



Introduction

Although they may seem quiet or unassuming, people with the INFP personality type (Mediators) have vibrant, passionate inner lives. Creative and imaginative, they happily lose themselves in daydreams, inventing all sorts of stories and conversations in their mind. INFPs are known for their sensitivity – these personalities can have profound emotional responses to music, art, nature, and the people around them. They are known to be extremely sentimental and nostalgic, often holding onto special keepsakes and memorabilia that brighten their days and fill their heart with joy.

Idealistic and empathetic, people with the INFP personality type long for deep, soulful relationships, and they feel called to help others. Due to the fast-paced and competitive nature of our society, they may sometimes feel lonely or invisible, adrift in a world that doesn't seem to appreciate the traits that make them unique. Yet it is precisely because INFPs brim with such rich sensitivity and profound creativity that they possess the unique potential to connect deeply and initiate positive change.

All that is gold does not glitter; not all those who wander are lost; the old that is strong does not wither; deep roots are not reached by the frost.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

The Gift of Empathy

INFP personalities share a sincere curiosity about the depths of human nature. Introspective to the core, they're exquisitely attuned to their own thoughts and feelings, but they yearn to understand the people around them as well. INFPs are compassionate and nonjudgmental, always willing to hear another person's story. When someone opens up to them or turns to them for comfort, they feel honored to listen and be of help.

Empathy is among the INFP personality type's greatest gifts, but at times it can be a liability. The troubles of the world weigh heavily on their shoulders, and these personalities can be vulnerable to internalizing other people's negative moods or mindsets. Unless they learn to set boundaries, INFPs may feel overwhelmed by just how many wrongs there are that need to be set right.

Speaking Their Truth

Few things make INFP personalities more uneasy than pretending to be someone they aren't. With their sensitivity and their commitment to authenticity, people with this personality type tend to crave opportunities for creative self-expression. It comes as no surprise, then, that many famous INFPs are poets, writers, actors, and artists. They can't help but muse about the meaning and purpose of life, dreaming up all sorts of stories, ideas, and possibilities along the way.

INFPs have a talent for self-expression. They may reveal their innermost thoughts and secrets through metaphors and fictional characters.

Through these imaginative landscapes, these soulful personalities can explore their own inner nature as well as their place in the world. While this is a beautiful trait, INFPs sometimes show a tendency to daydream and fantasize rather than take action. At times, these personalities may intensely deliberate with themselves in their heads, wrestling with their options until the last possible moment. To avoid feeling frustrated, unfulfilled, or incapable, INFPs need to make sure that they take decisive steps to turn their dreams and ideas into reality.

In Search of a Calling

People with this personality type tend to feel directionless or stuck until they connect with a sense of purpose for their life. For many, this purpose has something to do with uplifting others. And while they want to help anyone and everyone, INFP personalities need to focus their energy and efforts – otherwise, they can end up exhausted.

Fortunately, like flowers in the spring, an INFP's creativity and idealism can bloom even after the darkest of seasons. Although they know the world will never be perfect, they still care about making it better however they can. This quiet belief in doing the right thing may explain why INFP personalities so often inspire compassion, kindness, and beauty wherever they go.

Strengths & Weaknesses

INFP Strengths

- **Empathetic** – People with the INFP personality type (Mediators) don't just care about those around them in an abstract sense – they can actually feel another person's emotions, from joy and elation to sorrow and regret. Because of their sensitivity, these personalities tend to be thoughtful and kindhearted, and they hate the idea of hurting anyone, even unintentionally.
- **Generous** – INFPs rarely enjoy succeeding at others' expense. They feel called to share the good things in their lives, give credit where it's due, and uplift the people around them. These personalities want to contribute to a world where every voice is heard and no one's needs go unmet.
- **Open-Minded** – Tolerant and accepting, INFPs try not to judge anyone else's beliefs, lifestyles, or decisions. This is a personality type that prefers compassion to faultfinding. Many feel empathy even for those who have done wrong. Because they're so accepting, INFPs often become confidants for their friends and loved ones – and occasionally for total strangers.
- **Creative** – INFP personalities love to see things from unconventional perspectives. Few things give them more pleasure than allowing their mind to wander through all sorts of ideas and possibilities and daydreams. It's no wonder, then, that many INFPs are drawn to creative pursuits – or that this personality type is well represented among writers and artists.
- **Passionate** – INFPs contain a deep well of passion, primarily driven by their profound empathy, strong internal values, and ceaseless curiosity about the human experience. When an idea or movement captures their imagination, these individuals want to give their whole heart to it. People with the INFP personality type may not always be outspoken, but that doesn't diminish their strong feelings for a cause that speaks to their beliefs and convictions.
- **Idealistic** – INFP personalities strive to follow their conscience even when doing the right thing isn't easy or convenient. They rarely lose sight of their desire to live a meaningful, purpose-filled life – one that helps others and leaves the world a better place.

