

The Giver: ENFJ

As an ENFJ, your primary mode of living is focused externally, where you deal with things according to how you feel about them, or how they fit into your personal value system. Your secondary mode is internal, where you take things in primarily via your intuition.

ENFJs are people-focused individuals. They live in the world of people possibilities. More so than any other type, they have excellent people skills. They understand and care about people, and have a special talent for bringing out the best in others. ENFJ's main interest in life is giving love, support, and a good time to other people. They are focused on understanding, supporting, and encouraging others. They make things happen for people, and get their best personal satisfaction from this.

Because ENFJ's people skills are so extraordinary, they have the ability to make people do exactly what they want them to do. They get under people's skins and get the reactions that they are seeking. ENFJ's motives are usually unselfish, but ENFJs who have developed less than ideally have been known to use their power over people to manipulate them.

ENFJs are so externally focused that it's especially important for them to spend time alone. This can be difficult for some ENFJs, because they have the tendency to be hard on themselves and turn to dark thoughts when alone. Consequently, ENFJs might avoid being alone, and fill their lives with activities involving other people. ENFJs tend to define their life's direction and priorities according to other people's needs, and may not be aware of their own needs. It's natural to their personality type that they will tend to place other people's needs above their own, but they need to stay aware of their own needs so that they don't sacrifice themselves in their drive to help others.

ENFJs tend to be more reserved about exposing themselves than other extraverted types. Although they may have strongly-felt beliefs, they're likely to refrain from expressing them if doing so would interfere with bringing out the best in others. Because their strongest interest lies in being a catalyst of change in other people, they're likely to interact with others on their own level, in a chameleon-like manner, rather than as individuals.

Which is not to say that the ENFJ does not have opinions. ENFJs have definite values and opinions which they're able to express clearly and succinctly. These beliefs will be expressed as long as they're not too personal. ENFJ is in many ways expressive and open, but is more focused on being responsive and supportive of others. When faced with a conflict between a strongly-held value and serving another person's need, they are highly likely to value the other person's needs.

The ENFJ may feel quite lonely even when surrounded by people. This feeling of aloneness may be exacerbated by the tendency to not reveal their true selves.

People love ENFJs. They are fun to be with, and truly understand and love people. They are typically very straight-forward and honest. Usually ENFJs exude a lot of self-confidence, and have a great amount of ability to do many different things. They are generally bright, full of potential, energetic and fast-paced. They are usually good at anything which captures their interest.

ENFJs like for things to be well-organized, and will work hard at maintaining structure and resolving ambiguity. They have a tendency to be fussy, especially with their home environments.

In the work place, ENFJs do well in positions where they deal with people. They are naturals for the social committee. Their uncanny ability to understand people and say just what needs to be said to make them happy makes them naturals for counseling. They enjoy being the center of attention, and do very well in situations where they can inspire and lead others, such as teaching.

ENFJs do not like dealing with impersonal reasoning. They don't understand or appreciate its merit, and will be unhappy in situations where they're forced to deal with logic and facts without any connection to a human element. Living in the world of people possibilities, they enjoy their plans more than their achievements. They get excited about possibilities for the future, but may become easily bored and restless with the present.

ENFJs have a special gift with people, and are basically happy people when they can use that gift to help others. They get their best satisfaction from serving others. Their genuine interest in Humankind and their exceptional intuitive awareness of people makes them able to draw out even the most reserved individuals.

ENFJs have a strong need for close, intimate relationships, and will put forth a lot of effort in creating and maintaining these relationships. They're very loyal and trustworthy once involved in a relationship.

An ENFJ who has not developed their Feeling side may have difficulty making good decisions, and may rely heavily on other people in decision-making processes. If they have not developed their Intuition, they may not be able to see possibilities, and will judge things too quickly based on established value systems or social rules, without really understanding the current situation. An ENFJ who has not found their place in the world is likely to be extremely sensitive to criticism, and to have the tendency to worry excessively and feel guilty. They are also likely to be very manipulative and controlling with others.

In general, ENFJs are charming, warm, gracious, creative and diverse individuals with richly developed insights into what makes other people tick. This special ability to see growth potential in others combined with a genuine drive to help people makes the ENFJ a truly valued individual. As giving and caring as the ENFJ is, they need to remember to value their own needs as well as the needs of others.

