

ADVOCATE GUIDE TO PERSONAL GROWTH

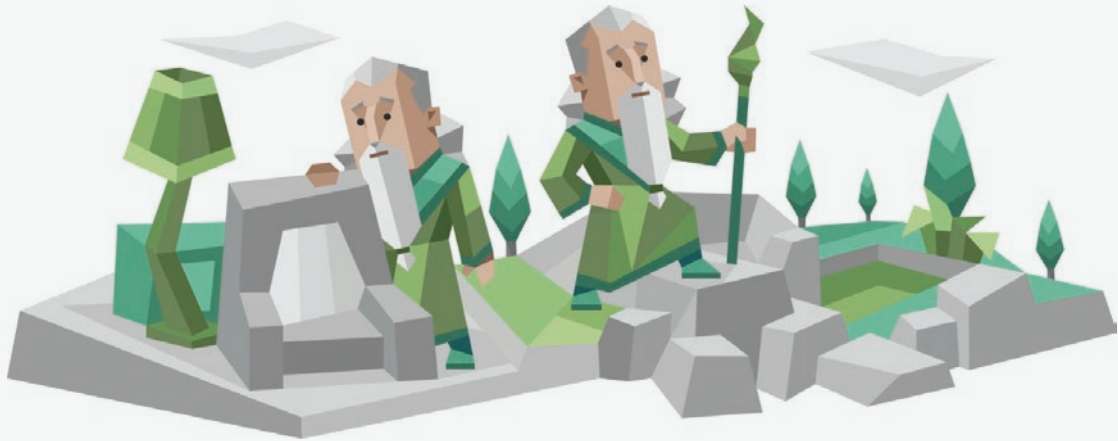
Embrace your unlimited potential while
cultivating deep self-improvement



16Personalities

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Introduction

Why Personal Growth Matters to Advocates

Advocates are known for their idealism and their resolute desire to be a force for good in the world. People with this personality type find it difficult, or even impossible, to ignore the injustices and problems that they observe around them. And they feel called to hone their own strengths, abilities, and gifts – in other words, to work on their personal development – so that they can realize their full potential and be truly effective at helping and uplifting others.

Introspective, big-picture thinkers, Advocates are constantly reflecting on where they are in life. These moments of reflection are how Advocates ensure that they're living in accordance with their values, making progress in the direction of their goals, and devoting their time and attention to the causes that matter most to them. It should come as no surprise, then, that people with this personality type generally hold themselves to high standards.

At times, even the most proactive Advocates will face the nagging sense that they aren't quite where they'd like to be in life – that they aren't developing as a person or making progress on their ideals in the way that they would like. In these situations, personal growth can function as a roadmap that helps Advocates stay true to themselves, appreciate what they've done so far, and recognize what they'd like to do differently in the future.

Finding Their Way

Advocates can seem somewhat reserved on the outside, but beneath their quiet exteriors, they harbor strong principles and convictions that aren't easily shaken. People with this personality type have a clear sense of right versus wrong, fairness versus inequity, and what matters in life versus what doesn't.

This clarity can be an incredible asset to Advocates' personal growth, enabling them to set decisive priorities and train their focus on what's most important. But unless they develop some flexibility as well, Advocates can struggle to translate their grand ideas into reality. They may overreact to criticism or become totally disillusioned if a mentor or role model lets them down. They may also refuse to make compromises, even if that means sacrificing forward progress.

In the pages ahead, we'll discuss how Advocates can harness their many gifts – including their compassion, creativity, and integrity – to grow into the people they most want to be. We'll also cover how Advocates can move past the stumbling blocks, both internal and external, that inevitably arise along the way. Our hope is that these insights will enable Advocates to build the meaningful, impactful lives that they feel called to lead.

Curious about the traits that make up your personality type and the theory behind them? You can learn more [here](#).

Fulfillment and Development

Looking Inward, Searching Outside

Advocates, more than most, invest themselves in the unlimited potential of personal growth, and they focus on developing the internal, seeking deep self-improvement in a way that borders on a spiritual quest. Some Advocates may even proclaim their self-development a spiritual act. This type knows that much of who they are and what they do is fueled by the pursuit of their own inner freedom, peace, and strength. And what they develop within, they express outwardly. When Advocates sense conflict, either with themselves or the world, they're not content to put up with it. They feel compelled to find and carry out solutions that create harmony and to make headway toward creating a better world.

Advocates grow by nurturing their integrity and defining their genuine selves, and they do not journey through life casually. They ultimately seek order in the universe and see themselves as promoters of that order. They may or may not be religious, but regardless of their beliefs, Advocates' growth is likely to be intense in its depth. A code of ethics is typically present in these types' lives, whether transmitted through a mentor or a belief system or cobbled together by the experiences they have had, and it plays a large role in how they assess themselves.

The idealism so integral to Advocate thinking can also burden them with self-doubt. After all, it's difficult to live up to such standards, so when they compare their reality to their ideal, they may find the difference intimidating. By allowing themselves to forgive any human flaws they may discover within, Advocates can help avoid a paralysis of doubt that can prevent their growth. These types live internally – they may need to build confidence, both to grow and to express that growth in more outward and more broadly influential ways.

Finding a Cause

To grasp fulfillment, Advocates need a reason or purpose, and much of how they measure their lives hinges on being true to that purpose. They usually express this *raison d'être* through causes, whether organized and formal or personal and individual. For Advocates, causes are outward manifestations of their beliefs, and alignment between the two is fundamental to their perception of themselves. This alignment also informs and measures their personal development strategies and the

degree to which they consider their actions and attitudes responsible. Almost everything in this e-book hinges on Advocates' purposes and causes because they are essential to growth for this type.

