

“If you truly and completely understand another human being, the only emotional response you can have is compassion.” – Unknown

An INFJ's hidden genius is their intuition about people. **They seem to just “get” what's going on for others**, and they're very often right. Even if the INFJ has never experienced those circumstances themselves, somehow they'll 'just know' how a person is feeling and be able to show great empathy and understanding. This capacity for compassion and depth of insight has earned them the nickname, “The Counselor” in the Myers-Briggs system.

An insightful, empathetic type that loves to explore the depths of the human experience – INFJs offer a beautiful pairing of heart and wisdom to the world. But life isn't always easy for the INFJ. Their most powerful gifts can go unnoticed and untapped as they navigate the world.

We hope to change that. We've provided this in-depth description to help INFJs discover how they're wired, and wired differently from other types, so that they can activate their gifts, enjoy healthy, meaningful relationships and be the best version of themselves.

Before we dive into the type description, let's suggest ways to use this information:

1. Remember, this is a framework, not the full picture.

Many aspects of ourselves fall outside the territory of Myers-Briggs and there is no framework that can fully define an individual. Don't be surprised if you find characteristics of your personality that don't seem to match your type description.

2. You will get good at applying this framework over time.

It might seem overwhelming at first, but you will begin to recognize its use in your relationships with family, colleagues and loved ones, and you'll see chances to apply it when you think about your own personal development journey. With time, Myers-Briggs will become another tool in your toolbox.

Percentage of the Population

Less than 2% of the population are INFJs. This makes them tied with INTJs as the rarest type in the Myers-Briggs system. INFJ men are especially rare, making up less than 1% of the population.



Overview of “The Counselor”

All of us can sense human energy. Without needing to see or hear it, we can feel the presence of someone standing right behind us. We can pick up on and be affected by other people's sadness, embarrassment, exuberance, or ill intent. Just like everyone accesses their five senses, so we all navigate the world with the help of our sixth sense.

But an INFJ's sixth sense is more sophisticated than most. Without even knowing it, INFJs have clocked thousands of hours sharpening the tool of this "knowingness" about other people. Consequently, **they have a heightened awareness of human energies that helps them pick up on the subtlest clues about what's going on for other people.**

Here's another way to put it: if everyone's sixth sense were antennae that could pick up the radio waves of human energies, emotions, unmet needs and unconscious motivations, then INFJs' antennae would get the best signals and highest range of frequencies.

As the "**kings and queens of people watching,**" **INFJs are tuned into people – particularly human dynamics.** They focus on the experience of each individual, how that individual relates to the rest of the world, and how that individual responds and reacts to the relationships around them. When an INFJ perceives an individual to gain insight, they will consider the sum total of that person's story, not just their present behavior. **They have an innate ability to adjust how they 'show up' to best resonate with the person/environment they are dealing with.** This gives them great capacity to be understanding and appreciative.

INFJs also use their intuitive process to watch their own minds form patterns. Knowing how their minds work means they can intuitively grasp the inner workings of other people's minds. Most of this 'intuiting' is unconscious, and will sometimes manifest consciously in the form of profound insights, sudden "ah-hah" moments,

hunches about a person's character or predictions about their future behavior that often turn out to be accurate.

A beautiful and often healing result of the INFJ's strong sixth sense, combined with their profound interest in human dynamics, is compassion. **The INFJ's compassion and empathy are nourished by her ability to see individual human beings in a complex, big-picture context.** They understand that a person is the emergent of a lifetime of experiences, wiring from their upbringing and environment, and choices as well as factors over which they had no control. It's difficult for an INFJ not to take a nuanced approach to personal or relational issues.

Check out our INFJ Type Advice Podcast!

Common INFJ Challenges

All of the types' strengths come with weaknesses, and the INFJ is no exception. Here are some of the challenges that are common among INFJ types.

One-Sided Relationships.

While INFJs are good at understanding people and tuning into their needs, this attentiveness isn't always reciprocated. In fact, **INFJs can find themselves in relationships with people who don't even get them, let alone appreciate their giving nature.** One-sided relationships can be exacerbated if the INFJ is all-giving and struggles to receive support or ask outright for what they need.

The opposite can also be true. When an INFJ finds someone who will genuinely listen, **they might realize an intense need to vent and share.** This can turn into an addictive use of others as sound boards for ideas and feelings. It can be extremely cathartic to purge all of the thoughts and feelings within, but the balancing act of giving and taking can often be a struggle. INTJs often find themselves either

giving, or taking too much in relationships, so it's important to 'refocus' and calibrate often.

Burnout.

Because they are so attuned to the needs of others, **INFJs can run around making sure others get their needs met while ignoring their own.** If they neglect their needs for too long, this leads to burnout. We like to encourage INFJs in this predicament not to exclude themselves from the needs of the group. The work involved in managing the emotional and psychic energies of those around them warrants good rest and rejuvenation.

