

# ISFP

PREMIUM PROFILE



16 Personalities

## *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 ISFP?**



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

Introverted – ISFPs listen carefully, prefer solitary activities, feel more comfortable when alone than when around other people and get exhausted by social interaction.

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

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

Prospecting – ISFPs 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.

## Table of Contents

What Will You Find in This Profile? .....	1
The Puzzle of Personality .....	6
Five Personality Aspects .....	10
Mind: Introverted vs. Extraverted.....	10
Energy: Intuitive vs. Observant.....	11
Nature: Thinking vs. Feeling.....	13
Tactics: Judging vs. Prospecting .....	14
Identity: Assertive vs. Turbulent.....	15
Type Groups.....	15
Roles.....	15
Strategies .....	17
Type Overview .....	19
Strengths and Weaknesses.....	23
Strengths .....	23
Weaknesses .....	24
Motivation and Self-Esteem .....	26
Self-Esteem .....	27
Self-Respect .....	28
Self-Confidence.....	30
Personal Growth .....	32

What Are the Things That Cause Most Problems for ISFPs? .....	32
How to Make Good Use of ISFP Traits? .....	36
Your Dark Side .....	38
Emotional Stability .....	40
Romantic Relationships.....	44
Potential Pairings .....	45
An Introverted (I) Partner .....	46
An Extraverted (E) Partner.....	47
An Intuitive (N) Partner .....	49
An Observant (S) Partner .....	52
A Thinking (T) Partner.....	54
A Feeling (F) Partner .....	56
A Judging (J) Partner.....	57
A Prospecting (P) Partner.....	60
Assertive or Turbulent? .....	61
Friendships.....	66
Analyst Friends.....	67
Diplomat Friends.....	68
Sentinel Friends .....	70
Explorer Friends .....	71
Parenthood.....	73
Analyst Child .....	74

Diplomat Child .....	76
Sentinel Child.....	77
Explorer Child.....	78
Academic Path.....	80
How ISFPs Learn.....	80
ISFPs in High School.....	82
Work or College? .....	84
When ISFPs go to College .....	85
Career and Professional Development .....	87
Getting on the Career Ladder .....	88
Professional Development .....	91
Communication between Types .....	94
Explorers – Explorers .....	94
Explorers – Analysts.....	97
Explorers – Diplomats.....	100
Explorers – Sentinels .....	103
Career Progression .....	105
Alternative Options.....	107
Suitable Careers .....	108
What Would Make a Job Unsuitable for an ISFP? .....	111
Workplace Habits.....	112
ISFP Colleagues.....	112

ISFP Managers.....	112
ISFP Subordinates.....	113
What Do Other ISFPs Say? .....	113

## *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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

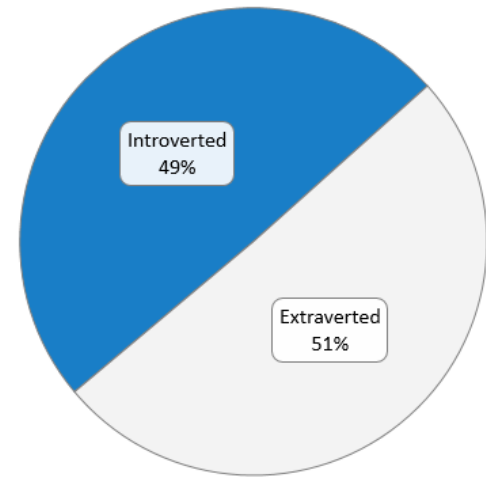
With our model, we’ve combined the best of both worlds. We use the acronym format introduced by Myers-Briggs due to its simplicity and convenience – however, we have redefined several Jungian traits and introduced an additional one, simplifying our model and bringing it closer to the latest developments,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

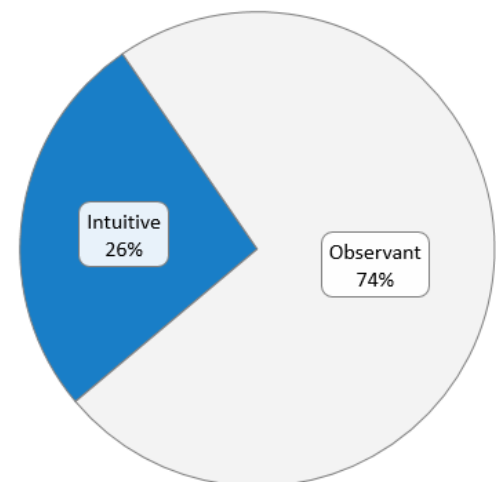


ISFPs are Introverted – this is why they are usually self-sufficient, have little desire to make lots and lots of friends, prefer working with ideas rather than people, and don't put a lot of emphasis on social skills. Again, these are just tendencies and likely consequences, not black-and-white, unchangeable traits. For instance, ISFPs are perfectly capable of honing their social skills and becoming experts in negotiation or small talk – however, these skills would be used out of necessity, not because they find them natural or exciting. Socializing depletes ISFPs' internal energy reserves quite quickly, and they always need to be able to return to their home base to recharge when that happens.

### *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.

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

This is also one of the reasons why ISFPs 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, ISFPs 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).

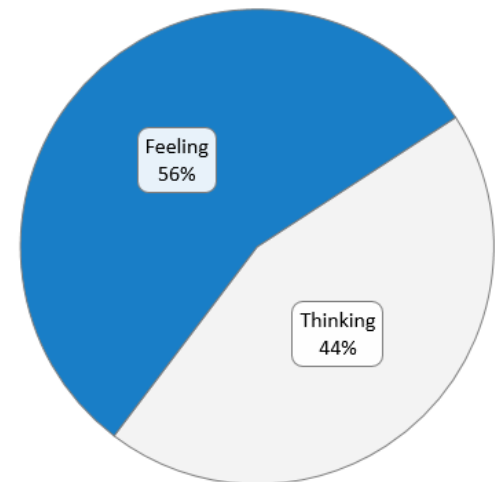
### *Nature: Thinking vs. Feeling*

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.

ISFPs 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 ISFP personality, making them very cooperative and kind individuals. This trait also makes it easier

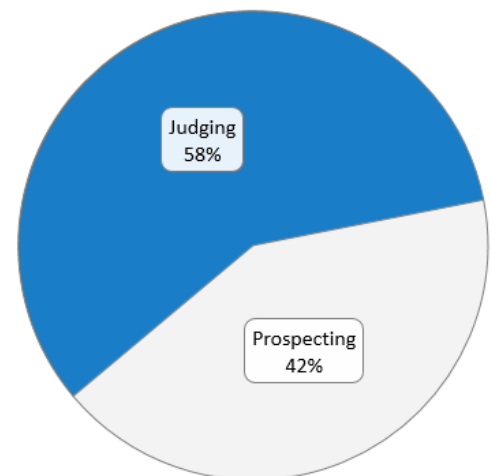


for the ISFP to engage with other people, enabling them to empathize and connect with other on the emotional level.

### *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.



ISFPs 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 ISFPs would rather take that risk than lock themselves into a position where the existing commitments would limit their freedom. ISFPs also tend to be quite relaxed about their

immediate surroundings – they do not obsess over tidiness, often paying far more attention to their hobbies. 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, rules etc.

### *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 [ \_S\_ ] 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.