The greatest goal for Advocates involves coming to terms with their true selves. Regardless of what cause Advocates champion, their involvement reflects certain values, and those values are far more important than an isolated concern or situation. Whereas most would deem an isolated war against a tyrannical force necessary, Advocates who happen to be pacifists may cope poorly with the idea of a battle, even if beating a foe means saving lives. Their causes and principles can supplant the most realistic actions at times. This can prove to be a powerful burden to idealistic Advocates who wish to make an impact on the real world.

Advocates who wish to grow must avoid allowing their ideals to become dogma or their dedication to causes to harden into inflexibility. This caring type can become so firmly insistent that they struggle to remember that they were originally motivated by compassion. When passion burns, humility and selflessness can be consumed in the fire. Advocates who wish to grow in a way that serves the world must always keep an eye on where their passion takes them. They must know when to temper their zeal. Fortunately, their need to be genuine and true to themselves usually catches up to them, at which point they realize that pushy fanaticism is not part of their values – their values typically invite others to grow on their own terms.



Components of Personal Growth

In the sections that follow, we talk about what motivates Advocates to grow, strategies that they might follow, and perspectives that they need to aid the process. Advocates find motivation from five closely related but distinct components of their personalities:

- **Self-esteem** speaks to how much Advocates like themselves. If they were sitting across the table from themselves having coffee, would they like that person based on what they've done with their lives?
- **Self-respect** speaks to Advocates' sense of worth. It is measured by the degree of value that they feel they offer to their world or community.

- **Self-confidence** is the energy source that moves Advocates forward in life. When they feel that their actions reflect their genuine natures and are true to their understanding of the world, that sense of honesty fuels their enthusiasm and their certainty. Tying their actions to that which they see as authentic helps them burst forth with positive energy.
- **Self-evolution** is the path that Advocates take to develop themselves and to grow. In an almost circular way, their growth comes from exploring growth both for themselves and others. From an Advocate's perspective, everyone is teeming with potential, and growth comes from tapping into, expanding, and nurturing that potential.
- **Self-responsibility** is Advocates' ability to take credit and responsibility for their decisions and the results of those decisions. When they have a balanced sense of self-responsibility, they can accurately separate what outcomes they are responsible for and what falls on the shoulders of others. In other words, they have a more accurate idea of which things they control and which they don't.

The first three of the five components above – self-esteem, self-respect, and self-confidence – involve more inward self-assessment and awareness. The latter two, self-evolution and self-responsibility, involve outward expressions with an eye toward strategy and Advocates' more active responses to their worlds. A proper balance of all five aspects is both the cause and the result of a successful and fulfilling life. But any one of the aspects going off-kilter can create difficulties.

In the following sections, we first examine components of Advocates' personal growth in their balanced and more developed form. Then we describe the tendencies that emerge if these components become unbalanced. We explore how abandoning healthy and productive motivational strategies, which can happen when Advocates become disconnected from their true selves, can lead to adverse effects. Finally, we discuss what Advocates can do to improve balance, especially when they lose perspective and need to restore an even approach. Explanation, tips, and concrete actions are provided to aid personal growth and development.

Self-Esteem

Advocates who own solid self-esteem are simply people who like themselves. They derive a positive self-view from their compassion and the many ways that it can be shared.

Balanced Self-Esteem

A Sense of Purpose

Advocates need to know that they have connected with other people – but not in a simple social sense. It must be deeper, perhaps even spiritual. This type needs to exercise empathy and creativity to feel as though they have a purpose. Leading with their vision, feelings, and insight, they derive personal pride by starting or joining causes and activities that focus on idealistic concerns. Their causes do not have to be the type read about in newspapers – local, family, office, or community causes will do just as well as national or international movements.

Such causes offer a perfect opportunity for Advocates to build self-esteem by sharing their virtues with others. Advocates who keep their altruism grounded realize their identity through the good that they do. It's a cliché to say that good work is its own reward, but for Advocates, such a statement is likely not mere modesty but the truth of what good works mean to their existence.

Harmony Is Order

Advocates view harmony and order as interrelated qualities. Others may regard order as following the rules or ticking off the right procedures, but Advocates view it as people relating well or effectively with one another. Order and harmony, as filtered through the minds of Advocates, mean that those involved receive respect, fairness, and equal treatment. When they play a part in making that happen, they believe that they have contributed something of value, and this confirms their own self-view.

This doesn't mean that Advocates avoid conflicts. On the contrary, sometimes seeking justice requires a stern stance. But even when they don't agree with others, their broader goals remain – creating equity and bringing accord to their environments. For Advocates, order and

harmony are not simply about everyone feeling good. They are about a vision of what is right and wrong and how applying that vision benefits everyone. Therefore, anger and disputes may well play a small role in the larger harmony that Advocates seek. Aristotle said, "Anyone can get angry, but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for everyone, nor is it easy."

Unbalanced Self-Esteem

Stretched Too Thin

Advocates may overcompensate for low self-esteem by caring too much about the needs of others at the expense of their own. Advocates who feel driven to improve their self-view may find themselves committed to dealing with too many other people's problems, of which there is an endless supply. Self-neglect may be an early warning sign of Advocates with self-esteem that needs attention.

If Advocates work themselves into overdrive to help others, losing sight of their own needs, burnout threatens to become a significant danger. This is especially true when they take on the problems of the people they love most – their family members and friends. In addition, unscrupulous people may try to take advantage of this type when they are in a weakened, excessively kind state.