This can be an unconscious source of resentment for INFJs. INFJs tend to come to an unspoken agreement with the rest of the group, that they will give readily of themselves, understanding that everyone else in the group will give just as much.

The agreement is indeed unspoken, and in most groups, there will be more than one person who will misread the INFJ's intentions. They will not honor the agreement, most likely because they're unaware that there is one. When this agreement is not honored, INFJs will take on an inordinate amount of work or stress, while the rest of the group seems not to notice, and feels no need to reciprocate. If this happens INFJs will naturally feel cheated, undervalued and taken advantage of.



Losing Themselves to Relationships.

INFJs tap into people so well that **others' emotional experience can become more real to them than their own emotional experience.** Their empathy and concern for others thus becomes a liability. They will spend all their energy making sure the significant other, children, parents or influential people in their lives get everything they want and need.

This is, at least in part, a strategy that protects the INFJ from absorbing other people's negative energy – if they can just keep everyone happy. Of course, this strategy backfires as the INFJ loses touch with their own feelings, needs, wants and even sense of individual identity. If this happens, it can take time for the INFJ to regain contact with their inner authenticity, independent from what's coming at them from the outside world.

Boundaries.

We notice that INFJs don't just struggle with setting boundaries, but they also can have difficulty knowing what their boundaries should be. For example, sometimes they don't have any boundaries and they're sitting ducks. Other times they have fortresses put up so that no one can enter at all. And other times, they set boundaries, but then start seeing things from so many different vantage points that they end up doubting their own judgment. They then struggle to stick to the boundary they previously set. The challenge is figuring out not only what healthy boundaries look like, but how to implement those boundaries in their lives.

The INFJ's Fixation: Fear of Vulnerability



All Introverted Judging types (INFJ, INTJ, ISFJ, ISTJ) have a tendency to fear vulnerability. The reason, for INFJs, is that their driver process (Introverted Intuition/Ni/Perspectives) is an introverted process, and it is responsible for gathering

information. Having an introverted information-gathering process means **anything the INFJ picks up gets stuck inside of them as they ruminate over it.**

An INFJ leading with Perspectives knows that the information they take in can sometimes be toxic, and it's difficult to get that information out of them once it's inside. So, especially if they've had a lot of unhealthy interactions throughout their life, such as having been hurt or abused, **they can have deep fears around being vulnerable with other people** – especially when they perceive that a person lacks compassion or is insensitive to their feelings.

The fear of vulnerability is also fueled by an uncertainty around where or how to form boundaries. An INFJ may not know how to vet people properly, how much to let people in, and how much to protect themselves from others.

The major leverage point for them is to figure out:

1. What kind of boundaries are they going to set up?
2. Who are they going to open themselves up to?
3. How will they know how to let people in just enough to get the understanding that they crave?

The Three Types of INFJ

Having coached hundreds and interacted with literally thousands of INFJs, we've identified three main styles of the Counselor type. Plus, we've noticed that each type of INFJ can exhibit a more progressive leaning or a more conservative bent, which influence their openness to unconventional ideas and career choices.

The Body INFJ



The body type is the “health and wellness INFJ,” interested in things like organic healing, organic foods, naturalistic healing (such as meditation or spirituality), yoga

and fitness. Sometimes these INFJs have an athletic bent and play in team sports. What seem to be more appealing athletic pursuits, however, are sports like skateboarding, snowboarding or martial arts.

Other body types are into health in general and may bring this interest into their profession, particularly if they are a nurse, doctor, counselor or nutritional coach. In these sorts of careers, INFJs can bring their out-of-the-box thinking to help people get their health and wellness on track.

It's not uncommon for INFJs to struggle with poor health themselves, since the body is a blind spot for them because of their unique perception of life and spirituality. This is a reason why **some INFJs are drawn to a health-related field. Since the body is their blind spot, they must conscientiously reconnect with their physicality.** As their relationship with their bodies becomes a center point in their lives, the INFJ naturally wants to share what they've learned to help others. They might take the role of a guide, perhaps teaching people alternative forms of getting in touch with or taking care of the body.

The Heart INFJ



The heart type is the most artistic, creative and expressive type of INFJ. They are drawn to the fine arts, design, performance arts and various types of writing. **These**

expressive types are primarily focused on human connection and wanting to make themselves seen and understood This can be difficult because of their unique outlook and individuality, which is often misunderstood or misinterpreted. Heart INFJs might use the phrase 'I see you' to communicate love, acceptance and affection. INFJ songwriters, for instance, may find themselves writing lyrics that focus on the human experience and the depths of the human soul.

Other heart types go into counseling, Qigong therapy, massage therapy, alternative medicine or mediumship. Because heart-centric INFJs tend to have more openness to non-traditional forms of health and wellness, they are usually receptive to chakras, crystals and other alternative approaches.