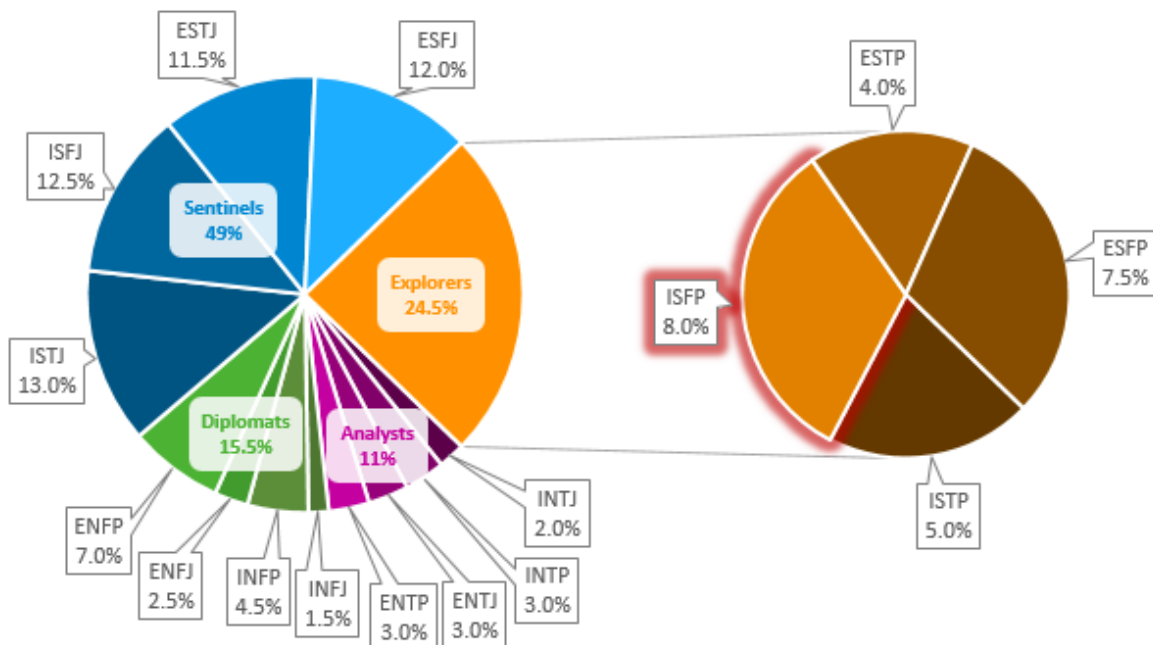
*SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT (EXTRAVERTED AND TURBULENT [ E\_\_ (T) ] TYPES)*

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 ISFP personality type is relatively popular – about 8% of Americans are believed to be ISFPs, averaging 6% 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.



ISFP personalities are generally seen as the most spontaneous and unpredictable of all Introverted types. Only one thing is constant in their lives and that is change – ISFPs love exploring and embracing new things, ideas and activities. They are very good at sensing such opportunities, but the ISFP personality traits also push them towards experimenting and coming up with ideas that no one has thought of before. ISFPs usually find it easy to set new trends and inspire other people – their penchant for experimentation is unmatched by any other personality type.

This personality trait is connected with ISFPs' love of freedom – ISFPs are very independent and fiercely resist all forms of control. People with this personality type are the ultimate “free souls”, seeing nearly all rules, guidelines and traditions as self-imposed limitations that make life dull and boring. ISFPs live completely in the present, refusing to dwell on the past or prepare extensive plans for the future – they take things as they come, experimenting and adapting their behavior as necessary.

While certain personality types (especially Sentinels) would discard such notions as irresponsible and reckless, ISFPs actually do great in areas that require an artistic, independent approach. ISFP personalities also tend to be very charming, mostly because they find it really easy to pick the best compliment for a particular person – ISFPs' sensitivity and great control of all five senses mean that they are very much in tune with the physical, sensual world. Consequently, ISFPs rarely have difficulties connecting with other people, despite the fact that they are Introverted. Even when the ISFP is being truly unpredictable or even reckless, their charm easily disarms those around them.

That being said, ISFPs also need time to withdraw from social interaction and let their mind rest. This personality trait can often surprise other people who may have believed that ISFPs' spontaneity and enthusiasm meant that they would always desire to be “in the open”. However, at the end of the day, ISFPs are still Introverted and their inner batteries need some time to recharge. This contributes to the air of unpredictability and mystery that usually surrounds ISFPs – if someone with this personality type has a very strong I trait, even their closest friends may have difficulties anticipating ISFP's thoughts and reactions.

ISFP personalities also tend to be very sensitive to other people's feelings – they are inclined to seek harmony in all situations and have no difficulties sensing a change in someone's emotional state. On the other hand, ISFPs can also be incredibly competitive and react very badly to any form of criticism. That competitive nature often pushes ISFPs towards risky activities such as

gambling or extreme sports – and they also tend to do quite well in those fields, mostly because they are so in touch with the physical environment.

ISFPs often find it very difficult to follow a structured process and consequently may do quite poorly at school. However, their spontaneity and other personality traits make ISFPs very artistic and give them a great sense of aesthetics – people with this type may fall behind in the academic environment, but they can truly shine in the field that utilizes their talents while also giving the ISFP a sufficient degree of freedom.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that ISFP personalities are very goal-driven, and shape their internal principles and rules around those goals. This liberates ISFPs from social expectations and constraints, for better or for worse. If the ISFP's goal is good and noble, they can be very selfless, amazingly charitable and inspiring; however, if the ISFP decides to pursue a selfish goal, they can become very ego-centric and even conniving, doing everything they can to achieve that goal. People with this personality type should be aware of these tendencies and question their own motives and reasoning from time to time.

Some famous ISFPs:

- Marie Antoinette, former queen of France
- Ulysses S. Grant, former president of the United States
- Millard Fillmore, former president of the United States
- Warren G. Harding, former president of the United States
- Marilyn Monroe, actress
- Elizabeth Taylor, actress
- Bob Dylan, singer
- Ervin Johnson, NBA star
- Paul McCartney, singer
- Christopher Reeve, actor

- Michael Jackson, singer
- Kevin Costner, actor
- Britney Spears, singer
- John Travolta, actor
- Donald Trump, entrepreneur

## *Strengths and Weaknesses*

ISFPs are one of the most relaxed, fun-loving and creative personality types, deeply dedicated to their art. 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 ISFPs' ability to embrace the real world and



create things that excite our senses makes them highly productive, masterful and innovative artists.

However, this comes at a price – ISFPs are often seen as too careless and impulsive, and they may also have difficulties in situations where it is important to stay calm and rely on logic and facts. ISFPs 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. This section will discuss these issues and pinpoint their source, hopefully helping you to address the traits you are unhappy with. After all, one man's weakness is another man's strength – you will need to decide if and how you wish to pursue personal growth and development.

## *Strengths*

- **Sensitive and observant.** ISFP personalities find it easy to relate to other people and recognize their emotional states. They seek harmony and strongly dislike conflicts.
- **Charming and open-minded.** ISFPs are relaxed, warm individuals who rarely have difficulties making friends or fitting in. They also tend to be very tolerant and flexible.



- **Artistic.** People with this personality type tend to have a very good sense of aesthetics and beauty. This is also their primary way of expressing themselves – ISFPs’ artistic skills are truly enviable.
- **Imaginative.** ISFPs possess a creative mind and are often seen as trend setters, coming up with bold and unusual ideas all the time. Their vivid imagination and artistic skills form a powerful combination, often helping the ISFP in an unexpected way.
- **Curious.** ISFPs tend to be very inquisitive and willing to try out new things. They would rather take risks than miss an exciting opportunity.
- **Passionate and enthusiastic.** ISFP personalities may often be quiet and reserved, but they can also become incredibly passionate if they are working on something that excites and interests them. People with the ISFP type tend to have very intense feelings, but their passion and enthusiasm are usually hidden from the outside world.

## Weaknesses

- **May have low self-esteem.** ISFPs often have problems with self-confidence, especially earlier on in life. Most of their positive traits revolve around sensitivity and artistic expression, and such things are often seen by many as secondary to, for instance, academic performance.
- **Difficulties in the academic environment.** People with the ISFP personality type usually find scientific subjects and research quite difficult, and may fall behind their peers in highly technical fields.
- **Get stressed easily.** ISFPs are intensely emotional individuals – consequently, they may have difficulties coping with conflicts or stress. This can also lower their self-esteem and stifle their creativity.

