

Portrait of an ISTJ:

ISTJs are characterized by decisiveness in practical affairs, are the guardians of time-honored institutions, and, if only one adjective could be selected, dependable would best describe this type which represents about 6 percent of the general population. The word of ISTJs is their bond, and they experience great uneasiness by thoughts of a bankrupt nation, state, institution, or family.

Whether at home or at work, this type is rather quiet and serious. ISTJs are extraordinarily persevering and dependable. The thought of dishonoring a contract would appall a person of this type. When they give their word, they give their honor. ISTJs can be counted on to conserve the resources of the institution they serve and bring to their work a practical point of view. They perform their duties without flourish or fanfare; therefore, the dedication they bring to their work can go unnoticed and unappreciated.

ISTJ's interest in thoroughness, details, justice, practical procedures, and smooth flow of personnel and materiel leads this type to occupations where these preferences are useful. For example, ISTJs make excellent bank examiners, auditors, accountants, or tax examiners. Investments in securities are likely to interest this type, particularly investments in blue-chip securities. ISTJs are not likely to take chances either with their own or others' money.

ISTJs can handle difficult, detailed figures and make sense of them. They communicate a message of reliability and stability, which often makes them excellent supervisors of, for example, a ward in a hospital, a library, or a business operation. They would be capable of handling the duties of a mortician, a legal secretary, or a law researcher. High-school teachers of business, home economics, physical education, and the physical sciences are ISTJs, as are top-ranking officers of the Women's Army Corps. Often this type seem to have ice in their veins, for people fail to see an ISTJ's vulnerability to criticism.

ISTJs are patient with their work and with procedures within an institution, although not always patient with the individual goals of people in that institution. ISTJs will see to it that resources are delivered when and where they are supposed to be; materiel will be in the right place at the right time. And ISTJs would prefer that this be the case with people, too.

As a husband or wife, the ISTJ is a pillar of strength. just as this type honors business contracts, so do they honor the marriage contract. Loyal and faithful mates, they take responsibilities to children and mate seriously, giving lifelong commitment to these. Duty is a word the ISTJ understands. The male ISTJ sees himself as the breadwinner of a family, although he can accept a working wife-as long as responsibilities to children are not shirked. The male ISTJ's concept of masculinity is patriarchal, and both female and male ISTJs make steady, dependable partners. The female ISTJ may abandon the frivolous for the sensible and may not always deepen her sensuality.

As parents, ISTJs are consistent in handling children, and the rules of the family are made clear. A rebellious, nonconforming child may have a difficult time, however, with an ISTJ parent-and vice versa. As a child, the ISTJ is apt to be obedient and a source of pleasure to parents and teachers.

Although ISTJs are outstandingly practical and sensible, they can marry people who are thoroughly irresponsible, with the marriage developing into a relationship more parent-to-child than adult-to-adult. The ISTJ fluctuates from being rescuer to reformer of the wayward mate. The marriage then becomes a lifelong game: On one side, there is Irresponsibility, Promise of Reform, Brief Period of Reform, and Irresponsibility again; on the ISTJ's part, the cycle is Disapproval, Rescue, Scolding, Forgiveness, Acceptance of Promise To Do Better, and on and on. This pattern often is seen when an ISTJ marries an alcoholic and enters a life of caretaking punctuated by periods of anger and rejection. Somehow, although ISTJs can accept periodic fickleness and selfishness in significant others, they do not see this kind of behavior as acceptable in themselves.

ISTJs have a distaste for and distrust of fanciness in speech, dress, or home. The ostentatious is abhorred, and a neat, orderly, and functional home and work environment is preferred. Durability of furnishings are of primary concern, esthetics given slim consideration. The clothes of an ISTJ tend to be practical and durable rather than in the latest style or luxurious. "No nonsense" in both food and clothes seems characteristic of this type who tend not to be attracted by exotic foods, beverages, or places.

The male ISTJ may enjoy stag, men-only parties and use a different sort of language when only men are present. The yearly hunting or fishing trip as a male ritual is often a part of recreation for an ISTJ. More than the female, the ISTJ male is apt to be involved in community service organizations that transmit traditional values to the young, such as Boy Scouting. They understand and appreciate the contributions these groups make in preserving the national heritage. Along with the SJs, the ISTJ takes particular delight in festive occasions held in the context of rituals, for example, weddings, holiday feasts, and birthdays. At work, the ISTJ is apt to see the holiday office party as a necessary nuisance and would be likely to participate and enjoy these events.