that information. The psyche uses Extraverted Thinking to reject the ideas, rather than analyzing the information within its intuitive framework, and therefore reduces the likelihood that the framework will have to be reshaped and redefined.

Using Extraverted Thinking in this manner serves the INTJ's psyche in two ways: 1) it saves it the energy that would have to be expended to truly consider new information, and 2) it protects the INTJ's sacred inner world. In either case, it is not ideal. It causes the INTJ to not consider information that may be useful or critical in developing a real understanding of an issue. It also probably causes the INTJ to come off as too strongly opinionated or snobbish to others.

The better use of Extraverted Thinking for an INTJ would be to use it to assess the INTJ's rich insights and weigh them against the external world. When the INTJ personality uses Extraverted Thinking to cut off incoming information, rather than to judge internal intuitions, it is effectively cheating itself. It's like getting the answers to a test without having to really understand the questions. It's easier to get the answer right away, rather than to have to figure everything out. For the INTJ, who has a tremendous amount of information and "studying" that needs to be done, it's very tempting to take shortcuts. Most INTJ's will do this to some extent. The real problems occur when an INTJ personality has become so imbalanced that its owner is extremely self-important and rarely consider anyone else's opinions or ideas.

## **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the INTJ needs to focus on applying their judgment to things only after they have gone through their intuition. In other words, the INTJ needs to consciously try not to use their judgment to dismiss ideas prematurely. Rather, they should use their judgment against their own ideas. One cannot effectively judge something that they don't understand. The INTJ needs to take things entirely into their intuition in order to understand them. It may be necessary to give your intuition enough time to work through the new information so that it can rebuild its global framework of understanding. INTJ's need to focus on using their judgment not to dismiss ideas, but rather to support their intuitive framework.

An INTJ who is concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to the subject of their judgments, and their motivation for making judgments. Are they judging something external to themselves, or are they judging something that they have sifted through their intuition? Is the motivation for judging something to be able to understand its usefulness in the world, or to dismiss it? Too often, an INTJ will judge something without properly understanding it, and with the intention of dismissing it. Seek first to understand, then to judge.

## **Living Happily in our World as an INTJ**

Some INTJ's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are generally associated with not knowing (or caring) how they come across to others, with having unreasonable expectations for others' behaviors, and with not putting forth effort to meet others' emotional needs. These issues stem primarily from the common INTJ habit of using Extraverted Thinking to find fault externally, rather than internally, and therefore diminish the importance of the external world, and increase the importance of the INTJ's own internal world. INTJ's who recognize that their knowledge and understanding (and therefore general happiness and feeling of success) can be enriched by the synergy of other people's knowledge and understanding will find that they can be committed to their rich internal worlds and still have satisfying relationships with others. In order to accomplish this, the INTJ needs to recognize the importance of extraversion, and develop their highest extraverted function, Extraverted Thinking.

An INTJ who uses Extraverted Thinking to find fault externally rather than internally may become so strongly opinionated that they form rigid and unreasonable expectations for others. Their hyper-vigilant judgments about the rationality and competence of others may be a very effective way of keeping themselves at an emotional distance from others. This will preserve the sanctity of the INTJ's inner world of ideas, but will reduce a lot of valuable input, arrest the development of their social character, and stagnate the development of the INTJ's rich structural framework of understanding. In extreme cases, the INTJ may find himself or herself quite alone and lonely.

More commonly, an INTJ's interpersonal problems will occur when they express their displeasure to those close to them in very biting and hurtful terms. Everyone needs emotional distance at one time or another and the INTJ wants more than most types.

Perhaps this is why INTJ's are famous for their biting sarcasm. An INTJ's internal world is extremely important to them. They may be protecting their internal world by using sarcasm to keep others at an emotional distance, or they may be sarcastic with others because they believe that they have the more evolved and logical understanding of the issue at hand, and seek to cut off the spurious input that they're receiving. This is an important distinction to recognize. An INTJ who is seeking an emotional respite can find ways to be alone that don't require injuring feelings and damaging relationships. When distance is required, the INTJ should just "leave". If an explanation is necessary, an INTJ should use their Extraverted Thinking to explain their need rationally and objectively, rather than using Extraverted Thinking to insult the other person, and therefore prod them into leaving.

### **Specific suggestions:**

Take care to listen to someone's idea entirely before you pass judgment on it. Ask questions if necessary. Do whatever it takes to make sure that you understand the idea. Try not to begin judging anything about the idea until you have understood it entirely.

Before you begin talking to another person, pause for a moment and look at that person. Take in that person's attitude and feelings at that moment. Be aware of the person with whom you're speaking.

If you become upset, walk away immediately. DO NOT express anger. When you get angry, you lose. After you have calmed down, apologize for leaving and continue with what you were doing.

Try to identify the personality type of everyone that you encounter frequently in your life. Remember that people with the Sensing preference need to be communicated with in a direct, concise manner. Speak plainly and simply with Sensors, giving "yes" or "no" answers.

Try to be on good terms with all people, even those that you consider beneath you. Try to understand that everybody has something to offer.

When you make judgments or decisions, try to be aware of your motivation for making the judgment. Are you more interested in finding fault externally, or in improving your own understanding? Seek first to understand, and then to judge.

### **Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve INTJ Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Do things that allow your brilliant intuition and logical abilities to flourish. Explore the fascinating worlds of science, mathematics, law and medicine. Give your mind an outlet for its exceptional analytical abilities, and watch them grow.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** See your weaknesses for what they are, and seek to overcome them. Especially, strive to use your judgment against your internal ideas and intuitions, rather than as a means of disregarding other people's ideas.



3. **Talk Through Your Thoughts.** You need to step through your intuitions in order to put them into perspective. Give yourself time to do this, and take advantage of discussing ideas with others. You'll find externalizing your internal intuitions to be a valuable exercise. If you don't have someone to discuss your ideas with, try expressing your ideas clearly in writing.
4. **Take in Everything.** Don't dismiss ideas prematurely because you don't respect the person generating the ideas, or because you think you already know it all. After all, everybody has something to offer, and nobody knows everything. Steven Covey says it so well when he says: "Seek first to understand, and then to be understood."
5. **When You Get Angry, You Lose.** Your passion and intensity are strong assets, but can be very harmful if you allow yourself to fall into the "Anger Trap". Remember that Anger is destructive to your personal relationships. Work through your anger before you impress it upon others, or you will likely find yourself alone. Disagreements and disappointments can only be handled effectively in a non-personal and dispassionate manner.
6. **Respect your Need for Intellectual Compatibility** Don't expect yourself to be a "touchy-feely" or "warm-fuzzy" person. Realize that your most ardent bonds with others will start with the head, rather than the heart. Be aware of other's emotional needs, and express your genuine love and respect for them in terms that are real to YOU. Be yourself.
7. **Be Accountable for Yourself.** Don't blame the problems in your life on other people. Look inwardly for solutions. No one has more control over your life than you have.
8. **Be Humble.** Judge yourself at least as harshly as you judge others.
9. **Assume the Best.** Don't distress yourself and others by dwelling on the dark side of everything. Just as there is a positive charge for every negative charge, there is a light side to every dark side. Remember that positive situations are created by positive attitudes. Expect the best, and the best will come forward.
10. **Don't Get Isolated!** Recognize the value that the external world represents to you, and interact with it in the style that's natural to you. Join clubs and internet e-mail lists that house in-depth discussions of topics that you're interested in. Seek and foster friendships with others of like competence and capacity for understanding. Extravert in your own style.

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

# **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 be 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 is 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.*

# **Portrait of an ISFJ**

## **Introverted Sensing Feeling Judging**

### **(Introverted Sensing with Extraverted Feeling)**

#### *The Nurturer*

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

ISFJ's live in a world that is concrete and kind. They are truly warm and kind-hearted, and want to believe the best of people. They value harmony and cooperation, and are likely to be very sensitive to other people's feelings. People value the ISFJ for their consideration and awareness, and their ability to bring out the best in others by their firm desire to believe the best.

ISFJ's have a rich inner world that is not usually obvious to observers. They constantly take in information about people and situations that is personally important to them, and store it away. This tremendous store of information is usually startlingly accurate, because the ISFJ has an exceptional memory about things that are important to their value systems. It would not be uncommon for the ISFJ to remember a particular facial expression or conversation in precise detail years after the event occurred, if the situation made an impression on the ISFJ.

ISFJ's have a very clear idea of the way things should be, which they strive to attain. They value security and kindness, and respect traditions and laws. They tend to believe that existing systems are there because they work. Therefore, they're not likely to buy into doing things in a new way, unless they're shown in a concrete way why it's better than the established method.

ISFJ's learn best by doing, rather than by reading about something in a book, or applying theory. For this reason, they are not likely to be found in fields which require a lot of conceptual analysis or theory. They value practical application. Traditional methods of higher education, which require a lot of theorizing and abstraction, are likely to be a chore for the ISFJ. The ISFJ learns a task best by being shown its practical application. Once the task is learned, and its practical importance is understood, the ISFJ will faithfully and tirelessly carry through the task to completion. The ISFJ is extremely dependable.