- **Very competitive.** Despite being quite reserved or even shy, ISFP personalities can become very competitive in certain situations. This trait is very common among Explorers.
- **Unpredictable.** ISFPs dislike long-term commitments and plans, often living completely in the present and consciously trying to avoid thinking about the future. This can lead to a lot of tension and misunderstanding in their romantic relationships.
- **Fiercely independent.** ISFPs value their freedom very highly and do not really worry about traditions, rules or guidelines, believing that they only hinder artistic expression and free thinking. Not surprisingly, ISFP personalities are likely to clash with more traditional types, especially in the workplace.

## *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 ISFPs 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:** ISFP self-esteem engine is a sense of competence and mastery. ISFPs 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, ISFPs 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. ISFPs 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 ISFP 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, ISFPs may not consider any collateral damage that others may bear because of their search for perfection.

Sometimes ISFPs must choose between focusing on their goals and caring for the needs of others. When this happens, ISFPs 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”, despite being Introverted. And, in fact, they are. However, ISFPs 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, ISFPs might achieve mastery but lose their world.

**Self-esteem rebalanced:** ISFPs 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 ISFPs 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." ISFPs 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:** ISFPs 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 fulfillment to the ISFP. They assess themselves by how well they solve problems. In striving for self-respect, ISFPs hone and exercise their skill at handling sudden predicaments.

While most character types like some measure of stability, ISFPs 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 ISFP during a crisis and ISFPs never feel better about themselves than when they are effectively dealing with one. If you have an emergency, find

ISFPs. 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 ISFP is that everybody else in the world is not an ISFP. To feel more self-respect, some ISFPs 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 ISFPs are.

Others may come to see ISFPs 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, ISFPs 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, ISFPs might end up liking themselves as they solve problems. However, they might also find that others are not so enamored with them. ISFPs 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.

ISFPs 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 ISFP do to make their world better? If the boss is unhappy with the ISFP's too narrow focus on a particular problem, what can be done to solve the "boss problem"? These are all worthy challenges for the ISFP who decides to think about them that way. A therapist or counsellor might help in some cases, but most likely ISFPs 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 ISFPs. A sense of boldness gives ISFPs 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 ISFPs' creative imagination. Boldly finding new places to be (metaphorically or literally) and new ways to do things pull the ISFPs 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 ISFPs 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 ISFPs 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. ISFPs 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 ISFP 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.

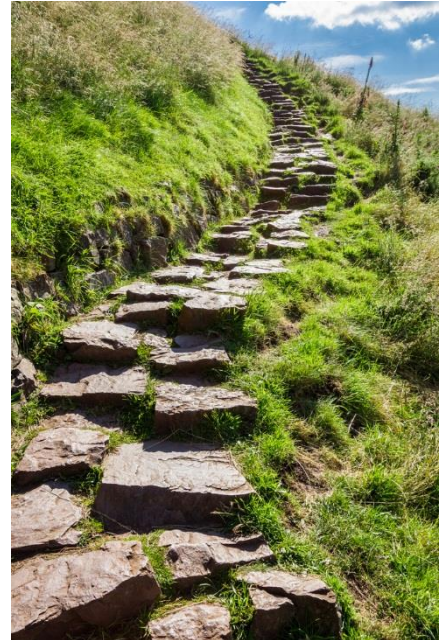


## *Personal Growth*

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 ISFPs?

ISFPs are known for their cleverness, ingenuity and artistic skills. The term “artist” can mean many different things when you are talking about ISFPs – many of them are artists in the true sense of the word, but some ISFPs also choose use their excellent grasp of the real world in other areas. There is no other personality type as adept at noticing what is likely to excite our senses – ISFPs can easily become masters of sound, color, flavor, design etc. This peculiar trait usually makes ISFPs very creative and productive individuals, especially once they get enough freedom to follow their own path. On the other hand, great power always comes with great responsibility – ISFPs often enjoy giving in to their impulses and desires so much that the line between what is acceptable and what is not can quickly become very blurry. Deeply utilitarian at heart, ISFPs are unlikely to worry too much about that, but it is very important to know one’s limits and not be too selfish or hurt anyone else – otherwise people with this personality type will be in danger of drifting towards purely sensual or even antisocial activities. Each ISFP has the potential of becoming an outstanding maestro in any field they choose – but in order to achieve that, ISFPs need to learn how to rein in their spontaneity every once in a while.



ISFPs 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. ISFPs are also one of the most impulsive and hot-blooded types, cherishing variety and unpredictability. Sometimes, they may even come up with artificial challenges or issues just to liven up the environment – ISFPs cannot stand boredom and routine. However, it is important to keep this trait in check, as otherwise the ISFP 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 ISFP's partner will either get stressed out because of increasing instability, or join the ISFP, encouraging the adrenaline-seeking behavior.

ISFPs 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 ISFPs 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 ISFPs to notice and take advantage of various opportunities; however, such traits may also push them to make rash and misinformed decisions, especially if the ISFP lacks experience in that specific area. Furthermore, other people may use this to diminish the contributions of the ISFP, focusing all the attention on the mistakes they have made or matters they have left unattended. If possible, ISFPs should try to join their forces with someone who is more meticulous and disciplined, as such a partnership would allow the ISFP's strengths to flourish.

ISFPs 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. ISFPs 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, ISFPs 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.

Another area that we should cover here is ISFPs' social skills. This is one thing that always comes up in our surveys – many ISFPs state outright that they have issues in this area. Let us first discuss why this happens.

ISFPs' personality traits (especially their Introversion) can make it difficult for people with this personality type to engage in small talk and leads to awkwardness in social situations, especially if the other person is not willing to take the lead. In turn, the ISFP may often experience anxiety well in advance of the social event, knowing that it is likely to be a challenge. Being highly practical and observant, ISFPs are more suited to handle such situations compared to intuitive types, but this still does not mean that they would feel comfortable.

There are two things to be considered here. One is that the ability to make small talk can be developed just like any other skill. ISFPs are good at handling unexpected challenges and coming up with ideas “on the spot” – there is no reason why small talk should not be approached just like any other challenge. There is plenty of advice available on the internet (for instance, [Lifhack](#) suggests focusing on F.O.R.M. – Family, Occupation, Recreation and Money), so we will not go into specifics here – however, it is worth pointing out that everything boils down to the fact that the main purpose of small talk is to serve as a gateway leading to a deeper, more meaningful conversation. It also has other uses, such as getting a quick glimpse into other person's personality and making them feel more important – so there are plenty of reasons why you should take time to develop this skill.

Another thing is that ability to make small talk does not represent the entire spectrum of social skills. ISFPs can be very eloquent and convincing when they are talking about something that greatly interests them – they are perfectly capable of painting an impressive picture with their words. Likewise, they are unlikely to have any difficulties keeping up their side of the conversation if they are talking with another like-minded individual. There is no reason to think that there is something wrong with you if you simply have poor small talk skills – in all likelihood, you would have spent just a tiny amount of time practicing them, when compared to nearly any extrovert. Of course you will be at a disadvantage. However, if you break this issue down into the basic building blocks and strategies, you will find that it is far less scary than it looks. Most people love talking about themselves, all they need is a little encouragement. For instance, simply try to listen to what they are saying and then ask some basic follow-up questions (e.g. “I was thinking about joining the Army, but went into hotel management instead”) leads to at least two questions – one about the Army, another one about hotels. Do not focus on what you are going to say next or think that you are obliged to immediately offer some information about yourself in return. There are plenty of things that make small talk much easier – just do the necessary research, this (and practice, of course) will make your life much easier in social situations.