Jungian functional preference ordering:

Dominant: Extraverted Feeling
Auxiliary: Introverted Intuition
Tertiary: Extraverted Sensing
Inferior: Introverted Thinking

ENFJ Relationships

ENFJs put a lot of effort and enthusiasm into their relationships. To some extent, the ENFJ defines themselves by the closeness and authenticity of their personal relationships, and are therefore highly invested in the business of relationships. They have very good people skills, and are affectionate and considerate. They are warmly affirming and nurturing. They excel at bringing out the best in others, and warmly supporting them. They want responding affirmation from their relationships, although they have a problem asking for it. When a situation calls for it, the ENFJ will become very sharp and critical. After having made their point, they will return to their natural, warm selves. They may have a tendency to "smother" their loved ones, but are generally highly valued for their genuine warmth and caring natures.

ENFJ Strengths

Most ENFJs will exhibit the following strengths with regards to relationship issues:

- * Good verbal communication skills
- * Very perceptive about people's thoughts and motives
- * Motivational, inspirational; bring out the best in others
- * Warmly affectionate and affirming
- * Fun to be with - lively sense of humor, dramatic, energetic, optimistic
- * Good money skills
- * Able to "move on" after a love relationship has failed (although they blame themselves)
- * Loyal and committed - they want lifelong relationships
- * Strive for "win-win" situations
- * Driven to meet other's needs

ENFJ Weaknesses

Most ENFJs will exhibit the following weaknesses with regards to relationships issues:

- * Tendency to be smothering and over-protective
- * Tendency to be controlling and/or manipulative
- * Don't pay enough attention to their own needs
- * Tend to be critical of opinions and attitudes which don't match their own
- * Sometimes unaware of social appropriateness or protocol
- * Extremely sensitive to conflict, with a tendency to sweep things under the rug as an avoidance tactic
- * Tendency to blame themselves when things go wrong, and not give themselves credit when things go right
- * Their sharply defined value systems make them unbending in some areas
- * They may be so attuned to what is socially accepted or expected that they're unable to assess whether something is

“right” or “wrong” outside of what their social circle expects.

ENFJs as Lovers

“To love means to open ourselves to the negative as well as the positive - to grief, sorrow, and disappointment as well as to joy, fulfillment, and an intensity of consciousness we did not know was possible before.” -- Rollo May

ENFJs make warm, committed lovers who are willing to go to great lengths for the sake of “The Relationship”. They’re totally dedicated to the relationship, and to their partner, and have a special skill for warmth and affirmation which brings out the best in their mates. They take their commitments seriously, and are likely to put forth a lot of effort into making a relationship work once they have committed themselves to it. In the event that a relationship fails, the ENFJ will feel a lot of guilt, and take on blame for the failure, but they will move on with their lives with relative ease, without looking backwards.

Since relationships are central to the ENFJ’s life, they will be very “hands on” and involved with their intimate relationships. They may be in the habit of constantly asking their partner how they’re doing, what they’re feeling, etc. This behavior may be a bit smothering, but it also supports a strong awareness of the health (or illness) of the relationship.

Although the ENFJ will probably not ask for it, they need to be given sweet words and loving affirmation. Since they are so externally focused on serving people, they do not always pay attention to their own needs. Since much of their personal satisfaction comes from bringing happiness to others, they’re able to ignore their own needs and still be happy much more easily than other types. However, if they focus entirely on giving without doing some taking, they may find themselves in an unhealthy, unbalanced relationship. They need to work on being aware of their needs, and being OK with verbalizing those needs to their partners.

A problem area for ENFJs in relationships is their very serious dislike of conflict. ENFJs will prefer to brush issues under the rug rather than confront them head-on, if there is likely to be a conflict. They are also likely to “give in” easily in conflict situations, just to end the conflict. They might agree to something which goes against their values just to end the uncomfortable situation. In such cases, the problem is extended and will return at a later time. The ENFJ needs to realize that the world will not end if there is a disagreement, and that dealing with things immediately initiates closure. Ignoring issues will not make them go away.

In general, the ENFJ is intensely and enthusiastically involved in their personal relationships. They bring fun and warmth into the equation, and are willing to work hard to make things work.

Although two well-developed individuals of any type can enjoy a healthy relationship, ENFJ’s natural partner is the INFP, or the ISFP. ENFJ’s dominant function of Extraverted Feeling is best matched with a partner whose dominant function is Introverted Feeling. An ENFJ and INFP are ideally matched, because they share the Intuitive way of looking at the world, but the ENFJ and ISFP are also a very good match. How did we arrive at this?

ENFJs as Parents

“You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth...
Let your bending in the archer’s hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.” -- Kahlil Gibran

ENFJs take their parenting role very seriously. They consider the task of passing on values and goals to their children as paramount, and will strive to consistently be a good role model to their children. The ENFJ considers it their responsibility to make sure that their children turn out well. This characteristic, combined with the ENFJ’s definite values and ideas about the way things should be, usually results in the ENFJ parent being rather strict, and having high expectations for the behavior of their children. On the other hand, the ENFJ is also warm and affectionate with their children, and very supportive and affirming. The ENFJ can also be counted on to take care of day-to-day necessities for their children.