The ISFJ has an extremely well-developed sense of space, function, and aesthetic appeal. For that reason, they're likely to have beautifully furnished, functional homes. They make extremely good interior decorators. This special ability, combined with their sensitivity to

other's feelings and desires, makes them very likely to be great gift-givers - finding the right gift which will be truly appreciated by the recipient.

More so than other types, ISFJ's are extremely aware of their own internal feelings, as well as other people's feelings. They do not usually express their own feelings, keeping things inside. If they are negative feelings, they may build up inside the ISFJ until they turn into firm judgments against individuals which are difficult to change, once set. Many ISFJ's learn to express themselves, and find outlets for their powerful emotions.

Just as the ISFJ is not likely to express their feelings, they are also not likely to let on that they know how others are feeling. However, they will speak up when they feel another individual really needs help, and in such cases they can truly help others become aware of their feelings.

The ISFJ feels a strong sense of responsibility and duty. They take their responsibilities very seriously, and can be counted on to follow through. For this reason, people naturally tend to rely on them. The ISFJ has a difficult time saying "no" when asked to do something, and may become over-burdened. In such cases, the ISFJ does not usually express their difficulties to others, because they intensely dislike conflict, and because they tend to place other people's needs over their own. The ISFJ needs to learn to identify, value, and express their own needs, if they wish to avoid becoming over-worked and taken for granted.

ISFJ's need positive feedback from others. In the absence of positive feedback, or in the face of criticism, the ISFJ gets discouraged, and may even become depressed. When down on themselves or under great stress, the ISFJ begins to imagine all of the things that might go critically wrong in their life. They have strong feelings of inadequacy, and become convinced that "everything is all wrong", or "I can't do anything right".

The ISFJ is warm, generous, and dependable. They have many special gifts to offer, in their sensitivity to others, and their strong ability to keep things running smoothly. They need to remember to not be overly critical of themselves, and to give themselves some of the warmth and love which they freely dispense to others.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Introverted Sensing

Auxiliary: Extraverted Feeling

Tertiary: Introverted Thinking

Inferior: Extraverted Intuition

**ISFJ's generally have the following traits:**

- Large, rich inner store of information which they gather about people
- Highly observant and aware of people's feelings and reactions
- Excellent memory for details which are important to them
- Very in-tune with their surroundings - excellent sense of space and function
- Can be depended on to follow things through to completion

- Will work long and hard to see that jobs get done
- Stable, practical, down-to-earth - they dislike working with theory and abstract thought
- Dislike doing things which don't make sense to them
- Value security, tradition, and peaceful living
- Service-oriented: focused on what people need and want
- Kind and considerate
- Likely to put others' needs above their own
- Learn best with hands-on training
- Enjoy creating structure and order
- Take their responsibilities seriously
- Extremely uncomfortable with conflict and confrontation

ISFJ's have two basic traits which help define their best career direction: 1) they are extremely interested and in-tune with how other people are feeling, and 2) they enjoy creating structure and order, and are extremely good at it. Ideally, the ISFJ will choose a career in which they can use their exceptional people-observation skills to determine what people want or need, and then use their excellent organizational abilities to create a structured plan or environment for achieving what people want. Their excellent sense of space and function combined with their awareness of aesthetic quality also gives them quite special abilities in the more practical artistic endeavors, such as interior decorating and clothes design.

### **ISFJ Relationships**

ISFJ's place a great deal of importance on their personal relationships. They're generally very giving and loving people, who place the needs of others above their own. They sometimes have a problem with becoming overly emotionally needy, and with keeping their true feelings hidden from others. They take their commitments very seriously, and seek lifelong relationships. ISFJ's are extremely dependable, and put forth a lot of energy into keeping things running smoothly. They sometimes have difficulty saying "no" when asked to do something, and therefore may be taken for granted.

### **ISFJ Strengths**

- Warm, friendly and affirming by nature
- Service-oriented, wanting to please others
- Good listeners
- Will put forth lots of effort to fulfill their duties and obligations
- Excellent organizational capabilities
- Good at taking care of practical matters and daily needs
- Usually good (albeit conservative) at handling money
- Take their commitments seriously, and seek lifelong relationships

### **ISFJ Weaknesses**

- Don't pay enough attention to their own needs
- May have difficulty branching out into new territory

- Extreme dislike of conflict and criticism
- Unlikely to express their needs, which may cause pent-up frustrations to build inside
- Have difficulty leaving a bad relationship
- Have difficulty moving on after the end of a relationship

### **What does Success mean to an ISFJ?**

ISFJ's are the homemakers, caretakers and facilitators of the world. Their strong sense of duty, hard-working tendencies and ability to respond quickly to what is suitable to a particular situation are great assets. With a dominant function that quickly grasps the qualities inherent within the external world, and a secondary function that weighs such perceptions against their value within this world, the ISFJ has a great talent for discovering the aesthetic and essential qualities compatible with and relevant to a particular real world situation. This means that, not only within the world of objects, but also in their relationships with people, ISFJ's are gifted with the ability to recognize and understand the comfort and surroundings suitable to a secure and pleasing existence. And they can do this with a decisiveness which might make others wonder if the ISFJ was not in fact getting their answers from some form of intuitive understanding rather than what is really a vast library of carefully related memory images and value judgments. An ISFJ will always feel best when their world a place of quality and reassurance, both for themselves and others. Success for an ISFJ means being able to fulfill a role providing value for others and ordering their world in a way in which safety and security is balanced against a genuine respect for the aesthetic and positive qualities of life.

### **Allowing Your ISFJ Strengths to Flourish**

As an ISFJ, 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 ISFJ's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- You are adept at seeing the right balance, the best way to make the world look and feel good. This talent enables you to make your world reflect your inner self and become a place of security and growth in which others can feel at ease too.
- You have a gift for knowing what will make another person feel better about the world and themselves. Your valuable input to their world comes back to you in ways which aid your own personal development.
- You see clearly what is right and wrong, what grates on yourself and others, what works for harmony and what does not. Your clear recognition of these things gains you the confidence and respect of others.
- You have a great memory for things, places and events, their curious details and the relationships between them. More than this, you also remember what was both good and bad about these things. These skills show in your ability to give no nonsense advice and aid to others



- Within yourself you know, even if others do not realize it, that for as long as they are trying to do their best, you will hold the line with them to the very end. You see this as simply doing the right thing, but in fact it is a special virtue and makes you one of the most worthy of partners and friends when the chips are down.
- You work hard to get the job done, and you can be counted on to stay with it till it is finished.

ISFJ's who have a strongly expressed Extraverted Feeling function will find they also enjoy these very special gifts:

- Work is never a chore to you, but a gift you offer to the world.
- In your relationships you are able to clearly show others how you feel about them.
- Others will always feel at ease in your home and presence.
- Your efforts always seem to be appreciated by those around you.
- You will try to find pleasing ways to settle differences and to find the most satisfying solutions to both your own and others difficulties.
- More often than not, you will know exactly the right thing to do, say, buy or create to make things better or move things toward a valid human solution to a problem
- You will clearly see the conditions underlying a situation and their effects on the persons within it, enabling you to see ways of changing things for the better. In this sense, you may be a powerful agent for social justice.

### **Potential Problem Areas**

With any gift of strength, there is an associated weakness. The strong expression of any function can overshadow others, whilst at the same time its own associated and unexpressed inferior function can mine the unconscious mind and throw up annoying resistances and unsettling emotions. We value our strengths, but we often curse and - even more limiting to our potential development - 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.

ISFJ's are kind, steady and responsible beings with many special gifts. I would like for the ISFJ to keep in mind some of the many positive things associated with being an ISFJ as they read some of this more negative material. Also remember that the weaknesses associated with being an ISFJ 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.

Many of the weaker characteristics that are found in ISFJ's are due to their dominant and Introverted Sensing function overshadowing the rest of their personality. This generally results in two notable effects: their Extraverted Feeling function is unable to balance their sharply rendered inner perceptions with a sense of human value, whilst at the same time these very perceptions often hint at strange associations and consequences which seem always to hover darkly in the background of the world

In such cases, an ISFJ may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- May find difficulty expressing their feelings without fear or anger.
- May be unable to correctly judge what really is for the best
- May wrongly suspect others of having hidden motives or agendas
- May be unable to shrug off feelings impending disaster
- May be unable to acknowledge or hear anything that goes against their certainty about the “correct” or “right” way to do things
- May have a tendency to blame particular persons for disturbing or upsetting “their world” by simply being who they are
- May come across to others as cold and insensitive to anything but another’s ability to fit in with and support their own judgments
- May be unnecessarily harsh or strict about appropriate social behavior
- May be oblivious to what others think about them
- May come across as rigid, inflexible or even cold and uncaring to others, without being aware of it
- May be unable to understand verbal logic, and quickly cut off other’s explanations
- May value their own certainties about the world and its problems far above others
- May be quite falsely certain of their influence upon, and understanding of others
- May be extremely vulnerable to tricks, con men, false hopes, religious cults and conspiracy theories
- May react with anger or distress when someone expresses disagreement with their view of the world, or disapproval of their judgments
- May favor their judgments to the degree that they are unable to notice the pain or difficulty such judgments might cause others
- Under great stress, are likely to make outrageously harsh and uncaringly selfish survival oriented decisions

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the ISFJ’s internally mapped and abstract view of the world not being successfully coupled to an appropriate level of Extroverted feeling. Without this rational external balance, the ISFJ’s opposing unconscious functions can wreak havoc upon the order and sense of the ISFJ’s perceptions and ideas. ISFJ’s are usually stable, certain, reliable and deft in their approach to life. But if unbalanced, they are likely to treat any point of view other than their own with a kind of cold dismay, and if pressed hard will tend to shut out the existence of problems caused by others differing attitudes and opinions. If the ISFJ does not learn how to deal with the wide range of differing world views they come into contact with, they can find themselves closed into a lonely little corner of the world in which only their own feelings of safety and certainty are maintained. This is a natural survival technique for the extreme ISFJ personality.

