

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR GENERAL PROFILE

INTP

Personality

INTPs exhibit the greatest precision in thought and language of all the types; they tend to see distinction and inconsistencies in thought and language instantaneously. The one word which captures the unique style of INTPs is architect – the architect of ideas and systems as well as the architect of edifices. This type is found in only 1 percent of the population and therefore is not encountered as frequently as some other types.

INTPs detect contradictions in statements no matter how distant in space or time the contradictory statements were produced. The intellectual scanning of INTPs has a principled quality; that is, INTPs search for whatever is relevant and pertinent to the issue at hand. Consequently, INTPs can concentrate better than any other type.

Authority derived from office, position, or wide acceptance does not impress INTPs. Only statements that are logical and coherent carry weight. External authority per se is irrelevant. INTPs abhor redundancy and incoherence. Possessing a desire to understand the universe, an INTP is constantly looking for natural law. Curiosity concerning these keys to the universe is a driving force in this type.

INTPs prize intelligence in themselves and in others, but can become intellectual dilettantes as a result of their need to amass ideas, principles, or understanding of behavior. And once they know something, it is remembered. INTPs can become obsessed with analysis. Once caught up in a thought process. That thought process seems to have a will of its own for INTPs, and they persevere until the issue is comprehended in all its complexity. They can be intellectual snobs and may show impatience at times with others less endowed intellectually. This quality, INTPs find generates hostility and defensive behavior on the part of others, who may describe an INTP as arrogant.

For INTPs, the world exists primarily to be understood. Reality is trivial, a mere arena for proving ideas. It is essential that the universe is understood and that whatever is stated about the universe is stated correctly, with coherence and without redundancy. This is the INTPs final purpose. It matters not whether others understand or accept his or her truths.

Career

The INTP is the logician, the mathematician, the philosopher, the scientist; any pursuit requiring architecture of ideas intrigues this type. INTP's should not, however, be asked to work out the implementation or application of their models to the real world. The INTP is the architect of a system and leaves it to others to be the builder and the applicator. Very often therefore, the INTP's work is not credited to him or her. The builder and the applicator gains fame and fortune, while the INTP's name remains obscure. Appreciation of an INTP's theoretical work frequently comes posthumously – or the work may never be removed from library shelves at all and thus lost.

INTP's tend not to be writers or to go into sales work. They are, however, often excellent teachers, particularly for advanced students, although INTP's do not always enjoy much popularity, for they can be hard taskmasters. They are not good at clerical tasks and are impatient with routine details. They prefer to work quietly, without interruption, and often alone. If an organization is to use the talents of an INTP appropriately, the INTP must be given an efficient support staff who can capture ideas as they emerge and before the INTP loses interest and turns to another idea.

Home

INTP's take their mating relationship seriously and usually are faithful and devoted – albeit preoccupied at times. They are not likely to welcome constant social activity or disorganization in the home. In all probability, the mate of an INTP will initiate and manage the social life. If left to his or her own devices the INTP mate will retreat into the world of books and emerge only when physical needs become imperative. INTP's are, however, willing, compliant, and easy to live with, although somewhat forgetful of appointment, anniversaries and rituals of daily living – unless reminded. They may have difficulty expressing their emotions verbally, and the mate of an INTP may believe that he/she is somewhat taken for granted. As a parent, the INTP is devoted; they enjoy children, and are serious about their upbringing. The home of an INTP parent is usually calm, low-key in discipline, but well run and ordered.

INTP's deal with the environment primarily through intuition, and their stronger quality, the thinking function, remains relatively hidden except in close associations. Therefore, INTP's are often misunderstood, seen as difficult to know, and seldom perceived at their true level of competency. They are inclined to be shy except when with a close friends, and their reserve is difficult to penetrate. They are very adaptable until one of their principles is violated. Then INTP's are not adaptable at all! They may have difficulty in being understood by others because they tend to think in a complicated fashion and want to be precise, never redundant in their communications. Because their feeling qualities may be underdeveloped, they may be insensitive to the wants and wishes of others, often unaware of the existence of these wants and wishes.

Midlife

At midlife the INTP might do well to work on increasing awareness of emotional responses, responding to the value preferences of others, and verbalizing to others the INTP's awareness of these values. At midlife one of the tasks of the INTP is to develop an ability to play for play's sake; not to learn something or to somehow improve a skill. Working on the sensual side of his or her nature may provide a source of new pleasure and excitement.

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR MATING PROFILE

INTP

Mates

Our “architect” is not merely a designer of buildings. There is the architect of ideas (the philosopher), the architect of number systems (the mathematician), the architect of computer languages (the programmer), and on and on. In short, abstract design is the forte of the architect and coherence is the primary issue.

