

ESFP

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 from 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 ESFP?



ESFPs belong to the **Explorer** type group, along with ISTPs, ISFPs and ESTPs. They have an Extraverted, Observant, Feeling and Prospecting personality:

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

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

Prospecting – ESFPs have little need for order or schedule, are relaxed about their work, seek freedom and prefer keeping their options open.

All Explorers prefer facts to ideas and focus on whatever works best.

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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.

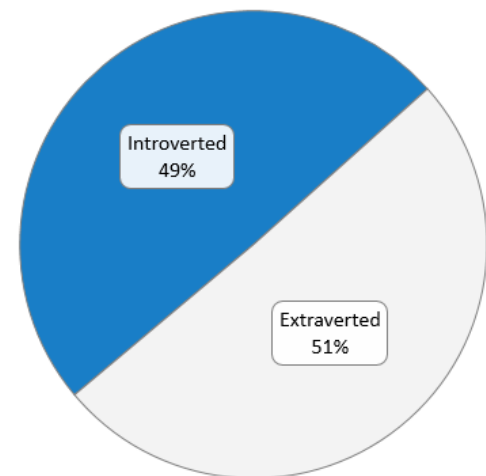
With our model, we've combined the best of both worlds. We use the acronym format introduced by Myers-Briggs due to its simplicity and convenience – however, we have redefined several Jungian traits and introduced an additional one, simplifying our model and bringing it closer to the latest developments, 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.

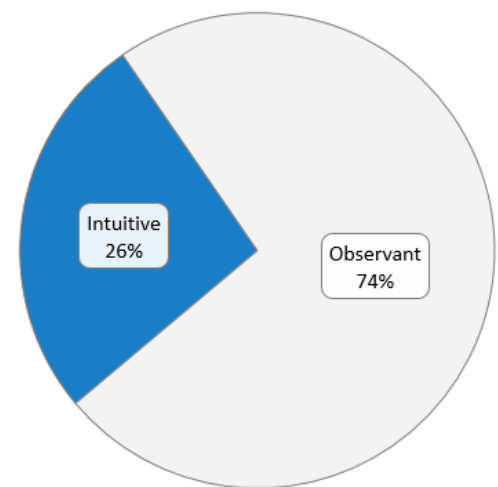


ESFPs are Extraverted – they tend to have good social skills and feel recharged after spending time in the company of other people. ESFPs enjoy taking command and issuing orders, often going ahead and voicing their opinion even before it has fully formed in their own mind. People with this personality 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.

ESFPs 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. ESFPs are not that concerned about what *might* happen or *why* it has happened – they focus on what *is* happening. ESFPs keep improving these skills throughout their lives, which makes them diligent and keen-eyed observers.

This is also one of the reasons why ESFPs 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.

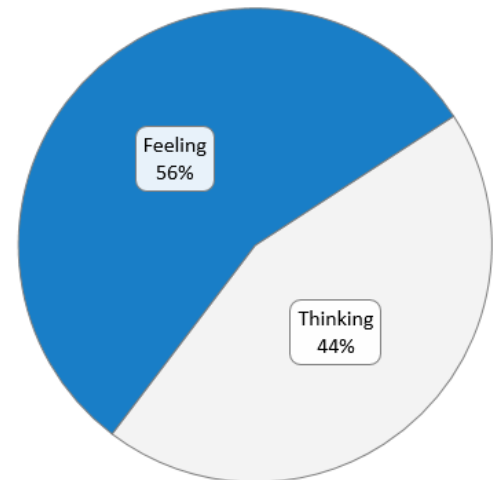
Of course, every stick has two ends. Introspection comes at a cost – by directing all their mental resources outwards, ESFPs inevitably have to discard the information that is being provided by their intuition. They are likely to have difficulties dealing with abstract, theoretical matters, or jumping 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.



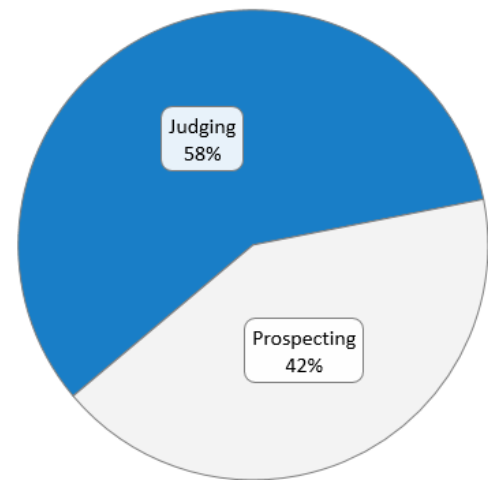
ESFPs have the Feeling trait – they trust and prioritize feelings, relying on moral and ethical arguments, and doing everything they can to stay true to their deeply held principles. People with this personality type are warm and sensitive, always able to find something positive regardless of the circumstances.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



ESFPs are Prospecting individuals – they want to be able to look for alternative options, knowing that there is always a better way. This may lead to unfinished projects or missed deadlines, but ESFPs would rather take that risk than lock themselves into a position where the existing commitments would limit their freedom. ESFPs also tend to be quite relaxed about their immediate surroundings – they do not obsess over tidiness, often paying far more attention to their latest mental exercise. Finally, people with this personality type are likely to have a relaxed attitude towards their work or studies, refusing to get stressed about deadlines, templates, or rules.

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.

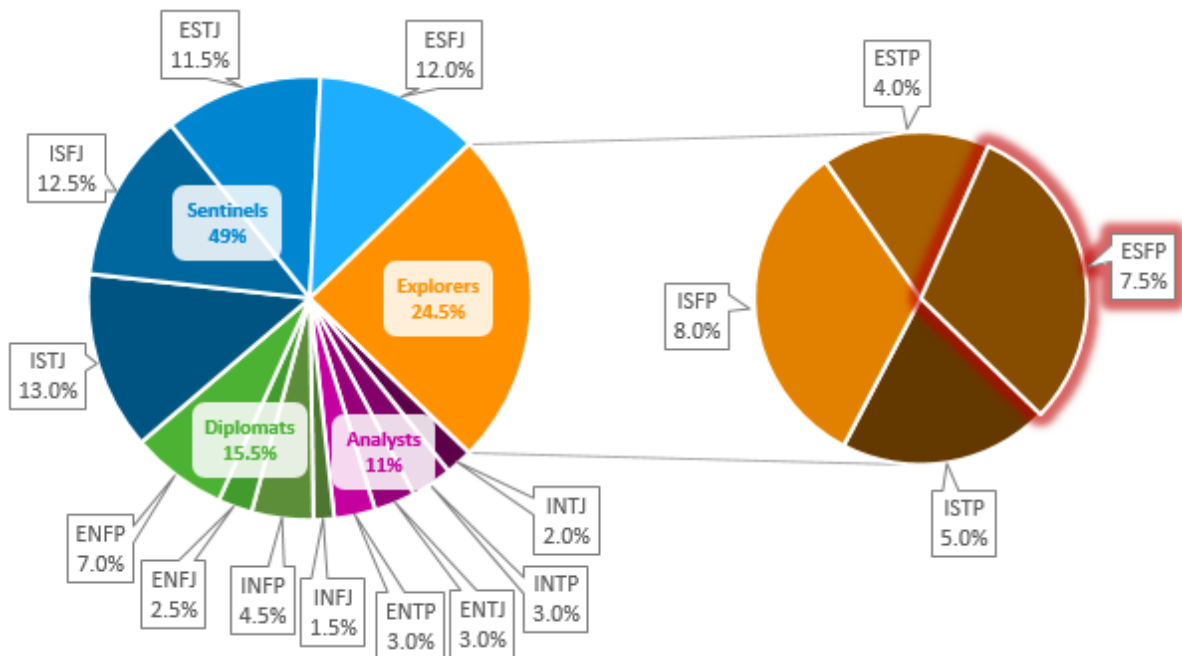
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT (EXTRAVERTED AND TURBULENT [E__ (T)] TYPES)

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 ESFP personality type is relatively popular – about 7.5% of Americans are believed to be ESFPs, averaging 5% among men and 10% 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.



For ESFP personalities, life is a never-ending party. ESFPs love being in the center of attention and enjoying even the simplest things – their fun and impulsive nature is usually very attractive to other people. People with this personality type never run out of ideas and their curiosity is insatiable – they will always be among the first to try something new and exciting.

ESFPs love communicating with other people and can spend hours upon hours chatting about various topics. There is no clearer tell-tale of an ESFP than the fact that someone has just spent the last hour talking about everything but the topic that was supposed to be the main reason for

the conversation. Not surprisingly, this personality type tends to be very popular in the company of Extraverted types.

ESFP personalities live in the world of opportunities and savor the pleasures, dramas and ideas that life throws at them. They are immersed in a never-ending performance, trying to cheer other people up. ESFPs are extremely talented at making other people feel good and excited, and they enjoy this immensely. The earthly and often unique wit of ESFPs is a perfect symbol of their playfulness.

ESFPs have a highly developed aesthetical sense and this is one of their strongest personality traits. This type of person will enjoy creating well-decorated surroundings and recognize the value of quality in many other things.

ESFP personalities are very observant, able to notice and respond to someone's distressed emotional state. As planning and long-term thinking are often their weakest personality traits, ESFPs may be inferior advisors and planners, but they are very well equipped to provide practical advice and emotional support.

The main weakness for many ESFPs is their extreme focus on the present moment, which can lead to superficiality and forgetfulness, with more emphasis on quick satisfaction, but not their obligations and duties. ESFPs are also likely to do their best to ignore potential conflicts instead of dealing with them head-on.

It is likely that the ESFP personality will be very practical, but not when it comes to repetitive or analytical tasks. They would rather rely on their luck or ask other people for help than spend time trying to understand a complex theory.

Some famous ESFPs:

- St. Mark

- Dale Evans
- Gracie Allen
- Marilyn Monroe
- Bob Hope
- Eva Gabor
- Willard Scott
- Goldie Hawn
- Kyle Petty
- Arsenio Hall
- Kathy Lee Gifford
- Steve Irwin

Strengths and Weaknesses

ESFP personalities are often called Actors for a reason – they are one of the most relaxed, fun-loving and cheerful types, always living on the edge and enjoying the present. People with this personality type are both friendly yet utilitarian, usually being very kind to other people, but also focusing on what works and satisfies them as opposed to listening what the society has to say



about something. The ESFPs' ability to notice things that other people miss, make them feel good, and sell anything to anyone, be it an idea or a product, make them invaluable friends, employees and partners.

However, this comes at a price – ESFPs are often seen as too careless and manipulative, and they may also have difficulties in situations where it is important to stay calm and rely on logic and facts. ESFPs may also be very egocentric, discarding facts and traditions as cumbersome and irrelevant, and using their impressive set of skills purely for their own selfish ends. Let us start by discussing the things that tend to cause most problems for people with the ESFP personality type – the Personal Growth section will then cover these issues in greater detail 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

- **Bold.** ESFPs want to experience things, to try everything there is to try – they do not mind going outside of their comfort zone or exploring something that others are reluctant to do.

- **Original.** ESFP personalities like to experiment and enjoy standing out in the crowd. They do not really care about traditions or what other people expect them to do.
- **Excellent people skills.** ESFPs tend to be very witty and talkative – they would never run out of things to discuss. They also strongly dislike being alone and enjoy communicating with other people where possible.
- **Great sense of aesthetics and beauty.** ESFPs are very artistic, especially when it comes to entertaining other people – this personality type is unmatched in this area.
- **Practical.** ESFPs are only interested in practical matters – they dislike theoretical or philosophical discussions, seeing them as a waste of their time.
- **Very observant.** ESFP personalities live in the present moment and focus exclusively on what is happening “here and now”. They find it easy to notice real, tangible things and changes.