However, it is worth remembering that small talk is just the exterior layer, the tool that is used to ease into more serious topics. Knowing all the tips and strategies in the world will not help if you start feeling fidgety and anxious the moment someone asks you a question. Your true self-confidence always shines through, and this is what you need to work on, if you are feeling really uncomfortable in social situations. It is often said that actual talking is just one part of the conversation, and a small one at that – your body language is far more critical. Just a quick example to illustrate the value of self-confidence. Imagine two well-dressed gentlemen in a high-end restaurant, both having chicken for dinner. One is anxiously trying to cut some meat off the bone using a fork and a knife, doing his best to maintain composure. The other one is completely

relaxed and is simply holding the chicken drumstick with one of his hands. The latter will look infinitely better – you may wonder for a moment why he is eating this way in a really nice restaurant, but his calmness and self-confidence will be far more important than his use of utensils. The same applies to social situations – you need to know the basic techniques, but they will not really mean anything if your body language is screaming “I am uncomfortable”. It is very important to work on the self-confidence as well, especially if you are actively trying to meet new people, e.g. a potential partner. We have already covered this in the previous section – focus on things that make you tick and you should have no problems building your self-confidence.

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

### How to Make Good Use of ISFP Traits?

The most impressive trait of all ISFPs 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 improvisers, especially where there is a need to act quickly and come up with an idea without prior planning. ISFPs 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, ISFPs 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 ISFP’s legacy once the main task is finished. Other people, especially those opposed to the ISFP’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 ISFP. As already mentioned above, ISFPs are at their best when they are accompanied by someone who is able to sort out the logistics behind the operation – people with this type tend to be brilliant artists and improvisers, but mediocre administrators or logisticians.

ISFPs 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. ISFPs 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 ISFP 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 ISFPs may feel as if their creativity and other 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 ISFP's skills – however, that does not mean that ISFPs themselves should be reluctant to capitalize on their strengths or feel ashamed of them. ISFPs 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 ISFPs themselves are highly vulnerable to emotional manipulation. For instance, ISFP women are generally seen as very prone to seduction by manipulative individuals, primarily because those individuals are able to capitalize on the ISFP'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, ISFPs tend to be very kind and friendly, but their good nature may be abused by less scrupulous individuals.

ISFPs' 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, ISFPs' relationships are full of both excitement and unpredictability, with the ISFP always being able to find something interesting to do and keeping the flame of the relationship burning brightly. That being said, ISFPs 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 ISFPs 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 ISFP to fully commit to the relationship relatively early, and may get very hurt if the ISFP 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 ISFP 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 – other people may be surprised by the ISFP'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.

ISFPs are not an exception to this rule. Your “evil twin” would be an unhealthy version of the ENTJ personality – it may push you towards things like being very cynical, cold and inflexible, blindly pursuing various projects, using your friendships for purely selfish goals, befriending



random strangers etc. This may even feel liberating at times – for instance, you may feel strangely energized by social interaction or living according to a strict set of rules – 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 ISFPs’ personal growth is emotional stability. This is determined by the last trait that we discussed in the “ISFP 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 ISFP, 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 ISFPs tend to be rather firm when it comes to habits and goals that are important to them, but Assertive ISFPs 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 ISFPs are likely to have a lower drive and potentially productivity, due to lower sensitivity to negative outcomes. People with this variant of the ISFP personality also tend to be more forceful and self-confident, which can isolate

them from other people – it is important to remember that ISFPs 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 ISFP, 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 ISFPs 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 ISFP, 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 ISFPs 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*

People with the ISFP personality type are often a complete mystery to others, and even their long-term relationship partners might get surprised from time to time. ISFPs tend to be very sensitive, emotional individuals, but they do their best to hide such traits from the world. And for a good reason – there are few other types that are more vulnerable to criticism, conflict and adversity in general. However, ISFPs can also be incredibly warm and enthusiastic if their partner is willing to accept them for who they are.



Feelings and emotions underpin every aspect of the ISFP personality, defining their relationships as well. ISFPs are likely to be very caring and loyal, always looking for ways to surprise their partners. This is not a difficult task for people with this personality type, thanks to their practicality and spontaneity. ISFPs tend to have relatively poor long-term planning skills, but they almost never run out of things to do in the present. This helps them bring freshness and unpredictability into the relationship.

ISFPs are realistic, well-grounded relationship partners, willing to spend a lot of time and effort making sure that their significant other is cared for and feels special. People with this personality type have excellent listening skills and are, generally, very interested in knowing how their partner feels. Logic, rationality and strategic planning are not their strongest suits and most ISFPs are more than happy to let their partner take the lead in those areas – however, they are perfectly capable of holding up their end of the relationship, especially when it comes to emotional matters.

From the sexual perspective, ISFP personalities are likely to be very sensual and attentive. They love to engage all five senses and do everything to make sure that their partner is fully satisfied as well. Even though ISFPs tend to be relatively reserved or even shy in social settings, these masks go off when they are in a relationship with someone they fully trust. The ISFP's partner will likely be pleasantly surprised when they discover this rarely seen side of the ISFP personality.

Finally, it is important to note that people with the ISFP personality type need to know that their love and attention are valued and appreciated. The ISFP is unlikely to ask for this, but they may feel frustrated and disappointed if their partner does not make efforts to express their feelings. Such an expression does not necessarily have to be verbal – ISFPs believe in actions, not words – but it is crucial that ISFPs know that their feelings are being reciprocated.

Recommended partners: ESFJ and ESTJ types as their Extraversion and Judging traits counterbalance ISFPs' Introversion 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 another Introvert is that you both are likely to be entirely self-sufficient. Spending time alone is not going to scare you that much – nor would the idea of staying at home and doing something together instead of going out. You are not going to feel a strong need to be around other people – talking with your partner will suffice.

You will also be in a good position when it comes to resolving problems in a relationship. As Introverts, you will both be used to discussing something and then going through all the details in your mind, as opposed to dealing with it externally, i.e. by relying on the actual discussion process.

As Introverts, you would have been pushed to "go out and socialize" numerous times in your lives. This is not going to happen in your relationship – in all likelihood, having a couple of close friends will fulfill all your socialization needs.

On the other hand, this is what brings us to the next part, where we are going to talk about difficulties you are likely to face. As you are both going to be quite reserved, you will likely have a situation where neither partner is willing to step up and push the other to socialize – or take the lead in a social event that you cannot escape from (e.g. wedding of a relative). Despite being Introverts, you are going to need at least some socialization if you want to avoid feeling isolated. The fact that you both are used to dodging social interaction is going to make this difficult.

You may also have difficulties when it comes to resolving conflicts. As mentioned above, introspection is great when you are analyzing your mistakes – the problem is that you need to become aware of those mistakes to begin with. As you both are likely to keep your thoughts to yourselves instead of throwing them out in the open, you will probably encounter many situations where one of the partners is keeping the feelings of resentment inside, allowing them



to build up, instead of talking about them. You will have to consciously work on improving your communication and get used to opening up.

Tips for both individuals:

- **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 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 or pushing your potential partner to talk. At best, you will look insecure and the other person will feel uncomfortable.
- **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. Communication is key in an Introvert- Introvert relationship.
- **Do not get stuck in a bubble.** You may both have difficulties when it comes to socializing with other people. Make sure that you do not falsely reassure each other that such interaction is completely unnecessary, even though this may seem to be an easy option.

### *An Extraverted (E) 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 Introvert will encourage the extravert to slow down and take a moment to think before acting, to spend more time reflecting on things before jumping straight into the action. The extravert, on the other hand, will draw the Introvert out from their shell, playing the role of the socializer in the relationship, encouraging their partner to establish new social links and taking care of any social obligations that the couple 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 extravert may get frustrated by the fact that their Introverted partner is more reserved and private, or has poor social skills. And vice versa, the Introvert may get annoyed by the extravert'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 an Introvert and an Extravert form a relationship, they give each other an excellent opportunity to do just so.

Tips for your partner:

- **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 Introverts, 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 Introvert simply needs some time alone to recharge.

Tips for you:

- **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 the extravert 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 extraverted 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 extraverts 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 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 ISFP 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 ISFP. Likewise, ISFPs 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:

1. **Communicate.** Your partner's indecisiveness or relaxed attitude will often frustrate you.

