

# Profile of the INFJ (Counselor / Protector)

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This document contains detailed information about the *INFJ* Jung personality profile. The content references concepts already mentioned in the document called *Understanding your Personality Assessment Results*, which can be found on the [Digital Citizen](#) website. If you are reading this and do not understand some of the content, please refer to the referenced document.

This personality profile comes with the following analysis:

- Portraits (summaries)
- Traits, strengths and weaknesses
- Possible career paths
- Relationships (strengths, weaknesses, lovers, Parents, friends)
- Personal growth (success, happiness, problems, solutions, rules to live by)

The analyses here combine work done by Carl Jung, Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers, and David Keirsey. Myers & Briggs built their work on Jung's, and Keirsey expanded and revised some of their work. At times, the outcomes conflict in small ways, and they are noted. However, all their works are presented for you to embrace whichever appeals to you.

A read of the Keirsey Temperament documents, found on the [Digital Citizen](#) website, is highly recommended if you want to know more about a profile's tendencies beyond what is here. The document you want is the one with Preference letters found in the profile you want.

## Words of Caution in Interpreting This Material

The biggest mistake I often see with the presentation of personality assessment results is that they are spoken of in absolute terms, when they should be discussed as majority tendencies.

You got a percentage score with each of your Jung type preferences (letter) if you took the test I supplied. That score is an indication of how strong you have those tendencies. A 75% score on Thinking, for example, means you rely on Thinking about 75% of the time to make decisions rather than Feelings. But it also means you use or value Feelings 25% of the time, rather than that you are a Thinking decision-maker all of the time. You have to keep these percentages in mind when interpreting this content as it may apply to you or someone else.

Do **NOT** compare your percentage scores with someone else's as if they were absolute. That is, if you had a 75% Thinking score, that does not mean you are more logical than someone with a 65% Thinking score. The best way I can think to illustrate this is with an analogy. Your percentage is like how you break up *your* "pie", where the whole is both Preferences (Thinking and Feeling here). Someone could have a 55% Thinking score & be more logical in their decision-making than you. That's because *their* "pie" might be bigger than yours. They may put more of, both, Thinking and Feeling, into their decision-making, or may be capable of more complex logical decision-making than you. They just don't rely on Thinking 75% of the time like you. That's all those percentages mean, so keep your % scores only for your own comparison.

While it may more convenient, less convoluted and more convincing to discuss your results in absolute terms, it is not true. People are complex and there's no way of "dumbing them down" to understand them. All that does is either create misunderstandings or skepticism in the results.

## Use the Results as a Starting Point, Not an End Point

Jung's personality type results are generalized, so they can be used as prejudice if you use them as an end point to judge others. This is true if you use the results to judge individuals and condemn them to certain behaviours *all* of the time, when you know it is only true more times than not. It is also unfair to expect all people of a certain personality type to all behave the same way given a certain situation, as each has freedom to behave any way in any certain situations.

Humans are not preprogrammed machines. We do not behave with absolute consistency. We just have tendencies. We are creatures of habit, not logic. As a result, use the Jung personality type results as a starting point to understand each other, not an end point to condemn each other.

## Portrait I – The Counselor

In the Keirsey Temperament version of the Jung personality type system, the *INFJ* profile is known as the *Counselor*, though this is not meant to be career advice. Here is Keirsey's description.

Counselors have an exceptionally strong desire to contribute to the welfare of others, and find great personal fulfillment interacting with people, nurturing their personal development, guiding them to realize their human potential. Although they are happy working at jobs (such as writing) that require solitude and close attention, Counselors do quite well with individuals or groups of people, provided that the personal interactions are not superficial, and that they find some quiet, private time every now and then to recharge their batteries. Counselors are both kind and positive in their handling of others; they are great listeners & seem naturally interested in helping people with their personal problems. Not usually visible leaders, Counselors prefer to work intensely with those close to them, especially on a one-to-one basis, quietly exerting their influence behind the scenes.

Counselors are scarce, little more than 3% of the population, and can be hard to get to know, since they tend not to share their innermost thoughts or their powerful emotional reactions except with their loved ones. They are highly private people, with an unusually rich, complicated inner life. Friends or colleagues who have known them for years may find sides emerging which come as a surprise. Not that Counselors are flighty or scattered; they value their integrity a great deal, but they have mysterious, intricately woven personalities which sometimes puzzle even them.

