

# ADVOCATE

PREMIUM PROFILE



## What's in This Profile?

This profile is designed to cover the main aspects of Advocates' personality as it affects different areas of their life, including Advocates' key strengths and weaknesses, relationships, academic path, career and professional development, as well as their communication and friend-making skills, parenting tips and advice, and much, much more. It combines personality-type theory with practical, real-world advice from other people who share the Advocate personality type.

Personality type has been the focus of many discussions, some of them dating back to ancient times. It's wise to draw from this source of knowledge and experience, especially when unsure of how to handle a specific situation. This kind of knowledge offers the power to control and understand oneself. As Aristotle said millennia ago, "The hardest victory is the victory over self." Consider this profile a plan for success.

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# Who Is “The Advocate”?



Idealistic, loving, and a positive force for good in the world, Advocates are so much more than meets the eye. Throughout this book, we discuss how Advocates' traits manifest themselves into a complete personality type, and we look at how interactions among the traits result in a unique set of behaviors that affect their personal growth, varied relationships, and academic and professional development. The following paragraphs are a brief overview of the personality type, and each subtopic is explored in much greater detail in subsequent chapters.

## *Personal Growth*

Advocates are the rarest personality type, making up about one percent of the population (depending on geographic region). But their rarity shouldn't be mistaken for invisibility. Although their Introverted trait may make them seem calm, reserved, or shy, Advocates are resolute in their beliefs. With passion and focus, these inspired individuals tend to leave their marks on the world.

Although they have a strong sense of idealism and morality, what sets Advocates apart is the accompanying Judging trait. These personalities aren't just idle dreamers;

they are highly capable of planning steps to meet their goals and make a positive impact. They may be cautious, but their inner flame and passion shouldn't be taken lightly. They maintain strong, sometimes single-minded convictions, but they also strive for peaceful harmony. Genuinely affectionate and caring, they express these qualities with a noble sincerity.

Advocates are often quiet, but theirs is the thoughtful silence of an internal debate that must come to a consensus before action is taken. Once caution has been exercised, however, Advocates are decisive, likely to render their judgment on a subject with firm finality (though they are always sensitive to an impassioned appeal). Prudent in their decisions and optimistic in their dealings, Advocates may find themselves at the forefront of any movement they take part in, even if they would otherwise shrink from the spotlight.

If people with this personality type have a common stumbling block in life, it's wrestling with the differences between their grand dreams and reality. While absorbed in their closely held hopes and beliefs, Advocates may not pay much attention to external limits, insisting instead on surpassing their own high expectations. This drive may help them break down the toughest barriers, but it can also easily lead to disappointment when the rest of the world doesn't seem to care as deeply as they do, or even agree with them. Conflict and criticism can be frustrating for Advocates, whose own principled regard for others isn't always met with equal consideration. They very much value respect and harmony, and their optimism about people means they aren't always equipped to deal with those who are insincere, harsh, or opportunistic.

*Friends, Family, and Relationships*

Human connections are of paramount importance to Advocates. They work diligently to ensure their personal ties remain strong – not through coercion or cynical appeals, but through the slow, steady work of bringing hearts and minds together. Although not boldly social, they love meeting like-minded people, and they are extraordinarily kind, generous, and dedicated to their friends. Their devotion may be intense, though, and even though Advocates are rarely domineering in their assertions, other types may find it daunting to be in the company of such unswerving drive. Their lofty convictions may be challenging for some, but those who share Advocates’ principles find that the commonality leads to long friendships and dedicated partnerships, romantic or otherwise.

As much as Advocates draw strength from their inner circle, rarely are they satisfied to let their sphere of influence end there. However, tolerance isn’t an easy virtue: these types sometimes have difficulty reconciling the messy pragmatism of otherwise good people with their own rigid moral code. Learning to compromise, without becoming compromised themselves, is a balancing act for Advocates, torn as they are between their compassion for others and their need to remain faithful to their ideals.

The idealism these types hold dear is reflected in their family life as well. Advocates place their highest hopes for the future of humanity in their children, and they tend to make extremely doting, conscientious parents. When it comes to their extended family of cherished relatives and closest friends, they’re both responsible and caring, and they gently hold all their loved ones to the same high standards they themselves strive for.



*Academic and Professional Development*

Advocates are typically fulfilled by work that improves the lives of others and keeps them connected to people. It should be no surprise, then, that many dedicate themselves to one of the helping professions, whether their requisite paths are going to college, attending grad school, or simply rolling up their sleeves and getting to work. If circumstances delay their dreams of meaningful work, their strong interpersonal skills allow them to flourish in alternate positions until their dreams can be realized. Advocates bring heart to any endeavor, then shape it to fit their values.

Advocates are diligent in any work they do, but they find strict hierarchies and aimless “busy work” unappealing. Whether in the classroom or on the job, those who aren’t regularly presented with meaningful challenges and the freedom to explore them tend to eventually search for environments where they will be. Their dreams of expanding their own minds can’t be held back by convention, no matter how dull their surroundings.

With their thirst for progress and vivid imaginations, they can’t help but turn things over in their minds, taking them far into the future, even to extreme possibilities. Once they feel comfortable that people are interested in what they have to say, they are likely to overcome any shyness or reservations and gladly contribute their thoughtful introspection and creativity. Advocates may become extremely valued in classes or professional teams, appreciated for their fantastic blend of compassion, imagination, and dedication. Although high-minded principles and emotional connections are important to Advocates, so are their own achievements, and their self-drive wonderfully elevates their environments and the people around them.

*On That Note ...*

This introduction has only briefly touched on Advocates’ potential strengths and weaknesses. In the following chapters, we discuss these areas in much greater detail and provide further information, as well as suggestions and resources for improvement. Understanding one’s personality type is incredibly valuable to making personal progress, and we hope that the following information proves both inspiring and useful. But before we dig in too much there, we’ll do a brief overview of our theory. For a full explanation of the theory and its history, skip to the end – [The Puzzle of Personality](#).

