

ESFJ

PREMIUM PROFILE



16Personalities

What Will You Find In This Profile?

This profile is designed to cover all the main aspects of your personality and areas of your life – your type description, relationships, academic path, career and professional development, your communication and friend-making skills, parenting tips and advice, and much, much more. It combines the personality type theory with practical, real-world advice coming directly for other people who share your personality type.

Personality types have been the topic of many discussions, some of them dating back to ancient times – and it is wise to draw from that source of knowledge and experience, especially when you are unsure how to handle a particular situation. This kind of knowledge gives you a lot of power – power to control and understand yourself. As Aristotle said millennia ago, “the hardest victory is the victory over self”. Consider this profile your battle plan.

What Does It Mean to Be an ESFJ?

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ESFJs belong to the **Sentinel** type group, along with ESTJs, ISTJs and ISFJs. They have an **Extraverted**, **Observant**, **Feeling** and **Judging** personality:

Extraverted – ESFJs are expressive, outgoing, prefer group activities, are eager to speak their minds, feel more comfortable when around other people than when alone, and get energized by social interaction.

Observant – ESFJs rely on their senses, are absorbed in practical matters and focus on what has happened as opposed to what might happen.

Feeling – ESFJs are sensitive, follow their hearts, keep feelings close to the surface, and focus on harmony and cooperation.

Judging – ESFJs are decisive, prefer clear rules, respect deadlines, are eager to commit and seek closure.

All Sentinels prefer facts to ideas and focus on achieving consensus.

Table of Contents

What Will You Find In This Profile?	1
The Puzzle of Personality	5
Five Personality Aspects.....	8
Mind: Introverted vs. Extraverted.....	8
Energy: Intuitive vs. Observant.....	9
Nature: Thinking vs. Feeling.....	10
Tactics: Judging vs. Prospecting.....	11
Identity: Assertive vs. Turbulent.....	12
Type Groups.....	13
Roles	13
Strategies.....	14
Type Overview	16
Strengths and Weaknesses	20
Strengths	20
Weaknesses.....	22
Motivation and Self-Esteem.....	23
Self-Esteem	24
Self-Respect.....	25
Self-Confidence	26
Personal Growth.....	29
What Are the Things That Cause Most Problems for ESFJs?	29
How to Make Good Use of ESFJ Traits?.....	31

Your Dark Side.....	33
Emotional Stability	35
Romantic Relationships	38
Potential Pairings.....	40
An Introverted (I) Partner	40
An Extraverted (E) Partner.....	42
An Intuitive (N) Partner	44
An Observant (S) Partner	46
A Thinking (T) Partner.....	48
A Feeling (F) Partner	50
A Judging (J) Partner.....	51
A Prospecting (P) Partner	52
Assertive or Turbulent?	54
Friendships	59
Analyst Friends.....	60
Diplomat Friends.....	61
Sentinel Friends	62
Explorer Friends	63
Parenthood	65
Analyst Children	66
Diplomat Children	68
Sentinel Children	69
Explorer Children.....	70
Academic Path	72

How ESFJs Learn	72
ESFJs in High School	73
Work or College?	76
When ESFJs go to College	77
Career and Professional Development	79
Getting on the Career Ladder	81
Professional Development	83
Communication between Types	86
Sentinels – Sentinels	86
Sentinels – Analysts	88
Sentinels – Diplomats	91
Sentinels – Explorers	93
Career Progression	96
Alternative Options	97
Suitable Careers	98
What Would Make a Job Unsuitable for an ESFJ?	101
Workplace Habits	102
ESFJ Colleagues	102
ESFJ Managers	103
ESFJ Subordinates	103
What Do Other ESFJs Say?	104

The Puzzle of Personality

Often the very first question people ask after completing our personality test is “What do these four letters mean?” We are of course referring to those mysterious acronyms like INTJ, ENFP, or ESTJ. As you may have already read in the free Type Descriptions or additional articles available on our website, each letter refers to a specific trait, with an additional variant listed at the end. But before we discuss those traits, let’s first take a brief historical detour.

Since the dawn of time, we have tried to describe and categorize ourselves in many ways. From the four temperaments of the Ancient civilizations – sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic – to the latest advances in psychology, people have been restless in their pursuit of a good, reliable way to fit something as complex and fluid as human personality into a well-defined model. We are still some time away from being able to do that, although the current models account for the majority of our personality traits and can often predict with a high degree of confidence how we are likely to behave in specific circumstances.

That said, it is important to bear in mind that regardless of which model we rely on, our personality is just one aspect of many – our actions are also influenced by our environment, experience, and individual goals. In these profiles, we describe how people belonging to a specific personality type are *likely* to behave – however, remember that these are just indicators and tendencies, not definitive guidelines or answers. There’s a big difference between scoring 10% on a trait, and scoring 80%. This information is meant to inspire personal growth and better understanding of others, not to be taken as gospel.

Our approach has its roots in two different philosophies. One dates back to early 20th century and was the brainchild of Carl Gustav Jung, the father of analytical psychology. Jung’s theory of psychological types is perhaps the most influential creation in personality typology, and it has inspired a number of different theories, including our own. One of Jung’s key contributions was the development of the concept of *Introversion* and *Extraversion* – he theorized that each of us falls into one of these two categories, either focusing on the internal world (Introvert) or the outside world (Extravert). These terms are usually defined differently nowadays, with Extraversion being synonymous with social prowess – however, the original Jungian definitions focused on where the person tends to get their energy from. In that sense, Introversion does not imply shyness, and Extraversion does not necessarily mean good social skills.

Besides Introversion and Extraversion, Jung also coined several additional concepts. The ones most relevant to us are the so-called *Judging* functions (either *Thinking* or *Feeling*) and *Perceiving* functions (either *Sensing* or *Intuition*). According to Jung, each person prefers one of these cognitive functions and finds it most natural to rely on it in everyday situations. However, other functions also have their place and can emerge depending on the circumstances. These functions are also defined by the person's Introversion or Extraversion – e.g. someone whose dominant function is Introverted Feeling is likely to think differently from someone with Extraverted Feeling at the helm.

In the 1920s, Jung's theory was noticed by Katharine Cook Briggs, who later co-authored one of the most popular personality indicators used today, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®). Briggs was a teacher with an avid interest in personality typing, having developed her own type theory before learning of Jung's writings. Together with her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers, they developed a convenient way to describe the order of each person's Jungian preferences – this is how the four-letter acronyms were born. There were four possible pairs of personality traits:

- Introversion (I) or Extraversion (E)
- Intuition (N) or Sensing (S)
- Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)
- Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)

You'll recall these terms from the paragraphs dedicated to Jung. According to the Myers-Briggs model, the first letter determines the *attitudes* of the dominant and subsequent functions, while the last letter shows which function *is* dominant. For Extraverts, the dominant function is focused on the outside world. J means that one of the Judging functions (Thinking or Feeling) is dominant; P points to one of the Perceiving functions (Intuition or Sensing). For Introverts, J and P show the auxiliary rather than dominant function – the dominant function itself is internalized. Of course, this is just a very simplified description of the Myers-Briggs theory – readers interested in learning more should read “Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type” by Isabel Briggs Myers.

Due to its simplicity and ease of use, the four-letter naming model is now shared by a number of diverse theories and approaches, such as Socionics, Keirsey Temperament Sorter®, Linda Berens' Interaction

Styles and many others. However, it is important to remember that while these acronyms may be identical or very similar, their meanings do not always overlap. One of the reasons behind such a lengthy introduction is that we want to make it clear that there is no single definition assigned to these type concepts – each theory defines them in their own way and it is entirely possible that if you meet five people who all say “I am an INFJ”, their definitions of what INFJ means are going to differ. There is certainly a lot of overlap between the theories sharing these type names – however, their type descriptions are by no means identical.

But let’s leave the typological theories aside for a moment. A different way to look at people’s personalities is through the lens of a *trait-* rather than *type-based* model. What do we mean by that? Instead of attempting to create 4 (or 8, 16, 32...) type constructs and fit people within them, we could simply define a number of traits and measure people’s preferences using well-defined scales, looking at their scores but not categorizing them. You may have heard the term *Ambivert*, which is a perfect example in this case. Ambiversion means that someone is more or less directly in the middle of the Introversion-Extraversion scale, being neither too social or outgoing, nor too withdrawn – which flies in the face of Jungian models described above. Every type-based theory is likely to have difficulties categorizing people whose scores end up right on the dividing line, regardless of how many dividing lines you have.

Trait-based theories would simply say that an Ambivert is a moderately Extraverted person and leave it at that, without assigning them a personality type. Such an approach certainly makes it much easier to reliably measure correlations between personality traits and other characteristics (e.g. political attitudes), which is why trait-based approaches dominate psychometric research – but that’s it, more or less. Unlike with type-based theories, it becomes impossible to define categories and types which could then be used as easily accessible concepts for discussions and recommendations. Consequently, while categories such as Extravert or Introvert are unavoidably limiting, they also give us a chance to describe a significant part of human personality and create theories that attempt to explain *why* we do what we do – something that a more scientifically reliable, but nondescript statement such as “you are 37% Extraverted” simply cannot do.

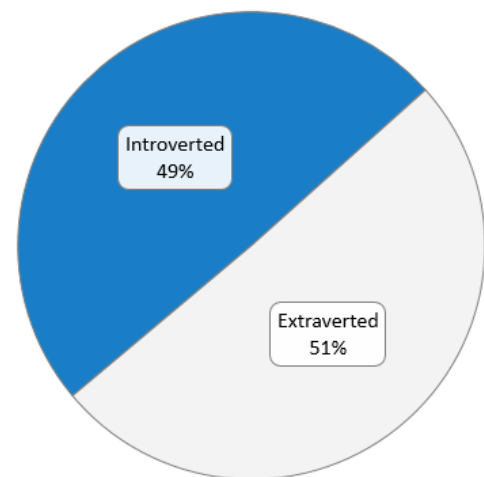
With our model, we've combined the best of both worlds. We use the acronym format introduced by Myers-Briggs due to its simplicity and convenience – however, we have redefined several Jungian traits and introduced an additional one, simplifying our model and bringing it closer to the latest developments, namely the dimensions of personality called the Big Five personality traits. Furthermore, unlike Myers-Briggs or other theories based on the Jungian model, we have not incorporated cognitive functions such as Extraverted Thinking or Introverted Sensing, or their prioritization, instead choosing five independent scales and building our types around them. This has allowed us to achieve high test accuracy while also retaining the ability to define and describe distinct personality types.

Let us now go through our five personality aspects one by one. The pie charts in each section will show the estimated distribution of each trait, based on our research and testing data.

Five Personality Aspects

Mind: Introverted vs. Extraverted

It is safe to say that this is probably the oldest notion in the history of personality theories. It has long been observed that some people are expressive, outgoing and comfortable in social situations – while others are reserved, quiet and more comfortable alone. It is as if the former (Extraverted individuals) sincerely enjoy engaging with the external world and recharge by communicating with other people, and the latter (Introverted individuals) prefer to rely on themselves and their own inner world instead of seeking stimulation from the outside. However, being Extraverted does not necessarily imply that the person will be an excellent public speaker; likewise, being Introverted does not mean that the individual is bound to be clumsy or antisocial. Rather, this trait shows the average degree of expressiveness and the overall tendency to seek stimulation from one or the other source.



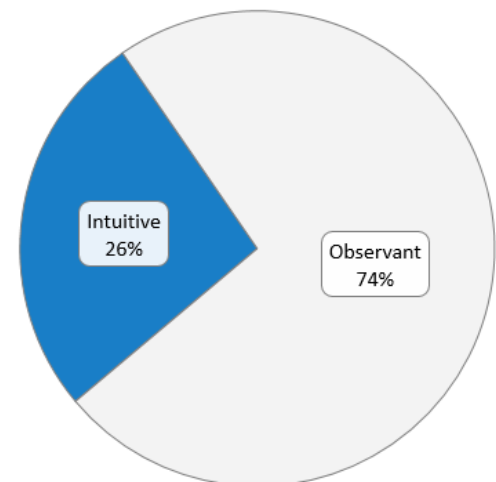
ESFJs are Extraverted – they tend to have good social skills and feel recharged after spending time in the company of other people. ESFJs enjoy taking command and issuing orders, often going ahead and

voicing their opinion even before it has fully formed in their own mind. People with this personality type cannot stand nonsense and do not like wasting their time chit-chatting about things of little importance.

Energy: Intuitive vs. Observant

All personality types can be divided into groups of those who favor the Intuitive energy style (more interested in ideas, focusing on the inner world) and those of the Observant energy style (more interested in facts and observable things, focusing on the external world). In our opinion, this dichotomy is the most important – while the other four determine how you interact with the world (Introverted / Extraverted), make decisions (Thinking / Feeling) and schedule your activities (Judging / Prospecting), the chasm between Intuitive and Observant individuals is far more significant as it actually determines how you see the world and what kind of information you focus on. It may seem like your decisions are the most important, but a decision is only as good as the understanding that backs it up.

Individuals with the Intuitive preference prioritize introspection, relying on their imagination, ideas and theories. They dream, fantasize and question why things happen the way they do, always feeling slightly detached from the actual, concrete world. One could even say that these individuals never actually feel as if they truly belong to this world. They may observe other people and events, but their mind remains directed both inwards and somewhere beyond – always questioning, wondering and making connections.



In contrast, individuals with the Observant trait focus on observing the actual world. They enjoy seeing, touching, feeling and experiencing things – and leave theories to others. They want to keep their feet on the ground and focus on the present, instead of wondering why or when something might happen. Consequently, people with this preference tend to be better at dealing with facts, tools and concrete objects as opposed to introspecting or theorizing.

These traits determine the communication style as well – Intuitive individuals talk about ideas and have no difficulties with allusions or reading between the lines, while Observant types focus on facts and

practical matters. This is why Intuitive types are likely to find it quite challenging to understand someone with the Observant trait, maybe even thinking that the latter is materialistic, unimaginative and simplistic. Likewise, an Observant individual is likely to think that their Intuitive conversation partner is impractical, naïve and unobservant. Both sets of assumptions can be quite damaging and it takes a mature person to get past them – but statements like these are fairly common.

ESFJs are Observant individuals – this is why they are so good at remembering various details, noticing discrepancies and keeping their feet on the ground. People with this personality type spend far more time observing concrete things around them than engaging in various internal discussions. ESFJs are not that concerned about what *might* happen or *why* it has happened – they focus on what *is* happening. ESFJs keep improving these skills throughout their lives, which makes them diligent and keen-eyed observers.

This is also one of the reasons why ESFJs rarely have difficulties finding a partner – as the majority of the population belong to one of the Observant types, many traits shared by people with this personality type, such as reliability, meticulousness and desire for security, are often seen as very attractive.

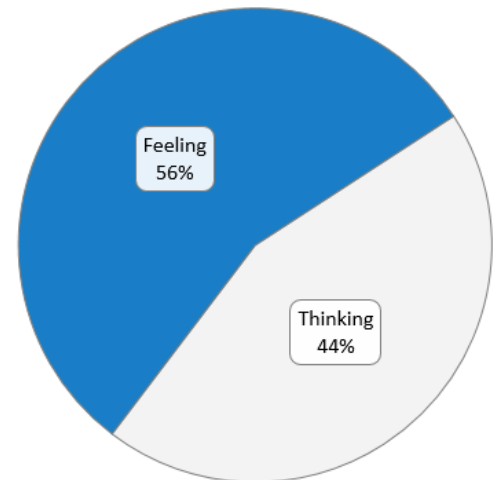
Of course, every stick has two ends. Introspection comes at a cost – by directing all their mental resources outwards, ESFJs inevitably have to discard the information that is being provided by their intuition. They are likely to have difficulties dealing with abstract, theoretical matters, or jumping from one idea to another – even finding it difficult to keep up with their classmates or colleagues when it comes to brainstorming the possibilities (but not assessing the facts).

Nature: Thinking vs. Feeling

This trait determines how we make decisions and cope with emotions. People with the Thinking trait seek logic and rational arguments, relying on their head rather than their heart. They also do their best to safeguard their emotions, shielding them from the outside world and making sure that they are not clearly visible. “Whatever happens, you must always keep a cool head” – this is the motto of Thinking types.

In contrast, people with the Feeling trait follow their hearts and emotions and care little about hiding them. From their perspective, we should not be afraid to listen to our innermost feelings and share them with the world – these individuals tend to be compassionate, sensitive and highly emotional.

That being said, it is important not to make the mistake of thinking that the first group is cold-blooded and indifferent, and that the second one is sentimental and irrational. This is a false dichotomy – people with the Thinking trait are often just as emotional as those with the Feeling trait, they simply try to hide and suppress their emotions; and people with the Feeling trait are fully capable of being rational, although they are likely to use different arguments, putting compassion and cooperation above efficiency and hard facts. It is unreasonable to dismiss or disparage either of these perspectives – both are perfectly valid.



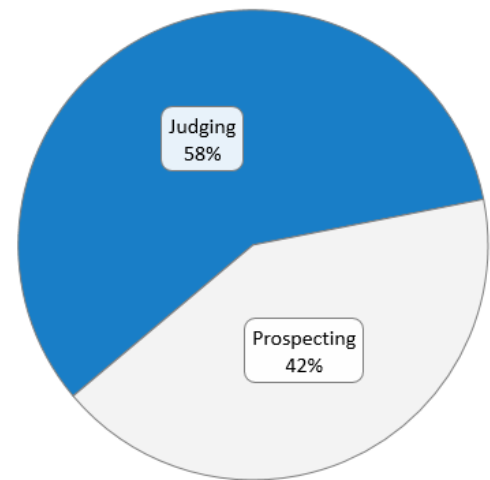
ESFJs have the Feeling trait – they trust and prioritize feelings, relying on moral and ethical arguments, and doing everything they can to stay true to their deeply held principles. People with this personality type are warm and sensitive, always able to find something positive regardless of the circumstances. Observant and Feeling traits form the core of the ESFJ personality, making them very cooperative and kind individuals. This trait also makes it easier for the ESFJ to engage with other people, enabling them to empathize and connect with others on the emotional level.

Tactics: Judging vs. Prospecting

This set of traits determines how we approach planning and available options. People with the Judging preference do not like to keep their options open – they would rather come up with five different contingency plans than just go ahead and deal with the challenges as they come. They prefer clarity and closure, always going with the plan rather than the flow. People with this trait likely keep a checklist, and when something is crossed off that list, it is done and not open to reassessment. This goes as much for groceries (“Was it on the list?”) as it does for life goals, like buying a house. Furthermore, these

individuals also tend to have a very strong work ethic, putting their duties and responsibilities above everything else.

In contrast, Prospecting individuals are always scanning for opportunities and options, willing to jump at them at a moment's notice. People with this preference are perfectly aware that life is full of possibilities and are reluctant to commit to something that might well prove to be an inferior option in the future. They are also likely to focus more on what makes them happy as opposed to what their parents, employers, or teachers expect – if a specific task is not that important or interesting, a Prospecting individual will always be able to come up with something better to do.



ESFJs are Judging individuals – they are decisive, choose security over freedom to improvise, and usually find it difficult to cope with uncertainty. This is what makes them excellent administrators, both able and willing to dedicate time for managing complex operations. That being said, people with this personality type are more interested in how things works in practice instead of spending time developing grand plans like Analysts do. ESFJs are logisticians rather than strategists.

Identity: Assertive vs. Turbulent

You may have noticed that we did not highlight either of these options, unlike before – this is because this particular trait affects all others, showing how confident you are in your abilities and decisions. Assertive individuals are emotionally stable, calm, relaxed and refuse to worry too much about minor matters. In contrast, individuals with Turbulent identity tend to care about their image, be self-conscious, success-driven and perfectionists. This does not necessarily mean that having an Assertive identity is better – for instance, Turbulent individuals perform better in certain roles as they push themselves to achieve superior results, while Assertive ones do not care about the outcome that much. However, Assertive individuals tend to benefit from higher emotional stability and increased self-confidence.

Type Groups

Now you know what each type consists of. But how do they fit together?

Our system has two layers: the first (inner) one defines our **Roles**, the second (outer) one – our **Strategies**.

Roles

The Role layer determines our goals, interests and preferred activities. Each of the four roles covers a set of personality types that are very similar; we will use these groups later in this profile to draw contrasts and similarities between personalities. They also serve to highlight the importance we have placed on the Energy trait – each personality type will share either the Observant or the Intuitive trait with all other members of their group, as well as one other key trait.

ANALYSTS (INTUITIVE AND THINKING [_NT_] TYPES, BOTH ASSERTIVE AND TURBULENT VARIANTS)

These personality types embrace rationality and impartiality, excelling in intellectual debates and scientific or technological fields. They are fiercely independent, open-minded, strong-willed and imaginative, approaching many things from a utilitarian perspective and being far more interested in what works than what satisfies everybody. These traits make Analysts excellent strategic thinkers, but also cause difficulties when it comes to social or romantic pursuits.

