

ENTP Essentials

Explorer Inventor™

Extraverting • iNtuiting • Thinking • Perceiving



Core Themes

ENTPs are inventive and life-long learners. They explore lots of ideas. They have a talent to build prototypes and launch projects. They enjoy creative problem solving and like to share their insights about life's possibilities. ENTPs are pragmatic as they come up with strategies for success. They enjoy the drama of give and take. They try to be diplomatic, invite others, and host. At some level, they need to feel safe. They are surprised when strategizing a relationship doesn't work.

Unpack the Stack: ENTPs...

Lead with “Excited Brainstorming” (Ne)

Perceive, pursue, and play with life's many potential possibilities, facilitating the promising ones.

Support by “Skillful Sleuthing” (Ti)

Analyze and define situations, solve problems, and apply leverage according to universal logical principles.

Struggle at “Friendly Hosting” (Fe)

Tend relationships, social norms, and people's needs and values as they organize and make thoughtful decisions.

Aspire to “Cautious Protecting” (Si)

Reference a massive storehouse of rich past experiences as they cultivate familiarity, comfort, and stability.



Let's explore...

this type from various angles including 4 developmental variants. As you read, consider what fits for you (or others), what has remained the same or changed over time, and options for where to go from here.

How ENTPs Lead with Heroism

Energize the Process

Seek out stimuli. Often appear random, emergent, and enthusiastic. Attend to the here and now.

Excited Brainstorming

Explore numerous emerging patterns.

Extraverted iNtuiting (Ne)

Perceive and play with ideas and relationships. Wonder about patterns of interaction across various situations. Keep up a high-energy mode that helps you notice and engage potential possibilities. Think analogically: stimuli are springboards to generate inferences, analogies, metaphors, jokes, and more new ideas. Easily guess details. Adept at “what if?” scenarios, mirroring others, and even role-playing. Can shift a situation’s dynamics and trust what emerges. Mental activity tends to feel chaotic, with many highs and lows at once, like an ever-changing “Christmas tree” of flashing lights. Often entertain multiple meanings at once. May find it hard to stay on-task.

What flavor of Excited Brainstorming?

ENTPs can express this process in two ways. They likely develop a bias for one way early in life and may develop the other later.

“Marketer” Ne

Analytic/Yang Style: active,
focused, fixed, outward,
top down

Put on a show. Pitch and juggle many ideas, trusting quantity over quality in search of advantages or gains. Recruit others and rely on strong energy of ideas to shift situations to one’s liking. Court uncertainty for progress.

“Catalyst” Ne

Holistic/Yin Style: receptive,
diffuse, flexible, inward,
bottom up

Notice subtle patterns. Negotiate toward a novel win-win outcome with a relaxed, subtle style. Use humor and disguises. Include and promote others. Search for the highest quality potential possibilities for everyone’s gain.

How ENTPs Give Flexible Support

Refine Decision Making

Clarify what's universal, true or worthwhile. Often appear quietly receptive. Trust own judgments.

Skillful Sleuthing

Gain leverage using a framework.

Introverted Thinking (Ti)

Study a situation from different angles and fit it to a theory, framework, or principle. This often involves reasoning multiple ways to objectively and accurately analyze problems. Rely on complex/subtle logical reasoning. Adept at deductive thinking, defining and categorizing, weighing odds and risks, and/or naming and navigating. Notice points to apply leverage and subtle influence. Value consistency of thought. Can shut out the senses and “go deep” to think, and separate body from mind to become objective when arguing or analyzing. Tend to back-track to clarify thoughts, and withhold deciding in favor of thorough examination. May quickly stop listening.

What flavor of Skillful Sleuthing?

ENTPs can express this process in two ways. They likely develop a bias for one way early in life and may develop the other later.

“Critic” Ti

Analytic/Yang Style: active,
focused, fixed, outward,
top down

Stubborn on principles. Stick to a singular, most worthy framework that can explain everything. Define precisely. Provide expert logic and guidance. Bring order to ideas. Correct errors, poor thinking, and wrong approaches.

“Systemist” Ti

Holistic/Yin Style: receptive,
diffuse, flexible, inward,
bottom up

Take multiple points of view. Find patterns in the chaos. Notice how systems scale, and apply principles in a fluid way. People, art, nature, and technology all interrelate. Understand and find leverage in the messiness of life.

ENTP Self-Portrait

From Conversations*: *What's it like to be you?*



Life feels like a constant state of moving from one interesting thing to another, and I can get frustrated when there isn't enough time to pursue all those interesting things.

