

ENFJ– Typewatching Profile

Smooth-talking Persuader

The ENFJ may best be described as a smooth-talking persuader. The ENFJ's combination of preferences makes this type a natural when it comes to motivating people—even motivating them to do something they may not initially have wanted to do.

Their focus and direction is toward other people (Extraversion), and they are highly skilled in understanding others' needs and motivations (Feeling). These tendencies, along with their gift for imagination and inspiration (iNtuition), are expressed in an organized, effective way that allows them to make their imaginative ventures become reality. Hence, the ENFJ is a highly credible leader who attracts many followers.

The ENFJ has the capacity to size up a situation iNtuitively and, in a very caring and concerned way, say just the right thing. This is part of why people are drawn to ENFJs, and why ENFJs are such natural leaders. They are seldom at a loss to iNtuit just what the group needs or how to help it reach its goal.

Because of these group-leadership abilities, ENFJs, more than other Feeling types, often rise to the top of a cross section of organizations. They are, indeed, natural and often well-liked leaders. The ENFJ sees 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 human needs. ENFJs have a zeal for imposing “what’s good for humanity” upon humanity—and, fortunately, more often than not, humanity is better off as a result.

Paradoxically, one of their biggest difficulties derives from one of their greatest strengths. While very accomplished at working with other people and groups, ENFJs can become depressed, wounded, even bitter, if their ideas meet with resistance. They take conflict or rejection very personally, and often carry a grudge against the individuals or groups involved. Disagreements tend to escalate into win-lose issues and become personalized, with loyalties sharply marked, even when the other side had only intended to raise some valid questions. Such behavior by ENFJs in influential positions has divided families, organizations, and systems.

The female ENFJ has an advantage because many of the nurturing, caring qualities associated with this type are considered feminine. However, when an ENFJ female assumes leadership beyond the family and moves, quite naturally, to larger systems, she may have trouble. The system, and especially its male members, may resent her. Suddenly all those qualities for which she was rewarded at home, in college, or in other organizational ranks, now become the basis for scorn because she has “overstepped her bounds” as a woman. She is not doing anything differently from what she has done successfully in the past; the end result, however, can be conflict.

ENFJs are such effective leaders that the male is often seen as a “man among men”. Both men and women look to the male ENFJ for leadership and decisiveness in a supportive climate—and rarely are they disappointed. This notwithstanding, all ENFJs, including males, are often criticized as insincere or superficial because of their smooth and glib way with words. ENFJs may respond to such criticism with incredulity, often followed by depression and self-doubt, because their sincerity and concern are their driving force and motivation.

Excerpted from *Type Talk* by Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen

Relating to an ENFJ is usually fairly easy. As a rule, an ENFJ wants a happy and affirming relationship because that is how everyone works best. Highly articulate, with excellent social skills and a quick sense of humor, ENFJs are often the life of the party. If it is a party of two, the ENFJ will still work just as hard at making the occasion a lively and memorable one. Unfortunately, as with most Extraverts, if an ENFJ works too hard at it, all the other person is likely to remember is how much talking the ENFJ did and how little listening.

Parenting, for the ENFJ, is a responsibility and a pleasure. There are young lives just waiting to be molded by the ENFJ's value system. Unlike most other types, especially Perceivers, 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 how he or she is expected to behave. When behavior is appropriate, affirmation abounds. Negative behavior, however, often makes an ENFJ parent feel like a failure, which in turn can give the child who picks up on these feelings a sense of guilt about failing to please mother or father.

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 a good measure of work. Peaceful and joyful living is certainly a goal—and an expectation. However, achieving that goal generally requires either following the ENFJ's good intentions or letting the ENFJ show you “the error of your ways” and redirect you toward “real joy”—whatever the ENFJ deems that to be.

As a general rule, people are central and important to ENFJs. This means that if people's needs end up in conflict with rules and schedules, the ENFJ will generally put people first—though not without a sense of martyrdom or possibly guilt.

ENFJ children's verbal skills develop early and stay with them. They are often advised to become public speakers, preachers, or announcers “when you grow up.” ENFJ children are pleasers, wanting strokes from adults. They are also hero-worshippers, often imitating those they idolize, whether it be a parent, sibling, teacher, or anyone else who has had a dramatic influence on them. Since imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, it is not surprising that ENFJ children are often teachers' pets and parents' favorites.

Learning, for ENFJs, is also by imitation. They seek to learn by emulating their heroes, and how *they* learn. In fact, somewhat like ENFPs, so strong is their desire to please and be stroked that ENFJs can end up in careers far removed from their natural abilities if they can think that will endear them to the heroes they are emulating.

Family events are fun for an ENFJ. Almost without being asked, the ENFJ child or adult will assume a responsibility for making events entertaining, harmonious, and enriching for all. The ENFJ is usually tuned in to the family event, ready to provide games, entertainment, wit, wisdom, or whatever else may be needed. Generally, family members appreciate this dimension of the ENFJ, and, of course, the ENFJ then feels affirmed and fulfilled. Clearly, any opportunity to be with others, to entertain, serve, involve others and 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 the ENFJ needs to move among and be engaged by people. Even a negative stroke from another person is better than being ignored.

ENFJs are drawn to careers that serve others with minimal potential for interpersonal conflict. Work that involves

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too many specific details, an abundance of paperwork, or too much time alone will be boring if not stressful to ENFJs. They are especially drawn to religious organizations, academia, and psychological services and approach these careers with enthusiasm and commitment. They are natural teachers and preachers, although they can become frustrated with the accompanying administrative demands, ending up somewhat disillusioned.

Senior citizenship may bring some Introversion and objectivity to the ENFJ, and with reflection may come the insight that the world is not going to be saved by anything the ENFJ can do, that life is going to continue—and probably quite well—without the ENFJ. Unless there is some respite from service to others, the ENFJ can suffer burnout. If that is avoided, the natural growth cycle can afford the ENFJ the chance to stop, “smell the daisies”—and quit trying to save the entire world. As a result, retirement, though perhaps still characterized by the service ethos, can also allow more focus on personal needs and a more relaxed, less compulsive way of life.

Famous likely ENFJs include Ronald Reagan (who was socially gregarious—ENFJs are naturally “great communicators”—and whose emotional stance on issues translated into rigid, not very negotiable positions); Jerry Falwell (who believed all would be well if people followed his moral preachings, and whose visions indeed garnered a great following); and Martin Luther King, Jr. (whose highly idealistic dreams and charismatic leadership created a fiercely loyal following).

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