DIPLOMATS (INTUITIVE AND FEELING [_NF_] TYPES, BOTH ASSERTIVE AND TURBULENT VARIANTS)

Diplomats focus on empathy and cooperation, shining in diplomacy and counselling. People belonging to this type group are cooperative and imaginative, often playing the role of harmonizers in their workplace or social circles. These traits make Diplomats warm, empathic and influential individuals, but also cause issues when there is a need to rely exclusively on cold rationality or make difficult decisions.

SENTINELS (OBSERVANT AND JUDGING [_SJ_] TYPES, BOTH ASSERTIVE AND TURBULENT VARIANTS)

Sentinels are cooperative and highly practical, embracing and creating order, security and stability wherever they go. People belonging to one of these types tend to be hard working, meticulous and traditional, and excel in logistical or administrative fields, especially those that rely on clear hierarchies

and rules. These personality types stick to their plans and do not shy away from difficult tasks – however, they can also be very inflexible and reluctant to accept different points of view.

EXPLORERS (OBSERVANT AND PROSPECTING [_S_P] TYPES, BOTH ASSERTIVE AND TURBULENT VARIANTS)

These types are the most spontaneous of all and they also share the ability to connect with their surroundings in a way that is beyond reach of other types. Explorers are utilitarian and practical, shining in situations that require quick reaction and ability to think on your feet. They are masters of tools and techniques, using them in many different ways – ranging from mastering physical tools to convincing other people. Unsurprisingly, these personality types are irreplaceable in crises, crafts and sales – however, their traits can also push them towards undertaking risky endeavors or focusing solely on sensual pleasures.

Strategies

The Strategy layer shows our preferred ways of doing things and achieving goals. There are four strategies:

CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALISM (INTROVERTED AND ASSERTIVE [I___ (A)] TYPES)

Confident Individualists prefer doing things alone, choosing to rely on their own skills and instincts as opposed to seeking contact with other people. They know what they are good at and have high self-confidence. These personality types firmly believe that personal responsibility and trust in yourself are very important values. Confident Individualists do not pay much attention to other people's opinions and prefer to rely on themselves.

PEOPLE MASTERY (EXTRAVERTED AND ASSERTIVE [E___ (A)] TYPES)

People Masters seek social contact and tend to have very good communication skills, feeling at ease in social events or in situations where they need to rely on or direct other people. These types are confident in their abilities and do not hesitate to express their opinions. Playing an active role in the society and knowing what makes other people tick mean a lot for People Masters; however, they are not too concerned about what other people think about them.

CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT (INTROVERTED AND TURBULENT [I___ (T)] TYPES)

Constant Improvers are quiet, individualistic people. They tend to be perfectionistic and success-driven, often spending a lot of time and effort making sure that the result of their work is the best it can be. As their name says, Constant Improvers are high achieving individuals dedicated to their craft – however, they also tend to worry too much about their performance.

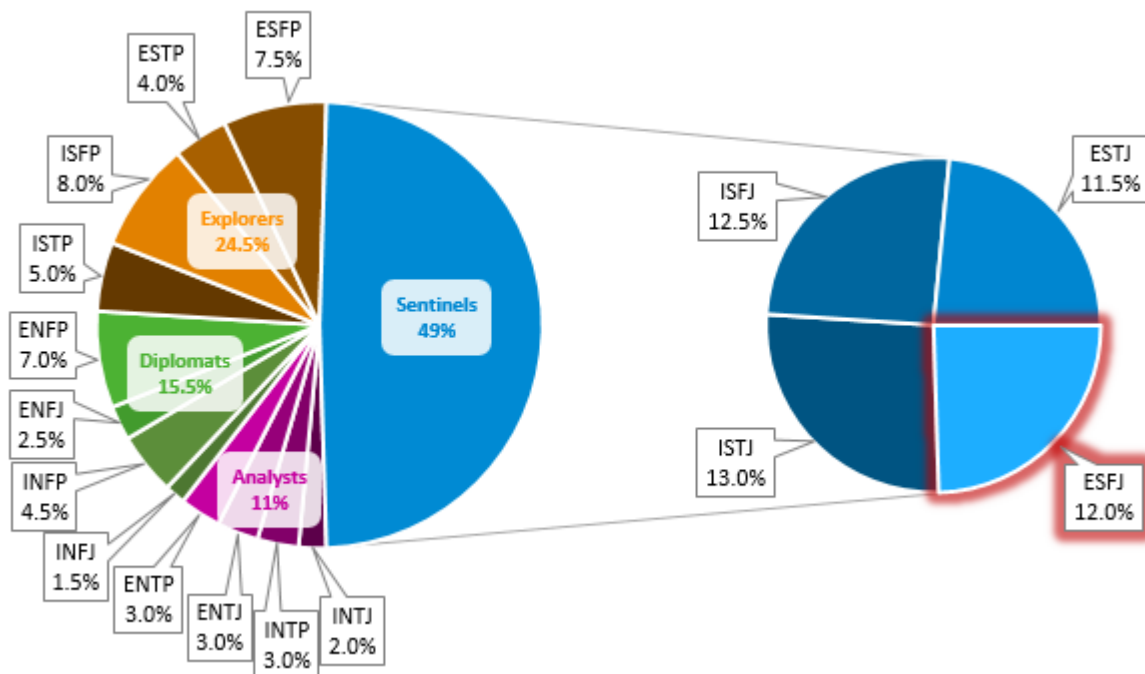
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT (EXTRAVERTED AND TURBULENT [E___ (T)] TYPES)

The last strategy is adopted by sociable, energetic and success-driven types. Social Engagers tend to be restless, perfectionistic individuals, prone to experiencing both very positive and very negative emotions. Their curiosity and willingness to work hard also mean that they are usually high-achieving, even if quite sensitive people. Types favoring this strategy also tend to place a lot of importance on other people's opinions; they value their social status and are eager to succeed in everything they do.

With all this in the background, let's now proceed to discussing your personality type and its place in the world!

Type Overview

The ESFJ personality type is the most popular of all Extraverted types. About 12% of Americans are believed to be ESFJs – averaging 7% among men and 16-17% among women. These percentages seem to vary across regions – for instance, countries in Asia tend to have higher percentages of Introverted and Thinking types, with locations like Hong Kong or Singapore also leaning towards a higher number of Intuitive individuals.



If someone tried to define ESFJ personality traits in three words, it would probably be Practical, Altruistic and Sociable. ESFJs want to be of service to others and take their commitments very seriously – they do not really worry about what role they are in, as long as they get a chance to socialize with other people and feel valued and appreciated. This personality type is generally considered to be the most altruistic and supportive of all Extraverted types. ESFJs rarely sit idle – there is always a worthy cause awaiting their attention. Most personalities are quite willing to reciprocate when it comes to good deeds; however, ESFJs take that to a higher level, often going above and beyond what is actually expected of them. People belonging to this type thrive in areas that are both traditional and involve a lot of activities where their input could make a huge positive difference. Many ESFJs seek careers in the academic sector, medicine,

social work or counselling; their personality traits also shine in administrative or clerical roles, or even in somewhat unexpected fields such as interior design.

ESFJs are great team players, always able to sense tensions and incompatibilities. They are very traditional, doing their best to support and defend authority and law. People with this personality type also tend to be very devoted, whether they are playing the role of a party host or a social worker. It is quite easy to recognize ESFJs in social events – they will find enough time to chat with everybody.

That being said, ESFJ personalities should be aware of their tendency to overdo things, especially in the family environment. As ESFJs always try hard to exceed others' expectations (especially when they are not sure what those expectations might be), their attention can be somewhat overbearing. Many personality types, especially more independent ones, are likely to get annoyed by this after a while. Furthermore, some personalities are naturally less sensitive compared to ESFJs – their reaction to that care and attention may differ from what the ESFJ would expect. This should not be taken personally – every type is unique and what is pleasant for an ESFJ may not feel natural for someone else.

As ESFJs always try to seek harmony in all possible areas, they are easily offended by others' disinterest or reluctance to participate in the activities the ESFJ finds noble and important. If uncontrolled, this may be one of ESFJ weaknesses and people with this personality type should consciously try to observe their own behavior around people of different cultures, background or personality types.

ESFJs pay a lot of attention to their looks and are very sensitive about their social status – this particular topic is a true minefield for anyone who decides to discuss it with an ESFJ, especially if there is at least some criticism or sarcasm involved. ESFJs also respect hierarchy and do their best to achieve a position of authority.

ESFJ personalities love to be involved in conversations focusing on practical topics or other people's lives – however, they will do their best to get out of the discussion once it touches abstract, theoretical topics. Analyzing complex ideas and discussing causes and consequences does not interest ESFJ personalities at all, in a stark contrast to Analysts.

ESFJs tend to be very warm, sensitive and perceptive. These are great traits but they can also cause difficulties for them and those around them – people with this personality type are likely to find it quite difficult to cope with situations that involve criticism or conflict. ESFJs should also not shy away from revealing how much they have done – not only this would prevent stressful situations, but the ESFJ would become more confident in their abilities and personality traits. It is not sufficient to simply know that you have done a great job – ESFJs also need to feel appreciated in order to remain enthusiastic.

An ESFJ is likely to take their commitments extremely seriously, putting security and stability above everything else, while not forgetting little but important details in their lives. This personality trait makes them very stable and loyal partners. ESFJs prefer structure over spontaneity, and value clarity, predictability and stability – in all areas of their lives.

ESFJs should also pay more attention to their workload and not hesitate to voice their concerns if it becomes unbearable. People with this personality type tend to overload themselves with work, but their kindness is abused just as often as it is respected. As a cynic would say, everyone is secretly an egoist – and the ESFJ personality is the perfect target for those who do not hesitate to use other people for their own gain. ESFJs are extraordinarily loyal, committed and patient – they should make sure that these traits do not expose them to exploitation. ESFJs are also respected for their exceptional loyalty to their duty – their accuracy, patience and ability to concentrate make them ideal employees in many professions. Not surprisingly, people with this personality type gravitate towards traditional, hierarchical institutions – public service, law, medicine etc.

People with this type are known for their meticulousness, patience, reliability and analytical skills. This is quite an unusual combination given that this is a Feeling type, but this is exactly what makes ESFJs so effective. They are unlikely to offer or embrace completely new and radical ideas, or lead a team towards some big goal, but their determination and passion more than make up for it. ESFJs tend to be very traditional and can be expected to defend existing norms and procedures – however, they are not blinded by this and are generally open to change, provided that the new approach does not contradict their inner values and principles.

Due to the above personality traits, ESFJ women are usually seen as extraordinarily feminine and are frequently depicted as role models in both real life and movies or TV shows. ESFJ men generally express and use these traits in a different way.

Some famous ESFJs:

- William McKinley, a former U.S. president
- Bill Clinton, former U.S. president
- Sally Struthers
- Mary Tyler Moore
- Sarah Palin, U.S. vice-presidential candidate
- Dixie Carter
- Sally Field
- Danny Glover, actor
- Nancy Kerrigan
- Dean Winchester from “Supernatural”
- Monica from “Friends”

Strengths and Weaknesses

ESFJ personalities are often called Benefactors for a reason – they are one of the most reliable, stable and loyal types, always doing their best to ensure that the needs of their loved ones are met. People with this personality type are kind and cooperative, but they can also be tireless and assertive when it comes to defending the rules, values and traditions that are important to them. The ESFJs' willingness to spend an enormous amount of time and effort making sure that everything is in order and everyone is provided for makes them very reliable, responsible and loyal employees, friends and partners.



However, this comes at a price – ESFJs are often seen as too dependent on other people, and they may also frequently feel pessimistic and overworked. For all their kindness and care, people with this personality type are likely to run into problems when it comes to dealing with situations that require a strictly rational and pragmatic approach, or when the surrounding environment is unstable and unpredictable. This section will discuss these issues and pinpoint their source, hopefully helping you to address the traits you are unhappy with. After all, one man's weakness is another man's strength – you will need to decide if and how you wish to pursue personal growth and development.

Strengths

- **Always look for win-win situations.** ESFJ personalities value harmony and do their best to avoid conflict wherever possible. They are natural team players, trying to get along with everyone.
- **Very loyal.** ESFJs value relationships and stability very highly and try hard to not disturb the status quo unless absolutely necessary. This makes them very loyal and trustworthy employees and partners.
- **Sensitive and warm.** ESFJ personalities seek harmony and care deeply about other people's feelings, being careful not to offend or hurt anybody.

- **Know how to connect to people.** ESFJs are social and friendly individuals who have no difficulties with small talk or following other social rituals. People with this personality type also tend to have a strong need to belong, e.g. by playing an active role in the local community.
- **Take their duties very seriously.** ESFJ personalities tend to be responsible and reliable, paying a lot of attention to their duties and responsibilities. They can be very hard workers, often putting their duties above their own needs.
- **Good with practical matters.** People with the ESFJ personality type have excellent practical skills and do not mind dealing with routine, daily tasks. They will always make sure that people close to them are cared for.
- **Very supportive.** ESFJs are always willing to help other people, sharing their knowledge and experience with their colleagues, classmates or friends.
- **Enthusiastic.** ESFJ personalities want to make a difference and are willing to spend a lot of time and effort fighting for or contributing to a worthy cause. It does not really matter if that is a simple task or a global initiative, the ESFJ will jump right in if the idea is aligned with their goals.
- **Good at creating and enforcing order.** ESFJs loathe chaos and always seek to come up with some kind of structure or a set of rules, regardless of what they do. They also do not shy away from enforcing the existing regulations (although this is likely to make them uncomfortable) and have zero tolerance for rule breakers.
- **Imaginative and observant.** People with the ESFJ personality type have their feet firmly planted on the ground, but they are also very imaginative, especially if something fascinates and inspires them. Furthermore, ESFJs also tend to be very observant individuals, able to pick up the smallest cues, especially when it comes to someone else's emotional state.
- **Reliable and patient.** ESFJs are meticulous and careful individuals, always making sure that their work is completed to the highest standard and sometimes even going beyond what is required. A promise means everything to an ESFJ – they would rather work overtime and lose sleep than fail to deliver the result that someone else is expecting.

Weaknesses

- **Often obsessed with their social status.** ESFJs tend to have a very strong need to be seen as responsible, respected and successful individuals – they will do everything to increase their social status and influence.
- **May be inflexible.** ESFJs place a lot of importance on traditions and may often worry too much about what other people see as acceptable. Consequently, they are likely to be very careful or even critical when it comes to unconventional methods or non-mainstream views.
- **Unwilling to improvise.** People with the ESFJ personality type dislike venturing outside their comfort zone and taking bold steps, usually out of fear of being (or appearing) different.
- **Very vulnerable to criticism.** ESFJs strongly dislike conflicts and criticism – they can get very defensive and hurt if someone (especially a person close to them) criticizes their habits, ideas or favorite traditions.
- **Often too selfless.** ESFJ personalities may care and worry so much about others that their attention will become overwhelming and ultimately unwelcome. This is also likely to lead to their own needs being neglected.
- **May be needy.** ESFJs need to know that they are liked and their efforts are valued. Consequently, people with this personality type may often fish for compliments or try to attract other people's attention.
- **Overload themselves.** ESFJs' perfectionism, combined with their strong sense of duty, often pushes them to take on too much work – and as already discussed above, ESFJs always want to make sure that everything is completed perfectly. Not surprisingly, this can cause a lot of stress and anxiety for an ESFJ, especially if other people abuse their good nature.
- **Judgmental.** From the ESFJ's perspective, traditions and morality are sacred and must always be respected. If someone is unwilling to accept that, the ESFJ may find it difficult to respect the individual, especially if they refuse to acknowledge that their opinion is wrong.
- **Always by the book.** People with the ESFJ personality type like having a clear set of rules and guidelines – however, as already mentioned above, this often results in them being reluctant to bend those rules or try something new.

Motivation and Self-Esteem

Closely related but different, your self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence are the sources of your motivation. Self-esteem speaks to your sense of your own worth. Self-respect speaks to how much you like yourself. Self-confidence is where you find the energy that moves you forward in your life. Much of our core motivation comes from trying to successfully satisfy these core aspects of ourselves. Think of them as three powerful psychological engines that, when understood and harnessed, can lead to a successful and fulfilling life.

However, like anything in life, if you allow these engines to overwhelm you, they can also be a source of great difficulty. Think of it like an engine overheating. This is usually caused because something in our psychological make-up needs support, and so we overcompensate to gird that which feels weak to us. If for some reason we're not feeling self-confident, we might pour on the thing that gives us confidence. The problem is that sometimes we crank it up too high trying to compensate.

The first section in each part represents the tendencies in their healthy form. When people use these motivators in a balanced way, they can help them be productive and happy. This represents the ideal expression of the motivator.

The second represents tendencies to watch out for if the engine begins to overheat. The purpose is not to describe anyone specifically. The descriptions in the second part may sound extreme, and they probably are for most ESFJs and other Sentinels. People generally exist at different degrees somewhere between fully this and fully that. Life has a way of socializing us and balancing us regardless of our foundational traits. When reading the second part, think in terms of tendencies and regard it more as a cautionary tale.

Self-improvement is about stepping outside one's comfort zone to expand your life for the better. The third section suggests a simple way to get along more effectively in the world through some simple rebalancing exercise.

Self-Esteem

ESFJs measure self-esteem by their reliability. They take their duties seriously. If you want a job done well, find yourself an ESFJ. They measure their self-worth by the efficient and thorough execution of tasks. If they say they're going to do something, they are going to go all out and do their best. Failing to do so can be a painful blow to their sense of self.

ESFJs base their worth on practical results. Because of this, they don't care so much about innovation or artistic expression. When there are such "bohemian" wild cards in play, you can't predict the results and that's what reliability is all about. For ESFJs sense of self-worth, visionary efforts are subordinate to the practical, the tried and the true, and kept promises.

A by-product of this motivator is loyalty. Loyalty is, by definition, an expression of reliability. You won't find anyone there for you more reliably than ESFJs. It's important to their sense of self that when they commit to something or someone, they invest themselves fully. They will stand as a reliable life-partner, friend, or employee.

When the quest for self-esteem goes out of balance: Reliable? What can go wrong? Can you be too reliable? Even the most positive motivators can go wrong if they become "overheated".

The French have a phrase "mise en place" which means "putting in place". When French chefs apply this idea, they have all the ingredients prepared, arranged and within reach. That way, when the cooking begins, everything is under control. There are no surprises to interrupt them as they prepare the dish. ESFJs like it when their world reflects a "mise en place" philosophy, and it serves them well. Unfortunately, the world is not like that. When ESFJs try to make the world in their image and attempt to guarantee reliable outcomes, it may drive them to act stubbornly and be rigid. They may go overboard as they try to force everything to be as they believe it "should" be.

Reliability depends on no surprises or no chaos. Unfortunately, much of what humans regard as growth occurs in the presence of risk, experimentation and embracing the unknown. Maturing and evolving can be a messy business whether it's a person or an organization that's growing. ESFJs don't typically like it

when things are messy. Their need for predictable outcomes can seriously hamper their development. It might also put them out of sync with a changing world.

Another substantial problem may occur when ESFJs try to cater to their sense of self-worth is overburdening themselves. If ESFJs insist on living their lives as “the most reliable person in the room”, they can become overloaded with responsibility. This can take a serious emotional or physical toll in time. It’s impossible for anyone to handle everything or and keep it all under control, even ESFJs. Because of this penchant for controlling the outcome, they often have trouble relaxing, and we know that stress is a killer.

Self-esteem rebalanced: ESFJs need to practice letting go on many levels and with many concerns. It’s more about attitude than it is about action.

One of the most effective ways to let go is to consider “what if” scenarios. What if you don’t strictly enforce this rule? What is the worst thing that can happen? Five years from now, how much will this matter? What if I said “no” rather than take on one more responsibility? What would the results of that be? Would it really not get done? What if I did deviate from the way I typically do things? What if I did it differently this time? What would be the worst thing that could happen if I put this off for a few days?

There is little danger for ESFJs if they should choose to lighten up just a bit. Entertaining the above scenarios will most likely not be the cause of them slacking off in any serious way. It’s just not in the ESFJ nature. However, challenging inflexible thoughts could be a useful tool. The exercise might allow ESFJs to refocus and gain a more reasonable definition of what it means to be reliable should things become overwhelming.

Self-Respect

ESFJs respect themselves when they feel like they’re doing something good. Their need to respect themselves will drive them to contribute in positive ways. They like themselves most when they take care of others. This might involve helping or taking care of someone directly. Or it might be a more indirect expression of caring for people, like running an office or organization efficiently or keeping a household running smoothly. ESFJs respect themselves when they make people’s lives’ easier. It’s

wonderful to have ESFJs in your life. They'll have your back and try to take care of you even when you don't ask for it.

When the quest for self-respect goes out of balance: When ESFJs overcompensate and become too busy doing good for others, they are in danger of their own needs not being met. Achieving sainthood may have its attractions, but living a balanced and full life is usually not one of them. If trying to meet everyone else's needs becomes overheated, ESFJs may lose sight of their own. This might work fine for a time. However, it's possible that they will look back from the future with regret because they didn't show as much concern for their own well-being as they did for others. Self-neglect can be responsible for mental or physical health difficulties. ESFJs would do well to be vigilant about taking care of themselves.

