

THE **16** PERSONALITY TYPES

Profiles, Theory, & Type Development



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Table of Contents

Part I. Introduction

[Introduction & Overview](#)

[The Functions & Functional Stack](#)

[Healthy vs. Unhealthy Psychological Functioning](#)

[Personality Type Development](#)

[Understanding Judging & Perceiving](#)

Part II. Type Profiles

[INFJ](#)

[INTJ](#)

[INTP](#)

[ISTP](#)

[INFP](#)

[ISFP](#)

[ISFJ](#)

[ISTJ](#)

[ENFP](#)

[ENTP](#)

[ENFJ](#)

[ESFJ](#)

[ENTJ](#)

[ESTJ](#)

[ESFP](#)

[ESTP](#)

Introduction & Overview

The personality type profiles contained in this book were first published on my [Personality Junkie blog](#) in 2011 and 2012. Over time, the popularity of the blog has grown exponentially, including a steady flow of new subscribers to our feed and newsletter. So if you have not already done so, I encourage you to [sign-up for email updates and extras from the blog](#).

From its conception, Personality Junkie has set out to distinguish itself by going to greater depth and detail with respect to personality theory, as well as our type profiles, career and relationship analyses, etc. Although originally focused on the Introverted and Intuitive personality types, we soon expanded our efforts to include all of the personality types.

Toward our goal of taking typology to a new level of depth and accuracy, my colleague Elaine Schallock (INFJ) and I (INTP) realized the need for a new approach for analyzing and describing the types. In this introduction, I will provide an overview of our approach, as well as important background material for the personality type profiles that follow.

The Functions, Functional Stack, & Function Pairs

One thing we realized early on was the importance of devoting more attention to the [functions](#) (i.e., Ni, Ne, Si, Se, Ti, Te, Fi, Fe) rather than the preferences (i.e., E, I, S, N, T, F, J, P). We felt this was necessary for a few reasons.

First, the preferences say nothing about *directionality*. According to Jung, there are two possible directions for a function to work. It can be introverted (directed inwardly) or extraverted (directed outwardly). This directionality modifies the nature and operations of each function. This is why, for instance, Introverted Intuition (Ni) differs markedly from Extraverted Intuition (Ne). Directionality also plays a key role in the functioning and presentation of the personality types. For a closer look at the effects of directionality on the functions, see our post, [Introverted vs. Extraverted Functions](#).

Focusing on the functions is also critical for understanding “the functional stack,” a term coined by Elaine Schallock. Each type has its own unique functional stack, comprised of four functions. The functions are ranked according to their relative level of consciousness. The most conscious function is referred to as the *dominant function*, followed by the *auxiliary*, *tertiary*, and *inferior* functions respectively. Here is an example of a functional stack (INFJ):

Dominant: Introverted Intuition (Ni)
Auxiliary: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)
Tertiary: Introverted Thinking (Ti)
Inferior: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Within each type's functional stack, there are two pairs of opposite functions. We refer to these as "[function pairs](#)." From the above example, we learn that the INFJ's function pairs are Ni-Se and Fe-Ti. The function pairs INFJs do not use, but which are employed by other types, include Ne-Si (or Si-Ne) and Te-Fi (or Fi-Te).

For each personality type, the dominant-inferior function pair (e.g., Ni-Se for INFJs) is a common source of psychological struggle and conflict. This is why much of our work, including much of the content in this book, focuses on the relationship between the dominant and inferior function.

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Psychological Functioning

The functions in the functional stack can interact in two basic ways: healthy and unhealthy. Before explaining this further, it is worth noting that whenever we start using terms like "healthy," we shift from the realm of the *descriptive* toward that of the *prescriptive*, from the *analytical* toward the *moral*. In effect, this allows typology to serve as a *bridge between self-knowledge and moral development*, the importance of which cannot be overstated.

Unhealthy Functioning

When the functions operate in an *unhealthy* fashion, they are essentially at war with each other, with each vying for a greater share of psychic dominance. Returning to our above example, INFJs experience an inner tug-of-war between their dominant function (Ni) and their inferior function (Se). Besides the fact that it occurs inwardly, this power struggle differs little from those among individuals of opposing personality types.

When the inferior function gain is able to wrest control of the functional stack, it causes us to act in ways that are grossly inconsistent with our "usual self." Indulging the inferior function can resemble a drug-induced high, leading us to behave in obsessive, compulsive, or addictive ways. It can also lock us into a certain mood, attitude, or behavior, one we cannot easily escape. We may become narrow-minded, irrational, impetuous, self-indulgent, and lose our sense of humor. Religious notions such as "sin," "evil," and "the devil" all point to the darker side of the inferior function.

The temptations of the inferior function are rarely overt or obvious. For instance, [ENFPs](#) are rarely tempted by mundane Si tasks, such as paying bills or keeping records. Instead, the inferior lures us through more subtle or insidious means. Perhaps most commonly, this occurs with activities that, at least on the surface, seem capable of marrying the dominant and inferior functions. From this, we get notions like "wolf in sheep's clothing" or "devil in disguise."

As a brief aside, the inferior function is also a common culprit in misdiagnoses of type. For instance, an INFP who is obsessed with reaching her inferior function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), is more apt to mistake herself for a Thinking type, such as an INTP, than if she were identifying more with her

dominant function, Introverted Feeling (Fi). Unfortunately, this sort of confusion has caused many people to give up on typology or to dismiss it as unscientific. But once we realize that all types are comprised of opposing functions and that an individual's presentation will vary according to her degree of psychological health / development (i.e., the state of her dominant-inferior function relations), then we can more readily account for the variations and deviations we commonly observe. To learn more about the inferior function and its role in personality, you can start with my post, [Understanding the Inferior Function](#).

Healthy Functioning

In *healthy* psychological functioning, the dominant and inferior (as well as the other functions) work together in a mutually supportive, complementary fashion. Rather than being inwardly divided, we learn to use our functional stack in a sustainable and integrative fashion.

Healthy psychological functional requires regular use and development of the dominant and auxiliary functions, as well as awareness of the insidious ways and tricks of the inferior function. For instance, healthy ENFPs focus on using and developing their Ne and Fi functions, rather than their less conscious Te and Si functions. To some folks, this approach may seem counterintuitive. After all, isn't negotiating a compromise between the dominant and inferior functions the only way to achieve psychological balance? Shouldn't the psyche function more like a democracy, granting equal say and priority to all the functions?

In our view, the answer is a qualified "no." Just as an acorn develops into a specific type of tree, we exist as specific and specialized types for a reason. The solution to the "type problem," then, is not one of watering down our specialties (i.e., our dominant function) in favor of becoming generalists (i.e., developing the inferior function). It does not entail a smudging of our typological differences. Rather the goal is to embrace and develop our type's specialties so as to allow for the integration of all the functions in our functional stack.

One of the best analogies I have found to illustrate healthy functioning of the functional stack is that of the brain-body relationship. The brain-body does not function as pure democracy, but more like a representative government, with the brain being the government. The dominant function (and to some extent the auxiliary) is analogous to the brain. Just as the brain receives and weighs feedback from the body, the dominant function receives and evaluates input from the other functions of the functional stack. Once sufficient feedback has been obtained, it can make informed decisions according to the overarching goals and objectives of the personality type.

As mentioned earlier, the dominant function is our most *conscious* function. So in granting governing authority to the dominant function, we are essentially endorsing conscious rather than unconscious functioning. It is worth noting that this is not a universally accepting viewpoint. Some folks believe, for instance, that human beings were (and are) better off living in a less conscious, more primitive state. In my view, however, this denies the trajectory of human evolution, which is characterized by a move from

relative unconsciousness to ever increasing levels of consciousness. So if we hope to align ourselves with what some might call the evolutionary or creative impulse of the universe, we have little choice but to move forward rather than backward. Like it or not, our species is heading toward *more*, not less, consciousness and differentiation.

To summarize, studying and applying typology, as outlined above, can increase our level of consciousness and self-awareness. And because many of us consider heightened consciousness a goal and standard for the good and moral life, typology can be considered a valuable tool for personal, interpersonal, and moral development.

Personality Type Development

Psychological development does not happen overnight. Rather, it is a gradual process of unfolding, propelled by life experience and increasing self-awareness. For this reason, it can be helpful to understand the phases of development for each personality type.

In each of our personality profiles, we outline the course of type development according to three basic phases. In a broad sense, type development follows the sequence of the [functional stack](#), beginning with the dominant function and proceeding sequentially down toward the inferior. However, because the dominant and [inferior function](#) (as well as the auxiliary and tertiary) exist in bipolar tension with one another, type development rarely follows a strictly linear course.

Phase I: The Emergence of the Dominant Function

Extending from early childhood through late adolescence, Phase I is characterized by the emergence and differentiation of the dominant function, along with the relative rejection and repression of the other functions. Through this process, the self becomes divided into conscious and less conscious aspects.

Phase II: The Dominant-Inferior Tug-of-War

Once the dominant function reaches a certain threshold of conscious prominence, the inferior function begins to play a more influential and mischievous role. This can be confusing because the inferior is not next in line for development in the functional stack. Its increasing influence derives its bipolar relationship with the dominant function. As the dominant moves toward greater conscious prominence, the inferior function is pushed deeper into the unconscious. This produces a greater polarity in the psyche as well as an attendant sense of incompleteness or imbalance.

In response to this increased polarity, we set out to recover or rediscover the lost or forgotten parts of ourselves (i.e., our inferior function). Moreover, because the dominant and inferior have become so polarized, there can seem to be no effective or sustainable way of bridging between them, no sign of middle ground. Therefore, in order to rediscover our inferior, we often see little choice but to leapfrog

to the other end of our functional stack. On Personality Junkie, we have described this in a few different ways, including “jumping the (functional) stack,” “indulging the inferior,” or “falling into the grip of the inferior.”

In short, Phase II is characterized by extremes, involving drastic pendulum swings between the dominant and inferior function. It is a love-hate, either-or situation, alternating between indulging and avoiding the inferior.

The inferior function is also a common culprit in dubious career and relational decision-making. Unfortunately, the peak of the inferior’s influence often coincides with the period (i.e., 20s & 30s) when people are making life-altering decisions about their careers and relationships.

On a more positive note, Phase II also includes the development of the auxiliary function. Developing the auxiliary can serve to reduce overreliance on the dominant function, which can thereby temper the dominant-inferior tug-of-war. Since the auxiliary is more conscious and not a polar opposite of the dominant, it is far easier to develop and integrate than the tertiary or inferior. The auxiliary is more like a natural sidekick to the dominant than a rival or opponent.

Phase III: Integration

In Phase III, a phase that some individuals may fail to reach, the entire functional stack is integrated into a seamless whole. Those fortunate enough to enter Phase III have often had their fair share of life experience and personal failures. They feel ready for a new sort of undertaking, one whose reward is largely one of intrinsic satisfaction. Having fatigued of the emotional rollercoaster of Phase II, those in Phase III are more aware of the tricks and temptations of the inferior function and the foolishness of indulging it. They work to understand the nature of the inferior in general, as well as its specific manifestations with respect to their type and their personal experiences. Having laid these things bare, they can then be supplanted with healthier ways of living.

Rather than engaging the dominant and inferior on a separate basis, as is common in Phase II, those in Phase III learn that *integrating the inferior function must somehow occur **through** the dominant* (as well as through the other functions in the functional stack). What this means, in essence, is that integrating the less conscious functions occurs in a more indirect and passive fashion, rather than by directly indulging or attempting to develop them.

The process of successful integration for the various personality types can be generally summed as follows:

N types: Integrate S through consistent & healthy use of N

S types: Integrate N through consistent & healthy use of S

T types: Integrate F through consistent & healthy use of T

F types: Integrate T through consistent & healthy use of F

Consider this example (INTP). INTPs' dominant function is Introverted Thinking (Ti), their auxiliary is Extraverted Intuition (Ne), and their inferior is Extraverted Feeling (Fe). The overarching goal of their functional stack might be understood as employing and developing their inner Thinking judgments (Ti), as well as creatively expressing them (Ne), which eventually may effect change in the world of humanity (Fe). It would be backwards, however, for INTPs to focus their energies on directly helping others (Fe), especially with respect to emotional or relational issues (such is the role of F types). This would amount to the INTP “jumping the stack” and would ultimately prove unsatisfying, not to mention unhelpful for society as a whole.

Undoubtedly, moving toward integration requires ample courage, both inwardly and outwardly. Inwardly, it demands taking an honest look at ourselves, even being willing to scrutinize our historical assumptions about our purpose and identity. And if that isn't difficult enough, it also requires a willingness to consider outward changes in circumstances, such as in careers and relationships, which makes way for more authentic functioning according to our type.

Understanding Judging & Perceiving

Our last major concern of this Introduction is the issue of Judging and Perceiving, which is among the most misunderstood elements of typology. In our experience, J-P misunderstandings (along with inferior function related issues) commonly result in people mistyping themselves.

For instance, there is no shortage of [INFPs](#) who mistakenly think they are [INFJs](#) and [INTPs](#) who think they are [INTJs](#). And while these types may seem similar at first glance, sharing three of four *preferences*, they actually share NONE of the same *functions*. Take a look for yourself:

INFP (Fi-Ne-Si-Te) vs. INFJ (Ni-Fe-Ti-Se)

INTP (Ti-Ne-Si-Fe) vs. INTJ (Ni-Te-Fi-Se)

The fact that INFPs and INFJs (as well as INTPs and INTJs) have zero functions in common means that they don't merely differ in degree (e.g., “He is a bit more “J” than I am”), but in kind; they are qualitatively distinct. Although INFPs and INFJs may display certain similarities as “Idealists” and INTPs and INTJs as “Rationals,” they are really more different than many are willing to admit.

It is worth noting that Jung did not use a J-P indicator for describing his types. The J-P indicator, that is, the last letter of the four-letter type designation, was added by Myers and Briggs as a sort of short-hand way of labeling the types. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of this and take the J-P label to

mean something it does not. In actuality, the J-P label merely describes whether the *first extraverted function* in a given type's functional stack is a Judging function (either Te or Fe) or a Perceiving function (either Ne or Se).

This J-P labeling system actually works fine for Extraverts, since their first extraverted function also happens to be their dominant function. Hence, there is no confusion, for instance, in calling an ENFP a Perceiver or an ENTJ a Judger. This very accurately describes the dominant mode of operation for these types.

For introverted types, however, the J-P label can be a source of confusion and misunderstanding. This is due to the fact that introverts' first extraverted function is *auxiliary* rather than dominant.

Consequently, the J-P designation of IPs and IJs fails to describe their dominant mode of functioning. Namely, IPs' preferred and dominant mode of functioning is Judging (Fi or Ti) and IJs' is Perceiving (Si or Ni). This is why IPs commonly mistype themselves as IJs and vice-versa. To summarize:

Extraverts: Since their first extraverted function is also their dominant function, the J-P label aptly describes their dominant mode of functioning.

Introverts: Since their first extraverted function is their auxiliary function, the J-P label belies their dominant mode of functioning.

To better understand these Judging-Perceiving issues, consider the following analysis of the J-P characteristics of the various types:

EP Types

EPs might be considered the "purest" Perceivers of all the types. Not only do they display Perceiving in their outer behavior and demeanor (e.g., openness, adaptability, receptivity), but their dominant function (Ne or Se) is also a Perceiving function.

EJ Types

EJs might be considered the "purest" Judging types. Not only do they display Judging in their outer behavior and demeanor (e.g., assertive, intentional, opinionated, directive), but their dominant function (Te or Fe) is also a Judging function.

IP Types

Unlike the above types, IPs are more of a mixture of J-P characteristics. Since their dominant function is a Judging function (Ti or Fi), they are inner Judgers. IPs are far more serious inwardly than they appear outwardly. Rather than preferring a state of openness, like healthy EPs, they feel driven to move toward closure and to have things settled in their minds (similar to EJs). They want to hammer down what they

believe in order to have a platform from which to make important decisions about their lives. When their beliefs are shaken into state of uncertainty, they can feel unsettled, aimless, and anxious. This anxiety prompts them to promptly seek answers so they can return to a comfortable level of closure and intentional action.

IPs also resemble EJs in that they think in terms of what they *should* be doing. They like to set goals and objectives for themselves (especially INPs), approaching life with an agenda or a certain set of expectations. Upon waking, they consciously work to determine what they want to/should do that day and then initiate the process. At least when it comes to *initiating* tasks, IPs are as disciplined as any EJ.

It is mainly *after* starting a task that IPs get sidetracked and start looking more like EPs. This is understandable when we examine IPs' functional stack. They start off with a judgment (Fi or Ti), which impels them to begin work on a task. Once initiated, however, the next function in their stack is a Perceiving function (Ne or Se), which can lead them to get distracted or sidetracked, even to the point of losing sight of their original purpose (this is why IPs are sometimes said to lack follow-through or staying power). This can be frustrating for IPs, since the endpoint or "goal" of their functional stack (i.e., their inferior function) involves reaching a state of judgment or closure (Fe or Te). This also explains why IPs may at times be sloppy or careless in their work, since they are driven by a desire for closure. It also explains why IPs may disdain interruptions in the middle of a project, fearing this could hinder them from reaching a conclusion or endpoint. Because IPs like to be in control of both starting and finishing their projects, *they cannot rightly be considered spontaneous in the way that EPs are*, at least not when it comes to interruptions from without. Just as EJs are sometimes viewed as outer control freaks, IPs are inner control freaks.

We might summarize **IPs' process** in the following way:

Starting point (J): Ti or Fi ("I should or want to do...")

Move into auxiliary (P): Ne or Se (may get sidetracked or distracted)

Desired Endpoint (J): Fe or Te closure

Visually, this process resembles a *diamond*. IPs start with a specific objective (Ti or Fi), diverge outwardly (Se or Ne), then work to reign in this expansion and bring it toward a point of closure (Fe or Te). This process is structured the same as that of EJs (although EJs' Si and Ni are not nearly as expansive as IPs' Ne or Se). Also note that the above process is the optimal way for IPs to function. In some cases, they can be rushed to reach closure and essentially forego the P process between their two J endpoints, which Elaine Schallock has dubbed "jumping the (functional) stack."

Like EJs, IPs can also be prone to labeling certain Perceiving activities (e.g., watching television) "a waste of time." They may even deem IJ or EP types lazy or unproductive. But at some level, IPs may envy IJs'

and EPs' ability to relax and Perceive. Some IPs simply don't know how to relax and "do nothing," constantly considering what they could or should be doing.

In sum, IPs prefer a certain degree of inner closure because it allows them to act with a sense of conviction and intentionality. At times, however, this can lead them to prematurely truncate Perceiving, which can lead to errors in judgment or shoddy work. Like EJs, they are prone to forfeiting some measure of accuracy for swift closure. This is consistent with the notion of Judging types "jumping to conclusions."

IJ Types

IJs are also a mixture of J-P characteristics. Outwardly, they look like Judgers. They can be assertive, directive, and opinionated, even resembling EJ types. But since IJs' dominant function is a Perceiving function (Ni or Si), they are best understood as dominant Perceivers. In reality, IJs are far less serious, closed, or judgmental than they can appear outwardly.

IJs' (especially INJs') inner world is characteristically open and allowing. Assuming they are not coerced by outer obligations, IJs are less naturally inclined to impose rules or agendas on themselves. While IPs start the day with a Judging mindset (Ti or Fi), IJs prefer a more leisurely and perceptive approach (Ni or Si), allowing their Judging process (Fe or Te) to emerge organically or spontaneously rather than intentionally. Therefore, when it comes to initiating the Judging process, IJs may procrastinate as long as EPs.

Once their Judging process is initiated, however, IJs begin to look more like Judging types. They may, for instance, suddenly feel compelled to write, compose a song, or solve a problem. While IPs' transition from their dominant to auxiliary function is one of increasing divergence, IJs' move toward greater convergence (Te or Fe). But unlike IPs, who prefer to finish with closure, IJs prefer to return to a state of openness (Se or Ne). Visually, IJs' (and EPs') process resembles an **hourglass**, moving from openness (P) to closure (J) and back to openness (P):

Starting point (P): Ni or Si

Move to auxiliary (J): Te or Fe

Desired Endpoint (P): Se or Ne

Like EPs, IJs may struggle when it comes to starting tasks or projects. Just as it is difficult for IPs and EJs to force themselves into a state of Perceiving, it can be difficult for IJs and EPs to intentionally jumpstart their Judging process. They may envy IPs' and EJs' ability to routinely initiate J work. While IJs and EPs undoubtedly love to Perceive, there are times when they would love to produce something, but end up feeling frustrated because of insufficient motivation or stimulation to enact their Judging process.

One of the strengths of the IJ approach is a concern for accuracy. Since they don't experience the same desire for closure that IPs do, they are often more patient and precise in their work; they prioritize accuracy over promptness, quality over quantity. In fact, their focus on accuracy is a chief contributor to their propensity for perfectionism. Unfortunately, perfectionism can compromise IJs' ability to finish their work in a reasonable time frame. Hence, IJs can struggle to both start and finish projects, making it all too easy for them to float in a state of perpetual Perceiving, even if envying types who seem to be "accomplishing" more.

Organization of the Profiles

Each of our sixteen personality type profiles are structured similarly. They begin with an introduction and overview of each type. This is followed by an overview of that type's three phases of type development. The remainder of the profile consists of analyzing the type in light of the particular functions of its functional stack.

Without further ado, let's dive into the profiles!

INFJ

The [INFJ personality](#) type is among the rarest of the sixteen types, constituting only 1-3% of the general population. Unlike [INTJs](#), in which males predominate, there is greater gender parity among INFJs, with nearly equal numbers of males and females.

INFJs are "old souls." Many grow up feeling wiser than would be predicted by their chronological age. Having discovered the benefits of their [Introverted Intuition \(Ni\)](#) quite early in life, INFJs grow to trust its judgments and insights. They may take on the role of counseling and advising their friends and siblings, or even adult family members, from a fairly young age. Their gift for providing wise counsel often continues into adulthood. INFJs often feel happiest and most fulfilled when helping others understand themselves and their problems.

Because of their strength of intuition, many INFJs report feeling like aliens in the world. One INFJ described her experience as a constant feeling of déjà vu. Others report feelings of disembodiment. The fact is that many INFJs (and INTJs) seem to experience the world and their bodies differently than other types do. It is therefore not uncommon for INFJs or others to occasionally question their sanity.

INFJs see two people in everyone. They see the public persona, the outer shell, that everyone else sees. But more importantly, their Ni provides a deeper sense or impression people, penetrating appearances and reading hidden motives and intentions. Rightly or not, INFJs often feel they can see people more clearly than those people can see themselves.

To best understand INFJs, or other IJ types, it is necessary to recognize the full implications of their dominant function being a Perceiving function. I discuss this issue in my post, [Rethinking Judging and Perceiving in IPs & IJs](#). In short, I suggest that INFJs are best viewed as predominant Perceivers and display many characteristics of ENPs, only that these are manifested inwardly rather than outwardly.

More specifically, INFJs are far less serious inwardly than they may appear outwardly. Their inner world is well described as playful, imaginative, colorful, mischievous, and daring. Characterized by Perceiving rather than Judging, it is far less controlled and regulated than that of INFPs. INFJs love playing with ideas, perspectives, theories, images, symbols, and metaphors. Their Ni serves as the veritable foundation for this inner playhouse. Because their Ni is dominant rather than auxiliary, INFJs tend to be more subversive in their ideation than [ENFJs](#).

While INFJs are deeply theoretical, they don't build their theories by consciously assembling facts in the way that Thinking or Sensing types might. Rather, INFJs see general connections and patterns by way of their Intuition, seeing everything as interconnected. For INFJs, discovering truth involves getting a better handle on the nature of this connectedness by discerning universal laws and patterns.

INFJs also have a deep concern for *quality*. As will be elaborated later in this profile, they long to see their ideals (Ni) perfectly manifested in physical reality (Se). This need for quality underlies many common INFJ characteristics. Their attraction to art (especially more realistic styles), for instance, can be understood as their attempt to perfectly embody an ideal in physical reality. Their love for fine food, clothes, and architecture can be understood similarly. Unlike INFPs, who tend to see food, clothes, and housing as little more than physical necessities, INFJs see the physical world as a forum for manifesting beauty and perfection, a place to marry their Ni and Se.

Despite their refined or sophisticated tastes, INFJs are generally not overly pretentious or serious individuals, at least not inwardly (ENFJs, as dominant Judgers, are characteristically more serious). INFJs enjoy regularly engaging with people, listening to music, and watching movies. Perhaps more than anything, INFJs love spending time engrossed in meaningful conversation. Because of their verbosity and communal nature, they are commonly mistaken for Extraverts.

Like [INFPs](#), many INFJs struggle with bouts of depression, which may relate to any number of things. They may, for instance, get depressed when they feel their creative inspiration has abandoned them or because they feel consistently misunderstood. Depression may also stem from feeling dissatisfied in the [INFJ's careers](#) or [INFJ's relationships](#). They may dream of having a beautiful home adorned with beautiful things, but feel stuck in a low-paying job that they are reluctant to quit because of a poor economy.

INFJs' Functional Stack & Personality Type Development

INFJs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

Auxiliary: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

Tertiary: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Inferior: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

INFJs' personality type development can be broadly conceived according to three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-Early 20s)

Phase I of INFJs' type development is characterized by the emergence and differentiation of their dominant function, Introverted Intuition (Ni). As Introverts, they may also show significant development of their auxiliary function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), which can serve as helpful extraverted tool for navigating the world of people. The Ni-Fe function pair makes INFJs particularly well-equipped to read and evaluate people, including their underlying motives.

Since Ni is a Perceiving function, it would be wrong to consider INFJs closed-minded at any point in their development. Nonetheless, during Phase I, INFJs can appear more opinionated, closed-minded, or

melodramatic. Even if their judgments are precociously accurate, Phase I INFJs may lack some discernment regarding the appropriate time and way to express those judgments. Moreover, their Ni-Fe conclusions have yet to be honed and tempered by their tertiary Ti, making them more reluctant to carefully review or revise them.

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

Once Ni reaches a certain level of consciousness and differentiation, INFJs' inferior function, Extraverted Sensing (Se), enters the picture and begins to play a more influential and often mischievous role. INFJs are not immune from the dominant-inferior wrestlings described in our Introduction, making this phase as challenging for them as it is for other types. Phase II INFJs may also begin to open up and further refine their judgments by way of their tertiary function, Introverted Thinking (Ti).

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, INFJs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Se. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as INFJs, they experience greater balance between their Ni and Se. They learn that integrating their Se happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Ni and Fe. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III INFJs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

INFJs' Dominant Function: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

Intuition is generally considered a subconscious process. It is often contrasted with more conscious types of rational thought. Because Intuition is commonly associated with the unconscious, it is often thought to have a certain magical quality, capable of delivering comprehensive answers or solutions suddenly—"out of the blue."

One of the central features of Intuition is its capacity to synthesize information. It is sensitive to patterns and similarities, quickly seeing connections among disparate pieces of data. By seeing how everything is connected and interrelated, it is capable of discerning universal laws and structures.

What is interesting about types with dominant Intuition, including INFJs, is that this Intuitive process, which for non-Intuitives is largely unconscious, is more accessible and observable in consciousness. This seems particularly true for INTJs and INFJs, whose Intuition is directly inwardly rather than being fused with the outside world. INJs have the good fortune of witnessing and consciously participating in a mysterious process which for other types is entirely unconscious.

Because Ni affords INFJs a more intimate relationship with the workings of what most people call the subconscious mind, INFJs' routine existence often assumes a sort of dreamlike quality. For INFJs, there is less of a distinction between their ordinary waking state and the experience of sleep. At times, this can

make it difficult to separate dream from reality, making nightmares all the more disturbing for this type. It is little wonder that many INJs, including Jung himself, find dream analysis so intriguing and important.

Because of their ready access to subconscious or subliminal information, INFJs are commonly viewed as profound, insightful, and sometimes even psychic or prophetic. While not diminishing the unique capacities of INFJs, Ni can be rational, non-magical terms.

In order to understand Ni, it is first necessary to understand INFJ's inferior function, Extraverted Sensing (Se). For INFJs, Se functions subconsciously and is constantly gathering copious amounts of sensory information from the environment. Meanwhile, their Ni is constantly working to process and synthesize this incoming data, like assembling pieces of a puzzle. Eventually, it manages to construct an impression or vision of what is happening. Because other types are not privy to the workings of this Ni-Se processing loop, it can seem as though INFJs' insights are magical or divinely inspired. In reality, INFJs cannot see the future, but are simply more skilled than most at accurately discerning what is happening in a given situation. This allows them to better envision what how things might unfold should they continue along their current course. This ability to accurately "see" is why INFJs are sometimes described as prophets or seers.

It is often said that human beings rely more heavily on vision than we do our other senses. This seems especially true of INFJs, who often ascribe a strong visual element to their Ni. INFJs often "think" by way of images rather than words. Their intuitions often manifest in the form of symbols, images, dreams, or patterns. This is consistent with Jung's characterization of the Ni type as a dreamer or seer. There is a distinct visual character to these notions, which is why vision-related terms—*foresight*, *insight*, *seer*, *visionary*, etc.—are invariably used in describing INFJs. The visual nature of Ni might also tie into INFJs' inferior Se, which is also a highly visual function. The difference is that Se is attuned to the specifics and details of the environment, whereas Ni is more concerned with forming an impression or theory of what is happening based on the totality of incoming sensory information.

INFJs' propensity for processing information visually may contribute to one of their signature strengths: reconciling opposites. One advantage of visual processing is it doesn't have the same rules or impediments of verbal processing. In some cases, problems may be better solved by employing images or symbols rather than by other means. It should not surprise us that Jung himself hailed the value of imagery and symbols. For Jung, symbols were critical for dealing with paradoxes, including the challenge of reconciling opposing psychological functions, which he dubbed "the type problem."