Weaknesses

- **Find it difficult to focus.** ESFPs get bored very quickly and want to stay entertained and excited for as long as possible, regardless of the situation. Not surprisingly, they are likely to find it difficult to deal with tasks that require patience, focus and dedication.
- **Very sensitive.** People with this personality type are extremely expressive and emotional, making no efforts to conceal their feelings. They are likely to react very emotionally in the face of criticism or if they are pushed into a corner and are unable to make a decision.
- **Poor planners.** ESFPs rarely think about the future and are more concerned about the present moment, refusing to worry about the next steps or potential consequences.
- **Always seek excitement.** ESFPs take risks and are often self-indulgent, putting the pleasures of the present above stability or long-term plans.

- **Have difficulties in the academic environment.** ESFPs see school as a waste of time – they are far more interested in creative, practical things as well as socializing. People with this personality type are likely to find it difficult to stick to schedules and put in enough effort to succeed in the academic environment.
- **Loathe conflicts.** ESFP personalities do everything they can to ignore potential conflicts, often pretending to be interested or concerned, but then going on to do something they see as fun.

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 ESFPs and other Explorers. 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

Healthy self-esteem: ESFP self-esteem engine is a sense of competence and mastery. ESFPs will never want to settle for “good enough”. Combining their natural curiosity, their extraordinary perception and their creative edge, life beckons them to find out how far a scenario can or will go. This naturally leads to mastery of a skill or a situation. Without this sense of mastery, ESFPs will feel a lack of completeness. Even if they do something very well, unless they feel like they have done it expertly, they will feel like they have not met their potential. They will strive to take any skill or achievement, large or small, to the next level until they can perfect it no further. This driving motivation can be an employer's dream come true. ESFPs accept the challenge of any problem, they get the job done, and they can get it done well.

When the quest for self-esteem goes out of balance: Is there such a thing as too much mastery? Not exactly. But an ESFP has to decide if the intense focus it takes to develop expertise is worth certain sacrifices when all is said and done. With this wish to dominate any field they enter or any problem they seek to solve, ESFPs may not consider any collateral damage that others may bear because of their search for perfection.

Sometimes ESFPs must choose between focusing on their goals and caring for the needs of others. When this happens, ESFPs will inevitably place others down on their list of priorities. They don't do this because they dislike people. They try to be good to others, and they may even regard themselves as “people persons”. And, in fact, they are. However, ESFPs can see others as “getting in their way” when they work to master something. This is especially difficult if they feel it's a boss or other decision maker who is in the way. In extreme cases, ESFPs might achieve mastery but lose their world.

Self-esteem rebalanced: ESFPs need to make an effort to grasp the big picture. This can moderate an overblown need for mastery that transforms into an obsession. A view of the bigger picture might show ESFPs that sacrificing dependability and relationships in favor of personal accomplishment does more harm than good in the end. Sometimes the larger plan needs to trump all other impulses, even the best of them.

Many philosophers throughout time have said in different ways what Voltaire finally wrote when he penned, “The best is the enemy of the good.” ESFPs would do well to stop and consider this. Instead of obsessing on the things they can master, sometimes they need to subordinate this self-esteem need to a larger goal that’s “good enough” and fosters teamwork and relationship building instead. Perhaps, they should consider mastering working with others.

Self-Respect

Healthy self-respect: ESFPs like themselves when they see they are flexible and able to deal skillfully with unexpected things that come at them. “Steady as she goes” brings no sense of fulfilment to the ESFP. They assess themselves by how well they solve problems. In striving for self-respect, ESFPs hone and exercise their skill at handling sudden predicaments.

While most character types like some measure of stability, ESFPs find no satisfaction in the metaphorical solid ground. They feel better about themselves after they’ve navigated choppy waters and figured out how to keep the boat upright. Successfully negotiating twisting trails beats the straight and narrow highway every time. There is no sense of accomplishment for them in sitting around being content.

Because of this, there is nothing like an ESFP during a crisis and ESFPs never feel better about themselves than when they are effectively dealing with one. If you have an emergency, find ESFPs. They’ll take care of the situation and you’ll make them happy at the same time. They

need to know that they are skilled enough and flexible enough to take care of such matters in order to respect themselves.

When the quest for self-respect goes out of balance: The problem for the ESFP is that everybody else in the world is not an ESFP. To feel more self-respect, some ESFPs may resort to seeking out difficulties to conquer or take risks just to prove themselves to themselves. While they continue to look for problems to solve and things to conquer, family, friends and co-workers may not be so interested in constantly facing down difficulties to show their skills. In fact, most other people like to avoid problems and are not as stimulated by overcoming difficulties as ESFPs are.

Others may come to see ESFPs as careless, unstable, undependable, or, at times, even dangerous. In a social or work setting, this can cause a lot of disharmony. To make these types of conflicts even worse, ESFPs may not care that much about the opinions of others when they find themselves “on a mission”. Think Don Draper on “Mad Man” and the unpopular, bold risks he frequently took to solve problems at his ad agency. This disregard for friends, business associates and loved ones can be damaging. When this motivational engine is out of balance, ESFPs might end up liking themselves as they solve problems. However, they might also find that others are not so enamored with them. ESFPs should try to understand boosting self-respect at the expense of others may make their lives less than satisfying when all is said and done.

Self-respect rebalanced: Reframing is a psychological trick we play on ourselves to create a new attitude or encourage a new behavior. When we reframe, we shift our perspective and this helps us respond to things differently.

ESFPs who have run over other people while overzealously trying to solve problems, create solutions or master skills might do well to reframe the way they look at their social or business network. They should try to see it as another puzzle that they need to solve. Each unhappy person in their social constellation can be seen as a challenge. If a spouse or friend is upset, then

what can the ESFP do to make their world better? If the boss is unhappy with the ESFP's too narrow focus on a particular problem, what can be done to solve the "boss problem"? These are all worthy challenges for the ESFP who decides to think about them that way. A therapist or counsellor might help in some cases, but most likely ESFPs will want to develop these people skills in their own way.

Self-Confidence

Healthy self-confidence: Many credit Goethe with saying, "Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now." This quotation is music to the ears of ESFPs. A sense of boldness gives ESFPs the thrust they need to move forward in life. They have little regard for traditional standards or rules. These are too confining and limit the ESFPs' creative imagination. Boldly finding new places to be (metaphorically or literally) and new ways to do things pull the ESFPs confidently into the future. The "next new thing" energizes them. They love change where others dread it. Attraction to bold innovation and problem-solving is what gives them energy and confidence.

When the quest for self-respect goes out of balance: We admire boldness in our culture. Our heroes are those who are bold and act in bigger than life ways. However, when the need to feel confident becomes so strong that ESFPs begin act boldly simply for boldness's sake, it can be damaging. Such bold action can become disconnected from anything that is meaningful like business plans, security and the things that make others feel secure and confident. That, in turn, can disconnect ESFPs from their social or career network. While they move forward with great bluster, those around them might just be shaking their heads at what they only see as erratic behavior.

Self-confidence rebalanced: Mission statements that describe the vision of an organization or a person have become a staple for goal-setting and self-improvement. ESFPs would do well to spend a little time expanding their comfort zone and creating a mission statement. Or they may

want to review the mission statement of any organization to which they belong. While they should consider putting their own bold spin on it, such a statement can help them stay in touch with what is relevant and important. A map like that could help an ESFP stay on the road to relevant outcomes even when their need to express their boldness is urging them to veer off it. This counter-balance to their Prospecting nature may help them stay in touch with the bigger picture and the needs and goals of others.

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 ESFPs?

ESFPs are known for their cleverness, ingenuity and artistic skills. The term “artist” can mean many different things when you are talking about ESFPs – some of them are artists in the true sense of the word, but more often than not, ESFPs will use their creative skills to experience everything to the fullest and entertain other people. There is no other personality type as adept at this. This peculiar trait usually makes ESFPs very popular individuals, especially once they get enough freedom to follow their own path. On the other hand, great power always comes with great responsibility, and to add another



cliché, all power corrupts – ESFPs may sometimes get so used to getting what they want by subtly manipulating other people that the line between what is acceptable and what is not can quickly become very blurry. Deeply utilitarian at heart, ESFPs are unlikely to worry too much about that, but it is very important to know one’s limits and not be exploitative or hurt anyone else – otherwise people with this personality type will be in danger of drifting towards entirely selfish or even antisocial activities. Each ESFP has the potential of becoming an outstanding entrepreneur or a brilliant con artist, and everything in between – it is up to them to decide where to draw the line.

ESFPs have a sensation-seeking personality and are fascinated by things they can experience with their five senses. Abstract, theoretical matters do not interest them as much – people with this personality type seek sensual rather than mental stimulation. ESFPs are also one of the most

impulsive and hot-blooded types, cherishing variety and unpredictability. Sometimes, they may even engineer dramas or convince other people to do something that would liven up the environment, simply for the sake of it – ESFPs cannot stand boredom and routine. However, it is important to keep this trait in check, as otherwise the ESFP may get into a certain downward spiral, where they will keep taking ever greater risks and seeking ever stronger sensations, all in the name of thrill and variety. This can be especially destructive in romantic relationships – the ESFP’s partner will either get stressed out because of increasing instability, or join the ESFP, encouraging the adrenaline-seeking behavior.

ESFPs also tend to be over-optimistic and even careless, both in and outside of the professional environment. They want to have fun, to enjoy the moment, and to experience everything there is to experience – and they are used to close brushes with danger, always saved by highly developed observation skills and willingness to do everything and anything to achieve the desired goal. However, even ESFPs sometimes run out of luck and there needs to be a balance between their self-confidence and self-doubt – people with this personality type often find it difficult to resist an urge to do something, but it is important to learn to put everything in perspective. It is that optimism and belief in one’s abilities that allow ESFPs to notice and take advantage of various opportunities; however, such traits may also push them to make rash and misinformed decisions, especially if the ESFP lacks experience in that specific area. Furthermore, other people may use this to diminish the contributions of the ESFP, focusing all the attention on the mistakes they have made or matters they have left unattended. If possible, ESFPs should try to join their forces with someone who is more meticulous and disciplined, as such a partnership would allow the ESFP’s strengths to flourish.

ESFPs may also want to pay more attention to their rational thinking skills. People with this personality type dislike abstract, theoretical discussions, doing their best to escape such situations or pretend that they are interested, while their mind is somewhere else. ESFPs are no-

nonsense people, always keeping their feet on the ground – this is a great trait when it comes to entrepreneurship and professional goals, but it is also important to learn to challenge your urges and instincts, forcing all important decisions to pass through the rational filter. If such skills are left underdeveloped, ESFPs may eventually end up with a baggage of mistakes, often blaming other people for their own missteps. Focusing on what is fun and avoiding what is uncomfortable or difficult is not conducive to personal growth.

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 ESFP Traits?

The most impressive trait of all ESFPs is their ability to “think on their feet” – people with this personality type are able to make snap decisions, always able to escape even the most challenging situations. This makes them excellent troubleshooters and improvisers, especially where there is a need to act quickly and ignore the established procedures, if necessary. ESFPs are fiercely utilitarian, willing to do what it takes to get the job done, even if it means breaking the existing traditions – although this is also accompanied by their kind attitude towards other people. This attitude may not win them many friends among the more cooperative and stability-oriented types (usually Diplomats or Sentinels), but will more than likely give them the reputation of highly effective craftsmen, whatever their craft may be. That being said, ESFPs should pay attention to their tendency to focus on the main goal and leave all other tasks aside – this attitude allows them to move quickly, but poses a danger to the ESFP’s legacy once the main task is finished. Other people, especially those opposed to the ESFP’s “let’s get this done” attitude, may often point fingers at all the little things that have been left unfinished or procedures that have been overlooked, ignoring the main achievements of the ESFP. As already mentioned above, people with this personality type at their best when they are accompanied by

someone who is able to sort out the logistics behind the operation – ESFPs tend to be brilliant frontline executors, but mediocre administrators or logisticians.

