

# Profile of the ISTP (Crafter / Mechanic)

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This document contains detailed information about the *ISTP* 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 be 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 Crafter

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

The nature of Crafters is most clearly seen in their masterful operation of tools, equipment, machines, and instruments of all kinds. Most of us use tools in some capacity, of course, but Crafters (as much as ten percent of the population) are the true masters of tool work, with an innate ability to command tools and to become expert at all the crafts requiring tool skills. Even from an early age they are drawn to tools as if to a magnet – tools fall into their hands demanding use, and they must work with them.

Like all the Artisans, Crafters are people who love action, and who know instinctively that their activities are more enjoyable, and more effective, if done impulsively, spontaneously, subject to no schedules or standards but their own. In a sense, Crafters do not work with their tools, but play with them when the urge strikes them. Crafters also seek fun and games on impulse, looking for any opportunity, and just because they feel like it, to play with their various toys: cars, motorcycles, boats, dune-buggies, hunting rifles, fishing tackle, scuba gear, and on and on. They thrive on excitement, particularly the rush of speed-racing, water-skiing, surfing. And Crafters are fearless in their play, exposing themselves to danger again and again, even despite frequent injury. Of all the types, Crafters are most likely to be risk takers, pitting themselves, or their technique, against chance or odds.

Crafters are hard to get to know. Perhaps this is because they tend to communicate through action, and show little interest in developing language skills. Their lack of expressiveness can isolate them at school and on the job, and even though they hang around with their own kind in play, they let their actions speak for them, and their actual conversation is sparse and brief.

Crafters can be wonderfully generous and loyal to their friends, teammates, and sidekicks, often giving up their evenings or weekends to help with building projects or mechanical repairs-house remodeling, for example, or working on cars or boats. On the other hand, they can be fiercely insubordinate to those in authority, seeing rules and regulations as unnecessarily confining. Crafters will not usually go against regulations openly, but will simply ignore them. More than anything, Crafters want to be free to do their own thing, and they are proud of their ability to do it with an artist's skill.

## Portrait II – The Mechanic

The *ISTP* profile is also often called the *Mechanic*. This is how the *ISTP* profile is also often summarized.

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

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

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

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

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

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

*ISTPs* avoid making judgments based on personal values – they feel that judgments and decisions should be made impartially, based on the fact. They are not naturally tuned in to how they are affecting others. They do not pay attention to their own feelings, and even distrust them and try to ignore them, because they have difficulty distinguishing between emotional reactions and value judgments. This may be a problem area for many *ISTPs*.

An *ISTP* who is over-stressed may exhibit rash emotional outbursts of anger, or on the other extreme may be overwhelmed by emotions and feelings which they feel compelled to share with people (often inappropriately). An *ISTP* who is down on themselves will foray into the world of value judgments – a place which is not natural for the *ISTP* – and judge themselves by their

inability to perform some task. They will then approach the task in a grim emotional state, expecting the worst.

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

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

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

## Jungian Preference Ordering

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

## Famous Crafters

- Michael Jordan
- Bruce Lee
- Woody Allen
- Katherine Hepburn
- Chuck Yeager
- Amelia Earhart
- Lance Armstrong
- Frida Kahlo
- Tiger Woods

## ISTP 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.

ISTPs generally have the following traits:

- Interested in how and why things work
- Do not function well in regimented, structured environments; they will either feel stifled or become intensely bored
- Constantly gather facts about their environment and store them away

- Learn best “hands-on”
- Have an excellent ability to apply logic and reason to their immense store of facts to solve problems or discover how things work
- Usually able to master theory and abstract thinking, but don’t particularly like dealing with it unless they see a practical application
- Action-oriented “doers”
- Focused on living in the present, rather than the future
- Love variety and new experiences
- Highly practical and realistic
- Excellent “trouble-shooters”, can quickly find solutions to a wide variety of practical problems
- Results-oriented; they like to see immediate results for their efforts
- Usually laid-back and easy-going with people
- Risk-takers who thrive on action
- Independent and determined – usually dislike committing themselves
- Usually quite self-confident

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

## **Career Suggestions for the ISTP**

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.