INFJs' Auxiliary Function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

INFJs use Extraverted Feeling (Fe) as their auxiliary function. As the most interpersonal of all the functions, Fe is attuned to surveying and improving interpersonal feelings and morale. Like other FJ types, INFJs work to cultivate "good feelings" in the interpersonal environment. In order to survey

others' feelings, Fe contributes to INFJs' ability to read emotional expressions and body language. This, in combination with their Se and Ni, allow them to effectively read, understand, and relate to others.

Interestingly, INFJs can have a more difficult time with perceiving and understanding their own emotions. This is due to the fact that their Feeling function is directed outwardly (i.e., extraverted) rather than inwardly. Unlike INFPs, whose Feeling function is introverted (Fi), INFJs are less equipped to manage their emotions independently. Inwardly, they deal in the currency of Intuition (Ni) and Thinking (Ti). Hence, when INFJs find themselves in emotionally taxing circumstances, they often turn to others for aid and support.

Fe also entails an extraversion of judgment. INFJs utilize their Fe to express their thoughts, feelings, opinions, and grievances. Fe gives voice and shape to INFJs' feelings and intuitions. In many cases, INFJs do not know fully understand the nature of an Ni insight until given the opportunity to verbalize it. They may have a hunch or a gut feeling, but the content of the intuition can remain somewhat nebulous until it is expressed via their Fe. Assuming they have not been severely censored in their upbringing, INFJs are generally happy to share their feelings and perspectives. In fact, given the right opportunity, INFJs will often talk at length about their feelings and intuitions. Unlike FP types, who generally prefer a more dialogical format, INFJs are inclined toward monologues, which allow them to fully flesh out their ideas on a certain topic.

INFJs' Fe can present differently among strangers than it does with their intimates. In larger groups, INFJs may seem consistently cheery as part of their attempt to cultivate good feelings. Many INFJs have a good sense of humor and can be funny and engaging. Enlisting their vivid imaginations and knack for metaphor, they can also make good storytellers. In the company of close confidants, however, INFJs use their Fe to be more open and direct with their grievances. Since some INFJs feel like tortured souls, their commentary may take on a characteristically negative tone. They may seem moody, pessimistic, discontented, or restless. They can also seem fairly intense in their communication when infused with the emotion of Fe. Consequently, their expressions can seem exaggerated, dramatic, or irrational, especially to Thinking types. They differ in this respect from INFPs, who are less disposed to melodrama in their verbiage. INFJs can also be susceptible to self-pity and self-loathing, seeing themselves as victims. They may curse the fact that life isn't fair, feeling that they always end up with the short end of the stick.

For INFJs, expressing themselves through their Fe is critical to their psychological and physical health and well-being. Even if doing so does not provide them with immediate solutions to the problem at hand, they tend to feel better once they have expressed their feelings, whether through words or tears. This is especially important for the mates or friends of INFJs to recognize. While not necessarily looking for others to solve their problems, INFJs value emotional support, empathy, and reassurance. Without such an outlet, INFJs can begin to feel isolated and depressed, turning to their inner fantasy world as a means of escape. And while fantasizing may seem helpful in the short-term, it can make the real world seem even less tolerable and exacerbate existing frustrations toward life.

Even if not to the same extent as EFJs, INFJs can be warm, welcoming, loyal, giving, and self-sacrificing. At the same time, as Introverts, they need time to themselves to recharge their proverbial batteries. This creates an ongoing, even lifelong, struggle for INFJs, trying to balance their own needs and desires with those of others.

INFJs may also experience value conflicts between their Ni and Fe. For example, they may be asked by a friend or relative to donate to a cause they don't believe in. This puts them in the difficult position of deciding between honoring their own perspectives (Ni) and maintaining the harmony of the relationship (Fe). Since INFJs can have difficulty saying no, they will often opt to oblige others, even while inwardly regretting doing so. INFJs may experience similar issues in school. On the one hand, they are disposed to questioning the veracity of what the teacher or other students are saying, not to mention issues of character. On the other hand, they want to please the teacher and maintain external harmony. This can leave them feeling torn between their allegiance to truth (Ni) and to people (Fe).

Because of the strength of their Fe, INFJs need to be careful not to abandon their Ni in the face of outward pressures. Since Ni is their best and most reliable compass for navigating life, when they lost track of it, INFJs can easily feel lost, restless, and frustrated. Hence, when it comes to decision-making, INFJs are wise to listen primarily to their own inner voice.

INFJs' Tertiary Function: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

The role of Introverted Thinking (Ti) in INFJs is to open and further refine their Fe judgments. Ti can help INFJs think more critically and analytically. It can serve as an aid and check to their Ni-Fe, helping them discern where their ideas might fit into existing categories and frameworks of knowledge. It adds an element of logic that is less apparent in the earlier phases of their type development. For instance, INFJs who grew up in a religious home may be disposed to interpreting their insights through the lens of their childhood faith tradition. As they develop their Ti, however, they might come to question whether that wisdom might better understood in psychological terms.

What INFJs may perceive as a negative or difficult feature of their Ti is its tendency to generate self-doubt. As Ti butts up against the insights offered by their Ni, INFJs may temporarily distrust their most cherished and utilized mode of knowing—their Intuition. But personal growth is never easy, not for any type. With time, INFJs settle into a healthy balance between their Ni and Ti, intuitively knowing how to apply their Ti without spoiling the insights proffered by their Intuition.

Less developed INFJs may see little need to use or develop their Ti. Since their Ni-Fe pairing provides them with strong convictions about truth, taking an additional step to Ti may seem unnecessary. With time and maturity, however, INFJs can grow increasingly comfortable with their Ti and recognize its inherent value.

INFJs' Inferior Function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

As is true of other types, INFJs can be easily blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. As discussed in [my post on INFJ careers](#), their Se may entice INFJs to pursue careers for which they are ill-suited. Or relationally, it may compel them to pair off with an ESP in attempt to secure, even if unwittingly, what they are lacking or striving to find in themselves. To avoid being subconsciously controlled by their inferior function, INFJs seeking self-knowledge and personal growth must work to understand the ways in which Se manifests in their personality.

Disembodiment

Of all types, INFJs (and INTJs) are the most disconnected from their own bodies. Not only is their S function inferior, but INFJs use Se rather than Si, and Si is the function that confers an internal sense of one's own body. INFJs commonly report a sense of disembodiment, as though living in a perpetual, dream-like state.

Relatedly, INFJs commonly have nightmares about unforeseen declines in their health. They may also worry that they could develop a serious disease without registering the common warning signs. Others may fear that their obliviousness to physical reality might compromise the safety or well-being of their children. INFJs may also forget to eat or, at the other extreme, overeat, because of their lack of attention to their level of fullness or the amount they have eaten.

In trying to compensate for this mind-body disconnect, INFJs may subject themselves to strict regimens of diet, exercise, and medical check-ups. Without this consistency, they fear their bodily obliviousness could result in potentially serious health consequences.

Sensory & Material Novelty/Security

Despite being the most otherworldly and abstract of the types (along with INTJs), INFJs have a curious thirst for sensory novelty and material comforts (Se). They often develop refined and sophisticated tastes for food, art, design, architecture, and the like. Not only do they love the fine things that money can buy, but also the experiences. INFJs enjoy travel, attending the opera or symphony, or savoring a fine meal.

Because of their inferior's concern for material comforts, INFJs also tend to struggle with subsistence-related fears. They may worry excessively about losing their jobs, being forced to relocate, or not having enough money.

Despite their love of worldly things, INFJs display an equal propensity to discount or downplay the importance of "things" in their lives. They tell themselves they aren't supposed to be concerned physical matters (Se), but metaphysical ones (Ni). They can be quick to criticize Sensing types for their materialism or superficiality while secretly envying them. INFJs may also balk at conventional practices,

such as marriage, seeing the marriage contract as superfluous to their metaphysical union with their partner. At the same time, however, they may themselves envy their friends who are getting married, having children, living in nice homes, etc.

This tug-of-war between their dominant N and inferior S also surfaces when making decisions about careers or relationships. INFJs may struggle to choose between a partner (or job) who promises material security (S) versus one who connects with them on a metaphysical plane.

Ideal (Ni) vs. Actual (Se); Perfectionism

Envisioning a more ideal world isn't necessarily bad or unhealthy for INFJs. The fact is that they wouldn't be INFJs if they didn't routinely receive new impressions and visions. The issue is not with their dreaming *per se*, but with the degree to which they become attached to or insistent on the perfect materialization (Se) of their ideals (Ni). This is where INFJs' perfectionism comes to the fore.

All dominant Intuitives can be perfectionistic, driven to see their N ideals perfectly translated into S reality. The issue of *quality* is extremely important to INFJs, which is why they can be so particular about the things they buy or the way their work is done. Some INFJs may sacrifice everything, even their own health or sanity, to ensure their vision finds a perfect incarnation. They can be obsessive and "in the grip," locked into a narrow mode of existence they cannot readily escape. In such a state, any deviation from their ideal may feel like the end of the world.

INFJs are also perfectionistic when it comes to themselves. They are often much harder on themselves than they are on others. Their Fe makes them more than willing to forgive the offenses and shortcomings of others. But since they see themselves as "knowing better," they may fail to grant themselves the same degree of grace. They may reason that if they cannot perfectly embody their ideal of the moral life, then how could they expect anyone else to. And if their ideals have no real chance of being actualized, then why should the INFJ even exist? Without the ability to maintain hope in their ideals, they may feel they have no reason for living. This is partly why it feels so important for them to act perfectly. This notion is well-captured in the words of Jesus: *"But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."* (Luke 12:48, NIV)

INTJ

Along with INFJs, INTJs are among the rarest of the sixteen types, thought to comprise only 2-3% of the population. More often than not, INTJs carry a Y-chromosome, outnumbering INTJ females at a clip of four to one.

With Introverted Intuition (Ni) as their dominant function, INTJs' signature strength is deep perception. This of course cannot be divorced from their inferior function, Extraverted Sensing (Se), which subconsciously amasses sensory information from the environment. This stream of sensory data provides the raw material for their Ni to form its "impressions" and theories. Much of this process occurs rather passively and subconsciously, allowing INTJs to "know" things without a full realization of how they know them. This is one of the inherent challenges of intuitive knowing, being able to translate what can often be an amorphous intuition or image into a more rational, communicable form.

As Ni dominants, INTJs are naturally attuned to "the big picture." They can't help but see how everything is interconnected. They are born theorists, concerned with explicating the underlying connections and cause-effect relationships of the physical world (Se/Te). This is why the world's greatest mathematicians and physicists (e.g., Stephen Hawking) are often INTJs.

Since their dominant function is a Perceiving function, INTJs often present as passive, even somewhat phlegmatic. More proactive types, such as [ENTJs](#), might even deem them somewhat lazy or apathetic. But calling INTJs (or INFJs) lazy is to miss the point of what it means to be a Perceiver. Since INTJs' first and foremost job is to Perceive rather than Judge or act, functioning in a passive mode of perception is actually their most authentic form of "work," work that can ultimately be of great benefit to society. After all, the reason that INTJs' theories are often superior is because, as Perceivers, they do not force things. They patiently allow their Intuition to do its work until it is finally time to translate it a la their auxiliary Te. This is one way they differ significantly from NP types (including [INTPs](#)), who can seem more impulsive, random, and arbitrary in their theorizing.

As Te types, INTJs generally display little as far as variability of emotion or expression. Exuding an air of learnedness and erudition, they may sometimes be perceived as intellectual snobs or elitists (similar to how INFJs can seem like cultural or artistic snobs). Perceptions of arrogance or aloofness notwithstanding, their status as intellectuals is typically well-founded. Not only do INTJs sport the highest collective IQ of all types, but they are almost always well-informed, displaying broad-ranging knowledge and incredible memories. As Te types, they are undeterred from directly and firmly (or some would say, "bluntly") expressing their viewpoints. Similar to ENTJs, onlookers can be taken aback by their directness, viewing them as opinionated, dogmatic, or closed-minded.

INTJs can also be surprisingly talkative, especially once their Ni gets rolling. Like INFJs, they can talk at great length (and depth) on topics that interest them. This is one reason INTJs often like lecturing and college teaching. And while not the most dynamic or energetic of orators, INTJs enjoy wit and relaying

stories or illustrations from pop culture. This can help to “humanize” them in the eyes of their listeners, even if their delivery remains a bit dry and monotonal. Since INTJs express themselves a la Te, it can be easy for others to miss this “lighter side” of the INTJ. Many would be surprised that INTJs are characteristically light, even playful, far less serious inwardly than might be inferred from their outward presentation.

INTJs' Functional Stack & Type Development

INTJs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

Auxiliary: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Tertiary: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Inferior: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

The personality type development of INTJs can be broadly conceived according to three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

Phase I of INTJs' type development is characterized by the emergence and differentiation of their dominant function, Introverted Intuition (Ni). As Introverts, they may also show significant development of their second function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), which can serve as a helpful extraverted tool for navigating the outside world.

Since Ni is a perceiving function, it would be spurious to classify INTJs as closed-minded at any point in their development. But during Phase I, at least when viewed from without, INTJs may seem particularly stubborn, opinionated, or closed-minded. Even if their judgments are presciently accurate, they may, at this stage, lack some discernment regarding if, when, and how to best express those judgments. Moreover, their Ni-Te conclusions are not yet being honed and tempered by their tertiary Fi, making them more reluctant to review or revise them.

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

Once Ni reaches a certain level of consciousness and differentiation, INTJs' inferior function, Extraverted Sensing (Se), enters the picture and begins to play a more influential and often mischievous role. INTJs are not immune from the dominant-inferior wrestlings described in our Introduction, making this phase as challenging for them as it is for other types. Phase II INTJs may also begin to open up and further refine their judgments as they become more open to the personal feelings and values associated with their tertiary function, Introverted Feeling (Fi).

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, INTJs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Se. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as INTJs, they experience greater balance between their Ni and Se. They learn that integrating their Se happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Ni and Te. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III INTJs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

INTJs' Dominant Function: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

As suggested in our earlier section on Judging and Perceiving, in order to understand INTJs (or other IJ types), we must recognize the full implications of their dominant function being a Perceiving function. In short, I suggest that INTJs are best understood as predominant Perceivers and display many characteristics of EPs, only that these are manifested inwardly rather than outwardly.

While INTJs can certainly function as rational thinkers via their auxiliary Te, their first preference is to process matters in less rational ways through Ni. In its popular connotation, intuition is understood as an unconscious way of knowing, or what Malcolm Gladwell has called, "thinking without thinking." It is therefore interesting to consider that, for dominant Intuitives like INTJs, intuition is considered their most *conscious* function.

While intuition is more conscious for INTJs than it is for other types, it is important to remember that Ni is a Perceiving function. So although INTJs may have readier access to its workings and products, there is still a sense in which they don't control it. When we start talking about control, we move into the domain of the Judging functions. What INTJs can control is their level of exposure to the problems they want their Ni to solve, as well as the sort of raw material that feeds into their Ni. The more they are exposed to or immersed in a certain topic, the more their insight will deepen. So it's not that INTJs can be totally hands-off, content to merely sit back and allow Ni to immediately solve everything for them. Rather, INTJs who function optimally find the right balance between allowing their Ni to do its thing and consciously participating with it. We might think of this as a process of mutual informing and enrichment between the conscious and unconscious mind.

Because INTJs can be profoundly insightful and prescient, Ni can almost seem magical to the outsider. While not discounting the impressiveness of INTJ insights, the workings of Ni can be rationally understood. Namely, INTJs' inferior function, Extraverted Sensing (Se), unconsciously gathers copious amounts of sensory information from the outside world. Ni then processes the data in order to make sense of it, like assembling pieces of a puzzle. Eventually, an "impression" is formed about what is happening. Since outsiders are only privy to the end result of this process, as delivered through INTJs' auxiliary Te, they typically don't understand the process by which the insight was formed, making it seem more magical than it really is.

It is often said that human beings rely more heavily on vision than any of our other senses. This seems particularly true of INJs, who often report a strong visual element associated with their Ni. Many INTJs report thinking by way of images more than words. Their intuitions may emerge in the form of symbols, images, dreams, or patterns. This is consistent with Jung's characterization of the Ni type as the dreamer or seer. There is a distinct visual character to these notions, which is why vision-related terms—*foresight, insight, seer, visionary*, etc.—are invariably used in describing INJs. The visual nature of Ni might also tie into their inferior function, Extraverted Sensing (Se), which is also a visual function. The difference is that Se is attuned to the specifics and details of the environment, whereas Ni is more concerned with forming an impression or theory of what is happening based on the totality of incoming sensory information.

Visual processing also seems advantageous for the reconciliation of opposites, which seems to be a specialty of Ni. Verbal processing can be understood as a largely left-brained affair. In order to name or otherwise describe things in words, we must extract whatever we hope to describe from its surrounding context. This discrimination is what the left brain does. While undoubtedly useful, language in many ways relies on our ability to keep things separate and distinct. This can make it difficult to find solutions to certain problems, especially those in which two ideas or concepts seem contradictory. The nice thing about visual processing is it doesn't have the same rules or impediments as verbal processing. In some cases, problems can be solved through the use of images or symbols that seemed intransigent to logical solutions. The work of Einstein is a good example of the merits of non-verbal problem-solving. Indeed, one reason why INTJs can be such formidable theorists is they can approach problems through the non-rational ways of Ni, as well as the more rational approach of Te. They can capitalize on the strengths of both the left and right brain, of both words and images. Jung is a classic example of such a thinker.

INTJs' Auxiliary Function: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

INTJs' auxiliary function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), hails squarely from the left brain. The left brain is characteristically abstract, logical, analytical, and systematic. It takes the perceived world and breaks it down into parts. It then proceeds to name each part, describe its functions, and determine its relationship to other parts. Te functions to rationally understand the world, thereby making it more amenable to structuring, prediction, and control.

While INTJs' Ni is anything but systematic, once an intuition has been uploaded into consciousness, their Te takes over and works to give it rational form, sort of like decompressing a computer file. This process can be painstaking, often taking longer than birthing the intuition itself. But in order for others to trust and get behind their ideas, INTJs must do their best to translate their intuitions into words or formulae. In honing and shaping their intuitions, INTJs' Te is highly systematic and methodical, even perfectionistic. They proceed carefully and slowly, always looking forward to foresee potential obstacles and contingencies. They work to incorporate facts, data, and other objective considerations.

Unlike FJs, INTJs are not as concerned with preserving social harmony. Te is characteristically impersonal, focused on objects and systems rather than subjective feelings. Through the impersonal and

objectifying lens of Te, the world becomes a giant machine, a system of interrelated parts that functions according to the laws of cause and effect.

A Te-based approach also emphasizes quantification, including utilizing objective and measurable goals and standards. Never vague or ambiguous, it employs clear definitions, policies, plans, and procedures. It carefully spells out how to get from here to there, using as many maps, directions, and labels as appropriate. The modern world, characterized by a sprawling system of laws and bureaucracy, might be viewed as the offspring of an unchecked Te.

In the end, it is important to remember that INTJs, like ISTJs, are not Te-dominant types. Not only are they blessed with the ability to isolate and analyze specifics, but they can simultaneously maintain a clear vision of the whole system, including its hierarchical structure and the interrelationships of its constituent parts. Their proficiency with seeing both the big picture (Ni) and its specifics (Te) makes INTJs masters of strategy, systemic analysis and reform, and contingency planning. They are quintessential "[systems thinkers](#)."

INTJs' Tertiary Function: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Introverted Feeling (Fi) is INTJs' tertiary function. An important feature of Fi is its direction. Because it is introverted, onlookers are barred from accessing INTJs' emotions. This is exacerbated by the fact that Fi falls lower in their functional stack, after their Te. Hence, rightly or not, INTJs can seem impersonal and insensitive to others' feelings.

As INTJs become more aware of their Fi, they get better acquainted with their personal feelings and values. They discover that truth does not merely reside at the level of universals (Ni-Te) but also in the felt experience of the individual (Fi). This may inspire INTJs to dive deeper into the process of self-discovery. Frederick Nietzsche, often cast as an INTJ, was deeply concerned with self-discovery and self-actualization, exemplified in his famous dictum "Become who you are."

It is not uncommon for INTJs to be largely career focused (Te) as young adults. But as they develop in their type, they may start to ask themselves if they are really doing what they want to be doing and how well it coheres with their values.

Fi may also inspire INTJs to work toward change and reform. Their Ni and Fi can work together to formulate a grand vision, while their Te specifies plans for implementation. Their drive for change and reform may find roots in any number of fields—from politics, to business, to education, and so on.

Lastly, less mature INTJs can be prone to taking things personally (as Fi types are wont to do). They may seem excessively sensitive, quick to overreact and defend themselves. With growth and maturity, however, INTJs become less defensive and less apt to take things personally.

INTJs' Inferior Function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Like other types, INTJs can be blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficient awareness and integration of their inferior, INTJs will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unwise decision-making in their careers, lifestyle, and relationships. As discussed on my [INTJ careers page](#), INTJs may be enticed by their inferior function, Extraverted Sensing (Se), to pursue careers for which they are ill-suited. In order to avoid being subconsciously controlled by their inferior function, INTJs must work to understand the ways in which their inferior Se manifests in their personality.

Sensory Novelty & Material Security

Like INFJs, INTJs can display a curious thirst for sensory novelty, material comforts, and physical thrills (Se). They may drive expensive cars, purchase luxurious homes, or arrange for the exclusive accommodations when travelling. When caught in the grip of their inferior Se, even the most responsible INTJs can lose control. They may turn to drugs, alcohol, sex, pornography, extravagant vacations, or food to indulge their Se. They may also tend to struggle with subsistence-related fears. They may worry excessively about losing their jobs, being forced to relocate, or not having enough money. This S-N battle can also make decisions about careers and relationships more difficult for INTJs. They may struggle to choose between a career or partner that promises material security or novelty (Se) versus metaphysical (Ni) fulfillment.

Disembodiment

Of all types, INTJs (and [INFJs](#)) are the most detached and disconnected from their own bodies. Not only is their S function inferior, but INTJs do not have Si in their functional stack, which is the function that contributes an internal sense of one's body. In his book, *Jung's Four and Some Philosophers*, Thomas King writes of the Introverted Intuitive: "his hands are alien to him and his body unfamiliar."

Because of their detachment from their physicality, INTJs may have nightmares about unexpected declines in their health. One INTJ, for instance, recounted to me his recurrent dreams of his teeth falling out. Others may forget to eat regularly and appear undernourished, or they may overeat because of lack of attention to how much they are eating. To compensate for this mind-body disconnect, they may subject themselves to overly strict, even obsessive, regimens of diet and exercise.

Perfectionism

All N dominants can be perfectionistic, driven to see their N ideals perfectly translated into S reality. This is no different for INTJs, who place the highest value on quality and accuracy in their work. Some INTJs may be willing to sacrifice everything, even their own health, to ensure their work is done perfectly, with no detail overlooked. Any deviation from their ideal is viewed as a desecration, an irreparable marring of

their perfect ideal. It is therefore unsurprising that their perfectionism can be destructive if left unchecked.

Dealing with N-S Discrepancies

In attempt to temper their perfectionism, INTJs may focus primarily on identifying and articulating truth, while disinvolving themselves from its application. In typological terms, they try to emphasize N and diminish the importance of S. This may be why INTJs are common among academics, as the academy allows them to develop their theories more or less independently of their application.

Other INTJs may work to actualize their ideals while trying to content themselves with something less than perfection. This option, while frustrating to their penchant for perfectionism, may be somewhat more enticing to their Se, which pushes for a tangible end product. However, this brings about a new set of concerns. Namely, once an S outcome deviates from the N ideal, at what point is it no longer acceptable? INTJs may face this question in both their work and their relationships, forced to consider whether the outcome is acceptable or whether they should just cut their losses and start over.

What seems most important for individuating INTJs to recognize is that their primary job is to perceive and analyze, to provide a coherent and accurate explanation of a particular physical system or phenomenon. The implementation or application of that analysis is typically best left to other types. If INTJs can learn to focus primarily on the Ni-Te process, without getting tied up in controlling or micromanaging Se outcomes, they will be much better off.

INTP

INTPs make up about 3-4% of the general population. Their dominant function is Introverted Thinking (Ti), which can be associated with high levels of focus, self-discipline, intentionality, independence, and intensity of thought. Such are the INTP's signature strengths.

INTPs generally work best alone, although their inferior Fe enjoys having people around for background noise. Therefore, INTPs can often be found perched in a public place, such as a coffee shop, plugging away at their personal projects.

Although INTPs may not discover their intellectual side (i.e., their N) as early as [INTJs](#) do, once their auxiliary Ne is fully awakened, they take intellectual matters very seriously. They work to discern unifying themes and metaphysical truths that explain the underlying nature of things. Especially early in their intellectual journey, they feel they must develop a sufficient understanding of the whole before they can competently assess any of its constituent parts. Toward this end, INTPs may devour stacks of books on subjects like philosophy, religion, psychology, and evolutionary theory.

When vacationing from their personal projects and investigations, INTPs, like [ENTPs](#), can be quirky, witty, and engaging. Since they extravert Intuition (Ne) and Feeling (Fe), they can have a certain charm, approachability, and congeniality about them. When discussing a topic that interests them, they can be stimulating conversationalists, as their ever active minds can easily connect one topic to another, paving the way for a multifaceted and broad-ranging dialogue. If disinterested however, such as when forced to endure protracted small talk, they will quickly zone out or find a way of redirecting the conversation.

Despite appearing outwardly genuine and personable, INTPs are more interested in discussing ideas than the commonplace details of people's lives. They enjoy discovering what makes people tick—their motivations, interests, patterns, and propensities. This allows INTPs to further hone and refine their theories (Ti-Ne) of human nature (Fe).

Like other introverts, INTPs can be anxious and self-conscious characters. It is not uncommon for them to display a handful of nervous habits, or at least some sign that they are not at ease. They generally avoid direct eye contact, as though the gaze of their interlocutor may somehow harm them or render them incapable of thinking or communicating. INTPs often have enough insecurity about the discombobulated nature of their Ne expressions in the first place. Feeling that someone else is watching or critiquing them only makes it worse.

Like [INFJs](#), INTPs can be slow to disclose the contents of their inner world. As strange as it may seem to other types, INTPs often conceal some of their most dominant personality features, namely, their highly cerebral, rational side. It may only be a select few who are granted full access to this side of the INTP. Others may only encounter INTPs' inner world through encounters with their work, such as by reading

something they have written. This may explain why many INTPs often take interest in writing, which provides an excellent forum for expressing themselves more fully and precisely.

Because of their reluctance to freely display the rational dimension of their personality, as well as the scattered nature of their Ne expressions, INTPs often feel their true level of knowledge and competence goes unnoticed by others. This is especially common in the workplace, where their lack of enthusiasm for organizational life, combined with their quirky outward demeanor, may be mistaken for incompetence.

Overview of INTPs' Functional Stack & Type Development

INTPs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Auxiliary: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

Tertiary: Introverted Sensing (Si)

Inferior: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

INTPs' personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

This phase is characterized by the emergence and differentiation of INTPs' dominant function, Introverted Thinking (Ti). Early in life, INTPs often employ their Ti to focus on one or two pursuits. They may, for instance, use it to master video games, program computers, get good grades, or perfect their 5 K time. Since Ti is a Judging function, INTPs tend to take themselves and their lives quite seriously. Even from a relatively young age, they are self-disciplined and goal-oriented, striving for excellence in whatever captures their interests.

While often described as pure skeptics, this is not characteristic of many Phase I INTPs. While INTPs are naturally logical thinkers, they, like [ISTPs](#), are not born skeptics. INTPs start with a given (T), and if clearly not unreasonable, will assume it true unless their Ne or Si suggests otherwise (functions which in this phase are not well developed). INTJs, by contrast, whose first function is Intuition (Ni), do not start with a given, but approach things more openly, through the eyes of perception. They use their Intuition to discern whether or not something seems viable. Consequently, INTJs are often ahead of INTPs, as well as most other types, when it comes to formulating their own personalized worldview.

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

Once their dominant Ti reaches a certain level of consciousness and differentiation, INTPs' inferior function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), enters the picture and begins to play a more influential role. INTPs are

not immune from the dominant-inferior wrestlings described in our Introduction, making this phase as challenging for them as it is for other types.

Phase II INTPs also show increasing use and development of their auxiliary function, Extraverted Intuition (this can also begin in Phase I for some INTPs). During this phase, INTPs often develop a stronger interest in intellectual and philosophical endeavors, poised to see and understand “the big picture.” They also become more skeptical toward certain Ti conclusions they made in Phase I. Developing their Ne involves an opening of prior judgments to allow an influx of new information. But since Ne is extraverted and expansive, INTPs must explore a breadth of ideas before they feel confident about who they are and what they believe. Thus, Phase II INTPs may find it much easier to identify what they *don’t* believe than what they do believe. Many will struggle with nihilism and relativism, worried that they may never find absolute truth. It can therefore take INTPs a great deal of time, even well into their thirties, to discern what they believe about the world and about themselves, let alone figure out what they should be doing. Unfortunately, societal pressures and expectations often push Phase II INTPs (as well as other types) into relationships or careers well before they are ready.

Phase II INTPs may also begin to tap into their tertiary function, Introverted Sensing (Si). They use their Si to recall past experiences and acquired wisdom. This prevents them from having to retread paths they have already explored in the past.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, INTPs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Fe. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as INTPs, they experience greater balance between their Ti and Fe. They learn that integrating their Fe happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Ti and Ne. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III INTPs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

INTPs’ Dominant Function: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

To understand INTPs, or other IP types, it is necessary to recognize the full implications of their dominant function, Ti, being a Judging function. I discussed this issue in our “Understanding Judging and Perceiving” section in the Introduction. In short, I suggest that INTPs are best understood as predominant Judgers and display many characteristics of EJs, only that these behaviors are directed inwardly or toward the self.