INFP Weaknesses

- **Unrealistic** – Nothing in this world is perfect – and that can be a difficult truth for INFPs to accept. People with this personality type can be hopeless romantics, with rose-colored visions of what their lives should be like. This can set them up for disappointment when reality inevitably falls short of their dreams.
- **Self-Isolating** – INFP personalities long to connect with others, but they don't always know how. Especially in new environments, they may be reluctant to put themselves out there in ways that would help them make new friends or become involved in a new community. As a result, people with the INFP personality type may sometimes feel lonely or isolated.
- **Unfocused** – INFPs' imaginative, introspective nature doesn't always lend itself to productivity. Many people with this personality type get frustrated by how difficult they find it to buckle down and get things done. The problem isn't that they are incapable – rather, it's that INFPs run into problems when they become so caught up in different ideas and ideals that they fail to commit to a course of action.
- **Emotionally Vulnerable** – The emotional attunement of these personalities is among their greatest strengths. But unless they establish boundaries, they can be at risk of absorbing other people's negative moods or attitudes. And this can be detrimental to their personal peace and productivity, as INFPs are the most likely personality type to say negative emotions get in the way of their ability to think clearly.
- **Too Eager to Please** – Conflict tends to be stressful for INFPs, who yearn for harmony and acceptance. When someone dislikes or disapproves of them, these personalities may become fixated on trying to clear the air and change that person's mind. They might even take responsibility and apologize for things that are not their fault at all in an effort to make sure that they are in everyone's good graces. Unfortunately, INFPs' desire to please others can drain their energy, eclipsing their inner wisdom and their awareness of their own needs.
- **Self-Critical** – INFPs believe in their unique potential, and they desperately want to live up to it. But this can cause them to have unrealistic expectations for themselves. When these personalities fail to live up to these visions, they may accuse themselves of being useless or selfish or woefully inadequate. Taken too far, this self-criticism can discourage INFPs, leading them to give up on even their dearest dreams.

Romantic Relationships

People with the INFP personality type (Mediators) are dreamers and idealists, especially when it comes to romance. INFPs believe in the power and beauty of true love, and they sincerely hope to never settle for anything less.

It's fair to say, then, that INFP personalities approach the world of romance with high expectations. They may have spent years daydreaming about the perfect relationship, imagining how it would feel to share their innermost selves with another person. But the reality of dating can come as something of a shock, forcing them to grapple with a challenging question: If they want to be in a relationship, will they have to compromise on their ideals?

For an INFP personality, an ideal relationship of any kind is one in which both people feel comfortable sharing not just their wildest hopes and dreams but also their secrets, fears, and vulnerabilities.

Hopeless Romantics

INFPs don't just want to find a partner – they want to connect with a soulmate. Thoughtful and open-minded, these personalities are generally willing to consider going out with all sorts of people. INFPs pride themselves on their ability to look past a potential partner's superficial traits – such as appearance, social status, or possessions – and focus on deeper, more meaningful signals of compatibility.

INFP personalities share the belief that two people can come together in a relationship and make each other better and happier than they were before.

But it would be a mistake to think that INFPs don't have preconceived standards for a significant other. With their active minds and imaginations, people with this personality type tend to develop and carry with them a vision of their ideal partner – a vision that may be based on a favorite fictional character, a person they once knew, or simply the stories they've told themselves about how love "should" look.

When they meet someone new, most INFP personalities can't help but compare that person with the ideal soulmate they've envisioned. Unsurprisingly, such comparisons tend to weed out more than a few potential partners. It can be difficult – if not impossible – for a real, flesh-and-blood person to live up to this type's cherished dreams.

Making an Effort

With time, many INFPs come to learn that true love doesn't just magically happen – it takes compromise, understanding, and work. After all, no partner is perfect, and even the most beautiful relationships have their challenges. Fortunately, people with this personality type can find a great deal of joy in the effort that it takes to strengthen a relationship.

When they fall in love, INFPs reveal just how much passion thrums beneath their quiet exteriors. Devoted and thoughtful, they often express their affection through written words, handmade gifts, or meticulously planned experiences that resonate with their partner's interests. They also tend to respect their partner's independence, aiming to accept their partner as they are. That said, these personalities also want to help their partner learn, grow, and pursue their goals.