Caring for others tempered by common sense and self-nurturing is caring that endures and is sustainable. Paradoxically, Advocates who allow the anguish of others to overwhelm them as they try to bolster their own self-esteem soon find that they have no emotional or physical resources left. With burnout, no energy remains for the things that they do to lift their self-view. Advocates must take caution to prudently measure their limits and feed their own needs while simultaneously helping others.

Driven to Conflict

If creating harmony increases self-esteem, disrupting harmony can start a downward spiral of self-loathing. When Advocates take on too much or begin to feel resentful when they believe that others are

taking advantage of them, they engage in behaviors that are counter to their nature. Mental and emotional exhaustion can drive them to reject demands for attention from others. Such behavior is a stark contrast to Advocates' typical generosity, and it serves to further damage their positive sense of self.

When Advocates' personal values aren't reflected or appreciated by those surrounding them, they can suffer from a sense of isolation, even if it's a product of their own imaginations rather than reality. In reaction, they may judge things harshly and may experience resentment – often toward themselves. When Advocates sense that others aren't hearing their voices or respecting them, they may see it as an injustice. They can feel rejected, powerless, or angry, leading to combative behavior. These dark feelings are far from the compassionate emotions that they pride themselves on.

Rebalancing Self-Esteem

Making Time for Self

When it occurs to Advocates that they've stretched themselves too thin, their only choice is to reclaim their energy by attending to their own essential needs. This doesn't mean that they must abandon their altruism, but they can schedule their time and energy to include more robust personal care. When Advocates sense their own value, they naturally find themselves to be worthy of self-care. The act of pursuing restorative rest and recreation is an expression of positive self-esteem. As a bonus, when properly valuing themselves, Advocates create even more of the energy necessary to care for others – creating a positive cycle that ultimately boosts self-appreciation.

Advocates strive to secure equality for all people. It is reasonable, in the name of equality, to assume that they are no less deserving than those they care for – thus, they deserve care themselves. Just as they would encourage others to rest and find joy in their lives, they benefit from encouraging themselves.

A calendar to keep track of the time that they dedicate to their own needs is a simple but powerful tool.

- Make a list of the times that you indulged your personal needs in the past seven days. The list can include activities like exercising, eating right, getting enough sleep, pursuing recreational interests, spending time with family and friends, meditating, getting a massage, and so on. Was it enough? A concrete inventory of your current state of self-care can help you decide your next steps toward restoration.
- Treat self-care, however you define it, as you would any other goal. Writing an appointment on a calendar and not relying simply on memory and good intentions can make the goal real. To succeed, treat your appointments with yourself just as you would work or family obligations.
- Be sure you are fully recharged before giving time and energy to others. Learning to say “no” at times to optional requests can be a vital part of self-care. You have the right, perhaps even the duty, to replenish your vitality and enthusiasm.

“Carve out and claim the time to care for yourself and kindle your own fire,” writes yoga teacher Amy Ippoliti. Advocates kindling their own fires not only care for themselves but also allow others to benefit from their warmth.

Finding Serenity in Self

Advocates want to maintain a compassionate, loving frame of mind. When their behaviors don’t match this intent, they may want to examine their sense of self. If they engage in regular conflicts with others, they can examine their contentious feelings to find out whether they come from principles they’ve established in their lives or something more subjective in the moment. Advocates don’t mind fighting for a cause, and being scrappy while taking a stand may even be an expression of high self-esteem, but if conflict comes from an injured ego, a feeling that they aren’t receiving enough appreciation, or a loss of purpose, some introspective measures may be necessary.

Restoring attitudes and feelings so they are more aligned with Advocates’ natural tendencies begins by renewing a sense of purpose and effectiveness. Part of this involves challenging any faulty notions that may contribute to low esteem.

- Make a list of inaccurate self-talk, listing things that you tell yourself that just aren't true. Everybody does it, so nobody should end up with an empty list. For example:
 - "If I don't live up to my ideals perfectly, I have no right to advocate for them."
 - "If I don't get the proper amount of validation from others, it indicates that I am not worthy."
 - "How can I take care of myself when others need my time and energy?"
 - "It's not perfect, so it's useless to try."
- Once the list is made, answer the negative ideas. In your responses, create new self-talk.
 - "I don't have to perfectly represent an ideal to profess it or advocate for it. Every messenger is an imperfect messenger."
 - "The validation of others is subjective. Their opinions alone say nothing about my worth."
 - "I have to take care of myself if I want to help others. And I am worth the effort."
 - "Perfectionism is a trap that leads to paralysis. It's better to attempt something imperfectly than it is to do nothing for fear my efforts won't be perfect."
- Once you have cleared out the clutter of damaging self-talk, further restore your sense of purpose by engaging in meaningful work.
 - Call a friend or relative with whom you have lost contact.
 - Volunteer at a food bank or other community resource for a day.
 - Take it upon yourself to pick up trash at a community park.
 - Offer to babysit for a harried new mother in the neighborhood or cut the lawn of some elderly people in the area.

Contributing to a harmony in their communities while remaining in charge of their own schedules and intentions is an outstanding way for Advocates to regain their positive self-regard.

Self-Respect

Self-respect is an individual's sense of self-worth. When self-respect is strong, Advocates enjoy looking in their mental mirrors because they like the reflection that comes from their self-assessments.

Balanced Self-Respect

Standing Tall

Advocates respect themselves most when they stand against injustice and cruelty. They must view themselves as a caring force on the planet. For some, self-respect can come from living a life that is a chain of good deeds, but Advocates need a larger sense of their contributions. Whether consciously or subconsciously, this usually translates into some form of a mission.