Ti involves the application of logic and reason for the sake of understanding a given situation, system, or problem. INTPs use Ti to bring structure and order to their inner world, granting them a strong sense of inner control. Inwardly, INTPs are highly self-disciplined, working to effectively manage their thoughts and their lives. The disciplined nature of their Ti compels INTPs to frame many things as a goal or challenge. These challenges may be physical (e.g., trying to achieve an ideal state of health or fitness),

intellectual, practical, psychoemotional (e.g., becoming self-actualized), or later in their development, interpersonal (e.g., "perfecting" a relationship or becoming a skilled lover). In order to succeed in these personal challenges, INTPs are apt to impose rules on themselves. However, because of the wayward influence of their auxiliary Ne, they commonly end up breaking or sabotaging them.

INTPs are also less interested in working with facts than with ideas. Jung writes: "His ideas have their origin not in objective data, but in his subjective foundation." INTPs are constantly digging into the background of their own thoughts in order to better understand their origins and to ensure their thinking is founded on solid reasoning. They see it pointless to try to build theories on a dubious conceptual platform, making them slower than Te types to rush into experiments to discover more "facts."

INTPs often find it easier to identify inconsistencies or logical shortcomings—to assert what is *not* true—than to identify and confidently assert what *is* true. They can quickly locate inconsistencies or logical shortcomings in a given theory or argument. They excel when it comes to identifying exceptions or imagining scenarios in which the proposed explanation could breakdown. Due to their sensitivity to theoretical exceptions, they can be quick to throw theories and start from scratch. INTJs, by contrast, seem less deterred by ostensible exceptions, perhaps feeling that they will eventually be explained or otherwise rectified.

When functioning constructively, INTPs, like INFPs, often employ a trial-and-error sort of approach to building their theories and ideas. INTPs start with a given (Ti) and then use their auxiliary Ne to explore various connections and possibilities. They also integrate past experiences and acquired knowledge through their tertiary Si. It is usually only after years of toying with ideas that something resembling a systematic and coherent theory may start to emerge.

We can also compare and contrast Ti with Fi. IFPs generally take up moral, artistic, personal, or humanitarian concerns (Fi) before logical or intellectual ones (Ti). They judge in terms of good and bad, love and hate, like and dislike. Conversely, for INTPs, things must first pass the test of reason. They think less in terms of like and dislike than they do of likely and unlikely, logical and illogical. This is why INTPs generally prefer working with ideas and concepts rather than more subjective, taste-oriented matters like the arts.

INTPs' Auxiliary Function: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

INTPs use Extraverted Intuition (Ne) as their auxiliary function. Ne can function either perceptively or expressively. The verbal expression of Ne amounts to something like "brainstorming aloud." When orating, INTPs may not always seem to "have a point" as they haphazardly drift from one idea to the next. Even ideas that seem inwardly logical and sensible INTPs may suddenly sound incoherent when they attempt to convey them through their Ne.

In its receptive role, Ne prompts INTPs to gather information. Ne does not merely gather sensory information as Se does. Rather, it goes beyond or looks behind sense data, allowing INTPs to discern otherwise hidden patterns, possibilities, and potentials. Their Ne is constantly scanning for relationships or patterns within a pool of facts, ideas or experiences. INTPs commonly use this receptive side of their Ne in activities such as reading, researching, and conversation. They enjoy asking questions that allow them to gain insight or knowledge from others, making INTPs good facilitators of conversation.

INTPs may also use their Ne to sniff out intriguing possibilities. They commonly enjoy and assume the role of wanderer or seeker, rarely knowing in advance exactly what they are seeking.

Ne also confers an open-mindedness, helping INTPs see truth on both sides of an issue without forming unwarranted judgments or premature conclusions. More specifically, their Ne can be seen as contributing to their openness to alternative or Bohemian lifestyles. INTPs are those most likely to suddenly become vegetarians, join a commune, or decide to live out of the back of a van. They are drawn to the idea and challenges of an unconventional lifestyle.

Like other NPs, INTPs often have a love-hate relationship with their Ne. They love the fact that it helps them remain open-minded and grasp the bigger picture. But living with Ne also has its challenges. For one, it can make it difficult for INTPs to arrive at firm conclusions or make important decisions. It often seems that at the very moment they are feeling good about a given conclusion or decision, their Ne steps in and causes them to start doubting it again. This has obvious implications for INTPs who are trying to find their niche in the world. This can leave them feeling discouraged and restless, worried that they may never find what they are looking for. They may feel frustrated by their seeming lack of progress toward anything substantial. The fact is that INTPs desperately want to produce something of lasting worth or value, but they also want to ensure they get it right. They don't want to leave any stone unturned before arriving at a conclusion. While INTPs typically enjoy this quest for truth, there comes a point when they begin to feel the pressures of life impinging on them. Questions about careers and relationships loom large as they enter their late twenties and thirties. This can be frustrating to INTPs as they feel like life is requiring them to make decisions long before they are ready. As is true of all IN types, they feel that life would be better if they weren't forced to reckon with practical concerns.

INTPs' Tertiary Function: Introverted Sensing (Si)

Unlike Ne (or Se), INTPs' tertiary function, Introverted Sensing (Si), is a conservative function. It involves an attachment to past experiences and past precedent—to the routine, familiar, and predictable. Types with Si in their functional stack, including INTPs, tend to eat a fairly routine or consistent diet, "eating to live" rather than "living to eat." Si types are not only conservative with regard to their diet, but with respect to the material world in general. They tend to be savers rather than spenders, seeing excessive material consumption as unnecessary, or perhaps even immoral.

Like other Si types, INTPs also have a diminished need for novel physical pleasures, lavish surroundings, or material comforts. They are minimalists to the core, relatively unconcerned with their physical surroundings.

An often overlooked role of Si is its perception of internal bodily sensations—the body as felt and experienced from within. Perhaps more than any other function, it provides access to the raw and basic sense of "being" that exists apart from thought or outward stimuli. Historically, Eastern philosophical and religious traditions have done a much better job exploring this dimension than those of the West. This feature of Si is brought to the fore during activities requiring close attention to one's internal bodily state, such as yoga, Tai-Chi, meditation, or various relaxation techniques. INTPs interested in exploring this element of Si may find great delight and benefit from these sorts of practices. They are especially useful in developing the body awareness necessary to relax and control anxiety.

INTPs' Fourth/Inferior Function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

As is true of other types, INTPs can be easily blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. As discussed in my [INTP careers](#) post, INTPs may be enticed by their inferior function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), to pursue careers for which they are ill-suited. Or, in [INTPs' relationships](#), they might pair with EFJ types in attempt to readily obtain, even if unwittingly, what they are striving to find in themselves (i.e., Fe). In order to avoid be subconsciously controlled by their inferior function, INTPs seeking self-knowledge and Personal Growth must work to understand the ways in which their inferior Fe manifests in their personality.

Harmony vs. Helping

In a group setting, INTPs, like ISTPs, want everyone to feel included and treated with fairness and respect. While not as warm and effusive as FJ types, INTPs are concerned with others' feelings and try to avoid hurting or offending them. Like FJ types, INTPs do what it takes to maintain a basic level of harmony in their immediate circumstances. Unlike FJs, however, they are generally slow to go out of their way to help others (at least not in a direct, hands-on way). Most INTPs forgo community service and do not invest extensive time or energy into helping others. This is particularly true when under stress. If burdened by too many demands and without sufficient time to themselves, INTPs' willingness to help others is one of the first things to go.

Reluctance to Extravert Judgment

Because of their Fe's concern for maintaining external harmony, INTPs can be slow to express their judgments for fear that their ideas will be disturbing to others. For instance, they may want to explain how human mating practices are primarily a product of evolutionary pressures. But if they suspect that even one person may take offense to such an explanation, they may withhold it to avoid introducing disharmony.

INTPs may also avoid extraverting their judgments by way of their Fe because of concerns about their ability to effectively articulate them, fearing that they will be perceived as less intelligent than they really are. Hence, their reluctance to self-express relates not only to a concern for others, but also to their own fears, insecurities, and ego. It can therefore take a great deal of courage for INTPs to assert themselves, particularly when discussing controversial or otherwise uncomfortable issues. INTJs, in contrast, whose extraverted Judging function (Te) is in the auxiliary position, seem to have little problem in this regard.

Because of their difficulty with direct self-expression, INTPs are prone to making sudden executive decisions without any prior communication. Others may be left feeling incredulous as to why the INTP had not thought to discuss the issue with them first. INTPs may also exhibit passive-aggressive forms of behavior, such as intentionally staying late at the office to eschew or resist domestic expectations. INTPs can resemble IFP types in this regard, who have a similar propensity for acting passive-aggressively rather than expressing their concerns more directly.

Convergent Truth

As I've written elsewhere, the inferior function can be understood to represent the ultimate goal or attractor point of the personal growth. It is what motivates and draws us forward. For INTPs, this attractor point is the promise of convergent truth. For INTPs, Fe, the final function of their stack, represents this place of convergent truth. This may involve finding the right theory, career niche, and/or relationship. Once INTPs feel confident that they have reached a place of convergent truth, they feel more complete and are compelled to share their findings with others.

Desire to Teach/Enlighten Others

Like FJs, INTPs like the idea of teaching others. INTPs strive to discover knowledge or wisdom they can use to enlighten the world. But as we've seen, INTPs can struggle when it comes to directly expressing their judgments. They are more comfortable exchanging ideas by way of their auxiliary Ne than they are in delivering Fe monologues. INTPs can also become impatient with those who are slow to understand or embrace their ideas. They often expect others to learn as quickly and independently as they do. For these reasons, INTPs are often ill-suited for teaching (with the possible exception of college/university professorship) and better off sharing their insights less directly, such as through writing.

Desire for Affirmation/Validation

Fe involves making connections between one's own emotions and those of others. When a successful connection occurs, it results in a sense of validation, of being valued and understood. While INTPs can do a fair job at reading others' emotions and are cognitively aware of the appropriate social response, they often do not "feel" what others are feeling. Despite this difficulty in connecting with others on a feeling level, their Fe still desires the same sense of affirmation and validation that FJs readily receive when engaging with people. This need for affirmation can be seen as a motivating force behind INTPs'.

desire for achievement. It is why many INTPs score high as Enneagram Threes (3) and display certain narcissistic tendencies. Personally, I never understood my desire to write for a popular audience (rather than an academic one) until I recognized that my Fe was pushing for widespread affirmation.

Because INTPs, wittingly or not, rely on others for affirmation, they may often feel they cannot live without at least one other person in their lives. At other times, they can feel incredibly independent (Ti). Especially when their work is going well, they may feel they don't really need other people. If they manage to completely isolate themselves from others, they will soon begin to feel that something important is missing from their lives. This prompts them to reinitiate contact with others, at least until they feel compelled to assert their independence again. This cycle of alternating between needing and devaluing others is common among INTPs and narcissists alike.

Slippery, All-or-Nothing Emotions

Despite the inferior position of their Fe, INTPs are not emotionless robots. Rather, as is typically the case with the inferior, there is an all-or-nothing character to their Fe. INTPs' emotions seem to have a mind of their own, coming and going as they please. Consequently, INTPs often feel awkward or inept in emotional situations, knowing that they cannot readily summon the situationally-appropriate emotions. As mentioned previously, INTPs are usually cognitively aware of what emotions are appropriate for a given situation, but without experiencing them directly, they can sound clumsy or mechanical in their expressions. This can be difficult for their romantic partners, particularly for FJ types, since FJs desire a sense of authentic emotional communion. While INTPs may experience strong feelings for their partners while away from them, they may not experience those emotions or may have trouble communicating them while together.

For most INTPs, their Fe is rather naive and childlike. They may, for instance, be easily moved by cheesy romantic comedies or sappy love songs, anything that unconsciously incites their Fe emotions. This can also make INTPs easy targets for love-at-first-sight sorts of infatuation. They are particularly susceptible to being wooed by Feeling types, who can bypass their typical channels of logic and directly appeal to INTPs' less conscious Fe.

While INTPs struggle to directly summon or contact their emotions, they can readily override or detach from them, almost functioning as though they didn't exist. Consequently, INTPs may not consciously struggle with the same degree of guilt, regret, or shame as other types. Others may be surprised how quickly INTPs can seemingly resume "business as usual" after what most would consider tragic or traumatic circumstances.

ISTP

"ISTP" is one of sixteen personality types. While some estimates suggest ISTPs comprise only 5% of the general population, my research and experience suggests this type to be more common, perhaps even as high as 8%. Male ISTPs are thought to outnumber ISTP females at a clip of three to one.

Like INTPs, ISTPs dominant function is Introverted Thinking (Ti), which can be associated with high levels of focus, self-discipline, intentionality, independence, and intensity of thought. ISTPs take life rather seriously and use their inner logic to discern the best ways of navigating it. They may, for instance, use Ti to work out their own personal methods for maximizing performance in a particular sport. They love using their Ti to solve practical problems or to optimize functioning. Because of their independence, self-directedness, and competitiveness, ISTPs may excel at nearly anything they set their mind to.

Because ISTPs' Thinking is introverted in its direction (Ti), it often goes unnoticed by outsiders. What others tend to see is ISTPs' engaging in action (Se) or mixing with people (Fe). ISTPs' Extraverted Feeling (Fe) can bring a surprising amount of affability and personableness to their outward presentation. ISTPs often present as sincere, genuine, and approachable. Their Fe confers a certain childlike innocence that others may find refreshing.

Since neither Ti nor Se is a highly verbal function, ISTPs can be persons of few words. Their relationships are often built around shared interests or activities rather than extensive conversation. But since status and reputation are important to their Se and Fe, ISTPs may be far more talkative at work or in public settings than they are at home. In public, they may be fun and outgoing. In private, they may seem more aloof or disengaged, sensing that their intimates cannot provide them the same degree of ego boost they find in the public arena (Fe). This ostensible disparity between their private and public persona may lead their intimates to consider them narcissistic or hypocritical.

ISTPs commonly display conventional, sometimes stylish, forms of dress. While their Ti is concerned with functionality and practicality, their Se and Fe are attuned to the trendy and popular. Physically, ISTPs may have either a lanky or muscular build. While athletic engagement often keeps them fit throughout their childhood, their love for food (Se) may lead to problems with weight in adulthood.

While not to the same extent as their ESTP counterparts, ISTPs are undeterred from investing in high quality and/or high-status goods. Like other Se types, they can appreciate excellent food (some are even foodies) and stylish clothing. Their Ti "techiness" also lends an interest top-notch technology or equipment. Fancy or vintage sports cars, motorcycles, or power tools commonly line the garages of ISTPs.

Like other SP types, ISTPs often display great kinesthetic intelligence. They are often athletic, mechanically-inclined, and endowed with excellent dexterity and hand-eye coordination. In contrast to INTPs, who sport high levels of mental energy, ISTPs exhibit high levels of physical energy and stamina.

While INTPs use their Ne to explore ideas, ISTPs use their hands, body, and other senses to explore and manipulate the concrete world (Se).

Because of their preference for hands-on activities, ISTPs may underperform in academic settings. This is typically not due to a lack of ability *per se*, but a lack of interest or stimulation. As is true for all Sensing types, being forced to deal in abstractions for too long can be draining for ISTPs. Their need for physical activity and impatience with abstractions may also explain why ISTP school children are more likely to be diagnosed with ADD or ADHD than some of the other personality types. ISTP students who can set their focus on a particular career goal or endpoint, such as becoming a surgeon, are apt to fare better.

Generally speaking, ISTPs are wise to pursue careers that allow them to use their practical intelligence to solve concrete problems (i.e., Holland “Realistic” careers). They can make excellent artisans, athletes, mechanics, drummers, maintenance workers, chiropractors, surgeons, pilots, chefs, etc.

While ISTPs differ from [ISTJs](#) by only one “preference” (i.e., J-P), these types actually share *zero* functions in common. This makes them far more different than is sometimes recognized. As TJ types, ISTJs are more direct and firm (even blunt) in their assertions than ISTPs are. ISTPs use Fe rather than Te, which confers a certain social ease, even charm, which ISTJs often lack. Moreover, ISTPs use Se rather than Si, making them less concerned with preserving past precedent than ISTJs are. Finally, ISTPs are more inclined toward “hands-on” and Realistic careers, whereas ISTJs gravitate toward “white collar” sorts of work.

ISTPs’ Functional Stack & Type Development

ISTPs’ functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Auxiliary: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Tertiary: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

Inferior: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

ISTPs’ personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Teens-20s)

This phase is characterized by the emergence and differentiation of ISTPs’ dominant function, [Introverted Thinking \(Ti\)](#). Early in life, ISTPs often use their Ti to focus on one or two pursuits. They may for instance, funnel their Ti energies into mastering video games, tinkering with computers, or learning the best way of shooting a basketball. Since they often apply their Ti to hands-on activities—sports, Legos, drumming, video games, and the like—Phase I ISTPs may also show significant development of their auxiliary function, Extraverted Sensing (Se).

Since their Ti is a rational Judging function, ISTPs tend to approach life fairly seriously. Even from a relatively young age, they can be self-disciplined and goal-oriented, striving for excellence in whatever they do. They can differ markedly from ESTPs in this regard, whose dominant function (Se) is a Perceiving function, leading Phase I ESTPs to be more open-ended and easygoing. While both types utilize Se and Ti, ESTPs are more concerned with perceiving or experiencing the outside world (Se), while ISTPs are more intentional, focused, and self-directed (Ti).

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

Once their dominant Ti reaches a certain level of differentiation, ISTPs' inferior function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), enters the picture and begins to play a more influential role. We will further explore the effects of ISTPs' Fe later in this profile.

Phase II ISTPs also show increasing use and development of their auxiliary function, Extraverted Sensing (Se). This may involve exploring new hobbies and interests, such as gourmet cooking. As a Perceiving function, Se also leads to an *opening* of their Ti judgments to see if they pass the test of lived experience. Since Se is an extraverted and expansive function, Phase II ISTPs may feel it necessary to explore a wide range of experiences before arriving at confident conclusions.

Phase II ISTPs may also begin to tap into their tertiary function, Introverted Intuition (Ni), which can subconsciously assist ISTPs in piecing together their Se experiences, furthering clarifying their identity and worldview.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ISTPs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Fe. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as ISTPs, they experience greater balance between their Ti and Fe. They learn that integrating their Fe happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Ti and Se. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ISTPs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ISTPs' Dominant Function: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

To understand ISTPs, or other IP types, it is necessary to recognize the full implications of their dominant function, Ti, being a Judging function. I discussed this issue in the "Understanding Judging and Perceiving" section in the Introduction. In short, I suggest that INTPs are best understood as predominant Judgers and display many characteristics of EJs, only that these behaviors are directed inwardly or toward the self.

Ti involves the use of logic and reason for the sake of understanding a given problem, situation, or system. ISTPs use Ti to solve problems, to optimize functioning, and to bring structure and order to their

inner world. This inner structuring grants them a strong sense of inner control. It allows ISTPs to be inwardly self-disciplined and to independently manage their lives and personal projects.

The disciplined nature of Ti may inspire ISTPs to frame their lives in terms of personal challenges or a series of independent projects. While not shying away from competing with others, ISTPs enjoy taking on challenges and projects for the mere pleasure of it. Such challenges may be physical (e.g., trying to achieve an optimal level of fitness), practical (e.g., fixing a car), creative (e.g., craftsmanship), or interpersonal.

At times, the inwardly focused and intentional nature of Ti lead can lead ISTPs to mistype themselves as ISTJs. In so doing, they rightly recognize their inner Judging nature, but wrongly conclude that they must be a J-type. They fail to recognize that the J-P label refers only to *outward* demeanor and behavior. This may partly explain what I see as the underrepresentation of ISTPs in demographic data.

Ti might also be viewed in terms of *fluid intelligence*, whereas Extraverted Thinking (Te) seems more related to *crystallized intelligence*. Ti is more intuitive, contextual, and right-brained, whereas Te is more procedure-oriented and left-brained. The fluid nature of their Ti, combined with the keen observational powers of their Se, contributes to ISTPs' acumen as practical problem solvers. ISTPs can analyze a situation, discern how things should work, and then determine how to fix it. While a Te type might feel compelled to use schematics or manuals to diagnose the problem, ISTPs rely on their Ti's ability to reason their way through concrete problems, even those they've never encountered. This contributes to their skill as mechanics, maintenance workers, machinists, surgeons, technicians, etc.

ISTPs' Auxiliary Function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Introverted Sensing (Si) is conservative with respect to new sensations and the material world. Extraverted Sensing (Se), by contrast, is more materially liberal and novelty-oriented. Se types (especially ESPs) often exhibit a laissez-faire, "eat, drink, and be merry" approach to life.

Unlike Si, Se is not content with routine and familiar experiences. For this reason, ISTPs enjoy physical thrills and new sensations. Their Ti penchant for challenges, combined with the thrill-seeking nature of their Se, makes ISTPs prime candidates for all varieties of extreme/ adventure sports. They may take up rock climbing, sky diving, motorcross racing, etc. ISTPs also enjoy team sports, long-distance running, and cycling. Any activity that allows them to see new sights, embrace new challenges, and spring into action is generally welcomed by ISTPs.

Se also attunes to the concrete details and sensory information of the environment by way of the five senses. SP types scan the environment for interesting sensory novelties, noticing details in the environment that other types might readily gloss over. This is why SPs (especially ESPs) often have strong visual recall, or what is sometimes dubbed a "photographic" memory. ISTPs may utilize their Se's attention to detail in any number of ways.

One of my ISTP friends, for instance, enjoys scavenging fields for arrowheads. As he saunters about, his Se scans the environment in hopes of finding another lost treasure. After locating an arrowhead, he further enlists his Se to explore its shape, texture, and other features.

ISTPs also employ their Se in their daily work as mechanics, technicians, chefs, construction workers, etc. They make excellent craftsmen, using their Se to attend to the finest physical details. They love working with their hands and using tools to produce high quality pieces.

Unlike the Ne-Si function pair, which encourages makeshift tool use (Ne) in the name of material conservation (Si), the Se-Ni function pair impels ISTPs to acquire the right tools in order to do the job the “right way.” In this vein, ISTPs are not opposed to spending a little extra on high quality tools, parts, etc.

Se also differs from Ne in that it is not a highly verbal or abstract function. So while INTPs enjoy sitting around discussing ideas, ISTPs would often prefer to be “doing” something. Even watching sports can be more stimulating than conversation for ISTPs, since it stimulates their Se and allows them to vicariously participate in the action.

ISTPs' Tertiary Function: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

ISTPs' tertiary function is Introverted Intuition (Ni). In combination with their dominant Ti, ISTPs may display some degree of interest in abstract or theoretical topics. After all, Ni and Ti are the same two introverted functions employed by [INFJs](#), who are among the most theoretical-minded of all types. However, because ISTPs' Ni is more unconscious, it is less accessible to them for immediate intuitive perception. Therefore, like other SP types, ISTPs are more likely to gain insight through analyzing a breadth of life experiences (Ti-Se). Ni can also aid in the process, helping ISTPs synthesize and extract meaning from a breadth of Se experiences.

ISTPs' Inferior Function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

Like other types, ISTPs can be blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficiently understanding the inferior function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), ISTPs will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unhealthy decision-making in their careers, lifestyle, and relationships.

The ISTP's personality type dynamics can be largely understood as an attempt find a balance between Ti and Fe, independence (Ti) and interdependence (Fe), self (Ti) and others (Fe). Since Ti and Fe comprise a functional whole, ISTPs intuitively realize that they need to better integrate their Fe in order to feel more whole and complete.

Obsessiveness/Workaholism

“In the grip” of the inferior function, all personality types are prone to acting compulsively and obsessively. Grip experiences can be difficult to escape, since the less conscious self (i.e., the inferior function) takes over as the driver of the personality. While the content of grip experiences may differ across the types, their basic shape is essentially the same.

For ISTPs (and INTPs), being in the grip often involves workaholism. As T dominants, work (including personal projects and hobbies), comprises a central component of ISTPs’ identity. In doing what they enjoy, ISTPs are naturally very disciplined and thorough. When they are in the grip, however, they become obsessive, perfectionistic, and unable to let go of whatever they are doing. During such times, ISTPs may alienate themselves from others, insisting they need more and more time to themselves (this is why ISTPs often test as Enneagram Fives). They become trapped, functioning only in Judging mode (Ti-Fe), while forgoing the Perceiving functions (Se-Ni) in the middle of their functional stack.

As for all types, the process of slipping into grip experiences is often subtle and insidious. For instance, ISTPs may have a goal in mind for what they want to accomplish that day, only to discover the task much larger than they originally imagined. But because a bigger task poses a greater challenge, they take the bait and see if they can still manage to get it done. The problem, of course, is that this essentially locks them into Judging mode, since any deviation into Se Perceiving will preclude them from accomplishing their goal. This includes closing themselves off to other people, who come to be viewed as intrusions or impediments to their productivity. Consequently, ISTPs who are frequently in the grip may end up ostracizing themselves from other people.

What is interesting is that ISTPs, like other types, can be relatively unaware of falling into a grip experience, rationalizing their obsessiveness as being “efficient” or “productive.” Moreover, since grip experiences are fueled by adrenaline, they can feel “good” at some level, allowing for heightened focus and endurance. At the same time, there is a part of ISTPs that knows they are in trouble. When all they can do is compulsively hurl themselves into their work, a part of them realizes this is unsustainable, unbalanced, and potentially destructive.

To compensate for the isolation involved with grip behavior, ISTPs may “crutch” their inferior Fe through their relationships, which provides the reassurance that external Fe support is available should they need it. This is why so many ISTPs (and INTPs) struggle when it comes to balancing their work and interpersonal relationships.

Slippery & Elusive Emotions

For ISTPs and INTPs alike, their Fe is rather naive and childlike. They may be easily moved by cheesy romantic comedies or sappy love songs, anything that incites their subconscious Fe emotions. They can also be easy targets for “love at first sight” sorts of infatuation. They may be particularly susceptible to

being wooed by Feeling types (especially FJs), who can bypass their typical channels of logic and appeal directly to ISTPs' less conscious Fe.

Because of the inferior position of their Fe, ISTPs struggle to intentionally contact or understand their emotions. It's not they never experience emotions, but only that their emotions seem to have a mind of their own, coming and going as they please. So even if ISTPs are aware of what emotions are appropriate for a given situation, they often do not "feel" them at the time, engendering a sense of awkwardness or discomfort in emotional situations. They may even experience the desired emotion a few hours later, but it's almost as though their emotions get "stage fright" when "put on the spot." To compensate, ISTPs may try to use their Fe to offer the socially-appropriate words. But without experiencing the emotions directly, they often sound clumsy or contrived in their expressions. At times, this can be difficult for their romantic partners, particularly for FJ types, who desire a reciprocation of authentic emotional expression. But because of their Fe stage fright, ISTPs may not experience their feelings "at the right times" or can have trouble expressing them when they are present.

While ISTPs can certainly have trouble contacting their emotions, they usually have little difficulty overriding or detaching from them. Consequently, ISTPs are less apt to struggle with guilt, regret, or shame in the way that other types might. Others may even be surprised how quickly ISTPs can resume "business as usual" after what most would consider tragic or traumatic circumstances. This should not necessarily be viewed as a flaw in the ISTP, however, but merely a reflection of the unconscious nature of their Fe.

Conflict-Avoidance, Passive-Aggressiveness, & Desire for Affirmation

ISTPs want everyone to feel included and to be treated with fairness and respect (Fe). While not as warm or effusive as FJ types, they are concerned with others' feelings and try to avoid hurting or offending them. They seek to maintain a basic level of harmony in their immediate circumstances.

Fe also contributes to ISTPs' desire for public affirmation. Fe involves making connections between one's own emotions and those of others. While ISTPs may not always "feel" what others are feeling, their Fe still desires the sense of social affirmation and validation. Consequently, there are times when ISTPs are helpful or compliant largely for the sake of external approval or to maintain a certain public perception. ISTPs with a strong concern for their image can take social engagements quite seriously. They want others to see them as laudable employees, spouses, parents, or citizens. Their desire for public esteem can also be a motivating force in ISTPs' desire for achievement.

ISTPs' propensity for conflict-avoidance and need for affirmation, on the one hand, with their need for independence (Ti), on the other, contributes to no small number of relational difficulties. Especially when in the grip of workaholism, ISTPs may feel they don't need or want other people around. Eventually, they come to a point of feeling miserably imbalanced, which prompts them to reinitiate contact with others, at least until they fall into the grip again. This cycle of alternating between needing and devaluing others is common among ISTPs and narcissists alike.

In the name of conflict-avoidance and preservation of external harmony, ISTPs may do all they can to circumvent directly expressing their frustrations or grievances. Wittingly or not, they view conflict as a potential threat to the relationship they depend on to meet their Fe needs, as well as a threat to the flawless image they seek to preserve. So rather than giving voice (Fe) to their concerns, ISTPs prefer to analyze (Ti) or act on them (Se), sometimes in passive-aggressive ways. They may, for instance, intentionally start spending more time at the office as a passive form of rebellion against their partner. Or, they may make sudden executive decisions without giving others any say or prior notice.

Poor communication can also lead ISTPs to create a convoluted set of assumptions about what their partners think, want, and expect. Unhealthy ISTPs may spin an ever-expanding web of faulty beliefs and assumptions about their partner. In so doing, they may come to resent or otherwise think negatively of their mates, even if largely a product of their own assumptions.