The Head INFJ



The head-centric INFJ is the most cerebral subtype and are often mistyped as Thinkers. They have a strong relationship to their thinking element and tend to be attracted to

science and tech, or things like programming and coding. Many head types work in accounting or administration. If they work in mental health or therapy, they're likely to want to be psychiatrists, rather than simply psychologists, because of their interest in the medicinal element of how humans work.

Head types are more likely to have a conservative bent, compared with the other subtypes, and tend to stay in more traditional jobs in their given field.

Progressive and Conservative Subcategories

We've described these three subtypes using a progressive element. But in fact, each of these types could have either a conservative element or a progressive element. Progressive INFJ subtypes are more open to unconventional ideas, pseudoscience, and mystical practices. They show less of a need to take up traditional careers or make sure they fill a place in society.

Some INFJs are conservative. **Their conservative element is the part of them that wants to fit into the social spectrum and ensure they have a place in society.** If an INFJ is raised in a more conservative social environment, they will have a tendency to be more conservative even though they can break free of it.

That said, most INFJs desire permission to go to a more open frame. **They often show a strong desire to connect with others who want to explore what those open frames might look like in a broader context.** They are often attracted to archaic or alternative ideas at the edge of their own personal comfort zone, however progressive or conservative that comfort zone might be.

Myths and Stereotypes About INFJs

While stereotypes might be somewhat based in truth, it is ridiculous to superimpose those stereotypes over all INFJs. No two INFJs are exactly the same, and we are all more complex than our personality type.

We see so much variety and nuance in INFJs type that we think it's important to call out and debunk the stereotypes.



1. They're Always Right About Their Hunches.

INFJs are tapped into people. They 'just know' why they operate the way they do, and how they experience life as individuals. This ability helps them gain insights, hunches and a sense of "knowingness" about what's going on for other people. The myth that stems from this ability is that their instincts are always right.

While they're very good at knowing what's going on, one area of confusion for them is knowing why that the person has for doing what they're doing. INFJs are really good at knowing what someone is feeling in realtime (sometimes even before they

feel it), but they can struggle with discerning why the person is experiencing the emotion.”

This can be a difficult truth for INFJs to fully accept though, because they ARE often right. **They tend to be right more often than they are listened to or taken seriously by others, which can make it difficult to hear the truth, that they are in fact sometimes wrong.**

Which brings us to our final point on INFJ hunches: if an INFJ has a hunch, it's almost always worth listening to. While the conclusion they've come to might not be entirely accurate, the information that lead to the conclusion is nuanced and powerful. **Be careful not to ignore advice from an INFJ just because it doesn't make sense to you.**



2. They're Selfless.

INFJs are often labeled as altruists because they can seem all-giving. The undercurrent of this phenomenon is that INFJs tend to give more credence and attention to the needs of others than to their own needs. But that doesn't mean that they don't, in fact, have needs like the rest of us mere mortals.

INFJs often find themselves acting selflessly all of the time... until they no longer can. Then they might show an extreme selfish streak and are capable of putting up major walls to give themselves space from other people. Often, in this state of self-protectiveness, they are trying to figure out where their boundaries should lie, and how to get to a healthy spot of comfort where they can rest until they figured it all out, or at least have understood, why this happened to them and what to do when it appears again

The most insidious version of this is when an INFJ finds themselves feeling that they are 'right' to be in that selfish place, or that they 'deserve to' because they've allowed themselves to get so burnt out. That is, **instead of looking for ways to set healthy boundaries, and understanding how to implement them, they might just stubbornly look for reasons to justify this selfish behavior** instead of expressing exhaustion and a healthy need to recharge.



3. They're New-Agey.

A common INFJ stereotype is the sensitive empath, or a woo-woo type who has ESP and is into crystal magic, energy work, paranormal activity and the like. Some INFJs are like this, but just as many are not. Those who aren't open to or comfortable with New Age theories tend to be more technology- or science-focused, or even very conservative.

A more accurate stereotype might be that **INFJs are drawn to wonderful, unusual, and off-beat ideas.** Because of how well they read people, it can sometimes surprise new friends that the INFJ who seems completely normal and vanilla, is actually rather strange and unique with a complex inner world few get to see. **They walk quietly, almost secretly, to the beat of a different drum.** Even the most conservative INFJ has a preposterous side that is often only apparent to those closest to them.



4. They're Impossible to Understand.

Are INFJs just impossible labyrinths that no one can navigate through? Will they always be doomed to one-sided relationships or prisons of loneliness? We don't think so.

INFJs can be understood, known and appreciated for who they are. They can have friends who connect with them at a profound level. They are fully capable – even uniquely capable – of building great intimacy with others. This, **building intimacy, is one of their deepest desires.**

Because INFJs have heightened understanding of other people, they crave the same thing in return. It is going to be less common for somebody to go that deep, but people of various types who are interested in going to the same depth of intimacy as the INFJ **are** out there. If the INFJ can create healthy boundaries and vet people

carefully before they let things get to that depth of intimacy, then **an INFJ is definitely capable of being understood.**

INFJ Cognitive Functions

Video: A brief explanation of the Cognitive Functions

The mind of an INFJ is wired differently than other types. While behaviors can give us clues to how the mind works, we at Personality Hacker are far more interested in what *causes* our behaviors in the first place.

