

INFP

(Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Perceiving)

Still waters run deep

Career Satisfactions for INFPs

Doing work that:

- Is in harmony with my own personal values and beliefs and allows me to express my vision through my work
- Gives me time to develop substantial depth to my ideas and maintain control over the process and product
- Is done autonomously, with a private work space and plenty of uninterrupted time, but with periodic opportunities to bounce my ideas off people I feel respect me
- Is done within a flexible structure, with a minimum of rules or regulations, letting me work on projects when I feel inspired
- Is done with other creative and caring individuals in a cooperative environment free from tension and interpersonal strife
- Lets me express my originality and in which personal growth is encouraged and rewarded
- Does not require me to present my work frequently in front of groups of people or be called upon to share before it is completed to my satisfaction
- Allows me to help others grow and develop and realize their full potential
- Involves understanding people and discovering what makes them tick; allows me to develop deep one-to-one relationships with others
- Allows me to work toward fulfilling my ideals and not be limited by political, financial, or other obstacles

Work-Related Strengths

- Thoughtfulness and the ability to focus on one issue or idea in depth
- Eagerness to “think outside the box” and consider new possibilities
- Deep commitment to work you believe in
- Ability to work well alone if necessary
- Natural curiosity and skill for getting the information you need
- Ability to see the big picture and to see implication of actions and ideas
- Perceptiveness about people’s needs and motivations
- Adaptability; you can shift gears and change directions quickly
- Ability to work extremely well with people one-on-one

Work-Related Weaknesses

- Need to control projects or you may lose interest
- Tendency toward disorganization and difficulty setting priorities
- Difficulty working on projects that conflict with your values
- Reluctance to follow traditional ways of doing things
- Natural idealism, which may prevent you from having realistic expectations
- Dislike of doing things in traditional or routine ways
- Difficulty working in competitive or tension-filled environments
- Lack of discipline about attending to and following through on important details
- Impatience working with structures or people who are too rigid
- Tendency to be unrealistic about how long things take
- Reluctance to discipline direct-reports and criticize others

*Source: Do What You Are, Paul D. Tieger & Barbara Barron-Tieger, 3rd edition, 2001
Please Understand Me, David Keirsey & Marilyn Bates, 4th edition, 1984.*

Popular Occupations for INFPs

Creative/Arts

- Artist
- Writer: poet/novelist
- Journalist
- Entertainer
- Architect
- Actor
- Editor
- Musician
- Informational-graphics designer
- Editor/art director (magazine)
- Multimedia producer
- Editor/art director (website)
- Composer
- Film editor
- Set designer
- Interior designer
- Desktop publisher

Health Care

- Dietitian/nutritionist
- Physical therapist
- Home health social worker
- Occupational therapist
- Speech-language pathologist/audiologist
- Massage therapist
- Holistic health practitioner
- Manual arts therapist
- Geneticist
- Ethicist

Education/Counseling

- College professor: humanities/arts
- Researcher
- Clinical psychologist
- Counselor
- Social worker
- Librarian
- Educational consultant
- Special education teacher
- Bilingual education teacher
- Early childhood education teacher
- Employee assistance counselor
- Child welfare counselor
- Substance abuse counselor
- Social worker (elderly and child day care issues)
- Translator/interpreter

- Legal mediator
- Planned-giving officer
- Philanthropic consultant
- Career counselor/coach
- Grant coordinator
- Genealogist
- Curator
- Public health educator

Religion

- Minister/priest
- Religious educator
- Missionary
- Church worker
- Pastoral counselor

Organizational Development

- Employment development specialist
- Human resources development specialist
- Social scientist
- Diversity manager—human resources
- Consultant: team building/conflict resolution
- Industrial-organizational psychologist
- Outplacement consultant
- Labor relations specialist
- Corporate team trainer

Technology

- Customer relations manager
- Staff advocate (technology consultant)
- Coach
- Project manager
- Engagement manager
- Human resources recruiter
- Educational software developer

Portrait of an INFP

INFPs present a calm, pleasant face to the world and are seen as reticent and even shy. Although they demonstrate a cool reserve toward others, inside they are anything but distant. They have a capacity for caring which is not always found in other types. They care deeply — indeed, passionately — about a few special persons or a cause. One word that captures this type is idealistic. At times, this characteristic leaves them feeling isolated, especially since INFPs are found in only 1% of the general population.

