

## **ENFJ**

*(About 2.5% of the U.S. population)*

ENFJs are highly credible leaders who attract many followers. They can size up a situation and, in a very caring and concerned way, say just the right thing. This is part of why people are drawn to them and why ENFJs are such *natural leaders and mentors*. They almost always understand just what a group needs and how to help it reach its goals.

### **ENFJ Personality Highlights**

- Their **Extraversion** focuses and directs them toward other people.
- Their **iNtuition** means they have a gift for imagination and inspiration.
- Their **Feeling** causes them to understand others' needs and motivations.
- Their **Judging** allows them to be organized, decisive, and effective.

This particular combination of preferences makes this type a natural when it comes to motivating people – even when those people are initially reluctant to do something. Because of their group leadership abilities, ENFJs often rise to the top of organizations. They are often well-liked as leaders. They see the entire world as filled with people whose endless needs and concerns are waiting to be funneled into organizations and institutions that can serve those needs. ENFJs have a zeal for imposing their idea of “what’s good for humanity” on everyone. Fortunately, more often than not, humanity is better off as a result.

Here are some other characteristics. ENFJs...

- Are very nurturing and caring, driven and motivated by sincere concern for the welfare of others.
- Are very accomplished at working with other people and groups.
- Are looked to by others for leadership and decisiveness.
- Can become depressed, wounded, or bitter if their ideas meet with resistance.
- Take conflict or rejection personally and can carry a grudge.
- May be criticized as insincere or superficial because of their smooth way with words.

### **ENFJs in Personal Life**

People are central and important to ENFJs. This means that if people’s needs conflict with rules and schedules, the ENFJ will generally put people first – though perhaps with a sense of martyrdom or guilt.

The opportunity to be with others – to entertain, serve, and involve others – and to be involved is far more rewarding than sleep or any other solitary activity. In fact, too much time alone can make an

ENFJ pensive, moody, self-punitive, and depressed. More than other types, ENFJs need to move among and be engaged by people. Even a negative interaction with another person is better than being ignored.

Relating to an ENFJ is usually fairly easy. Because people are so important to them, they want happy and affirming relationships. Highly articulate, with excellent social skills and a quick sense of humor, ENFJs are often the life of the party – even if it’s a party of two. But, as with most Extraverts (Es), if they work too hard at it, all the other person is likely to remember is how much they dominated the conversation.

### ***ENFJs at Home***

When harmony prevails, the living style of the ENFJ is lively and fun. But there must be order before relaxation, and fun must be balanced by work. Peaceful, joyful living is a goal and an expectation. However, achieving that goal generally requires that you either follow the ENFJ’s good intentions or let them show you “the error of your ways” by redirecting you toward “real joy” – whatever the ENFJ deems that to be.

Family events are fun for an ENFJ. Almost without being asked, the ENFJ child or adult will assume responsibility for making events entertaining, harmonious, and enriching for all. They are usually ready to provide games, entertainment, wit, wisdom, or whatever else may be needed. Generally, family members appreciate this, which makes the ENFJ feel affirmed and fulfilled.

Age can bring some introversion and objectivity to ENFJs. They may gain insight, discovering that the world is not going to be “saved” by anything they can do and that life is going to continue without them. With retirement, ENFJs have the chance to stop, smell the roses, and quit trying to save the entire world. They may create a more relaxed, less compulsive way of life, although they still may be committed to serving others in some way.

### ***ENFJs as Children***

The verbal skills of ENFJ children develop early and stay with them for life. They are often advised to become public speakers, preachers, or announcers when they grow up. ENFJ children are “pleasers,” wanting approval from adults. They are also hero-worshippers, often imitating those they idolize. Since imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, it is not surprising that these children are often teachers’ pets and parents’ favorites.

Learning for ENFJ children is also driven by imitation. They learn by emulating their heroes. In fact, somewhat like ENFPs, their desire to please and receive approval is so strong that ENFJs can end up in careers far removed from their natural abilities if they think that will endear them to people they admire.