It is not usually easy to be the child of an ENFJ. The ENFJ’s life focus is centered in the sphere of relationships. They take their relationship roles very seriously. They are very “hands-on” in relationships, always monitoring it’s progress. This behavior may be smothering to some individuals. ENFJs have very definite value systems, and well-defined ideas about what is right and what is wrong. Since they believe that part of their parental role involves passing their values and ideas to their children, and since they are so concerned and involved with their children, the ENFJ has a tendency to be a strict, controlling parent, who is very aware of their children’s actions. The ENFJ needs to remember to allow their children the room for growth which is necessary if they are to evolve into healthy, well-adjusted adults. With a bit of effort, it will be

possible for the ENFJ to balance their need to pass their values and ideals down to their children with their children's need to develop as individuals.

The ENFJ will put forth a good amount of effort to make their children's home environment warm, comforting and cheerful. They will be ready with a kiss and a band-aid for any hurt. Their normal attitude towards their children will be loyal, proud, warm, and affirming.

As is the case with most types, ENFJ parents may have problems with their children as they reach puberty. Their children will need more space at that age, and will begin to resent the over-protective tendencies of the ENFJ. This problem will be magnified in situations where the ENFJ is very manipulative. Since ENFJs are gifted with exceptional people skills and personal presence, some ENFJ individuals who are not supported by life's circumstances get into the habit of using these skills for personal gain to get what they want or need out of situations. As they grow older, their children will inevitably see the manipulative tendencies for what they are, and will begin to question their parents' value systems, and strongly resent being forced to comply with a set of values which may be somewhat hypocritical. The manipulative ENFJ, who still has strongly-held values which they are driven to pass to their children, may then find themselves "a day late and a dollar short". As an ENFJ, your best bet is to be aware of your type's manipulative tendencies and to make every effort that you are not using them in a negative way.

Usually, the ENFJ has nothing but the best intentions with regards to their children. They are remembered by their children as very warm and supportive (although strict), and are valued for passing on their goals and ideals.

ENFJs as Friends

ENFJs are warm, sociable people who are keenly in tune with other people's feelings and perspectives. They enjoy supporting and bringing out the best in others. They are energetic and fun to be with. They seek authenticity in their close relationships, and are very sensitive to the needs of others. All of these characteristics make the ENFJ valued by their peers as a warm, supportive and giving friend.

ENFJs are interested in all sorts of people, and are likely to be able to understand and relate to all of the personality types. They will excel at getting along with all sorts of people when the situation demands that they do so. However, they will not choose to spend their personal time around all of the types. They may resist spending a lot of time with Sensing Perceiving types, whose carefree "live for the moment" attitude may conflict with the ENFJ's strongly held value system. When seeking companionship that is not romantic, ENFJs will be drawn to other Feelers who have similar values and ideas. Since they live in a people-oriented world, they are not comfortable with objective judgments which do not consider people issues. Consequently, ENFJs are not likely to have close friendships with strong Thinking types. They will be likely to especially enjoy the company of other intuitive Feelers, as well as Sensing Judgers.

What does Success mean to an ENFJ?

ENFJs are motivated by external human situations, primarily by other people; their talents, their needs, their aspirations and their cares forming the world in which an ENFJ lives. They thrive when able to "make things right" for others, to enable and empower their co-workers, friends and family through valuing their human strengths and abilities. When gifted with the added ENFJ ability to intuitively adapt their feelings to the way they are affected by others, the ENFJ has a positive drive to find co-operative pathways leading to the best possible outcome for all, including themselves. Success for an ENFJ comes through involvement in the process of making things happen for people; through the accomplishments and satisfactions of those they have helped to enrich the human world with greater value, and through finding that their efforts on behalf of others have fulfilled their own life as well.

Allowing Your ENFJ Strengths to Flourish

As an ENFJ, you have gifts that are specific to your personality type that aren't natural strengths for other types. By recognizing your special gifts and encouraging their growth and development, you will more readily see your place in the world, and be more content with your role.