The size of the mission is not important, but the mission must answer some higher principle. The work may involve something as simple as dealing with a single child's self-esteem or as large-scale and complex as world hunger. Whether it's personal or global, Advocates respect themselves when their actions align with their greater virtues.

Unbalanced Self-Respect

Frustration with Flaws

Advocates are prone to relentless perfectionism – unless they remain aware of that tendency and counter it. If they surrender to the siren call of “perfect,” they may become critical of themselves and others. When their exacting tendencies take over and create unrealistically high expectations, stressful frustration and disappointment can build emotional pressure.

Advocates can be idealistic and too demanding on not only themselves but also the people who are important in their lives. Although they can be visionaries and inspiring leaders, their sense of justice and their principles don't always survive contact with reality. It's crucial for Advocates to recognize that the world isn't ideal. However, their self-respect hinges on their ability to “make a difference,” so they may struggle with feeling inadequate when they fail to live up their own expectations.

In response to disappointment and frustration over the flaws that they see in themselves and in their world, they may flee on some level and isolate themselves. This goes beyond their usually healthy wish to be alone for introspection or to recharge. For upset Advocates, interactions with the world may become a painful mirror reflecting actions that they have adapted to fit an imperfect world but which are not a match for their ideals. They may cope by hiding out, but doing so is not aligned with their ideals either. Self-respect suffers further when they tuck themselves away.

Knowing What's Best for Others

Should they lose their sense of self-respect, Advocates may try to boost the characteristics that they like about themselves, sometimes slipping into thinking that they know what is best for other people. They may stop waiting for others to come to them in their hour of need, instead insisting on helping – whether others want it or not. This may be a product of trusting their sophisticated and intuitive empathy too much. Those who hope to like themselves better may begin to believe that they have the best possible answers to their friends', families', and coworkers' problems.

When help becomes too pushy, it may be more annoying than helpful. There is no doubt that Advocates who extend their hands to others do so out of compassion and altruism. However, that doesn't mean they don't find it fulfilling themselves. There is likely some selfishness behind every "selfless" act – whether the promise of heaven or better self-appreciation. There's nothing wrong with that – it's rewarding to be a better person, and everybody wins when someone practices kindness. But when the overshadowing motivation is self-bolstering due to a loss of self-respect, Advocates' help may start to ring hollow.

Rebalancing Self-Respect

Celebrating Failure

Advocates have high expectations for society and themselves. Focusing on the tasks and causes that they haven't managed to carry out and needs that they have yet to meet – both on a personal and a global scale – can

be incredibly demoralizing. Sweeping perfectionism can be a challenging obstacle to a happy life. Advocates can restore self-respect by reframing their expectations. Rather than putting all of their blemishes beneath a microscope, they can instead focus on failure as a gift.

The key is to focus on failure as a lesson rather than a suggestion that they are missing some inherent ability or have taken a wrong path. When something doesn't go right, Advocates can rebalance their thinking by telling themselves, "This hasn't succeeded... yet."

Achieving a standard of perfection is impossible. Advocates can restore their self-respect when they realize this and absolve themselves of any unreasonable guilt. These types don't have to act in perfect alignment with their ideals 100% of the time – it's unlikely anyone can. They can become more comfortable with their flaws by understanding that if they are doing all they can, then they are moving forward.

To begin rebalancing their thinking, Advocates can:

- List five things that have gone right in the past 24 hours. Avoid deep pondering, and simply name the first things that come to mind.
- Pick a recent "failure." Have an imaginary conversation with it. What was the failure trying to teach you? If you could give the fiasco a human personality, what would it tell you?
- Take the sting out of failing. Never danced before? Take a dance class and expect to be terrible at first. Can't draw a straight line? Take a pad and pencil and go somewhere interesting like the woods or city street. Draw what you see. Practice doing things that won't be perfect. Discover that failure is survivable and, in fact, essential to growing.

Learning from mistakes then moving forward without shame is *always* an option, and taking this approach will help Advocates rebalance their self-respect.

Reclaiming Intent

Once Advocates deal with their perfectionism, they may wish to reassess their intentions and motivations. Those trying to restore their

self-respect may wrestle with what they discover. Their essential tactics for growth rarely involve telling people who they should be. Instead, they usually offer support to help others discover their own paths.

Altruism involves being selfless and prioritizing the needs of others. Only when they have veered off course will Advocates disguise their own needs as altruism. Exploring their motives may help them separate their own interests from the interests of those they claim to be helping. Rather than forcing what they believe is best for others, Advocates will like themselves better in the long run if they remember that their basic, natural mission is promoting growth as it uniquely applies to individuals.

The following exercises will help clarify motivations and increase focus on the needs and wants of others.

- Take a piece of paper or open a journal and write the answers to the following questions:
 - “What is my purpose, and how do I fulfill it in daily life?” (There may be many purposes. Choose one.)
 - To ensure specificity, in fewer than five words, answer, “Why do I do it?”
- For the next week, make it a point to ask at least two people a day, “Is there anything I can do for you?” Keep it general and free of any hints of direction. Listen very carefully to hear what they want, and respond to that rather than to any presumptions of what they need.

There is nothing wrong with feeling good about helping others. However, if that becomes the primary focus, it’s easy to lose sight of what is actually helpful. Advocates should learn to separate what is best for others from what they presume is best for others.

Self-Confidence

Advocates’ confidence comes from feeling connected to their true selves. They dislike anything that they regard as phony, and they always strive to be as real as they can. When they are aligned with what they feel is genuine about themselves, they advance with assuredness.