In the Myers-Briggs framework, each type comprises not just the four letters (I-N-F-J) but also four cognitive functions. Together, they're known as your cognitive function stack and they are:

- **Introverted Intuition (Ni) “Perspectives”**
- **Extraverted Feeling (Fe) “Harmony”**
- **Introverted Thinking (Ti) “Accuracy”**
- **Extraverted Sensing (Se) “Sensation”**

Each cognitive function plays a different role, and you use each one to a different degree of frequency and ease depending on its place in the stack. One of the easiest ways to understand the role the cognitive functions play in your mental wiring, is to use a visual framework we call the Car Model.

DRIVER

Perspectives

Show me a deeper insight

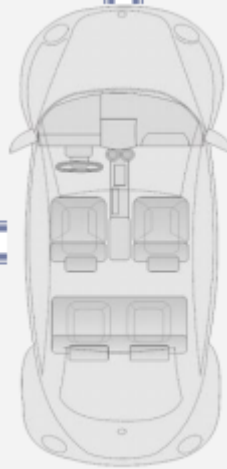
Deep, thoughtful and insightful. Understands other people's unique viewpoints. Has an eye on the future. Reaches into the unknown to discover deeper, hidden meanings. Often has sudden "flashes of insight". Sees things from multiple Perspectives. Redefines problems to find insight.

CO-PILOT

Harmony

What gets everyone's needs met?

Gives an opportunity to show love in a balanced way. Understands complex social structures and unspoken social contracts. Helps others meet their needs. Provides strength to say "no" when requests from others are inappropriate, and helps articulate this lovingly but firmly.



3 YR OLD

Sensation

In times of stress: You may go to food, alcohol, sex, or other highly immersive sensory experiences, often in an over-indulgent, destructive way. A healthy alternative: Get out in nature, exercise, or take a nice hot shower.

10 YR OLD

Accuracy

Becomes critical of others' opinions when they don't match their own. Focuses on the need to be 'perfect' all the time, sometimes creating an inhospitable environment if they become obsessive-compulsive.

Instead, use in times of play and intimacy.

Imagine a nuclear family strapped into a four-passenger car. In the front you've got the two adults of the family, the driver and the copilot sitting in the front passenger seat. In the back sit two children, a 10 year-old and a 3 year-old. Since the three year-old is the baby of the family, she sits behind the driver's seat so the co-pilot can easily reach her.

Each of these four passengers corresponds with your cognitive functions:

- Your driver process is your dominant function in the Myers-Briggs system. It drives the car and ultimately gets to call the shots.
- Your copilot is your auxiliary function. It's your second-strongest function and it helps the driver navigate.
- Your 10 year-old is your tertiary function. The 10 year-old is still a kid, less competent than the parent functions and often has an unconscious influence in family decisions.
- Your three year-old is your least developed function, your inferior function. It supports the rest of the family in limited ways, but is nonetheless an important part of your personality. Just don't let it drive the car!

The Driver Process: Introverted Intuition (Ni) – “Perspectives”

The driver cognitive function is introverted intuition, or what we call here at Personality Hacker, Perspectives. **It's a process that allows the INFJ to take a third-person perspective into their own mind**, noticing how their conscious and unconscious processes are working and forming patterns.

Here are some ways a Perspectives driver shows up in the INFJ:

- Seeing patterns and, over time, the patterns of patterns
- Perceiving a set number of ways the mind forms patterns
- Relative ease in shifting out of one's own perspective and into the perspective of someone else
- Applying their knack for pattern-recognition to “get inside the heads” of other people and make uncanny predictions about what will emerge from those patterns
- Applying their knack for pattern-recognition to perceive or forecast long timelines

The Copilot Process: Extraverted Feeling (Fe) – “Harmony”

Extraverted Feeling is **tapped into how we as humans are relating to each other and how we make each other feel**. Thus, it tends to show up in the following ways:

- Focuses on interpersonal dynamics
- Wants to keep morale up
- Wants to get people's needs met in order to keep them in a good state (so they don't get into a bad state and thus affect the group)
- Interested in concepts of culture and society's effect on the individual

Because INFJs couple this Harmony process with their Perspectives flow state, which allows them to deeply “get” other people, they develop a strong empathic nature.

The 10 Year-Old Process: Introverted Thinking (Ti) – “Accuracy”

Now, sitting behind the copilot is a 10 year-old called Introverted Thinking or Accuracy. This is the data-centric or “techy” part of an INFJ.

