

Profile of the Idealist (NF) Temperament

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This document contains detailed information about the *Idealists*, 1 of 4 Keirsey Temperaments. It references content 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 concepts or terminology, please refer to said document.

This Temperament analysis comes with the following sections:

- Summary portrait
- Famous figures of this Temperament, some of their profile links and quotes
- Work related info like job fitting, dealing with stresses and bosses, *etc.*
- Romantic tendencies for men and women of the Temperament

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.

The Four Temperaments

Some of the most important work done in Personality Typing has been done by David Keirsey. He created the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, upon which the test you took was based, on top of the Jung personality type theory. In his research, he has made observations that have allowed him to combine two of the four sets of preferences (letters) into four distinct *Temperaments*.

The Temperaments are based on how people see the world via the *Sensing* or *iNtuitive* Preference. The *Sensing* types, being those who care more for things the way they are, just react to it. They can either prefer to accept it the way it is (*Judging*, so *SJ*) or experience it (*Perceiving*, so *SP*). The *iNtuitive* types are about possibilities and the future, which means things have to be changed, and change means decisions on what needs to be changed and how, so they invoke their decision-making Preferences (*Thinking* or *Feeling*, so *NT* or *NF*).

Four of the 16 possible Jung personality types fit into each Temperament as follows:

SJ – Guardians

- ESTJ – Supervisors
- ISTJ – Inspectors
- ESFJ – Providers
- ISFJ – Protectors

SP – Artisans

- ESTP – Promoters
- ISTP – Crafters
- ESFP – Performers
- ISFP – Composers

NT – Rationals

- ENTJ – Field Marshals
- INTJ – Masterminds
- ENTP – Inventors
- INTJ – Architects

NF – Idealists (focus of this document)

- ENFJ – Teachers
- INFJ – Counselors
- ENFP – Champions
- INFP – Healers

Portrait of the Idealists

Keirsey combines those Jung personality types with the iNtuitive and Feeling (N and F) preferences into a Temperament called the *Idealists*. He describes the NF group's primary objective as "identity seeking" since they use their Feelings, which is about as personal to each person's identity as anything gets, to determine the possibilities and changes they see as being necessary in the world. The NF Temperament includes these types and their symbolic names:

- ENFJ – Teachers
- INFJ – Counselors
- ENFP – Champions
- INFP – Healers

Only 15-20% of the general population are of the Idealist Temperament.

Detailed profiles of each of these Personality Types can be found on the [Digital Citizen](#) website.

Idealists, as a temperament, are passionately concerned with personal growth and development. Idealists strive to discover who they are and how they can become their best possible self – always this quest for self-knowledge and self-improvement drives their imagination. And they want to help others make the journey. Idealists are naturally drawn to working with people, and whether in education or counseling, in social services or personnel work, in journalism or the ministry, they are gifted at helping others find their way in life, often inspiring them to grow as individuals and to fulfill their potentials.

All Idealists share the following core characteristics:

- Idealists are enthusiastic, they trust their intuition, yearn for romance, seek their true self, prize meaningful relationships, and dream of attaining wisdom.
- Idealists pride themselves on being loving, kindhearted, and authentic.
- Idealists tend to be giving, trusting, spiritual, and they are focused on personal journeys and human potentials.
- Idealists make intense mates, nurturing parents, and inspirational leaders.

Idealists are sure that friendly cooperation is the best way for people to achieve their goals. Conflict and confrontation upset them because they seem to put up angry barriers between people. Idealists dream of creating harmonious, even caring personal relations, and they have a unique talent for helping people get along with each other and work together for the good of all. Such interpersonal harmony might be a romantic ideal, but then Idealists are incurable romantics who prefer to focus on what might be, rather than what is. The real, practical world is only a starting place for Idealists; they believe that life is filled with possibilities waiting to be realized, rich with meanings calling out to be understood. This idea of a mystical or spiritual dimension to life, the "not visible" or the "not yet" that can only be known through intuition or by a leap of faith, is far more important to Idealists than the world of material things.

Highly ethical in their actions, Idealists hold themselves to a strict standard of personal integrity. They must be true to themselves and to others, and they can be quite hard on themselves when they are dishonest, or when they are false or insincere. More often, however, Idealists are the

very soul of kindness. Particularly in their personal relationships, Idealists are without question filled with love and good will. They believe in giving of themselves to help others; they cherish a few warm, sensitive friendships; they strive for a special rapport with their children; and in marriage they wish to find a “soulmate,” someone with whom they can bond emotionally and spiritually, sharing their deepest feelings and their complex inner worlds.

Idealists are relatively rare, making up no more than 15 to 20 percent of the population. But their ability to inspire people with their enthusiasm and their idealism has given them influence far beyond their numbers.

Famous Idealists

Art & Entertainment / Sports / Journalism / Literature

- Oprah Winfrey (Teacher)
- Jane Fonda (Teacher)
- Margaret Mead (Teacher)
- John Wooden (Teacher)
- Shirley MacLaine
- Richard Gere (Healer)
- Mia Farrow (Healer)
- Pearl S. Buck
- Charles Dickens (Champion)
- Joan Baez (Champion)
- Charlotte Bronte (Champion)
- Emily Bronte (Counselor)
- Sidney Poitier (Counselor)
- Emily Dickenson (Counselor)
- George Orwell (Healer)
- Aldous Huxley (Healer)
- Herman Hesse
- Albert Camus
- James Joyce
- Leo Tolstoy (Champion)
- Ann Morrow Lindbergh (Healer)
- Oliver Stone (Champion)
- Erica Jong (Champion)
- Paul Robeson (Champion)
- Upton Sinclair (Champion)