# Theory Overview

## Five Personality Aspects

### Introverted (I) vs. Extraverted (E)

People have long noted that some among them are more outgoing and comfortable interacting with their surroundings, and others are more at ease remaining in quiet solitude with their thoughts. You can see the two types in almost any home, office, or classroom. In our first scale, we focus on the difference between Introversion and Extraversion, which we call the Energy scale.

The Energy scale describes how we see and approach the outside world, including people, objects, and activities within it. There are significant links between this scale and things like willingness to volunteer, boredom, thrill seeking, motivation, and romantic assertiveness, to name just a few. The links may not prove one causes the other. However, it does hint at a relationship.

#### *Introverted People: Attuned Inwards*

**More Internal:** Introverts ground themselves more easily in solitude and derive energy from their own thoughts.

**More Selective:** Introverts are careful when choosing the people with whom they spend time and prefer a quieter environment when they have a choice.

**Slow to Offer Opinions:** Within reason, Introverts like a little time to process their thoughts and ideas and are slow to offer opinions, fearing they may be too rash.

### *Extraverted People: Outwardly Engaged*

**More Outgoing:** Extraverts tend to be outgoing both socially and in their willingness to interact with new and interesting environments.

**Energetic:** Extraverts have an energy that is almost replenished by its expression. They are energized by being energetic and putting themselves in stimulating situations.

**Quick with Opinions:** Extraverts are generally more comfortable with a flurry of opinions that typically are a part of casual conversations. It's almost like brainstorming ideas on the spot while saving the editing for later.

### *Advocates: Introverted (I) Trait*

Advocates are Introverted. This is why they enjoy being self-sufficient, prefer working with ideas rather than people, and don't need great numbers of friends. They may even be able to tune out what is happening around them. Socializing depletes Advocates' internal energy reserves quite quickly, and when that happens, they need to return to their home base to recharge.

Again, these are just tendencies and not predestined, unchangeable traits. For instance, Advocates are perfectly capable of honing their social skills and becoming experts in negotiation or small talk. Advocates would develop these skills out of necessity, however, and not due to particular enthusiasm or interest.

## Intuitive (N) vs. Observant (S)

The second scale in our model is called Mind and addresses Intuitive and Observant styles. Each trait determines what kind of information we focus on and how it is used. It's the foundation on which all the other approaches are built.

All personality types include either those who favor the Intuitive style or those who prefer the Observant style. But before we start, it's important to say that this has nothing to do with how they take in information. The word "Observant" might suggest it does. But Intuitive and Observant types use their five senses in the same way. Rather than how they absorb information, these qualities show how each of these traits manages it once it's received.

### *Intuitive People: Living in the World of Ideas*

**Focus on Ideas:** Intuitive people are fascinated by the world of ideas and love to discover the connections between various concepts and realities.

**Deeply Curious:** Within the realm of ideas, Intuitive individuals have a strong curiosity that leads them to somewhat adventurous discoveries.

**Highly Imaginative:** Those who prefer this trait typically stretch concepts to include possibilities beyond the obvious. "What if this not only means... but what if it could also mean..."

### *Observant People: Feet On the Ground*

**A Practical Focus:** Observant people are more in touch with the concrete world and work within it. They favor consistent actions and measurable results.

**Facts Over Theory:** These individuals leave theorizing and brainstorming to others, preferring to effectively apply established facts.

**More in the Moment:** While Observant individuals have a respect for the past and the future, they see them through the lens of what they can do now. The task at hand is always the most important.

### *Advocates: Intuitive (N) Trait*

Advocates are Intuitive individuals. This is why they are so good at seeing possibilities and honoring different points of view. People with this personality type spend more time engaging in various internal discussions than observing things around them. Advocates are not that concerned about what is happening; instead, they focus on what might happen or why something has happened. Advocates hone this focus throughout their lives, which makes them passionate and insightful thinkers.

Of course, every stick has two ends, and focus on novelty and change comes at a cost. By directing their mental resources toward possibilities and the future, Advocates inevitably lose sight of what is happening around them. They may have difficulties dealing with practical matters or data. If they aren't paying attention, they may even miss something right under their nose. Because the majority of the population has the Observant trait, Advocates may have difficulty connecting with others in ways that truly resonate.

## Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F)

The Thinking and Feeling traits determine how we decide matters and cope with emotions. While we all have feelings, there are significant differences in how we react to them and what role those feelings play in our lives. This then influences several

other areas, mostly related to our interactions with other people. This is what our third trait, Nature, focuses on.

### *Thinking People: Where Reason Rules*

**Rational and Objective:** Thinking individuals are most comfortable dealing with things that come from rational thought and involve proven principles.

**Logic Over Feelings:** While these types often feel quite deeply, they typically place their rationality and logic above any emotional responses.

**Constantly Assessing:** Thinking people constantly scan ideas and actions to decide whether they make sense or not. They can be valuable in any process that requires any level of critical thinking.

### *Feeling People: Those Who Follow Their Feelings*

**Lead from the Heart:** Feeling types listen to their feelings, care about how others feel, and are unafraid of sharing this perspective.

**Focus on Morals and Ethics:** People and their welfare are usually prioritized above any other consideration with the individuals who exhibit the Feeling trait.

**A Different Kind of Rationality:** While the Feeling type's way of choosing a direction may not always be totally objective, that doesn't mean that they lack rationality. There is practical wisdom in including feelings and consideration for the well-being of oneself and others in the decisions one makes.

### *Advocates: Feeling (F) Trait*

Advocates have the Feeling trait – they trust and prioritize feelings, relying on moral and ethical arguments, and doing everything they can to stay true to their deeply held principles. People with this personality type are kind and sensitive, always able to find something positive regardless of the circumstances.

The Intuitive and Feeling traits form the core of the Advocate personality, making them very insightful, idealistic and open-minded individuals, capable of amazing feats, especially in fields related to morality, philosophy, or diplomacy. However, they also push Advocates away from the majority of the population, sometimes making it difficult for them to relate to other people, especially when it comes to accepting what they see as egoism and self-interest.