The main driver to the ISFJ personality is Introverted Sensing, whose function is to define the properties of and locate and recognize the sometimes abstract and innate qualities of and between the objects of the outer world. If an ISFJ's picture of the world is threatened by external influences, the ISFJ generally tries to shut such new information out of their lives. This is totally natural, and works well to protect the individual psyche from getting hurt. However, the ISFJ who exercises this type of self-protection regularly will become closed within a small and ever decreasing circle of those family and friends who do not actively disturb their increasingly narrow and rigid world view. They will always find justification for their own inappropriate behaviors, and will always find fault with the outside world for problems that they have in their lives. It will be difficult for them to maintain close personal relationships because they will have a negatively polarized and therefore limited ability to communicate outside of the box of their own security needs.

It is not an uncommon tendency for the ISFJ to support their ideas and values by using only the value judgments they make about the world and other peoples behavior. However, if this tendency is given free reign, the resulting ISFJ personality is too self-centered to be happy or successful. Since the ISFJ's dominant function is Introverted Sensing, they must balance this with an auxiliary Extraverted Feeling function. If the ISFJ uses Extraverted Feeling only to serve the purposes of Introverted Sensing, then the ISFJ is not using Extraversion effectively at all. As a result, the ISFJ does not sufficiently recognize and sympathize with the way feelings affect the behavior of others in the world to have a good sense of why things happen as they do. They see nothing but their own perspective, and deal with the world only so far as they need to in order to support their perspective. These individuals usually come across as somewhat judgmental and full of fixed and often rather ambiguously polarized ideas about the world. Other people are often surprised by the vehemence of their ideas and are usually unable to understand how they came by them.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ISFJ needs to focus on opening their perspective to include a more accurate picture of the feelings and value judgments of others. In order to be in a position in which the ISFJ is able to perceive and consider data that is foreign to their internal value system, the ISFJ needs to recognize that their world view is not threatened by the new information. The ISFJ must consciously tell himself/herself that emotional affects in others are not unrelated to reality; that the feelings of others are also just and valid within a wider and less rigorous vision of the world.

The ISFJ who is concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to their motivation for deciding what is good and bad, right and wrong. Do they try to find the feeling values of others in a situation? Or, do they value only those feelings which support a personal idea or cause? At the moment when something is felt, is the ISFJ only concerned with whether that feeling supports something they recognize as correct? Or is she/he concerned with becoming truly empathetic? To achieve a better understanding of others and the world in which they live, the ISFJ should try to put themselves into the minds of others, to locate and recognize how they have come to feel the way they do,

before making judgments. They should consciously be aware of their tendency to discard anything that doesn't agree with their carefully ordered concepts, and work towards lessening this tendency. They should try to feel the way others would feel in situations, without making personal judgments about the actual situations. In general, they should work on exercising their Feeling in a truly extraverted sense. In other words, they should use Feeling to locate their true connections to and relationship with others for the sake of gaining a wider perspective, rather than only allowing such feeling values to support their own conclusions. The ISFJ who successfully feels things objectively may be quite a powerful force for positive change.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ISFJ**

Some ISFJ's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are often a result of an inability to flow with what is, a too negative or correcting attitude which dismays others, or unrealistic ideals and ideas about the world. These issues mostly stem from using Extraverted Feeling in a diminished manner: the lack of a strong externally focused value system allowing an often ambiguous and yet strongly defended world view which has little relation to concrete reality to control the personality. An ISFJ who attempts to feel and value the feelings of others for the sake of understanding the world around them, rather than quickly deciding how they and they alone feel, will have a clearer, more objective understanding of how society is dependant not only upon structure and correct behavior, but also how human values make it just what it is and not something else perhaps more desirable. He or she will also be more comfortable and less likely to demand that the world and the behavior of others conform to some abstract code of being. Such well-adjusted ISFJ'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 unambiguous and totally extraverted direction. It's difficult to even understand what that means, much less to incorporate that directive into your life. With that in mind, I am providing some specific suggestions that may help you to begin exercising your Extraverted Feeling more fully:

Take care to try and discover why others feel the way they do. Try to notice the connections between their feelings and the way they see the world. Don't immediately compare your own value judgments about the world to theirs; simply accept that for them this is a real and perfectly valid way of responding.

Think of those times and situations in your life when you felt misunderstood or disregarded by others. Now try to understand how one or two other people would see the situation. Don't try to assume they would judge as you do: "she would have to feel the same way if that happened to her", or "he would change his tune if he saw things from my point of view". Rather, try to understand how they would truly see the situation. Would it be seen as a problem, or as an opportunity? Would it be taken seriously or lightly? Try to determine their point of view without passing judgment or comparing it to your own.

When having a conversation with a friend or relative, dedicate at least half of your time to finding out how the other person feels about what they are describing. Concentrate on

really sensing their emotional state. Tell them how you feel and compare. Ask questions about why they feel as they do.

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 feeling right now. What emotions are they enacting, what thoughts are they having? Don't pass judgment, or compare their situation to your own.

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 ISFJ Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Let your talent for recognizing harmony and balance spill out into the world around you, show your gifts to the world. Allow yourself to take opportunities to design, reorganize and rebalance things to make your home and work environments better for yourself and others. Find work or a hobby which allows you to realize these strengths.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** Realize and accept that some things are never going to be how you would like them to be. Understand that other peoples feelings are sometimes more important than whether they are right or wrong. Facing and dealing with discord or differences in others doesn't mean that you have to change who you are; it means that you are giving yourself opportunities to grow. By facing your weaknesses, you honor your true self and that of others.
3. **Discover the World of Others.** Don't let yourself fall into the trap of thinking you always know what is right for others. Open your heart to the possibility of understanding that their true needs are something that must be discovered through relationship, and recognition that their world might be very different, yet just as valid as your own.
4. **Don't be too hasty.** Try to let things settle before you make a judgment, allowing others to discover the best for themselves while you feel your way into their way of seeing things.
5. **Look Carefully at the World.** Remember, things are not always what they seem on the surface. You might need to look deeper to discover the truth, particularly when it seems you are sure of your first quick judgment. There are layers of meaning and truth beneath everything.
6. **Try to Let Others Take Some of the Load.** By letting others help, you are not letting things get out of control, but are validating their own need to be a part of your life. Remember, it is better to guide another to see your point of view than keeping them out of the picture.
7. **Be Accountable to Others.** Remember that they need to understand you and your needs too. Express your feelings and reasons and let them become partners to your goals.
8. **Don't Hem Yourself in.** Staying in your comfort zone is self defeating in the end. Try to make every day one where you get out and discover a little

something different about the world and others. This will broaden your horizons and bring new ideas and opportunities into focus.

9. Assume the Best and Seek for it. Don't wait for others to live up to your expectations. Every person has a goldmine of worth in them, just as every situation can be turned to some good. If you let yourself believe this, you will find yourself discovering ways to make it true for you.
10. When in Doubt, Ask For Help! Don't let your sense of self sufficiency leave you on the horns of a dilemma or lead you into disaster. If you are uncertain of something or someone then get input from others you trust.

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

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

## *The Artist*

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

ISFP's live in the world of sensation possibilities. They are keenly in tune with the way things look, taste, sound, feel and smell. They have a strong aesthetic appreciation for art, and are likely to be artists in some form, because they are unusually gifted at creating and composing things which will strongly affect the senses. They have a strong set of values, which they strive to consistently meet in their lives. They need to feel as if they're living their lives in accordance with what they feel is right, and will rebel against anything which conflicts with that goal. They're likely to choose jobs and careers which allow them the freedom of working towards the realization of their value-oriented personal goals.

ISFP's tend to be quiet and reserved, and difficult to get to know well. They hold back their ideas and opinions except from those who they are closest to. They are likely to be kind, gentle and sensitive in their dealings with others. They are interested in contributing to people's sense of well-being and happiness, and will put a great deal of effort and energy into tasks which they believe in.

ISFP's have a strong affinity for aesthetics and beauty. They're likely to be animal lovers, and to have a true appreciation for the beauties of nature. They're original and independent, and need to have personal space. They value people who take the time to understand the ISFP, and who support the ISFP in pursuing their goals in their own, unique way. People who don't know them well may see their unique way of life as a sign of carefree light-heartedness, but the ISFP actually takes life very seriously, constantly gathering specific information and shifting it through their value systems, in search for clarification and underlying meaning.