Profiles of Famous Idealists

- [Princess Diana](#)
- [Mohandas Gandhi](#)

Science / Education / Humanities / Philosophy / Religion

- Lord Alfred Russel Wallace
- Siddhartha [Buddha]
- Albert Schweitzer (Healer)
- Karen Armstrong (Healer)
- Carl Rogers (Champion)
- Pope John Paul II (Teacher)
- Jane Addams (Teacher)
- Abraham Maslow
- Isabel Myers (Healer)
- Carl Jung (Counselor)
- Jane Goodall (Counselor)
- Mary Baker Eddy (Counselor)
- Soren Kierkegaard
- Plato

Politics / Government / Military

- Mohandas Gandhi (Counselor)
- Eleanor Roosevelt (Counselor)
- Nelson Mandela (Champion)
- Queen Noor (Counselor)
- Leon Trotsky (Champion)
- Vladimir Lenin (Teacher)
- Mikhail Gorbachev (Teacher)
- Ralph Nader (Teacher)
- Thomas Paine (Champion)
- Alexander Hamilton (Champion)
- Molly Brown “The Unsinkable” (Champion)
- Princess Diana (Healer)
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- [Mikhail Gorbachev](#)
- [Eleanor Roosevelt](#)

NF Idealist Quotes

"It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is."

– Hermann Hesse

"It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business."

– Mohandas Gandhi (Counselor)

"Character is much easier kept than recovered."

– Thomas Paine (Champion)

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

– Margaret Mead (Teacher)

"The solution to adult problems tomorrow depends on large measure upon the how our children grow up today. There is no greater insight into the future than recognizing when we save our children, we save ourselves."

"Intelligence in chains loses in lucidity, what it gains in intensity."

– Albert Camus

"To give without any reward, or any notice, has a special quality of its own."

– Anne Morrow Lindbergh (Healer)

"A leader has the vision and conviction that a dream can be achieved. He inspires the power and energy to get it done."

– Ralph Nader (Teacher)

Job Fitting for Idealists (Finding Unique Meaning and Identity)

The Baby Boomers publicized the phrase, “Finding Your Passion.” As a career counselor, I’ve known people to be quite concerned because they couldn’t find their passion. Certain types of personalities resonate to this phrase while others don’t.

The most passionate types are the Artisan *Performer (ESFP)* and *Composer (ISFP)* plus the Idealist *Champion (ENFP)* and *Healer (INFP)*. All are highly sensitive to values conflicts and many are willing to use their passion to fight injustices. Amy, a *Healer (INFP)*, worked to set up an alternative high school since she found her town’s high school so rigid that too many students were dropping out. She said, “I got so angry because all the administration was focused on was following rules and regs, not in helping the students become successful human beings. So I went to work to give students that didn’t fit into their tiny box a real chance to learn and grow.”

Rationals, especially the *Field Marshal (ENTJ)* and *Mastermind (INTJ)*, may not respond well to the word “passionate,” unless they are a member of the Baby Boom generation which frequently used the word. However, words like “interesting,” “fascinating,” and “intense” have a higher resonance with them. Says Rich, a Mastermind, “I’m not a Boomer and I don’t like going off half-cocked with emotion, but when I find an area that is fascinating, I really immerse myself in it. I guess you could call it my passion, but I prefer to see it as intense interest.”

Some people choose to have a career that just pays the bills and keep their highest interest or passion for their outside activities. Mike, an Artisan *Crafter (ISTP)*, says, “I like my job as a mechanic well enough, but what really turns me on is when a disaster hits. I volunteer for the Red Cross and can be sent anywhere. I love the intensity and the need for fast action and quick decisions. The change of pace between the emergencies and the regular job is great!”

Sometimes the job market where the person lives is limited and they need to find other ways to make their life satisfying. Martha, a Guardian *Provider (ESFJ)*, lives in a small town and works as a waitress. “I always wanted to go to nursing school, but we were poor and there just wasn’t enough money. I’m a pretty good waitress and everyone in town knows me, but what I’m really known for is quilts and blankets. I formed a group to make quilts and blankets for children suffering from cancer. I can hardly wait to get home from the restaurant so I can work on my current project.”

Idealists are the most likely of all types to resonate with the Boomer phrase, “Finding Your Passion.” Idealists strive to find Meaning and Unique Identity in their lives. They are the group most attuned to values and seeking the greater good. Famous Idealists include Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Ghandi, and Oprah Winfrey.

Of all the Idealists, the *Teacher (ENFJ)* is the most likely to seek leadership positions in the private or public sector. The Teacher is drawn to careers in education or social services, such as college professor, high school teacher, social worker, or non-profit director. In business they are often trainers, sales managers, recruiters, or executives. Since they are good at building relationships, they may be fund raisers or recruiters. They also are found in jobs such as a health advisor, clergy, facilitator, or counselor. Says Rene, “It’s very important to me to really connect with my students. I need to feel that I am making a difference in their lives.”

The *Counselor (INFJ)* is a more private person than the Teacher. They, too, can be found in the field of education as a professor, teacher, counselor, or educational consultant. Sometimes they feel a strong calling toward the religious life as clergy, nun, or director of religious education. Social service jobs, such as social worker, social scientist, or mediator can fit their needs. Some Counselors work in human services, marketing, or as a job analyst. Others are drawn to the arts as a novelist, designer, or artist. Says Benito, "My art is very personal. It expresses who I am at the same time reaching out to draw the viewer in. My art changes the viewer's perspective of reality."