Balanced Self-Confidence

Sharing the Honest Self

Only when Advocates act according to the truths that they know can they move forward with any sense of certainty. Others may trust their physical skills or their rationality to fuel confidence. For Advocates, it's believing they know the right thing to do, and although skills and logic may come into play, they hold secondary roles. Advocates' energy usually comes from certitude of the moral variety. When they know they have aligned themselves with their values and have a sense of being true to what is important to them, their response to life is a confident one.

From moral certitude and a pervasive sense of authenticity emerges passion. There is an intense nature to Advocates' enthusiasm born of deep convictions. When their self-confidence is strong, their actions are less like completing some task or job and more like fulfilling a calling or mission. When something is aligned with Advocates' beliefs, they do not take it lightly, which makes them serious-minded individuals.

Trusting Their Principles

Advocates form an opinion of right or wrong and use that opinion as a measurement to size up behavior – theirs and others. To do any less feels false to Advocates. Integrity, as they understand it, serves as their guiding force. When they sense their own integrity, they move forward confidently. In cyclic fashion, when they act according to their integrity, they gain confidence, and then their confidence encourages them to continue to act with integrity. With Advocates' taste for emotional decision-making, others are likely to benefit from their principles, and they typically stand with the underdog and strive to promote fairness. This leads them to their cause-oriented interests, and the truer they are to those interests, the more likely they are to trust themselves.

This commitment to integrity provides a path for Advocates. As they cling to their standards, their code keeps them organized, and when they are at their best, their standards provide a certain sense of stability. There is no doubt what Advocates stand for in a broad sense. When Advocates align themselves with their values, they not only create a sense of self-confidence for themselves but they also offer a kind of

reliability to those around them, extending their sense of confidence beyond themselves. It may be as simple as others knowing that they will always get an honest response from Advocates or as profound as knowing that Advocates will always extend a helping hand in times of trouble.

Unbalanced Self-Confidence

Honestly Inflexible

Advocates who lose faith in their connection to their true self and suffer a crisis of confidence may overcompensate by pushing their past agendas, perhaps even outdated ones, too hard. In similar fashion, if they feel they can't connect enough with their true self to produce a sense of certainty, they may try to artificially conjure up a facsimile – mimicking boldness and becoming brash. Of course, this is not who they are, so they short-circuit their real confidence, which is fueled by genuineness.

Insecure people are often the loudest voices in the room, and that may apply to Advocates who lose their way. They may become so intent in restoring their confidence that they abandon their characteristic open-mindedness and ignore the wishes and interests of others. Focusing on their own interests, they may become self-absorbed and intolerant of ideas not their own. They may appear far from the thoughtful Introverted types they are at their core.

Confused by Criticism

Advocates identify so closely with their ideals that, when they are criticized, it may be hard for them to separate the evaluation of their performance from a judgment of their principles. Because they find their self-confidence by aligning themselves with their core beliefs, feedback may feel like an attack on what they hold to be true rather than a single act they made. Their serious nature may place more weight on a critique than it may deserve. The waters may become muddied between who the Advocates are, what they believe, and what they do. A critic might address only one of those, but Advocates may not be able to separate the three.

When Advocates feel attacked or sense that a critic wants to undermine their self-confidence, they may raise a wall around themselves. Defensive people either withdraw or fortify their positions rather than consider the value of criticism. Neither is particularly helpful to Advocates' growth – or anyone else for that matter.

Rebalancing Self-Confidence

Restoring Open-Minded Confidence

Confidence is an attitude that allows one to act with a measure of assurance. It comes from within, but people fortify and confirm it by their outward expressions and their successes. This forms a feedback loop, but the cycle usually starts internally for Advocates. They may want to make sure that they don't try to reverse matters by overcontrolling their outer worlds to create a false sense of self-assurance. In fact, such an attempt may be the opposite of real confidence as Advocates experience it. Learning to trust their principles and stick with them – despite the flow of the rest of the world – may be an essential step in restoring confidence. Acting *as if* they are confident can be a strategy for some people, but it doesn't work for Advocates, who rely on their authenticity.

One way to restore self-confidence involves consciously connecting purpose and principles to actions. Advocates can recruit a trusted friend, relative, mentor, or spiritual adviser to go on this journey with them (their inclination toward rigorous idealism may make them too self-critical to catalog how their actions match their principles).

The following steps can help Advocates discover more about the alignment that creates their confidence:

- Assign a subjective number to your confidence level: one being no confidence and 10 being leonine boldness.
- List your ideals, purposes, and intentions in life. Be as comprehensive as you can.
- Next, perhaps with your adviser, connect the things that you do in your life with those ideals. Nothing is too small. Encouraging the

supermarket clerk who is bagging your groceries with a “good job” is not too insignificant, and larger expressions matter as well.

- Go somewhere safe (your work or school, for example), and look for ways to help other individuals. Maybe help them carry boxes or books. Perhaps you can get someone coffee. Find a real time, practical way to show and share your values.
- How would you rate your actions’ alignment with your values and purpose? Where are you doing well? Where might you improve? Does this assessment reflect your level of self-confidence?

Advocates develop and preserve self-confidence by approaching life with a genuine integrity that reflects their values and purpose. Taking an occasional inventory of how their actions match with those will help them nurture their sense of confidence.

Handling Criticism

Advocates who react too severely to criticism may be experiencing a fear of rejection. This fear is present in nearly all of us but especially in Advocates, who see themselves as representations of ideas as much as they are people. They want to tell the world that they’re steady, capable, and compassionate. They embrace these idealized personas, and whenever something arises that knocks down that image, they might panic.