Another major strength that all ESFPs share is excellent social skills. ESFPs instinctively know what makes other people tick and what arguments they are likely to listen to. There are very few personality types that could be seen as kinder than ESFPs – people with this type are masters of their observation and improvisation skills, instinctively knowing how they should react to what the other person says or does. This usually leads to the ESFP becoming quite popular in many circles, both in the professional and personal environment. Such a trait unavoidably has a dark side as well, giving ESFPs the ability to exploit other people's weaknesses, manipulating or convincing them to do something that goes against their best interests. Ultimately, it is up to the ESFP to learn to challenge their energy in a positive direction, creating and delivering value instead of acting like a con artist.

ESFPs are bold and able to both notice and act on opportunities where other types cannot or do not want to. People with this personality type should not be reluctant to embrace their spontaneity if the circumstances are right – they are very well equipped to deal with unexpected challenges and succeed with scarce resources. ESFPs can excel in the most unfavorable environments, knowing exactly how far the limits can be pushed, what tactics can be pursued and resources utilized. Unfortunately, this amazing trait is often misunderstood and drowned out by other people's suggestions to be methodical, not to disturb the waters, follow the well-established paths and so on. This is particularly apparent in highly structured environments, such as schools or public institutions. An ESFP child can be chastised for being restless and impatient, and then asked why they cannot be more like one of the “good” pupils (likely belonging to one of the Sentinel types). Not surprisingly, younger ESFPs may feel as if their strengths are undervalued, maybe even repressing their spontaneity and desire for excitement as a result. It often takes a crisis for other people to recognize the true value of the ESFP's skills

– however, that does not mean that ESFPs themselves should be reluctant to capitalize on their strengths or feel ashamed of them. ESFPs should really do their best to find a niche that is right for them, and then follow their instincts instead of listening to critics and naysayers. To paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, “The careful man adapts himself to the world; the reckless one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the reckless man.” Know your limitations, but do not be afraid to capitalize on your strengths – no other personality type knows how to enjoy the present moment as much as you do, and no one should underestimate the importance of joy and excitement that you bring to other people’s lives.

However, it is also important to point out that such never-ceasing desire to feel excited also means that ESFPs themselves are highly vulnerable to emotional manipulation. For instance, ESFP women are generally seen as very prone to seduction by manipulative individuals, primarily because those individuals are able to capitalize on the ESFP’s need for excitement, sensation seeking and dislike of criticism (e.g. by using critical comments to trigger an emotional reaction). People with this personality type should be aware of this danger and keep an eye out for potential attempts to manipulate them. As already mentioned above, ESFPs tend to be very kind and friendly, but their good nature may be abused by less scrupulous individuals.

ESFPs’ boldness and thirst for adrenaline are also like to be very attractive to other people, including potential partners. Just like many other things in their lives, ESFPs’ relationships are full of both excitement and unpredictability, with the ESFP always being able to find something interesting to do and keeping the flame of the relationship burning brightly. That being said, ESFPs often avoid committing to anything, knowing full well that life is unpredictable and choosing to live in the present instead of planning for the future. To each their own, and many ESFPs are perfectly happy with this approach – after all, “seize the day” is their motto – however, it is important to remember that many other people will expect the ESFP to fully commit to the

relationship relatively early, and may get very hurt if the ESFP does not seem that interested. People with this personality type do not need to worry too much about attracting a partner as, in all likelihood, that person will find them instead – however, the ESFP may need to work on recognizing (and, if necessary, managing) their partner’s expectations if they want to have a strong, lasting relationship. The same principles apply to non-romantic relationships as well – ESFPs are unlikely to have any difficulties making friends and should leverage that strength wherever possible, but other people may be surprised by the ESFP’s unwillingness to settle down and stop wandering.

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.

ESFPs are not an exception to this rule. Your “evil twin” would be an unhealthy version of the INTJ personality – it may push you towards things like being very cynical, cold and inflexible, blindly pursuing various projects, withdrawing from social interaction, embracing philosophy etc. This may even feel liberating at times – for instance, you may feel strangely energized by your new goals and projects or by disappearing social ties – 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 ESFPs' personal growth is emotional stability. This is determined by the last trait that we discussed in the "ESFP 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 ESFP, 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 ESFPs tend to be rather firm when it comes to habits and goals that are important to them, but Assertive ESFPs go further, feeling confident about their chosen path 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 ESFPs are likely to have a lower drive and potentially productivity, due to lower sensitivity to negative outcomes. People with this variant of the ESFP personality also tend to be more forceful and self-confident, which can isolate them from other people – it is important to remember that ESFPs 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 ESFP, you would still be rather confident in your skills and instincts, knowing that you are an adaptable, resourceful and highly practical individual – 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 ESFPs 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 ESFP, 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 ESFPs should not try to present themselves as completely independent artists or free-thinkers, 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

Few things are as bubbling and unpredictable as ESFP relationships. People with this personality type live completely in the present, squeezing everything out of every moment and approaching their relationships from the same perspective. For instance, ESFPs often enjoy dating someone without thinking about the next steps or long-term plans.



This peculiar trait is probably both the best and the worst one when it comes to ESFP relationships. Dating or simply being with an ESFP is an unforgettable experience – they will always come up with new and exciting things to do, will be able to talk about everything and everybody (as long as you stay away from philosophical or scientific topics), and will genuinely enjoy spending time together instead of getting distracted by thoughts about the future or the past. However, this trait becomes a weakness when it is necessary to stop having fun and start thinking about serious topics, such as long-term plans, commitment and potentially life-changing decisions.

As ESFPs re-evaluate their commitments on a daily basis, their willingness to work on the relationship can change drastically as time goes by. Even if the ESFP is very committed to their partner today, that does not guarantee that they will not seriously consider breaking the relationship after a week. Of course, this is most clearly visible among less mature ESFPs, but everyone with this personality type shares this trait to some extent. ESFPs naturally dislike long-term planning – this is not necessarily a weakness in other areas, but strong, life-long relationships always require mutual commitment and conscious efforts. This is something that

ESFPs should try to work on – otherwise, they will be at risk of always jumping from one dating partner to another, thus avoiding promises and commitments.

ESFPs are very vulnerable to conflicts and are likely to react very badly if someone says something negative about their relationship or, even worse, if their own partner criticizes them for any reason. ESFPs personalities are very emotional and they also prefer to take things at face value instead of trying to guess the motives and reasoning behind them. Consequently, ESFPs are deeply offended by any criticism and may get frustrated even further if the other person tries to take emotions out of the equation by saying that the ESFP should not take this personally, that they are reacting irrationally etc.

ESFPs should keep this trait in check wherever possible, and this is especially important when they are looking for a dating partner – for instance, some dating “strategies” advocated by certain types of men revolve around exploiting this emotional reaction and ESFPs are very vulnerable to such an approach. Furthermore, ESFPs are also likely to be quite materialistic and the combination of these traits is not very attractive.

Less mature ESFPs also have a tendency to care too much about social status and their friends’ perception of their relationship. People with this personality type should be aware of this trait as it may seriously hinder their dating efforts and the relationships themselves – as we tend to surround ourselves with people who are like us, our negative traits can actually be reinforced by our social circle.

From the sexual perspective, ESFP personalities are very affectionate, inquisitive and open-minded partners. They enjoy physical intimacy immensely and this is clearly visible in all ESFP relationships, as long as their partners are willing to reciprocate – ESFPs are very sexual beings and they also love sharing that pleasure with their partners.

Overall, ESFPs are very enthusiastic, direct and affectionate partners. Their relationships are likely to be based on simple, pure, down-to-earth love and focus on small everyday pleasures. Being very social and easy-going, ESFPs will bring a lot of energy and freshness into their relationships.

Preferred partners: ISFJ and ISTJ types as their Introversion and Judging traits counterbalance ESFPs' Extraversion and Prospecting 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 first 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:

- **Be patient.** Your potential partner may need a lot of time to open up to you.
- **When dating, choose locations without much social pressure.** Your potential partner may feel uncomfortable with many other people around.

- **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.
- **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:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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:

- **Be patient.** Your Observant partner is likely to have difficulties understanding some of your ideas.
- **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.
- **Keep your feet on the ground.** Intuitives often overestimate their abilities, enthusiastically embracing new and exciting ideas without thinking about the actual implementation.
- **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:

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

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 ESFP 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

Judging individuals enjoy planning and committing to things as opposed to keeping their options open. You, on the other hand, like to keep your options open, always looking for alternatives and opportunities. A relationship between a Judging individual and a Prospecting individual 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 Judging partner will try to come

up with an agenda and then stick to it until the end. In contrast, you may refuse to lay out all the possibilities and probabilities, making things up as you 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 relationships between Judging and Prospecting individuals are not an exception. Judging types can be relatively inflexible and this often brings tension into the relationship - which can then be defused by the easygoing ESFP. Likewise, ESFPs 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 Judging partner. 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, you 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 your partner's stability and your spontaneity, and you will both have to decide where that balance is in your relationship.

Tips for your partner:

- **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.

- **Be open-minded.** As a Judging individual, 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.
- **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.
- **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 you:

- **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.
- **Focus.** As a Prospecting individual, 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 to drift away when there is a job to be done.
- **Watch your environment.** You will likely have a much higher tolerance for disorder compared to your Judging partner. Do not ignore your housekeeping duties.
- **Do not be picky.** Prospecting individuals 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.

A Prospecting (P) Partner

As you both prefer Prospecting to Judging when it comes to tactics, you will rarely get stressed or have difficulties finding time for fun. Your playfulness and ability to spot opportunities will ensure that the relationship is never boring and you both have interesting things to do.

On the other hand, there are two sides to every story and relationships between Prospecting individuals are not an exception. Spontaneity and improvisation inevitably come with a degree of instability and this can cause tension in the relationship. For instance, Prospecting individuals are likely to balk at planning or doing routine, menial tasks, often finding it difficult to focus and wandering off in search of something more exciting - and since you both share the Prospecting trait, there may be no one to pick those tasks up.

Some Prospecting individuals can also be indecisive or even somewhat lazy, only focusing on things they find interesting and ignoring the rest - if this cannot be counterbalanced by their significant other, the practical side of the relationship can quickly become problematic. Furthermore, there are times in every relationship when it is necessary to plan for the future and stick to those plans, regardless of how challenging that is – such situations may cause stress for Prospecting individuals as well. You both will probably find examples in your lives that illustrate such traits.

That being said, recognizing the problem is already half of the solution - if you are both willing to make conscious efforts to recognize and address your weaknesses, then there is no reason why your relationship could not be as stable as a relationship where one or both of the partners belong to a Judging type. Most importantly, you need to learn how to keep your energy trait (Intuitive or Observant) in check by using your nature trait (Thinking or Feeling) – when necessary, the latter should stop the former from wandering off and engaging in activities that satisfy your thirst for ideas (Intuitive trait) or your senses (Observant trait). This should be the primary focus of your growth as a couple.

