

Portrait of an ISFJ:

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, a 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. Procedures 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, such irritation is turned inward and may be experienced as fatigue and muscle tension.

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 routines 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 material resources and abhor the squandering or misuse of these 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 a result, ISFJs are frequently overworked.

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 in the traditional manner. As a parent, the ISFJ expects the children 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 is apt to find the putting on of airs as offensive and tends to prefer 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.