

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR GENERAL PROFILE

ESFJ

Personality

ESFJs, the most sociable of all types, are energized by interactions with people, tending to idealize whatever or whomever they admire. Harmony is a key to this type, which is represented, in about 13 percent of the general population.

ESFJs are the great nurturers of established institutions such as the home, the school, the church, and civic groups. Wherever they go, they promote harmony and harmonious relationships. They are outstanding hosts or hostesses, able to call people by name, usually after one introduction. At a social gathering they can be observed attending to the needs of others, trying to insure that all are comfortable and involved.

Social ties matter to the ESFJs, and their conversations often drift to nostalgic recounting of past memories. Traditions are developed, supported, and carefully observed by the ESFJ.

ESFJs are hurt by indifference and need to be appreciated both for themselves and for the abundance, typically in the form of services, they give to others. They are conscious of appearances and take the opinions of others regarding social standards very seriously. Values in an ESFJ may take the form of shoulds and should nots and may be freely expressed. Conscientious and orderly, ESFJs may become restless when isolated from people.

Career

Career selection by ESFJs may lean toward service occupations. They have such outgoing personalities that they are outstanding at selling, being an invariable winner in sales contests. They are apt to have seniority in any sales group within an organization. Observation of ESFJs at work in a sales transaction will demonstrate how this type personalizes the sale. The customer is not buying the product; he or she is buying personally from the ESFJ. This same characteristic causes ESFJs to be good in teaching, preaching, supervision, administration, coaching, and, in general, people to people jobs. They seldom become a source of irritation to their superiors, for they respect and obey the rules and regulations, are duty-and-service-oriented. They are loyal to their bosses. ESFJs are likely to be aware of and enjoy discussing events and problems in the lives of their colleagues; but when conversations turn to abstractions of philosophy or science, the ESFJ may become restive. Analysis of the complex – for example, an attempt to find an explanation of events through an analysis of principles – does not excite their interest, as it does the NTs’.

Home

ESFJ mates have a set of values which contain clear should and should-nots, and they expect their family to abide by these. They are conscientious about home responsibilities, are orderly about the home, and prefer that other occupants be the same. They enjoy socializing and entertaining. ESFJs want family decisions settled efficiently and quickly and want family living routinized, scheduled, and correctly executed. They do not rebel against routine operations, are devoted to the traditional values of home and hearth, respect their marriage vows, and are the most sympathetic of all types. They tend to be dependent on their mates and may marry to insure that they have a proper place in the social strata. They enjoy the rituals connected with serving of good food and beverages, thrive on festive occasions, respect and accumulate a goodly store of material possessions. They take their role in the community seriously and are sensitive to the acknowledged, official decision-makers and identify with them. They are aware of status, and often depend on higher authority as the source of opinions and attitudes.

ESFJs wear their hearts on their sleeves and are outgoing in their emotional reactions. They need to be needed, loved, and appreciated and may spend much energy reassuring themselves that this is the case. They can become melancholy and depressed and even suicidal if they take the blame for whatever might be wrong in their institution or their personal relationships – as they are prone to do.

ESFJs usually respect and revere their parents, and as children were responsive and obedient pupils. They seem able to express the right feeling for a given situation. They are soft hearted, sentimental, and usually observe with gusto and a flourish birthdays, anniversaries, and the like, making of the event a delightful, important occasion. At the same time, however, ESFJs can cause others undue tension by expressing anticipations of gloom and doom, exhibiting a bent toward the pessimistic that can be contagious. They need to control their fears that the worst is sure to happen and suppress their tendency toward crepe hanging and anticipating disasters.

The children of an ESFJ are seen as an extension of the family, and all they do reflects on the ESFJ. If things do not go well, the ESFJ may be critical, even carping toward his or her mate and children. This type may marry alcoholics or others who are particularly needy. If a female ESFJ is married to a mate who is not a good provider, she can become nagging and brood over a comparison of her possessions and status with that of others. ESFJs, male or female, live in terms of people and things rather than in terms of ideas and principles. They enjoy the process of decision-making, particularly when focus is on the usefulness of things and people.

Midlife

At midlife ESFJs may want to get involved in activities that spark their imagination and creativity, for example, work with art media. They should find it useful to sort out priorities in their values and force themselves to give more attention to their own wishes and needs. They could begin to practice the art of being kind to oneself and each day attempt to do at least one self-indulgent deed. Travel should be something ESFJs particularly enjoy; at midlife they should allocate time to this activity. Also, the reading of “serious” technical books in a professional field might interest and expand the horizons of ESFJs at this time of life. Planning for retirement so that a sufficient number of interpersonal activities are available is vital for the ESFJ, who would very quickly become bored and restless if cut off from contact with a variety of people.

