

INFJ / ENFP

The Protector and the Inspirer

An Introverted/Extraverted Relationship

The level of both harmony and conflict within Introverted/Extraverted relationships can vary considerably, depending on how strongly expressed the introverted and extraverted tendencies are for these types. With very moderate expressions only the general attitudes, desires and interests of the parties involved are likely to be factors of importance affecting the relationship, and these will depend more upon the specific functions of the personalities and less upon their introverted or extraverted expression. In other cases however, particularly where both parties have a strongly expressed dominant focus, the impact of Introversion vs Extraversion becomes an important factor affecting all the functional dynamics of the relationship. For this reason general statements about the functional give and take within such relationships are of little value where individual differences play such an important part. We have tried to take this into account in the following, but it is worth recognizing that in some instances what might appear as a conflict in one relationship can be a source of harmony in another.

INFJ/ENFP Relationship Dynamics

In this relationship there are strong potentials for both development and for disaster. Just how, where and which of these potentials will be realized will depend not only on the self awareness of the two people involved, but also upon their work, environment and personal interests.

Both people here focus on a wide view of the world; the ENFP upon how they can impact upon this world and the INFJ upon how this world impacts upon them. The attitudes here are very different in perspective but may be aligned quite strongly within a particular creative area or vision. Provided there is freedom in the relationship for each to express these different perspectives there is little likelihood of strong function conflict; the main area of danger being the shadow side; the dark and earthy area of sensation, where the gritty details of everyday human existence and hard physical reality can serve up significant obstacles if ignored or dealt with in simplistic or naïve manner.

One problem that can arise in this area stems from the INFJ tendency to support others, which can lead them to try and take care of all the details their partner leaves unattended. This can lead to bad situations; not only for the INFJ who does not naturally work this way, but also for the relationship where each begins to blame the other for creating a problem that ought to have been dealt with in a different way from the start.

One area where the differing attitudes of the strong functions might create difficulties is in life partnerships where the outgoing needs of the ENFP can conflict with the somewhat hermetic needs of the INFJ. These different requirements can be very hard to balance without a strong commitment to allowing each other the space and time in which to satisfy these needs, particularly in those areas of life where there is little or no shared interest in an individual pursuit. Where shared interests exist, there can be a wide area of overlapping commitment in which each partner will not only confirm and support the other's choices, but also where each will tie up the loose ends the other finds hard to deal with.

Some conflict might occur in the work/living space environment between these two, as the ENFP penchant for trying the new and different and their constant search for the next best thing can disturb the INFJ, whose outer needs usually demand a settled, organized and unobtrusive atmosphere. Once again a trade-off of times and spaces here will be the answer, where each can organize their own space and time without having to meet the needs or expectations of the other within it.

This kind of "separation of powers" can be effective in workplace and creative relationships where the two can then come together on a project with ideas focused from each point of view, or upon specific parts of the creative process.

When emotionally connected, these two might run into some problems dealing with each others needs; the ENFP perhaps finding it hard to gain the responses they need while the INFJ might feel their intentions or emotions are not always being understood. Strong dominance in either of these personality types leads to intensity; both in behavior and expectations, and romantic relationships between two such people will reflect this intensity, both in their times of passion and their depths of despair.

One important factor for ongoing relationship here will be for a similarity of interests between the partners. Without this it will be difficult for them to not become engrossed in separate pursuits of their own and pay less attention to the ways in which they might enhance their life together.

Some commitment by each to understanding and reflecting upon the way their partner sees the world will be necessary, before either can truly recognize the strengths of the processes driving them to be the way they are.

Dominant intuition can be both a blessing and a curse, and the difference between its expression via extroversion and introversion can be extreme. Where supported by feeling in the extraverted ENFP, intuition drives a person into the world in a search for life enhancing qualities and meaning. In those of a cultural and artistic bent, this can lead to those creative schemes which bring new forms, structures or societies into existence, whilst in those who are gripped by the otherness of life, this search can present as the long trek to discover the and give voice to the spiritual nature of mankind; to discover its connection to and within all things.

For the introverted INFJ, this search lies within, via a constant and dedicated relationship to the truths they discover within themselves. Through this their outer life will reflect not only the strengths they gain but also the uncertainties inherent in this search. Their drives will be toward creating a world in which they and others can be comfortable, secure and supported; their own awareness of both the light and dark side of our inner nature drives them to want others to understand and share this awareness. An INFJ might be found anywhere, but whatever they take upon themselves as a career, it will be a conduit through which they will express their inner understandings.