INFP personalities use their compassion and insight to understand the people they care about, and they draw on their creativity to make their partner feel special.

INFPs are always dreaming up ways to improve themselves and the world around them, and the last thing they'd want is for their partner to feel unhappy or stuck. Many people with this personality type dedicate themselves to helping their partner improve their life. While this is a noble goal, they must be sure to keep track of their own needs and make sure that their partner is really ready to change. Provided they do so, INFPs' support and devotion can make all the difference in their partner's life.

Finding What's Real

INFP personalities tend to promote harmony over disagreement. Although this lends stability to their relationships, it can also lead to problems. To steer clear of conflict, they may avoid talking openly about things that are bothering them – instead, they might mentally fixate on the problem or try to solve it on their own. INFPs may also focus on making their partner happy, to the detriment of their own priorities and sense of self.

Their tendency to internalize their feelings can make INFPs susceptible to hurt. Disappointments and heartbreaks hit hard, often leading them to retreat into their shell. People with this personality type may need to remind themselves that open, honest communication is necessary in a relationship, even if it isn't always easy. In fact, such moments of candor can transform a relationship for the better.

Despite these challenges, INFPs remain steadfast in their search for true emotional connection. To love and be loved authentically is their ultimate romantic goal, making their approach to love a profound, beautiful journey guided by their sensitive heart. As long as they communicate openly, INFP personalities are more than capable of staying true to themselves in a relationship – and encouraging the person that they care about to do the same.

Friendships

When it comes to their social life, people with the INFP personality type (Mediators) may find themselves caught in a web of contradictions. INFPs crave alone time, but they're also vulnerable to loneliness. They long to feel accepted and well-liked, but they hate the idea of pretending to be anyone but their authentic self. And while these personalities hesitate to draw attention to themselves, they don't want to be invisible, either.

The good news is that, in the company of true friends, INFPs can escape the hamster wheel of these insecurities and focus on what really matters. For these personalities, friendship is a precious commodity – an opportunity for two people to lift each other up and change each other's lives for the better. INFPs truly believe in the old saying that “a friend in need is a friend indeed.” Few things bolster their sense of purpose like being there for someone they care about.

Perhaps because of their intense investment in these relationships, INFPs tend to feel most fulfilled by spending time with a small, intimate circle of friends. Quality trumps quantity for these sometimes shy personalities, as they prefer relationships with depth where they can share their wildest hopes, dreams, and fears without having to worry about being judged. Acquaintances may come and go, but their real inner circle likely includes some lifelong friends.

Searching for a Kindred Spirit

Although INFPs are warm and accepting, they don't always find it easy to make friends. This may be because superficial, casual relationships can leave these personalities feeling a bit empty. INFPs are looking for lasting, authentic friendships with people who share their desire to think and feel deeply, to do the right thing, and to give more to the world than they take from it. They enjoy delving into deep, philosophical discussions and exploring different ideas, often bridging the gap between reality and the fantastical.

Among kindred spirits, people with this personality type feel accepted and understood, happy to be themselves and bloom in their own time.

That said, this type is capable of befriending all sorts of people. INFPs' combination of the Intuitive (N) and Prospecting (P) personality traits draws them to diverse perspectives, which helps them appreciate friends whose experiences and worldviews are totally different from their own. These personalities may actually find it invigorating to connect with someone who, on the surface, has little in common with them.

Friends for Life

When INFPs befriend someone, they may secretly (or not so secretly) hope to stay close with that person for life. These personalities are capable of strong, stable relationships marked by passionate support, subtle poetic wit, and a profound level of emotional insight. Long-standing friendships tend to draw out less obvious aspects of this personality type, including a fierce protective streak. Many INFPs find that they can stand up for their friends in ways that they'd struggle to manage for themselves.

Although INFP personalities value their friendships, they also need personal space and alone time in order to recharge. At times, people with this personality type may withdraw from even their closest friends in order to reconnect with themselves and restore their energy, as Introverts often do. These departures are usually temporary, but INFPs may need to make sure that their friends don't feel snubbed by their absence.

Even as their friendships grow stronger, INFPs' enigmatic qualities never truly vanish.

All in all, navigating INFP friendships is a deeply personal and emotionally enriching journey. Their friendships are marked by unhindered empathy, intellectual explorations, and an incredible depth of understanding, making them one of the most cherished friends to have.

Parenthood

For people with the INFP personality type (Mediators), life is a journey – but even as they find their own way through the world, these personalities feel called to help others embark on their own journeys toward meaning, fulfillment, and happiness. In their understated, nondomineering way, INFPs love guiding others to learn and grow – and parenthood can be an incredibly rewarding opportunity for them to do exactly that.