Advocates should remember that criticism of themselves or their ideals is not always personal, nor is it something universal about them. Another person’s critique may have nothing to do with Advocates’ overall identity or values. It might be isolated to a specific action, or it could even be the result of the critic having a bad day. Advocates who look at critiques objectively and take the time to sort out different layers may discover that a criticism was no significant threat at all. With objectivity, they may find that they truly disagree with the criticism and reject it, or they may discover that there is something to be learned from it. Either way, that which gives them stability and confidence remains out of danger.

The following strategy can help Advocates work through any criticism they receive with a measure of objectivity:

- Can I learn something about myself from the criticism or even from my reaction to the criticism? Am I unsure of myself to the point where I can't weather a little criticism from others? If so, how can I restore my sense of being true to myself?
- The next time that criticism arises, consider any and all of the following:
 - Avoid the temptation to defend yourself until you've heard the criticism completely – and perhaps avoid the temptation even then.
 - Paraphrase the criticism for the person providing the feedback so that it's clear that each person is talking about the exact same thing.
 - Ask what the critic would do differently, or request suggestions from them.
 - In a lateral relationship, suggest taking a little time to consider the information.
 - In an unequal relationship, with a superior being the critic, try to learn from the criticism.
 - All things being equal, attempt to do things differently in compliance with the criticism, even if it's just an experiment. The results may be pleasantly surprising.
 - Later, take time to decide whether the criticism has merit or not.

Accepting criticism without measuring it against their core values and what makes sense to them is not going to work for Advocates. Being true to themselves is the only way for them to move confidently forward. Honest evaluation is a necessary step for this type.

Anchoring their actions in their beliefs is the primary way that Advocates develop self-confidence. However, as with anything, there are potential traps, in this case overcompensating with rigidity or defensiveness. Fortunately, as with any trap, there is always a means of escape and various ways to recover. In the end, self-assured Advocates tap into their inner convictions and create positive momentum by aligning their achievements with them.

Self-Evolution

Self-evolution is a lifelong trek along a path of positive change. Although the journey can happen naturally, a more active role in personal development is sometimes necessary to discover one's identity and purpose.

Balanced Self-Evolution

Growth as the Purpose of Living

Advocates always seek to grow and learn – and, inevitably, when they are true to their best natures, they face and accept their own limits. They personify the adage, “There is no staying the same. You’re either getting better or you’re getting worse.” Indeed, Advocates define themselves by their journeys in very intimate ways, and their instinct is to strive for improvement and to realize their best selves.

Advocates’ favored path of self-development is likely to be individual. Even if they are part of a self-help group, their learning may be communal, but their implementation is likely to be on their own. They would rather provide support for other people’s growth than receive support from others – they usually are too independent to let others help them in this personal way and will likely resist any attempts at such support. Being true to themselves means being strict about keeping their own counsel first. Nonetheless, to grow and to become actualized, Advocates must interact with people. They are most likely to succeed when they find a workable balance between autonomous introspection and social connection.

Advocates often compartmentalize their development in two ways. One compartment may include lone practices such as meditating, reading, taking long nature walks, listening to motivational or spiritual teachers, or just sitting around and pondering the nature of the universe. The other includes communal efforts such as employment, deep relationships, and social causes. Each contributes in some way to Advocates’ growth, but they remain decidedly separate in their lives. Think of Ancient sages who traditionally retired to the wilderness to discover their calling or to restore their souls only to return to society in a renewed state.

Delving Deeply

Self-evolution goes beyond mere self-improvement and the contents of the self-help shelves in the bookstore. Although Advocates might enjoy thinking about succeeding at business or becoming more popular, they only flirt with such surface considerations. They don't see their development as a technical step-by-step plan that goes from point A to point B. Instead, their central focus is on a dynamic and organic blossoming of self-discovery. Their evolution involves organizing their lives in ways that nurture other people's psychological health and social consciousness – as well as their own. In an almost circular fashion, they develop by developing and helping others develop.

Advocates may not have all the answers, but they have some idea of where life is taking them, and they generally have a vision of what they want their lives to be. There is nothing “quick fix” about their personal development, but they are fine with that because they prefer a life filled with ongoing vitality and enrichment. Advocates see their self-evolution as a lifelong chain of insights.

Unbalanced Self-Evolution

The Drain of Constant Growth

Although genuine growth is a good thing, an excessive focus on growth can lead to pitfalls. Advocates, who define themselves by their development and evolution, are prone to such tunnel vision. If they interpret growth as an unrelenting passion that requires uninterrupted progress, it can be exhausting. This can happen when they find themselves unhappy with their rate of growth, however they measure it.

Satisfaction involves appreciating things as they are. It is an immediate quality not found in imagining a better future. Although dissatisfaction can be motivating, Advocates should balance it with a recognition of fulfillment along the way. Otherwise, happiness may always feel just out of reach. Small steps forward are steps forward, and they should be celebrated.

Restorative periods are essential to growth, and everyone needs times when, at least temporarily, they drop the effort and allow life to occur

in its own way, free of ambitious impulses. Creative thoughts often occur in moments of idle work, like while doing the dishes or raking the yard. Advocates who feel driven to chase their better selves all the time risk missing fresh perspectives and creative solutions.

Personal Obsession

Similarly, Advocates should make sure that their big ideas and deep thoughts don't distract them from the mundane yet important details of their lives. Advocates who feel they're lagging in development may decide to concentrate on their "evolution," to the detriment of whatever they think won't help their growth. The more pedestrian and perhaps easier considerations in life can become unmanageable when Advocates set them aside altogether.