Counselors tend to work effectively in organizations. They value staff harmony and make every effort to help an organization run smoothly and pleasantly. They understand and use human systems creatively, and are good at consulting and cooperating with others. As employees or employers, Counselors are concerned with people's feelings and are able to act as a barometer of the feelings within the organization.

Blessed with vivid imaginations, Counselors are often seen as the most poetical of all the types, and in fact they use a lot of poetic imagery in their everyday language. Their great talent for language—both written and spoken—is usually directed toward communicating with people in a personalized way. Counselors are highly intuitive and can recognize another's emotions or intentions – good or evil – even before that person is aware of them. Counselors themselves

can seldom tell how they came to read others' feelings so keenly. This extreme sensitivity to others could very well be the basis of the Counselor's remarkable ability to experience a whole array of psychic phenomena.

## Portrait II – The Protector

The *INFJ* profile is also often called the *Protector*. This is how the INFJ profile is also often summarized.

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.

INFJs 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 most rare of all the types.

INFJs 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, INFJs 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, INFJs put a tremendous amount of faith into their instincts and iNtutions. 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.

INFJs have uncanny insight into people and situations. They get “feelings” about things and iNtuitively understand them. As an extreme example, some INFJs 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 INFJs 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. INFJs hold back part of themselves, and can be secretive.

But the INFJ is as genuinely warm as they are complex. INFJs 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. INFJs 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. INFJs 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, INFJs 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 & 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 & many excel in the sciences, where they make use of their iNtuition. INFJs 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 Preference Ordering

- **Dominant:** Introverted iNtuition
- **Auxiliary:** Extraverted Feeling
- **Tertiary:** Introverted Thinking
- **Inferior:** Extraverted Sensing

## Famous Counselors

- Mohandas Gandhi
- Sidney Poitier
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- Jane Goodall
- Emily Bronte
- Sir Alec Guinness
- Carl Jung
- Mary Baker Eddy
- Queen Noor
- Jesus (don't let it go to your head!)

## INFJ Traits, Strengths and Weaknesses

Whether you're a young adult trying to find your place in the world, or a not-so-young adult trying to find out if you're moving along the right path, it's important to understand yourself

and the personality traits which will impact your likeliness to succeed or fail at various careers. It's equally important to understand what is really important to you. When armed with an understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, and an awareness of what you truly value, you are in an excellent position to pick a career which you will find rewarding.

INFJs 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 INFJs have such strong value systems, & 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.

## **Career Suggestions for the INFJ**

Research has shown that many of the different Personality Types tend to have distinct preferences in their choice of careers. We have incorporated observations of each type's character traits which

affect career choice along with some suggestions for possible directions. We have also included lists of actual careers which the various types have chosen in their lives.

This material is provided for your reference, and is intended to be an informational guide. It does not comprise a complete analysis of ideal careers for individuals & does not guarantee success or failure at any occupation. As we know, individuals vary greatly. However, we highly encourage personal self-knowledge & research in your quest to live up to your fullest, and for this reason we provide you with this information. For a complete & personal evaluation of career possibilities, you should speak with a career guidance counselor.

- Clergy / Religious Work
- Teachers
- Medical Doctors / Dentists
- Alternative Health Care Practitioners, i.e. Chiropractor, Reflexologist
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Counselors and Social Workers
- Musicians and Artists
- Photographers
- Child Care / Early Childhood Developments

## Personality and Relationships

*“And above all, have fervent love for one another: for love shall cover the multitude of sins.”*

– Peter 4:8

Most of us are probably allured by the attractive notion that effortless relationships exist. Whether it be happily-ever-after marriages, or friendships which last forever, or parent/child bonds which supersede the need to understand each other, we’d all like to believe that our most intimate relationships are unconditional, and strong enough to withstand whatever may come. However, at some point in our lives most of us need to face the fact that relationships require effort to keep them strong and positive, and that even wonderful, strong relationships can be destroyed by neglect.

