

ESFJ Essentials

Facilitator Caretaker™

Extraverting • Sensing • Feeling • Judging



Core Themes

ESFJs easily accept and help others. They are often managing people. They hear out others, voice concerns, and accommodate needs. They easily keep in mind what's personally important, and they have a talent to provide what's needed. ESFJs admire others' success. They strive to keep things pleasant. They keep up a sense of continuity. They account for the human costs. They can surprise others, act as a rebel, or get inventive. They can easily feel let down by entrepreneurial projects.

Unpack the Stack: ESFJs...

Lead with “Friendly Hosting” (Fe)

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

Support by “Cautious Protecting” (Si)

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

Struggle at “Excited Brainstorming” (Ne)

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

Aspire to “Skillful Sleuthing” (Ti)

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



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 ESFJs Lead with Heroism

Expedite Decision Making

Proactively meet goals. Often appear sure and confident.
Organize and fix to get positive results soon.

Friendly Hosting

Nurture trust in giving relationships.

Extraverted Feeling (Fe)

Evaluate and communicate values to build trust and enhance relationships. Like to promote social/interpersonal cohesion. Attend keenly to how others judge you. Quickly adjust your behavior for social harmony. Often rely on a favorite way to reason, with an emphasis on words. Prefer to stay positive, supportive, and optimistic. Empathically respond to others' needs and feelings, and may take on others' needs as your own. Need respect and trust. Easily embarrassed. Like using adjectives to convey values. Enjoy hosting. May hold back the true degree of your emotional response about morals/ethics, regarding talk as more effective. May try too hard to please.

What flavor of Friendly Hosting?

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

“Shepherd” Fe

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

Announce values and prescribe best behaviors. Corral outliers and encourage them to join the group. Actively work to fix relationships. Inspire as an orator. Make sacrifices, and ask others to sacrifice, in a push to meet needs.

“Host” Fe

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

Enjoy supporting your community, family, and friends. Value harmony with others over being right. Sensitive to negative feedback. Accommodate people's many differences. Can be self-sacrificing as you even help foes.

How ESFJs Give Flexible Support

Chart the Process

Reflect on data and perceptions. Often appear focused and preoccupied. Attend to reference points.

Cautious Protecting

Stabilize with a predictable standard.

Introverted Sensing (Si)

Review and practice to specialize and meet group needs. Constant practice “burns in” how-to knowledge and helps build your storehouse. Specialization helps you reliably fill roles and tasks. Improve when following a role-model or example. Easily track where you are in a task. Often review the past and can relive events as if you are there again. Carefully compare a situation to the customary ways you’ve come to rely. In touch with body sensations. Strong memory for kinship and details. Rely on repetition. Check what’s familiar, comforting, and useful. Tend to stabilize a situation and invest for future security. May over-rely on authority for guidance.

What flavor of Cautious Protecting?

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

“Defender” Si

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

Act as an anchor. On guard, and guard others. A firm sense of culture and history. Stick with the strongest impressions from your upbringing. Prefer convenience and familiarity. Block big changes. Traditional. Aim to civilize.

“Hearth” Si

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

Maintain home and traditions. Draw on a big memory bank of sense impressions. Feel grounded. Adapt to the group’s changes and flex to others’ will. Prefer comfort and safety. Sensitive to subtle sensory variations.

ESFJ Self-Portrait

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



I like to be involved and doing something.

Much of my day is keeping contact with a lot of people. That's an important part of my life.

I enjoy communicating with people, talking, going places and doing things, watching people and learning from watching. Bringing people together is a real pleasure. Sharing and time spent with friends and family, a special person, is very satisfying. I like to think about other people, and find I feel tremendous pleasure in reading them. When I see someone who just doesn't talk, sometimes I feel maybe they're missing something. I don't have trouble revealing what is very close to me, even with a complete stranger if I feel safe. Sharing confidences is a gift. I will anticipate others' needs.

A perfect day is feeling I've made a difference to someone. No tension, no conflicts, just something I've solved in a way that feels good to the best of the standards I've set for myself.

In my personal life, friends are important, and being a good friend and having good friends I can depend on makes life a pleasure and a joy. Long-lasting friendships or new ones—I generally care about others and they sense that. Maybe I care too much sometimes, but I want to listen to their background and rationale of why they did something. Part of me wants to tell them the answer right away, but sometimes people just want someone to listen. When I have a problem I bounce it off of people I respect and take into account how others involved will be affected. It can be difficult to take a hard line when people are going to be slighted, but sometimes I have to go through a lot of conflict, do what I must, and step on some toes. But I don't like conflict.

It's hard for me to be confrontational, even to the point where I can leave myself in a bad place because I really don't have the nerve to confront someone and say really what I think needs to be said. I tend to skirt the issue, put it off, because I am very aware of hurting people's feel-

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

ings. But I am not afraid to face a challenge. I will stand up for the rights of others in spite of many obstacles because I believe in justice and helping people. Intolerance and prejudice, people who don't stand by their word or lie to cover up hurting someone else—these raise the hair on the back of my neck. It turns my stomach when people intentionally take advantage of and hurt others. It's not what the person says so much as how it's being said, to the point where I don't hear the message. I want to hear where the person is coming from.

Routine for me is actually something that can be comforting. I think the rhythm of it helps center me. I am good at organizing things. And you've got to have some fun out of your work in order to get up every morning and go. I like doing something just for fun, a random act of kindness. Appreciation and meaningful support can come in a variety of packages—when people intuitively know what I need or a hug or a day off. I've done a lot of the civic-type thing over the years in the community, volunteering part time. That's very rewarding. It's important to raise my kids to be good citizens, to be compassionate in their relationships, to work hard and stick with it through the hard times. Generally what goes around comes around if you wait long enough.

At times, even though by nature I want to be understanding, I can find myself torn between going by the rules and understanding. Often I'm frustrated with decisions because I'm caught between different values, and I have a reputation for expecting others to set goals for themselves and then try to obtain those goals. I tend to be a little too sensitive. I take criticism to heart. Please know that I may not respond right now but I heard you and I will respond.

I follow through on my commitments and obligations and believe in honest relationships and honest communication. I admire people who are not afraid to show affection, who are not embarrassed to try things even though they may not be good at them or are willing to make a change in their life, and who stand up for the rights of others and are not afraid to speak out when they feel someone is out of line. Personal growth means listening to myself and thinking about things, putting my priorities in order, and understanding that setbacks are only for today and that I can go on.

ESFJ Reminders* for Growth and Success

- ☐ Your gift of caring for other's needs is surpassed only by your gift for knowing their needs.
- ☐ Keep in mind that people are diverse, and it's okay if they feel a little odd.
- ☐ Consider that sometimes leaving people alone is the best way to help them mature.
- ☐ Interpersonal drama is not a good substitute for genuine love.
- ☐ Keep in mind that most other people simply cannot be as "up-front" emotionally as you because they are concerned about the meaning of what they are doing.
- ☐ It's okay to be more independent—you'll survive.
- ☐ It's okay to say no, or, "Why don't you try first?" in response to others' demands—everyone will survive.
- ☐ Help people cultivate courage.
- ☐ Before committing, consider how grateful someone can be.
- ☐ Try to replace "I deserve it" with "how can I step up and earn it?"
- ☐ Consider that occasionally, helping hands hurt the most.
- ☐ Not everyone is at home with tradition.
- ☐ The group is only one source of answers and identity.
- ☐ Overcoming adversity can be the highest measure of character.
- ☐ Try to leave room for people to pursue bright ideas that help others in new ways.
- ☐ Remind people that love "is" as love "does".

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



What Now?

Now that you've explored ESFJ:

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.