ISFP's are action-oriented individuals. They are "doers", and are usually uncomfortable with theorizing concepts and ideas, unless they see a practical application. They learn best in a "hands-on" environment, and consequently may become easily bored with the traditional teaching methods, which emphasize abstract thinking. They do not like impersonal analysis, and are uncomfortable with the idea of making decisions based strictly on logic. Their strong value systems demand that decisions are evaluated against their subjective beliefs, rather than against some objective rules or laws.

ISFP's are extremely perceptive and aware of others. They constantly gather specific information about people, and seek to discover what it means. They are usually penetratingly accurate in their perceptions of others.

ISFP's are warm and sympathetic. They genuinely care about people, and are strongly service-oriented in their desire to please. They have an unusually deep well of caring for those who are close to them, and are likely to show their love through actions, rather than words.

ISFP's have no desire to lead or control others, just as they have no desire to be led or controlled by others. They need space and time alone to evaluate the circumstances of their life against their value system, and are likely to respect other people's needs for the same.

The ISFP is likely to not give themselves enough credit for the things which they do extremely well. Their strong value systems can lead them to be intensely perfectionist, and cause them to judge themselves with unnecessary harshness.

The ISFP has many special gifts for the world, especially in the areas of creating artistic sensation, and selflessly serving others. Life is not likely to be extremely easy for the ISFP, because they take life so seriously, but they have the tools to make their lives and the lives of those close to them richly rewarding experiences.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Introverted Feeling

Auxiliary: Extraverted Sensing

Tertiary: Introverted Intuition

Inferior: Extraverted Thinking

**ISFP's generally have the following traits:**

- Keen awareness of their environment
- Live in the present moment
- Enjoy a slower pace - they like to take time to savor the present moment
- Dislike dealing with theory or abstract thought, unless they see a practical application
- Faithful and loyal to people and ideas which are important to them
- Individualistic, having no desire to lead or follow
- Take things seriously, although they frequently appear not to
- Special bond with children and animals
- Quiet and reserved, except with people they know extremely well
- Trusting, sensitive, and kind
- Service-oriented; they're driven to help others
- Extremely well-developed appreciation for aesthetic beauty
- Likely to be original and unconventional
- Learn best with hands-on training
- Hate being confined to strict schedules and regimens



- Need space and freedom to do things their own way
- Dislike mundane, routine tasks, but will perform them if necessary

The ISFP is a very special individual who needs to have a career which is more than a job. The middle of the road is not likely to be a place where they will be fulfilled and happy. They need to have a career which is consistent with their strong core of inner values. Since they prefer to live in the current moment, and take the time to savor it, they do not do well with some of the more fast-paced corporate environments. They need a great deal of space and freedom if they are going to function in their natural realm of acute sensory awareness. If they give free reign to their natural abilities, they may find a wonderful artist within themselves. Almost every major artist in the world has been an ISFP. Since the ISFP is so acutely aware of people's feelings and reactions, and is driven by their inner values to help people, the ISFP is also a natural counselor and teacher.

### **ISFP Relationships**

ISFP's are warmhearted, gentle people who take their commitments seriously, and seek lifelong relationships. They are very private people, who keep their true feelings and opinions reserved or hidden from others. This may cause them to constantly defer to their mates in their intimate relationships, which may cause problems if their mates are not extremely aware of the ISFP's feelings. Some ISFP's who are in the habit of not expressing their needs and feelings find themselves in situations throughout their life where they feel overshadowed, overlooked, or even "tread upon" by others. Highly practical and cynical by nature, these feelings may cause the ISFP to become bitter, and to either give up on their relationships, or to start using their relationships for their own personal gain. Although this problem is observed sometimes in the ISFP type, it does not seem to be present in those ISFP's who consistently express their feelings to those closest to them. These ISFP's have a very positive, warm outlook on life and love, and are not as likely to find themselves in relationships where they are taken for granted or taken advantage of. ISFP's go to great lengths to please their partners. They're very loyal and supportive, with a deep capacity for love. They detest conflict and discord, and highly value being seen and understood for who they are. They need space to live their lives in their own unique way, and will respect other's need for space.

### **ISFP Strengths**

- Warm, friendly and affirming by nature
- Usually optimistic
- Good listeners
- Good at dealing with practical day-to-day concerns
- Flexible and laid-back, usually willing to defer to their mates
- Their love of aesthetic beauty and appreciation for function makes them likely to have attractive, functional homes
- Take their commitments seriously, and seek lifelong relationships
- Likely to value and respect other's personal space
- Likely to enjoy showing their affection through acts and deeds
- Sensuous and earthy

## **ISFP Weaknesses**

- Not good at long-range financial (or other) planning
- Extreme dislike of conflict and criticism
- Focused on enjoying the present moment, they may appear lazy or slow-moving at times
- Need to have their own space, and dislike having it invaded
- May be slow to show their affection with words
- Tendency to hold back their thoughts and feelings, unless drawn out
- May become overly cynical and practical

## **What does Success mean to an ISFP?**

ISFP's are creative, sensitive souls with a great capacity for love. They seek harmony, validation, and affection in their relationships with others. They value creativity and spirituality. Very sensitive and easily hurt by rejection and harshness, they are sometimes drawn to turn their love towards creatures who will love them back unconditionally, such as animals and small children. They believe heartily in unconditional love, and in an individual's right to be themselves without being judged harshly for who they are. Of all of the types, the ISFP is most likely to believe that "Love is the answer." For the ISFP, personal success depends upon the condition of their closest relationships, their aesthetic environment and the development of their artistic creativity, their spiritual development, and how much they feel valued and accepted for their individual contributions.

## **Allowing Your ISFP Strengths to Flourish**

As an ISFP, 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 ISFP's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- Highly creative, artistic and spiritual, they can produce wonderful works of art, music and literature. ISFP's are natural artists. They will find great satisfaction if they encourage and develop their artistic abilities. That doesn't mean that an ISFP has to be a famous writer or painter in order to be content. Simply the act of "creating" will be a fulfilling source of renewal and refreshment to the ISFP. An ISFP should allow himself or herself some artistic outlet, because it will add enrichment and positive energy to their life.
- They're more spiritually aware than most people, and are more in touch with their soul than others. Most ISFP's have strong Faith. Those that don't may feel as if they're missing something important. An ISFP should nourish their faith.
- ISFP's have an extremely well-developed ability to appreciate aesthetic qualities. They're usually very aware of their environment, and can easily see what works well and what doesn't from an aesthetic perspective. If they allow this strength to flourish, they're likely to be stylish dressers who live in a home that's aesthetically pleasing.
- ISFP's have passionate and intense feelings.

- ISFP's are very quick-witted and spatial in their thinking. If they have the desire, they can be very good at individual sports like golf, skiing, biking, etc., because they're extremely observant and have quick reactions.
- They're usually good listeners who genuinely want to hear about someone's problems, and genuinely want to help them. This makes them outstanding counselors, and good friends. An ISFP may find great satisfaction from volunteering as a counselor.
- They accept and value people as individuals, and are strongly egalitarian. They believe that an individual has the right to be themselves, without having their attitudes and perspectives brought under scrutiny. Accordingly, they have a great deal of tolerance and acceptance dealing with people who might encounter negative judgment from society in general. They can see something positive in everyone. They believe in individuals. If they give themselves the opportunity, an ISFP can become a much-needed source of self-esteem and confidence for people who cannot find it on their own. In this way, they can nurture a "sick soul" back to health.
- Practical and detail-oriented, ISFP's are great at handling the details of a project.
- ISFP's live for the current day, and have an ability to enjoy the present moment without stressing out about the future or the past.
- They have a good ability to concentrate and focus. Accordingly, they can do well in school if they set their mind to it.
- ISFP's who have developed their Extraverted Sensing to the extent that they can perceive the world about them objectively and quickly will find that they enjoy these very special gifts:
- Their strongly passionate nature combined with their natural sense of aesthetic beauty may make them gifted artists (such as Picasso, or Barbra Streisand, both reportedly ISFP's).
- Their awareness of what's going on around them combined with their great capacity to love will make them outstanding parents and caregivers.
- They will quickly identify the opportunities of a situation, and quickly act to take advantage of them. They will find that they're able to do anything that they put their mind to, although they may not find it personally satisfying. Things may seem to come easily to these ISFP's. Although they're able to conquer many different kinds of tasks and situations, these ISFP's will be happiest doing something that seems truly important to them. Although they may find that they can achieve the "mainstream" type of success with relative ease, they are not likely to find happiness along that path, unless they have especially rich and rewarding personal relationships.
- The ISFP who augments their strong, internal value system (Introverted Feeling) with a well-developed ability to recognize opportunities (Extraverted Sensing) can be a powerful force for social change.

