

Sorting Clues for Similar Types – INFJ vs INFP

At first blush, these two types can look quite similar. Both are imaginative with creative output, often quiet if not retiring, emotionally aware, and interested in the big and small questions of the human condition. But looking closely, we find they work in different, even opposite ways. Here are some clues:

- As a general rule: **INFPs** focus more on their own feelings, and **INFJs** focus more on other people's feelings.
- A key contrast is how they handle energy. **INFJs** tend to act as a sensitive antenna to others' energy. They pick up and absorb a lot, especially what is not obvious or even in others' awareness. Thus while they tend to be quite socially adept when needed, they must retreat and recharge often. In contrast, **INFPs** use their imagination to understand others and perhaps play out, "What if I felt this way?" They act as a mirror for others (rather than antenna), and they can endure a lot continuously so long as they've sorted themselves.
- **INFP asks**, "Is this really me, and do I believe in it and in myself?" Whereas **INFJ asks**, "Does this inspire growth, and how do others experience or receive this?"
- Externally, **INFJ** is more analytical, neat, scheduled, and presentable. While time-and-task can stress them, they tend to give attention to perfecting details, especially to show caring. For example, an INFJ might craft ten creatively personalized place-settings for friends for her own birthday party. In contrast, INFPs look more casual, free-flowing, open to surprises, and – relatively – messy. But inside they have clear beliefs, and somehow through all the chaos and half-forgotten details, they get things done in their own imaginative way.
- **INFP tends to make a decision** based on an inner quest, and from a core set of personal beliefs, whereas **INFJ tends to make a decision** based on a mix of social and personal values, with a lot of consideration to how others will receive it, and whether it is role appropriate.
- **INFPs focus on** balancing opposites within themselves as they seek to live a deep truth. They have a psychological need to flow on the right path. Whereas, **INFJs focus on** nurturing others' potential within society, and they attend to prestige, status, and valuable friendships along with the personal growth. They have a deep psychological need to be invulnerable.
- **INFP** humor is softer, more narrative, and more spontaneous, usually to gently share an important point in an indirect way. Whereas **INFJ** humor is more pointed wit that lubricates interactions in the social hierarchy around them.

- **INFJs** focus on socially-driven or displayed emotions. For example, Jane envies Joe, Mario admires Lana, Alex fails to show confidence, and so on. For an INFJ, other people -- and the environment -- cause emotions. And they tend to use a lot of adjectives for emphasis here. In contrast, **INFPs'** emotions emerge from within themselves. The INFP believes, "If I am true to myself, and acting from my core, then everything is good, beautiful ,and possible." And they tend to feel that simpler language actually says more.
- **INFPs** tend to explicitly identify with underdogs and people on the margins of society, whereas **INFJs** tend to focus on what is arising as socially popular, or reflecting the most worldly, sophisticated or spiritual in taste or class.
- **In the workplace, INFPs** focus more on "success of individuals within the group"—for example, observing and supporting the different gifts that people bring to an organization. They like to believe there is room for everyone to be themselves. In contrast, **INFJs** focus more on "doing tasks well for the team"—for example, helping people pull their weight to complete an important project.
- Overall, **INFJs** seem like they can fit better into society, but actually they have a harder time staying in place or doing one thing over years. And, they grow best by embracing new experiences. In contrast, **INFPs** easily come across as misfits, yet in practice can sustain a lot of dedication and repetition over years. They grow best by using tools to help them think in a more business-like, factual way.