Personal growth for ISTPs involves integrating their Fe through consistent and satisfying use of their Ti and Se. Integrating ISTPs must also must learn to recognize the difference between healthy modes of work versus functioning in the grip of their inferior function. Healthy work for ISTPs includes remaining open to Se experiences and diversions, which can keep them from becoming too one-track minded.

In addition to taking a healthier approach to their work, integrating ISTPs must enhance their self-awareness and communication in their relationships. This includes working to unearth all their implicit assumptions about relationships in general and their partner in particular. It means being willing to dialogue about uncomfortable topics that may produce temporary pain or conflict. It is not until they “clear the air,” learning to be more open and honest with themselves and their partners, that ISTPs will experience true satisfaction and wholeness in their relationships.

INFP

The [INFP personality type](#) comprises about 4-5% of the population, outnumbering [INFJs](#) at a pace of three to one. INFPs are idealistic, humane, creative, imaginative, random, quirky, and individualistic. They generally see themselves as special individuals, equipped with a unique blend of skills and abilities. Many feel, however, that they don't know themselves well enough (Fi) and have yet to find their proper place in the world (Te). They feel that increasing their self-knowledge will allow them to act with greater confidence and commitment.

With [Introverted Feeling \(Fi\)](#) as their dominant function, INFPs' (and [ISFPs](#)') emotions are deep, intense, and personal. This contributes a deep sense of attachment and loyalty, even jealousy, toward the objects of their affection. INFPs empathize with and form attachments to those that affect their own emotions (Fi), such as their own pets, children, or the victims of an act of injustice. Instead of broadly distributing their F-related concerns (the way of Fe types), INFPs (and other Fi types) funnel their emotional energies into *select* individuals, groups, or causes. This is why Fi is often said to be *intensive*, whereas Fe is *extensive*.

INFPs can commonly be found helping individuals that are sick, disabled, disenfranchised, or otherwise in need. They love rescuing or helping the helpless, such as adopting abandoned pets from the animal shelter. They take up "niche" causes that have affected them personally, such as rallying for research for a rare disease.

INFPs want to feel inspired. They need their Fi to be stimulated and impassioned. They may therefore seek out, even if unconsciously, experiences that arouse or intensify feelings of passion, inspiration, or meaning. They may turn to relationships, novels, poetry, music, travel, or charity work to achieve their desired level of intensity.

Since Fi is introverted in direction, INFPs' status as Feelers is not always evident when viewed from without. When immersed in Fi, INFPs can often seem cold, aloof, indifferent, moody, or hypersensitive. But despite their Fi's lack of emotional warmth, INFPs' auxiliary function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne), often steps in to compensate. When using Ne, INFPs present as open, receptive, quirky, and even fun.

Because INFPs are outwardly receptive and non-judgmental, they can serve as veritable dumping grounds for others' problems. This can engender a sense of emotional heaviness, leading some INFPs to have a tragic or melancholic air about them.

Many INFPs are well-described as "earthy," both in appearance and lifestyle. Female INFPs tend to go light on the make-up and are generally less concerned with being fashionable than ISFPs are. INFPs also content themselves with rather meager or Bohemian living arrangements, flanked with second-hand furniture and decor. Designer clothes, fine meals, and extravagant vacations are rarely high on their priority list.

Although body types do not always closely correspond to personality types (especially in females), there is evidence to suggest that INFPs are disposed to more of an ectomorphic build. If mesomorphs are envisioned as square and chiseled and endomorphs as rounder in shape, ectomorphs can be pictured as more linear and lanky. While it is not all that unusual, at least in the Western world, to encounter INFPs who have taken on a rounder shape, only rarely are they heavily muscled.

Of all types, INFPs are among those most explicitly concerned with achieving a holistic balance of mind (Ne), body (Si), and emotions (Fi). Toward this end, they often populate self-help, "human potential," or bodywork seminars. Such holistic practices may also serve as attractive and viable career paths for many INFPs. They may find their niche in alternative or complementary medicine, homeopathy, naturopathy, Reiki, etc. Others might opt to study psychology, nursing, or ecology. Because Ne and Si are adjacent in their functional stack, INFPs (like [INTPs](#)) enjoy work that allows them to bridge theory (N) and practice (S).

Like [ENFPs](#), [INFP career-seekers](#) can be drawn to all sorts of creative endeavors—poetry, music, drama, fiction writing, the fine arts, and the like. Creative expression is in many ways the lifeblood of artistically-inclined INFPs. It not only provides INFPs an enjoyable sense of intensity and absorption, but an opportunity for self-discovery and self-expression.

INFPs' Functional Stack & Personality Type Development

INFPs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Introverted Feeling (Fi)
Auxiliary: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)
Tertiary: Introverted Sensing (Si)
Inferior: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

INFPs' personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

This phase is characterized by the development and employment of INFPs' dominant function, Introverted Feeling (Fi). Phase I INFPs are idealistic and quick to judge (even if keeping most of their opinions to themselves). In this phase, they have yet to grasp the bigger picture of reality (Ne). While their Fi confers a strong sense of right and wrong, their moral sensibilities have yet to be opened by the use and development of their Ne.

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

Once their dominant Fi reaches a certain level of consciousness and differentiation, INFPs' inferior function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), enters the picture and begins to play a more prominent and often mischievous role. The INFPs' Fi-Te tug-of-war will be explored later in this profile.

Phase II INFPs are also characterized by a propensity for seeking and experimentation. In developing their auxiliary function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne), they explore new ideas and open up some of their prior Fi judgments. They realize that some of their earlier judgments were premature, too black-and-white, or uncritically inherited artifacts from their childhood. This may compel them to embark on a journey of discovering their own truth, including obtaining a clearer understanding of themselves and their place in the world.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, INFPs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Te. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as INFPs, they experience greater balance between their Fi and Te. They learn that integrating their Te happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Fi and Ne. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III INFPs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

INFPs' Dominant Function: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Introverted Feeling (Fi) is a Judging function. As an introverted function, it is directed inwardly, actively brokering and managing personal tastes, values, and emotions .

As we saw earlier, Fi is more intensive and selective in its focus than Fe tends to be. This is one reason why Fi types seem particularly bent on having their own children, which can serve as a longstanding, rewarding investment for their Fi energies. Finding a niche cause or artistic outlet can also provide an object of focus for their Fi.

While Fe turns to others for emotional support and kinship, Fi deals with emotions more independently. When INFPs do opt to outwardly express their feelings and values, they often do so indirectly—through active (S), creative (Ne), or rational (Te) expressions.

Since Fi judgments are personalized rather than customary, INFPs can be wary of Fe judgments and expressions. To INFPs, Fe expressions can seem generic, predictable, shallow, fake, or contrived. Their distaste for what they might consider the facades of Fe may lead some INFPs to further dampen their own expressions of positive emotions. Some may even repress positive feelings within themselves, often unwittingly, to bolster their ideal of real and authentic Feeling. Others may assume the role of the victim or martyr. These Fi-Fe differences can at times make communication difficult between Fi and Fe types.

INFPs may find themselves questioning the Fe's sincerity, while the Fe may wish the INFP would display a little more good feeling to enhance rapport and emotional resonance. But Fi is more concerned with authentic feelings than it is with good feelings.

Fi also works to mold and shape its own worldview—a personalized system of values—that can serve as a platform for self-understanding and decision-making. In this sense, it is similar to Ti, which also involves a process of building or modifying an inner structure. This Fi structuring process was nicely illustrated by one of my INFP blog contributors:

"My inner values and feelings (Fi) are like a building, a structure of affections that inform my worldview. This involves an inner love for certain things, and an inner repulsion for other things. My values and feelings form "blocks" of varying hardness, depending on how strongly I feel about them; the stronger ones are more resilient...I constantly discover more about the structure as I go, and what I should change to make it better. For example, I didn't have to factually discern a respect for human dignity; I simply found myself in situations where people did not respect human dignity, and it made me angry — I found out that I hate bullying."

As introverted Judging functions, Fi and Ti share much in common. Both are intensive and focused rather than broad and extensive. Both involve a more individualized or subjective process of Judging. Just as Ti runs counter to the standardized methods of Te, Fi diverges from the broad, collective focus of Fe. Both can be skeptical of large systems or standardized ways of doing things.

Fi and Ti differ primarily in their focus. As we've seen, INFPs feel compelled to help the sick, needy, children, and animals. Ti types, by contrast, are less motivated to directly help or care for others. INFPs are also inclined toward art, poetry, and other means of self-expression, whereas NTPs are more interested in conceptual pursuits than artistic ones. Of course, these lines can sometimes be blurred on account of the inferior function, which, for better or worse, often inspires INFPs to pursue Te sorts of interests.

INFPs' Auxiliary Function: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

INFPs use Extraverted Intuition (Ne) as their auxiliary function. Ne can function either perceptively or expressively. The verbal expression of Ne amounts to something like “brainstorming aloud.” When orating, NPs may not always seem to “have a point” as they haphazardly move from one idea to the next. Even ideas that seem inwardly cogent to the INFP may suddenly sound incoherent when they attempt to convey them through their Ne.

In its receptive role, Ne prompts INFPs to gather information. Ne does not merely gather overt information as Se does. Se is more straightforward, involving a direct apprehension of information through one or more of the primary senses. Ne is different in that it goes beyond or looks behind sense data. This allows INFPs to discern otherwise hidden patterns, possibilities, and potentials. Their Ne is constantly scanning for relationships or patterns within a pool of facts or experiences. INFPs commonly

employ the receptive side of their Ne in activities such as reading, researching, and conversing with others. They enjoy asking questions that allow them to gain insight or knowledge from others, often making INFPs good facilitators of conversation.

Its extraverted nature makes Ne more divergent, extensive, and open-ended than its introverted cousin, Ni. Ni is more intensive and convergent, conferring a greater sense of conviction and closure. Once Ni has done its work, INJs are more apt to feel there is a single correct solution. NPs, on the other hand, because of the divergent nature of Ne, seem to be disposed to multiplying rather than reducing the number of options or possibilities.

INFPs also use their Ne to sniff out intriguing possibilities. They commonly enjoy and assume the role of wanderer or seeker. Rarely do they know in advance exactly what they are seeking, which is partly why they find operating in Ne mode so exhilarating. Ne involves a sense of blind anticipation and expectation, of not knowing who or what will manifest next in their life journey.

Ne also confers an open-mindedness. It helps INFPs see truth on both sides of an issue without forming unwarranted judgments or premature conclusions, including an openness to alternative or Bohemian lifestyles. INFPs are among those most likely to suddenly become vegetarians, join a commune, or decide to live out of the back of a van. They often fancy the notion of a "raw" or organic lifestyle.

Like INTPs, INFPs can have a love-hate relationship with their Ne. They love the fact that it helps them remain open-minded, to see the bigger picture, and to see the value of different options or perspectives. INFPs also enjoy the sense of adventure, expectancy, and wonderment toward life's mysteries that their Ne confers, of not knowing who or what will manifest next in their life journey. But living with Ne also has its challenges. For one, it can make it difficult for INFPs to arrive at firm conclusions or make important decisions. It often seems that at the very moment they are feeling good about a given conclusion or decision, their Ne steps in and causes them to start doubting it again. This has obvious implications for INFPs who are trying to find their niche in the world. It can cause them to feel discouraged and restless, worried that they may never find what they are looking for. They may feel frustrated by their seeming lack of progress toward anything substantial.

INFPs' Tertiary Function: Introverted Sensing (Si)

Unlike, Ne or Se, Introverted Sensing (Si) is a conservative function. It involves a strong attachment to past precedent—to the routine, familiar, and predictable.

Those with Si in their functional stack often eat a relatively bland or at least consistent diet. Since Si types "eat to live" rather than "live to eat," they are less likely to overeat or consider themselves "foodies" than Se types.

Si types are not only conservative with regard to their diet, but with respect to the material world in general. They are less apt to lather on make-up or concern themselves with current styles and fashions,

opting for a more “natural” and less embellished appearance. Many INFPs end up as vegetarians, eat organic or whole foods, and sport a bohemian lifestyle. Like other Si types, they have less of a need for novel physical pleasures, lavish surroundings, or material comforts.

This tendency toward material conservationism can also be seen in the creative and artistic approaches of NP types. Their approach often entails creative reuse or recombination of (Ne) existing resources (Si) to fashion something new. While commonly utilizing natural materials, they have also been known to supply their creative projects with items from thrift shops or garage sales.

A most overlooked feature of Si is its perception of internal bodily sensations—the body as felt and experienced from within. More than any other function, Si perceives a raw and basic sense of “being” that exists apart from thought or outward stimuli. Historically, Eastern philosophical and religious traditions have done a better job exploring this aspect of human experience than those of the West. This dimension of Si is engaged during activities that direct attention to one’s internal bodily state, such as yoga, Tai-Chi, or meditation. INFPs interested in exploring this element of Si may find great delight and benefit from these sorts of practices.

INFPs' Inferior Function: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

As is true of other types, INFPs can be blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficient awareness and integration of their inferior, INFPs will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unwise decision-making in their careers, lifestyle, and relationships.

As discussed in my INFP careers post, INFPs may be enticed by their inferior function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), to pursue less than ideal careers, such as computer science, mathematics, or the hard sciences. Or, in their relationships, they might pair with ETJ types in attempt to quickly obtain, even if unwittingly, what they are lacking and striving to find in themselves (i.e., Te). In order to avoid the potential pitfalls of their Te, INFPs can work to understand and be aware of the ways it manifests in their personality.

For INFPs and ISFPs alike, the Fi-Te pairing creates a tension between individuality and subjectivity (Fi), on the one hand, and standardized ways of doing things (Te), on the other. Consciously, INFPs tend to emphasize the former, championing the unique values and preferences of the individual (Fi), while less consciously, they are drawn to broader, “objective” truths and standardized ways of doing things (Te).

Since Introverts’ inferior function is extraverted in direction, it is attuned to externalities. For INFPs, their Te is sensitive to perceived problems in external systems, systems that allow Fi injustices like hunger or homelessness to go unmitigated. This is one of the primary ways in which Te works in tandem with Fi. Te subconsciously evaluates external circumstances and uploads its findings to Fi, which can then provide a subjective response. So when INFPs experience “negative feelings” toward a given situation, they are using subconscious information from Te in making that appraisal. In many ways, the

world relies on INFPs to use this Te-Fi process to identify potential injustices and dehumanization, ensuring that the individual (Fi) does not get lost in or swallowed up by the system (Te). On the reverse end, it depends on ETJs to ensure that systems don't get tossed out for the sake of individuality.

Te may also inspire INFPs to organize their immediate environment. INFPs can derive guilty pleasure from ordering and organizing, granting their Te the sense of external control and order it seeks. Te may also inspire them to "be responsible," follow the rules, or "do things by the book." INFPs caught up in their Te may be so bent on being responsible that they fail to spend time sufficient time empathizing with others (Fi) or functioning creatively (Ne). And since being responsible is culturally endorsed as a positive virtue, they may miss the fact that it can actually be unhealthy for them, causing them to forfeit some level of open-mindedness (Ne) and compassion (Fi). In the grip of Te, INFPs can be extremely rigid, particular, and dogmatic.

The inferior nature of their Te can also contribute to a lack of assertiveness and a propensity for conflict avoidance. INFPs often feel they have little control or power over the outside world. So when it comes to expressing their judgments, they often avoid doing so directly. They may simply swallow the judgment and try to deal with it by way of their Fi. Or, they may handle it more obliquely through jokes, quips, questions, or actions. Like other P-types, INFPs have also been known to express themselves through various forms of passive-aggressive behavior.

Healthy functioning for INFPs requires regularly partaking in Ne activities and explorations. Like other IPs, INFPs are prone to getting locked into Judging mode—alternating between their Fi and Te—while effectively bypassing their Perceiving functions (Ne & Si). Those who regularly employ their Ne auxiliary are able to remain more open and flexible, avoiding the potential pitfalls associated with their inferior Te.

ISFP

The [ISFP personality](#) type is one of sixteen types. ISFPs comprise about 8-9% of the general population, making them one of the more commonly encountered personality types.

ISFPs are lovers, nurturers, and caregivers. They experience great joy from spending time and making memories with their friends and loved ones. Like [INFPs](#), they have a particular fondness for children and animals, as their dominant function, Introverted Feeling (Fi), is drawn to those incapable of helping themselves.

ISFPs form deep emotional attachments to their loved ones, contributing to a strong sense of loyalty and devotion. ISFPs are generally less focused on the well-being of the masses (a concern of Fe and/or Intuitive types) than they are with applying their Fi in more local and concrete ways.

Both INFPs and ISFPs are sensitive to injustices and dehumanization (Fi). While perceived injustices may motivate INFPs to write poetry or novels (Fi-Ne), ISFPs are more apt to respond with action and hands-on aid (Se). An ISFP friend of mine, for instance, works in inner-city Berkeley providing food and other goods to the homeless.

Like [ESFPs](#), ISFPs often display a high concern for, as well as good taste in, fashion and aesthetics. They are often physically attractive, well-manicured, and enjoy keeping up their appearance. INFPs, by contrast, are often well-described as “earthy” and are far less concerned with enhancing, embellishing, or carefully attending to their physical presentation. Therefore, ISFPs and INFPs can often be distinguished rather quickly by mere observation of their physical presentation.

Like [ISTPs](#), ISFPs commonly display impressive kinesthetic intelligence. They are often athletic and endowed with good dexterity and hand-eye coordination. In contrast to INFPs, who exhibit high levels of mental energy, ISFPs possess more physical energy and stamina. While INFPs use their Ne to explore and manufacture new ideas, ISFPs employ their hands, body, and other senses to explore and manipulate the physical world (Se).

Like other IP types, ISFPs are quite independent and self-motivated. Their sense of values (Fi), as well as their desire to excel performance wise (Se), can motivate them to diligently and seriously apply themselves. However, because of their preference for hands-on activities, some may underperform in academic settings. As is true of other Sensing types, being forced to deal in abstractions for too long can be draining for ISFPs.

ISFPs often seem more optimistic and easily satisfied with life than INFPs. INFPs frequently have a depressive or melancholic bent, struggling to make it in a world that seems indifferent to the “impractical” (N) gifts they have to offer. ISFPs, by contrast, seem to more easily assimilate themselves to conventional careers and lifestyles.

Overview of ISFPs' Functional Stack & Type Development

ISFPs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Auxiliary: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Tertiary: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

Inferior: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

ISFPs' personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

This phase of development is characterized by the emergence of Introverted Feeling (Fi) as ISFPs' dominant personality function. Phase I ISFPs are quick to make Fi judgments, even if keeping most of their opinions and sentiments to themselves. ISFPs are also prone to viewing things in terms of black and white in this phase of their type development.

Phase II (LateTeens-30s)

Once ISFPs' dominant Fi reaches a certain threshold of strength and dominance, their inferior function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), begins to assert itself and play a more significant and mischievous role. This will be elaborated later in this profile.

Phase II ISFPs also show increasing use and development of their auxiliary function, Extraverted Sensing (Se). Their Se compels them to seek out new sensations, interests, and experiences. As a Perceiving function, it also facilitates an opening of their Fi judgments to see if they pass the test of lived experience. Phase II ISFPs may also begin to tap into their tertiary function, Introverted Intuition (Ni). Ni can subconsciously assist ISFPs in piecing together their Se experiences into a clearer and more coherent worldview.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ISFPs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Te. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as ISFPs, they experience greater balance between their Fi and Te. They learn that integrating their Te happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Fi and Se. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ISFPs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ISFPs' Dominant Function: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

ISFPs' dominant function is Introverted Feeling (Fi). Compared with Extraverted Feeling (Fe), Fi is more intensive, individualized, and idiosyncratic. Since Fi judgments are formed independent of collective sentiments, ISFPs may be wary of Fe judgments and expressions, which, from an Fi perspective, may seem generic, fake, or contrived.

Rightly or not, Fi is commonly perceived as more emotionally “mature” than Fe. For ISFPs, as well as other FP types, emotions are not readily expressed or dramatized. Instead, they are typically managed internally or repackaged and expressed via Extraverted Thinking (Te). Consequently, ISFPs are outwardly measured and rational in their presentation; outsiders may even mistake them for Thinking types.

The same introverted property which provides emotional restraint is also responsible for the depth and intensity of Fi. At times, one might glimpse such intensity of emotion passing through ISFPs' Te in the form of biting or caustic remarks.

Since Fi is a Judging function, it is characteristically more serious than it is light and playful. It is therefore unsurprising that ISFPs often take themselves and their lives quite seriously. In this respect, they differ from ESFPs, whose dominant function (Se) is more fun-loving and excitement-seeking. While both types utilize Se and Fi, ESFPs' are primarily geared to absorb, experience, and respond to the world (Se), whereas ISFPs are more intentional in their approach. Finding it difficult to relax and do nothing, ISFPs excel at constantly busying themselves with tasks and other matters.

ISFPs' Auxiliary Function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Extraverted Sensing (Se) serves as ISFPs' auxiliary function. It attunes to concrete sensory details of the external world by way of the five senses (i.e., sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste). Se types can often be found scanning the environment for interesting sensory novelties, noticing details other types might miss. They often display a strong visual recall, or what is sometimes dubbed a “photographic” memory. Se differs from Ne in that it is not a highly verbal function. While INFPs enjoy discussing ideas, ISFPs often prefer to be “doing” something. While INFPs love playing with words or abstractions, ISFPs may get swept up in sports, performance, cooking, etc. Despite these abstract versus concrete differences, both ISFPs and INFPs are commonly considered “artistic.” Unlike IJs, who outwardly express Judging (Fe or Te), IPs extravert their Perceiving function (Se or Ne). This can lead IPs to appear more creative or artistic. With regard to creative expression, INFPs are inclined toward writing or poetry, while ISFPs are often better suited for painting, sculpting, or various types of performance.

Especially in F types, Se contributes to a strong concern for taste, aesthetics, and fashion. As mentioned earlier, ISFPs are more concerned with their appearance and more liberal users of make-up or other embellishments than INFPs (who use Si) tend to be. Not only is Se associated with taste, but because it is extraverted, it gravitates toward *popular* tastes and fashions. This creates an interesting dynamic in ISFPs. On the one hand, their Fi is highly individualized, concerned with making its own value judgments

and developing its own tastes. On the other hand, their Se encourages them to notice what everyone else is doing and to follow suit. Because Fi is dominant, however, we would expect it to win out most of the time.

The Fi-Se combination may also inspire ISFPs to develop refined tastes for food or drink. Many enjoy cooking, wine tasting, and sampling new cuisines and restaurants. Contrast this with INFPs, whose Ne-Si combination inspires a more basic diet, often centered on organic or whole foods.

Se can also be associated with broad interests in sports or other “hands-on” activities. It may compel ISFPs to take up work as chefs, artisans, dancers, musicians, physical and occupational therapists, and the like.

ISFPs’ Tertiary Function: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

Like ISTPs, ISFPs use Introverted Intuition (Ni) as their tertiary function, which may lead them to develop some degree of interest in abstract or theoretical topics. After all, Ni and Fi are the two introverted functions employed by [INTJs](#), who are among the most theoretically-minded of all types. However, because ISFPs’ Ni is tertiary rather than dominant, it is far less accessible for conscious intuitive perception. So like other SP types, ISFPs gain most of their insights through lived experience rather than through bursts of intuitive knowing.

ISFPs’ Inferior Function: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

As is true of other types, ISFPs can be easily blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficient awareness and integration of their inferior, ISFPs will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unwise decision-making in their careers and relationships. Therefore, ISFPs must work to understand the ways in which their inferior function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), manifests in their personality.

For both ISFPs and INFPs, the Fi-Te function pair involves a tension between individuality and subjectivity (Fi), on the one hand, and standardized ways of doing things (Te), on the other. Consciously, ISFPs tend to emphasize the former, championing the unique values and preferences of the individual (Fi). Unconsciously, however, they are drawn to “objective” truths and more standardized ways of doing things (Te).

Since all Introverts’ inferior function is extraverted in direction, it is sensitive to externalities. For ISFPs, their inferior Te is attuned to the structure of external systems, systems that are inextricably linked with Fi-related concerns such as hunger, homelessness, or other injustices. This is one of the chief ways their Te works with their Fi. Their Te draws conclusions about external circumstances and their Fi provides the subjective response to those Te judgments. The world relies on ISFPs (and INFPs) to use this Te-Fi process to identify potential injustices and to ensure that the individual (Fi) doesn’t get lost in the system (Te).

ISFPs' Te can also contribute a desire to organize the immediate environment. Like INFPs, ISFPs can derive a great deal of guilty pleasure from ordering and organizing, giving their Te the sense of external control it desires.

Te may also inspire ISFPs to "follow the rules" and "be responsible." ISFPs who regularly indulge their Te may be so bent on being pious or responsible that they fail to spend time sufficient time exploring and experiencing life (Se). And because responsibility is culturally endorsed as a positive virtue, they may fail to realize that being obsessed with it is actually quite unhealthy for them, forfeiting their openness to new experiences and potentially some degree of compassion (Fi). In the grip of Te, ISFPs can become rigid, particular, and dogmatic, appearing more like ESTJs than ISFPs.

ISFPs feel they have little control over the outside world. Like other IPs, ISFPs they are known for their lack of assertiveness and conflict avoidance. This is partly due to their Fi's desire to avoid hurting others' feelings. It also relates to the fact that being "assertive" involves extraverted Judging, which for ISFPs, is in the inferior position (Te). So when it comes to expressing their judgments, they often avoid doing so directly. Instead, they may simply swallow the judgment and try to deal with its attendant feelings by way of their Fi. Or, they may address the issue more obliquely through action (Se). Like other P-types, ISFPs can be disposed to expressing their grievances through passive-aggressive behavior.

For ISFPs, personal growth requires regular employment of their dominant Fi and auxiliary Se. It involves avoiding obsessing over Te responsibilities and, instead, building a life based on care and empathy (Fi), as well as a breadth of activities (Se). Those who do so successfully are more open, flexible, and balanced, capable of avoiding the traps and pitfalls of the inferior function.

ISFJ

In contrast to [INFJs](#), ISFJs are among the more commonly encountered personality types, thought to comprise upwards of 8% of the general population.

To understand ISFJs, we must first consider their dominant function, [Introverted Sensing \(Si\)](#), which compels them to preserve and protect past ways of doing things. This is why David Keirsey has dubbed them “guardians.” Like other SJ types, they grow attached to the routine, familiar, and expected. The more often they do something in a particular way (e.g., eat a certain type of meal for lunch), the harder it is for them to break out of that pattern. The same can be said of their beliefs and worldview. As adults, ISFJs often persist in the beliefs and worldview of their childhood. In sum, they can be seen to rely heavily on past precedent, both behaviorally and ideationally.

While sometimes viewed as stubborn or nitpicky, ISFJs are actually more easygoing than they are often given credit for. Since their dominant function (Si) is a Perceiving function, they are naturally inclined to assume a receptive rather than a controlling role. Unfortunately, this often goes unnoticed by the casual onlooker, since Si introverted in direction. Especially in their free time, ISFJs know how to be leisurely, something [ESFJs](#) can have a harder time with.

In sharing the identical set of psychological functions, ISFJs resemble ESFJs. One difference is ESFJs tend to more warm and engaging upfront, while ISFJs can be a bit more reserved and take longer to warm-up. These two types also differ with respect to inferior function issues, with ISFJs wrestling with Ne and ESFJs with Ti.

ISFJs also resemble [ISTJs](#), since they share the same dominant and inferior function. However, their auxiliary functions do confer significant differences. ISFJs use Extraverted Feeling (Fe) as their auxiliary function, which grants them a greater measure of social intelligence. While ISTJs may lack some degree of social grace, their auxiliary Te contributes stronger powers of logical and tactical intelligence. ISFJs’ Fe may also contribute an added measure of open-mindedness, at least outwardly. However, this may be more a matter of ISFJs’ concern for interpersonal harmony than a true difference in openness.

Although differing by only one “preference” (i.e., J-P), ISFJs actually share *zero* functions with [ISFPs](#). ISFPs, who use Se instead of Si, are less concerned with past precedent than ISFJs are. And because of their Fi, ISFPs are more individualistic and less objective in their judging process. Their Se also confers a greater interest in sensory and material novelty. Moreover, ISFPs are inclined toward “hands-on” or what is described as “Realistic” work on the Holland career inventory. [ISFJ career-seekers](#), by contrast, are typically less interested in getting their hands dirty. They are more apt to pursue “Conventional” than Realistic careers. While both ISFJs and ISFPs may take up “Social” sorts of work, ISFJs gravitate toward more abstract occupations, such as teaching, whereas ISFPs, prefer more hands-on careers, such as nursing. ISFJs also make effective managers of people, balancing care and concern with organizational know-how.

All in all, ISFJs are among the most loyal, dutiful, and responsible of all types. They are admired for their devotion and steadfastness. They make loyal friends and companions, especially for those with similar values and lifestyles.

ISFJs' Functional Stack & Type Development

ISFJs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Introverted Sensing (Si)

Auxiliary: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

Tertiary: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Inferior: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

ISFJs' personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

Phase I is characterized by the development and rise to power of ISFJs' dominant function, Introverted Sensing (Si). ISFJs use their Si to absorb, integrate, and reflect on acquired information and personal experiences. Phase I ISFJs may also show some development of their auxiliary function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), which can serve as a helpful extraverted tool for navigating and managing the outside world.

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

While the inferior function is not entirely dormant or inert in Phase I, the epic tug-of-war between the dominant and inferior does not come to the fore until Phase II. Once ISFJs' dominant Si reaches a certain threshold of strength and dominance, their inferior function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne), begins to assert itself and play a more prominent and mischievous role. This will be elaborated later in this profile.