Whereas Harmony is focused on what helps everyone feel good and get their needs met, Accuracy is focused on:

- The data or information being reliable information, regardless of people's emotions
- What is true and accurate
- An interest in data and technology
- Getting some distance and space from people's emotional experience

The Accuracy process can provide a much-needed oasis from the psychic energy of other people. Because it is the copilot's opposite, it creates a beautiful balance that, between the Harmony copilot and the Accuracy 10 year-old, enables the INFJ to help other people in empathetic and informative ways.

That being said, it's only a 10 year-old process. **The INFJ doesn't always make sure that they are getting the details right.** They won't necessarily be good at

vetting their own information or paradigms, especially if they are emotionally attached to those paradigms. The Accuracy 10 year-old should neither be over-relied upon nor fully trusted.

The Three Year-Old Process: Extraverted Sensing (Se) – “Sensation”

Just like the copilot and the 10 year-old are opposites, the 3 year-old function, Extraverted Sensing, is the opposite of the Introverted Intuition driver process. The 3 year-old is the most unsophisticated of a person’s cognitive functions. **It can often show up as something akin to ‘white-noise’ that a person is vaguely aware of, yet means relatively little to them and is easily ignored.** Just like an actual 3 year old, an INFJ’s Sensation function shouldn’t be allowed to drive the car, but it absolutely should not be ignored. Ignoring the 3 year old might seem like a simple solution, especially if you don’t understand what it wants or why it’s making a fuss. But ask any parent, ignore the 3 year old at your own risk!

Extraverted Sensing, also called Sensation, gets the INFJ in touch with their body and the physical realm around them. For an INFJ Sensation often influences from the shadows until it makes its presence known, usually through inner turmoil, poor self-care, or in some cases, clumsiness. **We call the 3 year-old the Blind Spot.**

Sensation can show up as:

- Physical overindulgence, e.g. addiction
- Neglecting the body completely, e.g. never exercising
- Over-exercising
- Appreciation of sensual pleasures

INFJs should focus on Sensation daily as a form of self-care. One of the best ways to address an INFJ’s 3 year old is through play.

Recap

Perspectives and Harmony together create a distinctly empathic type. Both are interested in human dynamics. Because the INFJ leads with the Perspectives process, they are more focused on how the individual experiences these dynamics, rather than the dynamic itself.

But INFJs also have a technical, thinking side to them. It is neither their blindspot nor their greatest strength. It's a youthful process. At times it makes mistakes, while other times it brings insight and clarity.

We also see a tendency in INFJs to develop health issues from neglect of their body. The good news is, INFJs can learn to integrate body awareness into their daily experience. **They can use sensual experiences and other tactics to reconnect with the present moment.**

All of these characteristics become very clear when we look at the INFJ's cognitive functions in the car model.

INFJ Loops and Grips

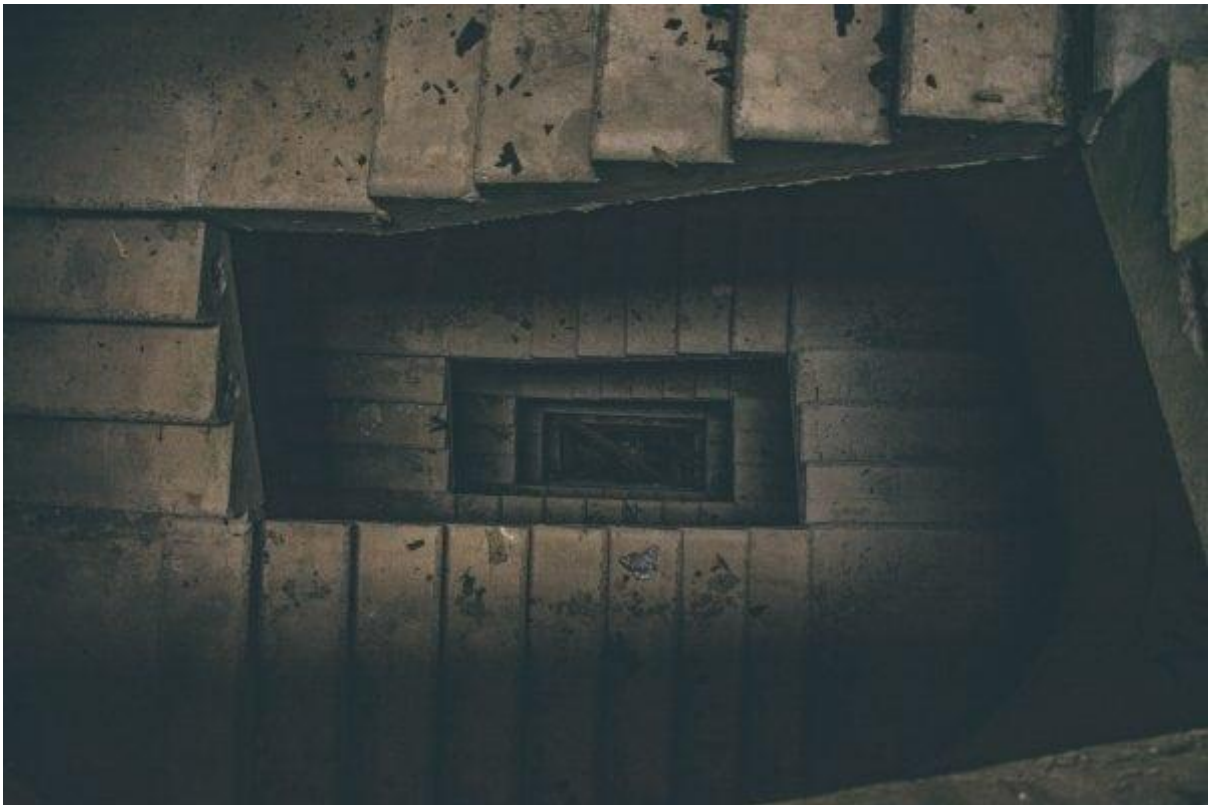
Loops and grips refer to unhealthy states an INFJ can fall into, either because of acute or prolonged stress, or due to over-reliance on their weaker functions. Every type has loops and grips. Each INFJ has their own unique stressors and unhealthy patterns, but we've found these ones are shared for most INFJs.