### Judging (J) vs. Prospecting (P)

The Tactics scale – Judging and Prospecting – is about how people plan and deal with the options they have. But this definition doesn't just concern what individuals write in their day planners. It's much broader. These traits answer questions like, "Do you prefer spontaneity or certainty?" "Do you feel more comfortable acting only with all your ducks lined neatly in a row? Or does a certain amount of flexibility or chaos excite you and prove motivating?" "Do you need more choices or fewer?"

At its core, this scale determines our attitude toward certainty and structure in our lives, both at mental and physical levels.



### *Judging People: A Steady Hand*

**Predictability Rules:** Judging types are most at home when there is a clear-cut, well-considered plan that provides sure steps and promotes certain outcomes.

**Work Hard:** Judging individuals tend to work hard, perhaps seeing strong effort as a way of ensuring predictability.

**By the Book:** Individuals with this trait usually like to do things by the book and respect reasonable protocols, established techniques, and duties. They sometimes see doing things any other way as “reinventing the wheel.”

### *Prospecting People: Possibilities in the Moment*

**Relaxed Spontaneity:** Prospecting types tend to deal with life and all its opportunities as it comes at them.

**Creative:** This trait can promote “coloring outside the lines.” This can lead to discovering new creative solutions.

**Serial Passions:** Prospecting individuals may find themselves passing quickly through many interests in their lives. Because of these experiences, they can possess a broad array of knowledge and ideas.

### *Advocates: Judging (J) Trait*

Advocates are Judging individuals – they are decisive and usually find it difficult to cope with uncertainty and unpredictability. This is what makes them not just natural visionaries, but also implementers, both willing and able to dedicate time to making sure that their ideas come to life. That being said, people with this personality type

aren't too meticulous or rule-bound – they seek closure, but don't obsess over tiny details or procedures. Advocates are idea people rather than logisticians.

### Assertive (-A) vs. Turbulent (-T)

Assertive and Turbulent – the Identity scale – measures how confident one is and how that confidence influences all other traits. The degree that people move more boldly or more timidly affects the way they make choices. It determines how they express their skills. Whether one is too confident to accept criticism or puts too much weight on the criticism of others because they lack self-confidence can make a major difference. The caution or lack of caution people apply to the things they do can color everything.

#### *Assertive People: A Confident Approach*

**Confident Style:** People with the Assertive identity are self-confident and resist stress.

**Often Success-Oriented:** Because these individuals don't spend hours fretting, it might be assumed they aren't interested in results. For many of them, nothing could be further from the truth.

**Responsive and Proactive:** Assertive people may jump into a task quickly, not being as burdened with the need to think endlessly about what may go wrong.

#### *Turbulent People: Always Improving*

**Useful Worry:** Turbulent people often worry and engage in self-doubt. While that might sound negative, the flipside of the coin is that it fuels much of their drive and productivity.

**Driven to Succeed and Improve:** Turbulent individuals are constantly seeking to do better and be better. This pushes them to put great effort into life.

**Problem Spotters:** Because of their cautious nature and tendency to worry, those with the Turbulent trait often spot problems early and are able to contain them quickly.

## Type Groups

Now you know what each type consists of. But how do they fit together?

In our system, we group personality types in two different ways:

- **Roles** determine our goals, interests, and preferred activities.
- **Strategies** reflect our preferred ways of doing things and achieving our goals.

You can think of Roles and Strategies as two ways of organizing personality types into categories. These two categorization methods each highlight different facets of the types. For examples, Roles can show us why certain types share similar interests, and Strategies can explain why certain types approach socializing the way they do.

We discuss Strategies in depth at the end of this e-book, in *The Puzzle of Personality*. With that in mind, let's explore the importance of Roles.

## Roles

There are four Roles, each of which groups together four personality types.

- The **Analyst Role** includes Architects (INTJ), Logicians (INTP), Commanders (ENTJ), and Debaters (ENTP).

- The **Diplomat Role** includes Advocates (INFJ), Mediators (INFP), Protagonists (ENFJ), and Campaigners (ENFP).
- The **Sentinel Role** includes Logisticians (ISTJ), Defenders (ISFJ), Executives (ESTJ), and Consuls (ESFJ).
- The **Explorer Role** includes Virtuosos (ISTP), Adventurers (ISFP), Entrepreneurs (ESTP), and Entertainers (ESFP).

So, why do we organize the types in this way? To put it simply, Roles help us to recognize important common ground between personality types.

The types within each Role all share the same Mind trait – either Intuitive or Observant. As you might remember, this trait is incredibly important because it determines how we view the world. As a result, the types within a given Role are alike in a very important respect: they share similar ways of understanding the world and their place within it.

In addition to the Mind trait, the types within a given Role also share the same Nature trait (Thinking or Feeling) or the same Tactics trait (Judging or Prospecting).

Does this seem like information overload? If so, don't worry. To help you get a better grasp of the Roles, let's go through them one by one and find out what makes them tick.

### Analysts: Intuitive (N) and Thinking (T)

The personality types in the Analyst Role – Architects, Logicians, Commanders, and Debaters – are known for their irreverent curiosity. Thanks to the Intuitive trait, these types are rarely satisfied with the status quo. Instead, they'll go deep in their search

for ways to make things better, more efficient, and more effective. Meanwhile, the Thinking trait means that they value rationality over emotionality.

Analysts' greatest strengths include:

**Driven to learn.** Analysts want to know how the world works. In their quest for knowledge, they push the boundaries of their understanding. The result? Their expertise in certain areas can be remarkable.

**Questioning natures.** Analysts rarely accept things at face value. Ever questioning, they look beyond superficial appearances. This enables them to come up with deep, unexpected insights.

**Intellectual energy.** Full of fresh, counterintuitive ideas, Analysts know how to spark a lively debate. Conversations with these candid, sharp-witted types can be a breath of fresh air.

**Born to improve.** Analysts are relentless self-improvers. Once they've recognized a flaw, they apply all their rationality, imagination, and ambition to make it right.

Analysts' forceful imaginations, when trained and focused, enable them to achieve incredible results. But, like anyone, these types can have their Achilles heels, such as:

**Lost in thought.** Thinking up great ideas gives Analysts a rush. As a result, they're at risk of staying in the realm of thought, never acting out their ideas.