Self-respect rebalanced: If the altruistic tendencies of ESFJs become overheated, it may be time to evoke the "Flight Attendant Rule". If you listen to the preflight instructions, you'll notice the flight attendant offering a special instruction to passengers with children. If the oxygen mask falls from the ceiling, they tell the adult he should don his own mask first before helping the child. The obvious reason is if the adult passes out, he is of little use to anyone. The adult taking care of himself first is important to the child's well-being.

ESFJs would do well to consider the Flight Attendant Rule, especially if they feel their lives are out of balance. If they don't take care of themselves – if they burn out because they are taking care of others while neglecting themselves - they can become useless and unable to be very helpful in time. Like the adult with the oxygen mask, ESFJs may want to focus on taking care of themselves first. That way they can stay mentally and physically healthy enough to continue the good work which, in turn, maintains their self-respect.

Self-Confidence

ESFJs gain self-confidence through a sense of respectability. ESFJs may never show off or ask for recognition, but they do like others to pay positive attention to their contributions. If someone recognizes their work, they feel proud and grateful. The presence of such appreciation creates the energy that pulls them confidently forward.

When you offer praise to ESFJs for the diligent and good work they do, they may respond to you humbly and even dismissively. However, you can bet the recognition is energizing them.

When the quest for self-confidence goes out of balance: The problem with any validation that comes from others is that it's not always readily available. And if you ask for it, how sincere is that? If your self-confidence depends on a sense of others appreciating what you do, then what happens when there is no discernible trace of it?

For ESFJs, they may begin to doubt themselves and lose the energy that motivates them. If ESFJs start to sense a lack of appreciation, they may suddenly come across as needy in their attempt to compensate. It may not be overt. They may even try to gain recognition through various passive-aggressive means. Such action could throw off any goodwill they've earned through their good works. Think of Marie Barone, the mother character in "Everybody Loves Raymond". When she feels she's not getting enough attention for her cooking, housekeeping and other formidable caretaking skills, she makes pointed comments hoping the Barone family will notice her "sacrifices". She uses guilt. She sometimes puts others down in order to provide a contrast that creates a comparison that puts her in a more favorable light. These passive-aggressive tactics are all designed to help her receive more appreciation. Instead, as these tactics always will, they end up creating resentment.

Self-confidence rebalanced: Should things get out-of-balance and they begin to feel underappreciated, ESFJs might do well to act counter-intuitively. It may be helpful for them to take some time to be alone and away from others who they look to for an expression of gratitude. This is a real step outside of their comfort zone, since so much about their identity depends on doing for others. Such an exercise may feel impractical to them. But since stepping out of there comfort zone is where growth happens, it could produce extremely practical results.

Then, by themselves, they might take a simple self-inventory of all the good that they do. Taking a break to refocus on what is truly important may mute any need they have to obtain the praise of others. Psychology tells us that well-developed internal motivation is more reliable and more powerful than that which is external. A time away could provide an opportunity to restore a sense of motivation from within and may have a re-energizing effect.

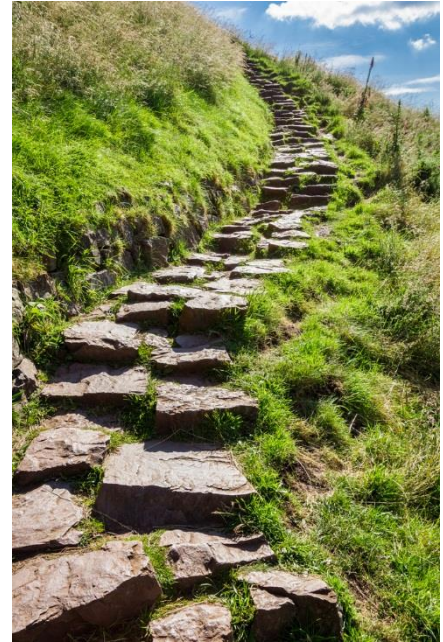
As a bonus, the time alone to take an inventory may also help ESFJs realize others probably appreciate them, even when it doesn't appear to be. People forget to say, "Thank you" when they become used to something being done for them. In considering all ESFJs do, the inventories may help them have a sense that they must be appreciated.

Personal Growth

Knowing your strengths and weaknesses is great, but leveraging or addressing them is even better. Let us take a look at some of the ways to do that.

What Are the Things That Cause Most Problems for ESFJs?

ESFJs are known for their desire to help other people, especially if they are part of their social group (-s). The dedication and effort they can put into that is simply unbelievable – no other personality type is as caring and tireless as ESFJs are. On the other hand, such a trait inevitably puts a lot of weight on the ESFJ's shoulders, often leaving them with too many things to worry about. People with this personality type are very service-oriented and they cannot stand the thought of a social event in chaos or a situation where they would not be able to help a friend in need. It is unlikely that an ESFJ will start bottling up their frustration, like less assertive personality types often do, but they may get overworked and become unreasonably pessimistic, expecting trouble behind every corner and worrying that everything may fall down if they start paying less attention. It is important to keep that need to help and direct in check, learning to step back and enjoy the show instead of trying to run it all the time.



ESFJ personalities respect rules and traditions, doing their best to support and promote them. They are not afraid of routines and see them as inherently good and safe rather than restrictive and boring, as many other types do. Not surprisingly, ESFJs feel uncomfortable when it comes to dealing with situations where the tried and tested rules do not work, or where they need to step outside their comfort zone. This is the reason why ESFJs often tend to be less flexible compared to other personality types – this is their safeguard mechanism. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to grow without any growing pains and this applies to personal development as well. In order to develop as individuals, ESFJs must lower their shields from time to time, letting fresh and untested information through, and trying out new things where the opportunity arises. They need to go beyond their comfort zone, beyond what they already

know – people with this personality type tend to surround themselves with friends that hold very similar views and the sooner they recognize this danger, the better. This does not necessarily mean that an ESFJ must force himself or herself to act irrationally or completely spontaneously – however, they should do their best to keep an open mind when it comes to new things or ideas.

ESFJs are prone to seeing their responsibilities as sacred and untouchable – once an ESFJ has been assigned a task, they will do everything they can to meet another person's expectations, provided that they respect or care about that person. Such an approach is not a problem per se – however, it can cause significant health, relationship and professional problems for an ESFJ if they are not careful. ESFJs need to know that they have done the job well and will get hurt if their efforts go unrecognized – people with this personality type tend to crave praise and appreciation, and will often go to extraordinary lengths to ensure that the results of their work are noticed. Unlike some other personality types that do not really care about their perceived social status, ESFJs usually base their self-esteem on the number and authority of people that need their help. It is important to recognize this trait and make sure that it does not turn into excessive neediness, especially in the younger years.

ESFJ personalities may also have difficulties dealing with situations that require the use of theoretical knowledge or extensive rational reasoning. As their strength lies in dedication, social and administrative skills, and focus on traditions, values and morals, ESFJs are likely to feel uncomfortable when it comes to making purely logic-based decisions. This is completely natural as their Thinking trait is used to staying in the background, letting their Feeling trait take the driving wheel – however, it is important that the weaker traits are utilized as well. All traits are like muscles – using the weaker ones may be difficult and feel uncomfortable at first, but you will get stronger and more well-rounded as a result. If the situation calls for it, try to analyze things impersonally, no matter how unpleasant they may be and regardless of your convictions, values and loyalties – sometimes it is more important to make the right decision than to be nice to everyone.

Finally, it is important to mention that most ESFJs are highly emotional and sensitive individuals, always wearing their hearts on sleeves and eagerly sharing their views and opinions with other people. ESFJs have a natural gift of connecting with other people very quickly and easily, regardless of the

circumstances – they always know the latest gossip, have strong opinions on things that matter to them (and have no difficulties airing those opinions, even in the face of a strong opposition), and are masters of small talk. However, people with this personality type also tend to be extremely conscious of their social status and care deeply about their appearance, perceived authority, intelligence etc. Critical comments about any of these things can hurt the ESFJ very easily. It is all too easy to state that ESFJs should grow a thicker skin – it makes more sense to say that people with this personality type should learn to focus on matters that are not dependent on external feedback. Focus on what is important for you and what you think of yourself, as opposed to trying to guess what others think of you. Some people spend years without having a clue what actually makes them tick because they are always worried about everybody else.

The unquenchable desire to do their best on every occasion inevitably lead to another typical ESFJ weakness – relentless perfectionism. This can be a great trait, but it often becomes disastrous in personal relationships or even the professional environment, if the ESFJ is unable or unwilling to control their mind. Neither the ESFJ, nor their partners or colleagues will ever be perfect, and it is crucial that the ESFJ recognizes this and does not get lost in never-ending thoughts about how this and that could be improved, or where they have possibly failed in their duties. No matter how difficult this may seem, ESFJs need to learn how to live in the present when it comes to such situations, letting their mind rest and enjoying the experience rather than seeing their duties as the most important thing in the world.

Now that we have covered the main weaknesses of this personality type, let us move on to their strengths.

How to Make Good Use of ESFJ Traits?

The most impressive trait of all ESFJs is that they tend to be really good at anything that requires cooperation and contact with other people. ESFJs are one of the most sociable personality types, always able to connect to another person regardless of their individual circumstances. Consequently, ESFJs tend to be very popular individuals, with a reputation of being able to get things done. This is highly likely to help them achieve success in careers that are generally seen as traditional and hierarchical – public service, supply management, administration, medicine, teaching etc. ESFJs thrive in the environment

that is built on rules, structures and cooperation. This is their element. That being said, an ESFJ should also try to challenge themselves and seek personal growth and development wherever possible – it is way too easy to get comfortable in an environment that reinforces your pre-existing views and opinions. ESFJs can be much more than this, but they must put in the effort to become more balanced.

As ESFJs tend to be remarkably social, their support network is likely to be strong and extensive. This will prove to be very important in situations where the ESFJ will need to find a friendly shoulder to lean on or seek advice on matters they are unsure of. People with this personality type tend to dislike abstract or theoretical topics, e.g. related to philosophy or science, instead focusing on down-to-earth matters and consulting their friends if they come across something they are unfamiliar with. This makes ESFJs versatile and adaptable individuals – even if they do not know something, they will always have at least one friend that they could call upon for advice. However, it is important to remember that quality is sometimes far more important than quantity when it comes to making friends – ESFJs enjoy having a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, but they should be careful not to overextend themselves. People with this personality already have a tendency to be quite pessimistic sometimes, and they need to make sure that they do not mistake acquaintances for friends – this can harm their self-confidence quite badly.

In order to succeed and use their gifts in the best way, ESFJs need to focus on their strongest suit – logistical skills, as opposed to diplomatic, tactical or strategic skills. This is the area ESFJs feel most at home in – and unlike many other types, they are likely to see logistical and administrative tasks as fun and enjoyable. People with this personality type dislike change and prefer evolution rather than revolution, paying more attention and respect to traditions rather than perpetual changes. The stability of society rests upon the shoulders of ESFJs and this is the strength they should focus on – making sure that everything and everyone does what they are supposed to do. The ESFJs' reliability and logistical intellect are invaluable in many situations and they should not be reluctant to pat themselves on the back for a job well done – people with this personality type may not be as visible as others, but their contribution is vital to the success of many projects.

ESFJ personalities should also recognize their need to belong. It could be anything – a community club, an organization with a strong corporate culture, their own family, or a circle of friends. The only thing

that matters is that the ESFJ feels safe and secure, and sees himself or herself as a loyal, valuable member of their chosen group. Sense of community is very important for ESFJs, no matter how big that community is – this is one of their anchors in life, even though finding the right group can be a challenge. After all, ESFJs are the ultimate providers, kind and dedicated – but they need to know who or what they are supposed to care for. People with this personality type will always seek this sense of belonging, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously – recognizing this inborn need can make their life much easier.

ESFJs are likely to have good social connections, which can make everything much easier for them – not many other types have such a potent combination of kindness, determination and social skills. However, it is crucial that ESFJs get more in touch with their rational side – people with this personality type are naturally sensitive and tend to get stressed or disturbed quite easily. Sensitivity is not always a bad thing, but ESFJs should bear in mind that becoming less vulnerable to criticism would definitely help them relax and enjoy their life much more – it is much easier to remain calm in difficult situations if your rational side has been trained to take over in those cases.

Your Dark Side

Each personality type has its dark side – it may emerge under extreme stress or fatigue, especially if the individual is frustrated by their real or perceived weaknesses. In those cases, their “evil twin” may manifest itself as the complete opposite of their personality, throwing the underdeveloped shadow traits into the light. Outwardly, it would seem as if the individual has suddenly decided to adopt a completely different approach to many things, including their career, romantic relationships, habits and so on. Inside, the individual is likely to feel confused and split between two completely different worldviews.

In some circumstances, such a change may not be sudden or short-lived – the individual may choose, either consciously or unconsciously, to behave in this way for a very long time if, for instance, they seek to fight their overly protective parents, restrictive environment, bad memories etc. Some examples of such behavior could be:

- an exemplary student leaving their parents’ house and becoming a party animal in college;

- a sociable, friendly and sensitive guy purposefully isolating himself from the outside world and being obsessed by radical ideas after a senseless crime committed against his close friend;
- a quiet, conservative girl suffering from a bad break-up suddenly becoming far more liberal or embracing a completely different philosophy when it comes to choosing partners.

It is not impossible that the individual's social circle will encourage them as well, by complimenting the clearly visible changes, e.g. more spontaneity, sensitivity or willingness to take risks – this would also reassure the individual, maybe even leading them towards a conclusion that this is actually their “real” personality and their previous persona was just a repressed version of their “real” self.

ESFJs are not an exception to this rule. Your “evil twin” would be an unhealthy version of the INTP personality – it may push you towards things like withdrawing from social interaction, engaging in random intellectual pursuits, choosing a completely unstructured lifestyle, embracing philosophy and idealism etc. This may even feel liberating at times – for instance, you may feel strangely energized by living without any plans or rules, or by the disappearance of most of your acquaintances – but that state is likely to be short-lived, succeeded by feelings of emptiness and confusion.

In such circumstances, it is important to remember to stop and think hard about who you truly are and whether your behavior is a true reflection of your inner self, or only a temporary mirage created by your mind to serve some kind of purpose (e.g. to try something completely different). Do not think about what you *are* (an engineer, a nice guy or a brilliant student) – that is irrelevant. Rather, think about what you can *do*. Pick up a blank sheet of paper and a pen, sit down and try to think of your purpose in life, of something that you would really, really want to create, experience or achieve in 5, 10 or 20 years. Any random thought will do, just keep writing them all down. You will definitely know when you have hit the right one – it may even make you cry. That will be the definition and reflection of your true self.

Simply being familiar with the fact that each one of us has a dark side is a good thing – this will enable you to spot when that “switch” has happened, either within yourself or within someone close to you. Otherwise, you may be oblivious to what is going on and even think that it would be a good idea to shut down any doubts and simply “double up” on whatever you are doing, getting drawn deeper into the

never-ending spiral of cheating yourself. It is one thing to use and develop your weaker traits wisely – it is quite another to give in and let them lead the way completely unchallenged.

Emotional Stability

Another important area related to ESFJs' personal growth is emotional stability. This is determined by the last trait that we discussed in the “ESFJ Type Traits” section above (the “Identity” subsection) – you would have also seen your personal score after completing our personality test. There are two sides of the “Identity” scale:

- Assertive – people with the Assertive identity are emotionally stable, calm, relaxed and refuse to worry too much.
- Turbulent – people with the Turbulent identity are self-conscious, perfectionists, care about their image and tend to be success-driven.

Most individuals are close to the middle on this particular scale, although that depends on the social environment and sex of the individual. For instance, women tend to be further to the right side of the scale (i.e. more likely to have a Turbulent identity), although that varies from region to region – sex differences are negligible in Africa and Asia, but rather significant in the Western world.

If you are an Assertive ESFJ, you are likely to be quite comfortable with your identity – you know what your strengths and weaknesses are, and do not hesitate to leverage them where possible. You may be relatively perfectionistic, but you do not go overboard with it, knowing that no one is perfect and no project is worth obsessing too much about. Similarly, you do not feel threatened by minor challenges, remaining calm and focused in stressful situations. All ESFJs tend to be rather firm when it comes to principles and traditions that are important to them, but Assertive ESFJs go further, feeling confident about their convictions regardless of the opposition. Furthermore, Assertive individuals are unlikely to internalize emotions, instead choosing to express them freely – this means that even deep down, they are not really affected by either negative or positive feelings. They rarely get stressed or excited, staying calm and composed at all times.

On the other hand, Assertive identity is not always a positive thing. A certain level of self-consciousness or occasional “emotional rollercoasters” can be quite useful, especially from the personal development perspective – for instance, Assertive ESFJs are likely to have a lower drive and potentially productivity, due to lower sensitivity to negative outcomes. People with this variant of the ESFJ personality also tend to be more forceful and self-confident, which can isolate them from other people – it is important to remember that ESFJs have a rather unique set of traits and skills, and these differences set them apart, even without taking Assertive identity into account.

In contrast, if you have a Turbulent identity, you are likely to be rather anxious about your performance and prone to worrying too much about the consequences of your actions. As an ESFJ, you would still be rather confident in your principles, knowing that you are hardworking, responsible and trustworthy – however, it is also likely that you would push yourself to the limit, internalizing all the stress and worry that would inevitably accompany your perfectionism. Deep down, you may also care about how other people perceive you (or how your ideal self would perceive you), even though you may do your best to not reveal that sensitive side of yours. This would lead to certain “emotional rollercoasters”, with you feeling at the top of the world when you see your ideas become reality, and then plunging into the abyss when you are forced to face your weaknesses or when you feel lost or can no longer cope with the workload. Turbulent identity is inseparable from higher stress levels, which can also lead to health problems if left unaddressed.

Then again, there are certain advantages to having a Turbulent identity. For instance, it could be argued that because Turbulent ESFJs are more success-driven and self-conscious than their Assertive cousins, they can also potentially achieve better results and become more well-rounded individuals instead of feeling satisfied with where and who they are.

Regardless of whether you are an Assertive or a Turbulent ESFJ, everything depends on your willingness and ability to address the challenges posed by your identity type. Each side has its own advantages and disadvantages, although generally you should try to stay close to the middle of this scale in order to achieve optimal results and grow as an individual. If you have an Assertive identity, learn to recognize the benefits of setting more difficult goals for yourself and occasionally giving it to your emotions – they

are an inseparable part of our lives and Assertive ESFJs should not try to present themselves as shining beacons of duty and devotion, who cannot be affected by mood swings or social expectations. Similarly, if you have a Turbulent identity, learn how not to internalize stress or negative emotions, and do not see yourself as a superhuman who must always aim for the best and never fail.

Romantic Relationships

People with the ESFJ personality type value security, stability and sense of belonging. Naturally, romantic relationships are very important to them, especially if they culminate in marriage and family. ESFJs take all relationship stages very seriously – even if they have just started dating someone, they will do their best to understand and support the other person.

Support and mutual respect are very important factors in ESFJ relationships. ESFJs strongly dislike all forms of conflict and criticism, especially if critical comments are coming from someone close to them – they are likely to take them very personally. People with this personality type need to know that they are loved and appreciated, and this can greatly influence their mood and self-esteem.

While ESFJs should definitely try to grow a thicker skin when it comes to rational and justified criticism, partners of ESFJ personalities also need to make sure that they offer enough support and attention. ESFJs are naturally very warm and loyal, but they really want to be trusted and valued by people who mean a lot to them. This can keep them going in the face of immense difficulties – ESFJs can be surprisingly tough, but they need to know that their partner will be there to support them every step of the way. There are few things more hurtful and depressing to an ESFJ than a sudden realization that their partner does not really respect or care about their dreams or opinions.

That being said, less mature ESFJs may feel the need to be appreciated, but not have enough inner strength or wisdom to actually attract the attention they seek. In such relationships, the ESFJ personality may become very needy and seek their partner's approval at all costs, even if it means going against their own principles and values. ESFJs should be careful not to fall into this trap, especially if they are still in the dating phase – neediness is not only unattractive, but it may also lead to an abusive relationship, which will further damage the ESFJ's self-esteem.



ESFJ personalities are great at dealing with everyday matters, including money management – they will happily take such responsibilities upon themselves and work hard to make sure that everything is fine with this aspect of their relationship. On the other hand, ESFJs tend to be very traditional, so they will probably stick to socially expected gender roles in the relationship. Anyone dating an ESFJ should also be aware of that – people with this personality type are likely to obey the perceived “dating rules”, which may change depending on what environment they are in.

Generally speaking, social status is very important to ESFJs and they will definitely care how their relationship is seen by their social circle, relatives etc. It is crucial that the ESFJ recognizes this trait and puts it in perspective – otherwise, both the selection of their dating partners and the ESFJ’s behavior in romantic relationships may be influenced more by other people’s opinions than by their own values. ESFJs tend to be very social individuals and they enjoy having a big circle of friends, but that need for social validation should not overshadow their own dreams.