- Police and Detective Work
- Forensic Pathologists

- Computer Programmers, System Analysts and Computer Specialists
- Engineers
- Carpenters
- Mechanics
- Pilots, Drivers, Motorcyclists
- Athletes
- Entrepreneurs

## 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”.

## **ISTPs in Relationships**



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

### ***Relationship Strengths***

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

### ***Relationship Weaknesses***

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

## **ISTP 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 *ISTP's natural partner* is the *ESTJ*, or the *ENTJ*. See their profiles on the [Digital Citizen](#) website. The ISTP's dominant function of Introverted Thinking is best matched with a partner whose personality is dominated by Extraverted Thinking. The ISTP/ESTJ combination is ideal, because both types share the Sensing preference for perceiving the world, but ISTP/ENTJ is also a good combination.

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.

## ISTPs 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

ISTPs can be very intense and exciting individuals. Their strong Thinking preference makes them seem rather aloof and "hard to get". Their Sensing & Perceiving preferences make them sensual, earthy individuals. These attributes frequently make them attractive to the opposite sex. ISTPs live entirely in the current moment, which makes them especially interested in new sensations and experiences. They strongly dislike routine and strict schedules, and resist being controlled by others. They are fiercely independent and need their own space within a relationship. When involved in relationships which provide for their basic needs and which present them with new experiences, the ISTP will be happy to do what's necessary to keep the relationship alive and well. If a relationship becomes boring or oppressive to the ISTP, they will try to fix it, or move on. ISTPs take their commitments on a day-by-day basis. Even if they say "I do", it usually means "I do for now". They do not like to make lifelong commitments, although they may very well be involved in lifelong relationships which they have taken one day at a time.

ISTPs love to fix things, and may create problems in their personal relationships, just so that they can have the fun of fixing them.

They have a tendency to hold back their own views on things. They like to listen to other people's views, but are generally non-committal about expressing their own opinions. ISTPs have a habit of evading answering questions by asking more questions. This can be frustrating at times to their mates, if they are after a direct answer. The ISTP's decision making process is entirely internal, so they don't feel much need to share their opinions with others. When they are interacting with others, they are in "information gathering" mode, so they tend to ask questions rather than share views. The ISTP just doesn't feel the need to expose themselves fully to others. When it comes to intimate relationships, the ISTP has the further motivation of protecting themselves. Most ISTPs are afraid of having to deal with their deeper feelings. Since their Thinking preference dominates their personality, their Feeling side is their least developed (inferior) function. Consequently, ISTPs are usually quite vulnerable and perhaps weak when dealing with their feelings. Their habit of keeping part of themselves hidden may also serve the purpose of keeping a protective wall around their hearts.

Although the ISTP does not usually have a well-developed Feeling side, they frequently do have intense feelings for people. They can feel overpowering love for their mates, although they are likely not to express their emotions, or to express them inadequately or inappropriately if they do venture towards expression. However, unlike many of the other personality types, ISTPs feel strong affections one day at a time. One day, they may feel completely, intensely in love with

their mate, and the next day they may be totally disinterested, or perhaps even ready to move on. This “live for the moment” type of approach is different from how most other types experience their feelings, and is difficult for many to understand. Consequently, the ISTP may be called “fickle” or “cold”. In fact, they are not really fickle, and certainly not cold. They simply experience their lives on a moment by moment basis, and go along with its natural flow. However, since most people need more commitment than can be offered when taking things day-by-day, the ISTP who wants to remain in a relationship will have to resolve themselves towards being involved in a more traditional commitment. For most ISTPs, making a commitment to an intimate relationship will require an effort to stretch themselves outside of their comfort zones. However, those who do so will realize they can enjoy the benefits of a strong, committed relationship and still live their lives in the present tense.