Phase II ISFJs also show increasing use and development of their Fe, allowing them to form and express judgments. They may even begin to tap into their tertiary function, Introverted Thinking (Ti), which serves to cross-check and refine their Fe judgments.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ISFJs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Ne. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more healthily as ISFJs, they experience greater balance between their Si and Ne, as well as an increasing sense of peace and wholeness.

ISFJs' Dominant Function: Introverted Sensing (Si)

ISFJs use Introverted Sensing (Si) as their dominant function. Si is the function that undergirds ISFJs' propensity to function as guardians and conservators of tradition. The longer they are immersed in particular set of circumstances, the more difficult it can be for them to open themselves to alternatives. Because Si is a Perceiving function, ISFJs are less inclined to function as frontline activists for their beliefs than ESJs, whose dominant function is a Judging function. Instead, ISFJs prefer to spend time reflecting on the past or their cherished traditions. Many enjoy attending religious services or studying religious texts, activities that strengthen and bolster their Si beliefs.

One of the most commonly overlooked features of Si is its role in bodily sensation. Namely, Si monitors internal bodily affairs, ensuring that physical needs are optimally satisfied. Being an introverted function, Si is more intensive than Se is, which can make ISFJs more sensitive to a variety of sensory stimuli such as lighting, room temperature, noise levels, sleeping surfaces, etc. They can also be sensitive to strong flavors and unfamiliar textures, which is why they commonly prefer what Se types might consider a bland, simple, or routinized diet.

The bodily role of Si can also influence ISFJs' health. It may, for instance, allow them to be more attuned to when they are full, thereby preventing overeating. On the other hand, it could play a role in health problems, such as hypochondriasis, in which normal sensations become amplified and interpreted as signs of illness.

We can also compare Si with its intuitive cousin, Ni. As Perceiving functions, both can be viewed as functioning rather passively. Both can also be associated with a strong sense of conviction, which is why SJs and NJs alike can seem outwardly stubborn, opinionated, or closed-minded. The primary difference between these two functions is that Ni is a synthesizing function, producing its own impressions and interpretations. Si, by contrast, does not perceive a different reality behind sense data, but compares present experiences to past ones. For Ni, each experience is approached as new and interpreted on its own terms, whereas for Si, the past is granted a more prominent role.

While it can be easy for some types to criticize ISFJs for their conservative ways, we should not overlook their value and purpose. In addition to helping and teaching others (Fe), ISFJs help remind us of where we've been (Si) in order to prevent us from repeating our past mistakes. Si serves as a necessary cultural counterbalance to Se, reminding us that material resources are not unlimited and should be managed with care and wisdom.

ISFJs' Auxiliary Function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

ISFJs use Extraverted Feeling (Fe) as their auxiliary function. As the most interpersonal of all the functions, Fe is attuned to surveying and improving interpersonal feelings and morale. Like [INFJs](#), ISFJs work to cultivate "good feelings" in the interpersonal environment. For the sake of surveying others' feelings, Fe helps ISFJs read emotional expressions and body language.

Interestingly, ISFJs may have a more difficult time with perceiving their own emotions than they do those of others. This is due to the fact that their Feeling function is directed outwardly (i.e., extraverted) rather than inwardly. Unlike ISFPs, whose Feeling function is introverted (Fi), ISFJs are less equipped to independently manage their emotions. Hence, when ISFJs find themselves in emotionally taxing circumstances, they often turn to others for support.

Fe also entails an extraversion of judgment. ISFJs utilize their Fe to express their thoughts, feelings, opinions, and grievances. Assuming they have not been severely censored in their upbringing, ISFJs are generally happy to share their feelings and perspectives.

ISFJs' Fe can present differently among strangers than it does with their intimates. In larger groups, they may seem characteristically "positive" in their expressions, as part of their attempt to cultivate good feelings. In the company of close confidants, however, they may be more open and direct with their concerns and grievances. In fact, self-expression a la their Fe is critical to their psychological and physical health and well-being. Even if doing so does not provide immediate solutions to the problem at hand, they tend to feel better once they have expressed their feelings, whether through words or tears. This is important for the mates or friends of ISFJs to recognize. While not necessarily looking for others to solve their problems, ISFJs value emotional support, empathy, and reassurance.

ISFJs' Tertiary Function: Introverted Feeling (Ti)

ISFJs use Introverted Thinking (Ti) as their tertiary function. Its role is to further refine their Fe judgments. It adds an element of logic that is less apparent in the early phases of their type development. Less developed ISFJs may draw very little from their Ti. Since their Si-Fe pairing provides them with strong convictions about truth, taking an additional step to Ti may seem unnecessary. With time and maturity, however, ISFJs can grow more comfortable with their Ti and appreciate its inherent value. Ti can help ISFJs think more critically and analytically, serving as an aid and check to their Si-Fe process.

ISFJs' Inferior Function: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

As is true of other types, ISFJs can be blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficient awareness and integration of their inferior, ISFJs will be prone to unwise decision-making in their lifestyle, careers, and relationships. Therefore, it behooves ISFJs to understand the ways their inferior function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne), manifests in their personality.

Ne is concerned with connecting ideas, brainstorming new theories, and conceiving options and possibilities. Prone to seeing connections and associations everywhere, it is an unpredictable and highly divergent function. This is why ENPs are often viewed as quirky, absent-minded creatives. While it is true that ISFJs can be routine and conservative, there are numerous ways in which Ne may manifest in their personality.

One way ISFJs may employ their Ne is finding creative ways to teach or engage with children. Since Ne might be construed as a rather "playful" function, there is part of the ISFJ that is childlike, that wants to play and let loose.

ISFJs may also employ their Ne through hobbies such as reading or word games. Many ISFJs enjoy working crosswords or other sorts of word puzzles. Such activities allow them to exercise their Si recall, while also making connections and associations (Ne). Many ISFJs also enjoy a variety of arts and crafts that allow for creative engagement of their Ne.

A less healthy means of engaging their Ne is gossip. By proffering speculations about people or events, ISFJs can obtain a quick ego boost for their Ne. ISFJs may also enjoy speculating about various religious or political topics.

Stocktrading is yet another way ISFJs may engage their Ne. Since reading and analyzing market trends might be construed as an Ne-Ti endeavor, ISFJs who can successfully navigate the complexities of the market not only anticipate a financial reward, but a psychological kickback for their inferior function.

Like other types seeking to integrate their inferior function, ISFJs must learn that integration does not occur through direct use or development of their Ne. Instead, they are wise to allow their Ne to remain rather unconscious, functioning passively in the background. This allows them to focus their time and energy on what they do best (Si and Fe), trusting that integration will occur naturally as they consistently and authentically function as ISFJs.

ISTJ

Thought to comprise over 10% of the general population, “ISTJ” is among the most commonly encountered personality types, outnumbering [INTJs](#) at a clip of ten to one.

ISTJs are among the most loyal, dutiful, and responsible of the types. They make loyal friends and companions and are admired for their devotion, steadfastness, and perseverance. If ESPs are the hares of the sixteen types, ISTJs are the tortoises. They work slowly and steadily until the job is done, fastidiously attending to all the details along the way.

In order to understand ISTJs, one must first understand their dominant function, [Introverted Sensing \(Si\)](#), which compels them to preserve and protect past ways of doing things. Their Si characteristics led David Keirsey to rightly describe them as “guardians.” ISTJs guard and defend traditions and conventions, particularly those they have significant personal experience and familiarity with (e.g., their childhood religion).

Like [ISFJs](#), ISTJs can grow attached to the routine and familiar. The more often they do something in a particular way, the harder it is for them to break out of that pattern. This not only applies to their behavioral habits, but also to their beliefs and worldview, as many ISTJs continue in the same belief system in which they were raised.

While ISTJs are at times viewed as stubborn or finicky, they are actually more easygoing than is typically accredited them. Since Si is a Perceiving function, their first preference is to assume a receptive rather than controlling attitude. Unfortunately, this often goes unnoticed, since Si is introverted in direction. This is especially true in work settings, where ISTJs are more apt to call on their auxiliary Te. Once away from the workplace, however, most ISTJs know how to be leisurely, something [ESTJs](#) can have a harder time with. In short, ISTJs are far less rigid and controlling (especially inwardly) than they are sometimes painted to be.

In sharing the same dominant and inferior functions, ISTJs have much in common with ISFJs. However, their auxiliary functions do confer significant differences. ISFJs use Extraverted Feeling (Fe) as their auxiliary function, which grants them a greater measure of social and emotional intelligence. And while ISTJs may lack some measure of social grace, their auxiliary Thinking function (Te) contributes stronger powers of logic and tactical intelligence.

Although differing in only one preference (i.e., J-P), ISTJs actually share *zero* functions with [ISTPs](#). ISTPs, who use Se instead of Si, are less concerned with past precedent than ISTJs are. Their Se also confers a stronger desire for sensory and material novelty. Lastly, ISTPs are more inclined toward “hands-on” work, whereas [ISTJ career-seekers](#) are more disposed to administrative or other “white collar” sorts of work.

ISTJs' Functional Stack & Personality Type Development

ISTJs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Introverted Sensing (Si)

Auxiliary: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Tertiary: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Inferior: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

ISTJs' personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

Phase I is characterized by the development and rise to power of their dominant function, Introverted Sensing (Si). ISTJs use their Si to absorb, integrate, and reflect on acquired information and personal experiences. Phase I ISTJs may also show some development of their auxiliary function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), which can serve as a helpful extraverted tool for navigating and managing the outside world.

Phase II (20s-30s)

Once ISTJs' dominant Si reaches a certain threshold of consciousness and differentiation, their inferior function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne), begins to assert itself and play a more prominent and mischievous role. The tug-of-war between their Si and Ne will be discussed later in this profile. Phase II ISTJs also show increasing use and development of their Te and may even begin to tap into their tertiary function, Introverted Feeling (Fi).

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ISTJs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Si. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as ISTJs, they experience greater balance between their Si and Ne. They learn that integrating their Ne happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Si and Te. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ISTJs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ISTJs' Dominant Function: Introverted Sensing (Si)

As we've seen, ISTJs use Introverted Sensing (Si) as their dominant function. Si types (i.e., SJs) are quite different from Se types (i.e., SPs). Unlike SPs, ISTJs are not sensation-seekers. They do not venture out seeking novel sensations, experiences, or material goods. They typically prefer a more routine, careful (versus *carefree*), and predictable lifestyle.

Si undergirds ISTJs' propensity to function as conservators of tradition. However, because Si is a Perceiving function, ISTJs are less inclined to function as frontline activists for their beliefs or values than ESJs are. Rather, ISTJs prefer spending time reflecting on the past and their cherished traditions. Many enjoy attending religious services or studying religious texts, activities that support and strength their Si convictions.

Another feature of Si is its role in bodily sensation. Namely, it serves to monitor internal bodily affairs, ensuring that bodily needs are satisfied. As an introverted function, Si is more intensive than Se is, which can make ISTJs more sensitive to certain sensory stimuli. They may be hypersensitive to things like lighting, room temperature, noise levels, etc. This can make them more irritable than other types when sleep-deprived, hungry, or otherwise physically uncomfortable. Sensitivity to strong or unusual flavors and textures may lead them to adopt a relatively bland or routine diet. Si can also play a role in problems like hypochondriasis, contributing to excessive attention to and concern for bodily sensations, so that normal sensations become amplified and interpreted as signs of illness.

We can also compare Si with its intuitive cousin, Ni. As Perceiving functions, both can be viewed as functioning rather passively. Both can also be associated with strength of conviction, as SJs and NJs alike can seem outwardly stubborn, opinionated, or closed-minded. The chief difference between these two functions is that Ni is a synthesizing function, weaving together disparate information to construct its own impressions or interpretations. Si, by contrast, does not see a different reality behind immediate sense data. Instead, it compares present experiences to past ones. For Ni, every experience is new and interpreted on its own terms. For Si, the past plays a more prominent role in interpreting the present.

While it can be easy for other types to criticize ISTJs for their conservative ways, we should not overlook their value and purpose. ISTJs remind us of where we've been and can thereby keep us from repeating our past mistakes. Their Si also serves as a necessary cultural counterbalance to Se, reminding us that material resources are limited and should be handled with care and concern.

ISTJs' Auxiliary Function: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Extraverted Thinking (Te) serves as ISTJs' auxiliary function. It undergirds their tendency to outwardly express their judgments and opinions. ISTJs' tendency to "think out loud," by way of their Te, can be both a strength and a weakness.

On the one hand, their Te can make ISTJs strong and effective teachers or managers. On the other hand, it can result in them coming across as brusque, dogmatic, or controlling. Like other Judging types, ISTJs can be prone to overstating things or saying things that, in retrospect, they wish they could rescind or at least soften.

Unlike Extraverted Feeling, Te is not oriented to the preservation of social harmony. It is less personal and less attuned to others' feelings. ISTJs' preference for Te may therefore lead others to perceive them as lacking some degree of tact or empathy.

Te also strives to bring order, control, and rationality to external systems and operations. The modern world, characterized by a snowballing of bureaucracy and "red tape," might be viewed as an offspring of an unchecked Te. ISTJs' Te, in combination with their Si, makes them well-suited for administrative, clerical, and other careers that require careful attention to detail, protocols, and procedures. While other types may find highly structured work settings off-putting, ISTJs find them comforting, since they know what to expect and what their role is according to the delineated structure.

ISTJs' Tertiary Function: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Introverted Feeling (Fi) is ISTJs' tertiary function. As an introverted function, Fi involves an inner focus on and analysis of personal feelings and values. Of all types, IFPs, who use Fi as their dominant function, are literally the most "self-focused" (in a neutral sense) with respect to their concern for independently exploring and managing their values and emotions. ISTJs, by contrast, whose Fi is far less conscious, do not always enjoy ready access to their own emotions.

As an inner Judging function, Fi grants IFPs a strong sense of inner self-control. By since ISTJs' Fi is in the tertiary position, they do not enjoy the same degree of inner control. To compensate, they, like other TJ types, focus more on shaping or controlling the outside world via their Te.

One of the more important features of Fi is its direction. Namely, because it is introverted, onlookers are often barred from accessing ISTJs' emotions. This is exacerbated by the fact that Fi is subordinated to Te in their functional stack. Consequently, can sometimes appear cold, aloof, or otherwise unemotional.

As ISTJs tap into their Fi, they begin to attend more closely to their personal feelings and values, as well as those of others. They begin to recognize and appreciate the merit of subjective concerns, acknowledging that truth or value is not limited to past precedent (Si) or external standards (Te), but can also include individual preferences (Fi). In opening to their Fi, ISTJs can become more compassionate and understanding, even toward those at the other end of the political or religious spectrum.

ISTJs' Inferior Function: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

As is true of other types, ISTJs can be blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficient awareness and integration of their inferior, ISTJs will be prone to unwise decision-making. Consequently, ISTJs seeking personal growth must work to understand the ways their inferior function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne), manifests in their personality.

Ne is concerned with generating and connecting ideas, as well as seeing all the various options and possibilities. Prone to seeing connections and associations everywhere, it is an unpredictable and highly

divergent function. This is why Ne types are often viewed as quirky and unconventional creatives. While it is true that ISTJs are rather routine and conservative in their ways, there are numerous ways in which Ne can manifest in their personality.

One way ISTJs may indulge their Ne is through various sorts of speculation or prognostication. One of the most common ways ISTJs do this is through gossip. By proffering theories about various people or happenings, they secure an ego boost for their Ne. They also enjoy propagating various religious or political theories.

ISTJs also engage their Ne in their hobbies, such as word or math games. I know a number of ISTJs who enjoy working crosswords, Sudokus, or other sorts of puzzles. Such activities allow them to exercise their Si recall, utilize Te strategies, and make associations and experiment with possibilities (Ne). Many ISTJs also enjoy a variety of arts and crafts that allow for creative use of their Ne.

ISTJs also employ their Ne by looking for creative ways to teach others. In addition to their desire to impart Si-Te information, creative use of their Ne may be another reason ISTJs gravitate toward teaching.

As for other types, integration for ISTJs does not occur through direct use or development of their inferior function. Rather, ISTJs are better off allowing their Ne to remain unconscious, functioning passively in the background. Instead of trying to develop or display more foresight, cleverness, or creativity, integrating ISTJs do what ISTJs do best, focusing their time and energy on Si and Te, while trusting that, in due time, everything else will fall into place.

ENFP

ENFPs are enthusiastic, idealistic, restless, and open-minded. They are among the most versatile of all types, working well with both people and ideas. As Extraverts they are not opposed to action, while as Intuitives, they are not opposed to reflection. In this sense, ENFPs represent a sort of hybrid between Introverts and Extraverts.

ENFPs are novelty-seekers. They are constantly scanning for new and interesting people, ideas, and possibilities. Like [INFPs](#), they enjoy abstract as well as more experiential forms of learning.

While seeking success in their careers and personal development, ENFPs generally take life less seriously than IP or EJ types (i.e., types with a dominant Judging function). At the end of the day, ENFPs want to have fun and may not be highly discriminating with regard to how that happens. Perhaps more than anything, ENFPs fear boredom and stagnation. Even sleep can seem a bit too boring or mundane for ENFPs.

The minds of ENFPs can move at a frenetic pace. They can be restless, anxious, and plagued by erratic sleeping patterns. As with ENTPs, one can even observe this restlessness in ENFPs' eyes, which are often darting broadly from one side to another, as though searching for something in their surroundings. What they are actually searching for, however, is more mental in nature, such as words, ideas, or possibilities (i.e., Ne). ENFPs are constantly generating new ideas, associations, and quips. They can often seem random, scattered, distracted, and flighty and, rightly or not, are commonly diagnosed with ADD or ADHD.

ENFPs are predominantly "right-brained" personality types. While the left side of the brain is concerned with order, control, and systematizing, the right brain is oriented to novelty, people, and emotions. The right brain is also the more random or "creative" side (i.e., divergence), while the left hemisphere is concerned with analysis and predictability (i.e., convergence).

Like other NP types, ENFPs place high value on their personal experiences when it comes to discerning truth. Though not to the same extent as ESFPs, for ENFPs, "experiencing is believing." Because of the high value they place on their personal experiences, ENFPs may feel they cannot fully know themselves until they have tried just about everything (contrast this with INJs, who feel they know whether they will like something without needing to experience it). For this reason, ENFPs are quintessential seekers and dilettantes, wanting to experience as much of life and the world as is humanly possible. In many regards, the interests and aspirations of ENFPs are infinite. This can be nothing less than exhausting for those trying to stay apace with them.

ENFPs are among the least judgmental and most inclusive of all types, both inwardly and outwardly. Much like INFPs, they are champions of diversity and multiculturalism. Their Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

allows them to readily see different points of view, while their Introverted Feeling (Fi) supplies a sense of empathy and respect for individuality.

ENFPs are also connoisseurs of and participants in the arts and culture. They are commonly drawn to all sorts of creative endeavors. In particular, they often enjoy music, drama, and photography. Those with sufficient mental focus can also make great writers, be it fiction or non-fiction. ENFPs are highly represented among journalists, excelling with both the written and spoken word.

[ENFP career](#)-seekers are often drawn to ministry, counseling, or teaching. They love seeing and cultivating potential in others. While some ENFPs are content with working largely with ideas, others seek to combine this with action and adventure. Such individuals may take up work as missionaries, tour guides, or diplomats. Others may try their hand at politics. ENFPs' inferior function, Introverted Sensing (Si), may contribute an interest in history that may add to the allure of religious, political, or journalistic work.

ENFPs' Functional Stack & Type Development

ENFPs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

Auxiliary: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Tertiary: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Inferior: Introverted Sensing (Si)

ENFPs' type development can be roughly conceived according to three phases.

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

Extending from early childhood into late adolescence, Phase I involves the emergence and differentiation of ENFPs' dominant function, [Extraverted Intuition \(Ne\)](#). While ENFPs are typically open-minded and curious throughout their lives, this becomes more apparent with the development of their Ne, which is among the most open-ended of the functions. Beyond the requirements of school, Phase I ENFPs are generally free to sit back and absorb the world without undue worry or concern. This grants their Ne ample time to form extensive connections and associations. Phase I ENFPs may further expand their horizons through things like reading, travel, the arts, engaging with people, etc.

Phase II (20s-30s)

Once their Ne reaches a certain level of conscious and differentiation, ENFPs' inferior function, Introverted Sensing (Si), enters the picture and begins to play a more influential and often mischievous role. We will discuss this in greater depth later in this profile.

ENFPs also develop their auxiliary function, Introverted Feeling (Fi), in Phase II. Fi serves to refine and clarify their values, worldview, and identity. The process of "finding themselves" entails both inner (Fi) and outer (Ne) exploration. As ENFPs develop and utilize their Fi, they may also become more serious, focused, and intentional.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ENFPs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Si. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as ENFPs, they experience greater balance between their Ne and Si. They learn that integrating their Si happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Ne and Fi. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ENFPs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ENFPs' Dominant Function: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

Extraverted Intuition (Ne) seeks outer novelty. At first glance, Se and Ne types can appear quite similar, as both ESPs and ENPs can be outwardly active, playful, or restless. Ne differs from Se, however, in that it is more concerned with seeking new ideas, connections, and possibilities than it is with seeking novel sensations.

Ne is an extraverted Perceiving function. It can function either perceptively or expressively. The verbal expression of Ne amounts to something like "brainstorming aloud." When orating, ENFPs may not always seem to "have a point" as they randomly move from one idea to the next. Often times, the "point" is for ENFPs to find their way to a judgment (Fi), but this first requires them to explore multiple options by way of their Ne. While others may not trust the seemingly arbitrary and haphazard ways of Ne, ENFPs realize its value. They know that, in time, that truth or wisdom will reveal itself. Their only job is to express their Ne, trusting that it will lead them in the right direction. Granted, some ENFPs are much more coherent and polished in their expressions than others; much depends on the context of the conversation. In some instances, ENFPs call on their tertiary function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), which is not at all random, but more direct and to the point.

In its receptive role, Ne works to gather information. It does not merely gather overt information as Se does. Se is more straightforward, involving a direct apprehension of information through one or more of the primary senses. Ne is different in that it goes beyond or looks behind sense data. This allows ENFPs to discern otherwise hidden patterns, possibilities, and potentials. Their Ne is constantly scanning for relationships and patterns among facts and experiences. ENFPs commonly employ the receptive side of their Ne in activities such as reading, exploring the arts and culture, and conversing with others. They enjoy asking questions that allow them to gain insight or knowledge from others, making them good facilitators of conversation. ENFPs often hone and apply this talent in careers such as journalism.

As an extraverted function, Ne is more divergent and open-ended than its introverted cousin, Ni. Once Ni has done its work, INJs are more apt to feel there is a single correct solution. ENFPs, by contrast, are disposed to multiplying rather than reducing the number of options or possibilities.

ENFPs also use their Ne to sniff out intriguing possibilities. They enjoy the role of wanderer or seeker. They rarely know in advance precisely what they are seeking, which is partly why they find it so exhilarating. Ne entails a sense of blind anticipation and expectation, of not knowing who or what will manifest next in their life journey.

Extraverted Intuition can also be associated with open-mindedness. It helps ENFPs see truth on both sides of an issue without forming premature judgments or conclusions. Ne can also involve openness to alternative or Bohemian lifestyles, allowing ENFPs to consider things like going vegan or joining a commune.

Like ENTPs, ENFPs can have a sort of love-hate relationship with Ne. They think it helps them stay open-minded and allows them to see the value of different options or perspectives. They also enjoy its sense of adventure, expectancy, and wonderment toward life's mysteries. But Ne also has its challenges, such as making it difficult for ENFPs to draw firm conclusions or feel confident about their decisions.

ENFPs' Auxiliary Function: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Introverted Feeling (Fi) is the auxiliary function of both ENFPs and ESFPs. One of Fi's primary concerns is the development of a personalized worldview, independent of societal conventions, which can serve as a platform for self-understanding and decision-making.

Fi is quite similar to Introverted Thinking (Ti) in that it involves an ongoing process of building an inner worldview and approach to life. The primary difference is that Fi focuses more on personal tastes (i.e., "likes and dislikes") and moral judgments (i.e., "good and bad"), whereas Ti thinks more in terms of "reasonable and unreasonable," "logical or illogical." Consequently, ENFPs' first inclination is to use Fi to make moral, artistic, or taste-related evaluations, whereas ENTPs use Ti to evaluate the validity and veracity of concepts.

The difference between Fi in ENFPs versus INFPs is its place in the functional stack. For INFPs, it comes first, which makes them quicker to judge. Afterward, they use their Ne to probe the judgment to see if it is valid or whether it should be kept open or "grey." For ENFPs, the order is reversed. They do not start with an initial judgment or presumption like INFPs. This is particularly true in Phase I of their development. ENFPs are wired to approach each situation with the openness of their Ne. After exploring things by way of their Ne, they use their Fi to form a judgment. Then, if they feel confident in that judgment, they may express it through their tertiary Te.

One of the more important features of Fi is its direction. Namely, because it is introverted, outsiders may not have easy access to ENFPs' emotions, with the exception of their general spiritedness and

enthusiasm. Like ESFPs, ENFPs express their Feeling judgments somewhat indirectly through their Te. This may at times lead others to view ENFPs as Thinking types, while seeing ENTPs, who extravert their judgments by way of Extraverted Feeling, as Feeling types.

ENFPs' Tertiary Function: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Extraverted Thinking (Te) involves the outward expression of rational judgments and opinions. Since Te is ENFPs' preferred extraverted Judging function and falls lower in their functional stack, ENFPs are generally less comfortable extroverting judgments than keeping their judgments to themselves (Fi). This may lead them, along with other Perceiving types, to habitually defer to others' wishes rather than asserting their own. And since ENFPs have independent minds, they can grow resentful of those who try to control them. With that said, ENFPs tend to be somewhat more self-assertive than IPs, but their relative discomfort with utilizing their Te can still land them in relational trouble.

As with other Perceiving types, ENFPs can also be disposed to passive-aggressive behavior, involving the expression of negative feelings in indirect and underhanded ways. For instance, an ENFP might suddenly discontinue correspondence with a friend after furtively feeling offended by something he said.

To improve their communication in relationships, ENFPs can develop the ability to confidently assert themselves through their Te. In hoping to live up to their ideal of authenticity, they can learn to express themselves more honestly and directly.

Self-actualizing ENFPs find a source of strength and confidence in their Te. They find the courage to stand-up for themselves, to overcome their fear that conflict or disharmony will necessitate a bad outcome. They come to see how forthright expression can enhance intimacy. Te also contributes to ENFPs' leadership capacities.

ENFPs' Inferior Function: Introverted Sensing (Si)

As with other types, ENFPs can be blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Consequently, ENFPs seeking self-knowledge and personal growth must work to understand the ways their inferior function, Introverted Sensing (Si), manifests in their personality.

Si uses information from the past to inform the present. It is attuned to past ways of doing things, engendering a concern for preserving certain traditions and conventions. Si types (i.e., SJs) are creatures of routine and habit. In contrast to Se types, they have a diminished need for novel physical pleasures, lavish surroundings, or material comforts.

Si is best understood in juxtaposition with its functional opposite, Ne. Despite being opposites, when considered together, Ne and Si constitute a meaningful whole. As we've seen, Ne is concerned with exploring new ideas and possibilities. Si, in contrast, is focused on preserving the past. Ne knows no limits, seeing options and opportunities as endless, while Si sees clearly defined limits as determined by

past precedent. Ne seeks the new and novel, Si the tried and true. Interestingly, all of these opposing forces can exist within the same personality type. ENFPs tend to consciously identify with the needs and values of their Ne, while their subconscious rallies for the values and desires associated with Si.

Mind (N) & Body (S)

A most overlooked feature of Si is its perception of internal bodily sensations—the body as felt and experienced from within. This element of Si becomes more evident during activities that direct attention to one's internal bodily state, such as meditation, yoga, or Tai-Chi.

Since Si is their inferior function, ENFPs can lack some degree of inner bodily awareness. In their attempts to compensate, they may grant too much attention to certain physical sensations. This can make them more susceptible to hypochondriasis or psychosomatic illnesses, in which a heightened focus on bodily sensations cultivates or amplifies physical symptoms. Because of the powerful role of the mind in both health and illness, negative imaginings may even promote the development of real physical problems and illnesses.

Big Picture (Ne) vs. Details (Si); Perfectionism

When operating in Ne mode, ENFPs tend to be oblivious to details. They focus on abstract ideas and the big picture rather than details or minutia. They may struggle to effectively attend to the concrete details of daily life, such as forgetting to pay the bills, eating a poor diet, or failing to take enough exercise. When engrossed in a creative project, however, ENFPs can look like INFJs. They can become perfectionistic and obsessive over details. It can be hard for them to accept anything less than the perfect material embodiment (S) of their imagined design (N). Walt Disney and Steve Jobs, both of whom were ENPs, exemplified this N-S perfectionism.

Past vs. Future; Traditional vs. Novel

Si concerns itself with the past, while Ne focuses on future options or possibilities. ENFPs' Si, combined with their tertiary Te, can take an interest in the facts and details of history. They may also enjoy using their Ne to explore historical meanings, as well as the implications of history's lessons for a better future. This is why many ENFPs and ENTPs turn to politics or journalism, careers that allow them to use their knowledge of history to analyze current events and speculate about the future.

ENFPs often experience a sense of tension between the familiar and traditional (Si) versus the novel and unconventional (Ne). This is especially common for ENFPs in their teens and twenties. At some level, ENFPs are attached and drawn to the traditions of their childhood (Si). On the other, their Ne and Fi may encourage them to reconsider those same traditions. This can contribute to identity confusion among ENFPs, finding themselves unsure of the degree to which they should break from their childhood traditions versus reinventing themselves.