I have a wide range of interests. I love to explore the world, how other people live, what they believe in, and what their lives are like. I have a deep need to understand the human condition and what brings people to life, even above difficult odds. I like it when the conversation goes wherever it wants to go—deep imaginative, intellectual, or philosophical conversation. Going off on one theory or another is fun, but long stories with nothing to learn frustrate me.

Ideas mean change. When I meet people who have interesting ideas, talents, or projects, I want to get to know them and help them make whatever they want to do possibly much bigger, more successful, or more impactful than they had intended. I start aligning with them and building trust because I want to get invited in—to probably change whatever they want to do because I tend to see more possibilities. Then we cook up the project. It's fun to learn. I enjoy that in-the-moment experience of connecting things in my mind. Challenge and intellectual stimulation get me excited.

I just see a different world than the one in which I live, and I admire people who have genuine compassion and a commitment to serve others. I really respect people who have the ability to take the slings and arrows that come with leadership roles and working for change, who can cope with all the misunderstanding and resistance, who can say, "This is an idea whose time has come and we're going to get it done." It's important to me to be in a setting where people are committed, where facts are respected, and where there is a space for people to tell the truth or at least look for the truth—and be open to listening.

Colleagues describe me as someone they can go to when they want an idea or help with an issue or problem they're trying to solve.

* Reprinted from *16 Personality Types: Descriptions for Self-Discovery*

I often can condense or simplify a complex idea. I really often know the right words to use, not necessarily the right empathetic words but the right words. Coaching and giving ideas I do well. Just giving direction is boring. I don't feel things have to be done my way, but they have to be done well.

I am very partner oriented, and being creative together is what makes a relationship alive.

I work a lot, always looking for new projects, something to sink my teeth into, and I am constantly challenging myself to make things better. Things I've already figured out I like to put together in a format or structure, so I don't have to sit down and go through all the nitty-gritty details. I think in terms of the future—why am I here, what is this connected to, where are things going, where did they come from and wouldn't it be better if...? When my intuition is working it produces a lot of excitement and ideas.

I tend to look at things from a very objective basis. Sometimes I don't take the time to stop and thank people and let them know I'm trying to build on what they have already done. When I look at things, I am trying to figure out the system—looking beneath, behind, or above, somehow looking beyond the sensory data to figure out how it all works. I spend a lot of time trying to figure out in my head everything around me. Competence is a must, trying to perfect things, finding a new way. I am hardest on myself, with incredibly high standards, and I hold others to my standards even though sometimes I wish I hadn't. And yet I often seem pretty easygoing.

Fairness and consistency are really important. I feel that people should be treated with respect at all times, and I don't like behavior demeaning to others. When there is conflict I feel a compulsion to figure it out, to resolve it. When I'm personally involved, it can be difficult to initiate a discussion about the conflict. Sometimes I feel inadequate.

I think life is a puzzle and we keep playing with how to fit the pieces together. Something new and challenging is always more interesting to me than something I am already competent at.

ENTP Reminders* for Growth and Success

- ☐ Yours is a rare mind; use it wisely.
- ☐ Find a place where your brainstorming and insights into possibilities are appreciated and given credit.
- ☐ Be nice and play fairly.
- ☐ In relationships, get feedback on how much the other person wants to do problem solving.
- ☐ Keep your humor.
- ☐ Practice diplomatically articulating your needs, values, and feelings.
- ☐ Focus on what you are the most passionate about.
- ☐ When (or if) you play politics, recognize that being political isn't "the" way but your way.
- ☐ If you cannot pinpoint someone else's strategy or principle, then recognize it as their belief.
- ☐ It's okay to have three jobs at once; just remember to sleep well, taste your food, and breathe deeply.
- ☐ Not everything can be successfully approached using a technique.
- ☐ There are many kinds of intelligence—some aren't cognitive—and it's okay that not all of them can be like yours.
- ☐ Promote the worth of others.
- ☐ Try to name three personal beliefs about major ideas you engage.
- ☐ Affect announces character, so pay attention to nonverbal cues.
- ☐ Recognize that failure can result from over-preparation, as well under-preparation.
- ☐ Practice giving and compassion

* Adapted from *Quick Guide to the 16 Personality Types in Organizations*



What Now?

Now that you've explored ENTP:

1. How do the strengths and challenges of this type show up in your life?
2. What's an insight or goal you can act on today in some way?
3. See the later chapters to leverage your subtype, neurotic zone, energy, and aspirations.