Do not resort to name-calling and try to understand what drives them and how you can

both support each other. Remember that your partner may not be as interested in plans and schedules as you are - they are used to keeping their options open.

2. **Be open-minded.** As a 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.
3. **Experiment.** Your tendency to plan and prepare may make things difficult when there is a need to experiment or try something new. Learn to let go and act spontaneously from time to time.
4. **Do not exhaust yourself.** Your desire to get things done can bring a lot of stress into your own life and into the relationship. Learn to step back and relax - the world is not going to collapse if you miss a self-imposed deadline.

Tips for you:

1. **Communicate.** Your partner's inflexibility or desire to have everything planned out will often frustrate you. Do not resort to name-calling and try to understand what drives them and how you can both support each other. Remember that your partner is used to putting their plans and schedules above play and rest - they may find it quite difficult to step back and relax.
2. **Focus.** As a 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.
3. **Watch your environment.** You will likely have a much higher tolerance for disorder compared to your Judging partner. Do not ignore your housekeeping duties.
4. **Do not be picky.** 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:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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*

In friendship, ISFPs are some of the most comfortable people around. Laid back and spontaneous, people with the ISFP personality type won't bog things down with arguments or structured long-term plans. Intellectually exhausting pastimes like debates over European economic policy won't hold their attention long.



The here-and-now is what's important to ISFPs, and they love spending time with their friends doing casual, fun activities.

ISFP personalities believe in actions, not words. They talk about what is, not what could, should or will be, and then they actually do it. This passion for action is a blessing for ISFPs, since it helps them get past their shyness in meeting new people. ISFPs are sensitive, much more so than most, and it takes time to build enough trust with new friends to open up and feel natural.

If new acquaintances start things out by explaining "You'd do way better if...", it's unlikely they will ever be close – ISFPs just take these remarks too personally for comfort. People with this personality type are happy to get along with just about anyone, but potential friends need to ease up on being too judgmental or demanding.

If their friends keep things supportive and easy-going, ISFPs are happy to return the favor with added warmth and laughter. When they're with friends they trust, ISFPs know how to relax, shedding rules, traditions and expectations in favor of just enjoying themselves.

Those who prefer safe, structured environments might end up struggling in these friendships though, especially if they lecture ISFPs on how they're living their lives. As with any criticism, those friends are free to do their own thing, and to leave ISFPs to do theirs. ISFPs' relaxed, non-

judgmental attitudes make it easy for them to get along with others, but it's not always the same way around.

Lots of personal space and freedom are essential to ISFP personalities, and it's often other Explorer types, who share their "live and let live" worldview and joy in actually *doing* things, that gravitate towards ISFPs. There's really no better friend than ISFPs for dropping the pretenses and enjoying low-stress fun.

We will now go through the main type groups, discussing the challenges and joyful moments that ISFPs 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 ISFP. 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 ISFP's latest idea or a specific action. Being quite direct themselves, ISFPs 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.

ISFPs and Analysts also share a desire for efficiency. If the topic is right, an otherwise fairly aloof ISFP may spend hours tinkering with some kind of system or polishing their techniques. With the Analyst trying to understand the principles behind the functionality, and the ISFP 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, ISFPs 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. ISFPs 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 ISFPs, 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 ISFP is not familiar with such a trait, it may surprise or even hurt them. For instance, the ISFP 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. ISFPs 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 ISFP, 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 ISFP, 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 ISFPs. 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 ISFPs. Diplomats' nearly constant soul-searching is as meaningful to them as experiencing things is to ISFPs. These differences can lead to numerous misunderstandings.

Another issue the ISFP and their Diplomat friend may come across is their tendency to neglect day-to-day matters and necessities. Whether it is the ISFP 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 ISFP and the Diplomat need to pay attention to their mutual responsibilities.

Regardless of these issues, the ISFP-Diplomat friendship can be quite fulfilling and inspiring. Empathic and insightful Diplomats can fairly easily draw the more reserved ISFP out of their shell, encouraging them to share their thoughts and ideas. Diplomats tend to have a knack for making people feel relaxed and comfortable, and the restless ISFP 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 ISFPs. 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 ISFP's social circle, unless the ISFP 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 ISFP stay focused and realistic when that is necessary – for instance, when the ISFP gets so caught up in the pursuit of their hobbies and pet projects that they forget to attend to daily matters or social obligations. Sentinels' patience, stability and sense of loyalty can be invaluable in situations where the ISFP feels particularly confused or uncertain about their chosen path.

Both ISFPs 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 ISFP 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 ISFP.

The main point of contention in the ISFP-Sentinel friendship is likely to be their different understanding of freedom and individualism. ISFPs 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 ISFP 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 ISFP feels overwhelmed by conflicting responsibilities or struggles with administrative tasks.

## Explorer Friends

For an ISFP, 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 ISFP, however, is probably going to be finding another Explorer (especially with similar hobbies), not keeping such a friendship alive.

## *Parenthood*

When it comes to parenting, ISFPs often feel right at home. While no one could be said to be truly prepared for such a task, ISFP personalities' natural warmth, practicality and relaxed nature help them to settle in and appreciate every moment of joy and hardship that comes with raising a child.



ISFPs' greatest strength is arguably the joy they take in being with and helping their loved ones. Practical needs are taken care of from day one, and ISFPs' children can always count on something exciting to do or to learn every day. People with the ISFP personality type love fun, hands-on activities, and as their children grow, they're often encouraged to pick up extra hobbies that revolve around those kinds of activities.

Even as those extra activities grow, ISFPs often defy their Introversion, spending time with their children and enjoying engaging activities that center on quality time. Impromptu trips, home improvement projects like repainting bedrooms, or simply baking some treats together are all likely to be fond memories for ISFPs' children.

None of this is to say that ISFP parents are overbearing – in fact, they are one of the most relaxed personality types there is when it comes to parenting. ISFPs believe that the only way to really have their children grow up to be open-minded and well-balanced people is to let them explore and experience new things, make mistakes and learn from them, and to always know that they'll be able to come home at the end of it. Interventions and hardline rules just aren't ISFPs' style.

The freedom ISFPs grant their children comes with risks too, since it demands a certain level of maturity from the children themselves. Some lessons are harder than others. These can be hard

lessons for people with the ISFP personality type too, since they are more sensitive than most when it comes to their lifestyles or parenting being criticized. Nothing's quite as unpleasant as "I told you so".

Long-term planning is another challenging area for ISFP parents. When it comes to things like saving for their children's college education, ISFPs necessarily rely on partners who take care of that sort of thing more readily.

As their children grow into adolescence, ISFPs sometimes struggle as well. ISFP personalities need to know that their work and effort are appreciated, something teenagers aren't well-known for expressing. It can take a lot of practice on ISFPs' parts to learn the emotional control necessary to not overreact when things don't go the way they want. Children make an effort to distance themselves at that age, and private individuals or no, ISFPs need to know that their loved ones are by their sides.

In the end though, ISFPs are so much less likely to create the kinds of divides that other more rigid personality types sometimes drive between themselves and their children. There's always going to be some push from developing adults, but with such warm, caring parents, ISFPs' children can always rest assured that they know where home and hearth are.

Let us now take a quick look at how ISFP 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 ISFP 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. ISFPs and Analysts share an interest in finding out how things work, which is why it is unlikely that the ISFP 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. ISFPs 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 ISFPs and Analysts. ISFPs 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, ISFPs 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 ISFP 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 ISFP, 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 ISFPs. 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 ISFP 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 ISFP 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 ISFPs 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 ISFP parent as well. However, while ISFPs 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 ISFP parent's help. This is likely to delight the ISFP – 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 ISFP. To give an example, while the ISFP 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 ISFPs, Diplomat children are also likely to understand the importance of personal responsibility and the need to be able to make their own decisions. However, ISFP 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 ISFP parent and a Diplomat child. Like other Explorers, ISFPs 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 ISFP 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.

