

ISFP Essentials

Composer Producer™

Introverting • Sensing • Feeling • Perceiving



Core Themes

ISFPs seek life's pulse to go with its flow. They are patient to take advantage of opportunities as they come up naturally. They stick with what's important, to be their true selves with their own personal style. They have a talent for pulling together what feels just right for an artistic impact. ISFPs attract others' loyalty and build relationships with care. They like to play against expectations and can get really creative at solving a problem. They struggle to nurture their self-esteem.

Unpack the Stack: ISFPs...

Lead with “Quiet Crusading” (Fi)

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

Support by “Active Adapting” (Se)

Enjoy the external world using their five senses and take concrete actions based on options before them.

Struggle at “Keen Foreseeing” (Ni)

Focus on a vision of the future, and on insights and realizations from the inner hidden world of the unconscious.

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 ISFPs 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?

ISFPs 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 ISFPs Give Flexible Support

Energize the Process

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

Active Adapting

Immerse in the Persent Context.

Extraverted Sensing (Se)

Act quickly and smoothly to handle whatever comes up in the moment. Excited by motion, action, and nature. Adept at physical multitasking with a video game-like mind primed for action. Often in touch with body sensations. Trust your senses and gut instincts. Bored when sitting with a mental/rote task. Good memory for relevant details. Tend to be relaxed, varying things a little and scanning the environment, until an urgent situation or exciting option pops up. Then you quickly get “in the zone” and use your whole mind to handle whatever is happening. Tend to test limits and take risks for big rewards. May be impatient to finish.

What flavor of Active Adapting?

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

“Mover” Se

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

Physically active. Move, and move others. Aggressive style. Tackle problems directly. Alert for relevant data. Court danger. Focus on actionable options for tangible, bottom-line results. Impulsive, strong, and can be crude.

“Sensate” Se

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

Absorb sensory experiences. Enjoy life’s pleasures. Trust rich sensory data. Prefer fun, relaxing activities. Attend to others’ motion and get in synch with them. Sensual style. Appreciate beauty. Artistic, graceful, and inviting.

ISFP Self-Portrait

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



Probably I'm the happiest when things are just a little different everyday. I don't want to commit to any particular way to be. I want to be able to be a lot of ways. In my mind, I am peacefully assimilating myself to a lot of different situations, flowing easily between them all. Most people don't understand there's a lot going on inside. It's always different, and if it's not always different, it's no fun.

When I'm someplace, doing something, I'm really there. The whole experience is related to that time and place. And people only see the part of me that is with them that day. That's who I am for that day, but little do they know that tomorrow I might be different.

I'm reserved when I first meet people, but I am friendly, warm, and outgoing once I've gotten to know someone. I really enjoy listening to people, hearing other people's stories and learning about them. I remember a lot of the details. I ask a lot of questions and like the challenge of recognizing where people are coming from and why they might be coming from that perspective. I love the give and take of conversations. I really feel thrilled and excited learning from that intellectual energy combined with that emotional energy. It gives me a sense of the person. In any situation, I love the give and take, the playfulness and energy, the excitement and a little bit of competition, a little bit of one-upsmanship. But when it becomes abrasive and people personally attack others, I'm offended.

I have a lot of interests and I can get interested in one thing, and then something else comes along and that looks fascinating. I enjoy using the skills that I do have, and they're varied. I'm always on the lookout for something that uses my skills and abilities, that will give me variety and still be stimulating and let me have a mission with people. In my best jobs, I was connecting with people and problem solving and often using tools, adapting equipment or techniques.

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

My nature is when things get to a crunch, I'll make something happen that will make it all right. I just know that I can do that and will do that. I love solving people problems.

But part of me shivers if someone tells me their expectations of me, even if they're expectations I have for myself. I need the freedom to be able to change my mind or direction. I like to get a feel for what they're looking for and then just make it happen and hope they enjoy it. And don't ask me how I did it because I have a difficult time communicating that. It's whatever moves me at the time. I probably don't even remember half of what I've done. I can spin around doing nothing and then spend two minutes and get something done. It's a whole process that I can't communicate, because it's not something that can always be written down on paper—because when I'm doing it, I'm enjoying it. It's like I'm in a different world. It's not a task to me—it's a creative outlet.

I enjoy family and friends. I enjoy being with them and doing things with them—developing that relationship, bonding with them. I carry through with my commitments and I'm a very responsible person. Deep friendships are important to me, but not too many.

When I am angry I get quiet. Others don't know though, that's the problem. Because it's not an external, visible reaction—it's more passive, turned inward. I'm trying to think it through to figure a way to get my point across so they understand because I wouldn't want to attack somebody. That's something about me, that noncommunication, or withdrawal.

I like recognition. It's very important to get complimented soon after an accomplishment. If something goes unnoticed or unrewarded, it doesn't have the immediate impact that I want. I've been learning my own positive self-talk. I tend to be a workaholic at whatever it is I am doing. You might say I'm a perfectionist. I want people to be impressed with my performance. I don't want anyone to be unhappy with my performance so I continue to perform, and that is kind of a driving force. It has been a constant struggle to not overdo it. I need a positive environment to work in and I need the people I'm working with to support me.

ISFP Reminders* for Growth and Success

- ☐ Surround yourself with people who recognize and support your talents and your originality.
- ☐ Be captain of your own ship and explore places beyond your sphere of life.
- ☐ Give yourself permission to follow the educational path best for you.
- ☐ Be careful people don't get the wrong idea when you behave like their friend.
- ☐ When giving suggestions, let people know whether or not you can really be involved.
- ☐ You will be happier and freer if you address some of the problems in your environment instead of living with them.
- ☐ So you made a mistake; you can address it, ignore it or try again.
- ☐ Notice that silence doesn't count as communication.
- ☐ If you're not doing something with your life, then what are you doing? Do until your heart is content.
- ☐ Find ways to be rewarded without losing your ethics—imagine who you can help with your success!
- ☐ Use all of your natural skills.
- ☐ Continually push your limits through new knowledge.
- ☐ Build up a tolerance to people who annoy you.
- ☐ Step outside to change your mind.
- ☐ Too simple a life stifles opportunities.
- ☐ Find three ways to experience the freedom that a structure can provide.

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



What Now?

Now that you've explored ISFP:

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.