## *Sexual Tendencies*

Sexually, the ISTP approaches intimacy as a physical act rather than an expression of love and affection. They are earthy and sensual beings who enthusiastically experience sex with all five senses. They bring spontaneity, creativity, and enthusiasm into the bedroom, and enjoy new experiences. Since aesthetic beauty has such strong appeal to them, they appreciate the “setting”, *i.e.* bedding, lingerie, cologne.

## **ISTPs 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

ISTPs are flexible, laid-back, uncontrolling parents who like to take things as they come. Their dislike of being controlled or controlling others extends to their children as well, and they’re consequently likely to give their kids a lot of breathing room and space for individual growth. However, when discipline is required, the ISTP will be able to administer it without too much difficulty. They may have difficulty mustering up the enthusiasm to discipline their kids, but once they get going they’ll be effective.

ISTP parents are likely to maintain a distance between themselves and their children. They do not feel a tremendous need to pass on their values to their children, or to influence their decisions in life. They’re likely to rely on their mates for creating a structured environment for their children to live within. ISTPs do not like to be directed or controlled, and are not likely to direct & control others – including their children. They’re likely to be relatively uninvolved with daily happenings of family life, without making a conscious effort to keep interested.

ISTPs will enjoy spending one-on-one time with their children pursuing outdoorsy activities, such as fishing, boating, hunting, etc. It is during these private moments that the ISTP will take

the opportunity to get to know their children's perspectives, and to pass on the ISTP's interests and perspectives.

## **ISTPs as Friends**

ISTPs have an enthusiastic, childlike approach to life that is attractive to others. As Introverted Thinkers, they also have some real substance to them which prevents them from being entirely frivolous and hedonic in their pursuits. They are laid-back and flexible, and generally accepting of a wide range of behavior. These attributes make them valued friends and confidantes.

ISTPs usually have a selection of friends who share their love of particular hobbies. They might have a friend who they ski with, and another who they shoot pool with, etc. They generally have no interest or patience with individuals who do not share their interests, and will spend little or no time with them. They have a difficult time understanding people with extremely strong intuitive preferences, and are not likely to spend time with these individuals unless they share a common interest or hobby. They enjoy spending time with Extraverts, whose enthusiastic, talkative natures are attractive to the more reserved ISTP, but they will eventually tire of their "bubbliness". The ISTP is able to get along well with people of any personality type, but is likely to value and bond only those with whom they have common interests.

## **Personal Growth**

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

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

Each personality type has a different idea of what it means to be successful. Self-knowledge is one common goal that will help everyone achieve personal success. So many people are hung up on somebody else's idea of what it means to be successful, and they are unaware of what is truly important to them. This is completely normal. We all have important role-models and influencers in our lives who may have basic values that are quite different from our own. If this is the case, it's important to recognize that the discrepancy between what we have been taught is truly important and what we personally believe to be truly important is due to a difference in perspective. If we spend our time and effort trying to meet somebody else's idea of success, and ignore or belittle any conflicting messages from our own psyche, then we will find ourselves exhausted and unhappy. Realizing what is truly important to us is a major step towards achieving personal success.

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

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

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

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

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

### *Strive for Balance*

Most of the weaknesses associated with any given personality type are a result of that type's dominant function overtaking the personality to the extent that the other functions become slaves to the dominant function. Although it is natural for every personality to be ruled by its dominant function, it becomes a problem when the supporting functions are not allowed to develop fully on their own because they are too busy "serving the master". In such cases, a personality can become quite imbalanced.

A situation in which the dominant function of a personality completely overshadows the other personality functions is analogous to a kingdom ruled by an overbearing king who requires absolute servitude. Imagine such a king sitting down to dinner in his castle. He keeps all of his servants running about to bring him dinner, and requires that they serve him fully (disregarding

their own needs) until he is completely sated. His Foreign Minister, expected at an important affair at a neighboring kingdom, finds himself pouring ale. His Minister of Domestic Affairs, rather than addressing the issue of a failing economy, slices roast turkey. His staff grabs food for themselves here and there, but never get what they really need or want, and are consequently unsatisfied, malnourished, and underdeveloped. The issues that the staff should be taking care of are left undone, because they never finish their primary task of serving the king. The king's immediate needs are being met, and so he is tolerably happy, but he is an ineffective king. As far as he knows, everything and everybody exists simply to serve him. He has no concept of Success beyond his daily needs. Since he cannot see beyond his own needs, the entire kingdom suffers.