Tips for both individuals:

- **Communicate.** Your partner's indecisiveness or relaxed attitude will often frustrate you - and vice versa. Do not resort to name-calling and try to figure out how you can both support each other.
- **Focus.** As Prospecting individuals, 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 to drift away when there is a job to be done.
- **Watch your environment.** You both are likely to have a high tolerance for disorder, but that does not mean you should ignore your housekeeping duties. Split the tasks and do not postpone them until the very last minute.
- **Do not be picky.** Prospecting individuals tend to balk at doing routine, menial tasks, often wandering off in search of something more exciting. Not all work is fun, but sometimes it is necessary to get things done regardless of how boring they are.
- **Learn to plan.** There will be times when you will have to think about the future and plan for it. That does not necessarily mean that you will have to stop looking for opportunities or be unable to keep your options open - however, it is important to find time to sit down together and discuss the direction in which the relationship is going.

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 unsupportive or not that interested in working on 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 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

ESFPs are known for their irrepressibly social and excited attitudes. They don't internalize much of anything, sharing it all with their extensive circles of friends with wit, style, enthusiasm, and optimism. ESFPs are explorers of the pleasures of life, and they take particular pleasure in sharing those experiences with others. For ESFPs, there's no point in living if you can't feel alive.



ESFPs are people of action. Getting out with activities that engage all five senses is ESFP personalities' idea of a good time. Sometimes though, ESFPs may go too far with risky or careless behaviors, and try to bring others along for the ride. People with this personality type are sensitive, and rejecting these pastimes can be taken personally, ending friendships then and there. ESFPs don't have time to be lectured.

Making new friends isn't a problem for ESFPs though – they use an alluring combination of blunt truths and disarming openness and charm to keep things moving. Where ESFP personalities falter is in keeping the friends they already have. In their excitement and focus on here and now over history, ESFPs too easily exhaust the adventure one person has to offer, moving on once one person's novelty has worn off.

This can all give the impression that ESFPs are shallow, pleasure-centric creatures who care little for anyone but themselves. This is a terrible misunderstanding, and far from the truth, but nevertheless makes friendships with Intuitive personality types challenging. ESFPs care sincerely about their friends – it's why they put so much effort into coming up with group experiences they believe everyone will enjoy – and they are deeply distressed by the occasional

conflicts that end these relationships. As they grow and mature, ESFPs respect different personality types and approaches more and more.

Novelty is king for people with the ESFP personality type, and there's only so much diversity among fellow Explorer types. ESFPs love touching on intellectual and philosophical subjects, and they seek out a diversity of personality types and perspectives to keep among their friends. But as these friends grind into the details of some esoteric topic about the long-term consequences of faltering European economic output, ESFPs inevitably find their minds wandering, hoping for someone to rush up and say "Guess what just happened!"

We will now go through the main type groups, discussing the challenges and joyful moments that ESFPs are likely to face if they decide to become friends with someone belonging to that type group.

Analyst Friends

The best thing about having an Analyst friend is that they are able to act as a rational, insightful and strategically-minded advisor to the highly practical and sometimes impatient ESFP. Analysts pride themselves in being objective, even with their closest friends. Consequently, a friend belonging to this type group would have few qualms about criticizing the ESFP's latest idea or a specific action. Being quite direct themselves, ESFPs are likely to feel right at home when it comes to such an approach – as long as that criticism is not too harsh or personal. The Analyst's penchant for conceptual thinking may frustrate them, but having someone who is able and willing to look at things from a different perspective can be invaluable in many situations.

ESFPs and Analysts also share a desire for efficiency. If something really interests them, an otherwise fairly impulsive ESFP may spend hours trying to tackle some kind of a challenge. With the Analyst trying to understand the principles behind the functionality, and the ESFP actually experimenting with what is in front of them, this partnership can be very mutually

rewarding. Their principles and perspectives may not necessarily overlap, but there should be enough common ground for both friends to benefit from an opportunity to share their thoughts with each other.

On the other hand, ESFPs and Analysts also have their fair share of differences that may cause tension in their friendship. The most important such difference is the way these types take in information. ESFPs are highly practical, live-in-the-moment individuals – as far as they are concerned, it is the real, tangible things that matter most. In contrast, Analysts mostly focus on what they can imagine and deduce, taking pleasure in coming up with various concepts and ideas. While there are ways to combine the two approaches – for instance, while working on a project that requires both planning and execution – these two different thinking styles can often turn out to be a major barrier when it comes to communication and mutual understanding.

Another important difference is that unlike ESFPs, Analyst types usually find it difficult to support their friends emotionally. Analysts can have very strong feelings, but they are neither comfortable with nor experienced in coping with other people's emotions. If the ESFP is not familiar with such a trait, it may surprise or even hurt them. For instance, the ESFP may grow accustomed to and enjoy sharing their feelings with other friends, developing a strong support network – and then be surprised when their Analyst friend finds it difficult to develop an emotional connection. ESFPs should not take that personally as Analysts are notorious for their focus on logic and rationality, regardless of whose company they are in.

Diplomat Friends

For an ESFP, having a close Diplomat friend can be both a very rewarding and a very perplexing experience. While both friends are likely to share a certain excitement about discovering and experiencing new things (although their definitions of what makes something interesting are likely to be very different), they may also remain enigmas to each other for a very long time. This is probably the most challenging combination of all, and for a number of reasons.

All Diplomats are enthusiastic, passionate and imaginative individuals – their energy will likely inspire the ESFP, at least initially, perhaps even making them think that their friend is actually really similar to them. Furthermore, Diplomats are quite rare compared to other personality types, and their unusual thinking may be very intriguing to ESFPs. However, that initial fascination may quickly give way to confusion – just like Analysts, Diplomats primarily live in their minds, and this attitude can be quite foreign to practical-minded ESFPs. Diplomats' nearly constant soul-searching is as meaningful to them as experiencing things is to ESFPs. These differences can lead to numerous misunderstandings.

Another issue the ESFP and their Diplomat friend may come across is their tendency to neglect day-to-day matters and necessities. Whether it is the ESFP deciding to go on an unplanned road trip a week before their tax return is due, or the Diplomat forgetting to transfer the rent money in the midst of their volunteering activities, both friends can sometimes find themselves dealing with an unpleasant surprise – especially if those matters affect them both. Meticulousness is not their strong suit, and both the ESFP and the Diplomat need to pay attention to their mutual responsibilities.

Regardless of these issues, the ESFP-Diplomat friendship can be quite fulfilling and inspiring. Empathic and insightful Diplomats can fairly easily pull the more realistic ESFP away from their daily concerns, encouraging them to share their thoughts and ideas. Diplomats tend to have a knack for making people feel relaxed and comfortable, and the restless ESFP can really benefit from such company. On the other side of the fence, idealistic and often absent-minded Diplomats would do good to spend some time with highly practical and efficiency-oriented ESFPs. As rewarding as brainstorming can be, often there is just no substitute for some good *real* fun.

Sentinel Friends

Sentinels are numerous and will probably form a significant part of an ESFP's social circle, unless the ESFP is particularly selective. These personality types are likely to be loyal, practical and down-to-earth friends, always eager to offer advice and support. A Sentinel friend will be able to help the ESFP stay focused and realistic when that is necessary – for instance, when the ESFP gets so caught up in their hobbies or social obligations that they find it difficult to spend time on more mundane yet important matters. Sentinels' patience, stability and sense of loyalty can be invaluable in situations where the ESFP feels particularly confused or uncertain about their chosen path.

Both ESFPs and Sentinels tend to be highly practical, with their feet planted firmly on the ground – both friends are likely to focus on activities that engage their senses, e.g. by participating in sports, going on a hike or working on something otherwise tangible together. The more adventurous and spontaneous ESFP may actually succeed in convincing the Sentinel to let go of their serious and composed attitude and simply have fun from time to time. Similarly, the structured and orderly style embraced by Sentinels can counterbalance the occasional devil-may-care approach of an ESFP.

The main point of contention in the ESFP-Sentinel friendship is likely to be their different understanding of freedom and individualism. ESFPs are famous for their unyielding spirit of independence, seeing many rules and traditions as stifling and redundant limitations. To them, freedom of expression trumps social cohesion or security every time. In contrast, Sentinels scoff at the thought of someone ignoring social conventions for the sake of individualism – from their perspective, stability and security are topmost concerns, and these types are quite likely to argue that the needs of the many trump the needs of the few. These differences may lead to some heated discussions revolving around flexibility and responsibility, with each side sticking to their guns.

This clash of different perspectives can be both very beneficial and very challenging, depending on how dedicated both friends are to understanding each other. If they are flexible enough, these differences can give them a great opportunity for personal growth. The ESFP will help their Sentinel friend see the benefits of occasionally letting go of daily concerns and looking at the brighter side of life; similarly, the Sentinel will be able to lend a hand when the ESFP feels overwhelmed by conflicting responsibilities or struggles with administrative tasks.

Explorer Friends

For an ESFP, having a close Explorer friend is a bit like looking into a mirror. All Explorers are practical and inventive individuals, so it is very unlikely that such friends would ever run out of things to do. Furthermore, all Explorers prefer to bond over shared activities, so it is likely that two such friends will find it quite easy to maintain their friendship regardless of the difficulties, often pushing each other to explore new hobbies or put more efforts into existing ones.

The key challenge for two Explorer friends is likely to come from the same source that fuels their friendship – their similarity. Having a friend who thinks just like you can be fun and reassuring, but it can also put you in a certain bubble, isolating you from criticism and different opinions. There is a risk that one Explorer will convince another that their behavior and attitude are perfectly fine, even when there are some obvious issues that need to be addressed – such as dealing with mundane yet necessary tasks.

Another issue that two Explorer friends may face is that they both are likely to place more importance on practical and tangible things than imagination and mental exercises. Consequently, it may be a good idea for both friends to encourage each other to remember that finding time for intellectual growth and discussions about the past or the future can also be very beneficial. While Explorers tend to mostly enjoy living in the moment, it is also important to stop and think about the long-term picture from time to time.

Regardless of these hiccups, it is likely that two Explorer friends will feel as if they have found a true mindmate. Explorers' spontaneity, boldness and willingness to push limits make them fun and interesting friends, and give them plenty of opportunities to bond with each other. The main challenge for the ESFP, however, is probably going to be finding another Explorer (especially with similar hobbies), not keeping such a friendship alive.

Parenthood

ESFPs are some of the most relaxed, fun-loving parents out there. Playing with children is a genuine pleasure for them, and people with the ESFP personality type constantly devise new and exciting ways to enjoy their time with their children. From the first moment they hold their babies, ESFPs are taken with the joy and wonder that their children experience in everything around them, and share and encourage it as much as possible.



Exploration and experiences are key philosophies for ESFP parents – when their children ask questions, the answer is “Let’s find out!” Overbearing structures and tightly scheduled activities aren’t a big part of ESFP personalities’ parenting. They’d much rather take things day by day and break up the crust by letting their children explore something new in their own way, something much appreciated by ESFPs’ children. Of course, this doesn’t mean there aren’t any rules – ESFPs were young once, too!

Discipline is far from their strongest suit, but hindsight and maturity have their effects, and ESFPs are often keen to prevent their children from suffering the same hurts and setbacks they themselves experienced. People with the ESFP personality type are quite sensitive themselves, and expect their children to be respectful and considerate with what rules there are, a point of contention through the teenage years.

ESFPs always keep up their end of the bargain though, providing plenty of emotional support. While not especially demanding parents, warm affection and a sense of practicality give ESFP personalities a very nurturing and encouraging parenting style, filling the gap nicely. When their children declare themselves future astronauts, ESFPs happily build make-believe

spaceships, and later use those declarations to help their children focus on their schoolwork and goals. After all, successful astronauts need to know their math!

Let us now take a quick look at how ESFP parents are likely to interact with their children, depending on their personality type.