### **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.

ISFP's are kind and creative beings with many special gifts. I would like for the ISFP to keep in mind some of the many positive things associated with being an ISFP as they read some of this more negative material. Also remember that the weaknesses associated with being an ISFP 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 ISFP's are due to their dominant Feeling function overshadowing the rest of their personality. When the dominant function of Introverted Feeling overshadows everything else, the ISFP can't use Extraverted Sensing to take in information in a truly objective fashion. In such cases, an ISFP may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- May be extremely sensitive to any kind of criticism
- May be unable to see the opportunities inherent to a situation
- May perceive criticism where none was intended
- May have skewed or unrealistic ideas about reality
- May be unable to acknowledge or hear anything that goes against their personal ideas and opinions
- May blame their problems on other people, seeing themselves as victims who are treated unfairly
- May have great anger, and show this anger with rash outpourings of bad temper
- May be unaware of appropriate social behavior
- May be oblivious to their personal appearance, or to appropriate dress
- May come across as eccentric, or perhaps even generally strange to others, without being aware of it
- May be unable to see or understand anyone else's point of view
- May value their own opinions and feelings far above others
- May be unaware of how their behavior affects others
- May be oblivious to other people's need
- May feel overwhelmed with tension and stress when someone expresses disagreement with the ISFP, or disapproval of the ISFP
- May develop strong judgments that are difficult to change against people who they perceive have been oppressive or suppressive to them
- Under great stress, may feel out of control and fearful, dwelling on the "dark side" of things

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ISFP problem of only taking in data that justifies their personal opinions. ISFP's are usually very intense and sensitive people, and feel seriously

threatened by criticism. They are likely to treat any point of view other than their own as criticism of their own perspective. If the ISFP does not learn how to deal with this perceived criticism, the ISFP will begin to shut out the incoming information that causes them pain. This is a natural survivalist technique for the ISFP personality. The main driver to the ISFP personality is Introverted Feeling, whose purpose is to maintain and honor an intensely personal system of values and morals. If an ISFP's personal value system is threatened by external influences, the ISFP shuts out the threatening data in order to preserve and honor their value system. This is totally natural, and works well to protect the individual psyche from getting hurt. However, the ISFP who exercises this type of self-protection regularly will become more and more unaware of other people's perspectives, and thus more and more isolated from a real understanding of the world that they live in. They will always find justification for their own inappropriate behaviors, and will always find fault with the external world for problems that they have in their lives. It will be difficult for them to maintain close personal relationships because they will have unreasonable expectations, and will be unable to accept blame.

It's not an uncommon tendency for the ISFP to look to the external world primarily for information that will support their ideas and values. However, if this tendency is given free reign, the resulting ISFP personality is too self-centered to be happy or successful. Since the ISFP's dominant function to their personality is Introverted Feeling, they must balance this with an auxiliary Extraverted Sensing function. The ISFP takes in information via Extraverted Sensing. This is also the ISFP's primary way of dealing with the external world. If the ISFP uses Extraverted Sensing only to serve the purposes of Introverted Feeling, then the ISFP is not using Extraversion effectively at all. As a result, the ISFP does not take in enough information about the external world to have a good sense of what's going on. They see nothing but their own perspective, and deal with the world only so far as they need to in order to support their perspective. These individuals usually come across as selfish and unrealistic. Depending on how serious the problem is, they may appear to be anything from "a bit eccentric" to "way out there". Many times other people are unable to understand or relate to these people.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ISFP needs to focus on opening their perspective to include a more accurate picture of what is really going on in the world. In order to be in a position in which the ISFP is able to perceive and consider data that is foreign to their internal value system, the ISFP needs to know that its value system is not threatened by the new information. The ISFP must consciously tell himself/herself that an opinion that does not concede with their own is not an indictment of their entire character.

The ISFP who is concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to their motivation for taking in information. Do they take in information to better understand a situation or concept? Or, do they take in information to support a personal idea or cause? At the moment when something is perceived, is the ISFP concerned with twisting that perception to fit in with their personal values? Or is she/he concerned with absorbing the information objectively? To achieve a better understanding of the external world, the ISFP should try to perceive information objectively, before fitting it into their value

system. They should consciously be aware of their tendency to discard anything that doesn't agree with their values, 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 Sensing in a truly Extraverted sense. In other words, they should use Sensing to take in information about the world around them for the sake of understanding the world, rather than take in information to support their own conclusions. The ISFP who successfully perceives things objectively may be quite a powerful force for positive change.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ISFP**

Some ISFP's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are often a result of an unawareness of appropriate social behavior, an unawareness of how they come across to others, or unrealistic expectations of others. Any one of these three issues stem from using Extraverted Sensing in a diminished manner. An ISFP who takes in information for the sake of understanding the world around them, rather than one who takes in information only to support their own ideas, will have a clearer, more objective understanding of how society values social behaviors and attitudes. He or she will also be more aware of how they are perceived by others, and will have more realistic expectations for others' behavior within a relationship. Such well-adjusted ISFP'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 Sensing in an Extraverted direction. It's difficult to even understand what that means, much less to incorporate that directive into your life. With that in mind, I am providing some specific suggestions that may help you to begin exercising your Extraverted Sensing more fully:

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

Think of a situation in your life in which you weren't sure how to behave. Now try to understand how one or two other people would see the situation. Don't compare their behavior to your own, i.e. "she would know better than me what to do", or "why is it so easy for her, but so hard for me". Rather, try to understand how they would see the situation. Would it be seen as a problem, or as an opportunity? Would it be taken seriously or lightly? Try to determine their point of view without passing judgment or comparing it to your own.

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

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 things are they encountering, what thoughts are they having? Don't pass judgment, or compare their situation to your own.

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 ISFP Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Encourage your natural artistic abilities and creativity. Nourish your spirituality. Give yourself opportunities to help the needy or underprivileged.
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 unexpressed emotions build up inside of you. If you have strong feelings, sort them out and express them, Don't let them build up inside you to the point where they become unmanageable!
4. **Listen to Everything.** Try not to dismiss anything immediately. Let everything soak in for awhile, then apply judgment.
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 YOU have more control over your life than any other person has.
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!** Don't assume that the lack of feedback is the same thing as negative feedback. If you need feedback and don't have any, ask for it.

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

# Portrait of an ISTJ - Introverted Sensing Thinking Judging (Introverted Sensing with Extraverted Thinking)

## *The Duty Fulfiler*

As an ISTJ, your primary mode of living is focused internally, where you take things in via your five senses in a literal, concrete fashion. Your secondary mode is external, where you deal with things rationally and logically.

ISTJ's are quiet and reserved individuals who are interested in security and peaceful living. They have a strongly-felt internal sense of duty, which lends them a serious air and the motivation to follow through on tasks. Organized and methodical in their approach, they can generally succeed at any task which they undertake.

ISTJ's are very loyal, faithful, and dependable. They place great importance on honesty and integrity. They are "good citizens" who can be depended on to do the right thing for their families and communities. While they generally take things very seriously, they also usually have an offbeat sense of humor and can be a lot of fun - especially at family or work-related gatherings.

ISTJ's tend to believe in laws and traditions, and expect the same from others. They're not comfortable with breaking laws or going against the rules. If they are able to see a good reason for stepping outside of the established mode of doing things, the ISTJ will support that effort. However, ISTJ's more often tend to believe that things should be done according to procedures and plans. If an ISTJ has not developed their Intuitive side sufficiently, they may become overly obsessed with structure, and insist on doing everything "by the book".

The ISTJ is extremely dependable on following through with things which he or she has promised. For this reason, they sometimes get more and more work piled on them. Because the ISTJ has such a strong sense of duty, they may have a difficult time saying "no" when they are given more work than they can reasonably handle. For this reason, the ISTJ often works long hours, and may be unwittingly taken advantage of.

The ISTJ will work for long periods of time and put tremendous amounts of energy into doing any task which they see as important to fulfilling a goal. However, they will resist putting energy into things which don't make sense to them, or for which they can't see a practical application. They prefer to work alone, but work well in teams when the situation demands it. They like to be accountable for their actions, and enjoy being in positions of authority. The ISTJ has little use for theory or abstract thinking, unless the practical application is clear.

ISTJ's have tremendous respect for facts. They hold a tremendous store of facts within themselves, which they have gathered through their Sensing preference. They may have



difficulty understanding a theory or idea which is different from their own perspective. However, if they are shown the importance or relevance of the idea to someone who they respect or care about, the idea becomes a fact, which the ISTJ will internalize and support. Once the ISTJ supports a cause or idea, he or she will stop at no lengths to ensure that they are doing their duty of giving support where support is needed.

The ISTJ is not naturally in tune with their own feelings and the feelings of others. They may have difficulty picking up on emotional needs immediately, as they are presented. Being perfectionists themselves, they have a tendency to take other people's efforts for granted, like they take their own efforts for granted. They need to remember to pat people on the back once in a while.

ISTJ's are likely to be uncomfortable expressing affection and emotion to others. However, their strong sense of duty and the ability to see what needs to be done in any situation usually allows them to overcome their natural reservations, and they are usually quite supporting and caring individuals with the people that they love. Once the ISTJ realizes the emotional needs of those who are close to them, they put forth effort to meet those needs.

The ISTJ is extremely faithful and loyal. Traditional and family-minded, they will put forth great amounts of effort at making their homes and families running smoothly. They are responsible parents, taking their parenting roles seriously. They are usually good and generous providers to their families. They care deeply about those close to them, although they usually are not comfortable with expressing their love. The ISTJ is likely to express their affection through actions, rather than through words.

