

Profile of the ESFP (Performer)

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This document contains detailed information about the *ESFP* 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 Performer

In the Keirsey Temperament version of the Jung personality type system, the *ESFP* profile is known as the *Performer*, though this is meant to be career advice. Here is Keirsey's description.

Performers have the special ability, even among the Artisans, to delight those around them with their warmth, their good humor, and with their often extraordinary skills in music, comedy, and drama. Whether on the job, with friends, or with their families, Performers are exciting and full of fun, and their great social interest lies in stimulating those around them to take a break from work and worry, to lighten up and enjoy life.

Performers are plentiful, something over ten percent of the population, and this is fortunate, because they bring pleasure to so many of us. Performers are the people for whom it can truly be said "all the world's a stage." Born entertainers, they love the excitement of playing to an audience, and will quickly become the center of attention wherever they are. Performers aren't comfortable being alone, and seek the company of others whenever possible – which they usually find, for they make wonderful playmates. Performers are smooth, talkative & witty; they always seem to know the latest jokes and stories, and are quick with wisecracks and wordplay-nothing is so serious or sacred that it can't be made fun of. Performers also like to live in the fast lane, and seem up on the latest fashions of dress, food, drink, and music. Lively and uninhibited, Performers are the life of the party, always trying to create in those around them a mood of eat, drink, and be merry.

The Performers' talent for enjoying life is healthy for the most part, though it also makes them more subject to temptations than the other types. Pleasure seems to be an end in itself for them, and variety is the spice of life. And so Performers are open to trying almost anything that promises them a good time, not always giving enough thought to the consequences.

Like the other Artisans, Performers are incurably optimistic – "Always look on the bright side," is their motto – and they will avoid worries and troubles by ignoring them as long as possible. They are also the most generous of all the types, second only to the Composer Artisans [ISFPs] in kindness. Performers haven't a mean or stingy bone in their body-what's theirs is yours-and they seem to have little idea of saving or conserving. They give what they have to one and all without expectation of reward, just as they love freely, and without expecting anything in return. In so

many ways, Performers view life as an eternal cornucopia from which flows an endless supply of pleasures.

Portrait II – The Performer

The *ESFP* profile is also often called the *Performer*. This is how the ESFP profile is also often summarized.

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.

ESFPs 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.

ESFPs 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 & place more importance on immediate sensation & 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 & 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.

ESFPs 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 & 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.

ESFPs 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”.

ESFPs 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. ESFPs 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.

ESFPs usually like to feel strongly bonded with other people, and have a connection with animals & 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 & 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 Preference Ordering

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

Famous Performers

- Elvis Presley
- Ronald Reagan
- Bill Clinton
- Marilyn Monroe
- Magic Johnson
- Judy Garland
- John Goodman
- Elizabeth Taylor
- Pablo Picasso

ESFP 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.

ESFPs 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

ESFPs 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.

Career Suggestions for the ESFP

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.

- Artists, Performers and Actors
- Sales Representatives

- Counselors / Social Work
- Child Care
- Fashion Designers
- Interior Decorators
- Consultants
- Photographers

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".

ESFPs in Relationships

ESFPs 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.

Relationship 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

Relationship 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

ESFP 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 *ESFP's natural partner* is the *ISTJ*, or the *ISFJ*. See their profiles on the [Digital Citizen](#) website. The ESFP's dominant Extraverted Sensing function is best matched with a personality that is dominated by Introverted Sensing.

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.

ESFPs 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

ESFPs embrace their love relationships in a Big way - similar to the way they approach their lives in general. They love to be in love, and will try to make the most of each moment. They take things on a day-by-day basis, and are uncomfortable thinking too much about the future, or making plans far in advance. For this reason, ESFPs are not natural long-term commitment people. They may feel tremendously committed on a day-by-day basis, but they do not naturally plan for their futures.

This commitment issue is a potential pitfall for the ESFP. Many people of this type overcome this potential weakness, and become involved in truly satisfying, lifelong relationships. Others do not address this weakness, and move from relationship to relationship without forming real commitments, convincing themselves that this is what they truly want.

ESFPs tend to be materialistic, and somewhat caught up in "what others think" of them. They should take care that this doesn't interfere with their personal relationships, since many of the others types will not be able to relate to their perspectives on these matters.

ESFPs do not handle conflict well at all. They take any sort of criticism very personally, and consider it to be a general indictment of their character. They may react with anger and harsh words which they would later like to take back. ESFPs would do themselves a favor if they would come to realize that criticism can be looked at constructively, rather than destructively. If they can hear criticism without feeling personally threatened, the ESFP will have come a very long way towards greatly improving the strength and health of their relationships.