People with this personality type are unlikely to experiment with things that are completely out of the norm – they will respect traditional social rituals. On the other hand, ESFJs pay a lot of attention to fulfilling their duties, which naturally include being a good partner and making their significant other happy. For instance, if the ESFJ’s partner is more spontaneous, the ESFJ will try hard to keep up, although it is likely that they will eventually try to convince their partner to settle down and behave more responsibly. ESFJ personalities are hard workers, and this covers their relationships as well – they will do their best to fulfill their duties and keep the relationship functional and stable. ESFJs can easily take care of daily tasks and they also tend to pay a lot of attention to their weaknesses as a partner, as soon as they realize that their partner needs this.

That being said, ESFJs sometimes tend to believe that they are always right, especially when it comes to matters related to morality or security. People with this type should remember that “winning” the debate might often cause them to lose much more outside of it, especially when it comes to a romantic relationship and even more so when that relationship is still in the dating phase. Some ESFJs also make the mistake of trying to get their partner to comply with the traditions and rules that are dear to the ESFJ’s heart. While such endeavors do succeed sometimes, more often than not they do not achieve

anything, causing frustration and tension instead. We are who we are, and trying to get another person to adapt their personality type to suit your preferences is a fruitless exercise.

From the sexual perspective, ESFJ personalities tend to be very affectionate and sensual, seeing intimacy as a fantastic way to make their partner happy. ESFJs are very much in touch with the physical world and they are also highly emotional – this makes them great sexual partners. It is likely that the ESFJ will prefer predictability and traditional roles while they are still dating or if their partner is fully satisfied with such a situation – however, they will also be open to experimenting and trying out new things if the other person is willing to reciprocate.

Preferred partners: ISFP and ISTP types as their Introversion and Prospecting traits counterbalance ESFJs' Extraversion and Judging traits.

Potential Pairings

Let us now take a look at all potential trait pairings – this will help you understand how those combinations work in romantic relationships. Each combination of traits brings different things into the relationship, sometimes positive and sometimes negative – knowing what to expect will definitely help you further down the road. However, please remember that each individual is unique, and what is true for one may not be true for another. Ultimately, you will be responsible for figuring out what exact role these traits play in your relationship.



An Introverted (I) Partner

The best thing about being in a relationship with someone who does not share your mind trait is that you are going to balance each other out quite well. The Introverted partner will encourage you to slow down and take a moment to think before acting, to spend more time reflecting on things before jumping straight into the action. You, on the other hand, will draw your Introverted partner out from their shell,

playing the role of the socializer in the relationship, encouraging your partner to establish new social links and taking care of any social obligations that you both might have.

These differences will also be beneficial when it comes to resolving conflicts in the relationship. However, it is crucial that both partners are mature and willing to listen to each other instead of sticking to their own guns and refusing to accept different viewpoints most of the time. If all goes well, both partners will be able to cover each other's strengths and weaknesses.

That being said, each stick has two ends and personality differences may also have a negative impact on the stability and health of the relationship. If one (or both) of the partners is not very mature, they may have difficulties understanding the other person's perspective. In such circumstances, the Extraverted individual may get frustrated by the fact that their Introverted partner is more private, or has poor social skills. And vice versa, the Introverted individual may get annoyed by their partner's chattiness or need to socialize.

It is crucial that both individuals make conscious efforts to understand each other – in all likelihood, they will both think that their way of life is perfectly normal and it is the other person who is strange. For instance, the fact that we tend to surround ourselves with friends who are like us is not going to help either - this simply reinforces our positive perception of ourselves along with the idea that our traits are the right ones. The only way to get out of that bubble is to push the limits and try to see the world through another person's eyes. When Introverted and Extraverted individuals form a relationship, they give each other an excellent opportunity to do just so.

Tips for you:

1. **Be patient.** Your potential partner may need a lot of time to open up to you.
2. **When dating, choose locations without much social pressure.** Your potential partner may feel uncomfortable with many other people around.
3. **Do not be overbearing.** Small talk is often a challenge for Introverted types, even though it is unavoidable in the dating phase. Do not be overbearing by trying to get your potential partner to talk extensively about themselves. At best, they will feel uncomfortable.

4. **Be tolerant.** Your partner is likely to have difficulties when it comes to socializing with other people or even yourself for an extensive amount of time. Remember that they get exhausted by social interaction, unlike you, who is recharged by it. There will be times when they will want to be alone – be understanding, give them space and do not ask them what is wrong. This has nothing to do with you – your Introverted partner simply needs some time alone to recharge.

Tips for your partner:

1. **Do not overcompensate.** Small talk is unavoidable in the dating phase, but you are unlikely to be good at it. Do not overcompensate by trying to appear chatty and sociable – let your partner take the lead. Otherwise, you will simply look insecure.
2. **Speak up.** Once you transition into a relationship, you will need to remind yourself to share your thoughts with your partner instead of sticking to your habit of keep everything to yourself.
3. **Do not get stuck in a bubble.** You will likely have difficulties when it comes to socializing with other people. Your partner will probably take care of this in social situations, but that does not mean that you should not make conscious efforts to bring something to the conversation. Do not get lazy.
4. **Be tolerant.** Your partner is likely to have difficulties when it comes to understanding why you need to spend time alone instead of talking to them. They might also worry that they have done something to offend you – as Extraverted types recharge while spending time with other people, your partner may not know that you need exactly the opposite. Take your time to explain how your mind works.

An Extraverted (E) Partner

The best thing about being in a relationship with someone who belongs to an Extraverted type is that you both are likely to complement each other very nicely when it comes to socialization. As each partner is likely to have a large circle of friends and an active social life, there should be no tension in the relationship as far as social needs are concerned. You will meet each other's friends and make new connections, effectively combining both social circles without any major difficulties. Furthermore, your

communication skills will prove to be very useful in social events - both partners will be able to hold their own and shine together as a couple.

You will also be in a good position when it comes to resolving problems in a relationship, although your conflict resolution style will depend largely on your other plans. Unlike Introverted types, who are used to reflecting in solitude and only then expressing their thoughts verbally, Extraverted types think while they speak – consequently, you are both likely to verbalize your discontent immediately instead of allowing it to take a more concrete shape in your minds.

This can be both a good and a bad thing - on one hand, you will likely resolve the conflict once and for all instead of letting the resentment simmer; on the other hand, it is sometimes necessary to keep your cool and reflect a bit.

There is also a danger of focusing too much on socialization and maintenance of social connections – as you both are probably used to spending a lot of time with your friends before the relationship, realigning the priorities can be a challenging task. If one of the partners does not slow down and finds it difficult to step back from socializing and start paying more attention to their significant other, someone is going to get hurt sooner or later.

Tips for both individuals:

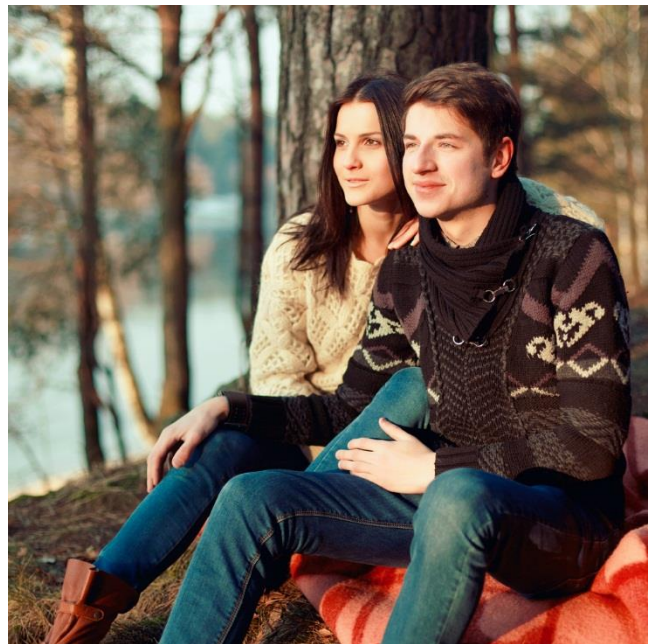
1. **Manage your time.** You are unlikely to have difficulties when it comes to socializing with other people. However, you also need to make conscious efforts to step back from engaging others and focus more on your partner.
2. **Handle your friends' expectations.** You are both likely to have many friends and they may be used to having your full attention. Both partners will inevitably have to cut back on time that is spent with friends, so it is best to manage those expectations early instead of trying to pretend that nothing has changed.
3. **Learn to listen.** As Extraverted individuals, you are most likely used to thinking while talking – however, you need to make conscious efforts to develop your listening skills as well. They will prove to be very useful in a relationship.

4. **Value privacy.** You may be used to sharing many details of your daily life with your friends and relatives - it may be necessary to change that habit when you are in a relationship.
1. **Know how to focus.** You may have difficulties spending time alone or focusing on something for an extended period of time. Learn to refrain from the temptation to chat when you both need to concentrate (e.g. while studying).

An Intuitive (N) Partner

This is one of the most challenging, yet potentially most rewarding combinations. These traits determine how we see the world, how we think, how we communicate – and this is just scratching the surface. In some relationships, the schism between the Intuitive and Observant traits is too great to bridge, and both partners may spend a lot of time thinking what they are doing wrong, why their significant other seems to misunderstand them all the time and why they just do not listen. In other cases, both individuals are able to acknowledge their differences and turn them into strengths, thus neutralizing each other's weaknesses.

Actually, the main difference between Intuitive and Observant energy styles is quite easy to define. The Intuitive partner will focus on abstract things – ideas, introspection, possibilities, dreams, connections between events etc. Intuitives are *imaginaries* who spend more time thinking about the future than the present. The Observant partner, on the other hand, will prioritize concrete things – objects, senses, observation, facts, daily matters etc. Observant individuals are *doers* who focus on the present moment rather than the future.



Not surprisingly, this affects everything else, from observational abilities to communication styles. It is absolutely crucial that you both take time to understand how the other person thinks and processes things - all other traits fade in comparison. It is also worth noting that Observant personality types

dominate the society and this often leads to Intuitives' traits being dismissed as impractical or unrealistic – the Observant partner should avoid labelling their partner as “odd” or getting frustrated because “this is not what most people do”. Respect the differences.

If all goes well, however, you are likely to have a very rewarding relationship. The Intuitive partner will be able to inspire their significant other and come up with a myriad of interesting ideas, always keeping the relationship fresh and interesting. The Observant partner will be able to ensure that those ideas are grounded in reality, as well as handle practical matters that the Intuitive may forget. As always, communication is key in such relationships - there will be plenty of misunderstandings, especially at the very beginning, but they are unlikely to cause lasting damage if both partners are open-minded and willing to compromise.

Tips for your partner:

1. **Be patient.** Your Observant partner is likely to have difficulties understanding some of your ideas.
2. **Improve your observation skills.** Your imagination is a great asset, but it is not going to help when, for example, you have to remember your partner's favorite perfume or where you put the car keys.
3. **Keep your feet on the ground.** Intuitives often overestimate their abilities, enthusiastically embracing new and exciting ideas without thinking about the actual implementation.
4. **Remember to enjoy the present.** You are likely to spend way too much time thinking about the future. Find a way to enjoy the present as well - time flows quickly. Your Observant partner will certainly be able to help you with this.

Tips for you:

1. **Be patient.** Your Intuitive partner is likely to have difficulties handling practical tasks or noticing things.

2. **Improve your introspection skills.** You are likely to be practical and realistic, but it is also often necessary to spend some time reflecting on things. Forget the practical world and let yourself dream every once in a while.
3. **Be imaginative.** Observant individuals often focus too much on routines or physical things. Embrace your imagination and do not be afraid of exploring ideas without knowing whether they are actually practical or implementable.
4. **Remember to think about the future.** You are likely to focus either on the past or the present - find some time to think about the future as well, no matter how scary this may be. This does not mean that you should make complex long-term plans - simply imagine and explore possibilities in your mind. Your Intuitive partner is probably doing this all the time - you need to meet each other halfway.

An Observant (S) Partner

As Observant individuals, you are both likely to prefer relying on your senses over introspection – that is, you will spend more time keeping your feet on the ground as opposed to exploring the world of ideas. A relationship between two Observant types is usually very straightforward, practical and fun – both partners are usually able to handle practical tasks very well, focusing exclusively on real and tangible things. The combination of pragmatism, down-to-earth attitude and “let’s just do it” approach is likely to be a great driving force in your relationship.

Observant types form the majority of the population (75-85%) and many traditions and social norms revolve around your traits as well. Consequently, you are unlikely to have difficulties understanding each other or finding things to do. All Observant individuals enjoy things that they can see, touch and feel - therefore, activities that excite you will probably be attractive to your partner as well and you will not need to worry about being misunderstood. This is a great advantage both in the dating phase and later on in the relationship.

Unfortunately, this is just one side of the coin. Your pragmatism and observation skills will be very useful in everyday life, but you may have difficulties when it comes to imagination and reflection. This does not mean that Observant types are unimaginative – quite the contrary, they are often brilliant artists.

However, that tendency to rely on the real world and ignore all things abstract can often lead to too much of routine or overstimulation of senses (e.g. by only focusing on material things). There will be times when it will be necessary to brainstorm about the future or reflect on things, disagreements or events – you are both likely to have difficulties in this area and addressing this should be one of your priorities.

Another problem that you are likely to face is your relative inflexibility. Observant types tend to be quite protective of their habits and may feel uncomfortable in situations that require innovative thinking and quick, imaginative solutions. It is important to take time to forget the habits and let yourselves dream and fantasize every once in a while - keep your feet on the ground, but your eyes on the stars.

Tips for both individuals:

1. **Improve your introspection skills.** You are both likely to be practical and realistic, but it is also often necessary to spend some time reflecting on things. Forget the practical world and embrace your imagination from time to time.
2. **Be imaginative.** Observant individuals often focus too much on routines or physical things. Do not be afraid of exploring ideas without knowing whether they are actually practical or implementable.
3. **Remember to think about the future.** You are both likely to focus either on the past or the present - find some time to think about the future as well, no matter how scary this may be. This does not mean that you should make complex long-term plans - simply imagine and explore possibilities in your mind.
4. **Do things that engage your senses.** You both will find it easier to deal with practical things than ideas, so look for activities that require good use of all five senses (e.g. sports, hiking, dancing etc.). This is especially important in the dating phase.
1. **Be careful with criticism.** As Observant individuals, you will both have your feet firmly on the ground, but that also means that you are likely to have disagreements over how to deal with practical things, each having your own opinion. Stay calm and compromise.

A Thinking (T) Partner

This trait (Thinking or Feeling) determines how the individual makes decisions or explains their actions. Thinking individuals rely on logic rather than feelings in situations where tough choices must be made. They look at the facts and facts alone, trying to find a rational and logical solution. Everything else, such as personal sensitivities or emotions, always take the backseat. Feeling individuals, on the other hand, rely on their feelings and morals rather than facts, trying to achieve harmony and understanding. For them, being sensitive is more important than being right.

A relationship between an ESFJ and someone who belongs to a Thinking type can be extremely rewarding as both individuals will be able to teach each other how to look at things from an entirely different perspective. However, it is crucial that both you and your partner understand and respect your differences - there is nearly always some unjustified criticism coming from both sides. Your Thinking partner may complain that you are too emotional or irrational, and you may respond by saying that they are cold and heartless.

Such criticism becomes even more damaging when the Thinking individual is a woman and the Feeling individual is a man, with various social expectations coming into play as well.

The Thinking trait does not imply that the individual is unemotional. Both Thinking and Feeling individuals are capable of deep feelings - however, the former tend to hide those feelings from the outside world. They want to stay in control, to not lose their heads regardless of the circumstances - and this is what creates that aura of indifference.

Likewise, the Feeling trait does not imply that the individual is irrational - they are simply using a different set of criteria, putting harmony and sensitivity above cold, hard facts. Feeling individuals tend to show their feelings quite clearly, as opposed to containing them as Thinking types do - however, their decision process is still perfectly rational.

Both these perspectives are perfectly valid and this is one of the most important lessons you will have to learn in your relationship. If both partners are tolerant and open-minded, a relationship between a Thinking person and a Feeling person can be very inspiring and successful, with the Thinking partner

making fact-based decisions and the Feeling partner bringing in warmth and harmony into the relationship.

Tips for your partner:

1. **Be tolerant.** Remember that your partner may not value the facts as much as you do - they are likely to prioritize harmony, values and morals.
2. **Observe.** Your partner is likely to be good at gauging other people's emotional state and they may expect the same from you - try to learn how to read the cues. Yes, it can be frustrating to hear "I am fine" when something is obviously wrong, but bear in mind that this is simply a mismatch of expectations. You are used to dealing with data, they are used to dealing with emotions.
3. **Be careful with criticism.** Feeling types tend to be very vulnerable to criticism – be careful when you are pointing something out and try to do this in a calm, non-confrontational manner.
4. **Know how to relax.** There is no need to contain yourself when you are having fun with your partner - learn to stop worrying about whether something makes sense.

Tips for you:

1. **Be tolerant.** Remember that your partner may be more interested in facts than in what other people feel - they are likely to focus on finding a rational solution.
2. **Stay calm.** Try not to take criticism personally - in some cases, your partner will simply be criticizing an idea or assessing a situation as opposed to pointing out your flaws.
3. **Observe.** Do not assume that your partner is completely calm and happy just because they are not showing their emotions.
4. **Be patient.** In all likelihood, your partner will not be as good as you are at gauging other people's emotional state - consequently, there will be times when they will completely misunderstand your emotions or get frustrated by not being able to deduce what you want to say. Thinking types are used to dealing with data, not emotions.

A Feeling (F) Partner

A relationship between two Feeling individuals is usually full of uncontained excitement and expressions of love. You are both likely to wear your hearts on your sleeves, making your emotions quite clear – in all likelihood, physical expressions of affection such as hugs and kisses will also be abundant, both in public and in private.

However, each coin has two sides. As your feelings are always running close to the surface, there may be many dramas and emotional arguments in your relationship. You could have different values, different backgrounds or simply different opinions – and since neither partner is going to feel comfortable in the “just the facts, please” role that is usually required in such situations, there will be times when both sides will feel frustrated and unhappy. Your relationship may often hit 10 out of 10 on the affection and emotional expressivity scale, but it may also be volatile and unpredictable, depending on how mature and experienced you both are.

In order to avoid these pitfalls, you will both have to make conscious efforts to develop your rational mental filter. Being sensitive and kind is very important, but you will not compromise these values if you stick to the facts when making certain decisions. There is a difference between being open with your feelings and allowing them to control all your decisions, and you will need to find a balance there. This does not mean that you should feel embarrassed by your emotions or try to take them completely out of the equation – however, there will be times when you will both have to find the willpower to sit down and calmly assess the facts instead of giving in to emotions.

Tips for both individuals:

1. **Do not be afraid to deal with the facts.** There are times when you need to be sensitive and then there are times when emotions have to be brushed aside. Learn to recognize the difference between the two.
2. **Be open-minded.** As Feeling individuals, you may find it difficult to tolerate a point of view that does not correspond with your values. Accept the fact that your partner may have a different opinion.

3. **Be careful with criticism.** You are both likely to be quite vulnerable to criticism - be very careful when you are pointing something out and try to do this in a calm, non-confrontational manner. And vice versa, try not to take criticism personally - in some cases, your partner will simply be criticizing an idea or assessing a situation as opposed to pointing out your flaws. You will need to avoid letting your emotions cloud your judgment.
4. **Do not get stuck in a rut.** If you have very similar values and principles, there is a danger that you will find it difficult to explore other perspectives. Both partners should challenge their beliefs and get out of their comfort zone every once in a while in order to grow and develop - make sure you do not limit each other's growth by unconditionally reaffirming those beliefs all the time.

A Judging (J) Partner

Judgers enjoy planning and committing to things as opposed to keeping their options open. As you both share this trait, it is unlikely that you will have difficulties making up your minds and sticking to specific goals or plans. This will contribute greatly to the stability of your relationship, with both partners always staying on track and focusing on what has to be done.

As Judgers, you are also likely to be dedicated and patient partners, putting your duties above pleasure. You will both work hard on the relationship and have no difficulties making up your minds, especially when it comes to future plans.

On the other hand, there are two sides to every story and Judger-Judger relationships are not an exception. Planning and scheduling inevitably come with a degree of inflexibility and this can cause tension in the relationship. For instance, Judgers are likely to defend their opinions quite fiercely, unwilling to give up and accept a different point of view. Not surprisingly, two Judgers may often clash with each other, with their need for closure demanding a clear solution and a clear path forward.

There is another problem that you may face. You are both likely to find it difficult to change your habits or long-held views – this is a good trait when it comes to duties and commitments, but it can also prevent you from keeping your eyes open for better alternatives. Consequently, you may never know what opportunities you have missed. This covers many things, ranging from hobbies to holiday plans –

shaking things up can bring a lot of variety and novelty into the relationship. Do not be afraid to experiment or simply be more spontaneous every once in a while.

Unlike Prospectors (P), who are generally more relaxed about their duties and deadlines, Judgers are also likely to get stressed when things do not go according to their plans. Watch out for these tendencies and learn to step away from that strict work ethic in your relationship when a situation demands. This does not mean that you have to stop making plans or start living completely in the present – rather, there needs to be a balance between stability and spontaneity, and you will both have to decide where that balance is in your relationship.