ISTJ's have an excellent ability to take any task and define it, organize it, plan it, and implement it through to completion. They are very hard workers, who do not allow obstacles to get in the way of performing their duties. They do not usually give themselves enough credit for their achievements, seeing their accomplishments simply as the natural fulfillment of their obligations.

ISTJ's usually have a great sense of space and function, and artistic appreciation. Their homes are likely to be tastefully furnished and immaculately maintained. They are acutely aware of their senses, and want to be in surroundings which fit their need for structure, order, and beauty.

Under stress, ISTJ's may fall into "catastrophe mode", where they see nothing but all of the possibilities of what could go wrong. They will berate themselves for things which they should have done differently, or duties which they failed to perform. They will lose their ability to see things calmly and reasonably, and will depress themselves with their visions of doom.

In general, the ISTJ has a tremendous amount of potential. Capable, logical, reasonable, and effective individuals with a deeply driven desire to promote security and peaceful

living, the ISTJ has what it takes to be highly effective at achieving their chosen goals - whatever they may be.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Introverted Sensing

Auxiliary: Extraverted Thinking

Tertiary: Introverted Feeling

Inferior: Extraverted Intuition

**ISTJ's generally have the following traits:**

- Value tradition, security, and peaceful living
- Will work long and hard to fulfill duties
- Can be depended on to follow through on tasks
- Loyal and faithful
- Stable, practical and down-to-earth
- Family-minded
- Dislike doing things which don't make sense to them
- Dislike abstract theory, unless they see the practical application
- Natural leaders
- Prefer to work alone, but work well in teams when necessary
- Extremely observant, they take in facts via their senses and store them internally
- Vast, rich inner store of facts which they rely on to understand problems which they encounter in their lives
- Profound respect for facts and concrete information
- Make decisions objectively, applying logic and rational thinking
- Dislike change, unless they are shown it's benefit in a concrete way
- Have strong opinions about the way things should be done
- Appreciate structured, orderly environments
- Have very high standards for their own behavior and the behavior of others
- Not naturally in-tune with other people's feelings
- Able to accomplish almost anything if they put their minds to it
- Community minded "good citizens"

ISTJ's have one character trait which puts them at a definite advantage in terms of career success - Perseverance. An ISTJ can do almost anything that they have decided to do. However, there are areas in which they will function more happily and naturally. An ISTJ will do best in a career in which they can use their excellent organizational skills and their powers of concentration to create order and structure. ISTJ's seem to fit extremely well into the Management and Executive layer of the corporate business world.

**ISTJ Relationships**

The ISTJ's word is as good as gold, and they honor their commitments faithfully. They believe that to do otherwise would be nothing less than a breach of honor and trustworthiness. Consequently, they take their vows very seriously, and once they have said "I do", that means they are bound to the relationship until "death do us apart" or

otherwise. ISTJ's are driven to fulfill their responsibilities and duties, and will do so with tireless effort. They will do their best to meet the obligations presented by the different relationship roles which they play during their lives, i.e. spouse, parent, offspring, etc. They may have difficulty showing warmth, but they frequently feel it in abundance, and most develop the ability to show it through sheer effort. If nothing else, the ISTJ holds the gold medal of all the personality types for Effort. They will put forth tremendous amounts of effort to accomplish goals which are important to them. If healthy relationships are among these goals, you can bet that the ISTJ will do everything that they can to foster and maintain healthy relationships.

### **ISTJ Strengths**

- Honor their commitments
- Take their relationship roles very seriously
- Usually able to communicate what's on their minds with precision
- Good listeners
- Extremely good (albeit conservative) with money
- Able to take constructive criticism well
- Able to tolerate conflict situations without emotional upheaval
- Able to dole out punishment or criticism when called for

### **ISTJ Weaknesses**

- Tendency to believe that they're always right
- Tendency to get involved in "win-lose" conversations
- Not naturally in-tune with what others are feeling
- Their value for structure may seem rigid to others
- Not likely to give enough praise or affirmation to their loved ones

### **What does Success mean to an ISTJ?**

People with the ISTJ personality type are serious, methodical, analytical, and hard-working. They store knowledge gained from their experiences, and use this knowledge to tackle new problems and ideas. They will work a problem through to its identified conclusion. They work towards defined goals; their analytical objectivity gives them the tendency to make goal-oriented decisions that are not waylaid by the concerns of individuals. They're uncomfortable with ideas that are completely new to them, or that are totally theoretical in nature. Since they have no direct experience with the new concept, they have no tools for knowing how to deal with it or what to think about it. They need to get the framework for a new concept before they're able to deal with it. An experienced ISTJ is usually a very capable person, and makes an excellent manager. ISTJ's have great value for the "tried and true" approach, and are reluctant to adopt new systems until direct experience proves the validity of the new system. They internalize and value the rules and structure of the society in which they live, and disapprove of behaviors that go against these rules. ISTJ's highly value the cornerstone institutions of society such as Family, Work, and Church. Their hard-working, dedicated nature is especially well-suited for holding up such institutions. An ISTJ's feeling of success depends upon being able to use their experience for the benefit of an institution, and also

upon the level of structure and lack of chaos in their life, and in the health and welfare of their family or other social structure.

### **Allowing Your ISTJ Strengths to Flourish**

As an ISTJ, 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 ISTJ's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- Their desire to execute known systems against concrete facts makes them happy to chunk through large amounts of routine work.
- With their respect for rules and order, they value honesty and integrity and seek to live with these ideals.
- An ISTJ has a "stick to it" attitude. They're not afraid of hard work, and will put forth a great deal of effort towards something that they are interested in. This persistence will help the ISTJ to achieve any identified goal.
- The ISTJ's value for social structure makes them more interested in being social than is true for many Introverts.

ISTJ's who have developed their Extraverted Thinking will complement their interest in their inner world of concrete data with an interest in the welfare of the rest of the world, especially with regards to upholding social systems and traditions. These ISTJ's enjoy these very special gifts:

- They will move beyond an expectation that others should follow rules into a dedication and willingness to work hard to uphold standards themselves.
- They show a dedication to maintaining personal relationships that lends them a respect for individual differences.
- They will use their inner store of facts for the benefit of an institution or society in general, rather than to satisfy their own interests.
- The more they develop their Extraverted Thinking, the better they will become at strategizing. They will be able to brainstorm multiple possible solutions to problems.
- ISTJ's are often uncomfortable with decisions based on values rather than on objective criteria, but the more they develop their Extraverted Thinking, the more likely they will become able to use Introverted Feeling as a positive force rather than strictly a negative one. This will allow them to understand a value judgment that is based on personal perspective rather than social obligation.

### **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 ISTJ's are due to their dominant Introverted Sensing function controlling the personality to the point that all other functions are being used to defend Sensing demands, rather than for their more balanced purposes. In such cases, an ISTJ may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- Excessive love of food and drink
- Lack of interest in other people, or in relating to them
- Occasional inappropriate emotional displays
- General selfish "look after oneself" tendencies
- Uses judgment to dismiss other's opinions and perspectives, before really understanding them
- May judge others rather than themselves
- May look at external ideas and people with the primary purpose of finding fault
- May become slave to their routine and "by the book" ways of doing things, to the point that any deviation is completely unacceptable
- May have difficulty communicating their thoughts and feelings to anyone
- Explanation of Problems

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ISTJ problem of Introverted Sensing overtaking the ISTJ's personality to the point that all other functions become slaves to Introverted Sensing. A more "whole" personality needs to have a good balance between its dominant and auxiliary functions. For an ISTJ, the dominant Introverted Sensing needs to be well-supported by the auxiliary Extraverted Thinking function. If Extraverted Thinking exists only to support the desires of Introverted Sensing, then neither function is being used to its potential.

Introverted Sensing is a personality function that constantly gathers data and stores it in a sort of informational database to be accessed at will in the future. As the dominant player in a personality, it has the effect of constantly bombarding the psyche with facts to store. As something new is perceived, it is added to the vast warehouse of Introverted Sensing data. Introverted Sensing does not in itself analyze this data for meaning or connection--it just takes it in as information. In order to sort through and make use of this information, a judging function must be applied. It is the judging function that does the analysis and ordering of the data.

When Introverted Sensing is too dominant, or Extraverted Thinking is not developed sufficiently, we see the ISTJ using Extraverted Thinking to order the individual's world in such a way that Introverted Sensing can reign without interference. This may include dismissing the importance of relationships, or pushing away anything that threatens the ISTJ's highly introverted way of life. In this manner, Extraverted Thinking is used against the external world, rather than against the ISTJ's internal data. It is a defensive shield, rather than a useful filter.

The better, more "whole" use of Extraverted Thinking for the ISTJ would be to use it to order and evaluate its own rich store of data, and therefore generate useful solutions to problems and efficient systems. Like all types, most ISTJ's will show some signs of this kind of weakness. This does not mean that they're hopelessly flawed. The real problems occur when an ISTJ personality has become so imbalanced that its owner is extremely selfish and unable to consider the importance or validity of anyone else's perspective.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ISTJ needs to focus on applying their judgment against information that they have gathered, rather than against single facts or ideas coming from others. Before judging, put all new data into the context of existing facts. Working with all of the facts at your disposal will greatly improve your ability to judge effectively, and will reduce the likelihood that you will become offensively reactionary and isolationist.

