

INFP Essentials

Harmonizer Clarifier™

Introverting • iNtuiting • Feeling • Perceiving



Core Themes

INFPs need a quest or core meaning. Yet they tend to go with the flow. They have a talent to listen in order to help, noticing what sits behind what's said. They explore moral questions, enjoy uncovering mysteries, and relate through stories and metaphors. INFPs have a way of knowing what is believable. They seek to balance opposites. To get to really know oneself again is a beautiful moment. They can manage others pretty well. They struggle with structure and getting their lives in order.

Unpack the Stack: INFPs...

Lead with “Quiet Crusading” (Fi)

Listen to their feelings, convictions, and conscience to make choices that align with their identity and beliefs.

Support by “Excited Brainstorming” (Ne)

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

Struggle at “Cautious Protecting” (Si)

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

Aspire to “Timely Building” (Te)

Utilize measurable data, tools, resources, and efficient procedures as they organize and make effective decisions.



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 INFPs Lead with Heroism

Refine Decision Making

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

Quiet Crusading

Stay true to who you really are.

Introverted Feeling (Fi)

Listen with your whole self to locate and support what's important. Often evaluate importance along a spectrum from love/like to dislike/hate. Patient and good at listening for identity, values, and what resonates, though may tune out when "done" listening. Value loyalty and belief in oneself and others. Attentive and curious for what is not said. Focus on word choice, voice tone, and facial expressions to detect intent. Check with your conscience before acting. Choose behavior congruent with what's important, your personal identity, and beliefs. Hard to embarrass. Can respond strongly to specific, high-value words or false data. May not utilize feedback.

What flavor of Quiet Crusading?

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

"Quester" Fi

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

Pursue a singular life quest or truth. Aim for moral clarity. Dedicated to a congruent set of beliefs. Align quest and core personal identity. Listen to a select voice like one's own conscience. Contain your feelings.

"Romantic" Fi

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

Live a life of deep quiet feeling. Listen to and harmonize with many voices. Pursue multiple soft quests. Allow room for inner and outer conflicts. Identity is subtle, diffuse, and varies in the context of each relationship.

How INFPs Give Flexible Support

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?

INFPs 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.

INFPs In Their Own Words

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



I have a very internal focus. I think I look at myself through other people's eyes, but sometimes I can lose touch with how things work for me. Then I can get introspective, going very deep and staying there, not coming out too quickly or easily. Somehow I find it very difficult to put into words and communicate the things that really matter to me. Most people don't have the foggiest notion about what goes on with me.

I like harmony and seek consensus and do well with the deep issues. My values and the things that are important to me often feel outside the mainstream in the sense that I feel impinged upon and uncomfortable with so much of what goes on. I'm too private to push my values on to other people, but I am convinced that one ought to be congruent in their own life if they are going to expect congruence from others. In a sense I hold other people to that standard, and I worry about my own incongruities, inconsistencies, and contradictions. Groups can be hard. I can put myself in the group process so rapidly and so completely, and it's important not to get sucked in. I need to be predictable about what I believe.

I am a global thinker and I like to learn interactively. My thoughts need to be connected with some person or value. On reflection, don't all thoughts have to be connected to something? I feed new information into other things I've read and my thoughts, and I can have a marvelous time just sitting with ideas. And I like to discuss or write things because I seem to have a lot in my head and I've got to get it out. I love bringing together different eclectic ideas and seeing what's similar. I like to have my own ideas, hear others ideas, and have ideas challenged, bantering back and forth. Chitchat has no interest for me. I tend to do a lot of mental rehearsal and play in problem solving, and the fun part is figuring out how to do something. Motivation comes when something has real meaning or value for me, and while I enjoy ideas, I don't like having my values challenged.

For me, asking questions is just a different form of being quiet, a

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

way to explore an inner thought stream or check out of reality and back into my thoughts. Sometimes I chuckle at myself that there is really no sequential way that I work though tasks.

I have always trusted my intuition, even before I was aware of it. I enjoy talking to people. It's interesting to learn about them, where they're coming from and how they invent their reality. And I have an innate talent for reading between the lines—to hear what hasn't been said—and a sense of what needs to be said and done. I tend to form impressions right away about people, and most of the time I feel pretty good about my impressions but sometimes I am way off. At least if the people have good intentions, I can relax.

I enjoy seeing people enjoy who they are, and I get a lot of joy helping others discover that they have value. Being able to help someone in their darkest hour, to communicate across differences and find common ways of working together, that is very satisfying because then there is a real sense of closeness and acceptance and a genuine pursuit of helping people heal and achieve their goals. I hold on to relationships even though we may go long periods without seeing each other, and I cherish those long associations.

I'm concerned about how others feel when they are around me. Lack of honesty or ethics or integrity in interactions—when someone is saying one thing but doing another—really puts me off. So does when someone doesn't honor, or accept as valid, my communication or feeling as I try to talk to them about something that matters to me. And I don't need to talk about myself. I don't enjoy it. Sometimes I'm frustrated trying to communicate, and sometimes a metaphor or a joke or a story is a way to effectively express myself so what I'm saying can be heard by someone who hears or experiences things differently.

I don't know what I am going to do next, but I trust in myself that something will come in as a new idea, with challenge and inner meaning. Whatever it is, it will be right. Although I would never actually say it, it feels as though I am grounded in the very being of who I am when I talk like this.

INFP Reminders* for Growth and Success

- ☐ Your gift is to really go to the heart of any issue, if you dare.
- ☐ Connect with people who create the kind of organization where you can be empathic.
- ☐ With a project, try to do a little work every day.
- ☐ If you're going to use an idea ethically, then seriously learn the specifics.
- ☐ Try to gather three facts about important situations, even if you must ask.
- ☐ It's okay to imagine "as if" you had a certain plan.
- ☐ Try to stay "tuned in" to alternate beliefs.
- ☐ When something seems unbelievable, consider what is really an aspect of your identity and what is simply a hasty evaluation about its worth.
- ☐ Good reasoning involves considering multiple counter-arguments.
- ☐ Ground your beliefs in the lives of many real people.
- ☐ Don't get seduced by the "dark side" of a reactionary identity.
- ☐ If you wait to hear what sounds good, consider how you can work out the negative feelings.
- ☐ Attend to your health and physical environment—it's not as scary as you imagine.
- ☐ If you can't "be there" emotionally for a person, then introduce them to someone who can.
- ☐ Realize that your words may cause people to reconsider who they are and what they believe in.

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



What Now?

Now that you've explored INFP:

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.