

Profile of the INTP (Architect / Thinker)

Compiled and edited by Minh Tan

Words of Caution to Interpreting This Material	2
Use the Results as a Starting Point, Not an End Point	3
Portrait I	3
Portrait II.....	4
Jungian Preferences	5
Famous People of this Type	5
Traits, Strengths and Weaknesses	6
Career Suggestions	7
Personality and Relationships	7
In Relationships	9
As Natural Partners.....	10
As Lovers	11
As Parents	12
As Friends.....	13
Personal Growth.....	13
Personal Growth for This Type	16
Ten Rules to Live by for Success for This Type.....	22
References	22

This document contains detailed information about the *INTP* 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 Architect

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

Architects need not be thought of as only interested in drawing blueprints for buildings or roads or bridges. They are the master designers of all kinds of theoretical systems, including school curricula, corporate strategies, and new technologies. For Architects, the world exists primarily to be analyzed, understood, explained - and re-designed. External reality in itself is unimportant, little more than raw material to be organized into structural models. What is important for Architects is that they grasp fundamental principles and natural laws, and that their designs are elegant, that is, efficient and coherent.

Architects are rare – maybe 1% of the population – and show the greatest precision in thought and speech of all the types. They tend to see distinctions and inconsistencies instantaneously, and can detect contradictions no matter when or where they were made. It is difficult for an Architect to listen to nonsense, even in a casual conversation, without pointing out the speaker's error. And in any serious discussion or debate Architects are devastating, their skill in framing arguments giving them an enormous advantage. Architects regard all discussions as a search for understanding, and believe their function is to eliminate inconsistencies, which can make communication with them an uncomfortable experience for many.

Ruthless pragmatists about ideas, and insatiably curious, Architects are driven to find the most efficient means to their ends, and they will learn in any manner and degree they can. They will listen to amateurs if their ideas are useful, and will ignore the experts if theirs are not. Authority derived from office, credential, or celebrity does not impress them. Architects are interested only in what make sense, and thus only statements that are consistent and coherent carry any weight with them.

Architects often seem difficult to know. They are inclined to be shy except with close friends, and their reserve is difficult to penetrate. Able to concentrate better than any other type, they prefer to work quietly at their computers or drafting tables, and often alone. Architects also become obsessed with analysis, and this can seem to shut others out. Once caught up in a thought process,

Architects close off and persevere until they comprehend the issue in all its complexity. Architects prize intelligence, and with their grand desire to grasp the structure of the universe, they can seem arrogant & may show impatience with others who have less ability, or who are less driven.

Portrait II – The Thinker

The *INTP* profile is also often called the *Thinker*. This is how the INTP profile is also often summarized.

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

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

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

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

The INTP has no understanding or value for decisions made on the basis of personal subjectivity or feelings. They strive constantly to achieve logical conclusions to problems & don't understand the importance or relevance of applying subjective emotional considerations to decisions. For

this reason, INTPs are usually not in-tune with how people are feeling, and are not naturally well-equipped to meet the emotional needs of others.

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

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

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

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

Jungian Preference Ordering

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

Famous Architects

- Albert Einstein
- Thomas Jefferson
- Marie Curie
- Charles Darwin
- David Keirse
- George Soros
- Gregory Peck
- Harper Lee
- Robert Rosen

INTP 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.

INTPs generally have the following traits:

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

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

Career Suggestions for the INTP

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.

- Scientists – especially Physics, Chemistry
- Photographers
- Strategic Planners
- Mathematicians
- University Professors
- Computer Programmers, Systems Analysts, Computer Animation and Computer Specialists
- Technical Writers
- Engineers
- Lawyers / Attorneys
- Judges
- Forensic Research
- Forestry and Park Rangers

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 & balanced can communicate effectively and make a relationship work, but most 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".

INTPs in Relationships

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

Relationship Strengths

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

Relationship Weaknesses

- Not naturally in tune with others' feelings; slow to respond to emotional needs
- Not naturally good at expressing their own feelings and emotions

- Tend to be suspicious and distrusting of others
- Not usually good at practical matters, such as money management, unless their work involves these concerns
- They have difficulty leaving bad relationships
- Tend to “blow off” conflict situations by ignoring them, or else they “blow up” in heated anger

INTP 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 *INTP’s natural partner* is the *ENTJ*, or the *ESTJ*. See their profiles on the [Digital Citizen](#) website. The INTP’s dominant function of Introverted Thinking is best matched with a partner whose personality is dominated by Extraverted Thinking. The INTP/ENTJ match is ideal, because these types shared iNtuition as a common way of perceiving the world.

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.