Why would this abstractionist find the ESFJ “seller” attractive? Think broadly of selling. This amounts to persuading another to receive something of value to the receiver. The seller is essentially caring for the receiver (quite apart from the fact that the receiver pays). This is the essential attitude of the ESFJ seller, and this attitude is perceptible to the receiver (buyer); he feels this nourishing approach. That is what is attractive to the INTP architect-philosopher – the nourishment which anchors him to the real world.

What attracts the ESFJ “seller”? Here is a person who, like a balloon filled with hydrogen, is likely to escape the earth (in his abstract attitude). He needs to have a string attached so that he can be hauled down to earth now and then. In a sense, he needs to be “sold on reality,” so indifferent is he to it.

The INTP also has a second likely target to attract him: the ENFJ “pedagogue.” What is a pedagogue? A catalyst of the growth process, someone who has that uncanny ability to “bring out” the other, to activate the differentiation or “unfolding” process in the learner. All NFs seems to have this capability in some degree and the accompanying desire to exercise it, but the ENFJ seems to have it in abundance. This relationship – the ENFJ – INTP -- can be “deep and meaningful” for the former and anchoring in a charismatic way for the latter.

Courting

The mate of Promethean NT may well believe that the NT is quite oblivious to his welfare, and may see him as unaware of daily events, which make up the stream of homely family life. The mate of an NT may long for more frequently verbalized expressions of affection and concern on the part of the NT. The NT, on the other hand, would probably be amazed that his or her way of relating and loving is experienced by the mate as being aloof or uncaring.

NTs do seem rather cold and unemotional to other temperaments. They tend to control and hide their emotions behind an immobile facial stance, with only the eyes transmitting depth of reaction. A public display of emotion or affection is particularly repugnant to an NT.

Because of the NT’s distaste for stating the obvious or being redundant, the NT is apt to verbalize expressions of affection rather infrequently. To other types this seems cold and miserly, and they often are hurt by the withholding. To the NT, stating what is already established is raising doubt where there is none. The commitment has been made; the position has been taken. And this commitment stands until notified. Therefore, clearly, it is unnecessary and inappropriate to restate the established and obvious.

In establishing sexual relationships NTs are not likely to give in to impulse, getting involved on a spur-of-the-moment basis. Rather they are likely to thing through relationships carefully, giving prolonged consideration to projections. Once the matter is thought through, the NT is ready to proceed with investing in the relationship. If it does not work out, the NT is likely to shrug his or her shoulders and turn away, perhaps with only mild regrets. Once an NT has made a decision, however, a change of heart is not likely to occur on his or her part, provided, of course, that a response has been forthcoming from the recipient. And, in all likelihood, the NT will develop the relationship as he or she has conceived it. If the situation calls for a long-term commitment, a long-term commitment is made. If the situation calls for a short-term commitment, a short-term investment is made. A peculiar dynamic is here likely to

occur: When the NT's intent is a long-term commitment, this fact is not likely verbalized, since for the NT, this intent is obvious. But if the relationship is to be short-term, this fact is likely to be verbalized, just in case it is not obvious. NTs are likely to honor a personal commitment once made, even though the relationship was not consummated as satisfactorily as anticipated. Not is the NT likely to verbalize any disappointment or dissatisfaction if such is the case.

The NT mate is not apt to hold mates responsible for discord; usually the burden of doing whatever needs to be done will be seen by NTs as their own responsibility. The NTs, as a group, do not thrive on conflict at a personal level. They do enjoy intellectual dispute, but quarreling on an emotional level is something NTs find destructive; generally an NT will walk away from this kind of interaction.

Sex

NTs often have a curious amorality related to the generally accepted standards of sexual behaviors. The rules of society have little pressure for NTs, but their own idiosyncratic standards of conduct do. These usually have been carefully considered, and are followed with or without society's approval. The sexual ethics of an NT are generally his own; they may or may not conform to the general morals of sexual behavior current in any given time.

Establishing a sexual or social relationship with an NT, especially introverted NTs usually requires more investment of time and energy than with other types. This is especially in contrast with SPs, who are more ready to establish relationships. Often, types who are not NTs are unwilling to invest the time and energy required to relate to an NT. Even the extraverted NTs, although apparently easy to get to know, are actually fairly difficult to understand, for the personality structure of an NT is characteristically complex and, at times, even convoluted. Friends and mates of NTs repeatedly express surprise at a facet of character they find in the NT, one that had not been apparent previously.

Female NTs, in particular, are apt to have their sexuality overlaid with intellectualism. Their preference for the logical can obscure expressions of their feelings, which may or may not be well developed. If not, the NT female may have difficulty with orgasmic responses unless her partner takes the time, makes the effort, and understands the necessity of making a sexual approach through mutual exploration of intellectual concepts. It is unlikely that an NT female will be sexually stimulated by a partner who is not her intellectual equal. Male NTs have a somewhat different expectation concerning intellectual equality. The preference here is for equality at most and some – but not too much – inferiority at best. Obviously, this places the intellectually gifted female in a position of limited appropriate NT choices.

