

Portrait of an INFJ:

INFJs focus on possibilities, think in terms of values and come easily to decisions. The small number of this type (1 percent) is regrettable, since INFJs have an unusually strong drive to contribute to the welfare of others and genuinely enjoy helping their fellow men. This type has great depth of personality; they are themselves complicated, and can understand and deal with complex issues and people.

It is an INFJ who is likely to have visions of human events past, present, or future. If a person demonstrates an ability to understand psychic phenomenon better than most others, this person is apt to be an INFJ. Characteristically, INFJs have strong empathic abilities and can be aware of another's emotions or intents even before that person is conscious of these. This can take the form of feeling the distress or illnesses of others to an extent which is difficult for other types. INFJs can intuit good and evil in others, although they seldom can tell how they came to know. Subsequent events tend to bear them out, however.

INFJs are usually good students, achievers who exhibit an unostentatious creativity. They take their work seriously and enjoy academic activity. They can exhibit qualities of over-perfectionism and put more into a task than perhaps is justified by the nature of the task. They generally will not be visible leaders, but will quietly exert influence behind the scenes.

INFJs are hard to get to know. They have an unusually rich inner life, but they are reserved and tend not to share their reactions except with those they trust. Because of their vulnerability through a strong facility to introject, INFJs can be hurt rather easily by others, which, perhaps, is at least one reason they tend to be private people. People who have known an INFJ for years may find sides emerging which come as a surprise. Not that INFJs are inconsistent; they are very consistent and value integrity. But they have convoluted, complex personalities which sometimes puzzle even them.

INFJs like to please others and tend to contribute their own best efforts in all situations. They prefer and enjoy agreeing with others, and find conflict disagreeable and destructive. What is known as ESP is likely found in an INFJ more than in any other types, although other types are capable of such phenomena. INFJs have vivid imaginations exercised both as memory and intuition, and this can amount to genius, resulting at times in an INFJ's being seen as mystical. This unfettered imagination often will enable this person to compose complex and often aesthetic works of art such as music, mathematical systems, poems, plays, and novels. In a sense, the INFJ is the most poetic of all the types. Just as an ENTJ cannot lead, so must an INFJ intuit; this capability extends to people, things, and often events, taking the form of visions, episodes of foreknowledge, premonitions, auditory and visual images of things to come. INFJs can have uncanny communications with certain individuals at a distance.

INFJs often select liberal arts as a college major and opt for occupations which involve interacting with people, but on a one-to-one basis. For example, the general practitioner in medicine might be an INFJ, or the psychiatrist or psychologist. As with all NFs, the ministry holds attraction, although the INFJ must develop an extraverted role here which requires a great deal of energy. INFJs may be attracted to writing as a profession, and often they use language which contains an unusual degree of imagery. They are masters of the metaphor, and both their verbal and written communications tend to be elegant and complex. Their great talent for language usually is directed toward people, describing people and writing to communicate with people in a personalized way. INFJs who write comment often that they write with a particular person in mind; writing to a faceless, abstract audience leaves them uninspired.

INFJs make outstanding individual therapists who have the ability to get in touch with the archetypes of their patients in a way some other types do not. The INFJs are also the most vulnerable of all the types to the eruption of their own archetypal material. As therapists, INFJs may choose counseling, clinical psychology, or psychiatry, or may choose to teach in these fields. Writing about these professions often intrigues an INFJ. Whatever their choice, they generally are successful in these fields because their great personal warmth, their enthusiasm, their insight, their depth of concentration, their originality, and their organizational skills can all be brought into play.

At work as well as socially, INFJs are highly sensitive in their handling of others and tend to work well in an organizational structure. They have a capacity for working at jobs which require solitude and concentration, but also do well when in contact with people, providing the human interaction is not superficial. INFJs enjoy problem-solving and can understand and use human systems creatively and humanistically. As employees or employers, INFJs are concerned with people's feelings and are able to provide in themselves a barometer of the feelings of individuals and groups within the organization. INFJs listen well and are willing and able to consult and cooperate with others. Once a decision is made, they work to implement it.

INFJs are generally good at public relations and themselves have good interpersonal relations. They value staff harmony and want an organization to run smoothly and pleasantly, themselves making every effort to contribute to that end. They are crushed by too much criticism and can have their feelings hurt rather easily. They respond to praise and use approval as a means of motivating others, just as they, the INFJs, are motivated by approval. If they are subject to a hostile, unfriendly working condition or to constant criticism, they tend to lose confidence, become unhappy and immobilized, and finally become physically ill.

As mates, INFJs are usually devoted to their spouses, but may not always be open to physical approaches. They tend to be physically demonstrative at times, but wish to choose when, which is when they are in the mood. This may be quite confusing to an extraverted mate. Often an INFJ's expressions of affection will be subtle, taking a humorous, unexpected turn. INFJs need and want harmony in their homes and find constant conflict, overt or covert, extremely destructive to their psyches. Their friendship circle is likely to be small, deep, and long-standing. As parents, INFJs usually are fiercely devoted. A female INFJ, particularly, is linked to her children in a way different from the other types: with almost a psychic symbiosis. This deep bond can create an overdependency that can be unhealthy for both mother and child. At the same time, INFJs tend to be good friends with their children, while firm in discipline. They usually are concerned about the comfort of a home and most especially the comfort, physical health, and emotional well-being of both mates and children.