Whether you’re looking to improve a love relationship, familial relationships, friendships, or employer/employee relationships, understanding your own personality type and the personality type of the other person involved in the relationship will bring a new dynamic to the situation, which will allow better understanding and communication. Although the different types of relationships have very different characteristics and specific needs, there are two basic areas which seem to be critical in all relationships: *Expectations and Communication*. What do we expect from ourselves and the other person involved in the relationship? How do we communicate these expectations, and our feelings and opinions to the person in the relationship? How does our personality type affect our expectations and methods of communication? Does our personality type affect who we are romantically attracted to? How does it affect who our friends are, and who we work with best? These are the questions which we address following.

### **\*\*Disclaimer\*\***

Please note that we are not prescribing an absolute solution to your relationship problems, nor are we stating that there's any guarantee of improved odds with particular type pairings. Statistics show that individuals who are most happy within their marriages are those who have the highest levels of inner peace and those who have the most optimistic outlook on life in general. We do not address people's emotional standing here when discussing relationship issues, which is another important aspect of relationship dynamics.

## ***Opposites Attract***

That old concept and expression "opposites attract" has been batted around for centuries. And in fact, it's very true when it comes to love relationships. Through our research, we have noted that people are usually attracted to their opposite on the Extraversion/Introversion and Judging/Perceiving scales. We are naturally attracted to individuals who are different from ourselves – and therefore somewhat exciting. But it's not just the exciting differences which attract us to our opposites, it is also a natural quest for completion. We naturally are drawn towards individuals who have strengths which we are missing. When two opposites function as a couple, they become a more well-rounded, functioning unit. There is also the theory that our natural attraction to our opposites is a subconscious way of forcing us to deal with the weaker aspects of our own nature. While we are highly attracted to our opposites, two opposites involved in an intimate relationship have significant issues and communication barriers to overcome. So in a sense, our attraction to the opposite personality can be seen as our subconscious minds driving us towards becoming a more complete individual, by causing us to face the areas in life which are most difficult to us.

The same cannot be said for other kinds of relationships. When it comes to work colleagues, or friends, we are not especially interested in dealing with people who are very unlike ourselves. We are most comfortable with those who have similar interests and perspectives, and we do not show a lot of motivation or patience for dealing with our opposites.

## ***Birds of a Feather Flock Together***

Although we are attracted to people who are very different from us in the way we deal with the world, we are most attracted to others who have a similar focus in their lives. Couples who have the same dominant function in their personalities seems to have the longest and happiest relationships. So, for example, an individual whose dominant function is Introverted Sensing (ISTJ or ISFJ) seems to be naturally drawn towards partners with a dominant function of Extraverted Sensing (ESTP or ESFP).

We have also noticed that Sensors seem to communicate best with other Sensors, and that iNtuitives seem to communicate best with other iNtuitives. There seems to be a more equal partnership formed with people who communicate on the same level, although there are many successful relationships between Sensors and iNtuitives. Two individuals of any type who are well-developed and balanced can communicate effectively and make a relationship work, but many people will communicate best with people who share their same information gathering preference.

With that in mind, it shouldn't come as any surprise to learn that research regarding Personality Type and Relationships shows a definite pattern which indicates that successful mates often share the same dominant function, and the same letter preference ("S" or "N") for their information gathering function. Of course, that does not mean that people with different preferences cannot have a happy, successful marriage, it simply indicates that people frequently settle down with individuals who are on their same "wave-length".

## **INFJs in Relationships**

INFJs are warm and affirming people who are usually also deep and complex. They're likely to seek out and promote relationships that are intense & 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.

### *Relationship 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)

### *Relationship 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

## **INFJ Natural Partners (in love and in life)**

Before you read this section, I would like to put in a word of caution *not* to take this section too seriously. Take it for what it's worth, a statistical likelihood.

All that means is that given some large sampling of pairs of various personality types, the natural partners are the ones which get along best most frequently. However, for any given pair, too

many factors in life influence how a relationship develops for naturally matching personalities to be the determining factor. It's a possible edge, enough to use as the core for love partner matching on love matching sites like *chemistry.com* or *e-harmony*, but not enough to be used along as those sites also take into account other life factors like personal interests, jobs and such.

Natural partners listed here are for life, in general, although some of the text is written for love partners rather than just two people's ability to get along together well.