People naturally confide in the *Champion (ENFP)*. That's why they make such good mediators, counselors, teachers, consultants, and reporters. Any position that outreaches to others can fit the Champion. They can be columnists, journalists, publicists, copy writers, advertising account executives. In the arts they can be character actors, cartoonists, art educators. If they choose jobs such as restaurateur, be sure that their business sites will be unique and designed for a particular type of customer. Don't be surprised to see them as an inventor. This type of personality wants to experience the whole of life and may change careers more often than many other types. Says Charles, "I've had a number of jobs and when there is nothing left to create, I move to something new. I want my life to be spiced with newness, love, and joy."

The most sensitive of the Idealists is the *Healer (INFP)*. While their list of jobs may echo that of other Idealists, they are more drawn to express their own unique vision of the world than all other types, so their work cannot help but be unique. They interpret their visions in the world of music, art, entertainment, or dance. As a professor or teacher, counselor or social worker, they often unlock the mysteries of life for those they encounter. In business they are drawn to organizational development and human resources careers. They may have a religious calling or seek work as a librarian. Their careers need to be in alignment with their personal values. Says Kay, "I chose health education so I could touch the lives of others to help them make better choices about their lives. I know I've done some good."

All Idealists seek to have a life of meaning, to help themselves and others grow to be the best that they can be. They do not want to be a copycat of someone else, but want to be seen as a unique and valuable individual.

How Idealists Deal with Work Stress (Out of Balance)

Since Idealists tend to work for a better future for all, if things keep going badly and they lose hope they become stressed. When Idealists experience great stress, they can have muscle or sensory problems.

The *Teacher* is likely to become stressed if they experience an absence of trust and too much pressure to conform. They also dislike interpersonal conflict. If this happens, they may become excessively critical, which is antithetical to their normal positive self. One of the signs that the Teacher is in high stress is muscle tics or cramps. To recover, this normally social type must be left alone. Solitude and journal writing can help them get back to normal. Also getting out of the current arena of conflict and taking on a new project can restore their sense of self. Says Josephina, "My old boss and I worked like a charm. I had plenty of freedom and a crew to lead. Then she

retired and my new boss was quite different. She wanted to inspect everything I did and insisted upon her way of doing everything. Some of her ideas were good, but others didn't work at all. She wouldn't listen to me. I got a tic in my right eye and had problems sleeping because of restless leg syndrome which I'd never had before. Something had to change. Then I heard about a special project which needed a new team and I applied. I'm now on the team, my tic and restless leg syndrome is gone. I never realized before how much I needed to be trusted and free to exchange ideas on improving things."

The *Counselor* can become stressed when they are required to deal with too many unexpected events or required to be too extraverted for too long a time. They can get overwhelmed if they are required to continually do very detailed work. If this happens, their muscles tighten up and they begin to see the external world through suspicious lenses. To return to normal, they need time alone to recharge and a lightening of their usual schedule. It will not help if others give them advice. Stretching exercises and calm, solitary walks will help. Says Lorraine, "I'm good at giving speeches. People see me as confident. But then they will want me to do more and more so I have no time alone and no time to recover. It's been hard, but I've learned to say 'no' because if I don't the personal consequences will be worse, and I won't be good for anything or anybody."

The *Champion* is usually a bundle of energy, but they can become exhausted if they are overloaded with work. They also will experience stress if their values and principles are violated and they see others in the company being hurt by policies that kill the human spirit. Then they become hypersensitive to what is going on around them. Facts become exaggerated. They have feelings of paranoia and may withdraw. To regain their equilibrium, meditation will help. Kindness and support by others, but not patronization, will help them get back to normal. Says Gloria, "I'd given a number of years of support to one boss, then he started bad-mouthing me. It threw me into a turmoil. I became suspicious of him and everyone else. Then a friend said that the boss was blowing up at everyone, not just me, and encouraged me to look at a position in a new section. I meditated to become centered again, then applied for the job. I love my new job and now life is great again. My old boss retired; he was drinking too much."

The *Healer* is the most sensitive of all the Idealists to a negative environment. They notice problems in a work group before anyone else. Divisions within a work group can cause fear of impending loss. Also violation of their values can trigger stress. When stressed, they are likely to act out of character and take on behaviors that are not normally associated with them. They can seem to others as if they are splintered. Sometimes they will blame themselves, other times they will lash out at others. They may act precipitously or not act at all. To get back to normal, they need a lot of space and need to have their feelings validated. It doesn't help to tell them that they are imagining things. It is important that the negative environment be dealt with by others or that the Healer be allowed to move to a more positive environment. Says Henrik, "I'm in health education. We have many programs to help people live healthier lives. An outsider began to influence our boss, saying that he was more successful and could do better. Our boss began to criticize all of us. Everyone started pulling away from each other. I found myself being nasty to others, which is very unusual for me. Luckily, our boss found out that this outsider was just good at getting and had moved from county to county and not accomplished much. I'm glad we're back to being a team."

Getting Along with Idealist bosses

What clues can you use to see if your boss might be an Idealist? Is your boss more focused on the future than the past or the present? Does your boss move their arms in such a way as pulling the group toward them or uplifting everyone's spirits? Does your boss talk about how you or your co-workers have grown? Do you notice that your boss enjoys praising others? If so, your boss could be an Idealist.

Hot buttons for an Idealist boss are:

- Employees who don't want to learn new skills
- Employees who refuse to work effectively with others
- Employees who are intolerant of others' beliefs.

Being successful with your Idealist boss means you need to show a positive attitude. Negative attitudes are toxic to Idealist bosses. They believe that positive thinking coupled with ingenuity can solve problems. Idealists work well with the brainstorming process. You can impress your boss by generating many possibilities. Reserve the critiquing of various ideas until multiple possibilities are generated.