Tips for both individuals:

1. **Be open-minded.** As Judgers, you may find it challenging to accept the fact that there may be more than one right answer to a problem. Try not to be stubborn and argumentative in cases where you both have different opinions.
2. **Experiment.** Your tendency to plan and prepare may make things difficult when there is a need to experiment or try something new. Learn to let go and act spontaneously from time to time.
3. **Do not exhaust yourselves.** Your desire to get things done can bring a lot of stress into your own lives and into the relationship. Learn to step back and relax – the world is not going to collapse if you miss a self-imposed deadline.
4. **Find time for each other.** Do not get so caught up in plans, tasks and order that you lose sight of what is really important. There is nothing wrong about being playful and simply having fun instead of doing yet another task. All work and no play is not the way to go in a relationship.

A Prospecting (P) Partner

In contrast to Judgers, Prospectors like to keep their options open, always looking for alternatives and opportunities. A relationship between a Judger and a Prospector may often be rocky and challenging, but there is a lot of potential as well if both partners are willing to take time to explore and understand each other's differences.

The main difficulty is going to be the fact that you will likely hold diametrically opposite views when it comes to planning and execution of those plans. The Judger will try to come up with an agenda and then stick to it until the end. The Prospector will refuse to lay out all the possibilities and probabilities, making things up as they go along – and then maybe even abandoning the project once the most interesting task has been completed. Not surprisingly, both partners can easily frustrate each other if these traits are not addressed or understood.

However, there are two sides to every story and Judger-Prospector relationships are not an exception. Judgers' planning and scheduling inevitably come with a degree of inflexibility and this can bring tension into the relationship – which can then be defused by the easygoing Prospector. Likewise, Prospectors can be indecisive or even somewhat lazy, only focusing on the fun tasks and ignoring the rest – this can be counterbalanced by the driven and dutiful Judger. As long as both partners refrain from name-calling and are willing to compromise, these differences can be turned into major strengths, covering each partner's respective weaknesses.

In order to achieve this, you will have to make conscious efforts to meet each other halfway. The Judging partner should not be afraid to experiment or simply be more spontaneous every once in a while, even if that means changing their habits or long-held views. Similarly, the Prospecting partner should resist the urge to always seek something new and exciting, even when it is very difficult to stick to the plan or manage all the chores. In all likelihood, each partner will be willing to help their significant other with things that they find challenging, but it is unreasonable to expect them to do this every single time. There needs to be a balance between Judger's stability and Prospector's spontaneity, and you will both have to decide where that balance is in your relationship.

Tips for you:

1. **Communicate.** Your partner's indecisiveness or relaxed attitude will often frustrate you. Do not resort to name-calling and try to understand what drives them and how you can both support each other. Remember that your partner may not be as interested in plans and schedules as you are – they are used to keeping their options open.

2. **Be open-minded.** As a Judger, you may find it challenging to accept the fact that there may be more than one right answer to a problem. Try not to be stubborn and argumentative in cases where your partner disagrees with you.
3. **Experiment.** Your tendency to plan and prepare may make things difficult when there is a need to experiment or try something new. Learn to let go and act spontaneously from time to time.
4. **Do not exhaust yourself.** Your desire to get things done can bring a lot of stress into your own life and into the relationship. Learn to step back and relax – the world is not going to collapse if you miss a self-imposed deadline.

Tips for your partner:

1. **Communicate.** Your partner's inflexibility or desire to have everything planned out will often frustrate you. Do not resort to name-calling and try to understand what drives them and how you can both support each other. Remember that your partner is used to putting their plans and schedules above play and rest – they may find it quite difficult to step back and relax.
2. **Focus.** As a Prospector, you probably enjoy trying out new things and often wonder whether the grass is greener on the other side. Learn to stick to your tasks and do not let your mind drift away when there is a job to be done.
3. **Watch your environment.** You will likely have a much higher tolerance for disorder compared to your Judging partner. Do not ignore your housekeeping duties.
4. **Do not be picky.** Prospectors tend to balk at doing routine, menial tasks, often wandering off in search of something more exciting. Not all work is fun, but you should make conscious efforts to do your fair share of household duties.

Assertive or Turbulent?

The format of this subsection will differ from that of the others, simply because we see the final trait as a variant of the personality rather than an integral part of the actual personality type. However, the importance of this trait should not be understated – it determines how confident we are in our abilities and decisions, which certainly affects our behavior in romantic relationships.

Assertive individuals tend to be emotionally stable, calm and relaxed – they do not easily get upset or excited, keeping their emotions in the proverbial middle of the scale. Their calm temper allows them to sort out any disagreements without much stress as opposed to being rattled even by the most insignificant of issues. Furthermore, individuals with this personality trait tend to be quite optimistic and content about their achievements and life in general. That said, this relaxed attitude can also encourage Assertive individuals to not worry too much about goals or self-improvement in their relationships, with their self-confidence overshadowing any signs that might make someone else question whether more work needs to be done.

In contrast, Turbulent individuals tend to be much more self-conscious and more reactive to stress. They are prone to experiencing “emotional roller coasters”, e.g. feeling at the top of the world in the morning and being overrun by negative thoughts in the evening. Turbulent types also tend to be more success-driven and perfectionistic than Assertive ones, often worrying way too much about their performance, image or future. On the other hand, this desire to do their best and never-ending quest for improvement often help these individuals achieve impressive heights in their career or pleasantly surprise their other half, simply because they really care about whether they are being good enough.

At first sight, it may seem that the Assertive trait is preferable – after all, what is not to like about being self-confident and relaxed? However, somewhat ironically, being resistant to stress and pressure may not always be a good thing. Despite being more prone to emotional swings and worrying, Turbulent individuals are also likely to be more reflective and organized, often pushing themselves harder than necessary. However, it is exactly that “must do better” attitude that makes them put in more effort into the relationship. Depending on other traits, Assertive individuals may also be more likely to take risks – where a Turbulent person may hesitate and weigh their options, an Assertive one may trust themselves just a little too much and make a mistake.

Ultimately, though, everything boils down to each partner’s willingness to recognize and address both the individual weaknesses inherent in each trait, and the potential ways their respective traits may complement or clash with each other. It is also important to remember that many things depend on how strongly expressed the trait is – the higher the score, the starker the characteristics are likely to be.

Let's now briefly discuss three potential combinations.

If both partners are Assertive

This is probably the most straightforward combination. You are likely to be confident, relaxed optimists, quite happy with your relationship and where it is going. If you are both Extraverted and Assertive, you are also likely to be more satisfied with life in general. You may rarely experience strong positive emotions, but you will not have many negative ones either. You will also probably feel quite relaxed about your work or your social status, instead trusting yourself and paying more attention to what you want, not what others say you should do.

On the other hand, you need to beware of the tendency to assume that everything is OK and not be perturbed by occasional issues in your relationship – by doing this, you can miss crucial signs that something is going in the wrong direction or that you may potentially face bigger issues further down the road. Too much confidence can be just as bad as too little confidence. Even if everything seems great and there is nothing that can upset you, finding some time for reflection and thinking about improvement can be a very healthy exercise.

If one partner is Assertive and another is Turbulent

As with all other traits, if partners are on opposite sides of the scale, there is a lot of potential for both mutual personal growth and various misunderstandings. With the Assertive partner being the decisive, calm and level-headed half, and the Turbulent partner being the cautious, sensitive and self-conscious one, it is easy to see that they can both help and hurt each other.

In such relationships, it is important to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses instead of assuming that there is something wrong with another person's attitude.

The Assertive individual should recognize that their Turbulent partner is much more emotionally reactive and vulnerable to stressful situations. They may be more pessimistic, anxious and shy – however, the Turbulent trait also pushes such individuals to reflect on their decisions and try to improve themselves and their relationships as much as possible. As a side effect, Turbulent individuals are also likely to be more organized, driven and motivated. If they are able to master their emotions and use them

as a driving force instead of simply giving in to the mood swings, this trait can actually be quite beneficial in a romantic relationship.

Similarly, the Turbulent individual should understand that their partner's calmness and relaxed attitude do not mean that they are unsupportive or not that interested in working on the relationship. Being less likely to feel nervous in challenging situations, Assertive individuals may seem somewhat detached or disinterested, especially from the perspective of someone who is Turbulent – however, it is precisely that emotional stability that should be utilized where possible. While it is true that Assertive individuals may sometimes be too self-confident and not care much about achieving the best possible results where a good outcome is enough, this level-headedness can also be invaluable in emotionally charged or unpredictable situations.

With this in mind, both partners should work on covering each other's weaknesses with their respective strengths instead of focusing on their differences and trying to "fix" them. For instance, the Assertive individual could act as an emotional bedrock for their much more sensitive partner, showing that there is always a bright side, reassuring their other half that the matter at hand may not be worth stressing about, and encouraging them to put their perfectionism aside and take a bolder, riskier step every now and then. Similarly, the Turbulent individual could bring more organization and goals into the couple's life, with their hard work and success-driven attitude pushing both partners to grow and develop instead of being content with where they are. The presence of the Turbulent trait may also act as a safeguard against decisions whose potential consequences may be underestimated by the Assertive partner, who may not care too much about choosing the best possible option or worry about how their actions may be perceived by others.

If both partners are Turbulent

This combination is likely to be the most tempestuous of all, with both partners leaning towards the emotional and anxious side of the scale. While the couple will probably experience very strong positive emotions, they will be accompanied by negative feelings – and it is in those moments that both partners have to remember to take a couple of deep breaths and refocus their thoughts and emotions. Otherwise there is a risk that they will end up fuelling each other's anxiety, with minor frustrations boiling over

and becoming a full-blown crisis. Turbulent individuals are vulnerable to stress and they may need to make a conscious effort to find mutually acceptable ways to fight it and relax instead of stressing each other out even further.

That said, the Turbulent trait can also work in the couple's favor, if both partners are able to recognize and address its accompanying weaknesses. Being reflective and self-conscious, they will likely find time to think about both the present and the future, readjusting the course as they go instead of blindly trusting themselves. While this may lead to plenty of soul-searching conversations around the dinner table, focusing on all the stressors in their life, the perfectionism and sensitivity shared by Turbulent partners will also encourage them to address those issues and try to find good solutions instead of writing them off as irrelevant and going on with their lives. Nearly any weakness can be turned into a strength, and this is one of such examples.

Friendships

ESFJs are very social personality types, seeking large circles of friends and proving themselves more than willing to spend the time and energy necessary to maintain these relationships. Loyal and warm, ESFJs are known for standing by their friends no matter what, and providing a constant source of emotional support and encouragement. ESFJ personalities are also sensitive to the traditions of friendship, seeing the support they offer as a responsibility as much as a pleasure.



Doing everything they can to make sure their friends are happy, and being so comfortable with introductions and small talk, ESFJs are naturally very popular in pretty much any environment. This is a dynamic that ESFJs genuinely enjoy, but they also expect their efforts and support to be reciprocated. One of the few things more hurtful to ESFJs than finding out through the grape vine that a trusted friend is critical of their beliefs or habits, is being told so in a direct confrontation.

ESFJs have a tendency to believe that their friends can do no wrong, always stepping up to defend them regardless of circumstances, and they expect the same benefit of the doubt in return. But ESFJs can greatly expand their circle of friends if they learn to be more receptive to other perspectives, rather than making snap judgments and conclusions. It's important for ESFJs, as with anyone, to avoid being insulated from other viewpoints and opinions.

On the other hand, ESFJs are great at using their sensitivity to stay in tune with what motivates and drives their friends. While in their weaker moments ESFJ personalities can sometimes use these observations to manipulate others, they are far more interested in maintaining strong relationships, and this is a great tool for doing so. Altruists that they are, ESFJs almost always use their powers for good, encouraging and inspiring others.

By and large, the ESFJ personality type is a pleasant and sincere one. Their energy and social intelligence win them many acquaintances and friends, and their support and dedication keep those friendships close and strong. With so much zest for life and company, dull moments are sure to be few and far between.

It's a big world out there, and if there's one thing ESFJs enjoy, it's the thrill of building new friendships. They may be a little more stubborn in their ways than most, but they also can't help but be drawn to those outcasts who haven't been invited to join the fun yet. Let's discuss further how each type group fits in, the challenges they may face, and the fun they have by playing off each other's strengths.

Analyst Friends

Friendships with Analysts don't enjoy that same natural alignment that those with Sentinels do. ENTJs and ENTPs are extremely forceful and critical. INTJs and INTPs can simply be unwilling to even participate, let alone with enthusiasm, in organized social events. But context is everything, and few people are truly and fully ruled by the habits of their type. In fact, it can be exactly these weaknesses that draw these opposites together.

ESFJs have a powerful need to ensure that the people around them are able to participate and enjoy themselves with the rest of the group. INTPs and INTJs, especially through high school, often grow used to a sense of social rejection, regardless of how much they'd like to work on being a little less isolated. When ESFJs think to offer these "outcasts" an invitation to a party, it can really change their world-view, so long as it seems like a genuine gesture. They may not take up the offer on the first try, but a little persistence can draw them in and add some real diversity to the group.

Not all Analysts need such gentle persistence, though. ENTPs and ENTJs do enjoy a good group discussion, with circles of friends almost as big as ESFJs'. They likely share some mutual friends who can bring these groups together, which tends to be a lot of fun for everyone. This gives these Analysts a rare opportunity to get in touch with people who hold truly different perspectives, which is always an invigorating experience.

A functioning friendship with any Analyst is certainly rewarding. Analysts are best with systems and ideas. ESFJs don't get many opportunities to talk philosophy or space exploration, and it can remind

them just how big and complex the world really is. At the same time, spending time with ESFJs can help remind Analysts that those ideas all affect people. Analysts often appreciate those reminders, seeing any information as inherently valuable. Going a little further, ESFJs' strength of consideration and conviction isn't something they see often, and they come to respect it.

There are challenges, of course – ESFJs can see Analysts as out of touch, unreliable, or disruptively critical. Analysts wonder how anyone could stay so engaged and supportive without “doing” anything with it, ambitious types that they are. The mutual recognition and enjoyment is worth pursuing, though. It can be very rewarding if they appreciate each other's differences and play off each other's strengths. ESFJs keep Analysts aware of the need to be caring, and are rewarded with a healthy stream of ideas so they always have something to talk about.

Ultimately the growth of the friendship is made or broken by one of Analysts' greatest flaws: their inattentive attitude towards actively maintaining their friendships. Intuitive types in general are well known for being able to go months or years without contact, then picking up as though no time had passed at all. This is downright bizarre to ESFJs, who all but define the quality of these relationships by their consistency and inclusiveness. It takes time and effort for these types to develop a good rapport – these are friendships built over a long time, through shared experience or environment.

Diplomat Friends

ESFJ-Diplomat friendships are some of the most enjoyable. They both avoid conflict and value cooperation, and they share a genuine desire to be helpful and supportive. Not only that, but the deeper values that Diplomats live by – fairness, kindness, and generosity – resonate with ESFJs' own traditional and sentimental values, a very pleasant discovery.

Diplomats can be a little too whimsical, but ESFJs appreciate the nuance and conviction of their expressions and ideas. The way these things seem to bubble up from nowhere only intrigues ESFJs further, and their tendency to bring groups together not just for fun but to work towards a social good is genuinely inspiring. These friends can be quite the team if they earn each other's trust.

On a practical level, Diplomats get ESFJs to try new things. They have a way of making unpredictability actually sound fun to ESFJs, who are otherwise very well-organized. ESFJs know that their Diplomat friends won't get pushy or judgmental, which makes it easier. On top of that, ESFJs never need to worry about conversation stalling, or worse, tearing the group apart. Diplomats love to draw people together to get their perspectives, and they'll always have a conversation-starter lying in wait. But they focus on inspiration – they aren't interested in stirring conflict the way Analysts sometimes do.

Friendships between ESFJs and Diplomats are pretty easy, because their goals work so well together. ESFJs love the idea of doing public good, but tend to rely on established organizations that don't always let them be involved as fully as they'd like. Diplomats bring fresh, home-grown approaches to such things, and ESFJs' ability to bring people together can really help things take off as these friends try to make a positive impact together. Diplomats' unbridled idealism, respect, and understanding, and the fact that ESFJs gladly reciprocate, go a long, long way towards building lasting and important friendships.

Sentinel Friends

Other Sentinels are a good fit for ESFJs, who share their interests and goals. The friendships focus on day-to-day activities and events, rather than ambition or purely theoretical curiosity. ESFJs enjoy the sense of dependability and support. They know too well the flake, the user, and the fair-weather friend. Having someone around who has stood by them through thick and thin for years, and will continue to do so, is no small consideration.

Big groups are what ESFJs enjoy. Too few people, and things get too quiet. They'll happily sit down to chat over coffee one-on-one, but no matter how long they've been friends, there is a little nagging worry that they'll run out of things to talk about. It's often much more enjoyable to go out and do something together, visit the zoo or the mall, where they have a chance of running into more friends.

Regardless of how many people there are, their conversations are likely to revolve around what people at work and home have been saying and doing, and how that's played out. They aren't big on esoteric topics focusing on grand plans and analyses. In fact, ESFJs often consider it a little annoying when

impersonal topics like global politics dominate a discussion, instead of using that time to really catch up and share. Having Sentinel friends lets them set the tone a little more consistently.

Their need to keep things both organized and active can create its own problems though. Conflict is inevitable in large groups. If mutual friends have a falling-out, it can derail an entire event and leave ESFJs in a very awkward position. They have a compelling need to create peace among their friends, even defining their self-esteem by it. Being pulled in opposing directions by people they care about equally can be an agonizing situation, made all the more difficult if more people take sides.

There's no good way out of these situations once they've begun, which is why ESFJs put so much effort into putting out fires before they start, preventing unnecessary conflict over ideological differences that have little bearing on the day-to-day, protecting everyone. When worst comes to worst, they can identify problem people and stand in quite forcefully in defense of the closer friends, letting them know that they have the option to either shape up or ship out, and they can depend on those close Sentinel friends to stand behind them.

When more personal emotional situations occur, not just between friends but with things like breakups and deaths in the family, ESFJs enjoy having friends who stand by their sides with genuine loyalty. ESFJs appreciate hugs, attention, and any other gesture of emotional support, and enjoy having friends they can trust, who they can tell all to and know without a doubt that they'll still be friends afterwards.

Explorer Friends

Explorers are defined by the moment and its pleasures. They are known for unpredictability and dynamism. Explorers' ability to lose themselves in the moment and simply have fun and be excited about something can really be quite refreshing. It's a big, beautiful world out there, to be engaged and explored. Such an energetic approach is something ESFJs enjoy having around.

ESTPs and ESFPs really grab ahold of life and run with it. They have a big appetite for excitement, and take great joy in bringing along anyone who can keep up. ESFJs can really help to organize things so that as many people as possible, even those more cautious individuals who need a little extra notice and coaxing, can join in the fun of the moment with their Explorer friends.

But as fun as the moment is, it certainly does Explorers some good to remember that actions have consequences. A party is swell, but Explorers need to remember that their friends expect them to help clean up afterwards. This is the real beauty, but also the tension, in the ESFJ-Explorer friendship. Explorers follow the excitement, and often forget to wrap things up gracefully – out of sight, out of mind. They need more accountable ESFJs in their lives, but ESFJs can learn to be more flexible and free.

Things work better with the Extraverts though. The Introverts often get so involved in their personal projects that they forget their social obligations altogether, which is likely to leave ESFJs speechless. Like the Introverted Analysts, these Explorers need a little extra encouragement to engage with other people, rather than reserving all their enthusiasm for their tinkering and painting.

Like with their Sentinel friends, ESFJs appreciate the hands-on side of Explorers, especially those who enjoy more up-beat get-togethers and activities. Friendships with social and excitable ESFPs can be especially enjoyable, if they can keep up with each other. Less social Explorers are likely to take some extra effort, but they can really help ESFJs to take a moment to stop and smell the roses.

Parenthood

As parents, ESFJs have an excellent opportunity to display their warmth, affection and dedication in ways that have a real and positive impact. Sensitive yet firm, ESFJ parents are able to establish rules and authority without being entirely overbearing. They use their compassion and support to smooth over the occasional miscommunication or difference of opinion. Having children is often the culmination of ESFJs' life goals, and they cherish every moment of it.



From the start, ESFJs try to ensure that their children feel safe and happy. People with the ESFJ personality type enjoy the support they are able to give their infants, who are utterly dependent on their care. Family being as important as it is to ESFJs, this is an incredibly rewarding start to the relationship.

As their children grow and begin to explore more, ESFJs' love and care grows with them, but often becomes overprotective. ESFJs may not just keep their children safe physically, but also socially, by arranging play dates, camps and other activities so much that their children aren't free to make the very blunders that lead to emotional growth and social independence.

ESFJs value harmony and stability highly, and it's often the case that they try to use indirect pressure to try to teach life's lessons, or by leading by example. When they are forced into a confrontation by their children's blatant wrong-doing though, ESFJ parents step in firmly, and expect their words to be respected. Believers in traditional roles, ESFJ parents view the parent-child relationship in absolute terms, with their authority as final.