Although two well-developed individuals of any type can enjoy a healthy relationship, the *INFJ's natural partner* is the *ENTP*, or the *ENFP*. See their profiles on the [Digital Citizen](#) website. The INFJ's dominant function of Introverted iNtuition is best matched with a personality type that is dominated by Extraverted iNtuition.

You may be interested in understanding how we came to the conclusion that certain types are ideal for each other. Our type pairing is a result of combining observation, research, and understanding of Jungian psychological type. Observation and research of married couples shows that there is a definite trend in types that are attracted to each other, and in type combinations that have the longest lasting relationships. Our understanding of psychological type helps to see that these types typically have the same dominant function, but with a different attitude.

In Jungian terms, "functions" refer to the four core traits: iNtuition (N), Sensing (S), Feeling (F), and Thinking (T). The term "attitude" refers to the direction of the function, *i.e.* Introverted (I) or Extraverted (E).

So, for example, a person with a personality type of ISFP has a dominant function of Introverted Feeling. More specifically, Feeling in the dominant function, and its attitude (or direction) is Introverted. A person with this personality type is likely to be most attracted to, and fit best with, a person that has Extraverted Feeling dominating their personality. Extraverted Feeling dominates the personality types ESFJ and ENFJ. We therefore determine that the ISFP's natural partner is the ESFJ or the ENFJ.

Our natural attraction to people who share our dominant function, but who use it in a different direction works very well for us. We not only flip-flop the Introverted or Extraverted trait, but we also flip-flop the Judging or Perceiving trait. In this way, the partner that we choose for ourselves will have a very different approach to dealing with the world. If we are laid-back and indecisive, our partner will be structured and decisive. If we are reserved, our partner will be outgoing. For all of our apparent differences, we will share a common vision of what's truly important in life.

For people whose personality types are dominated by Decision Making functions, (*i.e.* Thinking or Feeling), their ideal partners will include both Sensing and iNtuitive types. Many people have problems communicating effectively with people who do not share their same preference for Information Gathering. So, if you have a very strong preference for Sensing or iNtuition, you will need to give the personality type with the same preference a higher value as a likely natural partner. For example, an ISFP who strongly prefers Sensing will work best with an ESFJ, rather than an ENFJ.

Although we believe firmly that this model works very well to help in finding and maintaining healthy relationships, it is important to remember that it's just a tool. We offer guidelines to help you understand the kinds of things that you value in a relationship, rather than guidelines that you need to follow strictly. Two well-developed individuals of any type can make a relationship work, and work is a key concept here! There is no such thing as an effortless relationship. Don't use this model as an excuse to dump your relationship.

## INFJs as Lovers

*"To love means to open ourselves to the negative as well as the positive – to grief, sorrow, and disappointment as well as to joy, fulfillment, and an intensity of consciousness we did not know was possible before."*

– Rollo May

INFJs are warm, considerate partners who feel great depth of love for their partners. They enjoy showing this love, and want to receive affirmation back from their mates.

INTJs are perfectionists, constantly striving to achieve the Perfect Relationship. This can be frustrating to their mates, who may feel put upon by the INFJs demanding perfectionism. However, it may also be greatly appreciated, because it indicates a sincere commitment to the relationship, and a depth of caring which is not usually present in other types.

## Sexual Tendencies

Sexually, INFJs view intimacy as a nearly spiritual experience. They embrace the opportunity to bond heart and soul with their mates. As service-oriented individuals, it's very important to them that their mates are happy. Intimacy is an opportunity for the INFJ to selflessly give their love, and experience it in a tangible way.

## INFJs as Parents

*"You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth...  
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;  
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,  
so He loves also the bow that is stable."*

– Kahlil Gibran

INFJs usually make warm & caring parents. They strive to help their children know the difference between right & wrong, and who are independent, growth-oriented individuals.

Along the path to that goal they are generally very warm and caring, and are likely to treat their children as individuals who have a voice in family decisions. They want their children to be able

to think for themselves, and make the right decisions. They also can be quite demanding on their children, and may have very high expectations for their behavior. Although they are generally soft-spoken and gentle, they may become stubborn and sharp-tongued at times when their expectations aren't met, or when under a lot of stress.

INFJs take their parenting role with ultimate seriousness. They will make sacrifices for their children without second thought or remorse. Passing on their values to their children is a serious priority. Children of INFJs remember their parents fondly as warm, patient, and inspirational.