Both types here need to express the energy and imagery within their intuitive perceptions - particularly as they relate to the quality and meaning of life - in the broadest way possible. When unable to do so the ENFP can become a closed down and unhappy person, manipulating their cramped environment in ways which suit only themselves, often attributing disproportionate meaning to the smallest or most mundane of happenings, whilst the INFJ can become withdrawn, secretive and compensate any negative feelings they have about themselves or their situation through self gratifying behaviors which take little account of the world around them.

In a close relationship, where either of the partner's abilities to satisfy their needs are curtailed by the other's behavior or simply by current circumstances, the pressure for change in the relationship will be strong and this may lead to poor decisions, arguments or mutually opposed behavior.

Making it Work

There is tough work here if any ongoing or long term commitment to each other is going to be realized at its best. The natural tendencies or “ways” of these two are so opposed in terms of real life behavior and expectations that small tensions can arise simply through being together.

The INFJ can become frustrated by the ENFP constantly looking out into the world for something the INFJ believes can only come from within, while the ENFP can be frustrated by the INFJ inability to “see” the value or meaning in the things the ENFP sees and does.

The INFJ tendency to assess or judge inherent meanings according to a scale of their own can be a problem to many types, but to the ENFP it can be felt as a form of constraint, as they do not enjoy having their appreciations “structured” or organized by a formal process of judgment.

On the other hand the INFJ will have a hard time maintaining the energy of their focus within the ENFP world. Too much information, too many possibilities, too many ideas, plans or changes of scene and they need to stop, to go into themselves and assess, to place into context the things they have experienced. Trying to do this “on the fly” can leave the INFJ drained and unable to cope with further input.

The best plan here for people truly committed to each other will be to organize life along lines of interest and intensity of value. There will be no escape from the need to allow each other time and space to “do their own thing” without pressure and without judgments about the value of the way each uses their personal time. By understanding each other’s interests and needs, it is then possible to “come together” in those areas where there is a common focus and potential for each to input value or gain value from a co-operative situation.

Difficulty will arise if these common interests are in small matters only. To make things work for the best over the long term these two need a strongly focused life interest which takes them into the world together and provides considerable meaning for their lives. Home, family and related social interests are simply not going to suffice here.

In the workplace these two people will find it much easier to make a workable and creative relationship. Apart from the “separation of powers” mentioned above, there will be little need for anything but for each to add their own skills and ideas to a project or process. Where partnered in a close working situation

it will be necessary for both to make themselves aware of the relevant technical, logistical and practical aspects of the work they undertake and make certain that those who handle such aspects are consulted at every turn. As working partners, these two make a great “ideas” or project management team, but they will bog down quickly if expected to undertake the completion process, particularly if it involves “dumbing down” to repetitive, detail specific processes.

Should these two wish to become business partners in a new venture, they should be very careful to look at the non creative, technical and mundane aspects of any pursuit before going into it. It will be this side from which disaster will strike if these aspects are not fully recognized and their essential requirement to the whole process not clearly understood.

The importance of strong social support for this partnership cannot be overstated. Both partners here need firm mutual relationships with friends and co-workers and to live in an environment where they are open to a wide area of social contact. Living or working together in a situation where they are thrown back upon each other in a co-dependant relationship will only exacerbate the difficulties which arise from opposing need demands in a situation that cannot provide for both at once. Under such “worst case” circumstances it is not unusual for people to end up living separate lives under one roof.

ENFP Suggestions

- There is no question that you need to remain true to what drives you, to follow through into the things you need to do. Just remember that your partner may not see the values you find in things, or may not understand how you find them. Try always to relate your feelings to them through their effect upon yourself. Give them a clear picture of the way you see yourself in the world and how it affects you.
- Your partner has very different needs to you and cannot maintain your pace in the outer world. They do however maintain a strong inner connection to everything around them. They can be your rock, where you can find answers to things you have missed or advice you need to overcome difficulty. Don't make the mistake of believing you have left them behind or that they are not interested in keeping pace with you. They are, but they do it from a quiet distance. It is all there, you just have to slow down and listen. At such times you too will find your own thoughts coming more solidly together.