As their children grow into adolescence and begin to push away from their parents, ESFJs can take this transition personally. Feeling like they are losing their children, ESFJ personalities sometimes try to prolong their dependence as long as possible. It's important to remember that when grown children leave the home, it's because their parents were successful in preparing them for the next phase of their lives, an accomplishment ESFJs can be proud of.

ESFJs' children will always appreciate the sensitivity and warmth that they were raised with, and as time goes on and they have their own children, they will cherish the fact that those children also have the benefit of grandparents who love and care for them unconditionally.

Of course parenting isn't so simple that it can be summed up in a few paragraphs. Children are separate, growing, and whole individuals, with their own wants and needs. Different types have very different expectations. Their own personality types guide what kinds of information and interactions are most valuable to them, and each person demands a unique approach.

ESFJs, by the time they become parents, have had years to sort out what works for them. They prize social stability and participation above just about all else. They value thoughtfulness and reciprocity in others. They believe that the right approach is the agreed-upon one, and have trouble turning off the need to point their children in the right direction – even when their children are full-grown adults.

If they by chance end up raising a child who shares the Sentinel type group, ESFJs have a head start in sharing these values. But what happens when their children are from other, less compatible type groups? What happens if they don't enjoy big get-togethers or sports – or if they actually want to argue? What happens if they are withdrawn and calculating, behaving in ways that seem isolated and cold (but are in fact perfectly natural)?

ESFJs' strengths lie in creating social structure, not philosophy or debate. They focus on participation, and just don't understand "excessive" alone time or the need to argue. We hope that with this guide, ESFJs can strengthen those less-developed aspects. We hope that they can gain understanding as they learn to adapt to children who openly question others' motivations, even their parents', or who crave the unknown and the freedom to figure out their own way. We also hope to help ESFJ parents to develop more meaningful relationships with those who do share their own traits and qualities.

Analyst Children

Analysts are the most difficult type group for ESFJs to adjust to. They oppose on the Intuitive/Observant and the Thinking/Feeling traits – INTPs even oppose on all four! Analyst children expect people to be rational and independent. They are often intellectually combative, refusing to take things at face value,

and this skepticism and disregard for their parents' status can catch ESFJs quite off-guard. ESFJs are eager enough to support their children, but they have very different ideas about this means.

ESFJs teach their children about social skills and strong, traditional morals – this can feel completely out of place to Analysts. They determine their own values and make their own choices. ESFJs' highly involved style can feel controlling and even absurd to over-rational Analysts. To them, the safety of home and the warmth of family and friends that ESFJs value are secondary to intellectual stimulation. Grades and status aren't goals in themselves – they are byproducts of their need for intellectual challenges. It's why they argue, and why they push limits. Anything less is just damaging to their sense of well-being.

Analysts mostly create their own stimulation, with reading, puzzles and strategic games. ESFJ parents have trouble enjoying such things, and encourage more social activities. As Analysts grow and activities become more complex, ESFJs try to provide more guidance. Their Analyst children, meanwhile, crave more independence, especially intellectually. For ESFJs, the right activities are the ones that bring the crowds. INTP and INTJ children's inward focus can be frustrating for such social parents. Their words will be picked apart as their children try to exploit any logical flaw they can find to get what they want.

But there is a middle ground, if ESFJs have the patience to find it. Analysts may not respect authority for its own sake, but they do respect effective people. ESFJs' connections and down-to-earth practicality are admirable. ESFJs are better at bringing people together than Analysts can ever be. They can use that to create opportunities to meet those intellectual needs, like chess clubs and debate team, which Analysts might not think of. ESFJs' thoughtful planning and generosity can make a well-timed book a powerful gesture, too. Analysts run away with their imaginations, and a single article can literally change their lives, and they remember who got them started.

Little is likely to come easily in this relationship, but the two have a lot to teach each other. ESFJs place a great deal of importance on simply being there for the people they care about, which is exactly the balance Analysts need to their distant, calculating ambitions. Working as equals with their children can take some getting used to for ESFJs, but if they can make that happen, they come to respect Analysts' creativity and adaptability, making both the better for the experience.

Diplomat Children

ESFJ parents and Diplomat children make a fairly low-stress match. They both value harmony and support, especially emotionally. While ESFJs tend to approach such things from the perspective of a broad network of friends, Diplomats reach for something more spiritual and metaphorical, exploring the meaning of their feelings. But either way, they prefer handling people with sensitivity, making compromise, when needed, easy enough to come by.

ESFJs marvel at their Diplomat children's creativity and imagination, but are also concerned by their sometimes unrealistic idealism. ESFJs worry about whether it will end up making their children outcasts. ENFPs and ENFJs really put themselves out there, drawing in people who feel the same way. The heartfelt poetry of INFJs, and of INFPs especially, can even be misinterpreted as a cry for help. Such exposures are just what Diplomats need to stay healthy though, whether they're understood or not.

Whatever their missed connections, these types can rely on their shared need for healthy relationships to see them through. Diplomats expect deep and far-reaching emotional exchanges, more than ESFJs are used to, but they are able to be a part of those moments, building a great deal of trust. ESFJ parents won't ever forget to tell their children they love them, the value of which Thinking types tend to underestimate, and Diplomat children are unlikely to ever feel awkward reciprocating the feeling.

By meeting each other's emotional needs, they help each other to be better-rounded people in other ways. Diplomats instinctively value what they know is important to those they care about, which helps to smooth over those times when their need for understanding butts against ESFJs' need for stability and respect. Diplomats' unstructured approach to relationships can help ESFJs to grow more comfortable with social flexibility, rather than sticking to strict parent-child hierarchies.

As for fun, ESFJs and Diplomats have quite a bit of overlap. Diplomats enjoy the wonder of living things, people and ideas, while ESFJs appreciate community activities and institutions. Zoos, museums and historical landmarks all allow ESFJ parents to appreciate history and tradition, maybe with a few friends invited along for the outing. Meanwhile their Diplomat children can dream about how these stories, creatures, artifacts and landmarks have shaped the world today, and how they may shape tomorrow.

Encouraging INFPs and INFJs to write about these experiences, and ENFPs and ENFJs to talk about them, can help to extend and cement the positive experiences these parents and children share in these activities. Even when one thing or another falls flat, ESFJs' support and Diplomats' forgiving nature can always be depended on to let them try again.

Sentinel Children

The benefits of having Sentinel children are pretty easy to see. Because they share the Observant trait, they see the world much the same way, as things that simply are, without the baggage of inferences and assumptions. ISFJs and fellow ESFJs also share the Feeling trait, making decisions from the same basis of principles and morals. Even ISTJs and ESTJs, if coming to more "functional" conclusions, at least come to conclusions that can be followed in clear steps. This makes communication between ESFJ parents and their Sentinel children very straightforward.

It also means that they enjoy many of the same things, such as team activities and games. ESFJs' actions are well-planned and social, not improvised or just theoretical – it can be quite a relief to know that their children, especially fellow ESFJs, would rather plan a trip to a ball game than to tinker with electronics alone or read poetry. ISTJ and ISFJ children challenge their parents' need for a more active social life, but at least with activities that both can happily engage.

However, the drawbacks are the same as in any relationship with poor diversity. Without differing perspectives, neither side is encouraged to develop their weaknesses to become better-rounded individuals. ESFJs encourage development, but they focus on the things they value: social skills and details about people. Intellectual flexibility, self-reflection, and the simple act of spontaneous fun all suffer. Remembering your children's friends' birthdays is easy enough. Explaining the value of challenging one's own preconceptions is another matter entirely.

Philosophical lessons aside, flexibility is probably the most vital consideration for ESFJ parents. Sentinel children struggle to manage unpredictable environments and conflicting information, and ESFJs have poorly developed methods for encouraging such adaptations. But such situations, like moving to a new

school, are a fact of life. Sentinels all crave structure and predictability, which ESFJs are happy to give, but that's just not always possible.

With too much structure, Sentinel children can grow up without learning to direct themselves at all, making it even more challenging to deal with the unforeseeable. Or they can end up striving to maintain existing situations so stubbornly that they ignore chances to move forward. When this happens, they can lead a sterile life, missing out on adventures like world travel or more fulfilling careers. They can even miss out on the things that make life itself beautiful: the disruption of falling head-over-heels in love, or trying something because they're passionate about it, not because it's what they "should" do.

It sometimes makes sense to do what's expected over trying something new, or to put other's needs over your own, even if it means containing your passions. But when these behaviors become habits, they can create unhappiness and dissatisfaction that can prevent the experiences and relationships that are most rewarding. It's important for ESFJ parents to realize the importance of their own need for self-direction, and to ensure that their children, no matter how content they appear to be, realize theirs.

Explorer Children

If there's one thing ESFJs enjoy, it's getting people together. Explorers' every activity is dependent on the "fun factor", so they'll have a lot of luck with ESTPs, who are likely to be up for just about anything that involves getting outside, and with ESFPs, who are even more social than their ESFJ parents. ISTPs and ISFPs are a little more of a challenge though, as they focus on mastering tools and beauty without much concern for relating those things to social situations, even at a young age.

It's easy for ESFJs to organize things and playdates for their children regardless, and they love supporting them as they discover everything such activities have to offer. With some practice, ESFJs can even frame chores and other daily necessities, a common flashpoint, as games, helping Explorers to associate such things with fun, their key motivator. It doesn't take long to get a feel for what Explorers consider fun either – they are just so expressive. When something strikes a chord, they can hardly be pulled away.

But Explorers' shifting interests can easily tax ESFJs' patience – they want to do their own thing when and how they want. This attitude can be frustrating for parents who place so much importance on

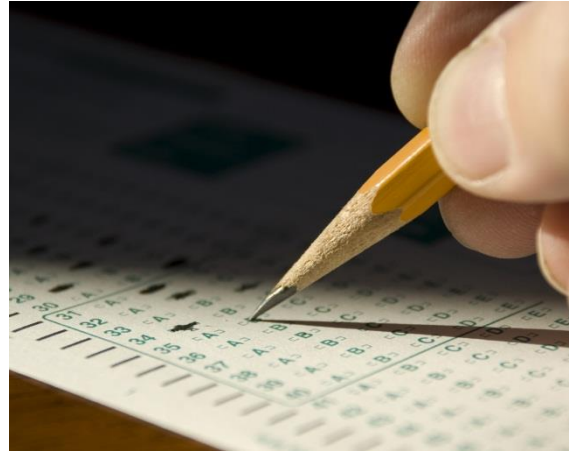
respect, and who see their word and authority as final. Explorers' demands can raise tensions in the household, and ESFJs can get just as involved in the high emotions, digging in their heels and becoming quite forceful. The Introverts don't often make waves, but ESFPs and ESTPs can fight back pretty hard.

As they get older, Explorers seek even more independence. They don't want their parents to keep offering up things to do, something ESFJs can struggle to accommodate. Explorers are creative, energetic people, and it can take everything ESFJs have just to keep their energy pointed in a useful direction, or at least in a direction that spares the walls another crayon mural.

Explorers' tendency to act without thinking about risk or consequences is by far the biggest frustration for their ESFJ parents. This undeterred and often impulsive self-indulgence makes creating a stable social network especially difficult, something ESFJs see as extremely important. Yet, Explorers hardly want for passion, the key ingredient in the most fulfilling successes. ESFJs' social support and dedication, if sometimes strained, is exactly what Explorers need to have just enough feedback to stay out of trouble, and to otherwise leave their mark in their own unique way.

Academic Path

Some people spend nearly one third of their lives studying. Some choose to enter the workforce earlier and don't spend as much time in classes or libraries. Regardless, most people spend at least some of their important formative years in school. No matter how long you remain in the academic world, your time there is important. These years not only could set one on a specific career path, but the school experience can also affect self-esteem and other aspects of psychology well into the future – in both positive and negative ways.



How ESFJs Learn

Pragmatism, duty, and tradition: These are three words that are foundational to the how ESFJs learn. They are most comfortable in a traditional classroom with traditional teaching methods. The exception may be a group activity that may be less conventional than a lecture or written work. They enjoy collaborative work. ESFJs have little interest in the abstract or the theoretical. They are much more interested in the practical. They prefer that everything be a “how-to” experience on some level in the classroom. They will tolerate the theoretical only under the condition the lesson ties the idea to something practical. If a debate or lecture does not land on something useful, they are likely to see the whole experience as “going around in circles”. They are more at home with proven and conventional ideas linked to a concrete purpose.

Having said that, ESFJ occasionally play with the other side of the coin and can be creative at times. They may take art or creative writing courses and do fairly well. However, that will be in conflict with their more pronounced practical side and may feel frivolous to them. That brand of creativity will likely never be a dominant part of their lives.

Sentinels, careful in their attention to detail, don't mind routine and repetitive tasks as long as there is clear reason for it. (Sometimes that reason can be as simple as preserving a tradition.) ESFJs usually

welcome hands-on training, and they appreciate models they can copy and opportunities to receive coaching. They work hard and strive to be good students. ESFJs appreciate feedback and they can see it as an essential part of learning rather than a judgment. They prefer to be active rather passive students.

ESFJs are creatures of habit in both their actions and their thoughts. Once they believe something, it can be hard to get them to accept alternate ideas. This tendency can create difficulty in some courses that rely on imagination and creativity or during general class discussions. ESFJs need to be careful to not discount new information in their tendency to lean toward traditional and perhaps outdated ideas. Courses that ask for creative and abstract thought can be challenging for ESFJs for that reason. They prefer thoughts that connect the past with the present – not new ideas “out of nowhere”.

Instructors can tap into ESFJs’ strengths by providing them with a sense they are doing something, not merely thinking about something. Providing ESFJs with cultural or historic context can also help them feel they are on solid footing. It will be distracting and uncomfortable for ESFJs if the teacher allows things to be “too relaxed” in the classroom. While it may healthy for ESFJs to step outside of their comfort zones and relax in the classroom a bit, this need for structure might be something instructors might want to understand to create a better learning environments for all of their students. Using groups will also provide stimulation and interest for the ESFJ.

Finally, ESFJs strongly dislike people unexpectedly putting them on the spot. They need to be sure of themselves and like to be confident in their answer before they commit to it. ESFJs always appreciate a reasonable amount of time to check their footing before they respond. However, they do tend to make quick decisions well when needed and this give them an aura of leadership.

ESFJs in High School

In the classroom: ESFJs start high school from a great place just because of the way they approach the world. They’re hardworking and dedicated to doing well. As far as earning good grades, this comes naturally to ESFJs and they may see it as a duty they need to perform. They will faithfully do so consistently.

ESFJs will do well in courses that promote administrative skills such as business, accounting or even math. However, Sentinels, as a whole, are generalists in that they will do whatever it takes to promote the general good. They will approach any subject they take as a resource. While they may like or not like a course, they don't need the course to be interesting or exciting in order to apply themselves like Analysts and Diplomats need to. The course is there, it needs to be done, it's there for a reason, and ESFJs will simply do it regardless of their subjective feelings. Nonetheless, the more practical purpose it has, the more comfortable ESFJs will be.

One of the challenges ESFJs face in the high school classroom is that there is certain rigidity to their way of thinking. As mentioned above they may have trouble with abstract or novel ideas. They stick firmly to rules and they always have a strong sense of duty. This may create problems in their relating to their fellow students in classroom. There may be a mutual disdain if they are put in a group with students who want to cut corners or who don't attend conscientiously to the details of something. ESFJs may want to play strictly by the rules while their peers don't. This can cause friction and stress all around. In the end, however, ESFJs' warm personality and appearance of confidence will most likely win these students over. Teachers will probably value the serious thoroughness ESFJs bring to such a group. However, being the hard-working students they tend to be, they can be very hard on those who are slower or don't carry their own weight in school and later in their jobs.

ESFJs will most likely work from the first day of high school to the day they graduate. They will always work hard and always diligently try to meet all the requirements put in front of them. Other students may slack off when the work becomes too predictable and easy or when they get toward the end of high school. ESFJs will not. They will continue to work to their highest level until they leave.

Outside the classroom: If you've been to high school, you don't have to watch a single one of the thousands of films about teenage angst to know that there's more to high school than just classes. And most would agree that there are as many lessons in a school's yards and hallways as there are in the classroom. So, let's take a moment to consider high school as a place where some important social lessons unfold.

ESFJs are usually popular in high school but not in the usual superficial sense. As mentioned above, they are “people persons”. They exude warmth and confidence. The warmth is genuine, but the confidence is usually external, even for Assertive ESFJs. Inside, ESFJs are usually not any more confident than most in high school. However, they give the clear impression that they know what they’re doing and others gravitate toward them for that reason.



Like true Sentinels, ESFJs will make it a point to care for their friends. It won’t be about sweeping compassion like that of a Diplomat as much as it will be about making sure they take care of the practical needs and feelings of others. This friendly helpfulness can go a long way to creating serious bonds of friendship in high school for ESFJs.

Extra-curricular activities often pigeon-hole the modern teen into stereotypical niches. Cheerleaders are seen as the popular kids and Latin Club is for the nerds... and so on. ESFJs will gravitate to the clubs they “should” belong to. By that, it could be for academic improvement, service to others, or a career path clubs of some kind. Being practical, they will join clubs that will pad their resumes or their college applications as their guidance counselor might suggest. They may join the drama club or something of that nature, if it’s presented as a community builder that upholds a fine long tradition or a similar reason. It will important to them to be a stable part of any organization they join, and they will want to contribute as much or more than they gain from the club.

ESFJs enjoy the limelight and will feel comfortable in a leadership role. They will bring an efficiency and organization to a group in a way that will surpass anything most of their peers can do. Their “let’s do it now” attitude and positive appearance can bring much energy to an organization.

Work or College?

While there are many more reasons involved in deciding whether to go college than personality types, they can have a role in the equation. Not long ago, most thought of college or university as the quickest path to success and security. Now some of the same people are vigorously arguing against higher education for everyone having seen college dropouts succeed on a grand scale in our technological age. Steve Jobs and Bill Gates are the two most famous examples. There's a niche for everyone and college is just one possible path to finding it. So, what might the ESFJ consider when thinking about college?

Two questions that ESFJs should ask when deciding whether to hit the books or enter the workforce:

- *Will a degree be necessary in the work you want to aim for?* Once deciding a profession, it sometimes matter whether one has a degree. The helping professions, many of which require certification, tend to draw ESFJs. Teachers, social workers, nurses, physicians, and other certified positions need a degree. If certification is not necessary for the path ESFJs choose or they, like many 18 year olds, have not yet decided, deferring higher education may be an appropriate decision. It pains ESFJs to be somewhere they shouldn't be doing something they consider irrelevant. If there isn't a sense of purpose or meaning in college, it's likely just to be a bad experience.
- *Will you be able to gain something intangible and yet valuable from going to college?* For many there is more to a higher education than just getting a job. It's a life passage and opportunity to grow and take steps toward becoming an independent young adult. ESFJs may find this a less compelling reason to attend college. The "growth argument" for attending school may sound a little frivolous to them. If they are not going for a certification or need any particular training, they may consider going straight to work more reasonable. However, even as practical as young ESFJs are, they may still have a yearning to better discover who they are and may still find a university setting good for that purpose. With their knack for leading, this is also a good place to work on those skills as a campus leader.

When ESFJs go to College

Sentinels may have mixed feelings when entering college. There is an opportunity to gain some real skills and develop professional credentials. However, university life can be a more relaxed environment than high school. This can be disconcerting to a student with as many fixed habits and beliefs as ESFJs have.

College is a time for ESFJs to begin to consider and exploit their strengths and talents in a real way. ESFJs may find this a time where they can develop competence. They need to be careful to choose their major though. If the courses are too abstract or theoretical, they will find no satisfaction. A major heavy in useful instruction, labs and practicums will suit ESFJs.

ESFJs' course choices will likely be similar to the subjects they connected with in high school. They will do well in any detail-oriented work that needs careful administration: bookkeeping, business administration, health care, education, law, social work and religious studies. For the ESFJ the subject isn't nearly as important as its application and purpose. It's unlikely they will be attracted to less traditional courses ("women's studies" for example). They will instead seek more bedrock courses – perhaps something their parents might have taken a generation earlier.

The question for ESFJ is not whether they can do something. They have the work ethic to do well in any niche they choose. But will they feel satisfied? Will they be fulfilled? Some feel that college and university is only about getting the tools you need to make a good living. ESFJs may fit into this category. However, they will always have one eye on the concept of contributing and taking care of others. Making a good living would more likely be about taking care of a family over the gratuitous accumulating of wealth for ESFJs. Keeping detailed books and a business running smoothly may make ESFJs good MBA candidates.

Will ESFJ look for a "party school" to strengthen their university experiences? Like most young people, the ESFJ will delight in the autonomy that going away to college offers – but perhaps not as much as other types. Home can represent safety, duty and structure for them. For most students, this is the first significant taste of life apart from their families and their families' rules (again, perhaps a mixed bag for ESFJs). It's no different for the ESFJs who are as interested in coming into their own. However, they are generally too serious and too rules-bound to see the wild "party life" as something that fits who they are.

