

From the Outside: Understanding People with Sensing-Feeling (SF) Preferences

People who favor Sensing and Feeling tend to be helpful, sympathetic, and friendly as they tackle life's many practical problems. With Sensing, they trust tangible data, particularly what they know first-hand, such as the signs others give off about their needs and emotions. With Feeling, they tend to set goals and make decisions based on their values, weighing what matters personally to themselves and for others.

Generally, whatever the situation, these people attend to concrete information about people, such as others' specific likes and dislikes, backstories, and current life situations. They easily notice people's *de facto* behavior such as body language, attitude, and time spent helping. They tend to focus on how people interact with each other based on their roles, needs, and drives. For example, did someone lend an ear or hand in a time of need? Did someone put in extra hours at work or remember to give a nice holiday gift? And so forth. They are very realistic this way.

On the job, these individuals offer practical help and encourage an enjoyable atmosphere. They are often adept with customers in day-to-day operations and do their best to bring a happy smile. They like teams or at least collaborating with or being inspired by someone. They seek others' input on problems. As leaders, they like to consult with the people involved, hear what's going on for them, their opinion, and then, ideally, engage in some kind of shared process to find and implement a solution. Career wise, they gravitate to social service, healthcare, craftwork, and the fine and performing arts, though they can work in any field. What's important is that their work has a human application and is not overly abstract or impersonal.

In relationships, people who prefer Sensing and Feeling want a down-to-earth, caring partnership. Ideally, each person constantly keeps in mind what the other prefers and needs and is readily available with concrete and heart-felt support. They like romantic gestures and can be highly passionate. When there is a problem, they like to talk it out, though they tend to gather advice from friends and family first. They may engage in excessive theatrics and catastrophizing rather than painful self-analysis or thoughtful, forward-looking problem solving.

With strengths comes one-sidedness. These individuals tend to discount what they don't know personally, especially regarding future hypotheticals, and they may easily find themselves out of their element in unfamiliar and impersonal situations. Under stress, they can suddenly get cold, contrary to their usual personal warmth, and they can get caught up in a really confused picture of others' intentions and behaviors, contrary to their usual perceptiveness.

At mid-life or earlier, these individuals experience a gentle push to develop Intuiting and Thinking. This can show up several ways, such as interest in technology, scientific research, spiritual practices, or business management. Ideally, the activity includes a practical human element. For example, an interest in media technology might be about visually telling real people's dramatic stories. An interest in research might be about gathering and analyzing data about human behavior. Or an interest in spirituality might involve teaching a body-mind practice like yoga. Whatever their path, they must often deal with obstacles to growth such as family obligations, questions of self-worth and capability, or a desire to simply enjoy life's comforts.

From the Outside: Understanding People with Sensing-Thinking (ST) Preferences

People who favor Sensing and Thinking tend to be realistic and matter-of-fact with a business-like approach to life's many practical challenges. With Sensing, they trust tangible data, particularly what they can observe and measure, from a car's idling sound to a company's bottom-line profit. With Thinking, they tend to logically assess the facts of a situation, reasoning from cause to effect, premise to conclusion.

Generally, whatever the situation, these people are interested in concrete technical information, such as cost, weight, typical cycles, and performance metrics like number of customers. They tend to view people as another kind of resource, and they evaluate others based on their behavior and the results they produce, often weighing pros and cons. For example, even if a colleague is difficult to deal with sometimes, exceptional performance makes his or her presence manageable until the person shapes up or someone better fitting is found.

On the job, these individuals are data- and task-oriented. They collect and verify information, and then analyze it in an objective way to complete a task or solve a problem. For example, they will look for tables with numbers to inform decisions, they will trust their experience and observations over abstractions, and they limit risks to areas they know well. As leaders, they tend to apply incentives for people to modify their behavior to fit with the key principles and procedures. Career wise, they gravitate to banking, business, law, manufacturing, the military, land management, and anything hands-on and technical from car repair to surgery to software coding, though they can work in any field. What's important is that the work affords real-world problem-solving and tangible rewards.

In relationships, people who prefer Sensing and Thinking want a down-to-earth, respectful partnership. Together, the couple is doing fun activities, divvying up and carrying out responsibilities, and solving life's problems in a thoughtful way with minimal drama. When an interpersonal issue arises, they may endure it as they see how it evolves, and then get blunt about the need for improvement. They may deploy sarcasm, silence, or criticism rather than deal with emotional scrutiny or inner psychological change.

With strengths comes one-sidedness. These individuals tend to discount untried ideas with no clear reason for change, and they may easily be awkward in interpersonal situations that require finesse or psychological understanding. Under stress, they can suddenly come off as shiftier or flustered, contrary to their usual straight-up demeanor, and they may deal inappropriately with complex human problems, from a particular leader's really questionable personal life to broad institutional biases.

At mid-life or earlier, these individuals experience a gentle push to develop Intuiting and Feeling. This can show up several ways, such as an interest in a humanitarian cause, cross-cultural appreciation, spiritual practice, or skills counseling. Ideally, the activity taps their nuts-and-bolts style. For example, a humanitarian cause might mean serving on a local council or helping youth stay out of trouble and graduate. An interest in spirituality might mean volunteering at or donating to a religious center or building a business around health retreats. Whatever their path, Sensing-Thinking types must often deal with obstacles to growth such as high costs versus unclear benefits, or simply being too busy.