Loops

Loops are any time that we're being defensive about something. Technically speaking, loops emerge from the relationship dynamic between the driver and the 10 year-old process. For INFJs, their loop is introverted because it entails getting stuck

in the Perspectives driver and the Accuracy 10 year-old. **The INFJ loop happens when the Harmony copilot gets so overwhelmed that the INFJ tries to find solace in Accuracy.**

For example, an INFJ may feel drowned out or burdened by the psychic energies of others, and feel like the emotions of people in the outer world are flooding them. To shut out these potentially toxic emotions, an INFJ will go into Introverted Thinking, where they don't have to figure out what's going on for other people and they don't have to deal with other people's bullshit. It's a place of respite but it's also easy for the INFJ to get stuck there.



Common Examples of INFJ Loops

1. Hyper-critical of others.

The Ni-Ti loop is problematic because it closes off the INFJ from outside information that they need to correct and calibrate their thinking. What usually results is a critical place where the INFJ looks for reasons to exempt themselves from needing to care

about other people and their emotions. Here, the Accuracy process is used to find fault in others so that the INFJ can feel justified in keeping them at arm's length – especially in relationships where the INFJ is hurt. But **Introverted Thinking is not meant to be critical of people, but rather of thoughts, including its own thoughts.** It's not meant to be used defensively.

2. Hiding out in a low-vibration state.

All INFJs need time away from the world so that they can recharge. In an Ni-Ti loop, however, INFJs can be critical, defensive and nurse a cynical attitude toward people in general. It's the INFJ hiding out from the world whilst in a low emotional and vibrational state.

3. Perfectionistic.

INFJs in the loop can also become highly self-critical. For instance, they might have trouble getting things done in the outside world because they believe they can't do anything right. "If it can't be perfect, then I won't do it all."

It's akin to covering nice furniture in plastic. An INFJ can become so focused on perfectly preserving the furniture, that they lose the human component of having it in the first place.

Grips

A grip is any time your three year-old process, the most immature and unsophisticated part of who you are, has pulled you into itself and won't let you out. This happens when your driver process is exhausted. **Your driver process will become overtaxed if it's not the right tool for the job,** but it keeps trying to solve the problem anyway, or when it doesn't get the alone time it needs. When this

happens, your driver will take a break and its polar opposite, the three year-old, will take over.



Here are some common grip experiences we see in INFJs:

1. Over-indulgence.

In a grip, the INFJ gives into its immature Sensation process' desires for sensual gratification. This could look like over-eating, over-drinking, sex addictions, drug addiction or simply wanting to just sit around and do nothing.

2. Overworking.

The second example of a grip involves a disproportionate belief about what the three year-old process requires, resulting in the INFJ working it to the extreme. This can show up in things like over-exercising. This type of grip overworks the three year-old rather than indulges it.

3. Purposeful ignorance.

INFJs are wired to be asking questions about the significance of things and figure out what's going on behind the curtain. The challenge is that once one knows something, one can't go back. New insight shifts one's paradigm and demands a change of habits and lifestyle. The INFJ might not be ready to hear the information they're gathering.

If for some reason the implications of this inquiry are overwhelming to the INFJ, they can try to stifle their intuition and revert to a "dumbed down" state. If their intuition leads them down a road that mirrors back to them some cognitive dissonance, maybe presents some information that forces a change in their life that they're not ready for, some **INFJs will allow themselves to be in a perpetual sensory grip of only taking everything at face-value and only being in the moment.** They may even take an "It is what it is" attitude to life.

Recap

Our minds employ strategies to help us avoid things that we believe will be too painful to process. These are understandable strategies, but in the long term, they don't serve us.