However, they may take an excursion into the party life if they feel they need a break from stress. ESFJs, especially Turbulent ones, can be perfectionists with very specific standards and that may cause them to be hard on themselves. If they start creating too much pressure in their lives, they may react by going in the opposite direction of their normally hardworking selves. Parties, alcohol, drugs and casual sex are not out of the question with such a reaction although probably not very common among ESFJs. More likely than not, such adventures will be short-lived for the ESFJ.

Career and Professional Development

We will start the article about typical ESFJ careers by restating that the key words for ESFJs are Practical, Altruistic and Sociable. The jobs that ESFJs tend to choose reflect this as well – as people with this personality type are ultimate extroverts, these traits tend to be clearly expressed and push them towards certain career paths.

To begin with, ESFJs are very organized, dependable and practical individuals. They take pleasure in making their environment more structured and predictable, and do not shy away from monotonous, routine tasks. Some of the best career paths for ESFJs revolve around these traits – for instance, people with this personality type can be excellent bookkeepers, accountants or administrators.

It is worth pointing out the fact that ESFJs are very comfortable in social situations. They are good listeners and valuable team members, and prefer jobs that involve some level of personal contact and emotional feedback – pure analytical careers may be too dull for them. ESFJs also tend to have a lot of practical knowledge and skills. Unsurprisingly, some of the best ESFJ careers are in teaching, medical care, counseling or social work.

It is important to mention one trait that may be seen as a weakness by some personality types – however, it often drives the ESFJ career forward more than anything else does. ESFJs really need to feel appreciated and know that they have helped someone. People with this personality type find it hard to feel satisfied with their job if they are not convinced that they are creating some value and giving it to others. This trait is a driving force behind many typical ESFJ careers, especially if they are in the fields of religious, social or psychological work.



Regardless of the area they are working in, ESFJs are benefactors and providers at heart. Nothing fascinates them more than making sure that everyone is happy, that all resources are flowing smoothly, that all goods are being delivered on time etc. People with this personality type are factual, no-nonsense organizers, able to connect with everyone and retain an extraordinary amount of information in their memory. ESFJs' keen eye, social skills and diligence give them a distinct advantage over other personality types when it comes to managing resources or other people. These skills are becoming more and more important in today's world, bearing in mind the interconnectedness that is the essence of all major business enterprises.

ESFJs have many inherent leadership traits and genuinely enjoy organizing people. Their internal principles and values tend to be very clearly expressed; furthermore, ESFJs loathe disorganization and ineptitude. ESFJs also love putting new structures in place and are remarkably thorough. These traits make ESFJs brilliant business administrators, office managers and financial officers in the corporate world – such and similar careers are excellent choices for ESFJs. People with this personality type also tend to be good sales representatives and are unmatched in service occupations.

Best ESFJ careers make good use of their hard work, social skills and motivation. ESFJs are also known for sticking to their projects until they are completed, no matter how hard it is. These traits are very important when it comes to advancing in a career – and ESFJs are well versed in this respect. Unfortunately, despite being smart and highly dedicated, ESFJs are likely to face many difficulties in their careers if they choose the wrong path. People with this personality type demand much of themselves and their need for security and stability does not help either – consequently, they may have difficulties coping with situations where their skills and efforts are not fully utilized or recognized. Ultimately, it all boils down to picking a career that is a good match for your traits and skills.

So, how do you choose the right path?

Getting on the Career Ladder

The best thing about being an ESFJ is that people with this personality type tend to be patient, knowledgeable and socially adept. Like other Sentinels, ESFJs are unstoppable when they find a niche that gives them an opportunity to contribute to the good of the organization or the society as a whole, while also being stable and secure – but getting such an opportunity can be a challenge.

Whatever their hobbies or aspirations, ESFJs do best when they embrace administrative, customer-facing roles, or positions revolving around development and enforcement of rules and guidelines. It does not really matter whether a particular ESFJ wants or is able to get into commercial or administrative fields which tend to be their top choices – sometimes their chosen profession has no direct links with these areas. What matters is the ESFJ's ability to take care of other people's needs and, manage the available resources in the best way possible.

ESFJs should embrace these strengths in the job-hunting stage as well. The good news is that they are likely to do very well when it comes to networking and socializing – the primary means of getting a job, especially in a tough job market. Furthermore, ESFJs exude stability and responsibility, which gives them the upper hand in interviews. People with this personality type should find it easy to show their prospective employer that they are trustworthy – they are usually able to communicate that fairly well. However, they may encounter difficulties when it comes to actually providing examples of previous work or describing their successes. ESFJs do not feel comfortable boasting about themselves, but that is often an unavoidable part of any interview. People with this personality type may find it easier to highlight their successes if they stick to factual data, describing what they had achieved in the previous role. Furthermore, such an approach will often be seen as more convincing than a never-ending stream of self-centered compliments. If you are a recent graduate, highlighting your academic achievements (which are likely to be quite impressive) may also be a good idea – and in any case, the ESFJ may feel more comfortable discussing something they have achieved as opposed to something they would imagine themselves doing.

Of course, you need to be able to present your skills in the right way in order to distinguish yourself among other candidates. As an ESFJ, you probably know many things and find many topics interesting,

maybe even seeing them as hobbies. Utilize this – think about what hobbies could be attractive in a specific field and then find a way to turn those ideas into real-life projects. There are plenty of opportunities out there – you can participate in competitions or volunteer projects, build an online presence (e.g. a small blog), organize a community event etc. It does not really matter what you do, as long as it is something you can put on your CV – not only this will make you a more attractive and versatile candidate, but will also give you a lot of breathing space in the interview. Answering a question like “describe the situation where you used your problem-solving skills” is much, much easier when you have got 5+ projects listed on your CV. Be imaginative – your skills are not worth much if you are the only person who knows about them.

You may also need to brush up your presentation skills. If you have an interview coming up, great – but do not make a mistake of thinking that your technical knowledge and enthusiasm will put you above everybody else. No matter how cliché that sounds, you need to be aware of the most common interview techniques and questions so that you are not caught off-guard by something like “what is your biggest weakness?” – answering “perfectionism” or “I work too hard” is not going to result in bonus points, quite the contrary. Try to highlight your achievements and knowledge, but also be prepared to get many template questions, especially in early stages. In some cases, the recruiter will not know much about the role and will simply be going through a checklist – expect that and do not let your confidence cloud your judgment when it comes to preparation. ESFJs tend to be very good candidates, but they may find it difficult to handle an unexpected question and may consequently lose out to less qualified but better prepared candidates. Do not fail to prepare.

Thanks to their meticulousness, social skills and hard work, ESFJs rarely have major difficulties when it comes to landing their first job, or keeping it afterwards. However, it is also important to always keep everything in perspective. People with this personality type often say that they studied extremely hard in school, with their eyes fixed on getting a position in a specific field – but then regretted missing a chance to develop personal relationships (especially deep, non-casual ones) that could have helped them a lot during their school years. ESFJs are hardworking and strong-willed individuals, but their perfectionistic tendencies may lead to a lot of stress – and having a social support network would be of great help in such situations.

You should also never forget to listen to yourself, especially when deciding what would be a good career choice. ESFJs are comparatively good at self-reflection, but this trait is often clouded by other factors, such as outside influences and financial rewards. In the end, you are the only one who knows what is going to make you truly happy. This does not mean that you should have unrealistic expectations at the start of your career – entry-level jobs are rarely interesting or satisfying – but it is your responsibility to find the right career path. Do not choose a profession just because it is popular or pays well – it may not be a good match for your individual set of skills or principles. In order to feel happy in the professional environment, ESFJs need to know that their contributions are respected and valued – this is unlikely to be the case if you are constantly struggling in an incompatible field.

Professional Development

Let us take a look at what makes ESFJs good at what they are doing, and then move on to discussing what traits are behind most of their problems.

ESFJs are often called benefactors for a reason – they have excellent people and managerial skills, a keen eye for detail and do not give up until they have found what they are looking for. People with this personality type tend to be less interested in building extensive systems or planning for contingency scenarios, leaving that for more technical-oriented Analysts. However, they live and breathe rules and structures – everything must be in order, everyone must be happy and everything must remain stable. ESFJs and this is what they should be focusing on – positioning themselves in a way that allows them to focus their efforts on administering things, managing resources or making sure that the rules of the organization are adhered to. Your mind is both your greatest gift and your greatest curse – if the environment is right, you will quickly be noticed and appreciated; if it is not, you will get frustrated by subpar performance of your colleagues and all the inefficiencies that you would like to fix. ESFJs are hardworking, patient individuals, so they are likely to do relatively well in many fields, but none will satisfy them as much as a logistical role would do. Try to consciously push yourself toward roles of this nature, wherever possible.

Another thing that is definitely worth mentioning here is the ESFJs' dependability and strong work ethic. You are likely to be a dedicated, meticulous individual, with one of your core strengths being your ability

to find the best way to help and protect other people, processes and organizations. This approach is going to be very different from what Intuitive types (Analysts or Diplomats) do – they focus on theories and methods, filling them in with facts as and when necessary. In other words, people with those types pay more attention to abstract statements than concrete facts. ESFJs, on the other hand, focus on the facts themselves, seeing them as something that guarantees reliability and impartiality. For this reason, you should try to steer your career towards roles that reward dedication, cooperation and keen eye for detail, and most importantly, focus on concrete, factual data rather than abstract matters such as ideas, brainstorming, diplomacy or planning.

That being said, this does not mean that you should rely too much solely on what you know at the moment and refrain from developing your skills or expanding your knowledge. ESFJs are good at absorbing new knowledge – therefore, try to use every opportunity you get to learn and experiment with something new, if possible. For instance, many organizations offer various training programs or subscriptions to professional magazines – there is always something else that you can learn. Use that mind of yours the best you can – even if a particular piece of information does not offer any immediate benefits, it is very likely it will prove useful at some point. You never know when someone will come in and ask if there is a person in the office who has an idea how a certain computer program works or how they should approach a specific project. Life is full of opportunities and ESFJs have a major advantage over other personality types when it comes to retaining and categorizing knowledge in their memory. Remember that regardless of what you are doing, you are constantly gaining experience and perspective – and that knowledge is not going to disappear. You may find it quite difficult to force yourself to learn something new, depending on the topic – but try to get out of your comfort zone as otherwise you may be outmaneuvered by other people. Consistency and stability are important, but they should not prevent you from trying out new things. Furthermore, this would give you an excellent opportunity to expand your professional and personal network.

Tangentially, it is worth mentioning that this applies to educational qualifications as well. Regardless of whether you are employed or not at a given time, you may want to consider exploring fields and subjects loosely connected to your main specialization. There are plenty of areas that reward ESFJs' administrative skills and logistical thinking – keeping your eyes open can sometimes yield great results.

Few ESFJs can say that they are always satisfied with their roles, so if you are not among the lucky few, trying out a new subject can easily open new horizons and boost your self-confidence as well. You do not necessarily have to get formal qualifications – nowadays, studying independently is easier than ever. New knowledge is always valuable, so why not keep your mind occupied with meaningful studies as opposed to something that has no lasting value.

If you have an opportunity, you should also try finding a hobby that you could potentially turn into a source of income later on, if you choose to – this approach is quite common among ESFJs, especially those in stable and well-paid, but not very intellectually challenging positions. The actual earnings do not really matter that much in the beginning – what matters is the chance to do something that truly excites and inspires you, without the constraints of the employer-employee relationship. If you create value – and it is hard not to, if you are truly enjoying what you are doing – other people will quickly notice it and reward you accordingly. It could be anything – a local neighborhood initiative, a home improvement project etc. ESFJs tend to enjoy managing all kinds of projects, especially if they involve working with other people – so why not try something like this if you have got time? The main principle is that you should try to do what you truly enjoy, while retaining the safety net of the regular employment – and who knows, maybe your idea will keep you going through difficult times or grow into a proper business. If you are also in a position where you can divert some financial resources to your hobby, then all the better. ESFJs tend to be excellent logisticians, so you should not have any difficulties managing your resources and this parallel “career”.

In all likelihood, you will only be satisfied with your career path if you feel confident that it makes you a respectable and productive member of the society. ESFJs want to be seen as dependable and trustworthy, working hard to achieve that status, as well as security and stability. Consequently, if your work is not being appreciated and respected, you will likely feel restless. Unlike some other personality types, ESFJs always push themselves hard in the professional environment, even if their efforts are underappreciated – but that cannot last forever, with the ESFJ being secretly stressed and frustrated. Ultimately, everything depends on how flexible your chosen organization is – there are few career paths that are really unsuitable for ESFJs, but there are plenty of roles where your primary skills will be underutilized. So explore, learn and try to find a way to use your social and logistical skills in that specific

field – and do not ever think that the gnawing feeling that you are in the wrong place will pass, if all rational arguments point to the fact that a particular role is unsuitable for you. ESFJs aspire to be influential, dependable managers, seeking to administer and direct resources in the way that ensures the survival and prosperity of their organization. Technical wizardry, sensuality or empathy are not their domains.

Finally, ESFJs do not fare well in situations where they need to do unfamiliar work under time pressures. People with this personality type are decisive and able to keep a cool head in critical situations, but they feel far more comfortable when they have enough time to assess the situation and make an informed decision. ESFJs have an excellent set of leadership skills lurking beneath the surface, but being in the “emergency mode” can exhaust them very quickly. Unlike Explorers, Sentinels in general are more suited to be logisticians and administrators than frontline executors.

Communication between Types

It’s useful to have something in common when you begin to talk with someone. It can make the rest of the conversation much more productive if you start with a resounding “yes” rather than stubborn “no”. This section will cover four possible pairings of type groups, including brief overviews of potential synergies and obstacles, as well as some tips that may help you navigate these tricky waters.

Sentinels – Sentinels

COMMON GROUND

Obviously, two Sentinels will find themselves “speaking the same language”. They’re about getting the job done and that will be the main thrust of their conversations. That doesn’t mean that people belonging to this type group won’t engage in casual conversation, but their motivation in that will likely be to create harmony in the workplace. They are often sincerely warm and personable. However, when it’s time to go to work, that becomes the clear focus. There can be a no-nonsense quality to their conversations.

Sentinels are pragmatists and are not much for the abstract and the theoretical. Discussion among them would most likely include discussions about facts and procedures. They like tradition and linking the things of the past with the things of the future. Sentinels would not spend much time talking about

concepts or visions like the Analysts or the Diplomats. They are more likely to reflect on the here and now and getting things done. This doesn't mean they don't plan or talk about the future. Just that they will more likely discuss the more tangible aspects of it.

Sentinels are nurturers in the sense that they want to take care of other people. They try to make their lives easier through attention to detail, following policy and completed action. Sentinels will want to make sure that they consider every possibility toward that end. They will spend most of their time going over logistics and organization together to make sure that everything runs smoothly.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The problems two Sentinels may have when talking to one another will most likely have nothing to do with understanding. However, they may have trouble if they become stuck in their own style of thinking without the benefit of insight from those who think differently. In business and in life, it's good to have varied personality types around to provide balance.

In this rapidly changing world of commerce, there is a constant need to switch perspectives from a macro view to a micro view and back. Many feel thorough mission statements combined with long-term imaginative planning is essential for an organization to survive. The Biblical book of Proverbs says, "Without a vision, the people perish." So it goes with modern businesses as well.

However, room full of Sentinels would be more likely to focus on the "nuts and bolts" plans of an organization but would not be comfortable dealing with the big picture. The Sentinels are wonderful at handling the micro view. When you need things achieved, these are the reliable and loyal people you want. However, for the macro view, the more visionary Analyst or Diplomat has much to offer a brainstorming session and efforts should be made to include them in such exercises.

Similar to that, a discussion of innovation and change, if extensive enough, may be unsettling for Sentinels. They connect with the traditional ways of doing things. Sentinels bear their name for a reason. In that important role, they take care of others and they take care of a fixed way of doing things. They serve as the anchors needed in a stable society. However, having said that, the world is a rapidly

changing place and often organizations need to innovate to compete. “Thinking out of the box” is an overused cliché that shows through its overuse how important thinking in new ways has become.

For Sentinels, a challenge to the confines of the proverbial box may feel almost like an affront. They have probably spent a lot of time protecting the status quo and may get uncomfortable when it’s threatened. Sentinels should be aware of these traits and invite other personality types to the table when the topic becomes about developing new products or systems.

Control may be issue when two Sentinels try to communicate. While they try to get along well with others, they are willing to sacrifice harmony if they feel it is in the way of their goals. They may decide there is a “right way” to do something and defend that way vigorously. Their internal read on the situation will be that they are working for the “greater good” within whatever context they are acting. Two Sentinels with a sense of conviction and different ideas on how to bring about results may clash.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING

- Enjoy the comradery of someone who sees things the way that you do. Alliances of like-minded people often make life easier. There’s much less of need to expend energy making the case for something.
- Be sure to recognize the efforts of your fellow Sentinels. Recognition provides them with energy to move forward. However, their work is not always recognized as it is frequently done behind the scenes. But who understands better than Sentinels what other Sentinels do and want?
- Beware of control issues. Understand that your ultimate goals are probably the same and there is more than one way to do almost anything.

Sentinels – Analysts

COMMON GROUND

While they can be complementary (see below), Sentinels and Analysts have few things in common. If there’s anything at all, perhaps it’s their shared need for efficiency. Analysts work with systems trying to get them to run smoothly. Sentinels do the same with more practical matters.

HOW THEY COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER

Sentinels bring order to an organization and see to perform practical tasks. Analysts gain knowledge and assemble the building blocks a system in their minds and on paper. Each plays a different role when they have a job that suits them in an organization. Analysts are visionaries while Sentinels efficiently attend to business in the here and now. Analysts often ask “what if” and “why” while Sentinels are more likely to ask “how” and expect a tangible answer.

So how do these two different types work with each other and communicate successfully? Analysts sincerely need someone to carry out their vision. They are masters at manipulating ideas but need someone else around to turn their ideas into something practical. Sentinels are great at getting things done. In many ways, that’s a perfect match. A good fictional model might be the visionary CEO with the practical administrative assistant. Think Tony Stark (Robert Downey, Jr.) and Pepper Potts (Gwyneth Paltrow) as comic book caricatures of this in the Iron Man movies. While he busies himself designing his technologies, she keeps Stark Industries running. (From such examples, one might easily think the Sentinel is always subordinate to the visionary Analyst. However, if you consider an Analyst in a research position with a Sentinel boss, you have the opposite power relationship. Yet they complement each other’s roles just the same.)

By clearly understanding and accepting one another’s role and communicating from their positions of strength, each type can become invaluable to the other. Analysts and Sentinels can create a mutually useful and productive partnership in the workplace.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

There’s an old saying: “Nobody likes change except a wet baby.” Whole industries have grown up around “change management”. But it’s not true that “nobody likes change.” Intuitive types like Analysts and Diplomats love change. They always look for ideas that improve things. On some level, these types crave it as it represents growth and possibilities to them.

On the other hand, Sentinels focus more on doing the right thing according to proven standards and traditions. With Sentinels, making the status quo work is a priority. Analysts have little regard for the

status quo, especially if it gets in the way of improving a system. Sentinels may insist on doing it the “right” way according to how it’s always been done. Meanwhile, Analysts may insist on doing it a “better” way regardless of how it’s always been done.

The universal conflict between those trying to preserve a system and those trying to change it is perhaps as old as man himself. It is an area that can be difficult in the workplace. This can play out as passive-aggressive resistance or discounting the importance of one another’s contributions to an organization. These two diverse approaches may need careful communication, reassurances and much understanding.

Analysts’ social style can lack warmth and consideration for the emotional needs of others. Sentinels are nurturers and preservers who can be warm with their co-workers. While, they can be rigidly efficient to the point of being controlling sometimes, they keep the welfare of others in mind and they can be extremely loyal. Sentinels would do well not to take an Analyst’s criticisms too personally whether it’s directed at themselves or others. Analyst would do well to understand that Sentinels may react badly to harsh comments and off-the-cuff negative comments. Since they are so invested in things running well, Sentinels sometimes take criticism of an organization or others on as their own.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING

Advice for Sentinels concerning Analysts:

- Understand that Analyst co-workers benefit from your attention to detail even if they don’t always recognize or seem to appreciate it.
- Try not to take any criticism or harsh comments from an Analyst to heart.
- Don’t load Analysts down with too many details that aren’t necessary. They may show little interest, and they may not even respond to such information.

Advice for Analysts concerning Sentinels:

- Make an effort to show appreciation for what Sentinels do. They will not necessarily seek gratitude from others for what they do, but they become energized when they get it.
- Talk to Sentinels about any changes to a system. Understand that their first impulse is to preserve the status quo. Change may feel like something is out of control for them.

- Avoid unproductive criticism of others when speaking with Sentinels.
- Talk about practical tasks rather than theories if you want to connect with a Sentinel.