Your Idealist boss is likely to praise employees, but often they do not receive praise in return. Learn to recharge their batteries by occasionally giving them a positive comment. Both of you will benefit.

There are four different kinds of Idealist bosses. The Idealist *Teacher* provides a warm atmosphere with coaching, mentoring, and teaching. Be sure to respond positively to this coaching or else your boss will quit paying attention to you. The Idealist *Counselor* is more sensitive than most to difficulties that are not readily seen by others. Keep in mind that they really want the best for all so treat any warnings as something to heed. The Idealist *Champion* leads through enthusiasm and cultivates a large network. Be positive, even when reporting problems to your boss; negativity short-circuits their problem-solving abilities and their ability to effectively mobilize their network. The Idealist *Healer* thinks in terms of human resources available to apply to problems. Talk to them in positively in terms of people's best abilities; then you will be on the same wave length.

Idealist *Teachers* and Idealist *Counselors* are fairly direct in their communication, and will coat their statements with a great deal of tact. Idealist *Champions* and Idealist *Healers* are so sensitive to negativity, that they find it almost impossible to give negative feedback. With all Idealist bosses, it is smart to ask about how you could improve. Then they feel free to give you honest feedback. Be sure that when you ask for it, that you will be willing to act upon their suggestions. They will have been thinking about how they could help you become more successful. Remember, they genuinely want the best for you.

Please check the [Digital Citizen](http://DigitalCitizen.com) website for other Temperament profiles to see how to get along with bosses of those types. Getting along is different from presenting, discussed following.

How Idealists Should Present to Non-Idealist Bosses

Bert, a customer support team leader at a large software company, was presenting the results of his customer satisfaction improvement project to VP of Sales Tom. Five minutes into the presentation, Tom interrupted Bert's anecdote about how various team members had handled difficult customer calls, asking about the bottom line change in the satisfaction metrics. Bert enthusiastically replied, "They are excellent, and I have a slide showing them coming up. And I want to share with you how important Mike's department was in helping us achieve them!", where upon he continued with his story singing the praises of all who contributed to the success. He took Tom's question, and the following interruptions as a sign of Tom's interest in his narrative, until Tom finally exploded, cutting the presentation short by directing Bert to skip to the final slide showing the statistics. Bert felt deeply injured by Tom's pre-emption of his presentation, and began looking for a new job. Tom was mystified when he learned Bert had left the company - he had actually been impressed by Bert's results.

What happened? And how can you be prepared so that this type of disaster does not befall you?

The key is to know something about the Big Boss's personality, and just as importantly, about yourself. A prime cause of presentation melt-downs lies in the difference between the two: in key areas you are speaking the equivalent of a foreign language – without knowing it. Disaster looms when communication breaks down and misunderstanding occurs. Most often the presenter has no clue that it has happened, and keeps digging a deeper hole, unable to climb out. Fortunately, Dr. David Keirse, author of *Please Understand Me*, and *The Keirse Temperament Sorter*, has performed more than 50 years of research into these differences in communication style, and once you are aware of them, you are on your way to successful presentations to your current and future Big Bosses.

Idealists make up 15% or so of the population, and they tend to gravitate to careers that are geared at helping people to work collaboratively, and grow to their fullest potential. They are over-represented in counseling, human resources consulting, psychology, and other areas where they can help others reach personal fulfillment. Idealists are especially rare as you go up the organization chart, so the odds that you are presenting to a Big Boss that speaks the same (Idealist) language as you diminish greatly the further up the hierarchy you are presenting. Because you run into a different Temperament Big Boss the vast majority of the time, it is critical for you to learn the subtleties of communicating with them in their preferred style.

As an *Idealist*, you likely have the following traits that you will tend to display when giving a presentation to Mr. / Ms. Big:

- You respect cooperation and diplomacy. Idealists see the workplace as an arena for inter-dependent effort. All contributions to your project are important and you are likely to give praise generously to all the members of your extended team. You see the potential in all people and ideas, and you try to convey this sense of excitement in your presentations. It is important to you to try to establish a connection with your audience; you often use personal anecdotes/stories to which you feel audience members can relate to "break the ice".

- You value harmony and individual growth and abhor processes and organizational structures that disregard the value of people. You are less concerned with concrete facts and numbers, believing that a motivated and enthusiastic team will produce excellent results as a matter of course, while an unmotivated team focusing on minute detail will miss out on the opportunities created by true synergy.
- You are loyal to the needs of the individuals within your sphere, and are likely to balk at any new methodologies or technologies where you don't see adequate planning to mitigate negative consequences affecting the well-being of the people in the organization. You are especially keen to the big picture ramifications of decisions that may have negative effects on team morale.

These are all positive traits that contribute to a harmonious and positive workplace environment. However, when presenting to non-Idealist Big Bosses – that is, Guardians, Artisans, or Rationals, these very traits may be what create the disastrous results you want to avoid.

Guardians are prevalent in most large organizations, and the odds are better than 50-50 that your Big Boss is a Guardian. In contrast to your traits, the Guardian:

- Is respectful of authority. As a high ranking member of the organization Mr. Big deserves your esteem and expects you to defer to him when there are differences between you. He views the organization hierarchically as opposed to your interdependent view across the org chart.
- Values established processes, proven methods, and proper channels. These keep order in the organization and avoid unnecessary risk that can cause chaos. Potential is fine, but they want to see concrete results, and the details matter.
- Is loyal to the organization, and will put the needs of the organization ahead of the needs of individuals. “A better mousetrap” is not always the best solution if it requires organizational change that may rock the boat. The needs of individuals often must be subjugated to the well-being of the organization.