### ***ENFJs as Parents***

Parenting for the ENFJ is a responsibility and a pleasure. There are young lives just waiting to be molded by the parent’s value system. Unlike most other types, especially Perceivers (Ps), ENFJs don’t wait for a child to develop. Instead, right and wrong, good and bad, and other models are

imposed in a very warm, supportive, and clearly defined environment. A child will know where an ENFJ parent stands on most things and what is expected. When behavior is appropriate, affirmation abounds. However, negative behavior can make an ENFJ parent feel like a failure. In turn, a child who picks up on these feelings can develop a sense of guilt about failing to please mother or father.

### **ENFJs in Professional Life**

If you need to sell the impossible to a reluctant buyer and make the buyer like it, call upon an ENFJ. These smooth-talking persuaders are life's salespeople; once they are convinced that you need the product in question, you will become putty in their hands. They will put together the perfect combination of words and rapport to clinch the deal.

The ENFJ's preferences combine to make them natural convincers. Their energy comes from the outwardly directed, socially oriented, gregarious external world (Extraversion). They perceive the world as having endless possibilities and meanings (iNtuition), which they use to make subjective, interpersonally based decisions (Feeling). And they prefer to live their daily lives in a structured, scheduled, and orderly fashion (Judging).

When ENFJs scan a situation, they are usually aware of the many interpersonal dynamics taking place. Their iNtuitive preference interprets each party's actions and reactions – who seems stressed, who needs to be motivated, who should be reprimanded, who needs a listening ear – while their Judging preference provides direction or suggestions as appropriate. Frequently their advice is apt, which can lead to both gratitude and dependence. However, when an individual or group doesn't pick up on this advice, the ENFJ can, in a moment, become bruised and angry at such ingratitude.

### ***ENFJs as Leaders***

The ENFJ natural need for closure means that deadlines and production requirements are met, though some immediate interpersonal or human need may momentarily sidetrack them. This makes them very promotable within organizations. What usually motivates ENFJs to climb the corporate ladder, however, is not mere ambition or good behavior. Instead, they have a vision that organizations exist to serve people. Inevitably, as they accept promotions they find themselves at odds with corporate realities like profits, production, cutbacks, etc. The higher ENFJs rise within an organization, the more they set themselves up for a struggle between their personal values and the organization's demands. At the higher levels such issues can't be swept under the rug, as the ENFJ would prefer to do. For everyone involved, it saves both personal and organizational heartburn when ENFJs are in touch with their real drives and motivations, and understand how those relate to the organization's mission.

### ***ENFJs as Employees***

The overall work style of the ENFJ is upbeat, affirming, positive, and marked by an above-average social awareness. Their iNtuition tends to keep them enthusiastic, even when the task may be dull or routine. They can seem like cheerleaders in such situations, calling forth others' loyalty, perseverance, humor, or whatever else may be needed when the chips are down.

ENFJs believe work should be a team effort – that people need to be happy with one another, caring well beyond their individual job descriptions. It’s “Go, team, go” during the workday, followed by a beer or two, or anything else that will affirm the group. ENFJs have a listening ear for others’ troubles and may even be offended if one isn’t willing to bare all. After all, that’s what friends are for.

### ***ENFJs’ Workplace Stressors***

If they aren’t careful, ENFJs can be seen as superficial by others, who think all the “rah, rah” is nothing but cheap talk. When this happens ENFJs can feel very hurt; they felt they were doing their best for the good of the cause, only to be shot down.

While all Feeling types prefer a happy, harmonious work environment, ENFJs have an unusually strong need to lead the workforce to its goals. However, for all their good intentions, they can run afoul of others – particularly other Extraverted-Judgers (EJs), who may also be vying to take charge.

The ENFJ’s gift for being empathetic can be both a blessing and a curse. One downside is a tendency to pick up and carry everyone’s emotional issues and become unnecessarily and unconsciously overburdened as a result. Finding it difficult to set limits and dissociate from everyone’s personal demands on their time, energy, and support can lead ENFJs to become angry and resentful (both at themselves as well as others). Being naturally hypersensitive to tension, they avoid conflict.