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

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

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

## *Opening the Door*

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

There is no quickie scheme that will make you a successful person. Psychological Type is a powerful aid in our quest for excellence, but it is not the actual solution. It is a model that will help you to expand your understanding of human nature. An improved understanding of yourself and others will help you to find, follow or expand your path. An awareness and acceptance of the fact that one personality function may be more effective than another function in a given situation will help you to understand the relevance of personal growth to your life.

Carl Jung identified a process of personal growth that he called individuation, which is essentially the conscious realization of your true self, beyond the Ego that is presented by your conscious self. Our efforts to help people develop themselves is essentially the effort to help them to realize

that their personal perspectives and conscious ideas are only a small part of who they are, and that the more they try to develop and defend this superficial “self”, the further they get away from their true Self. This realization helps a psyche in many concrete ways, and is also a positive step towards promoting a psyche that is open to the process of individuation. For the purposes of making this realization accessible to the general public, our writings are mostly void of complex theoretical discussion.

## **ISTP Personal Growth**

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

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

### *Allowing Your Strengths to Flourish*

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



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

- They have a natural ability to focus and “become one” with their immediate environment. This ability allows them to be great athletes, dancers, and musicians. They have an innately graceful connection with the physical world.
- They are highly in tune with their physical surroundings, and therefore have well-developed aesthetic appreciation. They appreciate beauty. If they are so inclined, they may develop their ability to control the physical world into some form of art expression, and become artists.
- They are exceptional troubleshooters in emergency situations. They can quickly take in the current situation and apply logic immediately to take steps that control the problem. Since the ISTP’s use of logic is based on their personal experience, their ability to troubleshoot will get better & better as they gain more experience. For this reason, ISTPs who are mechanics, technicians, and computer analysts (for example) often achieve “guru” status after they have been working in the field for a long time.
- They’re very sensual and earthy people. They usually a good deal of sex appeal and attractive sensuality.

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

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

### ***Potential Problem Areas***

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

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

- The ISTP gets “stuck in a rut” and only does things known and comfortable to the ISTP.
- They may unknowingly or uncaringly hurt people’s feelings.

- The ISTP resists and rejects anything that doesn't support their own experiential understanding of the world. If there is a conflict between their own way of life and something that they encounter, they don't perceive that "something" in an objective sense. Rather, they reject it to avoid conflict and to preserve the sanctity of their inner world.
- They choose to surround themselves with people who support their own way of life, and reject people who think or live differently.
- They may become overly paranoid about social organizations and institutions trying to control them.
- They may be completely unaware of how to express their inner world to others in a meaningful way.
- They may be completely unaware of the type of communication that is often desirable and (to some degree) expected in an intimate relationship. If they are aware of the kinds of things that are appropriate to say and do to foster emotional bonding, they may be unable to appreciate the value of such actions. They may feel too vulnerable to express themselves in this fashion, and so reject the entire idea.
- If pushed beyond their comfort level to form commitments or emotional bonds, they may reject a relationship entirely.
- Under stress, they may show intense emotions that seem disproportionate to the situation.

### *Explanation of Problems*

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ISTP problem of only taking in information that relates to or supports their own life experience. The ISTP is driven to work with and understand his or her world by applying their special brand of logic (an immediate, spatial, "fuzzy" logic) to their physical experience. They don't necessarily have a goal in mind to achieve from this process – it is the process itself that is rewarding to the ISTP. In their zeal for the satisfaction that comes from mastering their physical environment in such a way, ISTPs 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 on our strengths. The problem rears its ugly head when the goal of the ISTP becomes to achieve their personal satisfaction at all costs.

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

The dominant function of the ISTP is Introverted Thinking. This function is supported closely and importantly by the auxiliary function of Extraverted Sensing. Extraverted Sensing perceives the world and sends information into the psyche, where it is processed by Introverted Thinking.