Artisans are also prevalent in large organizations, especially in areas related to sales. An Artisan Big Boss may be a mystery for you to understand and effectively interact with. The Artisan:

- Respects results and “getting things done”. He doesn't care highly for the details of who all contributed to the success of the project; he cares about what got done. He will want you to skip “the small talk” and get to the point.
- Despises excuses. Extremely utilitarian, the ends often justify the means, and the Artisan Big Boss has little patience for bureaucracy, hierarchy, or tradition that stand in the way of reaching a goal. The long term ramifications on peoples' feelings or morale are usually beyond the timeframe of his concern.
- Seeks the thrill of competition. Winning is important, and teams and sides shift with the game at hand. Personal friendships and loyalties never disappear, but they are put aside during competition – and reappear after the final gun. What you may take as a cutting or insensitive remark is likely just part of the negotiation for him, and does not reflect any personal animosity.

Rationals are the rarest of the four temperaments, but tend to be over represented in the upper ranks of management. Rational big bosses:

- Respect competency above all else and are skeptical of hierarchy and positional authority. They will be impatient with personal anecdotes in a presentation, unless the anecdote is used to demonstrate competence and expertise in the subject at hand.
- Question the status quo continuously and will discard any process or method if they find a new one that they believe to be more efficient or effective.
- Are loyal to finding a better way, and the needs of the organization or individuals take a back seat.

In our example at the start of the article, once you know that Bert is an Idealist, and Tom is an Artisan, an effective response for Bert becomes apparent. Rather than continuing to sing the praises of all the contributing team members and painting the big picture of how teamwork helped them achieve their great results, he needed to go straight to the scores. Once Tom sees the bottom line, and agrees that the results are indeed excellent, he can sit back and listen to Bert's stories that extol the human side of their accomplishments. Bert should weave some competitive drama into this "back story", creating "a win" for the competitive Tom which will help him appreciate the amount of effort the team put in to achieve their results. Tom would congratulate Bert on the victory, rather than leave him feeling personally injured and believing he needed to find a new job.

Most of us have experienced similar situations at some point in our careers, and are likely to face them in the future. Armed with awareness of Keirsey Temperament Theory, these unfortunate results are both foreseeable and preventable. In fact, knowing how to best pitch the Big Boss based on their temperament can make you a star.

Working at Home or in an Office

With the gasoline crunch, some companies are encouraging workers to do part of their work at home and part of their work in the office. Also some parents want to work from home so they can also take care of their offspring. Here's some tips for the various personality styles with a label showing how much time at the office (% O) and how much time at home (% H) could work for them. For all types face-to-face time in an office is necessary if you want to have a fair deal when it is time for a raise or promotion.

80% O – 20% H

The most directive styles of the four personality groups need to have some way where they can take charge, at least occasionally. These are the Guardian Supervisor (ESTJ), the Artisan *Promoter* (ESTP), the Idealist *Teacher* (ENFJ), and the Rational *Field Marshal* (ENTJ). So they may need to spend more time with others to exercise their leadership skills. In fact, when they retire, they need to become active in groups so they don't drive their spouses crazy by ordering them around.

70% O – 30% H

The remaining four extraverted types also need people-contact to enjoy their jobs. They are the Guardian *Provider (ESFJ)*, Artisan *Performer (ESFP)*, Idealist *Champion (ENFP)*, and Rational *Inventor (ENTP)*. The first three need socialization with others to be able to enjoy their jobs, while the last needs to have people around so they can test out their inventive ideas. This group is more about passing along information than being directive.

50% O – 50% H

The introverted directive types will give directives when necessary, but also want some time alone. They are the Guardian *Inspector (ISTJ)*, Artisan *Crafter (ISTP)*, Rational *Mastermind (INTJ)* and Idealist *Counselor (INFJ)*. All like to have at least some influence over events, plans, or actions. The first three all need to be able to have their ideas considered for improvements of procedures or systems while the last need to have their suggestions considered to influence people systems.

30% O – 70% H

The introverted informative types have many differing motivations. They are the Guardian *Protector (ISFJ)*, Artisan *Composer (ISFP)*, Idealist *Healer (INFP)*, and the Rational *Architect (INTP)*. The last three need a great deal of freedom and autonomy in their work. The Guardian Protector needs control over a specific territory and their home is their castle. At times all will need to increase their office time so their work is considered seriously.

The percentages given are guidelines and can be easily changed due to the company's needs or the individual's needs. If you do decide to work from home, you'll find that many companies have policies and procedures governing working at home. You'll need to set some family ground rules so you can be productive. Spend some time Googling the internet about advice for people who work from home so you'll be well prepared for this change.

Keeping Your Job

When the economy tightens, eventually the job market shrinks. When jobs shrink, bosses are more likely to keep "utility players" who can handle a variety of roles.

Don't:

- Advertise your fear about losing your job.
- Come across as an "old fogie" who resists all change.

Do:

- Evaluate your skills & see what new ones you can add to be more valuable to your company.
- Talk positively about solutions you can bring to company problems.
- Be active in networking with others about potential opportunities.

Guardians are the most likely of all types to be tied to the past and resist changes. Their best tactic to stay relevant is to regularly observe skills needed by the company and make an effort to learn at least one new skill every year to stay employable. They'll also do well if they are knowledgeable about what is going on in their field so that changes do not take them unaware.