ESFPs are extremely literal and concrete when communicating. They say things in a very direct, abrupt manner, and can sometimes even unintentionally seem quite harsh. They like things to be communicated to them in a similar, concrete fashion. They dislike theory and abstraction, and will frequently misunderstand the gist of a communication if it is not communicated in a factual, present-tense manner. Discussions regarding the future or the past are not the ESFP's strong suit, and in fact they're likely to misconstrue future-looking statements as something that needs immediate attention. When they discover that the discussion is not regarding an immediate concern, they become disinterested.

ESFPs are in general very warm and giving people, with simple needs and demands from their partners. They just want to be happy, and want to bring happiness to others. They are energetic and popular individuals who will liven up the social life of the couple, and keep many new experiences on the horizon.

Sexual Tendencies

Sexually, the ESFP is a very earthy and sensual individual who seeks and enjoys intimate contact with their partners. Living in the here-and-now, they thoroughly embrace and enjoy the experience with all five senses. They are generous and warm, and highly interested in making their partners happy.

ESFPs 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

The ESFP's "go with the flow", fun-loving attitude will extend to the raising of their children. They are warm and affectionate parents, and are great for giving practical care to their children. They like to do things in a Big way, and enjoy big families.

The ESFP will freely give love and affection to their children, but they frequently have a problem with defining a structured, orderly environment for them, and they may rely on their mates in this regard. Ultimately, the ESFP likely believes that too much structure is not a healthy thing for anyone, and so they're unlikely to enforce a highly structured or disciplined environment. If this trait is strongly present in the ESFP, and is not counteracted by their mate's perspective, it could be considered a potential pitfall for the ESFP parent. Children need some structure which can be depended upon as they grow up.

The ESFP is very practical and concrete in their daily needs, and are usually quite good at taking care of their children's daily needs. Although their approach to life is frequently "ad-lib", and their lives are almost always extremely full of exciting events, the ESFP is very good at juggling many things at once, which makes them especially good at handling the various issues which come up in a large family.

ESFPs tend to have difficulty with the authoritarian role, preferring to be their children's friend. However, they do expect to be given respect & to be obeyed when necessary, and will fall into the role of parental authoritarian at times. This can be frustrating for some children, especially those with strong Judging tendencies as they will not know what to expect from their ESFP parent.

ESFPs are generally remembered fondly by their children for being fun-loving, upbeat, and affectionate, although somewhat scattered.

ESFPs as Friends

ESFPs are highly enthusiastic and effervescent. They are usually very popular, because people are naturally drawn towards them. They get such genuine delight and enjoyment from experiences which they encounter in life, and they love nothing better than to draw a crowd of people along with them for the sheer fun of it. ESFPs try to turn every day into a party, and they're usually successful at doing so.

ESFPs are highly valued for their ability to have a good time, and for their genuine warmth and interest towards people. They are extremely in tune with their five senses, and may be prone to overload them with too much alcohol, food, or drugs. They get along with all sorts of people, though they're not interested in spending time with people they find boring, or who expect the ESFP to communicate with them on an iNtuitive or Thinking level. Some people may disapprove of the ESFP's fun-oriented lifestyle. Others may be put off by their very straight-forward and blunt speaking style. The ESFP is likely to especially enjoy spending time with other Extraverts who have the Feeling preference, although they may have a special place in their hearts for people of any preference.

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 & 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 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 & defend this superficial "self", the further they get away from their true Self. This realization helps a psyche in many concrete ways & is also a positive step towards promoting a psyche open to the process of individuation. For purposes of making this realization accessible to the general public, our writings are mostly void of complex theoretical discussion.

ESFP Personal Growth

What does Success Mean to You?

ESFPs 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 savour 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 & 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 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 ESFPs 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.

ESFPs 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.

ESFPs 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 ESFPs 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 ESFPs unique make up and result from their diminished capacity to use abstract reasoning:

- May be seen by others as unnecessarily coarse in their behaviour 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 & immediate apparent facts of the external world. ESFPs 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 ESFPs 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 ESFPs 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 not 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 & 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 & although the problems discussed here can indeed be felt to some level by all ESFPs, 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 & 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

Some ESFPs 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 ESFPs 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 guilt from pride, rightness or applicability from wrongness or misapplication, *etc.*

Specific suggestions:

- 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 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 yourself, 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.

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