ISFP 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, ISFP 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, ISFP 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 ISFP 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 ISFPs, 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 ISFPs 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 ISFPs, although an ISFP 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 ISFP 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 ISFP 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 ISFPs, 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 ISFP 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. ISFPs 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 ISFP, who is usually less concerned about others' opinions. There is nothing wrong with such an attitude and ISFP 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 ISFP 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 ISFP parent.

## Explorer Child

Naturally, ISFP 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. ISFP 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 ISFP parent's repertoire.

Like ISFPs 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. ISFPs 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, ISFPs 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.

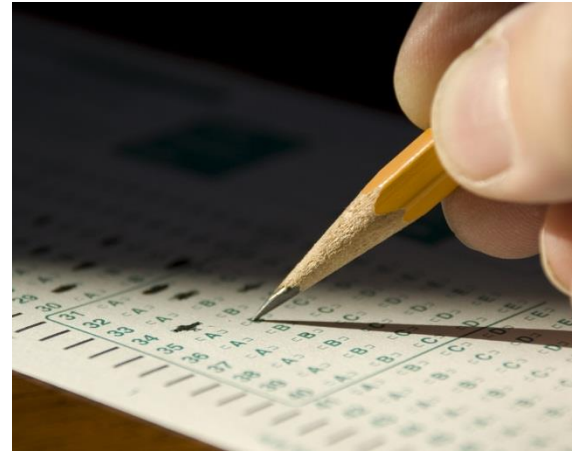
Tangentially, ISFP parents may also have difficulties teaching their Explorer children to find time for introspection and personal development. All Explorers are far more interested in real and tangible matters than internal discussions or abstract ideas, but both approaches have valuable things to offer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

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

## *How ISFPs 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, ISFPs will not fit well in that environment. Unfortunately for ISFPs, 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 ISFPs.

Learning that involves hands-on mastery interests ISFPs. They learn best in loose and unstructured environments with loose and unstructured curricula that have an emphasis on the experiential. ISFPs respond to a high personal involvement in their learning. While they are usually restless in a lecture hall setting, if they discover they have niche – like playing a piano – they will sit at the keyboard for hours immersed in their practice. ISFP do not respond well to just sitting still and absorbing information. But give them something to do and they become engaged. They let their fingers express who they are and what they know much more often than they use their voices.

ISFPs enjoy coaching and feedback on their performance. While nobody likes criticism, ISFPs are serious about mastering what interests them and will appreciate any observations that can help them honestly do that. The optimal pattern for ISFPs is to see something taught, mainly through modelling 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 ISFPs will help them find their niche. They will give them something to do on their own that gives them some freedom to explore and develop a skill. ISFPs will respond to instruction that has a feeling of boldness and spontaneity to it. 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. ISFPs will only take so much spoon-feeding before they go off on their own. When teachers must give instructions, ISFPs are likely to respond to multisensory learning using media and computers in novel ways. They need a wide range of activities that are rich in personal involvement. And, for ISFPs, an effective activity is something physical; not an exercise on paper.

## ISFPs in High School

**In the classroom:** ISFPs 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 ISFPs as uncooperative or incapable.

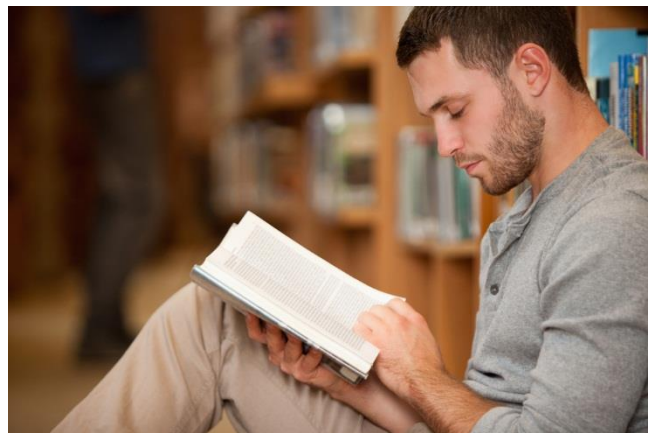
Let the other students memorize cold, hard facts or play with ideas but make sure ISFPs have something practical and tangible to do. In high school point the ISFPs toward music, art, or some other skills that need mastery. If left to struggle with traditional education, ISFPs will not only likely suffer 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. It will be clear to them that they don't fit and this can cause a great deal of damage to their self-esteem.

However, find them that activity or artistic expression with which they connect, and they 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. ISFPs 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 ISFPs 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 ISFP 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 ISFPs, 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.



ISFPs can be reclusive especially if they feel out of the place in the classroom. That combined with their sometimes poor grades may even get them branded a “loser” or some other unfortunate label. However, ISFPs who understand themselves and have found their niche will be able to offset this with their natural charm, boldness and mastery of the right skills. Everybody gathers around the guy with a guitar at a party. Associating with ISFPs may even appeal to the rebellious streak in some of their otherwise conventional peers.

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 ISFPs typically want. They may want to join something that reflects their passion to be with like-minded people, but more likely

they'll want to pursue it on their own and in their own way. If they do join, it would most likely be a group involved with an activity that is more physical than cerebral and skills-based more than theoretical. The art club or the jazz band would be examples of clubs ISFPs might join.

ISFPs are often not found in leadership positions, but by their own preference. Not liking structure, they are not likely to try to impose it on others. If they find a high school group that interests them enough to join, they will show great passion and commitment based on that passion. They often serve throughout life in advisory capacities and can offer a lot to a group by coming up with innovative ways for it to express itself or to solve problems.

## 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 ISFP consider when deciding between going to university or going to work?

It's easy to see the action-conscious ISFP 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 ISFPs 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 many 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, ISFPs get into occupations that need certification, and, in that case, they have no other choice than some form of higher education.)

## When ISFPs go to College

ISFPs 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, ISFPs may finally find an educational model that will fit their style of learning. For many ISFPs, leaving home and high school for college will be a freeing experience.

College is a time for ISFPs 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 ISFPs 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 ISFPs 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 ISFP gain a degree of tolerance for such things and prepare them to approach the adult world in a more realistic manner.

ISFPs’ course choices will likely be similar to the subjects they connected with in high school. The arts in all its forms will be a primary interest for many ISFP college students as well as some other professions that are active (teaching, forestry, psychology). ISFPs 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 ISFP 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 ISFPs will reject this as the primary reason to get a degree. Mastery and creativity will be primary motivation for the typical ISFP. Rightly or wrongly, they are usually convinced that their passion will see them through. Not being too risk averse, ISFPs will place emphasis on picking up skills in the “here and now” with only a slight regard for the future.

Will ISFP look for a “party school” to strengthen their university experiences? Like most young people, the ISFP 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 ISFPs who are as interested in coming into their own. As Introverts, gregarious social life would not necessarily be attractive to them. A few good friends will do nicely. However, all students are susceptible to the temptations of college freedom, especially when they are under some emotional stress. Explorers all have a tendency to seek a little adventure and novelty, and that could draw ISFPs into the campus party world, at least occasionally. They may want to exercise caution in this area.



## *Career and Professional Development*

When it comes to careers, ISFP personalities need more than a job. They need a creative outlet, a way to express their artistic talents and put their imagination to good use. ISFPs cherish their freedom and resist any attempts to force them into restrictive, predictable roles that many other types praise as stable and secure. People with the ISFP personality type do not care much about stability or security, they want to be valued for who they truly are.



ISFPs enjoy experimenting and trying out new things – this is the main reason why they are often called the trend setters. Not surprisingly, their roles need to be flexible enough to allow some improvisation. Also, ISFP personalities are extremely artistic, independent thinkers that can only shine in careers that are able to give them plenty of freedom. It is difficult to imagine an ISFP being happy in a cubicle, doing administrative work from 9 to 5 – they are free souls and do not do well in a strictly structured environment.