ENFJs tend to position themselves as the spokesperson for the core values and ideals of an organization. Often they see their efforts as related to the developmental needs of others and will promote understanding among individuals in a group. Masterful collaborators, they organize and facilitate action by building extensive networks and support for a given goal or mission. They are more concerned with group harmony and group process than with a tactical project plan, so their strength may become a weakness when overplayed in conflict situations. As a result, differences of opinion are not expressed and inefficiency is created because too much effort is spent in interpersonal processes.

### ***ENFJs’ Careers***

ENFJs are drawn to careers that serve others with minimal potential for interpersonal conflict. Work that involves too many administrative details, an abundance of paperwork, or too much time alone will be boring and stressful. They are especially drawn to religious organizations, academia, and psychological services, approaching these careers with enthusiasm and commitment. They are natural teachers and preachers, although they need regular breaks from serving others to avoid burnout.

### **Summary**

ENFJs have the capacity to inspire others. They have been called life’s teachers. They are naturals in teaching, leading, and working with others’ needs – finding the exact words and affirmations to inspire. Their Extraversion focuses their attention on others. Their iNtuition can be inspirational and encouraging, especially when things are going badly. Their Feeling keeps them sensitive to people

and the situation. And their Judging keeps the entire process going so that everyone ends up with a sense of accomplishment. With an ENFJ's support, people can face difficult moments and end up not only reaching a goal, but enjoying the process of getting there.

Based on a seeming instinct of what people need to do to get a job done well, they initiate changes to help people actualize their power in growth-oriented socially acceptable ways. The goal is to help people thrive in their environments and be positively affirmed for their accomplishments. Natural networkers, they have energy that easily connects people to others, to processes, and to procedures that will help further their intent for a glowing personal success.

Adapted from the writing and teaching of Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen.

## **ENFJs On a Team**

### **Naturally Bring to a Team**

- See potential in others; their relationships are about mentoring
- Can be good at drawing out the best in others, providing team members with camaraderie, mutual support, and a commitment to the overall team effort
- Are talented at gaining consensus using collaboration and cooperation
- Are catalysts who energize the team with enthusiasm and humor
- Are tuned in to organizational climate

### **Teamwork Style**

- Facilitate goal accomplishment through cooperation and considering all options
- Use their communication skills, enthusiasm, and warmth to gain cooperation
- Democratic and participative; they seek to mentor people to achieve their potential through coaching, encouragement, and by providing positive feedback
- Encourage and honor diversity to utilize the resources of the team

### **Potential Blind Spots**

- May get lost in relationships and become overburdened with the problems of others
- Might become so involved coaching and assisting others that other tasks take a back seat
- Tend to work in bursts of energy that may not coincide with the needs of the team
- May have a hard time separating from their ideals and being objective

### **To Help Them Succeed**

- Provide an open, harmonious, and sharing environment where they and others can self-disclose
- Give them genuine, positive feedback – they value the approval of others
- Provide opportunities for interaction
- Frame the work in the context of some higher purpose

Adapted from Quick Guide to the 16 Personality Types in Organizations by Sue A. Cooper, Roger R. Pearman, et al.

## **Managing the ENFJ**

### WORK LABEL – MENTOR

- Responsive and responsible
- Popular and sociable
- Charismatic charm
- Natural communicator
- Warmly enthusiastic

#### STRENGTHS

- Dependable
- Persuasive
- Cooperative
- Conceptual
- Considerate

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

- Take time for yourself
- Take care of routine details
- Seek out an objective viewpoint
- Set priorities and stick to them
- Be open-minded and listen

**TO FUNCTION BEST**      Opportunities to lead people, especially through face-to-face interaction. Harmony, support for ideas. Recognition, appreciation, and a cause or leader to work for.

**ENFJs NEED:**

**ENFJs ARE FRUSTRATED BY:** Cold, impersonal logic. Overly task-oriented jobs. Being left out of things, especially people-oriented issues. A lack of feedback. Criticism and a lack of appreciation.

**ENFJs IRRITATE OTHERS BY:** Becoming overly emotional, moralistic, and unrealistic. Being too anxious to please. Wanting to know everything and everyone.

**ENFJs VALUE:** Cooperation, harmony, and self-determination.

**ON A TEAM:** They are enthusiastic communicators.