Artisans are often the most adaptable, but like to be in control of their own destiny so may have trouble accepting helpful advice. They'll do best if they do not move into anger or emotionalism and maintain their sense of humor. Bosses are usually turned off by anger and high emotionalism and appreciate the employee who can stay positive when times are tough. Like Guardians, they need to keep adding to their skill set.

Idealists often absorb not only their own pain, but that of their fellow co-workers who are facing a shrinking job market. They might try to help others and neglect helping themselves. They need to take time to write down how they have positively contributed to the company's bottom line. Most bosses want specific facts, not global descriptions which are the Idealist's normal way of communicating.

Rationals, who comprise a small percentage of the population, can come across as arrogant or too intellectual. Like Idealists, they need to translate their visions into concrete facts that are understandable to the more numerous Guardians and Artisans. Since Rationals seek expert status, they can sometimes have trouble moving into a new area where they are a novice. Sticking with a no-longer-needed skill set will ensure that they are on the lay-off list. They can profit by doing a risk analysis of different options and actions.

All employees need to learn how to talk positively about their past efforts and current plans to keep a company functioning. They need to be seen as a part of the solution. For new employees, it is necessary to show their dedication to the company by working hard, turning out quality work and staying away from gossip and complaints. Getting a reputation as a hard worker goes a long way in contributing to job security.

Experienced employees also need to be seen as hard working plus they should take advantage of the network of contacts they have within the organization. Having a positive attitude, coupled with their deep knowledge of the organization and understanding of the current situation will give them the edge in keeping their job.

Networking for Work

The vast majority of jobs are never advertised nor posted on the web. How do you find them? Through your network of friends, acquaintances, co-workers and former bosses. Networks are important in times of lay-offs both within and outside your company. So what is networking all about? It is connecting with others for fun and mutual assistance.

Conscious, purposeful networking helps to

- Uncover opportunities and to keep options open
- Identify problems that people will pay you to solve
- Increase timeliness in achieving your objectives

What you might want from a network

- Get an introduction to someone who may be able to help you
- Gather specific information that you want or need
- Gain visibility and increase your reputation
- Keep up to date in your field
- Learn a new skill

What you might have to offer your network

- New ideas and critiques of others' ideas
- Specific knowledge or expertise
- Mentoring or teaching
- News of changes in the field
- Giving feedback and appreciation
- Increasing other's networks

Those of us who are more extraverted may find networking easy, while those who are more introverted may need to rely on friends who are good networkers. Some network for practicality while others network for ingenuity. Some network for factual information while others network for human interest. Some only network to achieve an objective while others network to respond to opportunities. Which aspects of networking are more interesting to you?

- *Guardians* tend to be the most aware of the structural and logistical aspects of businesses and organizations. They don't like to make changes unless there are proven benchmarks. Their most successful contacts come from working to improve business operations or smooth people interactions. Their networks help provide stability to themselves and others.
- *Artisans* live in the now and want excitement in their lives. They are pragmatic and want something that works. Artisans are most successful if they make connections to deal with crisis and change and to energize others to action. Their networks help uncover opportunities.
- *Idealists* want to improve the future for others. They are proponents of self-development. Idealists are most successful when they network to help others succeed and to influence organizational change. Their networks provide inspiration for others.
- *Rationals* are the least common of the different personality types. They drive themselves to be knowledgeable and competent, but often are less aware of the personal aspects of business relationships. They are most successful when they network to enact strategies or to design new systems. Their networks bring new ideas.

Networking may be the key to finding and landing your next job. If you begin your networking efforts with the objective of using your own personal strengths to help others, you'll find that the reciprocal benefits make the effort more than worthwhile.

Dressing for Life and the Work Place

Teens say, "People should judge for who I am, not for how I dress." But people make judgments about others in the first 5 seconds. How you dress can make or break you in your career.

Companies, like people, have a particular range of clothes preferences. Start-ups are more likely to have fewer “norms” about clothes. Large, established companies are more likely to have a more conservative “norm.” Artsy businesses want more personal flair in clothing. Some organizations have a preference for uniforms. Are you dressing within your company’s preferred range? Do you really want that promotion or raise?

Most *Guardians* are already well aware of company and/or occupation “norms.” However, even Guardians can have trouble if the dress code that worked in one situation doesn’t work in another. Crystal, a software manager who dressed in an up-scale East coast style, accepted a job at a casual West coast engineering company. She stood out, causing others to wonder if she was selected for her looks, not her qualifications. Her direct employees felt uncomfortable around her. She was out within a year.

Artisans tend to either follow the latest trends or push the envelope to show their independence and freedom. Joe knew that he was smarter and faster than any of his co-workers, but was never considered for a supervisor position. Why? The top brass thought he looked like “trailer trash.”

Most *Rationals* wear dark colors and don’t want to fuss much about what they wear. They can get stuck in a rut and become too “geeky-looking.” It’s good if they come out of their intellectual dark room every few years to see if their clothes send the message they want others to hear. Marina upgraded to blazers and more tailored slacks and found her opinions had more impact.

Most *Idealists* want to wear clothes that show their unique character. Those working in creative fields are often appreciated for their flair. Jose was a great networker, but learned that in some circles he had to tone down his style in order to make points.

Your clothing is the easiest way to identify yourself. You don’t have to become a clone to show membership in a group, but if you refuse to show any sense of membership, you’re not likely to get the spot you want. Remember, there are more Guardians than any other temperament and they are very sensitive to “norms.”

Answering the Toughest Question – “Tell Me About Yourself”

This seems like such an innocuous question, but many novice job candidates have a hard time giving an answer. Even experienced interviewees can sound like canned ads for the jobs they are interviewing for. Employers ask open-ended questions so they can see how candidates will present their skills, abilities, and ambitions.