Furthermore, ISFP personalities tend to be very competitive and excel in areas that require good use of all five senses – e.g. sports, design, art etc. They dislike long-term planning and prefer to live in the present, believing that is what matters most. This does not mean that ISFPs are reckless or shortsighted – this is simply because ISFPs are more interested in practical things, in things they can see and touch. People with this personality type do not see a point in worrying about something that they have little control over anyway.

All these traits make ISFPs excellent artists (in any field – e.g. music, photography, painting etc.), athletes, consultants, psychologists, linguistics, therapists, freelancers (again – there are many



good fields, ranging from medicine to event planning), teachers or tour guides. This is not an exhaustive list of ideal jobs by any means as there are many career paths that can utilize the ISFP traits very well.

Unfortunately, despite being bold and very flexible, ISFPs 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 quiet 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 ISFP is that people with this personality type tend to be very adaptable. Even at school, which is usually a source of frustration for many ISFPs, 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 ISFPs are proud of this particular trait of theirs. Like other Explorers, ISFPs 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 master a specific technique. However, getting such an opportunity can be a challenge.

Whatever their hobbies or aspirations, ISFPs do best when they embrace artistic roles – be it photographing nature, designing homes or creating music. What matters most is the ISFP's desire to become the master of their techniques. In all likelihood, those techniques will be of physical nature (e.g. working with color, visuals, sounds etc.), although it is not impossible that people with this personality type would choose to use their skills in unexpected ways – e.g. by

starting their own business. ISFPs thrive in risky, unpredictable situations and this trait can be very useful in many scenarios.

ISFPs should embrace these strengths in the job-hunting stage as well. The bad news is that they are unlikely to do well when it comes to networking and socializing – the primary means of getting a job for many other personality types. ISFPs can become better at this as time goes by, e.g. by only targeting like-minded individuals and taking time to improve their social skills – however, this is not by any means mandatory and many people with this personality type will do just fine without an extensive social network.

The good news is that ISFPs are likely to have a solid grasp of reality – this, combined with the ISFPs' willingness to spend many hours honing their chosen craft and ability to cope with unexpected challenges, may 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 piano skills alone may not be very useful if you are applying for a job at a bank; however, if you were good enough to participate in a national 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 ISFP, 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 technical knowledge and enthusiasm will put you above everybody else. No matter how cliché that sounds, you need to be aware of the most common interview techniques and questions so that you are not caught off-guard by something like “what is your biggest weakness?” 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. ISFPs tend to be very good candidates in certain fields, but they usually find it difficult to get that message across and may consequently lose out to less qualified but better prepared candidates. Do not underestimate yourself.

You should also never forget to listen to yourself, especially when deciding what would be a good career choice. ISFPs 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, ISFPs 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 ISFPs good at what they are doing, and then move on to discussing what traits are behind most of their problems.

ISFPs are often called Artists for a reason – they have a keen eye for detail and excel in fields that reward creativity. 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, ISFPs do not care much about diplomacy or empathy, unlike Diplomats. People with the ISFP personality type live and breathe art, seeking excitement and novelty, and pushing limits further and further. ISFPs are unmatched when it comes to exploring the unknown and reaching the heights of human ability. This is what drives and motivates ISFPs and this is what they should be focusing on – positioning themselves in a way that allows them to focus on a specific technique for the benefit of the employer, 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 ISFP onboard.

Another thing that is definitely worth mentioning here is the ISFPs' 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. ISFPs, 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. ISFPs are good at absorbing new knowledge, especially of technical nature – 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 ISFPs have a major advantage over other personality types when it comes to mastering different techniques. 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 ISFPs' tactical thinking and creativity – keeping your eyes open can sometimes yield great results. Few ISFPs 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 ISFPs, 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 home improvement project etc. ISFPs tend to have many hobbies, especially creative ones – 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. ISFPs know how to improvise and achieve supreme results with limited resources, so you should not have any difficulties managing this parallel “career”.

But let us go back to the world of offices and cubicles for a moment. Another big problem for most ISFPs is going to be personal relationships – people with this personality type rarely care about making friends in the office, seeing their work and duties as far more important. Such an attitude is not really surprising – after all, this is their *modus operandi* in many other areas of their life. However, difficulties in developing casual relationships at work can stifle professional development and result in missed opportunities, both personal and professional. It is important to keep your mind open and not cringe at the thought of getting to know your colleagues better – or at least not actively avoid them.

## 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 can 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 be a 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 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 from 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 ISFPs progress in their careers and what difficulties are they likely to have?

Answers to these questions depend heavily on the field that the ISFP is in. People with this personality type tend to do better in non-managerial roles, becoming knowledgeable and respected subject matter experts rather than senior managers with dozens of subordinates. Many companies have recognized that there are two distinct career progression paths and come up with ways to retain and promote personnel who are not really interested in managerial roles. Large corporations and science/technology companies 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 without being burdened with supervisory tasks.

However, it is also often possible to progress in a field where achievements are measured by the number of people reporting to you. ISFPs, 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 ISFPs 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 ISFP 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 rewards (financial or otherwise) 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 ISFP'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. ISFPs 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 do not suit ISFPs very well and corporate jockeying may exhaust them very quickly.

There may be times when getting a promotion is simply unrealistic, either because of the organizational culture that sees little value in the skills that the ISFP can offer, or simply because of the lack of room for growth. Here are some ideas of what ISFPs 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. ISFPs 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. ISFPs 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 ISFPs are likely to encounter in the corporate environment – forced interaction with other people. 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 ISFPs, 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 if you are not prepared to deal with numerous challenges that you will definitely encounter. This is where the ISFPs’ 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. ISFPs, 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 ISFPs’ amazing ability to improvise.

## Suitable Careers

Let’s look at some specific jobs that ISFPs 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 ISFP 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.

### **The Arts, Crafts and Design**

ISFPs love to be creative as long as it all doesn't become too abstract or theoretical. Fine arts and crafts of all types appeal to their need for mastery and to reach out for something new and different. Music can appeal to this type and ISFPs will strive to become virtuosos should a career in music attract them.

While occasionally the arts demand group participation (an orchestra, for example), artists and craftspeople do most of their work as individuals. One paints a portrait or molds a ceramic pot on one's own. Cellists, even those who belong to a group, will practice for hours by themselves. This will appeal to the ISFP's preference for the freedom of working away from social pressure or "office politics". They like to avoid such tensions and thrive when they do.

People who earn a living creatively can more likely set their own agendas. For the ISFPs, that means they choose the problems they want to solve and create their own purpose without the concern of others interfering. They can take risks without the bother of worrying about the reactions or welfare of co-workers. These specific jobs fit this description well:

- Musician – any type, instrumental, composing, or vocal
- Potter
- Painter
- Illustrator
- Sculptor
- Graphic artist
- Weaver
- Interior designer
- Fashion designer
- Jewelry Designer
- Metal smith

- Photographer
- Woodworker (Carpenter)

## **Mechanics and Engineering**

Positions in this area will appeal to the problem-solving nature of ISFPs, their need for hands-on involvement and their drive to create and innovate. It's also a practical profession where real objects act in real ways. While these fields are rich in practical ideas, they are almost void of the abstract and the theoretical. Engineers and mechanics often have to collaborate with others and conform to rules. However, depending on the position, they may balance a portion of their time exploring how to create, fix or improve something on their own and in their own way. Independent work based on skills rather than office politics is satisfying to ISFPs. Some specific occupations might include:

- Auto, boat or airplane mechanic
- Small engine mechanic
- Appliance repairer
- Heavy equipment mechanic
- Engineer (mechanical, computer, structural, environmental, acoustic, robotic... any of the many branches of engineering.)

