**ISFP Overview**

For ISFPs the dominant quality in their lives is a deep-felt caring for living things, combined with a quietly playful and sometimes adventurous approach to life and all its experiences. ISFPs typically show their caring in very practical ways, since they often prefer action to words. Their warmth - and concern are generally not expressed openly, and what people often first encounter with ISFPs is their quiet adaptability, realism, and "free spirit" spontaneity.

ISFPs deeply value people, relationships, and all of life. Given the ISFP's reflective nature, other people may not see this intense caring until they know the ISFP well. ISFPs are compassionate people who are typically sensitive to the emotional states and suffering of others. They are perhaps the gentlest and kindest of the types; ISFPs tend to be acutely aware of nonverbal messages, and their kindness is often expressed in nonverbal ways. Thus they often have a strong affinity with children and animals. ISFPs may also have a love of natural things: plants and bodies of water. ISFPs are idealistic and would like their work to contribute to people in some way: to their comfort, their freedom, their safety. ISFPs also take a very personal approach to life, and it is important for them to find work about which they can care deeply. When they find people about whom they care, they are intensely and fiercely loyal.

ISFPs are deeply concerned with harmony; they like for their relationships and environment to feel comfortable and free from strife. Since disharmony can be very painful to ISFPs, they may act as peacemakers in relationships or groups. If disharmony cannot be resolved, they may choose to go their own way. ISFPs are cooperative by nature because they deeply understand that connection and caring are essential to the natural order of the world.

Sensing provides ISFPs with a good grasp of realities and provides them with a way to stay open to new information, though their dominant drive is still a deep process of valuing. ISFPs are usually down-to-earth people who enjoy living in the here and now. They are immersed in the ongoing richness of sensory and sensual experience, and they tend to have a playfully optimistic approach to everyday life. As pragmatists, ISFPs prefer the concrete over the abstract, and they often have a good memory for factual detail. Theory tends to hold little interest for them, and they are more interested in how to make something work than in why it works. Sensing also ensures that the ISFP's caring is practical; they want to help people in a hands-on ways.

ISFPs need freedom and variety in their lives, and they may have a low tolerance for boredom or constrictions. Excitement and adventure often call them, and they want to pursue things at their own pace, and in their own way. They will fulfill their commitments to people and institutions, but they do not have a great appreciation for organizational structures in and of them­ selves. In their spontaneity, ISFPs are often good at responding to the needs of the moment. This is particularly true where a pragmatic response is required: helping a person by making them comfortable, by negotiating a dispute, or by keeping their own head in an emergency. In general, ISFPs are flexible and tolerant; however, when a deep value is violated, they can become quite stubborn, much to the surprise of others.

ISFPs are often excited by action for the sake of action. This often shows as a love of sports, crafts, or other hands-on activities. In fact, ISFPs often have athletic interests, and surprisingly, can be quite competitive in this arena, though it may not be obvious. With their immersion in hands-on activity, ISFPs may also develop craftsmanlike skill in their manipulation of athletic equipment, tools, or other instruments.

The ISFP's acute sensitivity to color, sound, and atmosphere may manifest itself as a sense of style and aesthetics. These qualities in conjunction with their discerning attention to sensory data can result in ISFPs being excellent craft workers, artists, or designers; it is not unusual for ISFPs to have interests in art, music, or dance.

The traditional classroom may have little of interest to ISFPs, particularly as the emphasis on theory increases and opportunities for applications or hands-on learning decrease. When ISFPs do enjoy school, it is often because they have found teachers with whom they feel a connection. ISFPs often like to work alone and may despair of finding their place in the world. Without planning, they may indeed drift from one career to another. They can find a place, however, and are commonly found in hands-on caring and helping careers, such as health care. ISFPs are also found in business and in technical, trade, or crafts careers, where their pragmatic adaptability can be readily applied.

ISFPs are caring and trusting people, if somewhat reserved. Their warmth becomes apparent once a relationship is established, and they deeply value their friendships. ISFPs prefer expression through action and artistry rather than through words, and thus their speech may be short and terse. Since they tend not to blow their own horns, ISFPs can also appear modest. In the extreme, this may become shyness or nonassertiveness, and ISFPs can be in danger of underselling themselves, even though they have so much to offer. ISFPs do want to be appreciated for their contributions, as they appreciate others for theirs. If ISFPs do not get that acknowledgment, they are in danger of withdrawing.

ISFPs need development of extraverted Sensing to ensure that they move into action on their ideals, otherwise they may end up feeling trapped in painful disillusionment. This situation worsens if their idealism becomes extreme perfectionism; nothing meets the ideal. Feeling can give ISFPs a sense of certainty about their evaluation of a situation, and development of Sensing will help them stay open to facts from the outer world. Development of Sensing will also provide them with information on how to move into action on their ideals. At times, ISFPs may also have difficulty in making decisions, meeting deadlines, or following through. As they learn to use Thinking and Intuition to look to the future, they will see the long-term consequences of some of these actions. They will also increasingly find their place in the world and find work that contributes in the way they would like. Under stress ISFPs may lose their self-confidence, become passive, and withdraw. They may also take their resistance to rules and regulations to the extreme and neglect their responsibilities, even ones they care about. Under stress, ISFPs can become overly sensitive to the remarks of others and become very self-critical; under extreme stress they may even become surprisingly and outwardly critical of others.