Here are the most common mistakes to make when answering this question:

- *“True Confessions”* – Tess answered by confessing that she had just completed the course to learn a new piece of software, but that she would try her best to do a good job. This shows a lack of self-confidence so Tess will not rank high on the list of who to hire.

- *“Home and Personal Life”* – Women are most likely to make this mistake of describing how many children they have and disclosing other personal information, such as age and marital status which are illegal for the employer to ask.
- *“The Commercial”* – Some people have read interviewing books or been trained by career counselors. They may give a 30-second commercial which shows their skills being tailored to the job needs. These often sound too canned and may be too limiting in showing the candidate’s abilities.
- *“I’ll Tell You Exactly What You Want to Hear”* – Some job candidates try to be all things to all people and emphasize skills that they believe the other person wants to hear. One individual talked about his attention to detail and accuracy and how he could keep a project’s budget on track. A few months after he was hired, he was seldom in his office and spent lots of time making contacts that could potentially bring in new business. Fortunately, his manager was knowledgeable about temperament and realized that he was likely was an Artisan Promoter. He now works in a position that better fits his talents.

How can you prepare to answer an open-ended question such as *“Tell Me about Yourself?”* You can use your results from the Keirsey Temperament Sorter as a tool. Review the document and highlight areas that demonstrate skills you enjoy using. Write down verbs that show you in action and nouns that show your qualities that you exhibit. Next, write down 3 adjectives that describe you. Here’s a sample: energetic, organized, timely, adaptable, far-thinking, problem-solving, artistic, creative. Then, think of a time when you solved a problem. Employers like to hire people who show initiative. Then organize these items into a 30-second commercial.

A *Guardian* might want to emphasize their organizational ability, their dedication and timeliness. They are very skilled at making sure that things, information and people are in the right place at the right time. Gina, a Guardian *Supervisor*, was applying for an accounting position. She had just graduated from college and her work experience included an internship. Here’s her answer to *“Tell Me about Yourself.”*

- “Last summer I worked as an intern for XYZ Accounting. I was known for being thorough and accurate in my work. We were in a big rush to make a deadline and I noticed that one page was missing from the master I was copying. I let my boss know. We found it, and were able to get the pages in order and the report printed in time for his meeting. I’m sure that my attention to detail and to high quality work will be an advantage for your company.”

An *Artisan* might want to emphasize their versatility, their fast response time, and their energetic problem-solving abilities. Brian was an Artisan *Performer*, with a lot of experience in customer service. He answered the question in this manner:

- “I’ve spent ten years in Customer Service. People want solutions, and they want them quickly. I’m known as a guy who gets things done. One of our dealers sold both new and used cars. He had a customer interested in a luxury used sports car that needed a particular part. He’d had no luck getting the part through his usual channels and asked me for help. I made a few calls and the part was on its way to him from across the country in two hours. The sale went through. I’m really energized by solving problems for people.”

An *Idealist* might want to emphasize their ability to work in teams and to coach others to success. Inez is an Idealist *Teacher* experienced in Human Resources. She worked in various departments and her ambition was to become a manager. She applied for a position as Manager of Employee Relations in a large company. Here's her answer:

- “With 20 years experience in various departments in Human Resources, I’m ready to contribute my knowledge to managing the Employee Relations department. This department requires knowledge of legal liability and requirements for businesses. Both employees and managers are uncomfortable with employee relation issues. Education of all parties given with a large dose of tact is necessary to keep problems to a minimum. In my last position we were able to forestall a potential lawsuit. One thing I particularly pride myself on was being able to solve issues of employee/supervisor mismatch. Helping them understand their roles, responsibilities, differences in strengths and weaknesses solved many problems. At times it was necessary to reassign the employee to a different manager so they could continue to be of value to the company. I’d like to bring my knowledge to serve this company.”

A *Rational* might want to emphasize their ability to analyze systems and to create new designs. Tony, a Rational *Field Marshal* was applying for the Manager of Information Systems. He answered the question in this manner:

- “As you are well aware, the field of Information Technology has seen a lot of changes in the 30 years that I have been in the field. New software and new technologies are constantly being introduced. It is a constant challenge to maximize the competitive advantage while minimizing costs. In general, people who are attracted to IT are self-educating problem solvers. But the rate of change and pressure on the staff can be so high that people get burned out. One of the innovations that I used at my last company was giving spot awards to individuals who volunteered to show new techniques to colleagues. Many people in IT concentrate on their own projects and don’t pass information along and the spot awards have encouraged a more communicative environment. I’m now looking for a new challenge in a larger sized company and believe I would be a good fit for your needs.”

In each case, the person answering the question gave a true picture of how he or she solved problems and brought value in their last situation. None portrayed themselves in a phony style. None are likely to end up in a mismatch with their skills not fitting the new position.

Negotiating a Salary (Channeling your Inner Artisan Promoter)

Negotiation can occur when one accepts a new job and when one is angling for a raise. The Artisan *Promoter* is the most naturally skilled of all types in negotiation. Here are some tips that they seem to know instinctively:

1. **Timing is Everything.**

In salary negotiations, the one who mentions money first loses. For a new job, never negotiate salary or other benefits until you have an offer of employment. For new employment, a new position or for a raise, talk about your future contributions to the company before money discussions start.

2. **Know what you are Worth.**

Idealists and Guardian *Protectors* tend to want others to praise and reward them for their worth and may not do the homework to get real facts. They tend to give their power away to the employer. It is best to research salary ranges before you start the negotiation. Know the average salary for candidates with your education and skills in that type of position, in that type of industry, and in that geographical location. Search the internet for salary information and also consult professional organizations.