Advocates' grand plans may falter when they fail to consider the smaller facets of a venture, instead focusing only on the expansive "big picture" view. Even great and noble projects can fail when someone forgets to check the legal details, handle administrative tasks, or estimate the workload. Although Advocates generally prefer predictability and order, an exciting vision can overshadow their need for organization. An Advocate trying to defeat poverty can overlook their own finances and go bankrupt, contributing to the very problem that they tried doggedly to solve.

Rebalancing Self-Evolution

Focusing on Today

Advocates can rebalance by attending to self-care. However, simply spending a few days at the beach isn't likely to restore balance if Advocates spend the entire time considering ways to become a better person once they get home. If they aren't being mindful of all the beach is, they are doing the same thing as when they're not at the beach – imagining a better future rather than being satisfied in the moment.

Advocates who reward their own growth with acknowledgment and celebration can strengthen the experiences and rebalance their meaning. The following exercises can help those who spend too much time focusing on the future:

- A day of fives: Set a timer or watch, preferably one that can be randomized, to go off throughout the day. When it does, simply select a nearby object and describe it in five unique single words – avoid phrases and sentences. There is no need to write them down or to preserve the description in any way. It's not about the future. It's about now.
- Learn the name of everyone you talk to in a day. (But only if it's safe to do so – in the supermarket, the school library, or the gym, for example. Not every stranger on the street is to be trusted.)
- Buy a small reward for yourself: an ice cream cone or something silly for your desk. Give it to yourself for being you. Make a fuss over it. It may be a reward, but don't worry about what you did to earn it.

Advocates don't have to worry about becoming slackers when it comes to their self-evolution. Finding ways to grow comes easily to them. However, they may need to work on balancing their lives so that they appreciate where they are as much as they focus on where they are going.

The Details Matter

Personal growth can be somewhat esoteric and, depending on the practice, may not always connect with daily life. Advocates should be aware of the degree to which they narrow their focus on other aspects of their lives to chase their ideal self. After all, enlightened individuals still need to pay the electric bill.

Rebalancing may require developing a new relationship with details. Sometimes the smaller things inform the larger things and bring a sense of satisfaction. In Zen practice, the details of flower arranging, tea ceremonies, or even archery open the door to profound experiences and understanding. Even if Zen is not their preferred path, Advocates can learn many things by appreciating the finer points. The following exercises may help:

- Construct three sets of rituals: one set for when you get up in the morning; one set for the end of the work day, school day, or other regular midday milestone; and a final set for bedtime. For each set,

include at least three activities but no more than six. They should be small to medium tasks that should be done every day, such as making the bed, showering, or brushing your teeth. Avoid anything that can't be done in a fairly short amount of time. Try to do them in order every day for the next week – and beyond if it helps. Try to be as mindful as possible during your rituals.

- Make an ongoing appointment once a week to assess your financial situation and to pay bills. Make it a habit by doing it at the same time every week.
- Find the messiest corner in the place you live and declutter. Pay special attention to where you put the items you remove from the offending spot and why you decided to do so.

Self-Responsibility

Self-responsibility sounds simple, but it can be difficult for many to achieve. Advocates who grasp a sense of self-responsibility decide matters for themselves, act independently, and follow interests without being excessively reliant on the opinions or permission of others.

Balanced Self-Responsibility

Morally Independent

Responsibility is a combination of action and attribution for that action. Advocates who practice self-responsibility act after exploring their values, which they use to achieve their goals. Attribution means they take full credit or blame for the results of their actions. Scapegoating isn't part of the equation for Advocates who have a strong sense of their personal accountability.

This personality type is likely to prefer a "moral" course of action over one that is "not moral." That preference doesn't mean that they can't navigate moral gray areas or ambiguities – Advocates explore ambiguities seriously before acting or deciding the merits of a result. For them, a moral decision isn't always easy, but it does have to be made. Advocates are successfully self-responsible when they check their decisions against their own ethical standards – both before and

after taking action. Their moral framework is highly individualized, and it doesn't necessarily have to align with what society judges as moral.

Prioritizing Personal Growth

Self-responsibility drives Advocates to thrive. It demands that they set priorities for big and small ideas so that they can live according to the values they embrace. It speaks to the sources of their self-esteem, self-respect, and self-confidence, and it is fundamental to their self-evolution.

When Advocates balance responsibilities, they set priorities around the people in their lives, their own care and upkeep, and their causes, whether a job they identify strongly with, a community program, or a political or social movement. Priorities are important, and self-responsible Advocates take them seriously. They are likely to link their personal growth to meeting their responsibilities as they define them and being accountable for the things they do.

Unbalanced Self-Responsibility

Helplessness and Stagnation

Advocates who don't have a strong grasp on their responsibilities may eventually give up trying to attend to them. Learned helplessness thwarts a person's sense of control over their lives or their efforts, and it occurs after repeated frustrations and a sense that they will never gain traction no matter what they do. Soon people in this dilemma ask some variation of "Why bother?" This lack of an internal locus of control, or the belief that they can influence results in their lives, limits personal growth. Because Advocates are so idealistic, their basic humanity can seem like a flaw. "Not performing perfectly" often translates to "failure" for Advocates who lack the proper perspective, leading to a loss of hope.

This false sense of helplessness may lead Advocates to try to find satisfaction through damaging behaviors – overindulging or letting their goals and ambitions slip away. When they believe that they have no way to control their lives and that nothing changes when they try, they may see no point in having discipline. For Advocates, this is likely to feel more serious than simply letting their duties slip. Because of the

moral overtones of their lives and their serious approach to matters, abdication of responsibility may result in a full-blown existential and moral crisis. They may start to think of themselves as not just helpless people but as *bad* helpless people.