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR MATING PROFILE

ESFJ

Mates

There is a mutual attraction of ESFJ and INTP. The ESFJ, wanting to serve as an anchorage for the INTP's flights to the higher levels of abstraction, finds in the ISTP an even more likely target for anchorage. The ISTP's flights are often literal, not figurative; He really does fly. Look in the cockpit of almost any aircraft and you'll find an ISTP. Of course, most ISTPs do not fly in the literal sense; but the hankering for adventure and exploration symbolized by flight is there, and it is this, the hankering, that draws the ESFJ like a moth to a flame. How does this serve the giving, caring, comforting nature of ESFJ? Why, when the adventurer returns, of course; the giver of comfort is there to provide rest and recreation.

Courting

The SJ tends to express affection in standard ways, verbalizing expressions of love in ritualistic language, and bringing gifts on appropriate occasions. These gifts have usually intrinsic value as objects and are to be kept and treasured. The transactional ritual is important, not the surprise or audience impression as with an SP. The notion of discussing philosophy, religion, aesthetics, or ethics as a precursor to erotic activities does not make much sense to either the SJ male or female. Sex is sex and Philosophy is philosophy. The notion of the "grand passion" is likely to mystify an SJ mate, who may enjoy the fantasy, but who soon wants to get on with the business of living. For an SJ, courting is something one does before vows are taken. Once the bargain is sealed, they are prepared to give priority to getting ahead in business, establishing a home and family, making a circle of friends and establishing social connections. Sexual routines are apt to be established early in marriage and observed throughout life. The unexpected and unusual are probably not a part of the basic sexual repertoire of the SJ. A male SJ may, perhaps, explore other relationships outside the framework of his marriage, but only if particularly dissatisfied at home.

Sex

Epimethean temperaments (SJs), males and females alike, tend to be more solemn about their sexual activities than do the SPs. Sex is a more serious business. While an SP could use sex to forget his or her troubles, an SJ, particularly a male SJ, would be more likely to use sex to ease fatigue, wanting to be comforted both emotionally and physically. After sexual release has been obtained, the SJ is apt to be most solicitous of the physical comfort and welfare of the other.

While other types might see sex as a mutually pleasing activity, from which both males and females benefit equally, the SJ male is apt to express gratitude to his partner for the sexual experience, communicating the message that something has been done for him, that his needs have been served, that a favor has been done. The possibility of a mate enjoying the experience equally, or needing the experience equally, is not often conceptualized by him. A female SJ is likely to go along with this position, placing the sexual needs of her mate over any she might have, perhaps seeing sex as a wifely chore rather than a pleasure.

SJs are apt to be faithful to their marriage vows. Males may have sown their wild oats before marrying, but after mating become more interested in establishing a home and a family and devoting their main energies to their jobs. Female SJs probably have had only limited sexual experience before marriage, even in an age of sexual freedom. If such is not the case, it is likely that peer pressures led the female into sexual explorations because it was the "thing to do," because it was "embarrassing to be a 20 year old virgin."

SJ males and females both may view sex as a service which is to be delivered by the female, performed dutifully and on request, presumably in return for social and economic security. They are not likely to experiment in sexual approaches. The tried-and-true time and place is usually the sexual mode for the SJ mate. The SJ male is likely to express concern for his partner, but neither male nor female SJ may believe that female orgasm is a requisite. Always there is that unexpressed attitude that “nice girls don’t.” At the same time, when SJ males are in social contact with other males (and selected females) – for example at conventions, hunting trips, and smokers – the SJ male can equal the SP in his command of vivid language and his repertoire of sexual jokes. Female SJs are not, whether with males or females, apt to discuss their sexual experiences. Sex is clearly understood as a means of reproduction rather than mainly as a form of recreation, and both male and female SJs may reflect the attitude that having children, who will bring joy and comfort and who will continue the family line, is expected and desirable. Sex generally is something one does at night, in the bedroom, as quietly as possible. Although this is less true in our so-called sexually liberated age, the view of sex as recreation is not a perception ordinarily held by most SJs.