Analyst Child

Analyst children are likely to be intellectually-minded, curious and very imaginative. Their creativity and open-mindedness are likely to delight the ESFP parent, who will be intrigued by their child's willingness to explore the unknown, which is in a way similar to their own penchant for improvisation. ESFPs and Analysts share an interest in finding out how things work, which is why it is unlikely that the ESFP will have major difficulties communicating with their child or coming up with interesting activities. Furthermore, Analyst children tend to be focused and driven once they find something that interests them. ESFPs share this trait as well, and they will probably be delighted to see that their child is as determined as they are.

On the other hand, the core engines that drive this kind of exploration and curiosity are completely different in ESFPs and Analysts. ESFPs usually enjoy exploring things simply because they present a challenge, and then either move on to something more interesting, or choose to spend time honing their skills in that particular area. Like other Explorers, ESFPs focus on the tangible and the real. In contrast, Analysts are concerned less about the practical application of something and more about why something works the way it does, from a mostly intellectual perspective. They want to understand the hidden principles, systems and patterns behind things, even when that offers few tangible benefits.

Consequently, an Analyst child may not hesitate to question their ESFP parent's suggestions or conclusions, often simply because they are interested in why their parent thinks so, not necessarily because they do not trust them. However, such questions may also frustrate the

ESFP, who will likely see them as a waste of time, wondering why their child does not simply give something a try or focus on experimenting instead. An Analyst child may not be persuaded by statements such as “because it works” or “this is the best way”.

Analyst children are unlikely to require much emotional support, which will probably seem rather strange for kind and sensitive ESFPs. Analysts tend to be more self-sufficient than Feeling types – although this may also cause problems when there is a genuine need to open up and discuss something instead of hiding and rationalizing one’s feelings. More often than not, the ESFP will bond with their Analyst children through shared activities and hobbies rather than heartfelt discussions about principles and values. It may be a good idea for the ESFP parent to make conscious efforts to encourage their child to partake in something they are doing, developing mutual appreciation and understanding in this way.

Diplomat Child

Even though ESFPs and Diplomats are complete opposites on many fronts, there is also some overlap among their traits. To begin with, a Diplomat child is likely to be quite inquisitive and willing to explore new things. This inborn desire for freedom and creativity is likely to delight their ESFP parent as well. However, while ESFPs tend to have an excellent grasp of reality, impressive practical skills and the ability to focus completely on what is in front of them, immersing themselves fully in the present moment, a Diplomat child may have some difficulties recognizing and understanding such traits due to their detachment from the practical world.

It is likely that a Diplomat child will always be able to find something to focus on, even without their ESFP parent’s help. This is likely to delight the ESFP – however, parents with this personality type should ensure that their child has enough mental stimulation when it comes to available activities. Diplomats are idealistic and even somewhat poetic individuals, and these characteristics may baffle the practical and realistic ESFP. To give an example, while the ESFP parent may see planting trees as a fun physical exercise, their Diplomat child may start

pondering what would happen if everyone in their city did the same – and then cheerfully present that idea to their parent.

Just like ESFPs, Diplomat children are also likely to understand the importance of personal responsibility and the need to be able to make their own decisions. However, ESFP parents should not confuse this with their own tendency to experiment and push limits – Diplomats seek to develop strong inner principles and tend to pick noble, often too idealistic goals. A Diplomat child may respond better to arguments based on values and principles than rewards and practical benefits.

This particular aspect is likely to be responsible for most of the tension between an ESFP parent and a Diplomat child. Like other Explorers, ESFPs tend to be very selective about what interests them and have little patience for things that do not fall into that category – Diplomats prefer to dive deep and try to find something fascinating in everything they encounter, even when that promises few tangible rewards. The ESFP parent may need to at least pretend to be interested in their child's musings, or find activities that combine opportunities for personal growth with real-world experiences.

ESFP parents should bear in mind that their Diplomat child requires a completely different approach compared to what is natural for them, and they should not attempt to “fix” their child's idealism or occasional naiveté. Rather, ESFP parents should try to appreciate (and learn from) their child's enthusiasm, open-mindedness and creativity. Diplomats' abilities are often underappreciated and rejected as offering little practical value, so a little encouragement can go a long way. Such issues are even more important during the child's teenage years. Thankfully, being nonconformists themselves, ESFP parents are likely to encourage their Diplomat child to pursue something that inspires and motivates them, and then help them along the way, instead of criticizing their habits or pushing them to look for more conventional career paths.

Sentinel Child

While ESFP parents are unlikely to encounter major difficulties communicating with an Analyst or a Diplomat child due to their flexibility and curiosity, a Sentinel child would likely require a different approach. Sentinels are far more traditional and structure-seeking than ESFPs, and the latter's somewhat laissez-faire approach to parenting may not be ideal in such circumstances.

A Sentinel child is likely to be very dutiful and obedient, trying very hard to meet their parents' expectations. They will respect family hierarchy and traditional roles, expecting their parents to set up a clearly structured environment with well-defined rules. Sentinels don't like to find out what's acceptable through trial and error the way ESFPs do – they prefer to have a clear understanding of what's okay and what isn't in advance. This is rarely the main goal of freedom-minded ESFPs, although an ESFP parent is likely to appreciate their child's willingness to cooperate and listen to what their parents have to say. However, first and foremost, Sentinel children seek a safe and stable atmosphere – fun comes after – and ESFP parents should try to provide that instead of suggesting yet another fun exercise or a potential hobby.

On the other hand, a Sentinel child may try too hard to be like their ESFP parent, feeling as if they are underperforming and not sufficiently spontaneous or inventive. Sentinels' strengths revolve around responsibility, duty and practical matters such as daily or routine tasks. Unlike ESFPs, they are not really fascinated by restless exploration and experiencing new things. This different set of skills and attitudes can cause some misunderstandings between an ESFP parent and a Sentinel child, with the parent hoping that their child will share their spontaneity or be attracted to similar hobbies, and the child trying to play along, but without much joy. ESFPs should recognize these differences and remember that their Sentinel child is likely to be far more careful, traditional and methodical in their exploration of the world.

Similarly, a Sentinel is likely to place much more importance on the approval of their peers or their social status compared to an ESFP, who is usually less concerned about others' opinions.

There is nothing wrong with such an attitude and ESFP parents should not criticize their child for wanting to be popular among their friends or for trying to meet other people's expectations. Sentinels are very community-oriented, even from a young age, and ESFP parents should not dismiss this trait. For a Sentinel child, feeling part of a group of friends will likely be far more important than it ever was for their ESFP parent.

Explorer Child

Naturally, ESFP parents will find it easiest to communicate with their child if he or she belongs to one of the Explorer types. Explorer children tend to be very adventurous and practical, often able to come up with exciting activities on their own as long as they are encouraged and given enough freedom to express themselves. ESFP parents will likely be fascinated by their child's curiosity, finding it easy to relate to and communicate with them. Furthermore, Explorer children tend to feel very in tune with the present moment and the world around them, often enjoying sports and nature, even from a very young age. Nature-related activities are likely to form a large part of an ESFP parent's repertoire.

Like ESFPs themselves, Explorer children are also likely to place a lot of importance on freedom and independence, often insisting on being allowed to experiment and do things in their own way. ESFPs will cherish the idea of seeing their curious and enthusiastic child discover something new or exhaust themselves while spending hours on a recently acquired hobby. That being said, such an improvisational and hands-off attitude is a double-edged sword. Knowing that their child loves freedom of action, ESFPs may be reluctant to discipline them for overstepping their boundaries with all those experiments, or to be firm in telling their child that time for play is over and they should get back to studying.

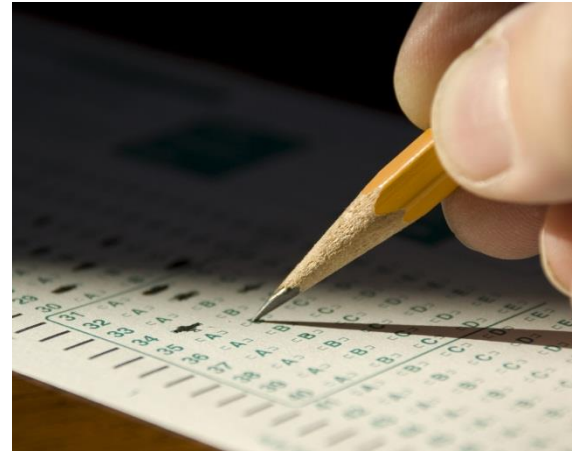
Tangentially, ESFP parents may also have difficulties teaching their Explorer children to find time for introspection and personal development. All Explorers are far more interested in real and tangible matters than internal discussions or abstract ideas, but both approaches have

valuable things to offer – it is way too easy to forget to find time to stop and think about the direction your life is going if you live mostly in the present. ESFP parents may want to make conscious efforts to look for ways to teach their children that while exploring is fun, sometimes it pays off to take a break and look at the map.

Finally, as ESFP parents focus more on improvisation and thinking on their feet, they tend to have difficulties with purely administrative and practical tasks. The Explorer child will likely share this particular weakness, which is why parents with this personality type should make conscious efforts to teach their child the importance of being economical, able to make fact-based decisions, and of knowing how to combine that restless curiosity with practical needs and responsibilities.

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.

ESFPs and traditional education do not necessarily connect well. To help ESFPs get positive outcomes from any academic path they follow, let's explore some guidelines based on their traits.

How ESFPs Learn

Explorers are the anti-Sentinels. That doesn't mean that they don't like Sentinels or are somehow against them. It's just that they work in an almost opposite manner. Sentinels are rules-based and they like to uphold tradition. They are orderly and think in linear ways. What you'll find in the traditional classrooms that they favor is predictable and routine. As discussed above, ESFPs will not fit well in that environment. Unfortunately for ESFPs, Sentinels dominate our society and set the standards for what most accept now as good pedagogy in most educational systems. Sentinels are highly represented among teachers and school administrators. For most people, this is an important service Sentinels offer society. However, it can present some real challenges for ESFPs.

Learning that involves hands-on mastery interests ESFPs. They learn best in loose and unstructured environments with loose and unstructured curricula that have an emphasis on the experiential. ESFPs respond to a high personal involvement in their learning. While they are usually restless in a lecture hall setting, if they discover their niche – like acting – they love to perform either on the auditorium stage or in the classroom.

ESFPs love to entertain in all of its forms. They do not respond well to just sitting still and absorbing information. But give them something to do and they become engaged. Allow them to express themselves in an interesting and amusing fashion and they shine. Ask them recall a historical timeline, and they are instantly not interested.

ESFPs enjoy coaching and feedback on their performance. While nobody likes criticism, ESFPs are serious about mastering what interests them and will appreciate any observations that can help them honestly do that. The optimal pattern for ESFPs is to see something taught, mainly through modeling a technique, immediately performing the same technique themselves, and then receiving feedback on their performance. Once they mature and gain mastery, they will most certainly put their own spin on their work.

And instructors who want to reach ESFPs will help them find their niche. They will give them something to do on their own that gives them some freedom to express themselves. ESFPs will respond to instruction that has a feeling of boldness and spontaneity to it. They are always looking for something new and novel. They like to reach decisions or conclusions in their own time based on what they personally discover. However, once they discover it, they may not wait around for others before they implement it. Instructors should include enough flexibility to accommodate that. ESFPs will only take so much spoon-feeding before they go off on their own. When teachers must give instructions, ESFPs usually respond to multisensory learning using media and computers in novel ways. Furthermore, ESFPs enjoy working with others. They need

a wide range of activities that are rich in personal involvement. And, for ESFPs, an effective activity is something physical; not an exercise on paper.