ENFPs raised in strong religious families may even experience a sense of guilt in allowing their Ne to roam free. But they are also motivated by their inferior Si to fashion a life that is more predictable and routine than would be possible if their Ne went unchecked. Such struggles can leave ENFPs with questions like: Do I want to start a family or do I want to live a freer and less fettered lifestyle? Should I take a good-paying job in a conventional career (Si) or try my hand at something more creative and risky (Ne)?

In weighing such questions, ENFPs, like other types, are wise to ensure they are leading with their dominant function rather than their inferior. As Ne-dominants, ENFPs' signature strength is creative exploration. To best utilize their creativity, they need to ensure they are not allowing their Si to impose excessive limitations or boundaries on their explorations. ENFPs are typically better to use their Ne, as well as the reasoning capacities of their Fi, to hash out truth, rather than deferring to Si tradition. Their Si may however supply some of the raw material for their Ne and Fi to explore and analyze.

For example, an ENFP who leads with her Si might start with the conclusion that the religion of her youth is true. She might then use her Ne and Fi to further explore that religion, without really questioning whether she had the right starting point. In contrast, an ENFP leading with Ne would not start with the assumption that the religion is true. While she would include her Si experiences in exploring its merits, she would not allow religious dogmas to restrict or bias her initial analyses. Only after exploring all the options, a process that typically takes years, would her beliefs grow clearer and allow her to draw firmer conclusions regarding the teachings of her youth.

ENTP

ENTPs are versatile, open-minded, and restless. Easily bored, they are constantly toying with new ideas and scanning for possibilities. Because of their insatiable thirst for novelty, their interests can seem limitless.

As is true of [ENFPs](#), ENTPs' minds move at a frenetic pace, contributing to restlessness, anxiousness, and erratic sleeping patterns. Not only are they constantly scanning for new possibilities, but also generating new ideas and associations. Moreover, ENTPs enjoy sharing and exchanging their ideas with others. Considering how their minds are drawn in so many different directions, it is no wonder that ENTPs can seem restless, scattered, distractible, and, rightly or not, are commonly diagnosed with ADD or ADHD.

Unlike [ENTJs](#) or other types with a dominant Judging function, ENTPs do not carefully screen and filter incoming information. They are truly among the most open-minded of all types when it comes to absorbing outside information. However, just because they are permeable to new information does not mean they are quick to accept it as true. As ENTPs ingest ideas over time, they gradually develop, even if somewhat passively, their own theories about the world and human nature. When these theories don't square with conventional thinking, which is often the case, they grow increasingly skeptical and critical of majority viewpoints. So despite their status as Extraverts, ENTPs can resemble INT types with regard to their skepticism and unconventional thinking.

When engrossed in their dominant function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne), ENTPs are not highly intentional or agenda-driven (their only agenda might be one of avoiding boredom). Hence, they may not be as consciously driven or obsessed with hammering down truth as some [INTPs](#) are. Nonetheless, many ENTPs, especially those who have developed their auxiliary function, Introverted Thinking (Ti), come to recognize their penchant for philosophizing. Like INTPs, they enjoy exploring unifying patterns and broad metaphysical speculations. Despite these propensities, they seem less apt to develop an exclusive focus on intellectual pursuits. As Extraverts, they can be reluctant to focus on any singular pursuit, preferring to distribute their energies across different hobbies and interests.

ENTPs' tertiary function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), is a strong interpersonal function. This, along with their verbose Ne, contributes to ENTPs' love for engaging with others possessing similar interests. Despite their tendency toward restlessness and distractibility, ENTPs can focus when partaking in stimulating discussions or activities. Like INTPs, they are more interested in discussing ideas than engaging in small talk. Their Ne, Ti, and Fe confer an interest in analyzing what makes people tick—their motivations, interests, patterns, and propensities. Engaging with others allows ENTPs to sharpen their theories of human nature and enjoy themselves along the way.

When it comes to schooling, the degree to which ENTPs feel engaged depends largely on the circumstances. Like other NTs, they generally excel in math and science. But as dominant Intuitives, they tend to have broad scholastic interests that extend into the arts and humanities. Their inferior function,

Introverted Sensing (Si), may also contribute to an interest in history. As abstract learners, ENTPs are more apt to enjoy traditional schooling than [ESTPs](#) are. Teachers often appreciate their intelligence, creativity, and genuine intellectual curiosity. However, if the instructor or coursework fails to be stimulating, they can quickly become bored, restless, and tuned out. ENTPs are also notorious for procrastinating too long, sometimes producing work that fails to reflect their true capabilities.

ENTPs are often better at finding their place among people (Fe) than they are at identifying an ideal job in the system (Te). Their Ne (as well as their lack of Te) can make ENTPs reluctant to work within highly structured systems or organizations. Unfortunately, the modern working world seems primarily suited for those with Te in their functional stack (especially TJ types). Rife with rules, policies, and regulations, nearly all professions, as well as academic and research institutions, have become Te-laden in their methods and operations. Consequently, ENTPs often struggle to find jobs and careers that allow them to function authentically as ENTPs.

Career-wise, ENTPs are best suited for working with people and ideas. Since many ENTPs are effective writers and orators, they often do well as journalists, writers, or editors. While apt to grow weary of the increasing systematization and bureaucracy of the modern education system, ENTPs may also enjoy teaching. ENTPs with religious affiliations may function as missionaries, pastors, or ministers, although their knack for deviating from conventional dogmas and traditions may precipitate problems. ENTPs may also enjoy work as actors, mediators, diplomats, or entrepreneurs.

ENTPs' Functional Stack & Type Development

ENTPs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

Auxiliary: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Tertiary: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

Inferior: Introverted Sensing (Si)

ENTPs' type development can be roughly divided according to three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

Extending from childhood to early adulthood, Phase I involves the emergence and differentiation of the ENTPs' dominant function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne). While ENTPs are generally curious and open-minded throughout their lives, this is especially pronounced during this phase of their development. Beyond the requirements of schooling, Phase I ENTPs are free to sit back and absorb the world without undue worry or concern. This allows their Ne to make all sorts of connections and associations, which can eventually coalesce into a coherent worldview.

Phase II (20s-30s)

Once their Ne reaches a certain level of consciousness and differentiation, ENTPs' inferior function, Introverted Sensing (Si), enters the picture and begins to play a more influential and often mischievous role. We will discuss ENTPs' inferior-function related issues later in this profile.

In addition to the increasing presence and influence of Si, Phase II ENTPs are also developing their auxiliary function, Introverted Thinking (Ti). Ti brings greater order and clarity to ENTPs' ideas, worldview, and identity. As ENTPs develop and utilize their Ti, they may also become more serious, focused, and driven.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ENTPs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Si. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as ENTPs, they experience greater balance between their Ne and Si. They learn that integrating their Si happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Ne and Ti. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ENTPs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ENTPs' Dominant Function: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

As described in our earlier section, *Understanding Judging and Perceiving*, EPs are really "purer" Perceivers than IPs are. Not only do EPs display the outer characteristics commonly associated with Perceiving (e.g., spontaneous, adaptable, receptive), but their dominant function (Ne or Se) is also a Perceiving function.

Extraverted Intuition (Ne) is a novelty-seeking function. At first glance, Se and Ne types may seem fairly similar (such conflation can be seen, for instance, in the Enneagram Seven), since both ESPs and ENPs can be outwardly active, energetic, and playful. Ne differs from Se, however, in that it is more concerned with ideas, connections, and possibilities than it is with novel sensations or material goods.

Extraverted Intuition can function either perceptively or expressively. The verbal expression of Ne amounts to something like "brainstorming aloud." Although typically not to the same extent as ENFPs, when orating aloud, ENTPs may not always seem to "have a point," quickly bouncing from one idea to the next. In many cases, "the point" is for ENTPs to find their way to a judgment, but they must first explore the options by way of their Ne. While others may distrust the seemingly arbitrary or haphazard ways of Ne, ENTPs realize its value, recognizing that in time, truth or wisdom will reveal itself. ENTPs' primary job then, is to employ and express their Ne, trusting that it will lead them in the right direction. With that said, some ENTPs are much more cogent and streamlined in their expressions than others. Many ENTPs learn to develop and express themselves via their tertiary function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), which is not at all random, but more direct and coherent.

Ne also works receptively, gathering information from without. Unlike Se, it does not gather overt information, but goes beyond or looks behind sensory data. It is what allows ENTPs to discern otherwise hidden patterns, possibilities, and potentials. Ne is constantly scanning for new connections and patterns. They often employ this receptive side of their Ne in activities like reading, watching movies, and conversing with others.

Because it is an extraverted function, Ne is more divergent, extensive, and open-ended than Introverted Intuition (Ni). Ni is more intensive and convergent, conferring a greater sense of conviction and closure. Once Ni has done its work, INJs are apt to feel there is a single correct solution. Ne, by contrast, is disposed to multiplying rather than reducing the number of possible options or solutions. Only through use of their auxiliary Ti can ENTPs move toward convergence.

Ne also confers open-mindedness. It helps ENTPs see truth on both sides of an issue without forming unwarranted judgments or premature conclusions. It also contributes an openness to alternative or Bohemian lifestyles, allowing ENTPs to entertain options such as vegetarianism or joining a commune.

Ne also resists excessive external structuring, which can feel like an imposition to ENTPs' sense of personal freedom and autonomy. ENTPs scoff at what they see as unnecessary or overly rigid rules, regulations, or procedures. They also dislike unchanging or sterile surroundings. When the environment is too bland or sterile, they can quickly become bored and restless.

Like other NPs, ENTPs can have a love-hate relationship with their Ne. They love the fact that it helps them remain open-minded, to see the bigger picture, and to appreciate different options and perspectives. They also enjoy its attendant sense of adventure, expectancy, and wonderment toward life's mysteries. But Ne also has its challenges. It can make it difficult for ENTPs to feel calm and satisfied, to arrive at firm conclusions, or to feel confident in their decision-making.

ENTPs' Auxiliary Function: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

As dominant Perceivers, ENTPs are disposed to taking a more passive approach to life, particularly with regard to the outside world. Like other EPs, they are content to remain in a mode of open Perceiving until they are prompted, whether inwardly or outwardly, to employ their auxiliary Judging function, Introverted Thinking (Ti). When ENTPs feel compelled to engage their Ti, they become more inwardly focused and intense, similar to the typical mode of operation for INTPs. But because Ti is introverted in its direction, onlookers may fail to notice this more rational side of the ENTP.

Ti involves the application of logic and reason for the sake of understanding a given situation, system, or problem. It also works to bring structure and order to the inner world. This inner structuring grants ENTPs a good sense of inner control.

When engaging their Ti, ENTPs dig into the background of their thoughts to better understand their origins and to ensure their ideas are logical. Like INTPs, they can quickly find inconsistencies or logical shortcomings in a given theory or argument. They excel at identifying exceptions or imagining scenarios in which the proposed explanation might breakdown. They find it easier to identify logical shortcomings or inconsistencies—to assert what is *not* true—than to confidently assert what is true.

The difference between Ti in ENTPs versus INTPs is its place in the functional stack. For INTPs, it comes first, which makes them quicker to inwardly judge. INTPs then use their auxiliary Ne to open up and further explore their initial judgments. In ENTPs, the order is reversed. Rather than starting with an initial judgment or presumption like INTPs, they approach things through the fresh eyes of Intuition. They then employ their Ti to analyze and enhance the logic and structuring of their Ne perceptions.

In addition to the different ordering of their functional stacks, ENTPs, as dominant Perceivers, can more easily leave things open-ended or ambiguous than INTPs can. Their Ne dominance also makes them more open to “playing” than INTPs are. I once administered a values inventory and was surprised when a couple ENTPs marked “having fun” as one of their top priorities in life. To most INTPs, whose dominant Ti compels them to take life seriously, such a response smacks of hedonism and would likely be among their lowest ranked values. ENTPs’ dominant Ne may also confer a greater interest in the arts and culture than typically seen among INTPs.

The difference between Ti and Fi seems largely a matter of interests and emphases. Fi types (FPs) are more concerned and skilled with moral judgments (Fi) than logical ones (Ti). They judge in terms of good and bad, love and hate, like and dislike. TP, in contrast, start out with a need for sound logic (Ti) and are generally less concerned with matters of taste or morality upfront. They think less in terms of love and hate than reasonable and unreasonable, logical and illogical. With that said, since T and F are adjacent in ENTPs’ functional stack, it can sometimes be a bit tricky, especially early in their development, to tease out their T-F preference.

ENTPs’ Tertiary Function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

ENTPs’ tertiary function is Extraverted Feeling (Fe). Fe is the most interpersonal of all the functions, striving for interpersonal peace, harmony, and understanding. This not only involves attending to *what* is said, but also *how* something is said. While ENTPs may be less disturbed by or sensitive to external disharmony than some other types, they still work, even if largely unwittingly, to cultivate good feelings in the environment.

We can also approach ENTPs’ Fe more theoretically. Namely, since Fe is their preferred extraverted Judging function and falls lower in their functional stack, ENTPs are less comfortable extroverting judgments (Fe) than keeping them to themselves (Ti). This can lead ENTPs, along with other Perceiving types, to habitually defer to others’ wishes rather than asserting their own. And because ENTPs have strong minds, they may grow inwardly resentful of those they see as trying to control them. Granted,

they are generally more self-assertive than IPs are, but their discomfort in deploying Fe can still get kindle problems in [ENTPs' relationships](#).

ENTPs' Inferior Function: Introverted Sensing (Si)

As is true of other types, ENTPs can be easily blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. ENTPs seeking self-knowledge and personal growth must work to understand the ways their inferior function, Introverted Sensing (Si), manifests in their personality.

Introverted Sensing is best understood when juxtaposed with its functional opposite, Ne. Despite their oppositional nature, when considered together, Ne and Si constitute a meaningful whole. As we have seen, Ne explores new ideas and possibilities. Si, by contrast, is concerned with preserving the past. Ne knows no limits, seeing infinite options and possibilities, while Si sees clearly defined limits as determined by past precedent. Ne is liberal and unfettered, Si conservative and careful. What is fascinating is that all of these opposing forces can exist within the same personality type. ENTPs tend to consciously identify with the needs and values of their Ne, while their subconscious pushes for the interests of Si.

When using Ne, ENTPs can be rather oblivious to details. They may fail to effectively attend to the concrete details of daily life, such as forgetting to the bills, being careless with their diet, or not taking enough exercise. When engrossed in a creative project, however, ENTPs can look like INTJs, becoming perfectionistic and obsessive over details. As N-dominants, it can be difficult for them to accept anything less than perfection when it comes to the physical embodiment (S) of their vision or ideas (N).

A most overlooked feature of Si is its perception and awareness of internal bodily sensations—the body as felt and experienced from within. But since Si is ENTPs' inferior function, they may feel out of touch with their inner body. To compensate, they may grant too much attention to certain physical sensations, making them more susceptible to hypochondriasis or psychosomatic illnesses, in which an increased focus on bodily sensations cultivates or heightens symptoms.

N and S also have a temporal element. Si concerns itself with the past, while Ne is focused on future possibilities and potentials. ENTPs' Si can confer an interest in the details of history. They also enjoy using their Ne to explore historical meanings, interpretations, and implications. This is why many ENTPs take up politics or journalism, careers that allow them to use their knowledge of history to analyze current events and speculate about the future.

ENTPs also experience tension between the traditional (Si) and the novel or unconventional (Ne). This is especially common for ENTPs in Phases I and II of their type development. To some degree, they remain attached and drawn to their childhood traditions (Si). At the same time, however, their Ne and Ti may encourage them to deconstruct and even rebel against those traditions. This can engender identity confusion in ENTPs, unsure of the degree to which they should break from their childhood traditions versus reconceiving themselves. Such struggles can leave ENTPs with questions like: Should I opt for

family life or an unconventional lifestyle? Should I pursue the security of a conventional career (Si) or something more creative and potentially risky (Ne)?

In considering such questions, ENTPs, need to ensure they are leading with their dominant function rather than their inferior. As N-dominants, ENTPs' best strengths involve creatively exploring ideas, theories, and connections. To best utilize these strengths, they need to ensure they are not allowing their inferior Si to impose undue limits or boundaries on their explorations. They are generally better off using their Ne, as well as the reasoning capacities of their Ti, to hash out truth, rather than deferring to Si traditions.

ENFJ

Like the [INFJ](#), the [ENFJ personality](#) type is among the rarest of the sixteen types, comprising only about 2-3% of the population.

ENFJs are warm, engaging, charismatic, persuasive, and talkative. They are the kings and queens of the social realm, capable of quickly reading and establishing rapport with others. Because of their love for people and formidable social intelligence, ENFJs develop extensive networks of friends, acquaintances, and social connections; they are networkers *par excellence*. Just as ESPs seek a breadth of sensory experiences (Se), ENFJs enjoy extensive interactions with people (Fe).

Like INFJs, ENFJs excel when it comes to reading people, quickly assessing and mirroring their emotions, expressions, and body language. This grants ENFJs great insight into people, contributing to their effectiveness as teachers, counselors, managers, salespersons, etc.

ENFJs discover their people skills rather early in life. Indeed, their self-esteem and self-image develops in large part around their social prowess. With each new person they encounter and connect with, their self-concept and self-worth are reinforced. Over time, ENFJs gradually become aware of their power to influence and persuade others. At some point, they realize they can use their powers of persuasion to get nearly anything they want. From that point forward, they must wrestle with the degree to which they are willing to use their charm and charisma to achieve their goals. They can take an “ends justifies the means” approach, manipulating and politicking their way to the top. Or, they can forgo the temptation of quick success and preserve their integrity.

While “working a crowd” or charming an audience is undoubtedly invigorating for ENFJs, their desire to engage with people goes beyond mere superficials. Their auxiliary function, Introverted Intuition (Ni), adds a degree of depth that is less apparent in their ESFJ counterparts. Like INFJs, ENFJs see it as their job to help others live more authentically, ethically, and healthily. Utilizing their insight into people, they can be quite effective at diagnosing problems and formulating solutions that spawn personal growth. And because ENFJs are the most convincing (even if a bit forceful) of all the personality types, others often respond well to their counsel.

Although ENFJs certainly want to help and support others, their reasons for doing so cannot be considered entirely altruistic. After all, as Fe types, their own sense of self is inextricably interwoven with that of others. So while ENFJs genuinely want those they help to succeed, if those individuals end up failing, the ENFJ may come down hard on them. After all, failure on the part of their students can seem threatening to ENFJs’ ability to self-actualize, since their students are extensions of themselves. Deep down, the ENFJ may feel that a “poor student” is a reflection of a “poor teacher.”

Another element of ENFJs that cannot be overlooked is their desire for self-mastery. As we will discuss later, this pertains to their inferior function, Introverted Thinking (Ti), which compels them to be self-

controlled, self-directed, and self-regulated. Unfortunately, like other types, ENFJs often overestimate the skill and development of their inferior. So while they may aspire to or even believe they have achieved self-mastery, they are typically far better at evaluating and managing others (Fe) than they are themselves (Ti).

In sum, ENFJs are driven by several things. They are invigorated by social novelty and networking with people. They are also motivated by personal excellence and self-mastery, including the sense of validation that comes from being esteemed and admired by others. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, they strive to quicken the personal growth of others, which, in turn, fortifies their sense of purpose and self-worth.

Overview of ENFJs' Functional Stack & Type Development

ENFJs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)
Auxiliary: Introverted Intuition (Ni)
Tertiary: Extraverted Sensing (Se)
Inferior: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

ENFJs' personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

This phase is characterized by the emergence and differentiation of ENFJs' dominant function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe). In developing and strengthening their Fe, Phase I ENFJs can seem inflexible and opinionated, quick to make judgments and draw conclusions about the world. Since their judgments are not yet being weighed and balanced by their auxiliary Ni, they are prone to jump to conclusions.

Since Fe is a rational Judging function, ENFJs tend to take themselves and their lives quite seriously. Even from a relatively young age, ENFJs are self-disciplined and goal-oriented, striving for excellence in whatever they do. They can differ markedly from INFJs in this phase, whose dominant function (Ni) is a Perceiving function. Ni prompts INFJs to be more open and take life less seriously than Phase I ENFJs are wont to do. While both types utilize Fe, INFJs are more concerned with ingesting and digesting the world (Ni), while ENFJs are already working to change or control it (Fe).

Phase II (Late teens-30s)

Once their Fe reaches a certain level of consciousness and differentiation, ENFJs' inferior function, Introverted Thinking (Ti), enters the picture and begins to play a more influential and often mischievous role. We will discuss ENFJs' Fe-Ti tug-of-war later in this profile.

In addition to the increasing presence and influence of their Ti, Phase II ENFJs are also developing their auxiliary function, Introverted Intuition (Ni). As they encounter complex problems and situations that call for greater patience and reflection, they turn to their Ni for assistance. In doing so, they become increasingly capable of grasping and incorporating the bigger picture (Ni) into their Fe Judging process. Ni insight may also compel them rescind or revise some of their previous premature judgments.

Phase II ENFJs may also begin to differentiate and incorporate their tertiary function, Extraverted Sensing (Se). For ENFJs, Se represents a further relaxing and opening of their judgments. It helps them loosen their grip on life, tempering their need for constant outer control (Fe). As their Ni and Se develop, ENFJs take on more Perceiving qualities, displaying more openness, flexibility, and acceptance.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ENFJs become increasingly aware of the insidious manifestations of their inferior Ti. By increasing their inferior awareness and learning to function more authentically as ENFJs, they experience greater balance between their Fe and Ti. They learn that integrating their Ti happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Fe and softening its judgments and its need for control through their Ni and Se. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ENFJs come to experience a heightened and enduring sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ENFJs' Dominant Function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

Extraverted Feeling (Fe) is ENFJs' dominant and most preferred function. As a Judging function that is extraverted in its direction, ENFJs are considered Extraverted Judging types. In laypersons' terms, this means they are quick to outwardly express their feelings, opinions, and grievances. They Judge before they Perceive, speak before they listen. This can be both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, it contributes to ENFJs' quick responsiveness and capacity for leadership. On the other, it can dispose ENFJs to judging too quickly or too severely.

Fe also imbues ENFJs with a propensity to control or otherwise influence other people. This desire for control should not immediately be considered "bad" or unhealthy. As we've seen, Judging is a viable and commonly used approach to navigating life. While ETJs are more quickly recognized as controlling commanders, ENFJs' Feeling preference makes their means of control more subtle and in some ways more effective. Because of their ability to read and understand people, ENFJs can quickly and intuitively discern the quickest and most effective route to influencing them. This often involves schmoozing through eloquent language packaged in Fe warmth and friendliness.

While ENFJs are subtle and smooth in the public sphere, those who work with or have a closer relationship with them will eventually see their more controlling or judgmental side. While Fe involves a penchant for maintaining interpersonal harmony and good feeling, this can be trumped by its commensurate desire for outer control and assertiveness. ENFJs are in many ways wired to express their

feeling judgments as soon as they come about. This is obviously of great importance for their intimates to understand, recognizing that what comes out of the ENFJ's mouth is often their first reaction, one they may later come to reverse upon further reflection (Ni). Unfortunately, parents and teachers often fail to understand this about their ENFJ children and end up stifling their Fe expressiveness. This most certainly produces great frustration and possibly even psychological harm in young ENFJs.

Fe also plays a prominent role in reading and empathizing with others' emotions. It helps ENFJs recreate another's emotion state within themselves, allowing them to feel what the other person is feeling. Interestingly, ENFJs have a more difficult time when it comes to perceiving and making sense of their own emotions. This is due to the fact that Fe is directed outwardly rather than inwardly. Unlike IFJs, ENFJs don't spend much time trying to independently sort out their emotions. Inwardly, they deal largely in the currency of Intuition (Ni). Hence, when ENFJs find themselves in emotionally troubling circumstances, they often (and should) turn to others for support or guidance. Expressing themselves through their Fe is critical to their psychological and physical health and well-being. Even if doing so does not provide them with an immediate solution to the problem at hand, they tend to feel better once they have expressed their feelings, be it through words or through tears.

Fe is more influenced by cultural norms and expectations than Fi is. Just as Extraverted Thinking (Te) involves collective methods for evaluating and ordering information (e.g., the scientific method), Fe entails socially accepted ways of engaging with people. For instance, ENFJs typically display ample warmth, friendliness, and congeniality in their interactions. While Fi types may disparage ENFJs as emotionally superficial or disingenuous, most ENFJs have good intentions of improving morale or finding consensus. Even their attempts to control or schmooze others may be rooted in a larger desire for peace, diplomacy, and mutual understanding.

Finally, the dominant position of their Fe, combined with their auxiliary Ni, makes ENFJs among the most consistently goal-oriented of all types. ENFJs tend to take themselves, their lives, and their endeavors quite seriously. To the casual onlooker, this may not always seem evident, since ENFJs spend so much of their time engaging with people. But for ENFJs, their interactions with people are a key part of their life's work. ENFJs are highly intentional and often have an agenda—to teach, motivate, unite, persuade, etc. If they see little opportunity to effectively execute their agenda, they can quickly become restless and move on to something different.

ENFJs' Auxiliary Function: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

As stated earlier, ENFJs Judge before they Perceive. In many cases, it is only after making an upfront judgment by way of their Fe that they open themselves to alternative perspectives presented by their auxiliary function, Introverted Intuition (Ni). They differ in this respect from INFJs, who use Ni first and are therefore slower to express an initial judgment. ENFJ-INFJ differences emerge in social contexts as well.

As Fe dominants, ENFJs are first and foremost concerned with shaping what is happening in the immediate social environment (Fe). They want to ensure that good feelings are maintained or to accomplish whatever social objective they have in mind (e.g., teaching, advising, motivating, etc.). For ENFJs, Ni concerns take a backseat to Fe.

INFJs, by contrast, are more concerned with obtaining an accurate perception of what is happening (Ni) than they are with accomplishing any specific social objective. If they are faced with the dilemma of stating truth versus saving face, INFJs are more inclined toward the former. ENFJs, by contrast, are more likely to take an "ends justifies the means" approach than INFJs are. In order to accomplish their J agenda, ENFJs may be willing to say or withhold things that would not sit right with INFJs. They may also be more willing to feign happiness. ENFJs might reason, even if unwittingly, that if good feelings can be cultivated out there (Fe), then a sense of inner happiness will likely emerge in due time.

All of this is not to say that INFJs are somehow more moral or upstanding than ENFJs. Rather, this discussion illustrates the importance of the relative ordering of the functions in the functional stack, which invariably influences a given type's priorities, motivations, and actions.

ENFJs' Tertiary Function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Extraverted Sensing (Se) serves as ENFJs' tertiary function. While Si involves an intensive connection to the remembered past, Se is more extensive and present-oriented. It amasses concrete details and sensory information from the environment by way of the five senses (i.e., sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste).

Unlike Si, Se is not content with the routine and familiar. Rather, it seeks sensory and material novelty. Se types love novel sensations and appearances, physical thrills, and material comforts. They are more liberal than Si types in their approach to and use of the material world.

Se can also be linked with a concern for beauty and aesthetics (especially in Feeling types). ENFJs often have refined tastes when it comes their material surroundings, their physical appearance, as well as their palate. They commonly display a taste for the finer things in life—fine arts, food, music, culture, etc. Consequently, some ENFJs may be perceived as snobbish or uppitty, taking themselves or their sophisticated tastes a bit too seriously.

The Ni-Se combination may also compel ENFJs to take up artistic sorts of work, as described in my post on [ENFJ careers](#).

ENFJs' Inferior Function: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Like other types, ENFJs can be blind to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficiently understanding their inferior function, Introverted Thinking (Ti), ENFJs

will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unhealthy decision-making in their careers, lifestyle, and relationships.

Like ITPs, EFJs can be seen as trying to find the right balance between their Ti and Fe, independence (Ti) and interdependence (Fe), self (Ti) and others (Fe). For ITPs, Ti is far more conscious than it is for EFJs. While ITPs may feel they have little control over or influence with regard to the outside world (Fe), the inner structuring granted by their Ti confers a strong sense of inner control. This allows them to independently manage and order their thoughts and experiences so as to better cope with a world they see as outside their control. ITPs also use their Ti powers of logic to discern their own truth.

Because their Ti is inferior, ENFJs don't enjoy the same sense of inner control that ITPs do. Nor do they experience the same aptitude or confidence in their ability to consciously wield logic. Just as feelings are slippery and elusive for ITPs, so it is with logic for ENFJs.

However elusive their Ti, ENFJs are still captivated by it (as all types are with their inferior). In many ways, Ti represents a source of wholeness and self-actualization for ENFJs. Since Ti and Fe comprise a functional whole, they intuitively realize the importance of integrating these two functions for them to feel whole and complete. Consequently, ENFJs can be seen as striving for a greater sense of inner control and logical competence (Ti), which is why they may exhibit some of the same interests or self-conceptions as INTPs.

For instance, ENFJs may conceive of themselves as highly logical, independent, and self-sufficient. They may extol the virtues of independent thought (Ti), lauding the value of "cognitive-behavioral" strategies. They may also fancy themselves as self-aware or self-taught. When indulging their Ti, they may lose themselves in stacks of non-fiction books or journals. Their Ti may even impel them to take up formal study in subjects like mathematics, science, or philosophy. Some ENFJs may even consider themselves Introverts because of their Ti attraction to heady or intellectual topics.

But just as other types misinterpret or overestimate the skill and competence of their inferior function, so it goes with ENFJs. In truth, ENFJs are not as logical or independent in their thinking as they imagine themselves to be; the majority of their Thinking-related ideas are typically culled from without. Moreover, as Extraverts, ENFJs are far better at reading, understanding, and controlling others (Fe) than they are themselves; they are more "other-aware" (Fe) than "self-aware" (Ti).

Since ENFJs are ultimately unsure of the soundness of their own logic (Ti), they may unwittingly try to convince themselves through the act of convincing others. The more people they can convince that an idea is sound (Fe), the more confident they hope to feel about its veracity (Ti). But the truth is that most people are not nearly as convinced by the content of ENFJs' Thinking judgments as they are by their persuasive Fe packaging.