INTPs 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

INTPs approach their intimate relationships quite seriously - as they approach most things in life. They take their vows and commitments seriously, and are usually faithful and loyal. They are usually pretty easy to live with and be around, because they have simple daily needs and are not overly demanding of their partners in almost any respect. While the INTP's internal life is highly theoretical and complex, their external life in comparison is usually quite simple. They like to keep the complexities of their external world to a minimum, so that they can focus their brain power on working through their theories internally. This makes them very straight-forward, honest lovers, with a love that is quite pure in its simple, uncomplicated nature.

Although they choose to keep things straight-forward in their relationships, this does not mean that the INTP is lacking in depth of feeling or passion. The INTP is very creative person, who has vivid imaginations. They can be very excitable and passionate about their love relationships. Sometimes, they have a problem reconciling the exciting visions of their internal worlds with the actuality of their external circumstances.

The largest area of potential strife in an INTP's intimate relationship is their slowness in understanding and meeting their partner's emotional needs. The INTP may be extremely dedicated to the relationship, and deeply in love with their partner, but may have no understanding of their mate's emotional life, and may not express their own feelings often or well. When the INTP does express themselves, it's likely to be in their own way at their own time, rather than in response to their partner's needs. If this is an issue which has caused serious problems in a relationship, the INTP should work on becoming more aware of their partner's feelings, and their partner should work on not requiring explicit positive affirmation to feel loved by the INTP.

INTPs do not like to deal with messy complications, such as interpersonal conflict, so they may fall into the habit of ignoring conflict when it occurs. If they feel they must face the conflict, they are likely to approach it from an analytical perspective. This may aggravate the conflict situation, if their partner simply wants to feel that they are supported and loved. Most people (especially those with the Feeling preference) simply want to be encouraged, affirmed and supported when they are upset. The INTP should practice meeting these needs in conflict situations.

Sexual Tendencies

Sexually, the INTP usually approaches intimacy with enthusiasm and excitement. Some INTPs play down entirely the need for sexual relations in their lives, but most use their rich imaginations & child-like enthusiasm to make the most of the moment. The INTP will usually be experiencing the moment with vivid intensity inside their own minds, though this may or may not be apparent to their partner.

INTPs 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

INTPs love and respect Knowledge, and want to pass their jewels of thought down to their children. Their greatest goal and satisfaction as a parent is seeing their children grow into independent, rational adults.

INTP parents are likely to encourage their children to grow as individuals, rather than attempt to fit them into a preconceived mold. They will stress autonomy through the children's growth. They're likely to respect their children's opinions and wishes, and allow their children to have a voice and presence in the family.

The INTP parents are likely to be pretty laid-back and flexible with their children, sometimes to the point of being relatively "hands-off" with regards to the day-to-day issues. They're likely to count on their spouse for providing structure and schedules. Since the INTP does not live in an

overly structured or organized manner, they're not likely to expect or create this environment for their children. If their spouse is not someone with the "J" preference, their children may suffer from a lack of boundaries. This is something the INTP should pay special attention to. Growing children don't know Right from Wrong, and so benefit from having their parents define these boundaries for them.

In spite of their relatively unstructured approach to parenting, INTPs take their role as parent very seriously, and are likely to put forth much effort into doing what they feel will be most effective in helping their children grow into independent, wise adults. INTPs enjoy parenting, and get a lot of fun out of their children. They're also likely to be very proud and loyal parents.

INTPs may have a problem meeting the emotional needs of their children. Although they generally are deeply caring and supportive individuals, the INTP does not always pick up on emotional clues. A troubled child of an unaware INTP parent may have to resort to drastic "attention-getting" tactics to get their parent to understand their emotional difficulties. If you find yourself in this situation, you may find that expressing some of your own emotions will do wonders for your child, yourself, and your relationship. Although it may not be possible for you to suddenly be "tuned in" on what your children are feeling, at least you can let them know that you care.

Children of INTP parents generally remember them respectfully and affectionately as loyal, fair, and tolerant parents, who care for them a great deal, although they don't often show it.

INTPs as Friends

INTPs are likely to have friends who share their interests and pursuits. Since the INTP loves theories, ideas, and concepts, they are not likely to have much patience or understanding for Sensing people, who are not usually comfortable with abstract conceptualizing.

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 quite different from our own. If so, 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 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.

INTP Personal Growth

What does Success Mean to You?

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

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

The INTP is happiest in situations in which they can use logic regularly in an effort to uncover Truths about the Entity. Their ability to be effective in these efforts, as well as their ability to deal with people and feel comfortable with their place in the world, will be in large part dependent on the development of Extraverted iNtuition. Although they have more simple needs from interpersonal relationships than most other types have, it’s very important that they keep up

their extraverted relationships, rather than going it alone. INTPs who isolate themselves rarely feel happy or successful. The INTP's feeling of success depends upon their opportunities to exercise their active mind, their opportunities to seek and find Truth, and the condition of their relationships and extraverted life.