**Ever the critic.** In the same vein, some Analysts are more comfortable thinking about and critiquing other people's work than jumping into the fray themselves. In time, these types may be frustrated to find themselves outpaced by people with real-world experience.

**Hunting for flaws.** If taken too far, Analysts' desire for improvement can have them hunting down the flaws in everything. As a result, they may undervalue the people and opportunities they encounter.

**Emoti-what?** Analysts feel more comfortable in the realm of thought than the messy world of emotions. But like anyone, they need to develop emotional literacy in order to deepen their relationships and fully understand themselves.

Fortunately, Analysts have enough creativity and ambition to move beyond these stumbling blocks. When they take action, look for the positive, and train their curiosity on the realm of emotions, these types can grow into their full potential.

### Diplomats: Intuitive (N) and Feeling (F)

Diplomats – Advocates, Mediators, Protagonists, and Campaigners – tend to be warm, caring, and generous. Bringing together the Intuitive and Feeling traits, they shine in their understanding of emotions – both their own and other people's. This ability helps them shine when it comes to diplomacy, counseling others, and communication in general.

Diplomats' gifts and talents include:

**Emotional literacy.** Even when it's far from obvious, Diplomats can often perceive how others are feeling. From the outside, this might look like mind-reading. But in truth, it's a combination of self-reflection and radical compassion that helps Diplomats understand others' emotional states.

**Only connect.** Diplomats don't use their people skills to manipulate others. Instead, they aim to nurture genuine connections with the people they encounter. Moreover, many Diplomats feel called to serve others however they can.

**Do no harm.** Deep down, Diplomats want what's best for everyone. For them, causing someone else distress would feel like a wound to their own psyche. As a result, these types aim to promote cooperation and harmony rather than conflict.

**Creators at work.** Profoundly creative, Diplomats are always on the hunt for inspiration. Whether or not they take up artistic pursuits, these types tend to enjoy self-exploration and self-expression.

Diplomats have high ideals. For them, kindness and altruism burn as brightly as a fire on a chilly winter's night. But if left unchecked, this idealism can have its downsides, including:

**Impractical magic.** Tempering passion with cold practicality is a challenge for Diplomats. These types are often reluctant to make tough decisions – especially if those decisions require them to compromise on their ideals or hurt someone's feelings.

**Beautiful ideas.** Diplomats have the best of intentions, and they have countless ideas about ways to help people. They're at risk, however, of staying stuck in the realm of ideas instead of taking action and sticking to a plan.

**Taking on too much.** In their efforts to make a difference, Diplomats may overcommit themselves – emotionally, physically, or even financially. If they don't deliver everything they'd hoped, they may feel overwhelmed or disappointed in themselves.

**Easily hurt.** Sensitive to criticism and rejection, these types may react strongly if other people question the value of their ideals. Disagreement and conflict can leave Diplomats feeling discouraged and hurt.

In all their actions, Diplomats crave a sense of meaning and purpose. Specifically, they feel called to cultivate positive change and gentle beauty in the world around them. Motivated by intangible rewards felt in the heart and soul, these types have a conviction to serve the greater good.

### Sentinels: Observant (S) and Judging (J)

Sentinels – Logisticians, Defenders, Executives, and Consuls – are cooperative and practical. This grounded approach helps them feel comfortable with themselves just as they are. Steadfast and hardworking, these types pride themselves on their character and competence.

Here are some of the ways that Sentinels contribute to their homes, workplaces, social circles, and beyond:

**Loving duty.** These types feel a deep responsibility for those they care about. Specifically, Sentinels feel duty-bound to keep their loved ones safe and to help them lead good lives.

**Always on time.** Sure, Sentinels might occasionally fall behind schedule. But most of the time, they pride themselves on being unfailingly reliable. As a result, friends, loved ones, and coworkers can trust that Sentinels won't flake on their commitments.

**Keepers of tradition.** Sentinels work hard to maintain the ways things are done. In their home life, this means they love to continue family traditions. At the workplace, these types keep track of and defend best practices.

**Unwavering diligence.** Sentinels aren't afraid of hard work. On a daily basis, they practice their virtues of consistency and persistence, refusing to take shortcuts or



stop before their work is done. And in situations where someone needs to step up and take responsibility, Sentinels can be counted on to come through.

Sentinels feel bolstered by having reliable people in their lives, and they make it a priority to hold up their end of the bargain. But even these dependable types can have their challenges, including:

**Resistance to change.** For Sentinels, trying new ways of doing things can feel wrong – almost like breaking an unwritten set of rules. These types can be skeptical of change, and they may stick with suboptimal choices on the grounds of “that’s how it’s always been done.”

**Stubbornness toward others.** Similarly, Sentinels may feel personally affronted when other people upset the status quo. What someone else might describe as “experimenting with new ideas” may seem reckless or disrespectful to Sentinels. As a result, these types might dig in their heels, even if that means forestalling progress.

**Imposing their values.** Sentinels love to give advice and shepherd people toward better lives – at least, what Sentinels consider better lives. It may be hard for these types to accept that not everyone holds stability, tradition, and respectability among their core values. And when other people don’t follow their advice, Sentinels may want to judge them harshly.

Sentinels’ loyalty and steadfastness shine in many situations. When they balance their firm convictions with curiosity and openness, these types can become nothing short of inspirations to the people in their lives.

## Explorers: Observant (S) and Prospecting (P)

Explorers – Virtuosos, Adventurers, Entrepreneurs, and Entertainers – are self-reliant and quick-thinking. They're always ready to tackle a challenge or act on the spur of the moment. This spontaneity doesn't only help them solve problems – it also enables them to find opportunities for enjoyment in their everyday lives.

Here are a few of Explorers' notable strengths:

**Surfing the waves.** Many people struggle with change, but not Explorers. These types can adapt to new situations with minimal regret or second-guessing. In fact, they often enjoy change and appreciate breaks from routine.

**Socially dynamic.** Because of their openness, many Explorers enjoy meeting new people and trying out new social experiences. This helps them to build a network of diverse and interesting friends and acquaintances.