As we've seen, personal growth is more about utilizing our natural strengths and enhancing the conditions for functioning authentically according to our type than it is about directly developing or

“improving” the inferior function. In this light, integrating ENFJs learn to regularly employ their Fe and Ni, while allowing the Ti endpoint to take care of itself. Rather than over-emphasizing their skills as independent logicians (Ti), for instance, ENFJs are better off focusing on their relationships and social networks (Fe). While it may sound paradoxical, the best way for ENFJs to self-actualize and discover themselves is through consistent engagement with other people. By helping others discover and actualize their potential, ENFJs move ever closer toward self-understanding and personal wholeness.

ESFJ

ESFJs are one of sixteen personality types. I have found ESFJs to be less common than demographic data sometimes suggests, especially among Caucasian females. In my experience, they are easily outnumbered by [ESFPs](#), at least in the U.S.

ESFJs are warm, engaging, caring, loyal, dutiful, and hardworking. They are admired for their work ethic, perseverance, devotion, and steadfastness. They strive to practice what they preach, holding fast to their commitments and convictions. As predominant Judgers, they take their work, family, and social roles rather seriously.

Like their [ENFJ](#) counterparts, ESFJs have strong interpersonal skills, capable of quickly establishing rapport with others. They are natural readers of people and their emotions, a trait which allows them to quickly relate to people. Because of their social intelligence and love for people, they often have a substantial network of friends, acquaintances, and social connections. Their people skills also contribute to their persuasiveness and prowess as salespersons.

While appearing outwardly confident and assertive, on the whole, ESFJs are no more inwardly sure of themselves than other types. Indeed, because their inner Judging function, Introverted Thinking (Ti), is inferior, ESFJs may feel they have relatively little *inner* control. Finding inner control elusive, they naturally turn their focus outwardly, hoping that achieving outer control will somehow bring them inner calm and security. Their primary means of achieving outer control is through Extraverted Feeling (Fe), which serves as their dominant function. By way of their Fe, ESFJs can befriend, persuade, and direct others. In so doing, ESFJs can reap the benefit of social support, as well as a sense of control and influence in the world of people.

Like their [ESTJ](#) counterparts, ESFJs' auxiliary function, Introverted Sensing (Si), prompts them to keep one eye on the past and to preserve existing methods, traditions, and conventions. This is why David Keirsey classifies them as "guardians." This may partly explain why many ESFJs love teaching, a role that allows them to relay existing knowledge and wisdom to others.

In sharing the same set of functions, ESFJs often resemble [ISFJs](#). One difference is ESFJs tend to more warm and engaging upfront, while ISFJs can be somewhat more socially anxious and take longer to warm-up. These two types also differ with regard to their inferior function issues, with ISFJs wrestling with Ne and ESFJs with Ti-related concerns.

ESFJs can also resemble ENFJs, since they share the same dominant and inferior function. Both types have strong social acumen and enjoy helping and supporting others. But because ENFJs use Ni as their auxiliary function, they are often more interested in theoretical or philosophical discussions than ESFJs are. On account of their Si, ESFJs tend to be more practical and traditional, whereas ENFJs are often less conventional in their approach.

While ESFJs differ from ESFPs by only one “preference” (i.e., J-P), they actually share *zero* functions in common. This makes these two types far more different than is commonly recognized. ESFJs, whose Extraverted Judging function is dominant (Fe), tend to be more direct and firm in their assertions than is true of ESFPs, whose Extraverted Judging function is tertiary (Te). Moreover, because of their Se, ESFPs are more concerned with keeping up with current trends and fashions, as well as modifying their appearance accordingly. ESFJs, by contrast, whose Sensing is introverted (Si), tend to have a diminished concern for doing so. Of course, ESFJs raised with Se types may assimilate certain Se tendencies because their Si has learned to see them as normal.

ESFJs’ Functional Stack & Type Development

ESFJs’ functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

Auxiliary: Introverted Sensing (Si)

Tertiary: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

Inferior: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

ESFJs’ personality type development can be broadly conceived according to three phases:

Phase I (Youth-20s)

Phase I is characterized by the development and differentiation of ESFJs’ dominant function, [Extraverted Feeling \(Fe\)](#). In strengthening their Fe, Phase I ESFJs can seem inflexible and opinionated, quick to make judgments and draw conclusions about the world. Since their judgments are not yet being weighed and balanced by their auxiliary and tertiary functions, they are especially prone to jumping to conclusions.

Since Fe is a Judging function, ESFJs tend to take themselves and their lives quite seriously. Even from a relatively young age, they tend to strive for excellence in whatever they do. They can differ markedly from ISFJs in this phase, whose dominant function (Si) is a Perceiving function. This leads ISFJs to be more open and take life less seriously than Phase I ESFJs are wont to do. While both types utilize Fe, ISFJs are more concerned with perceiving the world (Si), while ESFJs are already working to change or control it (Fe).

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

While the inferior function is not entirely dormant or inert in Phase I, the epic tug-of-war between the dominant and inferior does not come to the fore until Phase II. Once ESFJs’ dominant Fe reaches a certain threshold of consciousness and differentiation, their inferior function, Introverted Thinking (Ti), begins to assert itself and play a more prominent and mischievous role. This will be elaborated later in this profile.

Phase II ESFJs also show increasing use and development of their auxiliary function, Introverted Sensing (Si), and may even begin to tap into their tertiary function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne). These Perceiving functions allow ESFJs to open and modify their Fe judgments, as well as to loosen their grip on life.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ESFJs become increasingly aware of the insidious effects of their inferior Ti. By increasing their self-awareness and learning to function more authentically as ESFJs, they can negotiate a better balance between their Fe and Ti. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ESFJs can experience a heightened and enduring sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ESFJs' Dominant Function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

As we've seen, Extraverted Feeling (Fe) is ESFJs' dominant function. Since Fe is a Judging function that is extraverted in its direction, ESFJs are Extraverted Judging types, quick to express their feelings, opinions, and grievances. This can be both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, it contributes to ESFJs' quick responsiveness and capacity for leadership. On the other, it can dispose them to judging prematurely or too severely.

Fe imbues ESFJs with a desire to control or otherwise influence others. Whereas Fi dominants (i.e., IFPs) seek control inwardly, Fe types do so outwardly. This desire for outer control should in no way be considered "bad" or unhealthy for ESFJs. As we've seen, Judging is a viable and commonly used means of navigating life. While ETJ types are often viewed as controlling commanders, ESFJs' Feeling preference makes their means of control more subtle and in some ways more effective. Because of their ability to read and relate to people, ESFJs can skillfully discern the most effective route to influencing them.

Another feature of Fe involves meeting the needs of others. ESFJs work to ensure that everyone is getting along and is well cared for. ESFJs are often conceived as self-sacrificing, deferring their own needs for the sake of the collective good. In their attempt to cultivate good feelings in the social environment, ESFJs typically put on a happy face, displaying ample warmth, friendliness, and congeniality in their interactions. While Fi types may at times consider overt Fe friendliness as somewhat disingenuous, most ESFJs do so with good intentions of improving morale or finding consensus.

ESFJs' Fe can present differently among strangers than it does with their intimates. In larger groups, ESFJs may seem consistently "positive" in their expressions as part of their attempt to cultivate good social feelings. In the company of close confidants, however, they are more apt to share their negative emotions and grievances. And because their words are often bathed in emotion, ESFJs can seem intense or dramatic in their expressions. While such expressions are commonly interpreted as "irrational" by

Thinkers or Fi types, they are rational to the degree to which they accurately reflect the nature of the experienced emotion. In many instances, given sufficient time, ESFJs will further refine or soften their initial Fe judgments as they move through the Perceiving functions of their functional stack.

In contrast to IFPs, ESFJs can have a more difficult time independently perceiving their own emotions. This is due to the fact that their Feeling function is extraverted rather than introverted. Consequently, ESFJs don't spend as much time trying to independently sort out their emotions. Inwardly, they deal largely in the currency of Si. So when ESFJs find themselves in emotionally troubling circumstances, they often (and should) turn to others for support or guidance. Expressing themselves through their Fe is critical to their psychological (and physical) health and well-being. Even if doing so does not provide them with an immediate solution to the problem at hand, they tend to feel better once they have expressed their feelings, be it through words or through tears. Unfortunately, parents and teachers often fail to understand this about their FJ children and may end up stifling their Fe expressions. At least in the U.S., Fi seems to be the most common and socially accepted way to handle emotions. ESFJ females, in particular, can feel misunderstood in a culture predominated by FP and TJ females.

The dominant position of their Fe also makes ESFJs a proactive and highly intentional type. ESFJs tend to take themselves, their lives, and their endeavors quite seriously. They are efficient and task-oriented, quickly moving from one thing to the next. To the casual onlooker, this may not always seem evident, since ESFJs spend much of their time engaging with people. But for ESFJs, their interactions with people are a substantive part of their life's work. Even with communing with others, ESFJs often have an agenda—to help, teach, unite, etc.

ESFJs' Auxiliary Function: Introverted Sensing (Si)

ESFJs use Introverted Sensing (Si) as their auxiliary function. Si contributes to ESFJs' propensity to function as conservators of the past. The more often Si types do something in a particular way the harder it is for them to break out of that pattern. The same can be said for their beliefs and worldview. As adults, ESFJs often continue in the beliefs and worldview of their youth, including matters of politics and religion. The longer they are immersed in particular set of circumstances, the more difficult it can be for them to open themselves to alternatives.

ESFJs' Tertiary Function: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

Like Extraverted Sensing (Se), Extraverted Intuition (Ne) is a novelty-seeking function. Ne differs from Se, however, in that it is geared toward ideational rather than physical or sensory novelty. Ne types are more concerned with being creative, making connections, or exploring options than they are with experiencing sensory or material novelty.

Since Ne is in the lower half of ESFJs' functional stack, they often have a love-hate relationship with it. On the one hand, they may fancy themselves clever, witty, creative, or savvy. This can be seen, for

instance, in their desire to generate creative solutions or conjure clever comments. ESFJs may also employ their Ne in a variety of arts and crafts or work to find creative ways of helping or teaching others. The “hate” part of ESFJs’ relationship with their Ne can involve the way it injects uncertainty into their beliefs and worldview. ESFJs seek a firm and unambiguous worldview to base their lives on. And because abstract analysis is not their strong suit, wrestling with ideas that contradict their Si worldview can be unsettling.

ESFJs’ Inferior Function: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Like other types, ESFJs can be readily blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficiently understanding their inferior function, Introverted Thinking (Ti), ESFJs will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unhealthy decision-making in their careers, lifestyle, and relationships.

As with INTPs and ISTPs, the overarching project of EFJ types can be seen as an attempt to forge a balance between their Ti and Fe, between independence (Ti) and interdependence (Fe), between self (Ti) and others (Fe). The difference is, for ITPs, Ti is far more conscious. They use their Ti to consciously create and maintain inner structure and order. While ITPs feel they have little control over others (Fe), their Ti confers a strong sense of inner control and self-regulation. It allows them to independently manage their thoughts and experiences so as to better cope with a world they see as outside their control. ITPs also use their own Ti powers of logic to discern what is true and reasonable.

Because Ti is inferior in their functional stack, ESFJs don’t enjoy the same degree of inner control that ITPs do (just as ITPs don’t experience the same sense of outer control as ESFJs). Nor do ESFJs experience the same confidence in wielding Ti logic. Just as feelings are slippery, elusive, and ephemeral for ITPs, so it is with logic for ESFJs. Despite its elusiveness, ESFJs remain forever captivated by and in pursuit of their Ti. They intuitively understand that Ti is somehow important in their quest for personal wholeness. Therefore, ESFJs can be seen as striving for a greater sense of inner control and logical competence (Ti), which may lead them to exhibit some of the same interests and self-conceptions as ITPs. They may, for instance, view themselves as highly logical, independent, and self-sufficient. They may extol the virtues of independent thought or laud the value of cognitively managing one’s own thoughts and feelings. They may also fancy themselves as highly self-aware or “self-taught.”

ESFJs may indulge their Ti by pouring over non-fiction books, trying to prop up their desire for logical understanding. Their Ti may even impel them to take up formal study in subjects like math, science, or computer programming. Some ESFJs may go so far as to consider themselves Introverts because of their desire for inner control or obsession with being logical. But just as other personality types misinterpret or overestimate the skills and know-how of their inferior function, so it is with ESFJs.

In truth, as Extraverts, ESFJs are far better at understanding and helping others (Fe) than they are themselves; they are more “other-aware” (Fe) than “self-aware” (Ti). Moreover, ESFJs are not nearly as logical or independent in their thinking as they might imagine themselves to be. Often uncertain of their

Ti, ESFJs may try to convince themselves, even if unwittingly, of the veracity of their judgments through the act of convincing others. The more people they can convince that their idea is sound (Fe), the more confident they can feel in its logical veracity. But most people are not as convinced by the content of ESFJs' Thinking judgments as they are by their persuasive Fe packaging. After all, it is primarily ESFJs' Fe know-how that makes them effective teachers or salespersons.

Personal Growth for ESFJs

As I've described elsewhere, personal growth is more about utilizing our natural strengths and enhancing the conditions for functioning authentically according to our personality type than it is about directly developing or "improving" our inferior function. As we learn to function authentically, many of our inferior function related issues begin to take care of themselves.

In this vein, self-actualizing ESFJs can capitalize on their strengths of Fe and Si, while allowing their Ti concerns to resolve themselves. So rather than over-emphasizing their powers of logic and independence (Ti), ESFJs are better off allowing their self-identity to overlap with their relationships and social networks (Fe). Moreover, when it comes to self-help, ESFJs are wise to include others in the process (Fe) rather than attempting to manage their thoughts and emotions independently (Ti).

While the prospect of directly employing or identifying with their inferior Ti can at times be tempting, this does not represent a genuine path to wholeness for ESFJs. Foregoing this temptation requires trusting that their personal growth will occur primarily through regular use of their Fe and Si rather than trying to control Ti matters directly. By staying true to their most conscious and authentic selves (Fe and Si), ESFJs can move closer to an enduring sense of peace and wholeness.

ENTJ

[ENTJs](#) are born leaders. They are direct, assertive, and uninhibited. They can become frustrated and impatient when things don't unfold according to their expected plan or time frame, evoking notions of the "Type-A" personality. In the presence of ENTJs, others may feel they are somehow being hurried or rushed, that the ENTJ wants them to "cut to the chase."

Like [ESTJs](#), ENTJs are firm, direct, and outwardly opinionated. At times, they may be seen as harsh, blunt, or insensitive. Despite outer confidence and imposing presence, they are, on the whole, no more inwardly secure nor sure of themselves than other types. In fact, because their inner Judging function (Fi) is inferior, they may feel they have relatively little *inner* control. Finding inner control elusive, they naturally turn their focus outwardly, hoping that achieving outer order and control will bring them inner calm and security. Of course, controlling the outside world is rarely an easy task, contributing to ENTJs' propensity for restlessness and hypervigilance.

Unlike [ENFJs](#), ENTJs don't enjoy ready access to the interpersonal benefits conferred by Extraverted Feeling. Instead, they rely on their sense of humor, fueled by their auxiliary function, Introverted Intuition (Ni), to ingratiate themselves to others. ENTJs can be great showmen and storytellers. Undeterred by conflict or controversy (they actually like being seen as edgy or provocative), they like to push the envelope, which not infrequently results in someone feeling hurt or offended.

While ENTJs can be quite funny when the time is right, they are, on the whole, quite serious in the approach to life. Their dominant function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), confers a strong work orientation. As we will shortly explore in greater depth, Te seeks to impose order, rationality, and efficiency on the world and its operations. Therefore, like [INTJs](#), ENTJs are often drawn to science, or can at least appreciate the value of its standardized methods. One of the hallmarks of Te is its need for everything to be clearly defined, measurable, and quantifiable. This, in combination with their love for strategy and competition, can make ENTJs formidable strategists and executives. ENTJs are commonly found among CEOs heading for-profit companies.

Wealth and social status can also be motivating factors for ENTJs. This can be seen as deriving, at least in part, from their tertiary function, Extraverted Sensing (Se). Despite their status as Intuitives, ENTJs love worldly things. They are not opposed to owning high-end homes or taking extravagant vacations, just as long as these things are written into the Te budget. So while ENTJs certainly like to work hard, they can also play hard.

ENTJs' Functional Stack & Type Development

ENTJs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Auxiliary: Introverted Intuition (Ni)
Tertiary: Extraverted Sensing (Se)
Inferior: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

ENTJs' type development can be broadly conceived according to three phases:

Phase I (Youth-Early 20s)

This phase is characterized by the emergence and differentiation of ENTJs' dominant function, Extraverted Thinking (Te). Even early in life, ENTJs are goal-oriented. They are ambitious and seek success in whatever they put their mind to. Taking their goals and responsibilities seriously, they typically do well in school and aren't afraid to assume leadership roles.

During this phase, ENTJs can seem particularly inflexible and opinionated. They are quick to make judgments and draw conclusions about the world. Since their Extraverted Thinking (Te) judgments are not yet being tempered by their auxiliary and tertiary Perceiving functions, they are especially prone to jump to conclusions.

Phase I ENTJs differ markedly from Phase I INTJs. Since INTJs dominant function (Ni) is a Perceiving function, they tend to be more passive and take life less seriously than ENTJs. In Phase I, INTJs are more concerned with ingesting and digesting the world (Ni), while ENTJs are already focused on shaping and manipulating it (Te).

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

Once their Te reaches a certain level of consciousness and differentiation, ENTJs' inferior function, Introverted Feeling (Fi), enters the picture and begins to play a more influential and often mischievous role. This will be explored later in this profile.

In addition to the increasing presence and influence of Fi, Phase II ENTJs are also developing their auxiliary function, Introverted Intuition (Ni). As they encounter complex problems and situations that call for greater patience and reflection, they turn to their Ni for assistance. They work to better see and incorporate the bigger picture (Ni) into their Te Judging process. As they develop their ability to assume different perspectives and to grasp the bigger picture, they become somewhat slower to judge, displaying greater foresight and discernment in their decision-making.

Phase II ENTJs may also begin to differentiate and incorporate their tertiary function, Extraverted Sensing (Se). For ENTJs, Se represents a further relaxing and opening of their judgments. It helps them loosen their grip on life, tempering their need for constant outer control.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ENTJs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Si. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as ENTJs, they experience greater balance between their Te and Fi. They learn that integrating their Fi happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Te and Ni. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ENTJs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ENTJs' Dominant Function: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Extraverted Thinking (Te) serves as ENTJs' dominant and most preferred function. It undergirds their tendency to quickly express their judgments and opinions, to literally think (i.e., make judgments, conclusions, decisions, etc.) aloud. ENTJs speak before they listen, Judge before they Perceive. This can be both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, it can make them strong and courageous leaders, while on the other, it can contribute to their being abrasive or controlling. It can also dispose ENTJs to advancing premature judgments and assertions. They may say things that, in retrospect, they would prefer to rescind, soften, or further qualify.

As mentioned earlier, Te strives to impose order and rationality on external world. It is quantitative in nature, pushing for objective standards and measurable goals. Rarely vague or ambiguous, it insists on clearly defined policies, plans, and procedure. Although their auxiliary Ni may contribute some degree of openness, ENTJs still expect things to be done according to their Te plans and guidelines. After all, if too much leeway is granted, they feel the system will not function at their desired level of rationality and efficiency.

Te also contributes to ENTJs' work-orientation. As T-dominants, ENTJs are generally more serious and focused than they are relaxed or receptive. Even on days when they have no external obligations, they are quick to get to work on something. Like other types with a dominant Judging function, ENTJs are not good at relaxing and doing nothing.

ENTJs' Auxiliary Function: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

Like other Intuitives, ENTJs are future-oriented, always striving for something more. They are forward thinking and change-oriented, getting bored or restless when things seem too repetitive, straightforward, or mundane.

Instead of thinking of their Ni in terms of "intuition," which can sometimes have a feminine connotation, ENTJs may use terms like "instincts" or "going with their gut." Unlike Ne, which tends to generate more options than it does firm solutions, Ni confers a higher level of convergence and singularity. Hence, ENTJs, as well as other NJs, often feel confident that their Ni answers or insights are trustworthy and reliable.

Like INTJs, ENTJs are not only are they blessed with the ability to isolate and analyze specifics (Te), but can also maintain a clear vision of the whole system (Ni), including its hierarchical structure and the interrelations of its constituent parts. Their proficiency with seeing both the big picture (Ni) and its specifics (Te) makes ENTJs masters of strategy, analysis, and planning.

Not only does a well-developed Ni make ENTJs better visionaries, but it can also temper their propensity to jump to premature conclusions. ENTJs can use their Ni to explore alternative perspectives and avoid the tunnel vision that may result from exclusive use of Te. Using and developing their Ni represents an important part of their personal growth, helping to ensure that their Te judgments are rooted in a broader, more comprehensive understanding.

ENTJs' Tertiary Function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Extraverted Sensing (Se) is a sensual, instinctual, and appetitive function. Se types seek out novel sensations, physical thrills, and material comforts.

ENTJs can have a certain worldliness about them, enjoying novel sensations, experiences, and material acquisitions. They can be particular about the quality, appearance, and status of their homes and possessions. Like other NJs, they can be captivated by the finer things in life, including the allure and status of affluent lifestyles.

With that said, the fact remains that ENTJs are dominant Judgers, meaning that their Te work generally takes precedence over any Se concerns. So while ENTJs can enjoy Se goods and experiences, they may be slow to make time for them in their T-oriented schedule.

ENTJs' Inferior Function: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

As is true of other types, ENTJs can be blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without adequate awareness of their inferior, they will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unwise decision-making in their lifestyle, careers, and relationships. Consequently, ENTJs seeking self-knowledge and personal growth must work to understand the ways their inferior function, Introverted Feeling (Fi), manifests in their personality.

Fi involves an inner focus on personal feelings, tastes, and values. Of all types, IFPs are the most "self-focused" (in a neutral sense) with respect to their concern for exploring and managing their personal values and emotions. ENTJs, for whom Fi is inferior and largely unconscious, do not enjoy ready access to their personal feelings and values. As for other dominant Thinking types, emotions can be slippery and elusive for ENTJs. Therefore, in situations where a "socially appropriate" emotional response is warranted, ENTJs can feel quite uncomfortable, since their emotional experience is often relatively weak. They may then resort to using their Te to offer condolences, etc., which can sound a bit mechanical, terse, or otherwise inadequate in emotional situations. ENTJs may also develop strategies

for repairing a bad situation, allowing them to escape the awkward task of emotionally supporting or connecting with others.

Fi is also concerned with the development of a system of personalized values and judgments, independent of societal conventions. This inner value system and personalized worldview grants IFPs a strong sense of inner confidence and control. ENTJs, by contrast, do not enjoy the same degree of inner confidence because of the inferior nature of their Fi. To compensate, they focus on managing and controlling the outside world. They instinctively sense that the best way of controlling themselves is through controlling their surroundings. This is precisely the opposite of the IFP approach. IFPs feel relatively powerless in their ability to control the outside world (Te) and respond by focusing on the one thing they can control—themselves (Fi).

With that being said, it would be wrong to assume that ENTJs' Fi is powerless or lacking in influence. While they may feel they experience relatively little conscious control over their Fi, it can still exert its influence through less conscious means. As I have written elsewhere, the inferior function can play a prominent role in informing and orienting the dominant function, influencing its values and objectives.

More specifically, ENTJs' Fi might compel them to work toward a cause that has personally affected them. For instance, an ENTJ whose parent died of a rare disease may decide to become a physician or medical researcher. Their Fi might also lead them to place greater importance on the role of children and family in their lives than one might expect from a dominant Thinking type. This is not to say, however, that it is a good thing for ENTJs to be ruled or overtaken by their Fi. To the contrary, ENTJs, not to mention society as a whole, are better served when they engage in work that capitalizes on their Te-Ni strengths.

It is also critical that ENTJs consider *how* they are using their Te. Like other dominant Judgers, ENTJs can be prone to a sense of urgency when it comes to making decisions or finishing tasks. This sense of urgency can lead to premature and erroneous judgments, lower quality work, and obsessive sorts of behavior. For instance, ENTJs may have in mind for what they want to accomplish on a given day, only to discover the project to be much larger than they originally conjectured. But since larger task poses a larger challenge, they may "take the bait" and see if they can still manage to finish it. One of the problems with doing so is it locks them into Judging mode, as any deviation into Perceiving would likely prevent them from achieving their goal in the specified time frame. It might also lead them to shut out other people, who are then viewed as intrusions or impediments to their objectives.

To function more healthily, ENTJs need to ensure they are spending adequate time Perceiving rather than racing to finish things. While acknowledging their desire to reach a point of closure, ENTJs can benefit from remaining open to alternatives, realizing that Perceiving infuses their life with texture and richness. It allows them to live more organically, rather than always clinging to a preset agenda. This is not to say that ENTJs should stop being ENTJs and transform into ENTPs, but involves finding the right balance between Judging and Perceiving.

ESTJ

“ESTJ” is one of sixteen personality types. While some estimates suggest ESTJs comprise upwards of 8% of the general population, my research and experience suggests them as less common than both ESTPs and ISTJs.

ESTJs are dutiful, hardworking, and task-oriented. Often possessing “Type-A” tendencies, they can become impatient and frustrated when things fail to unfold according to their expected plan or time frame. In the presence of ESTJs, one can sometimes feel like he is being hurried or rushed, that the ESTJ wants him to “cut to the chase.”

ESTJs are also firm, direct, and opinionated. Their verbiage tends to be succinct and to the point. At times, others may view them as harsh, blunt, or insensitive. Despite appearing outwardly confident and assertive, they are, on the whole, no more inwardly secure nor sure of themselves than other types. In fact, because their inner Judging function (Fi) is inferior, they may feel they have relatively little *inner* control. Finding inner control elusive, they naturally turn their focus outwardly, hoping that achieving outer control will bring them inner calm and security. Of course, controlling the outside world is no small or easy task, contributing to ESTJs’ propensity for restlessness and hypervigilance.

Among the most “left-brained” of all the types, ESTJs typically present as relatively serious folks. Unlike [ENTJs](#), whose auxiliary Ni can go a long way in providing fun and entertainment for all, ESTJs’ Si may offer little in terms of lightness or humor. Those with a more salient sense of humor generally rely on their tertiary function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne), for witty or clever remarks.

Like their [ISTJ](#) counterparts, ESTJs tend to keep one eye on the past (Si). They aim to protect and preserve past methods, traditions, and conventions. This is why David Keirsey classifies them as “guardians.” They grow attached to the familiar and expected, often developing a reliable set of habits and routines. As such, ESTJs like to know what to expect, to “know the plan.” Unlike EPs, who are stimulated by novelty and uncertainty, ESTJs can find uncertainty or ambiguity unsettling.

Like ENTJs, ESTJs often rise to positions of leadership. The primary difference, in this respect, is that ENTJs tend to be visionary leaders, which often carries them to the very top of the leadership ladder. ENTJs also prefer to make and modify their own rules. ESTJs by contrast, are not only willing to give orders, but are generally okay with working under pre-established rules, guidelines, and procedures. Consequently, they often serve as middle-level managers and supervisors.

While ESTJs differ from ESTPs by only one “preference” (i.e., J-P), they actually share *zero* functions in common. This makes these two types far more different than is commonly recognized. ESTJs, whose Extraverted Judging function is dominant Thinking (Te), tend to be blunter and unapologetic in their assertions than [ESTPs](#), whose Extraverted Judging function is tertiary Feeling (Fe). ESTPs display a certain social ease and smoothness that is distinguishable from the blunt approach of ESTJs.

All in all, ESTJs are among the most loyal, dutiful, and responsible of all types. Like [ESFJs](#), they are admired for their work ethic, perseverance, devotion, and steadfastness. They strive to practice what they preach, holding fast to their commitments and convictions. They make loyal friends and companions, especially for those who embrace a similar worldview and lifestyle.

Overview of ESTJs' Functional Stack & Type Development

ESTJs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Auxiliary: Introverted Sensing (Si)

Tertiary: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

Inferior: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

ESTJs' personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Youth-20s)

This phase is characterized by the development and employment of ESTJs' dominant function, [Extraverted Thinking \(Te\)](#). In developing and strengthening their Te, Phase I ESTJs can seem particularly inflexible and opinionated, quick to make judgments and draw conclusions about the world. Since Te is a Judging function, they also tend to take themselves and their lives rather seriously. While often perceived as outspoken or opinionated, Phase I ESTJs are developing the Te skills necessary to function as leaders and managers.

Phase II (20s-30s)

While the inferior function is not entirely dormant or inert in Phase I, the epic tug-of-war between the dominant and inferior does not come to the fore until Phase II. Once ESTJs' dominant Te reaches a certain threshold of strength and dominance, their inferior function, [Introverted Feeling \(Fi\)](#), begins to assert itself and play a more prominent and mischievous role.

Phase II ESTJs also show increasing use and development of their auxiliary function, Introverted Sensing (Si), and may even begin to tap into their tertiary function, Extraverted Intuition (Ne). These Perceiving functions allow ESTJs to open and modify their Te judgments, helping them loosen their grip on life and temper their Te drive for outer order and control.

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ESTJs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Fi. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function

more healthily as ESTJs, they experience greater balance between their Te and Fi, as well as an increasing sense of peace and wholeness.

ESTJs' Dominant Function: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

There are two varieties of Thinking: Introverted Thinking (Ti) and Extraverted Thinking (Te). The latter serves as ESTJs' dominant and most preferred function.