3. **Know what you can Contribute.**

Rationals, in particular, love to solve systems problems, but they may get too technical in telling about their ideas so they need to learn to judge their audience. *Artisans* are great in emergencies and need to focus on how they have solved past crises. *Guardians* cut risks and ensure that operations go smoothly. Idealists are catalysts that help people work effectively in teams to create a better future. If you can't state what you have done to help the company and what you intend to do, you'll lose in negotiations. Think in terms of money or time saved, resources preserved, problems solved, and opportunities or new products created. In you can assign value in terms of numbers, you'll enhance your negotiating stance.

4. **Work toward a Win/Win situation.**

Focus on mutual goals. Negotiations that are open dialogues rather than adversarial positions get the most for everyone. Avoid commitment words like always, must have, never, and won't consider. If you don't get all you want, don't take it personally or become angry. Before you enter the negotiation, see if you can state the company's side in terms of present conditions. Those who can understand the issues on both sides of the table are the most successful.

5. **Seek Creative Alternatives.**

Often times in negotiations, a person does not achieve everything they would like, especially in the area of salary. What other things might be important to you? A bonus, cell phone and pager, childcare services, association membership, commuting and parking costs, company car, computer equipment, flexible work schedule, telecommuting, profit sharing and savings plans, etc. Decide what options are the most important to you and put them on the table.

Finally, celebrate. No matter if you got all you wanted, got some of what you wanted, or even didn't get anything you wanted, it is time to celebrate that you participated in a negotiation. Each time you participate, you learn something new. The negotiations concern a strictly economic issue – not a statement of your personal worth.

Romance and the Male Idealist

Idealist men find it relatively easy to express tender feelings, sympathize with others, and have female friends. Some even enjoy shopping. Many women find this intensely appealing while others view them as effeminate.

Idealist men are the most likely to provide romantic dates, an empathetic listening ear, and kindness. Women are likely to appreciate their ability to simply listen without trying to solve problems although they are likely to need to share the stage with the Idealist man who also wants to be heard. Along with sensitivity, Idealists are the most likely type of man to be moody, responding to the moods of those around them.

Tom is a *Teacher (ENFJ)* Idealist . When he met his wife, he threw himself in front of her car so he could ask her on a date. He says that he knew the first time they dated that she was “the one”. Almost every day, he leaves her a note about something different he loves about her. Although both he and his wife work hard to take care of their family including their four daughters, his wife says that he actually sacrifices more. He’s very protective and fears many things that could harm his girls.

Ian is a *Counselor (INFJ)* Idealist. He had many female friends in high school, some of whom were interested in him. He dated a couple but didn’t find it very satisfying. In college, he was convinced he’d found the woman of his dreams. They hit it off right away and dated for two years before he found out she’d been cheating on him almost the whole time. She told him she felt trapped because he idealized her so much. Now he’s dating a new woman and is working to view their relationship more realistically.

P.J. is a *Champion (ENFP)* Idealist. He never lacks for female companionship. Women seek him out because he’s cheerful and believes in them. His tendency has been to have very intense relationships which burn out quickly. He’s decided that it’s probably best to date casually to avoid flash-in-the-pan romances. P.J. figures he’ll eventually settle down and have a family but, for now, he enjoys the experience of femininity in many different forms.

Julius is a *Healer (INFP)* Idealist. In high school, his closest friends were girls. He and his friends were forever finding a cause, such as a homeless family or students’ rights. They worked hard to right the wrongs they found. His wife says she was drawn to his activism, his caring for the oppressed and the environment. She jokes that they have their roles reversed. She says she’s logical, stable, and hard-headed while he is romantic, moody, and compassionate.

Romance and the Female Idealist

Idealist women tend to be very romantic. They love to give and receive tokens of affection, such as an original poem, a hand carved box, or an item which reminds them of some shared experience. Men often appreciate their compassion and empathy along with their belief in others. When dating, they hope they'll get to know each other through deep conversation.

Rachel is an Idealist *Counselor (INFJ)*. She seldom dated in high school since she was studious and reserved, intimidating the guys. In college she dated more often. Rachel had a boyfriend who pursued her. It was a passionate affair which quickly burned out when she became convinced he didn't really love her. Later she met another man. Within a few weeks, they were certain they were meant for each other. A year later, they married.

Bethany is an Idealist *Teacher (ENFJ)*. She was fairly popular in high school and had her pick of young men. Later, she continued to find it easy to find dates. Her real problem was that she just couldn't find what she was looking for. She joked that she was like Goldilocks. Bethany finally realized that she was holding onto an ideal that no man could match. She began dating an old friend and discovered that a relationship doesn't have to be perfect to be satisfying and fulfilling.

Arianna is an Idealist *Champion (ENFP)*. She has always found that men are attracted to her. She has had quite a few serious romances. As soon as she realizes that they are both attracted to each other, Arianna has whole-heartedly thrown herself into the relationship, later discovering that they aren't suited to each other at all. Then she forced herself to slow down and take time to get to know the other person. She's been dating her current boyfriend for 2 years. He has been a steady influence on her.

Isabel is an Idealist *Healer (INFP)*. She doesn't really enjoy playing the field. That caused her too many heartaches. In college, her boyfriend was one of the most sought after good-looking guys on campus. However, he was shallow, inconsiderate, and straying. She stayed with him too long, hoping he would finally wake up to what he had in her. Later she started dating a man with whom she could laugh. She admired his intellectual capacity. He suggested that they live together. She said she'd live with him after marriage. They are now engaged.

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