Nearly all ENFJs will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- Making others feel valued and important

- Quickly seeing the positive and negative aspects of a human situation
- Expressing their feelings clearly
- Offering loyalty and commitment to partners, family and work mates
- Trying to always find the solution which works for everyone
- Encouraging humour and self expression in others
- Finding ways to help others fulfil their needs
- Affirming positive community values
- Naturally falling into leadership roles in their community

ENFJs who have developed their Introverted Intuition to the extent that they can see the possibilities within their perceptions will enjoy these very special gifts:

- Understanding and empathising with the feelings of others; realising “where they are coming from”.
- A talent for creative expression which can turn ordinary things and situations into something magical.
- An enhanced feeling of connection with and sensitivity to the world around them.
- The ability to see many facets of a problem and the many ways it might be resolved for the best.
- The ability to make creative and valuable use of time spent alone.
- Openness to the spiritual connections between all things
- They become increasingly creative, visionary and empathetic, and are therefore effective and kind managers of businesses, people, and various situations that life presents.

Potential Problem Areas

With any gift of strength, there is an associated weakness. Without “bad”, there would be no “good”. Without “difficult”, there would be no “easy”. We value our strengths, but we often curse and ignore our weaknesses. To grow as a person and get what we want out of life, we must not only capitalize upon our strengths, but also face our weaknesses and deal with them. That means taking a hard look at our personality type’s potential problem areas.

Most of the weaker characteristics found in ENFJs are due to their dominant Extraverted Feeling overvaluing what they see as objective values in the external world and thereby judging too much by the needs of others, or by appearances. This is primarily due to the ENFJ having not fully adapted their Introverted Intuitive function sufficiently for them to be able to discern the vast range of ways in which they might be being misled by such appearances. The ENFJ naturally looks outward to find value and satisfaction, and whilst it is essential that this direction be taken to fulfil their primary needs of relation and comfort, without the supportive balance of a well developed Intuitive function, ENFJs can overvalue the external world to the point where they lose sight of themselves, becoming fixed in their judgements about people and the world. In such cases, the ENFJ will tend to live in a rigid - and to others, somewhat surreal - world of definite values which often seems “overstated” or obsessively connected to other people or human situations.

Explanation of Problems

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed in various degrees to the common ENFJ problem of wanting to find the “proper” value in everything. If the ENFJ does not learn how to see beneath the appearance of what they quickly judge as good or bad about the people and situations in their external en-

vironment, they will only use their introverted intuition to support those judgements they feel are good for them and disregard not only other possibilities but their own quality of inner life as well. The consideration of these less obvious possibilities and their own needs requires that the ENFJ recognize that their own value judgements are indeed subjective, and that it is not appropriate or effective to apply them across the board to all civilized people. The practice of standing back and looking objectively at their own value system is not something that the ENFJ is accustomed to doing; trying to avoid abstract rationalisation of problems and the feelings they engender is a natural survival technique for the ENFJ personality. The main driver to the ENFJ personality is Extraverted Feeling, whose purpose is above all to find and discriminate the values in people and human situations. If their ability to find a specific and worthy value in a person or situation is threatened, the ENFJ shuts out the threatening force. This is totally natural, but unfortunately the individual who exercises this type of agenda protection regularly will become more and more rigid in their judgements and expectations of people, but even less concerned with the effect such conditions have upon themselves. Where the unbalanced ENFJ does acquiesce to the images of intuition, these will generally be skewed to support the subjective agenda of dominant Feeling. In this way they always find justification for their determinations and their self sacrifices to people, things and situations, and they will be unable locate the reality of another's true feelings, nor be interested in discovering that their seemingly objective judgements miss the reasons and subjectivities underlying both their own and others lives or worldly situation.

Petulance, pensiveness and a sense of being let down by others can often be the end result of this one sided approach to the world, whilst if the ENFJ is in a strong company or relationship position they might become driven to manipulate others and situations to conform to their own feeling needs and value judgements, irrespective of any true value to the situation or for the other persons involved. In this case, the "big picture" valued for its great worth to all, becomes a dominant drive which seeks to blot out or crush any opposition by claiming the moral high ground, even to the point where the ENFJ sacrifices their own life to the "cause". The inability to recognize the plethora of subjective possibilities their feelings bring into their lives strip the unbalanced ENFJ of their access to both a deeper connection with others and the possibility of refining and developing pathways to the kind of self understanding and self nurturing their finer judgements might otherwise lead them to.

Solutions

To grow as an individual, the ENFJ needs to focus on paying attention to their inner images. This means they need to be open to the possibilities that lie beneath their judgements and values, rather than just accepting the appearance of values which accord with their sense of rightness. The ENFJ needs to understand that developing their ability to see the subjective possibilities within themselves and others does not threaten their ability to make correct judgements, but rather enhances it, and enhances their personal chances for achieving a measure of success in their lives.