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

The ISTP's inferior fourth function is Extraverted Feeling. This means the ISTP is not naturally in tune with how other people are feeling, or with social expectations. In fact, the ISTP is likely to reject the importance of social rituals, rules, and expectations. This is a natural weak point for the ISTP, which no doubt causes strife to the ISTP and their love partner. This weakness can be overcome by developing their Extraverted Sensing to the point that they can perceive Feeling type expectations in the external world. They don't have to use Extraverted Feeling to understand how to act in situations. They can perceive the expected behavior from their Extraverted Sensing function. However, if they are restricting their incoming data to only those things that support their existing way of life, then they are not learning from Extraverted Sensing at all. They are not growing their understanding of social and intimate behaviors - rather, they are reducing the importance of this type of understanding to their own life. In these situations, ISTPs shy away from very close personal relationships, and feel more vulnerable and less sure of themselves in situations that involve expressing their emotions.

## *Solutions*

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

## *Living Happily*

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

### Specific suggestions:

- Don't expect yourself to be a master at the "touchy-feely" game. Be yourself, but remember that there is a basic assumption of human decency that must be adhered to in relationships. If you're not sure what that means, take special care to observe how people in good committed relationships behave towards each other, so you can determine where the lines are drawn.
- Pair yourself with an Extraverted Thinker (ESTJ or ENTJ) who is less likely to assume that the lack of feedback is the same thing as negative feedback.
- Expanding your world and experiences will expand your understanding of human expectations. Try to figure out the personality type of people that you know & encounter in your life.

## Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ISTP Success

1. **Feed Your Strengths!** Realize your gift at mastering your physical environment, and give yourself plenty of opportunities to exercise your abilities. Ride, play, paint, work it. Much of your sense of well-being will come from these experiences.
2. **Face Your Weaknesses!** Face your fear of the unknown, and get yourself into new situations. Experience new activities and people with new perspectives. Don't isolate yourself into a narrow and lonely existence.
3. **Talk Through Your Thoughts.** Discussing your ideas and perceptions with others will help you to develop your Extraverted Sensing, and thus your understanding of the world. How well you use your auxiliary function is very important to your overall health and happiness.
4. **Don't Be Afraid to Love.** That's just your old inferior function trying to convince you that you're unloved and unlovable. It's not true. Just because you're not sure what to do with yourself doesn't mean that you can't learn! Go on... jump in. The water's warm.
5. **Respect Your Need for Action.** Understand that you need to be actively working with your environment to be "in the groove" with life. Don't chastise yourself for not being the sort to sit around and read a book or watch a movie. Choose a partner and companions who value active lifestyles.
6. **Recognize Social Principles.** Realize that our society functions around some basic social principles, and that our society would fail unless those principles are recognized & upheld. In a democracy, people vote. At a red stoplight, people stop. If people stopped voting because it wasn't important to their own way of life, who would be in power? If people stopped stopping at red stop lights because it didn't fit into their way of life, how could we drive safely? Your priorities and beliefs are important, but you must recognize that the external world's agenda is also important. Don't dismiss the importance of principles that don't affect your life directly.
7. **It's OK to Get Out of your Comfort Zone.** Understand that the only way to grow is to get outside of your comfort zone. If you're uncomfortable with an idea or situation because you're not sure how to act, that's good! That's an opportunity for growth.

8. **Identify and Express Your Feelings.** You may have a hard time figuring out exactly how you feel about someone that you're involved with. It's important that you do figure this out. Don't lead someone on with your ambivalence. If you determine that you value the person, tell them so every time you think of it. This is the best way to make them feel secure in your affections, and so to promote a long-lasting relationship.
9. **Be Aware of Others.** Try to really identify where people are coming from. Their ideas, thoughts and priorities are different from yours. They have something to offer you. Try to identify their personality types.
10. **Assume the Best.** Don't distress yourself with fear and dark imaginings. Expect the best, and the best will come.

## References

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