Te strives to bring order, control, and rationality to the systems and operations of the outside world. It is oriented toward quantification, insisting on objective standards and measurable goals. It carefully spells out how to get from here to there, using as many maps, directions, and labels as appropriate.

Te undergirds ESTJs' tendency to quickly express their judgments and opinion, to literally think (i.e., make judgments, conclusions, and decisions) aloud. ESTJs Judge before they Perceive, speak before they listen. This can be both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, it can make them strong and courageous leaders. On the other, it can cause them to seem abrasive, dogmatic, or controlling.

Having a dominant Te can also make ESTJs prone to overstating things. They may say things that, in retrospect, they wish they could rescind, or at least soften. This is especially true for ESTJs with a hypersensitive inferior function (Fi), which can lead them to respond defensively or reactively.

As a Judging function, Te also contributes to ESTJs' work-orientation. Like other types with a dominant Judging function, they are generally more serious and focused than relaxed or receptive. Even on days when they have no obligations, they are quick to get to work on something. Even in their leisure time, they can experience a sense of urgency or hurriedness in getting things done.

ESTJs' Auxiliary Function: Introverted Sensing (Si)

ESTJs use Introverted Sensing (Si) as their auxiliary function. Unlike Extraverted Sensing types (SPs), ESTJs are less concerned with seeking novel sensory stimulation or acquiring new material goods. Instead, their Si prefers a more routine and predictable lifestyle. When combined with Te, Si also contributes to a sense of conviction about their beliefs and lifestyle, which is why ESTJs are sometimes perceived as stubborn or closed-minded.

Like other SJ types, ESTJs function as conservators of the past. The more often they do something in a particular way, the harder it is for them to break out of that pattern. The same can be said of their beliefs and worldview. As adults, they often continue in the beliefs and worldview of their youth, including matters of politics and religion. The longer they are immersed in particular set of circumstances, the harder it is for them to be open to alternatives.

ESTJs' Tertiary Function: Extraverted Intuition (Ne)

Ne is a novelty-seeking function. Ne differs from Se, however, in that it is geared toward ideas rather than the material or sensory world. Ne types are more concerned with being creative, making connections, developing new theories, or seeing new possibilities than they are with sensory or material novelty.

Since Ne is in the lower half of ESTJs' functional stack, they often have a love-hate relationship with it. On the one hand, it may inspire them to view themselves as witty, clever, creative, or savvy. This can be seen, for instance, in their desire to conjure clever comments or generate creative options or possibilities. They may also draw on their Ne for the sake of creative business or entrepreneurial enterprises.

What ESTJs may dislike about their Ne is its tendency to inject uncertainty into their beliefs and worldview. After all, ESTJs seek a clear and unambiguous worldview to base their lives on. And since abstract analysis is not necessarily their strong suit, ideas that contradict their Si worldview can be unsettling. In response, they may try to close off their Ne to various sources or ideas that they perceive as potential threats to their belief system.

ESTJs' Inferior Function: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

As is true of other types, ESTJs can be blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficient awareness and integration of their inferior, they will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unwise decision-making in their lifestyle, careers, and relationships. Consequently, ESTJs seeking self-knowledge and personal growth must work to understand the ways their inferior function, Introverted Feeling (Fi), manifests in their personality.

As an introverted function, Fi involves an inner focus on personal feelings and values. Of all types, IFPs are literally the most "self-focused" (in a neutral sense) with respect to their concern for independently exploring and managing their values and emotions. ESTJs, by contrast, whose Fi is inferior and largely unconscious, do not enjoy ready access to their own emotions. As for ITPs, emotions, for ESTJs, are slippery and elusive, often taking an all-or-nothing character.

For IFPs, Fi also confers a strong sense of inner control. However, because Fi is inferior in ESTJs, they do not enjoy the same luxury of inner control. To compensate, they spend much of their time vigorously working to control the outside world. They instinctively sense that the only way they can feel in control of themselves is by taking control of their surroundings. This is precisely the opposite of the IFP approach. IFPs feel relatively powerless in their ability to control the outside world (Te) and respond by focusing on the one thing they feel they can control—theirself (Fi).

With that said, it would be wrong to assume that ESTJs' Fi is powerless or lacking in influence. While they may feel they have little conscious control of their Fi, it can still exert its influence through less

conscious means. As I have written elsewhere, the inferior function can play a prominent role in informing, motivating, and orienting the dominant function, influencing its goals, interests, and values. For ESTJs, their choice of work is often informed and motivated by the less conscious feelings and values of their Fi. This may lead them to take up work that deviates from what one might imagine for an ESTJ. They may, for instance, be driven by their Fi to take up work in ministry. While ESTJs are not innately gifted in matters of N or F (ministry might be roughly construed as an NF career), their move toward psychological wholeness does entail a reconciliation of their Fi and Ne functions. So while I am not suggesting that ESTJs are well-suited to function as ministers, we can at least understand why they might feel compelled to do so.

Fi might also inspire ESTJs to take up causes that have personally affected them. For instance, an ESTJ whose parent died of a rare disease may decide to become a physician or medical researcher. Another example of Fi influence would be an ESTJ who opts to function as a stay-at-home parent. IFPs seem to have a particular empathy and concern for children, often finding great fulfillment in having and caring for children. Since ESTJs have Fi in their stack, they may have similar proclivities, even if far less conscious. Therefore, ESTJs may experience a sort of “high” from having or caring for children, even if doing so ultimately proves taxing or unsatisfying.

Personal Growth for ESTJs

As I have written elsewhere, we prepare the grounds for personal growth and personality type development by functioning authentically according to our personality type. This includes considering whether our circumstances (i.e., work, relationships, and lifestyle) allow for regular use of our dominant and auxiliary functions. In this case of ESTJs, this would involve regularly employing their Te and Si.

It is also important for ESTJs to consider *how* they are using their Te. Like other types with a dominant Judging function, ESTJs are prone to a sense of urgency when it comes to finishing tasks or making decisions. This often leads them to jump between their two Judging functions (Te & Fi) while spending too little time Perceiving (Si). Their concern for “being productive” can prevent them from absorbing or appreciating life (i.e., Perceiving); they may take their lives, as well as themselves, too seriously. While ESTJs are naturally disciplined and thorough, this can mutate into obsessiveness or compulsiveness if they aren’t careful.

In short, personal growth for ESTJs occurs primarily through consistent and balanced use of their Te and Si. By staying true to their most conscious selves, they can move ever closer to an enduring sense of peace and wholeness.

ESFP

“ESFP” is one of sixteen personality types. It is among the most commonly encountered personality types, especially among women, comprising upwards of 10% of the general population.

Like [ISFPs](#), ESFPs are often considered physically attractive. Of course, this might be partly attributable to their extraverted personality, as well as their concern for keeping up their appearance. They are attuned to what is trendy and popular, willing to modify their appearance accordingly. Glitz, glamor, perfume, jewelry—all are a part of the ESFPs’ repertoire.

It’s not that ESFPs are necessarily snobbish or narcissistic about their appearance. Rather, because of their dominant function, Extraverted Sensing (Se), they seem to have a natural eye for beauty, style, and aesthetics. Their homes are often immaculate and tastefully adorned, as ESFPs love to ensconce themselves in beautiful and well-appointed surroundings.

As much as anything else, ESFPs are disposed to seeking sensory, material, and experiential novelty (Se). This is part of the reason they enjoy keeping up with current trends and fashions. Their Se is hungry for new stimulation—new sights, sounds, tastes, and experiences.

Like [ESTPs](#), ESFPs also display high levels of kinesthetic intelligence. They are often athletic and endowed with good dexterity and hand-eye coordination. In contrast to [ENFPs](#), who exhibit a preponderance of mental energy, ESFPs can display great physical energy. ENFPs use their Ne to explore new ideas. ESFPs employ their senses to explore and manipulate the physical world (Se).

ESFPs can also make great performers. Their sense of style and presentation, combined with their kinesthetic capacities, allow them to excel as actors, vocalists, and the like. For similar reasons, ESFPs can make skilled marketers and salespersons.

ESFPs’ penchant for sensory and material novelties, as well as their knack for social “performance,” has at times earned them the label of “hedonist” or “life of the party.” While this may be true in some cases, especially early in their development, it only captures one aspect of the ESFP, namely, that of their dominant function (Se). What is often missed is the fact that many ESFPs present as intelligent, articulate, and composed. They use their tertiary function, Extraverted Thinking (Te), to express themselves in a measured and rational way.

ESFPs are generally adaptable and open to new experiences. Despite their status as Extraverts, they, like other SP types, are often more interested in “doing” or being otherwise entertained than they are in sitting around talking. While they can certainly be chatty at times, Se, by nature, is not a highly verbal function. ESFPs often express themselves through action rather than words, showing their love and thoughtfulness through gifts or acts of kindness.

ESFPs are often most verbally engaged when granted an opportunity to proffer advice. Rightly or not, they often see themselves as wise counselors. Because of their Ni function, they feel they can independently generate insights and answers for others' problems. This is why ESFPs often score as Enneagram Twos (i.e., "The Helper") and choose careers like counseling. Because Ni and Te make-up their subconscious ego, there may be nothing more ego-gratifying for ESFPs than giving advice. Wittingly or not, a common reason they maintain a wide social circle is because it provides them ample opportunity to advise others. ESFPs like having others turn to them for help and guidance, since it helps them feel valuable and important (it also gives their inferior Ni quite an ego boost). If they aren't careful, however, ESFPs propensity to proffer unsolicited advice can be off-putting to others.

Because of their Te rationality and directiveness, as well as their penchant for maintaining neat and tidy surroundings (even if largely for aesthetic reasons), ESFPs are commonly mistyped as ESFJs. In my experience, however, ESFPs are far more common than ESFJs are, at least in the U.S. As Si types, ESFJs are generally less stylish and image conscious than ESFPs are. And because ESFJs use Extraverted Feeling, they have a more natural sense of warmth and approachability.

While not to quite the same extent as ISFPs, ESFPs are lovers, nurturers, and caregivers. They love children and animals, whose relative helplessness makes them perfect recipients of ESFPs' affection.

Although ESFPs can present as warm and inviting, this is best understood as an Se social performance rather than a natural expression of feeling. The natural direction of their Feeling is inward (i.e., Introverted Feeling (Fi)). Fi prompts ESFPs to manage their emotions on a largely independent basis. The sense of emotional independence conferred by Fi may also contribute to their confidence in advising others about how to manage their emotional concerns.

All in all, ESFPs are fun, active, attractive, and impressive. While generally fun-loving and easy-going (Se), they can also be assertive, controlling, and subtly manipulative. Like other personality types, their degree of psychological health depends on their degree of personal growth, including the way they go about reconciling their conscious and less conscious personality functions.

Overview of ESFPs' Functional Stack & Type Development

ESFPs' functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Auxiliary: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Tertiary: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Inferior: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

ESFPs' personality type development can be broadly conceived according to three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

This phase of development is characterized by the emergence of Extraverted Sensing (Se) as ESFPs' dominant personality function. Phase I ESFPs are fun-loving and free-spirited. They enjoy being active and drinking in all the experiences life has to offer. Since their foremost concern is absorbing and experiencing the world, Phase I ESFPs tend not to take themselves or life itself too seriously.

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

While the inferior function is not entirely dormant or inert in Phase I, the epic tug-of-war between the dominant and inferior does not come to the fore until Phase II. Once ESFPs' dominant Se reaches a certain threshold of strength and dominance, their inferior function, Introverted Intuition (Ni), begins to assert itself and play a more significant and mischievous role. This will be discussed later in this profile. Phase II ESFPs also show increasing use and development of their auxiliary function, Introverted Feeling (Fi), and may even begin to tap into their tertiary function, Extraverted Thinking (Te).

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ESFPs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Ni. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as ESFPs, they experience greater balance between their Ne and Si. They learn that integrating their Ni happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Se and Fi. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ESFPs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ESFPs' Dominant Function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

There are two varieties of Sensing: Introverted Sensing (Si) and Extraverted Sensing (Se). Si involves a strong attachment to past precedent—to the routine, familiar, and predictable. Not only does it seek to conserve past precedent, but it is also conservative with respect to the material world. Si types (SJs and NPs) are less apt to lather on make-up or concern themselves with current styles and fashions, opting for a more "natural," simple, and less embellished appearance.

Se involves the perception of information through the five senses (i.e., sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste). It is sensual, instinctual, and appetitive. Compared to Si, it is more liberal and novelty-oriented with respect to sensations and the material world. Se types love novel sensations, physical thrills, and material comforts. They are "sensation-seekers," relishing novel experiences and the thrill of action. Many enjoy cooking and experimenting with new recipes. Because Se is concerned with "here and now" experiences, it can also be associated with a present temporal orientation.

Se attunes to the concrete details and sense data. ESFPs naturally scan the environment for interesting sensory novelties, noticing details that other types might miss. This is why they often have a strong visual recall, or what is sometimes dubbed a “photographic” memory.

Like other SPs types, ESFPs enjoy an array of sports and other “hands-on” activities. They commonly take up work as chefs, cosmetologists, nurses, waitresses, physical/ occupational therapists, and the like.

ESFPs’ Auxiliary Function: Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Because ESFPs' auxiliary function, Introverted Feeling (Fi), is one of inner Judging, they are more serious inwardly than they might appear outwardly. Their Fi grants them a good sense of inner control, independently managing and regulating their emotions.

Compared to Extraverted Feeling (Fe), Fi is more individualistic and idiosyncratic. Because Fi judgments are formed largely independently, Fi types can be a bit wary of Fe expressions. To FP types, Fe can seem generic, fake, or contrived. With that said, since ESFPs often use their Se to mimic Fe, they are apt to be less bothered by Fe expressions than IFPs might be.

Rightly or wrongly, Fi can also seem more emotionally “mature” than Fe. This Since ESFPs’ emotions are often repackaged and expressed via their tertiary Te, they can often come across as measured and rational; they may even be mistaken for Thinking types. Unlike Fe emotion, Fi emotion is not given an opportunity to “run rampant” in its outward expression—it is restrained. The same introverted property which provides such restraint is also responsible for its intensiveness. At times, that Fi intensity of emotion comes out through Te in the form of biting or sarcastic remarks, something ESFPs need to be wary of.

ESFPs’ Tertiary Function: Extraverted Thinking (Te)

Extraverted Thinking (Te) involves the outward expression of rational judgments. As we’ve seen, Te contributes to ESFPs’ ability to communicate in a measured and articulate fashion. Their Te is particularly active when proffering advice, at times leading them to seem preachy or condescending.

But because Te is in the bottom half of their functional stack, ESFPs are not always comfortable expressing their judgments, especially early in their development. This can lead them, along with other Perceiving types, to merely adapt rather than assert themselves. And since Perceivers are generally uncomfortable with direct conflict, they often mistake relational *harmony* for relational *health*, forgoing open communication in favor of preserving outer peace. So while ESFPs are generally more self-assertive than IPs are, those who fail to self-express via their Te can still find themselves in relational trouble because of inadequate communication.

Te can also inspire ESFPs to “be responsible,” follow the rules, or “do things by the book.” And because responsibility is culturally endorsed as a positive virtue, they may fail to realize that being obsessed with it is actually quite unhealthy for them. An overactive Te can contribute to an air of smugness and self-righteousness in ESFPs, detracting from their better virtues of openness (Se) and compassion (Fi).

ESFPs’ Inferior Function: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

As is true of other types, ESFPs can be easily blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficient awareness and integration of their inferior, ESFPs will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unwise decision-making in their lifestyle, careers, and relationships. ESFPs seeking self-knowledge and personal growth must work to understand the ways their inferior function, Introverted Intuition (Ni), manifests in their personality.

For NJ types, Ni confers a depth of perception and insight. But because Ni is essentially unconscious and undeveloped in ESFPs, they do not enjoy the same degree of access or benefit from its workings. Nonetheless, for reasons I have described elsewhere, their inferior Ni remains highly attractive and alluring. For this reason, ESFPs often delude themselves into believing they are deeply insightful and entitled to function as sages or counselors.

While ESFPs’ auxiliary Fi does confer a healthy and genuine concern for friends and loved ones, this differs from the ego boost they receive from using their Ni and Te to proffer advice. In many ways, ESFPs can be understood as trying to validate their self-worth or achieve wholeness through counseling others. And while some ESFPs can seem impressive and convincing in doing so (especially at first blush), like other types, they are prone to overestimating their inferior’s capacities. The fact is that, as Se types, they are not wired to function as idea generators or advice givers. When ESFPs fancy themselves as Ni sages, they are being deceived, even if unknowingly, by their ego.

Similar to the Enneagram Two, as described by Riso and Hudson, ESFPs in the grip of their inferior Ni are prideful and self-righteous. They can be slow to see or admit their own personal failures or shortcomings, since this would threaten their self-image of being wise (Ni) and righteous (Te).

Their inferior Ni can also cause ESFPs to latch onto a particular theory, worldview, or plan for their lives. So instead of going with the flow and allowing life to come to them (Se), they try to control life (Te) to ensure it conforms to their Ni vision or ideals. This of course goes against their natural (and healthy) mode of functioning as ESPs. By going against the “natural order” for their type, they are susceptible to unwise decision-making in their careers and relationships.

Healthy functioning for ESFPs, as well as other personality types, involves the development and regular employment of their dominant and auxiliary functions. In truth, ESFPs best insights and decisions come from a breadth of lived experience (Se) and a compassionate outlook (Fi) rather than from indulging their Ni. Understanding this alone is a critical first step for ESFPs seeking enduring peace, wholeness, and life satisfaction.

ESTP

"ESTP" is one of sixteen personality types. While some estimates suggest ESTPs comprise only 4% of the general population, my research and experience suggests that estimates of 7% (or higher) are likely to be closer to the mark. ESTP males are thought to outnumber females at a clip of two to one.

Like [ESFPs](#), ESTPs are fun, active, and charming. Because ESTPs' Thinking function is introverted in its direction (Ti), it often goes unnoticed by outsiders. What others tend to see is ESTPs engaging in action (Se) or with people (Fe). Their tertiary function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe), contributes ample affability and personableness to their outward presentation.

ESTPs typically display conventional, even stylish, forms of dress. While their Ti is concerned with functionality and practicality, their Extraverted Sensing (Se) and Fe functions are attuned to the trendy and popular; social status is often a high priority for ESTPs.

Since their dominant function (Se) is a Perceiving function, ESTPs are naturally more concerned with experiencing the world than they are with structuring or controlling it. And as Extraverts, the outside world serves as their primary source of stimulation. This makes ESTPs the most action-oriented and task-oriented of all types. Without a task or something novel to experience, they can quickly become bored and restless. With adequate stimulation, ESTPs act and respond quickly, making things happen and getting things accomplished. They are "doers," men and women of action.

Like [ISTPs](#), ESTPs display great kinesthetic intelligence. They are athletic and mechanically-inclined, endowed with ample dexterity and hand-eye coordination. In contrast to [ENTPs](#), who exhibit a preponderance of mental energy, ESTPs exhibit great physical energy. ENTPs use Ne to explore new ideas or hypotheticals. ESTPs employ their bodies and senses to explore and manipulate the physical world (Se). Therefore, ESTPs commonly pursue careers that allow them to explore sensory novelties and use their practical intelligence to solve concrete problems (i.e., Holland "Realistic careers"). They make excellent chefs, athletes, chiropractors, physical therapists, surgeons, etc. They can also make great performers. Their sense of style and presentation, combined with their kinesthetic capacities, allow them to excel as actors, musicians, and the like.

Because of their preference for hands-on activities, ESTPs may underperform in academic settings. This may not be due to a lack of ability *per se*, but to a lack of Se stimulation. As is true for all SPs, the most concrete of all the personality types, being forced to deal in abstractions for too long can be draining for ESTPs. Their impatience with abstractions may also explain why they are more apt to be diagnosed with ADD or ADHD than some of the other personality types.

ESTPs are generally open and adaptable to new experiences. Despite their status as Extraverts, they often prefer "doing" more than talking. While they may be chatty at times, neither Se nor Ti is a highly verbal function. Thus, ESTPs first instinct is to express themselves via action rather than words. Their

relationships are generally built around a breadth of shared activities (Se) rather than extensive, in-depth conversations. But since status and reputation are important to both their Se and Fe, ESTPs may be far more talkative at work or in public settings. In the public arena, they may quickly shift into “schmoozing mode.” This can differ dramatically from their private persona, where they can seem more independent and aloof. The ostensible disparity between their public and private personas may at times lead their intimates to consider them narcissistic or hypocritical.

As we’ve seen, ESTPs’ public actions are driven by a need to be admired and respected. This stems, in large part, from their tertiary Fe, which combined with their Se concern for appearances, prompts them to take their social obligations quite seriously. Since their public actions affect their reputation, ESTPs are careful not to act in ways that could jeopardize their social standing. In attempting to maintain a strong public image, they may be particular about punctuality, dressing appropriately, and behaving according to social expectations. This image-consciousness contributes to their tendency to score high as Enneagram Threes.

ESTPs’ public conscientiousness may lead them to mistype themselves as [ESTJs](#). But ESTJs, whose dominant function is Extraverted Thinking (Te), tend to be far more blunt and unapologetic in their assertions than ESTPs. ESTPs exude an affability and personableness that is clearly distinguishable from the take-charge, “to-the-point” persona of ESTJs. In social settings, ESTPs can blend and engage with people far more effortlessly than is typical of ESTJs. While ESTPs put people at ease, ESTJs are often uncomfortably direct or opinionated.

Like other Perceivers, ESTPs can have a propensity for acting passively or passive-aggressively in their relationships. Because their Ti precedes their extraverted Fe in their functional stack, ESTPs are more apt to internalize (Ti) or act on (Se) their frustrations than openly talk about them (Fe). This can be frustrating for partners who would prefer to dialogue about their concerns rather than ESTPs taking matters into their own hands. This can be complicated by the fact that, because of their tertiary Fe, ESTPs may prefer to avoid conflict and function, to some degree, as people-pleasers. Hence, ESTPs can find themselves caught between wanting to please their partner, on the one hand, and wanting to convey their frustrations, on the other. This can lead to a situation in which ESTPs are being outwardly compliant while furtively engaging in duplicitous or passive-aggressive behaviors.

Overview of ESTPs’ Functional Stack & Personality Type Development

ESTPs’ functional stack is composed of the following functions:

Dominant: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Auxiliary: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Tertiary: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

Inferior: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

ESTPs’ personality type development can be broadly conceived as consisting of three phases:

Phase I (Childhood-20s)

This phase of development is characterized by the emergence of Extraverted Sensing (Se) as ESTPs' dominant personality function. Phase I ESTPs are fun-loving and free-spirited. They enjoy being active and drinking in all the experiences life has to offer. Since their foremost concern is absorbing and experiencing the world, they tend not to take themselves or life itself too seriously. Phase I ESTPs may also show some degree of development in their auxiliary function, Introverted Thinking (Ti).

Phase II (Late Teens-30s)

While the inferior function is not entirely dormant or inert in Phase I, the tug-of-war between the dominant and inferior does not come to the fore until Phase II. Once ESTPs' dominant Se reaches a certain threshold of strength and dominance, their inferior function, Introverted Intuition (Ni), begins to assert itself and play a more significant and mischievous role. This will be elaborated later in this profile. Phase II ESTPs also show increasing use and development of their auxiliary Ti, and may even begin to tap into their tertiary function, Extraverted Feeling (Fe).

Phase III (30s, 40s, & Beyond)

If all goes well and they are fortunate enough to enter Phase III, ESTPs become increasingly aware of the insidious ways of their inferior Ni. As they become more aware of their inferior and learn to function more authentically as ESTPs, they experience greater balance between their Se and Ni. They learn that integrating their Ni happens naturally and indirectly as they go about authentically using their Se and Ti. As they cultivate conditions that support their natural strengths, Phase III ESTPs come to experience a heightened sense of peace, wholeness, and satisfaction.

ESTPs' Dominant Function: Extraverted Sensing (Se)

There are two varieties of Sensing: Introverted Sensing (Si) and Extraverted Sensing (Se). While Si is conservative with respect to the material world, Se is more liberal and novelty-oriented. Se involves the perception of information through the five senses (i.e., sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste). It is sensual, instinctual, and appetitive. Se types love novel sensations, physical thrills, and material comforts. They are "sensation-seekers," relishing novel experiences and the thrill of action.

Se attunes to the concrete details and sensory data of the present by way of the five senses. ESTPs naturally scan the environment for interesting sensory novelties, noticing details that other types might miss.

As a child, I would occasionally go on long car rides with my ESTP father. He loved driving because it provided him with the constant change in scenery needed to stimulate his Se. It was a rare occasion that he failed to "spot" something to bring to my attention: a deer prancing through a distant field, a rare

sports car, or a hawk scoping out its prey from above. Only occasionally could he be found directly attending to the road ahead, since he was always on scanning for something novel and interesting.

ESTPs commonly enjoy hobbies that capitalize on their keen powers of observation. My father has always enjoyed keeping his cars in immaculate condition, washing them by hand twice a week. The notion of "detailing" a vehicle aptly describes a primary purpose of Se, involving close attention to the details of the immediate environment.

Se also contributes to ESTPs' love of sports, food, sex, and physical action. As we've seen, ESTPs love working with their hands and quickly responding to environmental demands.

ESTP's Auxiliary Function: Introverted Thinking (Ti)

As dominant Perceivers, ESTPs are naturally disposed to taking a less intentional approach to life. Like other EPs, they are content to remain in an open mode of Perceiving until life demands a response or judgment. When ESTPs are compelled to make judgments à la their auxiliary Ti, they become more inwardly focused and intense, similar to the typical mode of operation for ISTPs. But because Ti is introverted in its direction, onlookers may fail to notice this more serious side of the ESTP.

Ti involves the application of logic and reason for the sake of understanding a given situation, system, or problem. Ti also works to bring structure and order to the inner world. This inner structuring grants ESTPs a good sense of inner control. Inwardly, ESTPs are self-disciplined, working to independently manage their thoughts and objectives.

Ti might also be viewed in terms of *fluid intelligence*, whereas Extraverted Thinking (Te) seems more related to *crystallized intelligence*. Ti is more intuitive, contextual, and right-brained, whereas Te is more abstract, procedure-oriented, and left-brained. The fluid nature of their Ti, combined with the keen observational powers of their Se, contributes to ESTPs' acumen as practical problem solvers. ESTPs can analyze a situation, diagnose the problem, and then determine how to fix it.

The difference between Ti in ESTPs versus ISTPs is its place in the functional stack. For ISTPs, Ti comes first, which makes them characteristically more serious, focused, and quicker to judge. ISTPs then use their auxiliary Se to open up and further explore their initial judgments. For ESTPs, the order is reversed. They do not start with an initial judgment or presumption like ISTPs, but approach things through the open eyes of their Se. They then employ their Ti to evaluate, structure, and order their Se observations. Their Se dominance also makes ESTPs more open to "playing" or perceiving for its own sake.

ESTPs' Tertiary Function: Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

ESTPs' tertiary function is Extraverted Feeling (Fe). Fe is the most interpersonal of all the functions. It strives to promote interpersonal peace, harmony, and understanding. This involves attending not only

to *what* is said, but also *how* it is said. It allows ESTPs to quickly establish rapport and connections with others.

Fe also involves a desire to be socially understood and validated. Although ESTPs may not connect with others on a deep level of feeling, their Fe still desires the sense of affirmation and validation that comes from engaging with people. So even though they are Thinking types, ESTPs need a certain degree of social engagement. As we've seen, they particularly enjoy engaging with others in the public arena.

We can also approach ESTPs' Fe more theoretically. Namely, since Fe serves as their extraverted Judging function and falls lower in their functional stack, they are generally less comfortable extroverting judgments (Fe) than they are keeping their judgments to themselves (Ti). This can lead ESTPs to habitually defer to others' wishes rather than asserting their own, functioning to some extent as "people-pleasers." But because ESTPs have fairly independent minds (Ti), they may eventually grow resentful of others who they may see as trying to control them. This can result in ESTPs functioning unhealthily in what is sometimes described as a "co-dependent" fashion. On the one hand, they feel reliant on their partners for Fe support, while on the other, they feel the need to be unfettered (Se) and independent (Ti).

ESTPs' Inferior Function: Introverted Intuition (Ni)

For those unfamiliar with the powerful influence of the inferior function on personality, as well as common strategies for dealing with it, I encourage you to explore my post, [Understanding the Inferior Function](#).

As is true of other types, ESTPs can be easily blinded to the degree to which their inferior function impacts their decisions and behavior. Without sufficient awareness and integration of their inferior, ESTPs will continue to feel incomplete and be prone to unwise decision-making in their lifestyle, careers, and relationships. Consequently, ESTPs seeking self-knowledge and personal growth must work to understand the ways their inferior function, Introverted Intuition (Ni), manifests in their personality.

ESTPs' inferior Ni may manifest as a desire to be seen as profound or insightful with respect to abstract topics, such as politics or religion. So by asserting and defending certain dogmas or ideologies, ESTPs can experience a strong, even if unhealthy, sense of ego validation.

Since Ni is a fairly convergent function, it may inspire ESTPs to latch onto a single theory, worldview, or plan for their lives. So instead of going with the flow and allowing life to come to them (Se), they may try to force-fit life into a preformed Ni plan. This of course goes against their most natural (and healthy) mode of Se functioning, making them susceptible to unwise decision-making in their careers, relationships, and otherwise.

Healthy functioning for ESTPs, as well as other personality types, involves the development and regular employment of their dominant and auxiliary functions. ESTPs must realize that their best insights and

decisions will not come from their immature Ni, but will emerge primarily from gaining a breadth of experiences (Se), combined with rational analyses of those experiences (Ti). When ESTPs extend much beyond their own experiences, they are prone to much greater error and are more likely to fall into the grip of their Ni ego.