

ESFJ– Typewatching Profile

Hosts and Hostesses of the World

The Extraverted-Sensing-Feeling-Judgers' four preferences equip them to be gracious and effective in dealing with others. They use their subjective Feeling decisions to bring harmony and goodwill to almost any situation in which they find themselves, at the same time imposing order and structure on any situation—gently, yet firmly. They are exceptionally in tune with specific individual needs and especially sensitive to the nuances that make for happy and wholesome lives.

As a type, ESFJs probably personify “motherhood.” Their gentle, caring nature, in its Extraverted way, takes them beyond their own needs to serve the world around them. As a result, they are the hosts and hostesses of the world. ESFJ males, who have less need to be “in charge” than to be concerned with others’ needs, may as a result be torn between expressing the more conventionally masculine parts of their personalities and giving in to opposing tendencies. The male’s Sensing-Judging temperament, sometimes described as “stabilizer-traditionalist,” demands macho, objectively cool, yet aggressive behavior, while the Extraverted-Feeling preference combination demands a warm or more caring and gentler role.

If the ESFJ male is something of a fish out of water, the ESFJ female, in contrast, often represents the epitome of femininity. She always wears the right clothes, says the right words, and behaves the right way. ESFJ girls are perfect children who never get dirty, and even as adults, never seem to get mussed. There’s something about an ESFJ—especially the female—that just reeks of appropriateness in all aspects of life.

Don’t think that ESFJs have found perfection, however. As EJs, for example, they are given to quick, abrasive comments whenever their routines are interrupted. As SFs, however, they are critical of their own EJ behavior and compensate for their abrasiveness with extra sweetness. To paraphrase Isabel Briggs Myers, they have many “shoulds” and “should nots,” and they express them freely. They may especially overlook facts when they find a situation disagreeable or a criticism hurtful. As a result, they may sweep problems under the rug rather than seek solutions.

The ESFJ’s home is the center of his or her universe: it is the focus of family life, the place for entertainment, the bastion against the harshness of the outside world, the ultimate womb for all family members. The ESFJ’s home is generally neat and orderly, however much activity takes place there. It isn’t advisable to tell an ESFJ to relax as long as there are unmade beds or messy kitchens. Relaxation for the ESFJ comes both from doing such chores and from knowing that they are done. (As an EJ, they may complain about the mess and about how much work must be done, but they nevertheless are happiest in serving others in this way.) Like all Js, ESFJs schedule their relaxation, whether it be reading a book or being with friends.

As a rule, home can be a place of fun, happiness, and affirmation for the ESFJ. These things must take place on schedule, however, and in an “appropriate” manner. Parties, for example, are great, but only when sufficiently planned; “spontaneous fun” is a contradiction in terms. “Appropriateness” extends to dress, decor, and behavior. ESFJs mete out assignments to family members and expect them to be done correctly and in timely fashion. They readily impose behavioral “shoulds” on other family members, and when disappointed in their expectations of others they become either hurt or upset.

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

This need for appropriateness also drives ESFJs' parenting style. The child of an ESFJ parent probably feels loved and generally satisfied, albeit somewhat restricted by the "shoulds" and "oughts," coupled with the constant need to put work (homework, housework, etc.) before play. ESFJs are generally very patient with children, although even patience can be subject to other demands and responsibilities. An ESFJ parent is likely to be looked upon as being somewhat strict, but still very loving and caring.

The same, in fact, may be said of ESFJs in relationships. They are very loyal, almost to a fault, often sacrificing their own needs in favor of the mates'. This, combined with their drive for harmony, often puts their personal welfare low on the list of priorities and can result in their feeling more like hired help than lovers or mates. The paradox is that while it is difficult for them to acknowledge their own needs, they may resent those who take them for granted.

ESFJ children bring the same graciousness, caring, and punctuality to their young lives. They tend to be neat and easy to be around. At school, ESFJs like teachers who stick to a lesson plan and generally "follow the rules." They respond well in such situations with good work habits and punctually completed assignments. In one study, ESFJs were rated by teachers and school psychologists as the ideal type to have in the classroom. Many of the qualities desired by teachers come naturally to ESFJs: they are helpful, cooperative, and eager to please.

They are like that at home too. But difficulties may arise with ESFJs, as with all Js, if some of the demands placed on them conflict with strong inner needs. Bedtime, for example, can be difficult for the gregarious Extraverted child, whose social needs may conflict with the night's hour and parents' demands. Still, ESFJ children think "parents should be parents" and appreciate rules and regulations imposed by those in authority. Like their SJ adult counterparts, they may protest such authority, at the same time respecting and expecting it. Role clarity is important.

ESFJs' careers often lean toward those that serve humanity: nursing, public school teaching, clergy, and psychology. Sales and other public service-oriented jobs also have particular appeal. More impersonal tasks (related to computers, for example, or bookkeeping) and jobs that demand theory and speculation (such as college teaching, consulting, and especially investment brokering) can be particularly stressful to an ESFJ.

In their later years, ESFJs may mellow somewhat, but they still are guided by the same values that shaped their earlier years. After a life devoted to meeting the needs of those around them, they may turn their attention to more abstract, universal concerns. Even in retirement, however, they tend to be driven by "shoulds" (and, perhaps, a few "shouldn'ts"), though the "shoulds" may be of a more leisurely kind, with perhaps less emphasis on service ideals—for example, learning a language, tending to neglected hobbies, or meeting some self-directed needs. In general, home, children, and grandchildren play central roles; they prefer to have family nearby and accessible, and may also enjoy the occasional unexpected visitor. For them, the ultimate symbol of security may be the continually replenished woodpile for the fireplace around which the family gathers.

Some famous ESFJs could include Dwight Eisenhower (although he was never seen as a brilliant military strategist, he could do no wrong. *Life* magazine called him "the most popular man in the world" in the 1950s; indeed, his highly successful campaign theme was "I like Ike"); and Felix Unger of *The Odd Couple* (who raged at his sloppy roommate but was constantly there to take care of him).

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