In any event, both female and male NTs can bring to a sexual relationship a willingness to explore possibilities of erotic arousal. If they have so marked it out as one of their areas of competency, NTs can be quite expert in sexual technology. They are very apt to possess skill in both the physical and psychological logistics involved in sexual intercourse, and to understand well the necessity for this relationship to be based on a wide variety of common interests outside the bedroom. Unlike the NF, who might consider it unromantic to study carefully scientific treatises on sexuality (e.g., Masters and Johnson, 1966), NTs would be likely to do so, finding it relatively easy to translate these objective findings into creative sexual, sensual behavior.

Interpersonal

Outside the bedroom, NTs seem to have more difficulty than other types in engaging in play. They are, on the whole, apt to be rather serious, finding it amusing to dialogue at what they might call "seventh plane of irreality," a pastime which other types are apt to find rather dull. For the NT, the amusing and humorous is usually subtle and, more often than not, based on a play on words. They especially enjoy humor which contains an unexpected double meaning, but – unlike the SPs and, at times, the SJs – they do not enjoy ribald sexual stories or practical jokes and find the recounting of both somewhat offensive, especially in mixed company.

A few deep relationships are the usual pattern of an NT's emotional history; promiscuity is typically regarded with distaste. The experience of partner swapping is apt to repel an NT, who would, in all probability, find this experience psychologically scarring. The NT mate is not likely to discuss past personal involvements with a mate or with others and almost never discusses a mate with friends.

Sensuality begins for an NT in the imagination, as it does for an NF; both types are capable of nuances of appreciation of the erotic, which those with S preferences might find irrelevant or even unfathomable. As a sexual partner, an NT can be highly creative, imaginative, and exciting. The degree of satisfaction for an NT in a relationship will be correlated with the depth of the relationship. Still, mere sexual release is sometimes seen as necessary, particularly if sexual tensions are getting in the way of important work. In that event, the tension is cared for with dispatch and as conveniently as possible.

Social

NTs tend to be relatively uninterested in acquiring wealth and as mates, therefore, tend to be satisfied with modest comfort. Possessions as an end in itself seems not to motivate NTs; rather, enjoyment in the beauty of an object, pleasures of design and building, pleasure in elegant functioning in possessions all motivate an NT. A vintage car, a classic airplane, and elegant art object, owned or not, give pleasure to an NT. This characteristic NT trait—enjoying without needing to possess—often causes mates who do not share this detachment some impatience. The NT's usual disinterest in acquiring material wealth beyond that necessary for reasonable security and comfort can also provide some dissonance in the mating relationship. Although an NT periodically is inspired to acquire wealth, this urge seldom lasts long enough to acquire that fortune. The NT's attention quickly turns once again to the theoretical, and the momentary interest in becoming wealthy dissipates—only to return from time to time with the same result.

NTs seldom, however, lose interest in owning books and knowledge; these hold their interest year after year, and an NT's home is likely to be well lined with books. In fact, the non-NT mate of an NT often perceives the NT as directing exclusive attention to the world of theory and techniques, at the expense of giving sufficient attention to the mate. Although NT's may seem oblivious to the home life going about them, they usually show interest when these events are brought to attention. NTs are somewhat vague about social time, especially the introverted NT's, and may be unaware, unless reminded, what hour, day, date, or season it is. This can lead to difficulty in the mating relationship when the mate is a type to whom anniversaries, birthdays, and the like are important.

Domestic

Both NTs and introverted NFs tend to develop intimate relationships rather slowly; intellectual development seems to proceed at a faster rate than does social development. For both NTs and NFs, communications sent through the physical relationship are apt to become more and more complex over time, with their approaches to the sexual encounter threaded with subtleties and symbolism. The sexual act is usually given meaning beyond mere release from sexual tension. Sexual contact for the introverted NT may be less frequent than for the extraverted NT. Routines of daily living, such as working—especially if these daily routines are fraught with conflict—can be quite repressive to the emotional and sexual readiness of the NT, especially the introverted NT (as well as the introverted NF). NTs may engage in the sex act as a profound expression of love, or, at the opposite extreme, as an act of self-humiliation and self-denigration, resulting in disgust for self.

NTs usually take family responsibilities seriously, particularly their own responsibility to members of their family, including their parents. They are, however, often perceived by members of the family as having more psychological distance between themselves and others than do other types. The NT tends not to “own” the behaviors (or body) of his mate as might other types. The errors of others, whether family members or not, are not the NT's errors, and are handled objectively. The NT's own errors are those which are inexcusable, and unforgivable. Parenting is usually a pleasure, therefore, for an NT, who seems to watch the growth of children (and a mate!) with joy but as somewhat of a bystander.