- Your partner has very definite ideas about what is right for them and what is not. Sometimes it seems you have met an invisible wall with them on some point, where, no matter how you push they seem to slide about but cannot be made to move further. They are kind and careful in their speech, but they won't give in. Consider these moments carefully, as they mean you need to look very closely at the path ahead of you, for they can see trouble where you only see possibility.
- Your partner needs their quiet space as much as you need the freedom to explore what interests you. In their own quiet way they are doing the very same thing, they just need less of the world in which to do so. They too are searching for meaning and value and how they can offer this to the world – to you. Try not to make demands upon the personal time and space they need to refresh themselves.
- You prefer not to deal with the details, the small adjustments, and the boring or repetitive tasks necessary to make things work smoothly. In many ways, neither does your partner. So try and organize how these things will be done between you with the minimum of intrusion and fuss. Do not expect your partner to pick up the details you can't deal with, for they too prefer such things to be organized without having to trouble too deeply with them. Find ways to make things work smoothly: get help, get organized and keep such difficulty to a minimum.
- Familiar paths and places can become tiresome for you. Be careful not to allow this feeling to apply to your partner simply because you have not taken the time to look inside them, to see the wide world of their inner self. If you take the time to sit down with them and explore, you may discover they are not so familiar after all; that the world they inhabit is just as surprising and full of meaning as your own.

INFJ Suggestions

- Judgments based upon the meanings you find in things will not apply very well to your partner. What enlivens them is different, even though they seem to want the same things you do. They just have a different way of finding them. So try to pave the way if you can, rather than doubting that the outcome will be realized. In yourself, you know how things can work out if there is not enough drive or follow through. You can be part of the answer or part of the problem, simply by the choices you make. Things are always hardest for your partner when the goal is almost in reach – this is the time they need you the most.
- One thing you need to understand is that your inner world is just another part of the outside, a part of the external reality your partner lives in. The

amount of it you show to them will directly affect their regard for you and the choices they make with you in mind. What you keep to yourself is not some secret kept from them, but a non-existent other that they neither see nor recognize for its lack in their world. Hard as it might be, you need to provide them with a map, with a complete set of images and ideas about what lies within you. Only in this way can they include the things which are important in your life as factors to be taken into account in their own world of awareness.

- Your partner has a talent for pulling things together in the outside world, or pulling things out of it in ways you had not considered would be valid or perhaps even possible. Your attitude to this process, which often seems to you as a haphazard or unfocused scanning of what might be, will make all the difference, both to how useful it might be to your own life and how effectively you relate to your partner's goals. Remember the stone that the builders rejected? Your partner's gift is to bring such things to your attention. You just need to be prepared to look.
- Don't expect your partner to sit quietly by while you silently go about your business, nor expect them to be constantly absorbed in your interests. Their needs have to be met through a strong and ongoing relationship with the wider world around them. They will include you and your pursuits in this world only to the degree that you make such things visible and useful to them. Beyond this they have to also be "out there". You can be a large part of their world, but do not expect or try to be all of it.
- It may often seem to you that your partner leaves a lot of stones unturned in their world as they look for the things they need, or even when they are trying to undertake a task where understanding all the factors involved is important. Jumping from stone to stone in intuitive leaps can be a quick way to cross a river, but sometimes it seems the river is you and your partner's feet only lightly touch the places where you rise to meet the world. Try and make these places as broad and supportive as you can.
- Much of what drives you out into the world comes from within and you need to have the time and space for this inner world. Make sure your partner understands this need for your own quiet space. Sometimes new relationships make us feel we can 'mix it up', and that our previously private spaces will no longer be needed. On the contrary, if you do not maintain what comes naturally to yourself, its demands will only become all the stronger over time. This makes only for difficulty if your partner does not understand why you should need something now that you had not seemed to need before.

The Key

Not letting life get bogged down in endless details and mundane tasks is particularly important here. This needs to be an open, outward bound relationship with a lot of spare space for both partners. This partnership is basically a team with one goal in mind, but with two very different players making the passes. Making sure that these passes move between each player is the key to this relationship. Sidestepping the partnership and passing the ball outside the relationship can make the game come apart very quickly. Know and understand each other's moves and make each other the key player in the team. One more thing: make sure the field is large enough to take some chances, to run and make the long passes. Playing in tight, difficult spaces will just cramp your style. If it starts to feel that way, take the game to a bigger field and go for something more.