## **INFJs as Friends**

Although the INFJ is likely to put friends behind their God and their families in terms of importance, they do value their friendships. As idealists who have strong value systems, INFJs seek authenticity and depth in their close relationships, and especially value people who can see and appreciate the INFJ for who they are and what they stand for.

The INFJ is likely to spend a lot of time socializing with family members. If they are religious, they probably are social with members of their religious community. After that, the INFJ may have friends represented from any of the personality types. They are usually extremely intuitive individuals, who will have no patience for anyone they feel is dishonest or corrupt. They'll have no interest in being around these kinds of people.

All kinds of people are drawn towards the INFJ. They are usually quite popular, although they may be unaware of it themselves, because they don't place a lot of importance on it.

The INFJ is valued by their close friends for their warmth and consideration, their new and interesting ways of looking at things, and for their ability to inspire and motivate others to be the best that they can be. genuine article that they are.

## **Personal Growth**

Perhaps the most important realization that an individual can make in their quest for personal growth is that there is no single formula that defines the path to personal success. We all have different goals and priorities, which means that different activities and attitudes will make us feel good about ourselves. We also have different natural strengths and weaknesses that are a part of our inherent personality type. How then, as individuals, can we feel successful in our lives?

### *Understand What's Important to You*

Each personality type has a different idea of what it means to be successful. Self-knowledge is one common goal that will help everyone achieve personal success. So many people are hung up on somebody else's idea of what it means to be successful, and they are unaware of what is truly important to them. This is completely normal. We all have important role-models and influencers in our lives who may have basic values that are quite different from our own. If this

is the case, it's important to recognize that the discrepancy between what we have been taught is truly important and what we personally believe to be truly important is due to a difference in perspective. If we spend our time and effort trying to meet somebody else's idea of success, and ignore or belittle any conflicting messages from our own psyche, then we will find ourselves exhausted and unhappy. Realizing what is truly important to us is a major step towards achieving personal success.

## ***Recognize Your Weaknesses Without Hiding Behind Them***

While improving our self-knowledge and realizing our true goals can be very liberating, we should not discard the rules of the society in which we live. We must recognize that other people's value systems are no less important than our own. And we must recognize and accept that we live in a society in which certain personality types and behaviors are more suited towards particular tasks. This is the second key that will open the door towards personal growth.

For example, there are situations in which it is more appropriate & effective to show compassion and caring (Feeling), rather than impersonal logic (Thinking). Likewise, there are situations that call for using impersonal logic to make a decision, in which the more subjective viewpoint of the Feeling function is inappropriate and ineffective. Persons with a preference for Feeling will have a natural advantage over Thinkers in situations that require compassion and awareness of other's emotions. Conversely, persons with a preference for Thinking will have a natural advantage over Feelers in situations that require the ability to make a decision based on impersonal data.

As we learn about our personality type and the types of others, we are empowered with an understanding of why people react differently in different situations. When put into the context of Psychological Type, we can better accept and understand people's behaviors that are different from ours. These insights are extremely useful and powerful to us as individuals. However, if we are concerned with growing as individuals, we must take care not to use personality type as an excuse for our inappropriate behavior. While it's powerful and useful to notice that another person's inappropriate behavior may be due to their personality type, we cannot use the same reasoning on ourselves. We should recognize that our personality type has weaknesses, but we must use that knowledge to conquer those weaknesses rather than to excuse poor behavior. We cannot be responsible for other people's behavior, but we can control our own.

Accordingly, if we notice that someone seems to be unable to make an impersonal decision that is isolated from human perspective, we should say to ourselves, "Ah ha, here is a Feeler. This person does not use Thinking well, and that is why they're behaving this way." Yet when we as Feelers are presented with a situation that requires an impersonal approach, we should NOT say to ourselves "I am a Feeler, and can't be expected to make decisions based purely on impersonal facts & logic." This kind of rationalization for behavior is certainly an easy way out of a situation, but it enforces the weakness, making it weaker and weaker still.

## ***Strive for Balance***

Most of the weaknesses associated with any given personality type are a result of that type's dominant function overtaking the personality to the extent that the other functions become

slaves to the dominant function. Although it is natural for every personality to be ruled by its dominant function, it becomes a problem when the supporting functions are not allowed to develop fully on their own because they are too busy “serving the master”. In such cases, a personality can become quite imbalanced.