Sentinels – Diplomats

COMMON GROUND

Both Sentinels and Diplomats like to take care of other people and will have much to talk about when it comes to the human side of work. While the Diplomats focus more on ideological matters involving compassion, Sentinels' interests lie more in taking care of others on a more practical level. For example, Sentinels might want to make sure they complete the payroll so everyone receives their pay. Meanwhile, the Diplomats might focus on making sure that everyone receives fair treatment and they genuinely benefit from professional development. Both find energy and self-respect in doing good for others, and there is plenty of common ground on which to bond in that area.

HOW THEY COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER

As hinted at in the preceding paragraphs, Sentinels and Diplomats will most likely complement each other by providing different kinds of support for the organization. For Diplomats, it's the larger picture and the big ideas that are important. They are interested in growth for themselves and others. Details do not always concern them, and anything that comes across as "picky" may feel unimportant to Diplomats. So, they sometimes miss small but essential details. Sentinels do not and organizations need their diligence to run smoothly.

On the other hand, Sentinels can become so involved in making sure they do every little thing correctly that they can "miss the forest for the trees". They can get so caught up in the details and procedures that they lose the larger purpose of what they're doing. Partnering with a Diplomat can help them hold onto the greater vision of an organization, especially around issues about human capital.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Conflict arises between Diplomats and Sentinels when there is an opinion that one is too controlling (Sentinels) or the other is too lax (Diplomats). If one arrives 10 minutes early for work and another arrives 10 minutes late, you can almost guess which one is the Sentinel and which is the Diplomat. It won't be

because Diplomats thumb their noses at the rules or time clocks. It's just that those 10 minutes are not as important to them on their mental list of priorities. To them, as long as they get their job done, what does it matter? However, that might be hard to explain to a Sentinel supervisor who finds comfort in enforcing the rules. It can become difficult to bridge this gap in attitudes.

Diplomats are often able to understand things intuitively. Their view of the world comes from an almost subconscious linking of information and feelings. They are always imagining something better. Sentinels protect efficiency and order using proven standards and methods. In a way, they try to connect something that has worked in the past with the future hoping that will bring guarantee the same results.

Similarly, Diplomats often accurately size up other employees simply by using their instincts. Sentinels will prefer a proven established employee evaluation check list to do the same thing. While these two styles may not necessarily conflict, they can. Sentinels have to be careful not to judge Diplomats as "flaky", having their "heads in the clouds", or too future-oriented. Diplomats have to be careful not to judge Sentinels as too pedestrian or lacking imagination.

The two personality types can resolve these potential problems by understanding that both world views have something to offer. Practicing patience in the middle of pronounced differences is always good advice and always helps communication.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING

Advice for Sentinels concerning Diplomats:

- When talking about procedures with a Diplomat, couch the discussion about how these specific standards might affect larger considerations in the workplace. Connect these rules to values and fairness. You have a better chance of connecting with them if you appeal to their sense of morals and empathy rather than a set of rules that may feel arbitrary to them.
- Diplomats will not respond well to "that's the way we've always done it" or "that's what you're supposed to do." Take care not to offer that style of argument. Growth and development motivate Diplomats, and they always assume there is potential for something different and better. A

company rule book usually says little about evolving, and so it probably won't carry much weight in a discussion with a Diplomat.

- Diplomats like to encourage others. Remember that feeling traits are strong for Diplomats and sometimes they need encouragement themselves. Take a moment to recognize their efforts out loud even if you don't always agree with their methods.

Advice for Diplomats concerning Sentinels:

- Be careful not to judge Sentinels as too unimaginative, work-a-day or rigid. Try to remember the efficiency and stability they offer is a necessary part of any organization and don't be quick to write them off. Share abstract thoughts or imaginative ideas with them sparingly. While they might not have any trouble grasping your vision, they will probably have little interest in it.
- Don't spend much time talking to Sentinels about feelings. While they can be warm and friendly at work, getting the job done and preserving order is more important to them than how an individual feels. They will most likely view any necessary sacrifice of someone's feelings as something "for the greater good."
- Show appreciation for what Sentinels do. While they may not actively seek recognition, it energizes them when they receive it, and they gain self-confidence from it.

Sentinels – Explorers

COMMON GROUND

It's easy to get the impression that Sentinels and Explorers are polar opposites. While they often approach things differently, they both gather their information from the world around them rather than form an internal source like the Analysts or the Diplomats. However, that's where most of their likenesses end. While Explorers are more in touch with things directly and immediately, Sentinels usually filter their experiences through what they remember and how things have always been. Explorers relish the new and exciting while Sentinels favor the traditional and stable. Despite these differences, they both speak in terms of what is practical and tangible.

HOW THEY COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER

Explorers and Sentinels most often complement each other when things go wrong. Sometimes even the tried-and-true ways of doing things fails us. This can be disconcerting to Sentinels, but a compelling problem to solve for Explorers. In this ever-changing world, there are often times when the old methods no longer work. There may be no other choice other than to develop a new way of doing things and there's nobody better equipped to help a Sentinel should this happen than Explorers.

On the other hand, sometimes an Explorers' impulsive drive to find solutions can get off-track. Sometimes, the best answer when a situation goes bad is to retreat to a known starting place. "Known places" are where Sentinels like to spend their time. Some have commented that sometimes, as Explorers get older, they seek out Sentinel marriage partners to help them settle down. While this makes sense, it also makes sense that it could apply to professional situations. There are times when boldly "winging" it can lead to effective solutions. However, there are also times when such approaches create more problems than they solve. Sometimes a Sentinel can help an Explorer "come home", figuratively speaking. Sentinels usually know how to repair a situation or they know someone who does. This can be of great help to the Explorer who has wandered too far in the wrong direction.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

There are clearly things about Explorers that drive Sentinels crazy and the other way around. However, the Explorer has the advantage in this as they usually go with flow and don't allow others to bother them much. For the Sentinels, however, their problems with Explorers can be disturbing for them.

While Explorers have no problem cutting corners when necessary, Sentinels usually dedicate their lives to making sure those corners remain intact just the way they've always been. Sentinels like things to be orderly and predictable. Explorers can have a freer attitude and loves things that are new and interesting. Metaphorically, Sentinels will have a favorite restaurant they go to most of the time, and Explorers will want to sample all the latest restaurants that open in town. At work, Explorers can come across as reckless and undisciplined to Sentinels. To Explorers, Sentinels might appear boring and uninspired by their environment. While the opinions of each type are usually more reactionary stereotypes than real, they can get in the way of trust and open communication.

While keeping the status quo strong and in place seems essential to Sentinels, Explorers will have no problem doing whatever they need to do to solve a problem regardless of “how it’s always been done”. Sentinels see the tried-and-true means as the way to a guaranteed end. Only the end concerns Explorers and they may use any means necessary to get there. For them, it doesn’t have to follow traditional protocol.

It’s easy to see how Sentinels can view Explorers as being at cross-purposes with them. Sentinels may devote an undue amount of time trying to get Explorers to walk in a straight line according to the rules. Meanwhile, Explorers may ignore the Sentinels as they do whatever they feel they must do, going in a straight line or serpentine, to master a situation. The possibilities for conflicts are endless.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING

Advice for Sentinels concerning Explorers:

- Smile and enjoy an “it takes all types to run a world” attitude. Explorers can be a strong asset in the workplace. While everyone needs to follow the rules, you playing the role of “rules police” may be more trouble than it’s worth if the Explorer is contributing in positive ways. Try to keep it all in balance.
- Actively show appreciation for the good things Explorers do. Do this as much for you as for the Explorers. It may go a long way toward seeing them in a different light.
- In a discussion with an Explorer, avoid any form of the argument “because it’s always been that way”. If you follow that line of reasoning, they will probably no longer be paying attention to the point you’re trying to make.

Advice for Explorers concerning Sentinels:

- As Santayana wrote: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Don’t be too quick to dismiss the Sentinels’ attachment to the past, the settled protocol. There can be much to learn there. Don’t be afraid to ask why you need to do something a certain way. Doing so may avoid problems.

- Recognize the necessary work Sentinels do and show appreciation for it. This will help build a work relationship with Sentinels who are energized by recognition.

Career Progression

You got that job, settled in and have been an exemplary employee ever since. What now? How can ESFJs progress in their careers and what difficulties are they likely to have?

Answers to these questions depend heavily on the field that the ESFJ is in. People with this personality type tend to do better in managerial roles, making sure that everything works smoothly, all stakeholders are happy and all goals and deadlines are being met, as opposed to becoming self-contained subject matter experts. This means that ESFJs should have no difficulties utilizing the well-established career progression paths, especially in large organizations, where they have plenty of opportunities to utilize their leadership and administrative skills. Multi-national corporations are naturally better at this, so if you are able to get a job there, it is likely that you will be able to secure promotions relatively easily.

However, it is also often possible to progress in a field where achievements are not measured by the number of people reporting to you. ESFJs, like other Sentinels, are very good when it comes to administering resources and making sure that systems work as they are supposed to, and it is nearly inevitable that someone with this personality type will come up with ideas and suggestions aimed at improving the efficiency of the business model. Furthermore, their natural curiosity (some might call it nosiness) leads to ESFJs having fingers in many pies and indirectly influencing activities not related to their specific role.

This is one way of being recognized and promoted – as the ESFJ gets a better understanding of how the company operates, they can grow their responsibilities without overburdening themselves. This would increase their job security and future prospects as well. However, getting appropriate financial rewards can be a challenge in such situations – many managers are understandably reluctant to grant (or try to justify) a raise without any additional managerial responsibilities, not even talking about situations where raising the ESFJ's salary would mean that it would reach or surpass the salary of the manager themselves.

It is also important to remember that a better position does not necessarily come with more freedom. If anything, it can mean more red tape and more supervision. ESFJs excel in roles where they are given a clear set of rules and are able to work more or less independently. Ironically, getting promoted can often hinder rather than ease such efforts – sometimes, you may be better off staying in the same role for longer, using the time to learn something new and then looking for a better paid job at a different company. In most cases, traditional promotion paths suit ESFJs very well, but corporate jockeying may exhaust them very quickly.

There may be times when getting a promotion is simply unrealistic, either because of the organizational culture that sees little value in the skills that the ESFJ can offer, or simply because of the lack of room for growth. Here are some ideas of what ESFJs could do – changing the employer is an obvious option, but is it the only one?

Alternative Options

However radical this may seem, you do not need to be employed to live comfortably. We live in the age of possibilities and selling your time to a corporation is not the only way to generate income. ESFJs are hardworking, diligent individuals, and their impressive ability to recognize and leverage other people's skills can be very valuable. So why not try putting some of those ideas into practice and turning them into your own business?

Many people find the notion of self-employment quite scary – however, the times when someone could spend 20+ years working at the same company and not worrying about the future are over. Job security and guaranteed prospects are a thing of the past, with the exception of several fields such as military or medicine. Consequently, working for yourself may actually be a more secure and viable option, which also comes with a range of other benefits such as ability to plan your time, see tangible results of your work and, obviously, be your own boss. ESFJs value respect, control and self-reliance, and being self-employed would give them an excellent opportunity to enjoy these things.

Furthermore, self-employment solves one of the major hurdles that ESFJs are likely to encounter in the corporate environment – resistance by individuals who are either unwilling or unable to put in the effort

and play by the rules. As a self-employed individual, you are free to choose which tasks you want to perform and which ones you want to delegate or outsource – no more following irrational orders or dealing with people who are more interested in play than work. Self-employment offers many major benefits to ESFJs, especially in today’s global and always-connected environment, and people with this personality type are highly likely to be successful in this area.

However, there is no point in trying to start a business without a good idea. This is where the ESFJs’ meticulousness and hard work start to shine. Anyone could come up with a random idea and try turning that into a business (and failing 99% of the time due to poor planning) – but it takes a lot of hard work to do proper research, develop a solid business plan and ensure that your business does not crumble after the first month. Think of an interesting way to fulfill an existing need (or create one) and do it better than your competitors – which will not be that difficult, given the ESFJs’ amazing ability to leverage their connections and plough through mundane work with a smile on their face. ESFJs can be excellent entrepreneurs, having both the knowledge necessary to develop a good business model, and the willpower to keep going in difficult times.

Suitable Careers

Let’s look at some specific jobs that ESFJ may find fit them the best. We do not try to offer a full list of professions. That would be impossible and the list would grow daily. We offer a sampling of jobs that are consistent with ESFJ personality traits with added explanations of why they are. Use this to create guidelines when thinking about your own career goals.

For those of you already employed, this may serve as a confirmation or an explanation for why you might be happy or unhappy where you are. We do not presume this to be a firm prescription of what you must do to be successful or happy. Rather, we hope it will provide you with some insight as you make your personal decisions.

Business (Logistics and Management)

Having something or someone you need at the right place and at the right time is the heart and soul of logistics and management. There is perhaps no better personality type than a Sentinel for carrying out

this important work. ESFJs are good at it because their ability to reach out and to work with other people. If a widget isn't where it's supposed to be, ESFJs are good at discovering who can correct the mistake the quickest.

However, ESFJs usually won't allow the widget to become lost in the first place. The relationships they build at work are valuable and personal to them and they use their connections to get things done. They work "by the book" and are team players, so their loyalty to their company and their colleagues is important to them. They know how to rally co-workers and can be good at motivating them to complete projects but only if the work includes well-defined tasks that make sense to them.

ESFJs will find great satisfaction in helping their team succeed and sincerely enjoy managing others. Jobs that utilize these qualities might include:

- Office manager
- Customer service
- Leading sales teams
- Clerical work
- Retail manager or owner
- Human resources and professional development
- Retail buyer
- Shipping manager
- Office or personal assistant
- Insurance agent
- Hotel management
- Cook / Chef / Kitchen Manager
- Receptionist
- Entrepreneur

Healthcare

At the core of most Sentinels is the need to take care of others in concrete and practical ways. ESFJs are no different. This makes them excellent candidates for healthcare work. Clearly their traits equip them to care for patients especially when you consider their attention to detail and their ability to organize and to meet goals.

ESFJs are good at creating a healing alliance between the patient and the staff so long as their occasional stubbornness doesn't get in the way. ESFJ health workers typically will not tolerate negligence or mistakes and this is invaluable in a medical setting. Jobs that may fit them well include:

- Family physician
- Nurse
- Dentist
- Medical secretary
- Physical therapist
- Social worker
- Dietitian
- Hospice worker
- Home healthcare worker
- Occupational therapist
- Speech / language pathologist
- Veterinarian

Education

In elementary education and in courses that involve teaching practical skills, ESFJs make excellent teachers. "No child left behind" which was the motto of an education movement is a marching order for the Sentinel teacher. ESFJs own the internal motivation necessary to help children progress as they should both individually and as a group. They genuinely will care whether their students learn or not.

ESFJs tend to do best with younger children who need instruction involving rudimentary skill building. Teaching high school or college students may not suit ESFJs quite as well. However, they may do well

teaching even the older students when the courses involve building skill such as home economics, second languages or automobile mechanics. Education jobs for the ESFJ might include:

- Elementary school teacher
- Librarian
- Auto mechanic or shop teacher
- Home economics teacher
- Coach (any sport or skilled-based activity)
- Language teacher for non-native speakers

What Would Make a Job Unsuitable for an ESFJ?

In modern society, we not only spend a great deal of time at work, but we also tend to allow our work to give us meaning. We need to be careful not to get stuck in a situation that doesn't suit us unless we risk all manner of difficulties. Here are some characteristics of the type of jobs that may not be suitable for ESFJs.

Working Alone

ESFJs will not be comfortable in a cubicle doing solitary work unless perhaps it involves phone sales or outreach. But even then, they will yearn for more solid human interaction. ESFJs are a tremendously social type. They need people and ESFJs like to manage their co-workers. They see their business relationships as friendships and may feel uncomfortable if they don't get to know or work directly with the person in the next cubicle.

Loose Structure

In all likelihood, ESFJs will have difficulty accepting a workplace where the guidelines for performing one's duties are too loose. ESFJs need a strong sense of structure to feel at ease in their positions. They respect the authority of the boss and the authority of time-honored rules.

ESFJs don't like improvised action or taking unproven paths. While people with this personality type might contribute to a brainstorming session if it seems required, they will likely do so in a limited fashion.

Contributions may include rehashing old ideas with which they are comfortable. “Remember when we used to...” may be a phrase they use in such sessions.

If a business requires too much improvising or frequent change, it will likely unsettle ESFJs. For that reason, some jobs that involve more creative or spontaneous types could be difficult for them. On the other hand, ESFJs may provide the needed organization that less rule-driven people lack. They make great personal assistants to creative types who need organizing.

Lack of Recognition

ESFJs enjoy others recognizing the work they do. They may not be obvious about it, but others noticing their efforts energizes them. Sentinels, more than the other types, need some positive acknowledgment for their undertakings. It could be a monetary reward or simply applause, but they need a signal that they are appreciated.

A lack of recognition could have the opposite effect on ESFJs and create a sense of malaise. However, people with this personality type are unlikely to overtly advertise their accomplishments and may instead employ passive-aggressive behaviors. It may pay off for ESFJs to check to see if there is an “Employee of the Month” display in the reception area when they go for a job interview. Does the culture of the business recognize hard work? ESFJs thrive when it does.

Workplace Habits

Most of us will spend a huge percentage of our life at work. This is why we believe that discussing how different personality types behave in the workplace is important. What drives them or makes them miserable? How can you create a mutually beneficial and productive relationship with a specific personality type? How should you handle conflicts with them?

ESFJ Colleagues

- Good team workers
- Tend to see colleagues as personal friends
- Very social, may find it difficult to work alone

- Sensitive, likely to get stressed easily
- Usually very willing to help their colleagues, but may often overload themselves
- Vulnerable to criticism, likely to get offended if colleagues are not interested in their ideas
- Good networkers
- Want to do everything “by the book”
- Value peace and security in the workplace
- Dislike brainstorming and theorizing, but enjoy putting ideas into practice
- May find it quite difficult to acknowledge the validity of ideas that contradict their opinion, unless they have a lot of respect for that person

ESFJ Managers

- Genuinely enjoy managing other people
- Good at convincing and uniting team members
- Do their best to create a warm, conflict-free work environment
- Able to make everyone feel involved
- Respect traditional power structures
- May be very sensitive about their status and react badly if someone challenges their authority
- Likely to be short-tempered in stressful situations
- Strongly opposed to breaking rules
- Love responsibility and power resulting from it

ESFJ Subordinates

- Need to have clear roles, rules and guidelines
- Patient, efficient and hard-working
- Very loyal, likely to try to follow their manager if they leave for another role
- Do not mind doing routine tasks
- Respect authority and traditions
- Prefer structure and safety to freedom and improvisation
- Meticulous and very reliable

- Need to know that their input is valued
- May also be quite inflexible
- Respect authority and prefer traditional hierarchies at work
- Need to have a clear set of instructions and well-defined responsibilities
- May be very reluctant to give up responsibilities even if it becomes apparent that another person is better suited for that task or if the workload becomes unmanageable

What Do Other ESFJs Say?

It is one thing to read the description of your type – it is quite another to get tips and advice from fellow ESFJs. This is what other ESFJs say about their chosen career paths:

“I am still a student, but I will be working as a teacher. Dream job? Yes, of course. I want to inspire young students or people. I want to make their life meaningful.”

“I am a professor. This is my dream job. I have a very flexible schedule and teach and research things that make the world a better place. I regret not working harder and wasting time. I am happy that I have accomplished a lot.”

“I am a full time childcare-nanny for one family. Yes, it is my dream job. I get paid a salary to care for kids all day; I love the smaller setting with one family because I can address more needs.”

“I have a double degree in Computer Science (not my choice) and Art (my passion). I started off as a developer and soon found my way to being a User Experience designer. I currently work at a major shoe and clothing shop and it is absolutely my dream job to work in tech retail. I would not have done anything differently. I am really happy with my choice. It was really hard to get through the CS curriculum as I am not naturally smart but I have good discipline to get me through it.”

“I am a self-employed entrepreneur. I got trained in the Securities Industry at age 23 and went independent at age 32. It is not my dream job, but it’s up there! I worked hard and have always been honest. If I could change things, I would have chosen a different profession in my 20s that would have allowed me to be more creative. My advice to other ESFJs – do something you love so that you’ll never have to work a day in your life.”

"I work in a hospital in the department of nuclear medicine as a technologist. I really do enjoy my job. I get great satisfaction knowing that I helped ease patients' pain. I went to the same school that my older brother attended and majored in the same major. I wanted to be just like him. When I heard about nuclear medicine, I knew that I would be very interested in knowing more about the field. I didn't study as much as I should have in college. If I could go back, I would put more time into my school work. By far the best thing is making people feel at ease about what they are going through... even if it isn't about medical issues. The worst aspect is working for a large corporation and not knowing where you stand in the manager's eyes. Never knowing if your job is really safe... Especially in this economy."

As you can see, ESFJs can be found in a variety of jobs, ranging from teaching to sales. It is not the role itself that matters, but the ESFJ's ability to rely on their connections and administrative skills, and combine them with their desire to care for and help other people. There are fields that are more ESFJ-friendly than others (e.g. medicine, teaching or customer service), but people with this personality type can carve out their niche anywhere, if circumstances are right and they are willing to put in the effort.

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