**Getting things done.** Explorers don't overthink things. Instead, they leap into action and get the job done. These types spend their energy on taking concrete steps, only pausing to consider abstract ideas or nitty-gritty details when it's absolutely necessary.

**Picking up techniques.** Utilitarian in their way, Explorers love to master new tools and techniques. Whatever their hobbies and passions, these types enjoy the challenge of building their skills and picking up new ways of doing things.

Explorers enjoy being free of obligations, where they can indulge themselves or their interests on their own time. Like most traits, this has its upsides and its downsides. Here are some tendencies that Explorers may need to counteract:

**Losing interest.** We all lose interest in our activities from time to time. But Explorers often run out of motivation as soon as a project no longer feels fun, novel, or exciting.

**What planning?** Explorers prefer to deal with challenges on the fly rather than plan ahead. Alas, sometimes an ounce of planning really is worth a pound of cure.

**Risky business.** Explorers are drawn to pleasure, risk, and – sometimes – risky pleasures. As they grow and mature, however, they often learn that some risks simply aren't worth taking.

Explorers connect with the world in a way that's almost childlike in its wonder and sheer fun. It can be a challenge for them to work for things with a distant or unexciting payoff, but when they harness their passion and administer just enough self-discipline, they can move heaven and earth.

*Now, let's talk about you.*

# Advocates' Personal Growth



## *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 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 fulfilment, 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 section 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 they might follow, and perspectives they need to aid the process. Advocates find motivation from five closely related but distinct components of their personalities:

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

Self-esteem is an individual's sense of self-worth. Advocates derive their feelings of worth from their compassion and the many ways it can be expressed.

#### Balanced Self-Esteem

##### *A Sense of Purpose*

Advocates need to know 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 and worth through the good 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 they have contributed something of value, and this confirms their own worth.

This doesn't mean 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 strengthen their sense of worth 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.

As unbalanced 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 they have no emotional or physical resources left. With burnout, no energy remains for the things they do to lift their sense of self-worth. 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 sense of their own value.

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 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 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 energy necessary to care for others – creating a positive cycle that ultimately boosts self-worth.

Advocates strive to secure equality for all people. It is reasonable, in the name of equality, to assume that they are no less worthy 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 they dedicate to their own needs is a simple but powerful tool.

- Make a list of the times 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-worth. 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 respect, 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 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 of respect."
  - "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."
- One 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 sense of worth.

## Self-Respect

Advocates who own solid self-respect are simply people who like themselves. When self-respect is strong, they 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 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 unbalanced Advocates, interactions with the world may become a painful mirror, reflecting actions they have adapted to 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 a sense of self-respect, Advocates may try to boost the characteristics 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 they have the best possible answers to their friends', families', and co-workers' 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 they haven't managed to carry out and needs 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 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 percent 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 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 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 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 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 over-controlling 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 do 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: 1 being no confidence and 10 being leonine boldness.
- Re-list your ideals, purposes, and intentions in life. Be as comprehensive as you can.

- Next, perhaps with your adviser, connect the things 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.
- Next time 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 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 their own psychological health, their social consciousness, or that of others. 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 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 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 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 a 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 flowering 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 which is "not moral." That preference doesn't mean 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 if they run an action and an attribution through their own ethical filters before, during, and after, and they pass the test. Their moral framework doesn't necessarily have to align with what society judges as moral.

#### *Prioritizing Personal Growth*

Self-responsibility drives Advocates to thrive. It demands they set priorities for big ideas and small ideas so 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 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 run-away 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 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 they tap 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 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 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.

## Conclusion

It's hard to describe Advocates' personal growth without some reference to spirituality. Some define spirituality as a person being part of something bigger than themselves. Even those who lack a formal spiritual practice or religion explore ideas that are bigger than they are, such as growth and well-being for themselves and others. Development depends on responding to what such explorations reveal.

Advocates who stick to their strengths and styles of being find that growth is more likely to occur when they seek ways to be true to themselves. Understanding their moral foundations and acting in ways that honor them will create fulfillment and purpose for Advocates. Learning to stand with integrity when they need to, yet be flexible and open to feedback, will help this personality type discover a meaningful path toward evolution and further development.

Each Advocate has their own spin, having adapted to their unique worlds in different ways. Some skillfully navigate personal growth most of time. Others, some of the time. And still others may struggle a lot. They may experience wonderful growth some days, but other days ... not so much. But none will experience life in any perfect way. Nonetheless, growth and learning are always choices for those who are willing.

## Additional Tools and Tests

Want to dig even deeper into your personal growth? If you have access to the toolkits area of the website, we offer a variety of additional tools and tests to help you explore.

### Locus of Control Test

Dig deeper into who or what you feel is responsible for your life satisfaction, happiness, and level of fulfillment.

### Emotional Intelligence Test

Find out how good you are at understanding your own emotions as well as paying attention to the emotions of others with this test.

### Confidence Test

How much do you believe in your competence and ability to successfully follow through on the choices you make? Let's find out.

### Dark and Light Side Test

Your moral choices may not be as simple as you think. This test asks you to go deep and take an honest look at your attitudes.

### Resilience and Grit Test

Some people are hard to knock down; some find it easy to get back up; and some are both or neither. Which group do you belong to?

### Coping Styles Test

There are four primary ways to cope with crisis. This test explores the dominant and secondary techniques you're likely to turn to.

### Optimism and Pessimism Test

This simple test measures your levels of both optimism and pessimism in a novel way. Find out where you fall in each of these areas.