From the start, INFP parents aim to be warm, caring, and open-minded. People with this personality type delight in their children's wide-eyed wonder at the world, and they want to give their children freedom – freedom to form their own opinions, discover their own interests, and grow into their unique selves. INFP parents counterbalance these freedoms by creating a stable foundation of support and acceptance in the hopes that their children never forget just how much they are loved.

Sensitive and perceptive, INFP personalities attune themselves to their children's needs and perspectives. They want to know their children as unique, multidimensional individuals rather than as projections of themselves.

Coping with Challenges

INFPs may enjoy raising free spirits, but that doesn't mean that they're totally hands-off. They want to teach key values to their children, including honesty, equity, and the importance of caring for others. They also want their children to understand the meaning of personal responsibility, especially when it comes to not harming others or taking advantage of people for personal gain.

Like parents of any personality type, INFPs inevitably face challenges. They take their parenting responsibilities seriously, so it can feel like a personal failure when their children misbehave in ways both large and small. These personalities may be especially upset when they see their children behaving in ways that don't seem considerate or ethical.

With their hyperactive consciences, INFP parents may blame themselves for their children's misbehavior, even when doing so isn't reasonable or productive.

When their children do something wrong, INFP personalities may find themselves wondering, *Have I failed as a parent?* The danger here is that they might become so focused on blaming themselves that they don't establish appropriate consequences for their children's actions. Discipline may not come easily to people with the INFP personality type, but when balanced with their caring, gentle nature, it can become a powerful tool in their mission to teach their children the difference between right and wrong.

Balancing Structure with Spontaneity

INFP parents naturally want to serve as good role models. They try to show their children the best side of themselves, keeping their problems, negative emotions, and frustrations under wraps. This can preserve a sense of harmony in the household, helping their children feel safe and cared for. By the same token, INFPs often try to shield their children from the greater problems in the world. This is certainly appropriate when their children are young, but eventually, they need to find ways to talk through tougher issues with their little ones.

Another hurdle for many parents with this personality type is establishing practical, day-to-day structures and rules for their children. Fortunately, INFP personalities can use their creative energy to impose boundaries without stifling their children's curiosity and enthusiasm. These parents have a remarkable ability to put themselves in other people's shoes, and this enables them to come up with schedules and rules that truly work for their children's individual needs.

When they balance structure with spontaneity, INFPs can help their children grow into their most caring, responsible, and joyful selves. People with this personality type are driven by a profound sense of duty and love toward their children. As natural dreamers and free spirits themselves, they place an incredible amount of faith in their children's unique abilities and aspire to support their passions – whether they lead to prosperity or not, emphasizing the beauty of pursuing what genuinely resonates in their kids' hearts.

Career Paths

Many people with the INFP personality type (Mediators) long for a career that doesn't just take care of the bills but also feels personally fulfilling. They want to spend their days doing something they genuinely love, preferably without too much stress or drama.

For INFPs, an ideal career path should feel like a calling, not just a job. And if it doesn't involve too many draining social interactions or phone calls, so much the better.

Even the idealists, these personalities might struggle to find a profession that meets their practical needs *and* fulfills their dreams. INFPs may drift in frustration, waiting for the perfect job to present itself, eventually feeling stuck or worried that they're not living up to their potential.

The question of whether to settle for a less-than-ideal position can weigh heavily on people with this personality type. Alas, there's no such thing as a perfect job. Fortunately for INFPs, their creativity, independence, and sincere desire to connect with and help others can help them shine – and find fulfillment – in nearly any line of work.

A Place for Everyone

Certain careers and vocations seem to hold a special allure for these personalities. With their curiosity and their love of self-expression, many INFPs dream of becoming writers. They might write novels, seek out interesting freelance niches, or even find themselves doing communications in a corporate field or for a nonprofit organization. Richly imaginative, INFP personalities can infuse even the driest of fundraising or marketing materials with new life.

Although this personality type isn't known for seeking the spotlight, they can find their life purpose in the performing arts. Sensitive to artistic beauty, some INFPs simply come to life in the worlds of music, drama, or dance. These personalities can draw from their inner depths to pull out exquisite interpretations of a creator's work. INFPs may also create their own works as playwrights, composers, or choreographers.

Whatever they do, INFPs want to feel that their work is helping others. It's not surprising, then, that many people with this personality type choose careers that are focused on service, such as counseling, psychology, teaching, health care, social work, massage therapy, or physical rehabilitation. For these caring, supportive personalities, few things are more meaningful than seeing their work help change someone's life for the better.