ESFPs in High School

In the classroom: ESFPs often have a difficult time in high school. As discussed above, the typical classroom is not a great fit for them. Their preference may be so at odds with what happens in the average classroom that they come across as troublemakers or not bright. Within the traditional system, it's easy to miss a genius of another type lurking below the surface in such a student. Unfortunately, too many teachers and parents lack this perspective, and they often view ESFPs as troublemakers, out to steal the spotlight away from the serious business of learning. Where classrooms are often quiet and somber, ESFPs are often expressive and energetic. This energy may be misinterpreted as frivolous as they bring their entertainer persona to the classroom. However, it would be a mistake to assume ESFPs are superficial and flighty. They are often intelligent thinkers who notice everything that goes on around them.

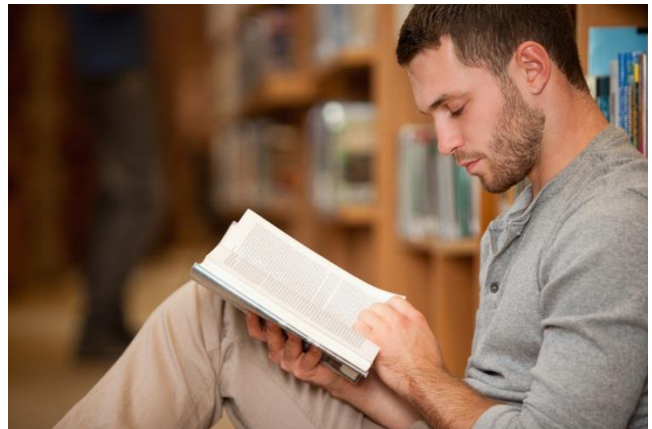
Let the other students memorize cold, hard facts or play with ideas but make sure ESFPs have something practical and tangible to do. In high school, point the ESFPs toward music, drama, or some other skills that need mastery and suggest entertainment. If left to struggle with traditional education, ESFPs will not only likely suffer poor grades, but the emotional and psychological distress can also be painful for them. The constant message they receive from their school environment is too often is that they are out of sync with everyone else. While they will be popular among their peers, there may still be a sense that they don't fit and this can cause a great deal of damage to ESFPs' self-esteem.

However, find them that activity or artistic expression with which they connect, and ESFPs will not only put in a great deal of effort to master it. They will probably tolerate the passive lecture hall a little better as well. ESFPs settle down and apply themselves more to school when they find their niche or, in effect, find themselves. They enjoy a wide range of interests. When they

are allowed to express themselves in a way that is true to their nature, they will sometimes find more patience for subjects that wouldn't normally fit their interests. With a sense of fulfillment, it won't feel like they are denying themselves to do so. Once ESFPs feel able to commit to something, school in this case, they are passionate and loyal people.

Many places are cutting or reducing their arts programs to tighten their budgets. These cuts can be painful for many reasons, but they are particularly painful for students who perform creatively. If available or reasonable, transferring to a high school of the arts may be an option for ESFP students. They would likely feel more at home in that environment and perhaps receive a healthy dose of affirming feedback there as well. There are also many accredited alternative schools that cater to students who feel out of place in a traditional school. They often allow students to create their own curriculum and explore their talents in a very active way. However, while these non-traditional schools could be great opportunities for ESFPs, a counselor, teacher or parent who understands personality types could also go a long way in helping these students learn.

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.



ESFPs are usually popular. They are fun and energetic and always looking for novel experiences. They love drama and excitement. They can be a bit gossipy always talking about the latest social news... in an entertaining fashion, of course. So, when you're in high school, what's not to like

about that? ESFPs in high school will be invited to the best parties and will attend them just to see what's new.

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. Even the idea of a club or group may represent more of a structure than ESFPs typically want. However, their love of people and social interaction may overrule that tendency. They will do well in social clubs, performing arts groups, sports and other places where they can shine as performers.

Work or College?

While there are many other 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 ESFP consider when deciding between going to university or going to work?

It's easy to see the action-conscious ESFP wanting to get out into the world as quickly as possible and start performing and producing. However, their need to master their craft can be just as insistent as their need to perform. These will be the two things that ESFPs will have to weigh and balance when thinking about college. If they have an image of it as a place with a lot lecture halls and books, this may not appeal to them. However, if they see it as a place with vibrant social life, studios and practice rooms, that would attract them to higher education. The second can be attained just by choosing the right major at the right college. They could find an apprenticeship in the nonacademic world, but college provides a "ready-made" opportunity to learn from others. (Occasionally, ESFPs get into occupations that need certification, and, in that case, they have no other choice than some form of higher education.) On the other hand, because

of their personality, many ESFPs go into sales or customer service, neither of which demands a degree.

When ESFPs go to College

ESFPs who choose to go to a college or university will most likely feel set free. No longer bound by the rules of high school life, ESFPs may finally find an educational model that will fit their style of learning. For many ESFPs, leaving home and high school for college will be a freeing experience.

College is a time for ESFPs to begin to consider and exploit their strengths and talents in a real way. There they can customize their course of study to enough of a degree that they will feel fulfilled. One area of difficulty for ESFPs in colleges is the necessity of taking those courses none of us really want to – the foundational, prerequisite courses. While students often “test out” of these, into every college career a little mundane must fall. However, learning to cope with this may also be a good disciplinary practice for ESFPs and other Explorers. It won’t be the last time they run into necessary tasks that feel meaningless and boring to them. College can help the aware ESFP gain a degree of tolerance for such things and prepare them to approach the adult world in a more realistic manner.

ESFPs’ course choices will likely be similar to the subjects they connected with in high school. The performing arts in all its forms will probably be a primary interest for many ESFP college students as well as some other professions that are active and require good social skills. ESFPs will have to be cautious to avoid pressure to choose majors and courses that will put them back into the same difficulty they were in high school. Sometimes parents and guidance counselors, with all the best intents, can send someone graduating high school in the wrong direction in college. If the ESFP did not embrace the more abstract, theoretical coursework in high school, the chances are not any better for them doing so when they go to college.

Some feel that college and university is only about getting the tools you need to make a good living. Most ESFPs will reject this as the primary reason to get a degree. Mastery and creativity will be primary motivation for the typical ESFP. Rightly or wrongly, they are usually convinced that their passion will see them through. Not being too risk averse, ESFPs will place emphasis on picking up skills in the “here and now” with only a slight regard for the future.

Will ESFP look for a “party school” to strengthen their university experiences? Like most young people, the ESFP will delight in the autonomy that going away to college offers. For most students, this is the first significant taste of life apart from their families and their families’ rules. Some even chose their universities based on their distance from the family home. It’s no different for the ESFPs who are as interested in coming into their own. ESFPs will fit nicely into campus party life. Their thirst for novelty and their outgoing nature may lead them to one party followed closely by another. They need to be careful not to allow their social life to overshadow any other reasons they may be attending college. This is an area in which they need to exercise caution.

Career and Professional Development

Even though ESFPs are commonly referred to as “party people”, typical ESFP careers do not always reflect this sentiment. People with this personality type tend to be independent and resourceful, and these traits help them tremendously on the career ladder.

To begin with, the most important trait shared by all ESFPs is their desire for excitement, stimulation and novelty. People with this personality type seek new challenges, take



pleasure in socializing with many different people, and always focus on the present. Some of the best ESFP careers focus on these traits – for instance, ESFPs tend to be excellent entertainers, photographers, event planners and sales representatives.

Next, ESFPs are truly interested in other people and they know how to make them happy, even in difficult situations. As already mentioned above, ESFPs can be very resourceful, especially when their help is badly needed. Contact with other people is crucial for this personality type and almost all ESFP career paths are based on this need – ESFPs can be wonderful and inspiring counselors, social workers, personal coaches, consultants etc.

Furthermore, ESFPs are very spontaneous and there are very few things that they loathe more than a strictly scheduled, structured and monotonous grind. Theoretical writing, a 9-5 administrative job or meticulous data analysis are akin to torture for ESFPs – any careers that involve such or similar things are highly unsuitable for this personality type. In contrast, the best ESFP jobs give them enough freedom to show their love for novelty, aesthetics and new experiences – typical ESFP careers include fashion or interior design, tourism, trip planning etc.

In general, these are the key things to remember as far as ESFP careers are concerned: they need a lot of contact with other people, more so than any other personality type; their thirst for new challenges is unquenchable; and they need to feel that their work is being appreciated by others.

Unfortunately, despite being bold and very flexible, ESFPs are likely to face many difficulties in their careers if they choose the wrong path. People with this personality type tend to shine in very specific fields and their spontaneous nature does not help either – consequently, they usually 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 ESFP is that people with this personality type tend to be very adaptable. Even at school, which is usually a source of frustration for many ESFPs, they are likely to improvise, experiment and cope with daily challenges in a way that perplexes many other types – by making their decisions on the spot and refusing to plan for contingencies. Some would even say that ESFPs are proud of this particular trait of theirs. Like other Explorers, ESFPs are unstoppable when they find a niche that gives them freedom to choose their preferred course of action in all circumstances, or an opportunity to entertain and influence other people. However, getting such an opportunity can be a challenge.

Whatever their hobbies or aspirations, ESFPs do best when they embrace frontline roles – be it selling cars or running a business. What matters most is the ESFP's ability to convince other people. In all likelihood, they will focus on practical matters (e.g. selling something) rather than theoretical discussions, although it is not impossible that people with this personality type

would choose to use their skills in unexpected ways – e.g. by going into politics. ESFPs thrive in risky, unpredictable situations and this trait can be very useful in many scenarios.

ESFPs 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, ESFPs are likely to have a solid grasp of reality – this, combined with their keen eye for detail and excellent persuasion skills, is likely to give them an unexpected leg up. In right circumstances, people with this personality type should find it easy to show their prospective employer that they are very dedicated, capable and trustworthy. For instance, your acting skills alone may not be very useful if you have not got any examples to share – however, if you were good enough to, for example, win the regional competition and decided to put that on your CV, that may well be the thing that gets you the job.

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 ESFP, you probably find many things 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 – for instance, you could participate in competitions or volunteer projects or build a personal website dedicated to your favorite niche. 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 social skills and enthusiasm will

definitely 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?” 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. ESFPs tend to be very good candidates in certain fields, but they may fail to prepare and then fail to get that message across, losing out to less qualified but better prepared candidates. Do not overestimate yourself.

You should also never forget to listen to yourself, especially when deciding what would be a good career choice. ESFPs tend to know what they want and seek, being honest with themselves – but this trait is often clouded by other factors, such as social pressure. 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 unique set of skills or principles. In order to feel happy in the professional environment, ESFPs need to have enough room to breathe – 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 ESFPs good at what they are doing, and then move on to discussing what traits are behind most of their problems.

ESFPs are often called Artists for a reason – they tend to be well liked by their peers, have a keen eye for detail and excel in fields that reward social skills and ability to remain calm in stressful situations. 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. They are not interested in security and stability, which are so dear to Sentinels. Finally, ESFPs do not care much about diplomacy or empathy, unlike Diplomats. People with the ESFP personality type live and breathe adrenaline, seeking excitement and novelty, and pushing limits further and further. ESFPs are unmatched when it comes to exploring the unknown and reaching the heights of human ability. This is what drives and motivates ESFPs and this is what they should be focusing on – positioning themselves in a way that allows them to focus on using their improvisation, influencing and problem-solving skills, while also retaining enough freedom to choose their own methods. This may be a challenging task, depending on the employer – however, smart managers will not take long to notice that it is good to have an ESFP onboard.