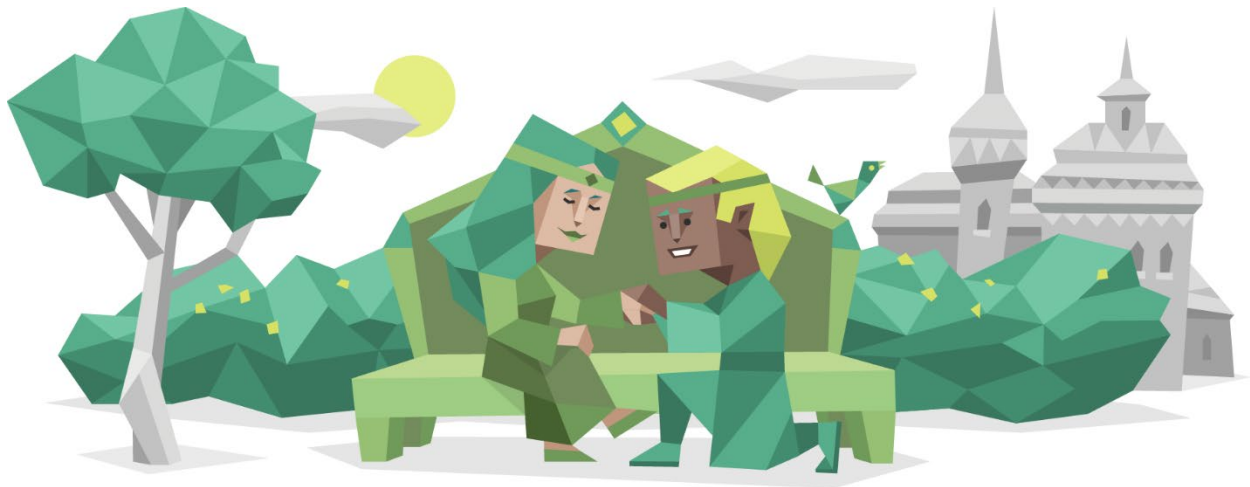
### Imagination and Magic Beliefs Test

How does your imagination work? What is your belief about magic? Explore the role of imagination, magic, and belief in your life.

### Traveling Preferences Test

This simple test delves into your preferred choices during those times when you leave home to explore the world.

# Advocates' Romantic Relationships



Not ones for casual encounters, Advocates treat the process of finding romantic partners seriously. It's one of the most significant investments they make toward happiness, so they proceed with care and earnestness in their search for depth, meaning, and fulfillment. This painstaking approach has its rewards – once they've found their special someone, they reach a level of interconnected harmony that most people only dream of.

Making the cut is challenging for potential partners, especially if they're impatient, as Advocates tend to be perfectionistic and picky. People with this personality type aren't easily talked into things they don't want, and failure to respect that is a trespass unlikely to be forgiven, particularly in the early stages of dating. It's even worse if suitors resort to manipulation or dishonesty, as Advocates have little patience for fakeness.

One of the things Advocates find most important in life is establishing genuine, deep connections with individuals who share their desire for authenticity. They go out of their way to avoid those who don't, especially when looking for love. Advocates are

caring and insightful and can see past facades into others' thoughts and emotions. These types may focus on the best in people, but they also see the whole picture, warts and all.

### *Inspired Love*

Advocates' characteristic sense of wisdom and warmth allows them to enthusiastically, repeatedly, and pleasantly surprise their lovers. These types aren't afraid to unconditionally show their emotions, so relationships with them aren't for the uncommitted or shallow. Advocates look for connections that go beyond physical intimacy, embracing the emotional and even spiritual bonds they have with their partners. They are passionate, seeing intimacy as a way to express their love and make their partners happy. They cherish not just the state of being in a relationship, but becoming one with another person in mind and spirit.

Generous and warm, Advocates focus intently on their partners, and reciprocity can be essential to this personality type. Their desire for a deep bond means they need to see and feel the energy flowing back and forth between themselves and their partners to be satisfied. For them, thoughtful gestures and romantic symbolism help tangibly reaffirm what they feel in their hearts and want to believe in their minds. They are often genuinely affectionate and crave the same lush, devoted, passionate attention in return.

### *Self-Sacrificing*

Because of their desire for powerful, warmly intimate connections with their partners, Advocates sometimes find it hard to express even minor dissatisfaction within their relationships. These types are so concerned with their partners' happiness and crafting stable romances that they're reluctant to speak up when their



needs aren't met. They may expect their lovers to step forward to make their dreams come true, but they also tend to feel guilty about coming across as "demanding" to the people they love.

Advocates strive toward ideal images in their minds that are full of romantic hopes and visions, but even though they draw some joy from merely seeing the results of their efforts, they also need personal attention and fulfillment. Too much selfless humility can leave this type suffering inside, though they might not always show it. This kind of silent martyrdom is an emotional trap that's hard to free themselves from if they can't find ways to fairly assert their needs. Even worse, when Advocates feel a lack of care and respect in their relationships, they may grow jealous when their partners show attention to others.

### *Strong Expectations*

Giving too much may have other unintended consequences as well, as Advocates' intensity can go too far. Many people need a little personal space and time, even within devoted, loving relationships. When Advocates blanket their partners with too much attention – or expectations of returned attention – it may cause even loving people to pull away, if only to get some air now and then. Advocates may become alarmed if they only see the withdrawal, not the reasons.

Although constant connection is an entirely understandable ideal, Advocates tend to be a lot happier when they don't expect to always be their lovers' number one priority. Just as they might want a little time to themselves, their partners also benefit from their own company or the company of other people some of the time. Constant togetherness doesn't always support the growth of Advocates' strength and freedom within romantic relationships, and it may simply be too much for some types. Finding

fulfillment within themselves is just as critical when they are in relationships as when they are not; the above Personal Growth chapter is good to keep in mind while reading this and other sections as well.

## Potential Role Pairings

Finding a satisfying relationship isn't always easy, especially for a type so concerned with authenticity and depth. Advocates are never ones to settle for a shallow, general view of things – they seek the hidden dimensions and mysteries of life. Whether Analysts or Explorers, Sentinels or fellow Diplomats, everyone has something unique and beautiful to bring to their relationships. This creates many opportunities, and some challenges (which, to wise Advocates, are just opportunities by another name). The following section looks at the potential interplay of different Roles to help Advocates striving to understand and develop their relationships.