## **Animal and Child Care**

While, of course, children and animals aren't the same, ISFPs often show a liking for more innocent lives. Many ISFPs do well when in a job that nurtures either. They own a gentle, charming way with children. Their preference for the "here and now" and love for discovery allows them to connect with the young at their level. Their patience and sensitivity aids them in their work with animals. Some jobs that might use these special qualities include:

- Veterinarian or veterinarian's assistant
- Animal trainer / groomer / boarder
- Pre-school or early education teacher
- Nanny

- Children's museum curator or docent (particularly if it's activity-based)

## **Medicine (Nursing)**

Medical careers can afford ISFPs the opportunity to master skills and to show rare expertise and use problem-solving abilities. As long as the work brought in new and interesting patients and enough leeway for meaningful intervention with them, ISFPs will do well in nursing. However, if mundane nursing activities dominated the job description, the position would soon lose its appeal for ISFPs. A specialized branch of nursing or medicine would probably suit them better. Overall, people with this personality type would likely do well in the healing professions.

## **What Would Make a Job Unsuitable for an ISFP?**

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 ISFPs.

### **Work That Is Too Dependent on a Team**

ISFPs tend to do much better as solitary workers. While they may do adequately as part of a loose team, they will likely be much more comfortable and perhaps even more productive when working on their own. Too much of other people may prove exhausting for ISFPs who work full-time.

### **Mundane and Repetitive Work**

ISFPs 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**

ISFPs 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?

### *ISFP Colleagues*

- Good advisors, especially when it comes to practical matters
- Very charming
- May get exhausted quickly if their role requires a lot of social interaction
- Seek harmony in the workplace and strive for win-win situations
- Can be unpredictable, depending on what their personal goals are
- Tolerant and friendly, but also very sensitive
- Private and reserved most of the time

### *ISFP Managers*

- Usually dislike being in a leadership position
- Sensitive, good listeners
- Dislike long-term planning
- Find it difficult to discipline their subordinates
- Know how to inspire people
- Very good at securing cooperation from others
- Tend to give their subordinates plenty of freedom
- Likely to prefer non-verbal forms of communications

- Open-minded and flexible, willing to try new ideas

### *ISFP Subordinates*

- Loathe being micro-managed
- Need to know that their work is valued
- Love learning new things
- Very flexible and open-minded
- Prone to taking risks
- Need to have clear goals
- May use unconventional methods, regardless of existing rules or policies
- May be unwilling to step up and suggest their services
- Dislike making long-term commitments, but can be very loyal
- Enjoy experimenting
- Loathe mundane tasks

### *What Do Other ISFPs Say?*

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

*“My chosen career path when young was in architecture, or making architect’s models, a dream job but I wasn’t good enough at math to go this way. Instead I got an ordinary job in a bank and later various office jobs in between bringing up my children. Now I am self-employed, a partner with my husband who is a printer of art prints. I tend to do the book keeping side of things, mainly because of my past skills but I really like the art and being surrounded with creativity. My mistakes when young was laziness in planning ahead, being scared to look further into other architecture routes, too shy to ask for advice, being cowardly about challenging the art teacher’s incompetence and getting kicked out of her class, messing about in math lessons and not developing my story writing and drawing. If I went back, knowing what I know now, I would persevere with the night school course making architectural models instead of being overwhelmed by my classmates who were all 5 years*

*older than me and Iranian and did not interact with me. I would have the nerve to hit my art teacher round the face with a wet fish and find a better one. I might have tried some sort of vocational college and not see it as second best to doing A levels, a degree etc. I would not listen to my mother who told me at 16 'just get a job, you're not going to amount to much,' and listen to my father who once said, 'I know a chap who works in TV set design, shall I introduce you to him?' I was far too shy then, still am a bit but would speak to him now!"*

*"I am a translator at a medium-sized company, nothing I dreamed about when I was young but it's a decent job and I'm happy enough with it. I did freelance work for the company during my studies and signed with them even before graduating. I've never considered it a mistake, but I wish that I had had more confidence when I was young and put more determination in my artistic pursuits. Maybe they could have become more than the neglected hobby they are now."*

*"I truly love what I do. I work at a salon/spa and enjoy working in a team environment. I also love serving my clients. It is very rewarding to me. I love the fast pace of the salon, but I also love the quietness of the spa as well. My job fits me so well. I could never work in an office or alone. I love to be around people all day long. And I love that I'm always moving around and not sitting all day long. I had a hard time in high school. Not because I wasn't smart, but because I didn't like the subjects and they were boring. I daydreamed a lot and had trouble focusing. It took me longer to understand things in school, and that really frustrated me. So I think because of that, I just gave up and didn't pay attention. Instead of really trying my best, I just decided not to really care. I would have definitely changed that if I could go back to high school. I took 3 years off and worked 2 jobs before I went to beauty college at the age of 21. Best thing I ever did. I needed a break from school. I'm almost 25 now, and I am happy with the way my life is going in my career."*

*"I am currently a Human Resources Manager. I work for a company that has about 300 employees. I would not consider this my dream job because it doesn't allow me to use my creative side very often. It can become monotonous to deal with the same issues, problems, complaints every day. Honestly, HR was something I sort of "fell into". I never set out to have a career in HR. Originally I went to school to be a social worker, but wasn't fond of that idea after taking some SW classes. I transferred to an English major in college, but then dropped out of college before I could complete my degree. If I could go back and do things differently, I would've taken more artistic classes in high school and*

*college. I never really believed I was creative back then and I think had I majored in writing or arts, I would've been much happier and would've completed my degree."*

*"I work in a salon as a hair stylist. I would consider this to be close to a dream job. I still have no clue what I want to do with my life but this is fun currently. I got to where I am now just being myself and learning as much as I could about my trade. Many of my mistakes in my career stem from my emotions in the situation. I hate being treated like I am incompetent or walked over by my superiors. I tend to become very sarcastic or I snap in response. If I was to go back and do it again I would try to take a deep breath access the situation and then react. There are many things that rank on the top. I enjoy the creative freedom and usually dealing with the best of people. I like making my clients feel amazing, I like feeling important in their world. I also like not doing the same thing day after day. The worst things in my job are the clients who walk in and start off being rude or hateful. I find the drama to be worse than being back in high school."*

*"I am a social worker in the UK; I work in a psychiatric hospital. I have been a SW for most of my life and have never aspired to a management position. I enjoy the work. For about half my working life, I was a probation officer. I loved it at first but hated it by the end, that's why I returned to SW. My present job suits me because the workings of the mind interest me. There is a large element of report writing and this is OK because it is not too prescribed. The biggest mistake was not leaving the probation service when I started to become unhappy in it. However, given my working life again, I would choose a more practical path, such as designing and/or restoring furniture! But maybe I say that now because I have spent my life working with people!"*

*"Chosen career path – drawing office (engineering draughtsman), abandoned because I couldn't stand smokers in the office (this was in the early 70's). Current occupation – self-employed in construction (heating/plumbing/building). The job is o.k. but not my dream job. I wish I could have been an Architect or Designer (I still do some drawing work). I think science would be really interesting. What would I say to younger ISFPs? Be yourself, don't sell out, just be creative. You are probably at the wrong end of being a money-making business or entrepreneurial type but your creativity could give you a nice career income. The "money" people are always crying out for imaginative creativity so hang in, be creative and don't let anybody steal it. Learn how to keep and sell your ideas for your own benefit. The hardest thing to be is original but try. It might make you rich."*

*"I am doing event planning for a multinational bank. Dream job? Yes, if I were asked years ago. I'm happy where I am now but I think I should start looking at less stressful jobs but equally enjoyable like being a tour guide. But obviously, the pay is not the same. I can't afford a pay cut right now. I'm very big on word of honor. If I say yes to something, I make sure it is done at the time it was promised to be delivered. If not possible, I make sure that I advise even before anyone asks or follow up. People trusted me and refer me. I keep myself updated on the latest on anything and everything. I'm the coolest 50 year old! I constantly look for new ways to entertain people in events. Customer experience is always the priority."*

As you can see, ISFPs can be found in a variety of jobs, ranging from hair styling to construction. It is not the role itself that matters, but the ISFP's ability to rely on their creativity, practical skills and ability to improvise. There are fields that are more ISFP-friendly than others (e.g. crafts or design), 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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