If you observe yourself in a loop, ask yourself:

1. What is the information I'm missing about the human connection, the human component?
2. Why am I doing this? Is it because I'm not getting my needs met?
3. In order to get out of this loop, what needs can I get met that will help me feel less defensive and under-resourced?

Just like the loop, our grip comes from not getting our needs met. Both of them happen as strategies to avoid reality when we're under-resourced. One of the most

important things an INFJ can do to avoid both the loop and the grip is to make sure they are resourced.

INFJ in Relationships

Here are some observations we've made about common challenges INFJs can experience in relationships:



1. Tend to create one-sided relationships.

INFJs can have a tendency to create one-sided relationships, believing that nobody will ever understand them as much as they understand the other person. Because

they're used to those kinds of relationships, they can sometimes create them in romantic ones as well.

The challenge with one-side relationships is that INFJs become the martyrs. There's a sense that they are the ones who have to take the hit for everybody. This is simply not true. The martyr complex keeps the INFJ in the Drama Triangle, a phenomenon in which they see everyone as either a victim, a villain or a hero, and they're almost always the victim. Caught in a victim mentality, the INFJ believes that nothing can be done to improve their situation and that they are powerless.

Given that their flow state is an introverted process, which doesn't take action but rather just understands things, **INFJs might get stuck in a place of continually and perpetually understanding the situation and the other person, hoping the answers will eventually become obvious. Which they never do.**

INFJs will find the solutions they're looking for once they get more into their extraverted Harmony process and start expressing more of their wants and needs. **The challenge for INFJs is to be forthright and transparent about what they want, even if it means the other person will be unhappy with what they hear.**

As INFJs know, the alternative is to accumulate resentment inside of themselves in order to "take one for the team." But the martyr complex is not real selflessness, nor is it healthy for the INFJ, it's really just an ego play. It's not wanting to take responsibility for the situation and do something about it.



2. Can lose themselves in relationships.

The INFJ's propensity to lose their identity in a relationship often accompanies their martyr complex, if they develop one. INFJs can get so focused on making their partners happy that they start to merge with them and forget what their desires, opinions, virtues and worldviews are independent of their partners'. Alternatively, the **INFJ will simply keep their opinions to themselves so as not to cause waves.**

Again, this is another negative potential consequence of a type that leads with Introverted Intuition, or Perspectives. They are so good at shifting into someone else's perspective that it can turn into letting someone else do their thinking for them. If the INFJ is not particularly aligned with their own perspective, then it won't initially feel like it's that big of a deal. Rather, it feels like understanding.

But when the INFJ ceases to remember who they are in the relationship and to assert their opinion, their needs and their individuality, then they have lost their identity. To regain a sense of who they are, they will often have to spend time

separating themselves from that person. **It's important that INFJs be aware that the power of their Perspectives process to relate to others can backfire in romantic relationships when it turns into taking on someone else's identity.**



3. May be avoidant of relationships.

Because INFJs instinctively know that the first two challenges can happen to them, **they might avoid relationships altogether in order to prevent those problems from ever happening.** If they avoid relationships, then they don't have to worry about asserting themselves or trying to navigate through a place where the other person's pain is their pain. It's quite common for INFJs to go their own way, trying to figure out how to live without a relationship.

Of course, this suits their desire to not be vulnerable. If they don't have a relationship to contend with, then they don't have to be vulnerable. They don't have to set these boundaries because they've created a fortress and nobody can get in. Unfortunately, it also means that it prevents them from being truly understood.

There's a nuance to the INFJ's avoidance. It may not be wholesale avoidance. Instead, it could be different levels of avoidance in a relationship, such as a lack of desire to commit. **In this case, an INFJ might opt out of marriage or moving in with a partner and settle for a more casual relationship where they don't explore the depths of the other person or reveal deeper aspects of themselves.** So, whereas some INFJs choose singleness, others get into relationships in which they very much hold back.

INFJ Careers and Workplace Habits

INFJs thrive in all sorts of careers. We've made a few key observations to help INFJs thrive in any career or job situation. Here they are.

1. An INFJ who's in a low-morale situation needs to figure out a way to get out of it as fast as possible.

Workplace dynamics that involve too much emotional heavy lifting will prove exhausting for an INFJ. **A toxic environment, such a company fraught with conflict, tension, stress and anxiety or a boss who yells all the time, can damage the internal terrain of an INFJ if they stay too long.** And unfortunately, many INFJs opt to stay in hostile environments because they feel they have to. They might see themselves as the only person keeping it from being miserable. They might ask themselves, "Who will try to raise morale when I'm gone?" Again, they become the martyrs in highly unsustainable situations.



