

## MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR GENERAL PROFILE

### ISFJ

#### Personality

Six out of every one hundred people are ISFJs. Here the primary desire is to be of service and to minister to individual needs. ISFJs carry a sense of history, and sense of continuity with past events and relationships. Traditions and the conservation of resources are valued highly. The least hedonistic of all types, ISFJs believe work is good, play must be earned. ISFJs are willing to work long, long hours. When they undertake a task, it will be completed if at all humanly possible. Adhering to an established way of doing things and doing them well is valued and respected. The efficiency and effectiveness of an established procedure is not often questioned. Procedure dictated by handbooks are law. If others violate or ignore these standard operating procedures, ISFJs are annoyed and irritated, although they may not always display this reaction. Usually, irritation is turned inward and may be experienced as fatigue and muscle tension.

#### Career

ISFJs are super-dependable and seldom are happy working in situations where rules are constantly changing. Their major need to be of service to others leads them into occupations such as nursing, teaching, secretarial work, medical practice (especially general practice), librarian work, and middle management administrative jobs. They relate well to people who need them, for example, the sick, the ignorant, students, and the “boss.” Much satisfaction comes to them when they are taking care of the needs of another and they render the service gently and helpfully. When the recipient is no longer in need, the relationship may change its character, the ISFJ becoming disinterested. They enjoy assisting the downtrodden and can handle better than other types servility in others. If a situation calls for such behavior on their part, they will show “due respect.” ISFJs have an extraordinary sense of responsibility and an outstanding talent for executing routings which call for repeated, sequential procedures; for example, ISFJs make extraordinary secretaries, highly efficient nurses, and dedicated teachers. Speculation and theory do not intrigue ISFJs, who would rather leave the less practical matters to others while remaining themselves practical and down-to-earth.

ISFJs tend to be devoted and loyal to a boss and tend to identify personally rather than institutionally. They expect others, including the boss, to follow procedures and are distressed and embarrassed when people do not behave as they are supposed to behave. ISFJs often seem to feel personally responsible for seeing to it that people in an institution or business carry out established rules and routines. They often are aware of status given by titles, environment, offices, and the like and can use this to advantage. They are aware of the value of resources. To save, to put something aside against an unpredictable future, to prepare for emergencies – these are important actions.

ISFJs may experience some discomfort when placed in positions of authority over others and may tend to try to do everything themselves rather than insist that others do their jobs. As result, ISFJs are frequently overworked.

#### Home

ISFJs are devoted to mate and family and usually are excellent homemakers. The home of an ISFJ is likely to be well kept inside and out. Interior and exterior are meticulously maintained and appointed to conform to the rules of society and has a feeling of personal responsibility to see to it that these rules are honored. An ISFJ has modest, quiet friends rather than more boisterous ones. For the ISFJ, people should behave according to their position in life, and the ISFJ may be annoyed by others who act either above or below their social or economic station.

The ISFJ female often displays a flair for making the interior of the home attractive in a time-honored style, provides attractive, nourishing meals, and maintains the environment in a neat and orderly state. To the ISFJ male and female, the home territory is important to own and to preserve.

While ISFJs are super-dependable, they may be fascinated by and attracted to the irresponsible, the lush, and the glutton. Many ISFJs marry alcoholics and then proceed to conduct a rescue-rejection game without end, with the rescuing phase taking the guise of an attempt to reform. Occasionally an ISFJ mother may reveal a tendency to find humor in the “waywardness” of a son, while raising her daughters to respect traditions and to do the Right Thing at the Right Time; always.

ISFJs are frequently misunderstood and undervalued. Their contributions often are taken for granted, and the ISFJ as well is too often taken for granted. This can cause an ISFJ to harbor feelings of resentment, and this bottled up emotion can gnaw inwardly, causing the ISFJ much undeserved suffering.

### Midlife

At midlife ISFJs might want to develop the thinking function more fully. For example, a study of human behavior might be one avenue that ISFJs can find fascinating at this time. They also might practice being in the limelight occasionally, more aggressively claiming recognition for the many contributions they have been making so quietly for so long. They could even practice the art of accepting service from others, allowing themselves to be pampered a bit, and cutting down on the services they provide to others, no matter who those others may be.

## MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR MATING PROFILE

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#### Mates

The conserving nature of the ISFJ nicely complemented the iconoclasm of the ENTP “inventor.” There would seem to be an even greater affinity in the mating of ISFJ with the ESTP “promoter.” The dashing, glittering, wheel-and-deal capers of the ESTP calls for anchorage. The ESTP tends to have “high” periods during which there is a whirlwind of euphoric activity. The ISFJ provides, and like to provide, a place to “crash” for our high-rolling entrepreneur. Usually the ISFJ finds employment that requires this ministering, nursing, helping sort of activity. Even so, he or she doesn’t seem to mind doing the same thing at home, and so tends to get burdened with a bit more duty than others. If the spouse does not show appreciation now and then for this overtime work, he may be in for an increase in physical complaints and “worries” on the part of the unappreciated ISFJ.

#### 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 male 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 as 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 for 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, using biting sarcasm, or even, in rare instances, attempt to make a point through violence.

SJ’s 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 the 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. These 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 times 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 are 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-bases, 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.