INFPs have profound sense of honor derived from internal values. The INFP is the Prince or the Princess of mythology, the King's Champion, Defender of the Faith, and the guardian of the castle. Sir Galahad and Joan of Arc are male and female prototypes of an INFP. To understand INFPs their cause must be understood, for they are willing to make unusual sacrifices for someone or something believed in.

INFPs seek unity in their lives, unity of body and mind, emotions and intellect. They often have a subtle tragic motif running through their lives, but others seldom detect this inner minor key. The deep commitment of INFPs to the positive and the good causes them to be alert to the negative and the evil, which can take the form of a fascination with the profane. Thus INFPs may live a paradox, drawn toward purity and unity but looking over the shoulder toward the sullied and desecrated. When INFPs believe that they have yielded to an impure temptation, they may be given to acts of self-sacrifice in atonement. The atonement, however, is within the INFP, who does not feel compelled to make public the issue.

INFPs prefer the valuing process over the purely logical. They respond to the beautiful versus the ugly, the good versus the bad, and the moral versus the immoral. Impressions are gained in a fluid, global, diffused way. Metaphors and similes come naturally but may be strained. INFPs have a gift for interpreting symbols, as well as creating them, and thus often write in lyric fashion. They may demonstrate a tendency to take deliberate liberties with logic. They see logic as something optional. INFPs also may, at times, assume an unwarranted familiarity with a domain, because their global, impressionistic way of dealing with reality may have failed to register a sufficient number of details for mastery. INFPs may have difficulty thinking in terms of a conditional framework; they see things as either real or fancied, and are impatient with the hypothetical.

At work, INFPs are adaptable, welcome new ideas and new information, and are well aware of people and their feelings, and relate well to most, albeit with some psychological distance. INFPs dislike telephone interruptions and work well alone, as well as with others. They are patient with complicated situations, but impatient with routine details. They can make errors of fact, but seldom of values. Their career choices may be toward the ministry, missionary work, college teaching, psychiatry, architecture, psychology — and away from business. They seem willing and usually are able to apply themselves scholastically to gain the necessary training for professional work, often doing better in college than in high school. They have a natural interest in scholarly activities and demonstrate a remarkable facility for languages. Often they hear a calling to go forth into the world to help others; they seem willing to make the necessary personal sacrifices involved in responding to that call, even if it means asking others to do likewise. INFPs can make outstanding novelists and character actors, for they are able to efface their own personalities in their portrayal of a character in a way other types cannot.

As mates, INFPs have a deep commitment for their pledges. They like to live in harmony and may go to great lengths to avoid constant conflict. They are sensitive to the feelings of others and enjoy pleasing those they care for. They may find it difficult to reconcile a romantic, idealized concept of conjugal life with the realities of everyday living with another person. At times, in fact, INFPs may seem fearful of exuberant attainment, afraid that

current advances may have to be paid for with later sacrifices. The devil is sure to get his due if the INFP experiences too freely of success, or beauty, or health, or wealth, or knowledge. And thus, INFPs guard against giving way to relaxing in the happiness of mating. They may have difficulty in expressing affection directly, but communicate interest and affection indirectly.

For INFPs, their home is their castle. As parents, they are fierce in protection of home and family and are devoted to the welfare of family members. They have a strong capacity for devotion, sympathy, and adaptability in their relationships, and thus are easy to live with. They are loyal to their family and, although they may dream of greener pastures, if they stray into those pastures they soon locate the nettles. The almost preconscious conviction that pleasure must be paid for with pain can cause a sense of uneasiness in the family system of an INFP, who may transmit an air of being ever-vigilant against invasion. In the routine rituals of daily living, INFPs tend to be compliant and may even prefer having decisions made on their behalf—until their value system is violated! Then INFPs dig in their heels and will not budge from ideals. Life with an INFP will go gently along periods, until an ideal is struck and violated. Then an INFP will resist and insist.

Using your strengths is easy.

The secret to success for an INFP is learning to:

***DEVELOP REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS, VALUE COMPROMISE, AND NOT
TAKE THINGS QUITE SO PERSONALLY***