The ENFJ concerned with personal growth will pay close attention to their motivation for accepting values that come to them. Are they trying to see the background of circumstance behind their own and others value judgements, or are they trying to maintain their own image of how things "ought" to be? The goal is to find a balance between what seems correct and valuable and the many possible ways in which such a judgement might be subjective and not necessarily the best for themselves or a situation. Obviously, this is not entirely possible, but it is the exercise to keep in mind. They need to see the many divergent images of values and their conflicts which affect them, without feeling threatened, and without losing their sense of what is right and wrong.

Living Happily in our World as an ENFJ

As can be seen from the above, some strongly expressed ENFJs can have difficulty fitting into society. Their problems are usually due to their Extraverted Feeling function being so dominant that they are so strongly bound to what they see as objective values that they cannot relate to the world except via the objects of their feeling. In such cases the intensity of their judgements can actually drive others away from them, and the resulting lack of close relationship felt as a personal failing for which the ENFJ feels guilty. Such guilt can drive even more strongly affective behaviour which leads the ENFJ to ignore their own needs entirely, or it can become a negative drive to manipulate others to conform to their one-sided vision of the world. The ENFJ who consistently tries to see the underlying possibilities and the scope available in each situation will be able to see the right path to take with each person and situation in their life. This will always lead them to toward closer relationships, happiness and great achievements.

The key to personal growth for the ENFJ is competent execution of Introverted Intuition. Because it is often hard to define what this represents subjectively to each person, here are some action-oriented suggestions that will help lead you down the path towards more effective use of the Introverted Intuitive function. Specific suggestions:

- When confronted by a person or situation which seems to be rejecting or rebuffing your value judgements and your mind filling with all the arguments, images and alternatives to the situation, look closely at those you are immediately rejecting as negative or unsuitable ways to proceed. Within these images often lie paths to understanding and agreement if you look more closely. Some of these images hold the key to seeing another's feelings and point of view more clearly. Remember, what seems positive to you may not be everything or even important to another.
- Behind everything of value that you see lies much potential. Try not to be satisfied with just a good result, but let yourself imagine the ways in which a person might fulfil all their creative aspects; the ways in which a situation might become useful to many more than just what it was made for. Try to imagine everything as a source of untapped magic and creative power – let your mind see all the things it might become. Above all, apply this exercise to yourself, as if you were seeing yourself in a mirror: just as you would another person whom you love.
- When you are alone try to become fully aware of how it feels to you, try to recognise the emptiness as a place of potential, try to imagine what you might be able to do for others in this empty time, try to realise that you are not truly alone but with this special person who is yourself. What would you do for this person if you could make their private world a better place?
- Everything wonderful in life proceeds from the qualities which lie behind it. You can feel these things, these drives and attitudes which seem to come from a place outside, perhaps from the creator expressing himself within people and nature. Letting the sense of these background qualities permeate your drive to life will give you purpose and meaning. Allow yourself to feel the meanings and purposes of the world, let them become a valuable gift which can be expressed in your dealings with others and in the things you strive for.

Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ENFJ Success

1. Feed Your Strengths! Make sure you have opportunities to involve yourself with others in situations where your input is valued.
2. Face Your Weaknesses! Realize and accept that some traits are strengths and some are weaknesses. By facing your weaknesses, you can overcome them and they will have less power over you.
3. Express Your Feelings. Understand that your feelings are as important as others are in the overall situation. Without your feelings and needs being valued the best result is not realised, so value and speak to your own feelings as much as you value those of others.
4. Make Decisions. Don't be afraid to have an opinion. You need to know show others the qualities and potentials you can see are worthy of action.
5. Smile at Criticism. Try to see why disagreement and discord indicate the differences between people, and use this as an opportunity to make your value judgements useful for growth, because that's exactly what they are. Try not to feel responsible for another's criticism, but try to hear it and understand the feelings and images it engenders within you. Then you may see a path not only to agreement but to a shared and truly valuable end.
6. Be Aware of Others. Remember that there are 15 other personality types out there who see things differently than you see them. Most of your problems with other people are easier to deal with if you try to understand the other person's perspective.
7. Be Aware of Yourself. Don't stint your own needs for the sake of others too much. Realise you are an important focus. If you do not fulfil your own needs, how will continue to be effective and how will others know you are true to your beliefs?

8. Be Gentle in Your Expectations. It is easy for you to see the value in others, but stressing this too much can drive them away. Try to show that you understand their fears and limitations and lead them gently to see how you feel: lead them gently into understanding and love.

9. Assume the Best. Don't distress yourself by feeling that your values are lost upon others – they are not. Perhaps it just has to sit with them too. Let the situation resolve itself and never stop believing that love is the true answer.

10. When in Doubt, Ask Questions! Don't assume that the lack of feedback is the same thing as negative feedback. If you need feedback and don't have any, ask for it.