Interpersonal

SJ mates may have some difficulty understanding the emotional needs of other types, particularly the NFs and NTs, where transactions outside the bedroom loom vital as precursor to sexual response. An SJ could give way to a temper tantrum, to biting sarcasm, scolding, criticizing, the works – and then expect a mate to separate these behaviors from the sexual relationship. He or she may not understand the possible impact on sex which is clear to other types. This mate believes that, as long as he or she cares for the spouse and takes the proper responsibility for the spouse’s health and welfare, the constructive “lessons” which he or she offers to correct the mate should not inhibit the other’s affection.

Social

Time is apt to be structured by the SJ around productive activities, which have a clearly-defined task as the focal point. Wasting time in frivolity tends to be difficult for the SJ. For example, reading a newspaper is apt to have more appeal than would reading novels. SJs value time as a thing to be used, not to be wasted. They tend to be punctual and expect their mates to be also; they like to make and keep schedules for themselves and sometimes even their mates and children. The SJ mate wants social events to proceed in a preplanned, orderly manner, with pleasant but not uproarious hilarity. Generally, SJ mates do not mind members of their family (and others) making demands on their time, as long as the demand is for sensible reasons.

As mates, SJs seldom complain of boredom. They are content to live on an even keel, and are happy keeping within established routines. They may enjoy eating out at the same restaurant, say, every Friday evening. They may be willing to visit the same vacation spot year after year, performing the same recreational activities with the same people in the same place.

The SJ mate is apt to communicate an attitude of nurturance and well as an attitude of being critical. In the language of Transactional Analysis, they come from both the Critical and Nurturing parent ego states. For the SJ mate, caring for mate or children means having the responsibility to see to it that the other knows the Right thing to do and the Right Way to do it, which means the ways learned from parents and tradition. Spontaneity in the SJ tends to be suppressed, although when fatigued or under stress, the SJ can erupt into a temper tantrum, use biting sarcasm, or even, in rare instances, attempt to make a point through violence.

SJs’ need to be of service and to belong to established institutions make them faithful, steady, responsible, reliable mates who are predictable, loyal, dependable, and usually faithful. They are not likely to abandon their families at midlife or to squander lifelong savings in impulsive spending sprees. They make excellent homemakers, and belong in outstanding supportive ways in the institutions of community – the home, the church, the government, and civic institutions – truly the pillars who hold up society.

Domestic

SJs may be possessive about their family – often referring to “their wife,” “their children,” their car,” – and possessions can assume large proportions, claiming much interest and attention. Their possessions are to be dutifully serviced and cared for, to be held and cherished, and never wasted in frivolity. SJs tend to be careful with money and are likely to budget carefully, planning well for the future, at time at the expense of much sacrifice in the present. Insurance policies, savings accounts, bonds, and the like make sense to the SJ, who understands their value. Also understood is the utilitarian value of property, tools, cars, clothes, and the like. Possessions should be functional and without undue ostentation. Goods should be used up, worn out, and then not thrown away, but donated to a charitable agency. “Waste not, want not” is understood and honored as a motto by the SJs. Property is likely to be well tended and the expectation of SJs is that those around them will do likewise, including their neighbors and colleagues at work.

For a female SJ, especially one who is introverted, home may be a focal point, to the exclusion of all else. Devotion to husband and children, the preparation of meals, keeping a clean and orderly house may take all her time and become her reason for living. At midlife, when the children have left home, this can occasion a major crisis. For the male SJ, retirement can bring about the same trauma; his job is often to the male SJ what the home and family are to the female SJ. Both may worry about loved ones when they are away from home and will tend to make frequent contact by telephone. SJs sometimes catastrophize and suffer with worry about unlikely calamities.

Frequent or rapid changes in home environment or rituals or frequent changes in work procedures or personnel are not welcomed by the SJ. Individual deviations from the traditional, accepted ways of behaving on the part of family members are not encouraged by an SJ parent. They have a sure sense of what is Good and Right and they do not hesitate to impose this on their mates and children. In truth, the SJ sees this imposition of standards as his duty. He requires things and people, procedures and products, to be consistent and stable, appropriately in harmony with traditional ways.

The past has a strong press for SJs. They have a sense of family history, and value stories and information about their families. They tend to entertain relatives, to keep in touch with the extended family circle, to honor the traditional rituals such as the Thanksgiving turkey and Easter dinner. Church-related activities may often occupy the SJ’s free time, as might community-based, organized activities, both charitable and social. An SJ mate is likely to belong to the organized civic groups of the community, and probably be knowledgeable of the status hierarchy and pecking orders in those groups.