From the Outside: Understanding People with Intuiting-Thinking (NT) Preferences

People who favor Intuiting and Thinking tend to be logical and ingenious, taking a scientific approach to life's big questions and pressing issues. With Intuiting, they notice abstract patterns, possibilities, and ideas. They absorb numerous philosophical frameworks and scientific concepts. With Thinking, they apply those models to come up with strategies to improve whatever they put their mind to.

Generally, whatever the situation, these people seek an abstract view of what's going on and why. They quickly notice patterns, which they can match with their mental models and theories. They likely have one or two primary interests plus a dozen side interests. Some of these usually relate to technology or the future, even if as a hobby, and hopefully, at least one will be how to effectively deal with others. For example, they might draw on Jungian psychological theory to understand people.

On the job, these individuals bring theoretical and technical understanding and, intended or not, tend to set an organization or discipline on a new path into the future. They seek a working knowledge of how things are organized. They prefer to study a problem in a non-personal way and come up with a strategy to address it longterm. As leaders, they can be visionary, though they may have difficulty with the practicalities and the human elements. They will often drive hard for quality, are open to quantitative data and calculated risks, and tend to tap survey feedback to get insights and outside consultants to promote organizational change. Career wise, they gravitate to science, technology, philosophy, and organizational strategy, though they can work in any field, or a blend multiple fields. What's important is that the work galvanizes their minds to explore and master new ideas, to gain expertise.

In relationships, people who prefer Intuiting and Thinking want a stimulating partnership that's like a meeting of minds. They love discussing ideas, learning, and doing creative projects together. When an interpersonal issue arises, they may be oblivious to it, try to solve it logically, and/or seek expert help. They may deploy sarcasm, critiquing, and abstract theorizing rather than deal with emotions or pressing practical daily issues.

With strengths comes one-sidedness. These individuals tend to discount feedback that does not fit their mental model or strategy. Also, they may over-extended their expertise into an area they don't actually know. Under stress, they can suddenly get irrational, contrary to their usual clear thinking, and they can really lose touch with their practical needs, letting health and happiness slip away. When they miss others' humanity, they may be viewed as arrogant or devious.

At mid-life or earlier, these individuals experience a gentle push to develop Sensing and Feeling. This can show up several ways, such as enjoying nature, improving health and fitness, spending more time with family, developing an artistic or musical skill, or delving into psychology. Ideally, the activity taps their scientific mindset and need for life-long learning. For example, they might research and develop their own fitness strategy. Or, time with family might involve museum trips or anything else that is educational and somewhat challenging. Whatever their path, Intuiting-Thinking types must often deal with obstacles to growth such as their innate skepticism, a penchant for turning play into more work, or a sense they can grow simply by thinking about it.

From the Outside: Understanding People with Intuiting-Feeling (NF) Preferences

People who favor Intuiting and Feeling tend to be insightful and enthusiastic, taking a romantic approach to life's big questions and pressing issues. With Intuiting, they notice abstract patterns, possibilities, and ideas. They notice people's behavioral patterns and ways to catalyze their growth. With Feeling, they remain in touch with their values and make choices that align with who they are at their core.

Generally, whatever the situation, these people attend to the complex web of human behavior, relationships, and society. They notice patterns, future potential, people's stories, new projects that motivate others to realize their potential, and ways to bring healing and important truths to light. They tend to perceive what's going on psychologically, such as seeing beyond the masks people wear, the scripts they repeat, and the roles they play to the underlying human being. This can be painful, joyful, inspiring, heart-breaking, and everything in between.

On the job, these individuals bring personal warmth and insight into people issues, and they often seek to make procedures and structures more human-centric. They soak up information about people, their values, and the organization, and prefer to use group- and people-oriented techniques to promote change. They tend to be good communicators of possibilities and values, and they rely on stories, metaphors, and imagery to make points. They may ignore numerical evidence, get preachy, or over-estimate their ability to implement plans. Career wise, they gravitate to counseling, human subject research, media, and the dramatic arts, though they can work in any field. What's important is that the work affords creativity and allows them to positively impact society.

In relationships, people who prefer Intuiting and Feeling want a stimulating partnership that's like being with one's soul mate. True love is like a fairytale story that sweeps them off of their feet, takes them on adventures, and allows them to live happily ever after. When problems arise, they may hold fast to the belief that love conquers all. They may engage in idle fantasy rather than address their own deep needs, and engage self-discovery over pressing practical daily problems.

With strengths comes one-sidedness. These individuals tend to discount feedback that does not fit their values. Similarly, they may ignore negative outcomes simply because they had good intentions. Under stress, they can suddenly start misreading people, contrary to their usual empathic insights, and they can lose touch with their practical needs such as health and finances. When they over-prioritize others, or put an abstract ideal before themselves, they can lose touch with their core.

At mid-life or earlier, these individuals experience a gentle push to develop Sensing and Thinking. This can show up several ways, such as starting a business, learning a scientific or technical skill, or turning to a more objective philosophy of life. Ideally, the activity fits their focus on people and desire to improve the human condition. For example, they might earn a degree in medicine to help solve a personal or world health issue. Or they might start a business to personally get aligned with an important cause. Whatever their path, Intuiting-Feeling types must often deal with obstacles to growth such as their innate optimism, poorly thought out strategies, or a lack of inspiration or belief in themselves.