Another thing that is definitely worth mentioning here is the ESFPs' practicality. You are likely to be a very down-to-earth individual, with one of your core strengths being your ability to remain level-headed in difficult situations. Bear in mind, however, that your approach is going to be very different from what Intuitive types (Analysts or Diplomats) do – they focus on theories and methods, seeing plans and ideas as more important than what is happening in front of them. ESFPs, on the other hand, focus on the reality – they do not care much about superfluous information when it comes to making actual decisions. For this reason, you should try to steer your career towards roles that reward practicality and efficiency, 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. ESFPs are good at absorbing new knowledge, especially related to social skills, psychology etc. – 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 ESFPs have a major advantage over other personality types when it comes to mastering different techniques and leveraging them in unexpected circumstances. Remember that regardless of what you are doing, you are constantly gaining experience and perspective – and that knowledge is not going to disappear.

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 ESFPs' tactical thinking and risk management skills – keeping your eyes open can sometimes yield great results. Few ESFPs 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 necessary 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 ESFPs, especially those in stable and well-paid, but not very exciting 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 website about your favorite hobby, a local neighborhood initiative, a small business on the side etc. ESFPs tend to enjoy leveraging their social skills and improvising – 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. ESFPs know how to improvise and achieve supreme results with limited resources, so you should not have any difficulties managing this parallel “career”.

In all likelihood, you will only be satisfied with your career path if you feel confident that it gives you enough freedom to do things your own way. ESFPs want to be seen as smart, artistic and audacious – consequently, if you are restrained by various rules and unable to see the results of your work, you will likely feel restless. Unlike some other personality types, ESFPs always push themselves hard in the professional environment, regardless of the award – simply for the thrill of the chase. Their deals must be closed; their stakeholders convinced; their challenges overcome.

Ultimately, everything depends on how flexible your chosen organization is – there are few career paths that are really unsuitable for ESFPs, 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 negotiation and tactical 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. ESFPs aspire to be masters of their own fate, utilizing all available resources (including other people’s skills and connections) in the way that enables them to achieve specific goals. Technical wizardry, security or empathy are not their domains.

Finally, ESFPs fare really well in situations where they need to do unfamiliar work under time pressures. People with this personality type may get stressed in critical situations, but they tend to feel comfortable making decisions on the go and taking risks where others would falter. As hardened frontline soldiers, ESFPs have an excellent set of leadership skills lurking beneath the surface and they are great in crises – this particular trait can supercharge their career if they end up being in the right place at the right time. People with this personality type should always keep their eyes open if the organization they are working for is prone to experiencing unexpected turbulence from time to time.

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.

Explorers – Explorers

COMMON GROUND

Obviously, two Explorers will find themselves “speaking the same language. Explorers are in their element when they are finding solutions to problems – real problems that can be fixed now by applying some “hands-on” effort. Theoretical and conceptual problems, which will thrill an Analyst, are just annoying to Explorers. They find no purpose in going there. They’re interested in the facts and in here and now problems. Conversations about solving such problem or the mastery of a skill or situation will be of great interest among Explorers. They gain energy and motivation from such topics.

Whatever gets the job done is what interests Explorers most. They may bypass rules, standards, or traditions that get in the way of that focus. Because of this and their spontaneity, others often see them as risk-takers and Explorers will be comfortable “thinking outside the box” with other Explorers. They like talking about new and different things - as long these discussions focus on tangible matters and do not wander into the arena of abstract theories. While people belonging to this type group might appreciate talking about the capabilities of a new iPhone, they will show less interest in a discussion of “the future sociological impact of the constant digital communication worldwide”. They will share a sense of satisfaction that they can actually do something with the iPhone. The second topic would be “just talk” to this action-oriented group.

While they typically enjoy other people, Explorers will often put practical solutions ahead of the feelings and the concerns of others. This may come across as having a brusque disregard for their co-workers (including other Explorers). It’s not that they don’t like their colleagues. But they do have a tendency to place people below solutions on their list of priorities. Another Explorer would probably share the view that such attitudes come from being practical and not from mean-spiritedness. “It can’t be helped” would probably be the conclusion drawn between two Explorers if they discussed such matters.

Explorers brought together as a team could become a brainstorming powerhouse within a company. They would not only resolve problems but also innovate and add to the growth of an organization on a practical level. The harnessed energy of Explorers who bounce ideas off one another could be a formidable asset to any organization.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The problems two Explorers may have when talking to one another will most likely have nothing to do with understanding each other. 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.

On the off-chance that a meeting becomes too "Explorer-heavy", there are several factors that can be problematic. Grace Hopper said, "It's easier to apologize than it is to get permission." Explorers often take this quote to heart and may need someone on-board to temper this tendency. A Sentinel in the room may help keep the boundaries in place and keep the damage from a risk "gone bad" to a minimum. Explorers' willingness to take different paths and risks to find a unique solution can be a valuable asset in the workplace. However, it probably should not go unchecked.

Similar to the risk-taking, the often complex relationship of Explorers with their co-workers may also need tempering. A Diplomat might help Explorers reflect of the importance of good morale and teamwork in the workplace. In their zeal, Explorers sometimes can use a reminder of the value of human capital even if it's not directly related to their solution or goal.

Explorers may also find themselves "missing the forest for the trees". They are detail-oriented and like to think in the present. Working together, they may disregard the larger view of an organization's goals and focus too narrowly on the present. Just as it takes one degree off on a compass to send a ship hundreds of miles off course, so can a misguided "solution" disrupt a company's larger goals. Inviting an Analyst or a Diplomat who has their finger on the pulse of the company's long-range vision into the discussion may ward off any ill-fitting solutions.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING

- Enjoy the comradery of another Explorer. It's always enjoyable when like minds sit down together for a talk. Consider using this time to brainstorm new and better ways of doing things. You may want to include tinkering while talking to satisfy your need for action.

- After you've come up with your great ideas, always consider a "second opinion" from someone who is not an Explorer. Every personality type can benefit from being balanced by other types. (We also grow as individuals and as teams when we expand our comfort zones.)
- Be aware of any competitive urges that may get in the way of honest and full communication.
- You can be comfortable asking the "how" questions and sharing your own observations with another Explorer.

Explorers – Analysts

COMMON GROUND

For the Explorers and Analysts, they both like to search for answers. Their style and scope of doing so is different (discussed below). However, if they recognize that they are both looking for a "better and more efficient way" it can make any discussion more productive. If they can grasp that and can tolerate their different approaches, they may find that their motives are alike enough. Bonding by using the things we have in common while learning the value of our differences can go a long way in a business relationship.

HOW THEY COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER

While Analysts want to play with ideas and systems, Explorers would rather solve problems in a hands-on fashion. While Analyst may not always see their ideas to the end, it can be hard to get Explorers to wait long enough to check with others before they carry out theirs. Explorers work with the here and now and the practical while Analysts work with overarching systems that are more conceptual than tangible. If you want a real problem solved, there is nobody better than the Explorer. If you want to know how to understand a system, deconstruct it or rebuild it on paper, there is nobody better than the Analyst.

When Explorers and Analysts work together, they need to understand that they are each part of a two-step process. Explorers can put together the pieces needed to make the Analysts' models work. Analysts are notoriously weak at implementation where the Explorers are strong. However, Explorers sometimes don't pay enough attention to the big picture as they focus on the details. This can put them out of sync with the vision of an organization's management and perhaps into some hot water. As long as each realizes they both have good things to stir into the same pot, Explorers and Analysts can create a powerful working relationship.

Consider Apollo 13, the movie and a real life event that brought us the iconic phrase "Houston, we have a problem", as a metaphor. After a mechanical mishap, three U.S. astronauts were in danger of not making it back to Earth alive in their crippled space capsule. The Analysts can be compared to ground control in Houston who calculated all the numbers and worked out a trajectory. They created a system to get the astronauts home.

However, the Explorers / astronauts were the problem solvers. They did the hands-on work and figured out the details that brought about the swing around the moon which eventually got the capsule home. Communication between ground control and the astronauts was vital to the success of the rescue. Okay, it's not a perfect metaphor. Is there such a thing? Nonetheless, hopefully it demonstrates how the different functions and styles can work together to fulfill the same goal.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

An Analyst may become annoyed at the Explorers' focus on details while the Explorer may feel that the Analysts' ideas are too vague and impractical. It can be tempting for Explorers to dismiss Analysts as having their heads in the clouds and not understanding the practical side of anything. On the other hand, Analysts may return the judgment by declaring that Explorers are reckless, have no vision and think too narrowly about things. When either or both refuses to see the value of the other's style, communication is likely to shut down.

Analysts can be condescending if they don't feel someone is able to play skillfully in their playground of lofty notions and complex systems. They may wrongly react to the Explorers' focus on detail and simply write them off as uninspired. Meanwhile, the Explorers are just as likely to be ignoring the Analysts' "nonsense" as they go ahead and complete their revered solutions. The result is that they aren't talking to each other and that's a pitfall that co-workers should avoid.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING

Advice for Explorers concerning Analysts:

- Analysts become bored with too many details. They don't need to line up all the facts like you do. Talk to them about how you think your ideas will affect the larger organization or system. Ask them to give you feedback from that perspective. Such a vantage point can save you from going in a wrong direction – one that you might not even be aware you're going in. The "long-range view" can be your blind spot, and Analysts can help you with that.
- Don't be too quick to dismiss the Analysts and their theories. They want an efficient outcome just like you. Try to find common ground here even if the point of doing so isn't immediately clear. You might be surprised how helpful it can be in the long run.
- Approach Analysts with "why" questions if you want a heartfelt response.

Advice for Analysts concerning Explorers:

- Explorers become bored with topics that are too abstract and theoretical. Don't spend too much time there when speaking with them. Share a quick overview of your ideas and add the facts you know. Then give them the space they need to create a workable implementation. They might surprise you and bring your ideas to life in exciting ways.

- Genius comes in many forms. Keep in mind Explorers often have a different kind of intelligence that relies on details and mastery. While it may be tedious to you, vital results often hinge on their attention to the finer points. Be patient and don't try to force them to work in ways that are foreign to them. Respect their style and allow it to work.
- Approach Explorers with "how" questions if you want a heartfelt response.

Explorers – Diplomats

COMMON GROUND

The common ground between Diplomats and Explorers is somewhat intangible but they do share a similar attitude. They both enjoy a sense of moving forward and finding something better. For the Explorer, it's about finding novel and interesting solutions to practical and specific problems. Explorers can look at a tangle mess of a program and figure out how to make it work – often in unique and interesting ways.

For Diplomats it's more broadly about personal growth, moral development and well-being. They can flip a fixed idea on its head creating a whole new perspective. Despite the different emphasis, both types have a respect for flexibility; rules and traditions do not bind either type too tightly. While the Explorer is much more practical and utilitarian to the Diplomats' idealistic pursuit of values, it's not hard to imagine them sharing a common appreciation for innovation and change.

HOW THEY COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER

If an Intuitive type and an Observant type are open to each other's differences, a partnership between the two can offer a lot. Explorers excel at hands-on activity. They relish mastery of objects within their physical environment. Diplomats, as Intuitive types, are great at grasping, creating and transforming ideas, but they are more theoretical and thought-based and not as strong at seeing things through. Details bore them where Explorers are fascinated by them. They

want to know how they can manipulate each little piece and use it to create something new and better – especially if it meets a need or solves a problem. If you want a “vision”, call on a Diplomat. If you want the Diplomat’s vision realized in a down-to-earth, innovative way, call on an Explorer.

Let’s say, as an illustration, a Diplomat realizes that an organization’s problem is that it needs to create a greater sense of community. Communication is poor and the Diplomat senses a lack of connection among their clients and co-workers. An Explorer might answer that realization by creating an email newsletter, a phone chain, a podcast, monthly coffees or any of the multiple practical methods for building a community. They would create a brand around the organization that says, “Community” and, in doing so, also create a team effort between the Diplomat and the Explorer.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

While established standards do not bind either the Explorer or Diplomat as tightly as they might a Sentinel, Diplomats do have their own code by which they live. Their values, usually connected to their sense of empathy and compassion, are strong forces in Diplomats’ lives. While Explorers are not amoral as a rule, values are not always as prominent in the way Explorers handle business.