An ISTJ who is concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to the subject of their judgments, and their motivations for making judgments. Are they judging something external to themselves, or are they judging something within the context of their stored knowledge? Is the motivation for judging something to be able to understand its usefulness in the world, or to dismiss it? Too often, an ISTJ will judge something without properly understanding it, and with the intention of dismissing it. Seek first to understand, then to judge.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ISTJ**

People of all personality types sometimes experience problems dealing with specific aspects of civilization and human interaction. For the ISTJ, problems are generally associated with being unable to tolerate behaviors that go outside perceived norms, and with not putting forth effort to meet others' emotional needs. These problems stem from building up the importance of the ISTJ's inner world and diminishing the importance of the external world. ISTJ's who recognize that their knowledge and experience can be enriched by the synergy of other people's knowledge and experience will find that they can be committed to their internal worlds and still have satisfying relationships with others. The key to accomplishing this is development of their highest extraverted function, Extraverted Thinking.

An ISTJ who uses Extraverted Thinking to find fault externally rather than internally may become so strongly opinionated that they form rigid and unreasonable expectations of others. Their hyper-vigilant judgments about the rationality and competence of others may be a very effective way of keeping themselves at an emotional distance from others. This will preserve the sanctity of the ISTJ's inner world and lifestyle, but will reduce a lot of valuable input, arrest the development of their social character, and stagnate the development of the ISTJ's rich store of experiential data. In extreme cases the ISTJ may find him or herself quite alone and lonely.

More commonly, the ISTJ will run into trouble when they try to order and structure the outer world, rather than their inner world. Trying to structure people into a predefined,

acceptable system is problematic. The personality types who value the unique individual will be offended by the apparent lack of respect for their person, and people with personality types who follow social values will want to be honoring their own system, rather than being forced to follow yours. Many people experience being controlled or manipulated as a form of suppression, and resist it. Eventually, they may harbor serious resentment against the suppressor.

**Specific suggestions:**

Take care to listen to someone's idea entirely before you pass judgment on it. Ask questions if necessary. Do whatever it takes to make sure that you understand the idea. Try not to begin judging anything until you understand the details.

Try to identify the personality type of everyone you encounter frequently in your life. Remember that Intuitives often have a wandering style of expression. Try to exhibit tolerance for this.

Before you begin talking to another person, pause for a moment and look at that person. Take in that person's attitude and feelings at that moment. Be aware of the person with whom you are speaking.

**Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ISTJ Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Do things that allow your excellent organizational and logical abilities to flourish. Explore the worlds of business management, accounting, and medicine.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** See your weaknesses for what they are, and seek to overcome them. Especially, strive to use your judgment against your internal store of knowledge, rather than as a means of disregarding other people's ideas.
3. **Talk Through Your Thoughts.** You need to step through your vast amount of information in order to put things into perspective. Give yourself appropriate time to do this, and take advantage of discussing ideas with others. Some find that externalizing your thoughts is a valuable exercise, as is expressing your ideas clearly in writing.
4. **Take in Everything.** Don't dismiss ideas prematurely because you don't respect the person generating the ideas, or because you think you already know it all. After all, everybody has something to offer, and nobody knows everything. As Steven Covey says, "Seek first to understand, and then to be understood."
5. **Quench Your Desire to Control Others.** Remember that most people do not want to be controlled. Again, turn your controlling tendencies inwardly rather than outwardly. You can only really control yourself.
6. **Be Aware of Others.** Take time to notice where others are coming from. What is their personality type? How are they currently feeling?
7. **Be Accountable for Yourself.** Don't blame the problems in your life on other people. Look inwardly for solutions.
8. **Be Gentle in Your Expectations,** and judge yourself at least as harshly as you judge others.

9. Assume the Best. Don't distress yourself and others by dwelling on the dark side of everything. Just as there is a positive charge for every negative charge, there is a light side to every dark side. Remember that positive situations are created by positive attitudes, and vice versa. Expect the best, and the best will come forward.
10. There is Nothing to Fear but Fear Itself. Sometimes it's necessary to take a risk to initiate change. Don't be afraid to do so when that time comes. In most cases, the obstacles and burdens standing in the way of your goal are not really there--they just exist in your perspective. Change your perspective--change your life.

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



# Portrait of an ISTP

## Introverted Sensing Thinking Perceiving (Introverted Thinking with Extraverted Sensing)

### *The Mechanic*

As an ISTP, 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 via your five senses in a literal, concrete fashion.

ISTP's have a compelling drive to understand the way things work. They're good at logical analysis, and like to use it on practical concerns. They typically have strong powers of reasoning, although they're not interested in theories or concepts unless they can see a practical application. They like to take things apart and see the way they work.

ISTP's have an adventuresome spirit. They are attracted to motorcycles, airplanes, sky diving, surfing, etc. They thrive on action, and are usually fearless. ISTP's are fiercely independent, needing to have the space to make their own decisions about their next step. They do not believe in or follow rules and regulations, as this would prohibit their ability to "do their own thing". Their sense of adventure and desire for constant action makes ISTP's prone to becoming bored rather quickly.

ISTP's are loyal to their causes and beliefs, and are firm believers that people should be treated with equity and fairness. Although they do not respect the rules of the "System", they follow their own rules and guidelines for behavior faithfully. They will not take part in something which violates their personal laws. ISTP's are extremely loyal and faithful to their "brothers".

ISTP's like and need to spend time alone, because this is when they can sort things out in their minds most clearly. They absorb large quantities of impersonal facts from the external world, and sort through those facts, making judgments, when they are alone.

ISTP's are action-oriented people. They like to be up and about, doing things. They are not people to sit behind a desk all day and do long-range planning. Adaptable and spontaneous, they respond to what is immediately before them. They usually have strong technical skills, and can be effective technical leaders. They focus on details and practical things. They have an excellent sense of expediency and grasp of the details which enables them to make quick, effective decisions.

ISTP's avoid making judgments based on personal values - they feel that judgments and decisions should be made impartially, based on the fact. They are not naturally tuned in to how they are affecting others. They do not pay attention to their own feelings, and even distrust them and try to ignore them, because they have difficulty distinguishing

between emotional reactions and value judgments. This may be a problem area for many ISTP's.

An ISTP who is over-stressed may exhibit rash emotional outbursts of anger, or on the other extreme may be overwhelmed by emotions and feelings which they feel compelled to share with people (often inappropriately). An ISTP who is down on themselves will foray into the world of value judgments - a place which is not natural for the ISTP - and judge themselves by their inability to perform some task. They will then approach the task in a grim emotional state, expecting the worst.

ISTP's are excellent in a crisis situations. They're usually good athletes, and have very good hand-eye coordination. They are good at following through with a project, and tying up loose ends. They usually don't have much trouble with school, because they are introverts who can think logically. They are usually patient individuals, although they may be prone to occasional emotional outbursts due to their inattention to their own feelings.

ISTP's have a lot of natural ability which makes them good at many different kinds of things. However, they are happiest when they are centered in action-oriented tasks which require detailed logical analysis and technical skill. They take pride in their ability to take the next correct step.

ISTP's are optimistic, full of good cheer, loyal to their equals, uncomplicated in their desires, generous, trusting and receptive people who want no part in confining commitments.

**Jungian functional preference ordering:**

Dominant: Introverted Thinking

Auxiliary: Extraverted Sensing

Tertiary: Introverted Intuition

Inferior: Extraverted Feeling

**ISTP's generally have the following traits:**

- Interested in how and why things work
- Do not function well in regimented, structured environments; they will either feel stifled or become intensely bored
- Constantly gather facts about their environment and store them away
- Have an excellent ability to apply logic and reason to their immense store of facts to solve problems or discover how things work
- Learn best "hands-on"
- Usually able to master theory and abstract thinking, but don't particularly like dealing with it unless they see a practical application
- Action-oriented "doers"
- Focused on living in the present, rather than the future
- Love variety and new experiences
- Highly practical and realistic

- Excellent "trouble-shooters", able to quickly find solutions to a wide variety of practical problems
- Results-oriented; they like to see immediate results for their efforts
- Usually laid-back and easy-going with people
- Risk-takers who thrive on action
- Independent and determined - usually dislike committing themselves
- Usually quite self-confident

The ISTP is fortunate because they have the abilities to be good at many different kinds of tasks. Their introverted and thinking preferences give them the ability to concentrate and work through problems which leaves many doors open to them. However, to be happiest, the ISTP needs to lead a lifestyle which offers a great deal of autonomy and does not include much external enforcement of structure. ISTP's will do best working for themselves, or working in very flexible environments. Their natural interests lie towards applying their excellent reasoning skills against known facts and data to discover underlying structure, or solutions to practical questions.