Without intervening success and a sense of progress, Advocates experiencing learned helplessness may continue their destructive habits or, in extreme cases, simply shut down. For example, Advocates who believe that they are, and always will be, treated unfairly may adopt the identity of someone who has been marked as “less than” and lose their sense of power. This can start or continue a vicious cycle of irresponsible behavior.

Imagination Without Purpose

Advocates normally have a powerful focus, but when they are feeling inferior they can find too much comfort in their imaginations, where they feel at home. Thus, they may have trouble keeping their minds focused on tangible projects or plans that reflect their responsible natures. They may allow themselves to remain too long in a creative flow of consciousness and may experience a chain of inspirations. However, more concrete and responsible expressions of their creativity may never come to fruition. During such times, it can be a challenge for them to see a project or task through to the end.

Rebalancing Self-Responsibility

Creating an Internal Locus of Control

Developing a strong internal locus of control can foil a sense of helplessness, whether that helplessness is a result of some real outside suppression or an imagined feeling formed within. Learning to recognize negative self-talk and challenging it are important steps in discovering or maintaining a positive perspective.

To develop their self-responsibility, Advocates must direct their attention with attentiveness and purpose. They should avoid losing themselves to distractions (either internal or external). Self-responsibility means taking responsibility for every part of life, and focus is necessary to ensure that certain details aren't overlooked.

Sometimes attitudes affect behaviors, but behaviors affect attitudes just as often. People should start where they can. If they have a good attitude, that's a natural place to start. If they don't, a powerful approach is to achieve a small success by disproving a helpless attitude. Advocates can begin developing an internal locus of control by dispelling negative self-talk and then picturing what they want from life. Taking small, positive steps toward greater success can chip away at a sense of helplessness. Here are some exercises to consider:

- Build success into your day. Make an appointment to do something each day that demonstrates skill and effectiveness. It doesn't have to be a significant activity – just one that is guaranteed to succeed. Mind the self-talk.
- Mentally place things that come up during the day into one of two columns: "Things I can control" and "Things I can't control." This is about awareness, so there is no need to write them down. Just notice.
- Try something new. Take up a sport or a hobby. Remember that beginners are unlikely to do well in the beginning – and that when starting out, just trying is a success. Notice any self-talk. Be kind and aim to be realistic.

Harnessing Imagination

Advocates, especially when younger, may struggle to balance their desire to make the world better with the runaway tendencies of their imagination. An untamed imagination can become overrun. When intriguing ideas are plentiful, Advocates may have trouble focusing responsibly on just one.

With maturity and conscious decision-making, they can develop the ability to filter out ideas that are exciting but not realistic, achievable, or useful. Advocates can embrace their natural tendency to organize and plan to ensure that there is plenty of opportunity for both focus and inspiration.

At their best, Advocates are incredibly perceptive and easily notice patterns and connections that may not be as visible to other people. This allows them to plan and strategize better than many other types.

Still more impressively, Advocates organize systems based on human beings rather than technology or methodology. Such an approach unlocks far-reaching potential, as it taps into other people's talents and ideas in an almost communal fashion. Nurturing the growth of others can keep Advocates' attention as they align their values with their efforts.

Here are a few ways that Advocates can harness their imaginations:

- Take a short time each day to allow daydreams to flow freely. Make an appointment on the calendar for at least 10 minutes a day. Sit in the park or stare out the window. Do nothing but allow a stream of consciousness. Then go back to organized activities. Try it for a week.
- Plan a group event, perhaps a party or a bowling night, that you can realistically pull off. Try to get every member of the group involved. You can put an imaginative, novel spin on it, and make it unique.
- Innovation is not always about discovering something completely new. Sometimes it involves changing an idea that isn't working. Search for an idea in your personal life. How can you change it?

It's hard to be responsible without focus. Advocates need to connect to their values to discover the right motivations and then decisively choose specific actions. When they manage their goals in this way, focus is likely to accompany them throughout their efforts.

Final Words

For Advocates, personal growth is partly about becoming their best selves, but it's about more than that too. People with this personality type want to better the world around them in ways both large and small, and so their personal growth journey is motivated, at least in part, by their desire to contribute to something greater than themselves.

There is no single secret that enables a person to reach their full potential – nor would most Advocates expect there to be. People with this personality type realize that self-development is a multifaceted process, and it will be inextricably woven with their efforts to live out their calling, uphold their principles, and create purpose in their daily lives. This willingness to put in sustained effort rather than seek out a “quick fix” will serve Advocates well at every step of their path to personal growth.

At some stage, every Advocate must face the realization that perfection isn't always possible – but *progress* is. By balancing integrity with flexibility and conviction with open-mindedness, Advocates can ensure that they keep moving in the direction of their dreams and ideals, even if doing so requires patience, compromise, or change. There will inevitably be stumbles along the way, but Advocates have more than enough resilience and creativity to recognize and take full advantage of opportunities for learning and growth. As a result, the progress and contributions that they make over the course of their lifetimes can be nothing short of remarkable.

So... What's Next?

You've reached the end of this guide, dear Advocate, but fear not – we've created many more resources. Here are a few that might be the right next step for you:

- Looking for more tests and insights to help you direct your personal growth journey? Explore our [Personal Growth Specialized Tests](#).
- Ready to enhance your academic or professional life? Check out the [Advocate Guide to Careers](#).
- Ready to deepen your romantic relationships, friendships, or relationships with your children? Our [Advocate Guide to Relationships](#) may be just what you need.



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