Allowing Your Strengths to Flourish

As an INTP, you have gifts that are specific to your personality type that aren't natural strengths for other types. By recognizing your special gifts and encouraging their growth and development, you will more readily see your place in the world, and be more content with your role.

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

- They have a natural ability to focus and get "into the zone" when working on a problem. They can absorb their minds completely with an issue, and work it through with amazing speed and accuracy. This ability makes them outstanding trouble-shooters. Since their logical abilities are dependent on their experiences, their abilities will increase with time. INTPs with experience are often seen as the "gurus" of their professions.
- Their respect for precision in communication lends them the ability to accurately convey their ideas and discoveries in full.
- They are usually quite intelligent and can grasp difficult concepts.
- They are often jovial and good-natured, with a good sense of humor.
- They are not overly demanding in personal relationships, and have simple daily needs. They are often easy and enjoyable to live with.

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

- They may be exceptionally intelligent, and make ground-breaking discoveries.
- With a well-developed understanding of their environment and the ability to act very quickly, they may be good athletes.
- They're typically able to communicate their ideas more concisely than the average INTP without sacrificing accuracy.
- They understand the benefits of close relationships, and understand how to support and enhance these relationships.
- They see the value of principles that are not strictly logical
- They have attractive and compelling personalities, and are well-liked and accepted by most people.

Potential Problem Areas

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

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

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

Explanation of Problems

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Solutions

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

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

Living Happily

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

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

Specific suggestions:

- Figure out how you feel about the other person. Do not falsely express love, or lead someone on with your ambivalence.
- Don't expect yourself to be a master at the "touchy-feely" game. Be yourself, but remember that there is a basic assumption of human decency that must be adhered to in relationships. If you're not sure what that means, take special care to observe how people in "good" committed relationships behave towards each other, so that you can determine where the lines are drawn.
- Pair yourself with an Extraverted Thinker (ESTJ or ENTJ) who is less likely to assume that the lack of feedback is the same thing as negative feedback.
- Realize and accept that for you a satisfying relationship will start with the head, and move on towards the heart.
- Expanding your world and experiences will expand your understanding of human expectations. Try to figure out the personality type of people that you know and encounter in your life.
- Take care to notice what people look like in different social situations. Notice their hair, makeup (or lack thereof), the condition of their clothes, their shoes, their facial expressions. Don't compare others to your own appearance, simply take notice of it.
- When having a conversation with a friend or relative, spend at least half of the time talking about them. Concentrate on really understanding where the person is coming from with their concerns. Ask questions.
- Think of the people who are closest to you. Remember that they have their own lives going on. Try to visualize what that person is doing, and imagine what kinds of things that person is thinking about. Don't pass judgment, just think about it.

Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve Success

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Realize your gift at mastering logical problems and situations, and give yourself plenty of opportunities to exercise your abilities. Much of your sense of well-being will come from these experiences.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** We all have weaknesses. Recognizing your weaknesses for what they are (without beating yourself up) will give you the power to change your life for the better.
3. **Talk About Your Thoughts.** Discussing your ideas and perceptions with others will help you to develop your Extraverted iNtuition, and thus your understanding of the world. How well you use your auxiliary function is very important to your overall health and happiness.
4. **Listen to Everything.** Try not to dismiss anything immediately. Let it soak in, and then apply judgment. Try not to dismiss things that are illogical – they are not illogical.
5. **Be Aware of Others.** Understand that everyone has their own lives and their own perspectives. Everyone has something to offer. Try to identify people’s personality type.
6. **Recognize Social Principles.** Realize that our society functions around some basic social principles, and that our society would fail unless those principles are recognized and upheld. In a democracy, people vote. At a red stoplight, people stop. If people stopped voting because it wasn’t important them, who would be in power? If people stopped stopping at red stop lights because it didn’t fit into their plans, how could we drive safely? Your priorities and plans are important, but you must recognize that the external world’s agenda is also important. Don’t dismiss the importance of principles that don’t affect your life directly.
7. **Get Out of Your Comfort Zone.** Understand that the only way to grow is to get outside of your comfort zone. If you’re uncomfortable with an idea or situation because you’re not sure how to act, that’s good! That’s an opportunity for growth.
8. **Identify and Express Your Feelings.** You may have a hard time understanding how you feel about someone. It’s important that you do figure this out. Don’t lead someone on with your ambivalence. If you determine that you value the person, tell them so every time you think of it. This is the best way to make them feel secure in your affections, and so to promote a long-lasting relationship.
9. **Be Accountable for Yourself.** Remember that no one has more control over your life than you have. Don’t be a victim.
10. **Assume the Best.** Don’t distress yourself with fear and dark expectations. Remember that a positive attitude often creates positive situations.

References

- Personalitypage.com
- Keirse.com