For instance, Extraverted Explorers like people and are often friendly, outgoing and fun. However, on occasion, they may see solving a problem as more important than taking care of a colleague or a client. They may take risks, cut corners or cavalierly develop plans that might have a negative impact on others. Similarly, Introverted Explorers may trust their instincts a little too much, going and doing something on their own without taking other people’s opinions into account. Such occasions might create conflict between an Explorer and a Diplomat. There will likely be a strong negative response when one does anything that crosses a Diplomat’s values.

Diplomats may see Explorers as shallow while Explorers may regard of Diplomats as impractical dreamers. The answer to this difference is always about appreciation of what the other brings to the table. While Explorers bring practical solutions the workplace, Diplomats strengthen an organization's overall vision.

Explorers live in the “here and now” while Diplomats live in the infinite time of imagination and thought. Diplomats are more likely concerned with long-range results while Explorers are more likely interested in the immediate results. Let's use a hospital metaphor here. Diplomats would be the case manager equipped to handle the long-term well-being and treatment of the patients in a holistic way. Meanwhile, the Explorers will be down in the emergency room doing triage and reattaching limbs while thinking on their feet. These two views can create difficulty in communicating because of pronounced differences of opinions and plans of action. However, if you are running a hospital, you probably want both types around for their own particular missions.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING

Advice for Explorers concerning Diplomats:

- If you want to find out what motivates Diplomats, find out what their values are. They extend their values and ideals into their work life as much as they can.
- Don't bog them down in too many discussions of details or techniques. These things will be of little interest to the Diplomat.
- If you're on a team with a Diplomat, explore the common ground with questions that begin with “what if”.

Advice for Diplomats concerning Explorers:

- Avoid lofty intellectual discussions that include the theoretical ideas. While Explorers will probably understand what you're trying to say, they most likely won't care.

- Approach issues with Explorers by discussing solving problems and doing things.
- If you're on a team with an Explorer, explore the common ground of questions that begin with "how".

Explorers – Sentinels

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 done 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 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.

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.

Career Progression

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

Answers to these questions depend heavily on the field that the ESFP is in. People with this personality type tend to do better in managerial roles, managing and influencing other people with skill and ease not seen among other types. This means that ESFPs 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 problem-solving 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. ESFPs, like other Explorers, are very good when it comes to dealing with unexpected challenges, and it is nearly inevitable that someone with this personality type will come up with ideas and suggestions if the management is having difficulties with something. Furthermore, their natural curiosity (some might call it nosiness) leads to ESFPs 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 ESFP improves their skills and 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 ESFP'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. ESFPs excel in roles where they 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. Traditional promotion paths tend to suit ESFPs very well and they are masters of corporate jockeying – however, it is more than likely that the ESFP will be promoted as a result of their success in dealing with a crisis situation as opposed to quietly spending several years in a specific role.

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 ESFP can offer, or simply because of the lack of room for growth. Here are some ideas of what ESFPs 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. ESFPs do not mind taking risks and their impressive ability to make it up as they go 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.

ESFPs value freedom 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 ESFPs are likely to encounter in the corporate environment – forced compliance with numerous 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 mundane administrative work or following irrational orders. Self-employment offers many major benefits to ESFPs, 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 ESFPs’ willingness to take risks starts to shine. Plenty of “entrepreneurs” have given up after trying and failing once, or failing simply because they were too afraid to jump into a pool full of what they perceived as sharks. ESFPs, on the other hand, would take the risk, see what happens and then deal with the consequences, if need be – but not fret about them too much before even starting. People with this personality type know exactly what it means to be an entrepreneur as they have been taking risks their entire life. Simply 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 ESFPs’ amazing ability to improvise.

Suitable Careers

Let’s look at some specific jobs that ESFPs 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 ESFP 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 and Sales

ESFPs hold many qualities that make business careers a perfect fit for them. They are practical, yet not afraid to take risks. They are friendly, smooth and persuasive. They have a natural flare for storytelling and “branding” comes easily to them because of this. Furthermore, people with this personality type seek out the new and innovative, and this puts them on the cutting edge which can be potent in a competitive business field.

If there is a “glitch” discovered there is no better personality type to help fix it. Overall ESFPs work well with others and are popular, and this makes them excellent in commerce and business. As entrepreneurs, they are powerful networkers, a skill which is useful when building a business. Some possible business positions for ESFPs:

- Insurance sales
- Investment banking
- Entrepreneur
- Money management
- Real estate
- Non-profit fundraising
- Strategic planning
- Sales of any kind
- Advertising and public relations
- Event management

Presentation

With their combination of charisma and storytelling skills, ESFPs make outstanding “faces of...” This can be as obvious as taking on a whole character in acting or as subtle as representing a subject as a teacher. People with this personality type are master communicators. They embrace interesting and new ideas and can use them to represent something in a way that captures the imagination of those to whom they are presenting.

ESFPs can be witty, inspirational and quick on their feet. Even the most scripted presentation sometimes needs improvisation, and ESFPs are naturals when it comes to creating spontaneous material. That which works interests them more than that which is traditional or expected. This quality is useful for speakers who need to prevent an audience from becoming bored. Some possible jobs may include:

- Actor
- Teacher
- Politician
- Public relations spokesperson or press agent
- Seminar facilitator
- Investigative reporter (broadcasting over publishing)
- Clergyman (if not too tradition-bound)
- Lawyer
- Sales
- Motivational speaker

Practical Strategy and Coaching

To work an overworked phrase a bit more, ESFPs prefer “thinking out of the box”. This makes them outstanding strategists. As mentioned above, this trait can be useful in business. However,

ESFPs often use it in a coaching sense as well. They can use this skill to help people or groups of people move forward especially when they are stuck.

When ESFPs combine their practicality with their love for the new and different, they can find unique ways to break bad habits and transform old patterns. Their genuine regard for others provides them with the enthusiasm needed for this work. Some of the jobs where these would come in handy include.

- Social work
- Life coach
- Behavioral therapist
- Consultant
- Sports coach
- Nutritionist
- School guidance counselor

What Would Make a Job Unsuitable for an ESFP?

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 ESFPs.

Working Alone

ESFPs 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. A cubicle working with lifeless data or paperwork will feel deadly to ESFPs. They need people and often like to be in the front of the room.

Mundane and Repetitive Work

ESFPs are most comfortable with activity that involves novelty and spontaneity. Repetitive work of any kind will fall short for them. They are great improvisers and easily get bored.

Restrictive Environment

ESFPs like to experiment and explore new ideas. If the structure and the rules of the workplace are too rigid, they will more than likely feel stifled and unfulfilled. They are problem-solvers and innovators and are not happy when they cannot exercise those passions. People with this personality type also like to take some risks which may be frowned upon in an office that is run too tightly by the rules.

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?

ESFP Colleagues

- Irreplaceable when you need fun and exciting ideas
- Very social and spontaneous, enjoy interacting with other people
- Likely to be very popular
- Witty and enthusiastic
- Very observant, able to accurately judge the atmosphere at work
- Dislike criticism, especially if it is related to their habits
- Brilliant storytellers
- Very tolerant, can get along with everyone

ESFP Managers

- Enjoy being in the center of attention
- Focused on “here and now”
- Very good at preventing conflict situations and making their subordinates feel relaxed
- Do not care much about their authority or social status and prefer horizontal hierarchies
- Can be very resourceful and inspiring
- More interested in what works than what is traditional or popular
- Open-minded and flexible, willing to try new ideas
- Very practical
- Able to inspire the team

ESFP Subordinates

- Enjoy experimenting and trying out new ideas
- Excellent brainstormers, able to effortlessly jump from one thought to another
- May be somewhat forgetful and focused on quick returns
- Very creative and practical at the same time
- Honest and direct
- Prefer freedom and independence to safety and security
- Loathe repetitive and strictly defined tasks
- Dislike being restrained by rules and regulations
- Quick thinkers
- May get bored quickly
- Have excellent improvisation skills
- May take unnecessary risks
- Seek tangible rewards
- Loathe mundane tasks

What Do Other ESFPs Say?

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

“I am a career coach, self-employed – this is my dream job because I work with people for people and I am my own boss. I started out in marketing which was fairly creative and social and then had a stint in product management which I did not like because it was too restrictive and completely dependent on others. I loved sales and business development. The main difference now is that I am my own boss and I do something meaningful, instead of selling ideas and contracts, I make people feel better.”

“I’m an IT Consultant, which is my dream job, since I get to work on different projects with different people in different locations, so I’m facing new challenges all the time. I used to work for consulting companies, but last year, I’ve switched to freelancing – I miss working in a team, though, so I’ll have to do something in my private life to balance that. Mixed in with the customer-interaction are also quiet times when I do the programming, which suits me quite well, since I actually like to work out solutions to intricate problems, as long as they have a practical application. Fortunately, I arrived in my dream job right after university. If I could go back, I’d cut short my university career – I spent too much time thinking academia would be my thing, because my parents are both very academically minded. I wish I had realized earlier that it was not my holy grail, then I could have got out and started my real life way earlier.”

“I work as a GIS analyst, processing data, running analysis, making maps, and obtaining quantitative results. I work for a petrochemical energy firm. As I loved my major in college (geography), I obtained the specific focus of GIS as a commodified skill but I prefer to work with people and have more social interaction. My love for people, variety, and excitement does not make this my dream job. I am currently looking for a career change which involves a higher degree of social interaction. I went to college because it was expected of me and I came from an educated family. However, my college route was not a typical, “graduate in four years” plan. I attended university directly out of high school but took multiple semester breaks to live in different parts of the USA, different countries internationally, and I changed majors plenty of time. The day-to-day grind was difficult (and very typical of an ESFP personality) so I DID graduate and was successful in college but did it my way with many exciting adventures along the way.”

“I am a Certified Public Accountant working for the government as a Systems Analyst. I do not consider this my dream job, as I would like to help people in a different way. I wanted to be a social worker or work in social science area. My dad was a social worker, by means not by choice, so he discouraged me from studying this field. I choose accounting in college because I knew that this type of work would allow me to learn about the different aspects of how a business is run. But I found that accounting is really boring, except when I am preparing tax returns. I got into the Information Technology field because it was exciting learning about technology, how it works, designing training curriculum, and providing the training. Yes, I would not be a system analyst nor a CPA if I got to go back. I would work in an area where I get to learn about the various motivational self-help guru and helping others learn about these special individuals.”

“I am a hair stylist. I do love it because it is always changing and flexible. The environment is social, of course, (which is my favorite part) along with using my creativity to make people happy. I was a stay at home mom of 4 for 16 years. I went to beauty school when all my kids got into school, and graduated within 1 year. I have been working for the last 3 years and of course, I’ve had my share of mistakes. The biggest mistakes for me happen when people cannot convey what they truly want and lack the vocabulary to help me to understand. Then, I have to rely on my perception and if it doesn’t go right, then I have an unhappy client. The only thing I would change about my job is that I would have done it sooner. This career is flexible as far as a schedule, and would’ve blended well with having 4 small children, and could’ve been a welcomed break from the monotony of being a stay at home mom for all those years.”

As you can see, ESFPs can be found in a variety of jobs, ranging from career coaching to IT consulting. It is not the role itself that matters, but the ESFP’s ability to rely on their social skills and ability to improvise. There are fields that are more ESFP-friendly than others (e.g. acting or sales), 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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