### **ISTP Relationships**

ISTP's are generally extremely capable individuals who are good at most things which interest them. They are usually bright, interesting, and exciting individuals with a lot to offer. They live almost entirely in the present moment, and usually do not make commitments beyond the immediate foreseeable future. An ISTP probably coined the phrase "nothing is unconditional". They strongly prefer to take things one day at a time, rather than make long-term commitments. If a relationship interests them and satisfies their needs, the ISTP will do their part on a daily basis to keep the relationship strong and healthy. If they lose interest in a relationship, their natural tendency will be to move on.

### **ISTP Strengths**

- Good listeners
- Usually self-confident
- Generally optimistic and fun to be with
- Practical and realistic, they handle daily concerns
- Are not threatened by conflict or criticism
- Able to leave a relationship with relative ease once it is over
- Able to administer punishment, although they're not interested in doing so
- Likely to respect other's needs for space and privacy

### **ISTP Weaknesses**

- Living entirely in the present, they have difficulty with long-term commitments
- Not naturally good at expressing feelings and emotions
- Not tuned in to what others are feeling, they may be insensitive at times
- Tendency to be overly private and hold back part of themselves
- Need a lot of personal space, which they don't like to have invaded
- They thrive on action and excitement, and may stir things up to create it

### **What does Success mean to an ISTP?**

People with the ISTP personality type are action-oriented thinkers. They are highly tuned into their immediate environment, and driven to interact with it in a hands-on fashion. It is by working with things in their environment that they experience and understand life. By working physically with their environment, they have a natural and immediate understanding of how things work, and how best to achieve their identified goals. Although they constantly use logic to determine how to best manipulate objects in their immediate situation, they are not naturally analytical in a more objective sense. When they step back to methodically analyze the relationship between objects in their world, they often lose touch with their understanding. Their understanding is intimately tied into their physical experience with reality. It is immediate and holistic. They are naturally "in-sync" with the physical world, and value life largely in terms of their ability to flow with and conquer the physical challenges presented to them. Although they think about and value past experiences, they live almost entirely in the here and now. ISTP's are natural mechanics, athletes, musicians, technicians, and engineers. They excel at tasks that require a great deal of tactile mastery, as well as quick, logic-based action. ISTP's are most comfortable using their known skills, rather than being thrown into situations with which they have no personal experience. The nuances of variation in each individual situation will bring a sense of newness and freshness to the experience for the ISTP. ISTP's often resist and rebel situations that are entirely new, or that require a great deal of structured planning and thinking. This way of thinking is foreign to the ISTP, and therefore uncomfortable. When someone tries to push or control the ISTP into these situations, he or she is likely to "walk away" from that person without looking back. Their resistance to structure may cause them to quit school early, quit jobs that they find stifling, or quit relationships that have too many expectations. ISTP's are often likeable and have more friends and social interaction than is normal for an Introvert. The ISTP genuinely enjoys the company of their friends, and needs their input in his or her physical world to maintain their understanding of their own place in the world. An ISTP's feeling of success is dependent primarily upon their mastery of their physical world, but is also dependent upon the existence of strong, reliable, interpersonal relationships. Without these relationships, the ISTP is likely to avoid relationships, isolate him or herself, and feel very vulnerable to rejection and hurt.

### **Allowing Your ISTP Strengths to Flourish**

As an ISTP, 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 ISTP's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- They have a natural ability to focus and "become one" with their immediate environment. This ability allows them to be great athletes, dancers, and musicians. They have an innately graceful connection with the physical world.
- They are highly in tune with their physical surroundings, and therefore have well-developed aesthetic appreciation. They appreciate beauty. If they are so inclined,

they may develop their ability to control the physical world into some form of art expression, and become artists.

- They are exceptional troubleshooters in emergency situations. They can quickly take in the current situation and apply logic immediately to take steps that control the problem. Since the ISTP's use of logic is based on their personal experience, their ability to troubleshoot will get better and better as they gain more experience. For this reason, ISTP's who are mechanics, technicians, and computer analysts (for example) often achieve "guru" status after they have been working in the field for a long time.
- They're very sensual and earthy people. They usually a good deal of sex appeal and attractive sensuality.

ISTP's who have developed their Extraverted Sensing to the extent that they regularly take in information in an objective fashion, rather than strictly to support their own way of life, will enjoy these very special gifts:

- They have attractive and compelling personalities, and are well-liked and accepted by most people.
- They're usually quite intelligent, and can work through difficult problems.
- They understand the benefits of close relationships, and understand how to support and enhance these relationships.
- They can handle just about any task that they are presented with.

### **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 ISTP'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 ISTP may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- The ISTP gets "stuck in a rut" and only does those things that are known and comfortable to the ISTP.
- The ISTP resists and rejects anything that doesn't support their own experiential understanding of the world. If there is a conflict between their own way of life and something that they encounter, they don't perceive that "something" in an objective sense. Rather, they reject it to avoid conflict and to preserve the sanctity of their inner world.
- They choose to surround themselves with people who support their own way of life, and reject people who think or live differently.
- 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.

### **Explanation of Problems**

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ISTP problem of only taking in information that relates to or supports their own life experience. The ISTP is driven to work with and understand his or her world by applying their special brand of logic (an immediate, spatial, "fuzzy" logic) to their physical experience. They don't necessarily have a goal in mind to achieve from this process - it is the process itself that is rewarding to the ISTP. In their zeal for the satisfaction that comes from mastering their physical environment in such a way, ISTP'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 ISTP 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 ISTP affects this problem when they stop taking in information in a truly objective sense, and instead only take in information that supports their way of life.

The dominant function of the ISTP is Introverted Thinking. This function is supported closely and importantly by the auxiliary function of Extraverted Sensing. Extraverted Sensing perceives the world and sends information into the psyche, where it is processed by Introverted Thinking. An ISTP who uses their Extraverted Sensing function in a diminished way is one who chooses to restrict their environment to people and places that support their favored activities. In such a way, the ISTP prevents his or her psyche from having to consider data from differing viewpoints and lifestyles, and thus promotes a lifestyle that allows them to frequently exercise and enhance their known tactile skills. It serves their immediate needs, which are the primary focus of the ISTP. However, it also promotes a lifestyle that is essentially self-centered and narrow in focus. It solves short-term problems, and creates long-term ones.

The ISTP's inferior (fourth) function is Extraverted Feeling. This means that the ISTP is not naturally in tune with how other people are feeling, or with social expectations. In fact, the ISTP is likely to reject the importance of social rituals, rules, and expectations. This is a natural weak point for the ISTP, which no doubt causes strife to the ISTP and their love partner. This weakness can be overcome by developing their Extraverted Sensing 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 Sensing 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 Sensing 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, ISTP's shy away from very close personal relationships, and feel more vulnerable and less sure of themselves in situations that involve expressing their emotions.

### **Solutions**

To grow as an individual, the ISTP needs to focus on taking in as much information as possible through Extraverted Sensing. 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 ISTP learns from experience, so the best way for the ISTP 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, rather than understanding how the world fits in with your way of life.

### **Living Happily in our World as an ISTP**

ISTP's usually have a loyal group of friends that they fit in with and feel comfortable with. The problems that ISTP's have with regards to fitting into our world are not usually related to platonic friendships. Usually, the ISTP has trouble finding and maintaining a love relationship. The ISTP usually has very simple needs and expectations from their mates, and they're surprised and confused to find that their mates have more complex demands. They feel inadequate to meeting their mate's needs, and begin to get very uncomfortable with the situation as they perceive that they are expected to do something that is unknown to them. They back away from the relationship. Outside of a relationship, they feel more unloved and unappreciated, but are afraid to commit to a relationship because they fear rejection and hurt.

### **Specific suggestions:**

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.

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.

Don't fear the unknown. You can handle it.

### **Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ISTP Success**

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Realize your gift at mastering your physical environment, and give yourself plenty of opportunities to exercise your abilities. Ride, play, paint, work it. Much of your sense of well-being will come from these experiences.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** Face your fear of the unknown, and get yourself into new situations. Experience new activities and people with new perspectives. Don't isolate yourself into a narrow and lonely existence.
3. **Talk About Your Thoughts.** Discussing your ideas and perceptions with others will help you to develop your Extraverted Sensing, and thus your understanding of the world. How well you use your auxiliary function is very important to your overall health and happiness.
4. **Don't Be Afraid to Love.** That's just your old inferior function trying to convince you that you're unloved and unlovable. It's not true. Just because you're not sure what to do with yourself doesn't mean that you can't learn! Go on... jump in. The water's warm.
5. **Respect Your Need for Action.** Understand that you need to be actively working with your environment to be "in the groove" with life. Don't chastise yourself for not being the sort to sit around and read a book or watch a movie. Choose a partner and companions who value active lifestyles.
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 to their own way of life, who would be in power? If people stopped stopping at red stop lights because it didn't fit into their way of life, how could we drive safely? Your priorities and beliefs 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. **It's OK to 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 figuring out exactly how you feel about someone that you're involved with. 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 Aware of Others. Try to really identify where people are coming from. Their ideas, thoughts and priorities are different from yours. They have something to offer you. Try to identify their personality types.
  10. Assume the Best. Don't distress yourself with fear and dark imaginings. Expect the best, and the best will come.

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