A situation in which the dominant function of a personality completely overshadows the other personality functions is analogous to a kingdom ruled by an overbearing king who requires absolute servitude. Imagine such a king sitting down to dinner in his castle. He keeps all of his servants running about to bring him dinner, and requires that they serve him fully (disregarding their own needs) until he is completely sated. His Foreign Minister, expected at an important affair at a neighboring kingdom, finds himself pouring ale. His Minister of Domestic Affairs, rather than addressing the issue of a failing economy, slices roast turkey. His staff grabs food for themselves here and there, but never get what they really need or want, and are consequently unsatisfied, malnourished, and underdeveloped. The issues that the staff should be taking care of are left undone, because they never finish their primary task of serving the king. The king’s immediate needs are being met, and so he is tolerably happy, but he is an ineffective king. As far as he knows, everything and everybody exists simply to serve him. He has no concept of Success beyond his daily needs. Since he cannot see beyond his own needs, the entire kingdom suffers.

Likewise, a personality that has developed with a goal of serving the dominant function above all other considerations often results in a person who is imbalanced. In severe cases, weaknesses associated with the given type are often quite apparent to others and overshadow the individual’s natural strengths. Such a drastic imbalance is not common, and may be the result of continuous and extreme stress. Most people will experience times in their lives during which they are stressed to the point of serious imbalance. People who experience this constantly have issues that need to be dealt with, and should seek help.

Much more commonly, we see individuals who exhibit both the strengths and weaknesses of their type. It is natural and healthy that each personality type is ruled by a dominant function, and that the other functions support the ruling function. We don’t seek to change anyone’s natural self, or to achieve a perfect balance amongst a personality’s functions. By definition, a kingdom needs a king in order to exist, and a personality needs a dominant function. However, a kingdom with a well-developed and effective king (the dominant function), who has well-trained and educated advisors (the supporting functions), will thrive more than the kingdom ruled by a neglectful king who is supported by inexperienced advisors.

As we can see, Balance and Success are relative terms. They have different meaning for each personality type, but one statement is true for all types: Balance is the key to Success.

## *Opening the Door*

So how do we go about realizing what’s truly important to us? How do we recognize our weaknesses, and learn not to hide behind them? How do we become balanced? How do we open that magical door that will show us the way to personal growth and success?

There is no quickie scheme that will make you a successful person. Psychological Type is a powerful aid in our quest for excellence, but it is not the actual solution. It is a model that

will help you to expand your understanding of human nature. An improved understanding of yourself and others will help you to find, follow or expand your path. An awareness and acceptance of the fact that one personality function may be more effective than another function in a given situation will help you to understand the relevance of personal growth to your life.

Carl Jung identified a process of personal growth that he called individuation, which is essentially the conscious realization of your true self, beyond the Ego that is presented by your conscious self. Our efforts to help people develop themselves is essentially the effort to help them to realize that their personal perspectives and conscious ideas are only a small part of who they are, and that the more they try to develop and defend this superficial “self”, the further they get away from their true Self. This realization helps a psyche in many concrete ways, and is also a positive step towards promoting a psyche that is open to the process of individuation. For the purposes of making this realization accessible to the general public, our writings are mostly void of complex theoretical discussion.

## **INFJ Personal Growth**

### *What does Success Mean to You?*

People with the INFJ personality type are intense and perfectionist. 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 around 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 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 how you can better use your talents to achieve your dreams.

Nearly all INFJs 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. INFJs 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.
- Perfectionist 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.

INFJs 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, such as Jesus (INFJ) & Mahatma Ghandi (INFJ).

### *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.

INFJs 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 INFJs 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 & 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 & auxiliary functions. For INFJs, 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. As a result, 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 iNtutions, 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 INFJs 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. INFJs 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*

Some INFJs 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. Both these issues stem from using Extraverted Feeling primarily to dismiss external ideas, rather than to sort through their own iNtutions.

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 is 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 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 iNtutions, rather than as a means of disregarding other people's ideas.
3. **Talk Through Your Thoughts.** You need to step through your iNtutions 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 & 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.

## References

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- [Keirse.com](http://Keirse.com)