2. In whatever job they choose, they need to make a definitive impact on people.

If the INFJ can't observe how they're helping people, and get that hit of satisfaction for having contributed, then they will quickly become fatigued or frustrated. **An INFJ cannot perpetually give and not get any compassion, satisfaction or see the impact of their labors.**

If the INFJ's work does not directly make an impact on people, then they need someone over them who can provide words of affirmation and remind them that they're doing a great job. Many INFJs find it hard to admit this need because it can feel childish to need to be reassured that they're doing good work, but as childish as it may feel, it is a real need. This is crucial in jobs that an INFJ would find especially challenging, such as hospice care and counseling. **Bottom line: they need to be getting as much in as they're putting out, which is often a lot.**

3. If the INFJ sits at a desk for any amount of time, their back should face the wall so they can see any distractions coming.

Like INTJs, INFJs will find sensory distractions particularly jarring. This is because they need to go inside their minds and tune out the world to do their best thinking.

Sudden noises, or someone walking up behind the INFJ and surprising them, pulls them out of their flow state and decreases their productivity as it takes some time to get back into focus. That is why we strongly recommend that INFJs make sure they are positioned to be able to see incoming distractions.

Conclusion

INFJs are a rare type. One of their biggest challenges is that their mental processes make them a more esoteric type and thus more difficult to understand. This makes it harder for INFJs to find the right mentors or like-minded people who can help guide them in growth and progress in their lives.

On the path to growth and maturity, INFJs will encounter unique individual challenges that they may find difficult to articulate to others. Not everyone understands, let alone sympathizes with the challenges of being able to absorb the psychic garbage of the people around them. It's easy to feel alone, or a bit like a martyr.

We want INFJs to remember they're not alone, and to give them the vocabulary they need to discuss their needs and tendencies with the people in their lives that might otherwise not understand them. **There are other INFJs out there experiencing the same things.** There's also a percentage of the broader population who understand

and appreciate the INFJ, even if they haven't directly experienced some of what the INFJ goes through. Learning about the Myers-Briggs system can help bridge those gaps, helping people recognize what the INFJ is going through and support them in the best ways.

The Growth Path for the INFJ



Of course, it's all about growth. Growth is how you get from the place you are right now to the place you want to be, and really resting into your true potential as an INFJ. **Your mental wiring is no accident; you're part of the social ecosystem and you have something precious to offer the rest of us.**

All of those talents can sometimes feel like a challenge. But when you accept, appreciate and understand how important your personal growth is. **You'll figure out how to better operate your own mental wiring, you can now leverage those**

talents to make an impact and actually feel good about your contribution as opposed to being at the receiving end of other people's psychic garbage.

Here's the number-one secret to growth as an INFJ: your leverage point is your copilot: Extroverted Feeling or "Harmony".

It may not feel like it, but Harmony is absolutely the leverage point. That's because Harmony understands interpersonal dynamics on a very deep level. **Harmony is how you understand where to put your boundaries.** It's the part of you that understands that getting human needs met must include your own.

Harmony is how you train yourself to meet your needs and become sensitive to what your needs are and how often to meet them. It's how you recognize the relationships you're supposed to be having and how to engage with other people in a more assertive way. It's learning how to not just roll over, lose yourself to relationships, have one-sided relationships or go into hiding, but to show up as somebody who has something to contribute and to be able to vet other people and know whether or not they have something to contribute back to you.

It's how you pick up the language for being able to tell somebody on a bus that this is not a story that you can hear today. That you love them and you hope the best for them, but right now you're not really in a position to do so. Or, it's the part of you that can listen to the person on the bus and offer them some counsel and guidance, depending upon the situation that you're currently experiencing and being very sensitive to that. **Your leverage point and growth is developing the harmony process.**

Using Harmony effectively can be incredibly energizing! **It can supercharge your Perspectives Driver process, and let you function at a new level of awesome.**

There seems to be a direct correlation between getting your needs met, and feeling safe and excited to let your mind wander into stories, patterns and ideas.

After you develop “Harmony”, your developmental growth path is to have a beautiful simpatico relationship between “Harmony” and “Accuracy”.

This is where you really get in touch with your truth, with who you are as an individual. You will become rested into your own integrity, but not to a point where you are over-reliant on it as a defense strategy. **Done right, the tension between Harmony and Accuracy gives you integrity while encouraging you to help others.**

Finally, your growth will need to integrate that three year-old Sensation, your aspirational process.

With time, you'll get better at knowing when to go to Sensation, how often to use it, how to rest into it and how to know when it's got you in its grip versus when you're simply utilizing it the way that you're meant to use it. Then, the Sensation process will not just be “a whisper in your ear”, but you will be able to fully understand the messages it's giving you to **become the best version of yourself as an INFJ.**

Was this helpful? If so we created a INFJ Kit to help you understand your personality type more deeply.

You don't have to invest in this kit. The choice is completely up to you. We created this mini-course because we want to give you a deeper dive into your unique personality type.

If you're not interested in this mini-course that's **TOTALLY** ok. It's not for everyone. Feel free to use this article as a free guide or reference, but if you want to dig deeper watch this 4 minute video to learn how to uncover more insights about your type.