People with the INFP personality type are naturally drawn to professions that foster human connection and emotional depth. Their immense capacity for empathy and understanding makes them adept at facilitating healing and growth and allows them to fulfill their inherent desire to aid others in their personal transformations.

Finding Their Way

INFPs are highly adaptable people, but they still might find it demotivating to work in high-stress, bureaucratic, or hectic environments. They can also become frustrated by workplaces that are highly critical or competitive. Conversely, workplaces that reward independence tend to be a good fit for INFPs, although they may appreciate some structure and oversight to help them avoid procrastinating and getting lost in thought.

That said, people with this personality type don't need ideal conditions to thrive professionally. INFPs want to live in tune with their values, in their careers as much as in any other aspect of their lives. They can put up with – and overcome – any number of challenges as long as they can pursue a sense of mission in their work.

Workplace Habits

People with the INFP personality type (Mediators) want to feel a sense of purpose in their work. Wherever they find themselves on the job ladder, they try to cultivate an emotional and moral connection to what they do – looking for reassurance that their day-to-day efforts are helping others in some shape or form. This desire to be of service colors how INFP personalities respond to authority in the workplace as well as how they express it.

INFP Subordinates

As employees, INFPs tend to be loyal, upbeat, and considerate. They take pride in being honest and doing the right thing in all circumstances, and they feel gratified by pleasing others, from their bosses to their customers. This might be why INFP personalities feel the most motivated when they're thinking up ways to help others, not worrying about checklists or bottom lines.

People with this personality type thrive off of positive feedback at work. With their idealistic nature, INFPs often hold themselves to extremely high personal standards. When they receive encouraging words from their boss or their coworkers, it serves as the validation that they need to know they are on the right track. On the flip side, criticism can lead these personalities to shut down. When faced with punishing expectations or a highly negative boss, they may find it hard to get things done. And they find it equally difficult, if not more, if they have to stand up to their boss and challenge their opinions or direction.

Overall, INFP employees enjoy having freedom and latitude. Their creativity and insight enable them to shake up old, ineffective ways of doing things – as long as they're given the chance to speak up and make changes. That said, they tend to benefit from deadlines and clear expectations to keep them on track. Otherwise, people with this personality type might get caught up in procrastination, bouncing from one idea to another rather than settling down and crossing tasks off their to-do list.

INFP Colleagues

INFPs value equality and fairness, so it's no surprise that people with this personality type can feel stifled by workplace hierarchies. They prefer professional environments where everyone feels valued and is encouraged to share their ideas – no matter their job title. As colleagues, INFPs do what they can to make this egalitarian ideal a reality.

In their quiet way, they can become the glue that holds their workplace together. Although their voice might not be the loudest, they are often admired for their insight, with coworkers routinely coming to them for advice. Pleasant and kindhearted, INFP personalities don't like conflict, drama, or workplace politics. Instead, they try to act in ways that foster harmony and cooperation. When someone needs help, INFPs tend to pitch in without any expectation of praise or recognition.

One of INFPs' greatest contributions as colleagues is their empathetic communication style. These personalities speak in a way that's honest but kind, which can set a positive tone for the entire workplace.

INFP Managers

As managers, INFPs are among the personality types least likely to act as if they're in charge. They respect their employees as full-fledged human beings, not just as workers. Rather than make all the decisions themselves, INFP personalities often ask to hear their employees' thoughts and opinions.

In general, people with this personality type don't micromanage. Instead, they keep their eyes on the big picture. They see it as their responsibility to support their employees, not to tell them exactly what to do and how to do it. Whenever possible, they encourage the people who work for them to develop their own ideas and use their own best judgment.

There is a downside to this management style. Sometimes, INFP managers may struggle to set boundaries, drill down on inefficiencies, or offer criticism, even when it's necessary. This can slow down their team and create needless stress, both for them and for their employees. At times, managers with this personality type may need to be strict for the good of their team – and the workplace as a whole.

Conclusion

Few personality types are as poetic and kindhearted as INFPs (Mediators). With their unique gifts, these personalities can overcome all sorts of challenges and obstacles – *and* brighten the lives of those around them in the process.

INFPs' creativity, imagination, and kindness prove to be invaluable in many areas, including their own personal growth.

Yet INFPs can be tripped up in areas where idealism and altruism are more of a liability than an asset. When it comes to finding (or keeping) a partner, making friends, pursuing a meaningful career, or planning for the future, people with this personality type may need to consciously develop their weaker traits and gain new skills – even as they draw on their many strengths.

The Secret Life of INFPs

Here's the truth: knowing and accepting yourself is the first step to moving forward and making positive changes in your life.