### Advocate–Analyst Relationships



Comfortable with ideas and abstractions, Advocates and Analysts share a visionary, open-minded view of the world that can spark quick fireworks between them. These

personality types offer their partners virtues that complement their approaches, but which aren't always easy for them to master by themselves. When they move more deeply into romantic relationships, their collective inspiration and creativity form bonds of mutual respect, and sometimes incredible growth.

### Balanced Advocate–Analyst Relationships

#### *Divine Creativity*

Both Analysts and Advocates love forward-thinking, and they want to get deep into any matter. For Advocates, this means seeking the human heart of an issue, whereas Analysts' goal is to achieve an in-depth understanding of the facts. When combined, these two distinct perspectives almost perfectly compensate for each other's inherent weaknesses and limitations. In balanced partnerships, these types share their approaches with each other, opening doors to new information, creative concepts, and plans for the future – endless subjects for conversation and discovery together.

#### *Reinforcing Each Other's Abilities*

More than just inspired thoughts, Advocates bring real warmth and intimacy into their partners' lives – qualities that Analysts often struggle to understand or express but find enchanting nonetheless. Advocates often lead Analysts into better comprehension of human intricacies and the world of romance itself, offering rewards that go far beyond logic. In turn, Analysts welcome their partners into their world of rationality, where love isn't just about a feeling, it's about recognizing and appreciating compelling reasons to be together. When Analysts devote themselves to Advocates, it's with their heads as well as their hearts. Advocates intent on their personal growth may find Analysts to be valued sounding boards for their ideas.

Advocates appreciate how their Analyst partners' inspiration is tempered with deduction; their sharp perspective can illuminate real opportunities for positive change. Analysts offer Advocates the benefit of a thoughtful stance on emotionally charged issues, as well as guidance on critical thinking itself – they love to see their partners temper their admirable passion with thoughtful consideration. When in balance together, these two marry creative, idealistic fervor with cool reasoning, their mental cooperation becoming an enduring source of personal growth and inspiration.

### Unbalanced Advocate–Analyst Relationships

#### *Head vs. Heart*

Differing natural approaches to romantic gestures and emotional expression often challenge these couples; without personal balance and awareness, this can become a real problem. For example, Analysts may think that giving flowers, only to have them sit in a vase to die, is a somewhat superficial or even dishearteningly transient gesture. However, Advocates may see the beauty of the flowers as a deeper symbol of appreciation, even if the petaled conveyors of the message are short-lived.

Analysts might not always be sensitive to Advocates' perception of emotional connections between people, things, and actions, so they may forego many of the sentimental rituals of courtship, or else just go through the motions to meet expectations. But Advocates know when gestures don't come from the heart, and they may feel disappointed as a result. What can seem like meaningless demonstrations to Analysts who are out of touch with their partners' needs can, in fact, be very potent sources of emotional connection for Advocates, especially during times of trouble.

Such troubled times may bring up another issue for these couples, as Analysts often try to cleverly fix Advocates' problems when their partners instead crave heartfelt sympathy and support. This misstep can get Analysts into hot water, as Advocates may be upset by offers of what they regard as cold logic rather than much-desired emotional soothing. If Advocates take their discontent too far, they may utterly fail to see the sincere concern behind Analysts' efforts, instead becoming hurt and resentful.

### *Tripping over Their Grandiosity*

Conflict aside, a potential shared problem for Advocate–Analyst couples is a lack of follow-through on routine aspects of life. Analysts tend to excel at devising innovative ideas but may fall just as short as their Advocate partners when it comes to everyday matters, as both types favor creative pursuits instead. When these partners involve themselves too much with personal interests or ideas for the future, practical concerns often slip by, leaving unpleasant consequences in their wake. These couples may allow dirty laundry and debt to pile up around them when they are distracted by their arcane ideas.

These same passionate, lofty constructs can cause discord when these lovers differ – Advocates' passionate idealism can crash abruptly against Analysts' dispassionate assessments. When these types get carried away by their active imaginations, they can lose their sense of balance: Advocates become overly outraged when they think their dreams are being marginalized, and Analysts act overly critical, caring more about proving themselves right than opening their minds.

## Rebalancing Advocate–Analyst Relationships

### *Appreciating Each Other's Ways*

To help rebalance their differing ways of showing emotion, Advocates can encourage Analysts to explore their sentimentality, reminding them that symbolic, romantic gestures are important affirmations in relationships. By making a point of showing appreciation when their Analyst lovers make any conscious efforts to grow emotionally (knowing that the sincerity of their attempts matters more than any clumsiness in their approach), Advocates can teach Analysts how to meet their emotional needs without prompting or artifice. Their artless reactions of joy can help Analysts realize the importance of developing emotional connections in their relationships.

Advocates should also recognize that approaching problems and emotional issues with cool rationality has value, and it is often how Analysts express their love. To put it metaphorically, Analysts show care by trying to cure an illness rather than merely soothe the symptoms. If Advocates can see the loving energy that motivates Analysts' version of thoughtfulness, then they can draw emotional satisfaction even from somewhat unromantic contributions to the relationship.

A few steps both types can take to work toward meeting each other's emotional needs:

- Communicate needs promptly and respectfully – don't hide them.
- Seek out needs – Analysts (and some Advocates) may not be very forthcoming.
- Acknowledge each other's needs verbally.
- Act on each other's needs willingly.
- Appreciate acts of caring even when they're not overtly emotional.

- Encourage each other toward further demonstrative action with gratitude and praise.

Rebalancing differences in emotional expressivity may be challenging for these couples, but taking deliberate action and treating each other patiently will bring balance.

### *Staying Grounded*

Exploring lofty ideas together is one of the great joys of this pairing, but wise Advocate–Analyst lovers find balance by scheduling life's practical matters deliberately. Mutual attention to daily priorities and deadlines can help keep their shared environment working smoothly. These partners can also volunteer to take on more responsibility in areas that suit them. For example, Advocates could play a bigger role in directing their shared social relationships, while Analysts could do more research in “technical areas” like auto financing and trip planning. When both types value each other's capabilities, their differing strengths combine to wonderfully complement each other.

These partners should work on appreciating the importance of completing these mundane responsibilities, instead of merely rolling their eyes at them. Even though shifting internal narratives and priorities to complete tedious tasks may be a challenge for these types, both appreciate the results: Advocates appreciate things being orderly and secure, and Analysts see the rationale in keeping life functioning. To increase motivation, these couples can share rewards with each other, including grateful praise and a little indulgence. When acting responsibly results in something pleasant, it's far easier to keep everyday matters and chores up-to-date.

Some useful steps to consider:

- Write a plan together, including a timetable, for accomplishing common responsibilities.
- Agree to share tasks according to aptitude and interest, but make things equal overall.
- Perform tasks together or apart, as desired.
- Reward each other for a job well done with treats and thanks.

It's not always fun to work on life's little necessities, but it's a lot better than always being distracted by dysfunction. With their combined imaginations, Advocate-Analyst couples can get things done together without losing their spark of fun and creativity.

### *Above All Else, Love*

When it comes to differences in beliefs, ideas, or imagination, Advocates and Analysts should understand that they need not be reconciled. For these creative types, divergent thoughts are a wonderful part of who they are. When treading through the realm of ideas, they may walk paths apart from the norm, society, and even each other. However, it's not necessary to prove others wrong or convert their way of thinking.

These couples would be wise to focus on the underlying desire they have for each other that transcends ideological positions. Balanced relationships between Advocates and Analysts demonstrate respect for each other's views; even if they don't share an opinion, it need not interfere with love or cooperation. A key realization here is that these types can coordinate and compromise on practical matters of life, but they don't necessarily need to do so when pursuing personal interests or creative projects.



For example, politics, religion, and philosophy may all be set aside to allow connections that provide much more direct fulfillment in their daily lives. Dedicated to principles, Advocates can have difficulty relaxing their views, but they understand that harmony in relationships requires unique souls to resonate *together*, not identically. Likewise, Analysts who want to create balanced relationships must learn when to quit arguing over every little detail and embrace the loving feeling that can exist even among very different people.

A few tips:

- When things get tense, take a moment to remember your core connection to each other.
- Decide together that the issue is less important than that connection.
- Accept that each of you has a right to your own views.
- Refocus on something tangible that matters to both of you.

Although these types may both become absorbed in their own minds, the lure of what they can share together keeps them connected. The love, passion, and intimacy are worth deciding to be accepting.

## Advocate–Diplomat Relationships



Advocates and other Diplomats build relationships that are deep, significant, and idealistic. Diplomats give their romantic partners special status in their lives – they may feel they “complete” each other. These types see growth as a virtue, happily viewing their partners as works in progress. Admiring and encouraging each other’s aspirations, they support their partners as they learn and grow. This level of energy channeled into an interconnected life can be intense, but Advocate–Diplomat couples revel in intense connections. As if they have a psychic link, they feel each other’s troubles easily, and they offer comfort and counsel at just the right times.

### Balanced Advocate–Diplomat Relationships

#### *Inspired Harmony*

When they form romantic relationships, Advocates and their Diplomat partners revel in inspiring each other’s imaginations. Though even the rare Advocate–Advocate couple may still have their differences, fellow Diplomats take interest in each other’s creative dreams. Progress, harmony, and kindness are essential qualities that create common ground for these partners to understand each other’s goals in life. As these

lovers guide each other into new, inspiring territory, they discover surprising, colorful worlds of possibility.

### *Healing and Support*

Advocates and Diplomats like to practice empathy, and such couples connect on a deeper level than perhaps any other types. This very satisfying sharing and understanding can result in unmatched warmth and sensitivity in their personal lives, especially if they share a home. One thing that makes this pairing special is that Advocates and Diplomats don't hold their empathy only between themselves – they want to share it with the world. Nothing gives these couples more satisfaction than connecting with other kindred souls, especially toward grand ends that reflect their values.

If these lovers decide to make their dreams into reality, they can be powerful partners in helping themselves – and others. Their principles are likely to reflect a desire for equality, justice, and peace, and being so in sync with each other provides great fulfillment when they are working together toward these goals. Whether it's occasionally volunteering together for a worthy cause they feel strongly about or just living their lives as purely as they can, their commonality of spirit provides great opportunities for them to grow closer.

## Unbalanced Advocate–Diplomat Relationships

### *Inflaming Each Other*

All the wonderful ways in which Diplomats' emotions mix and flow are mirrored by unpleasant potential as well. The strong, constant connections that often characterize relationships between Advocates and other Diplomats can sometimes

grow overwhelming, and these couples may feel stifled or even aggravated by too much togetherness. When constantly together, they may lack the room to think clearly, resulting in unbalanced decision-making and a subtle build-up of stress. Introverted types such as Advocates may especially feel stressed by constant company.

These couples also tend to struggle with overly idealistic expectations for their relationships. Disappointment may occur when the reality sinks in that no one is perfect. Advocates may become critical as they notice even minor flaws in their Diplomat partners – and vice versa. The contrast between expectations and real people makes it hard for these types to reconcile their complicated feelings of hope and love – unbalanced couples believe only in the best possible outcomes, and anything less seems horribly lacking.

### *Unrealistic Priorities*

Routine life management is also likely to be a problem for Advocate–Diplomat couples, even when other aspects of their relationships are good. As distracted with ideas as any two Intuitive types might be, these partners may start to feel lost and overwhelmed as neglected chores accumulate. Unfortunately, their response to mounting tasks is often procrastination, or even outraged protest as mundane responsibilities threaten their loftier goals. These types often allow unfinished business to grow around them like a jungle, and cutting a path out rarely comes easily.

One of the worst possible consequences of a shared dysfunctional lifestyle is blame. When Advocate–Diplomat couples feel the stressful consequences of procrastination or irresponsibility, their unbalanced response is often to judge each other. In truth,

they may have both participated equally in creating the overall mass of problems, but each may criticize the other's failings, placing broader blame at each other's feet for the unhappy results cropping up around them both. It's painful to accept responsibility, and unbalanced partners may decide that it's far easier to blame the situation on each other than on own their mistakes.

### Rebalancing Advocate-Diplomat Relationships

#### *Finding Allowance*

Advocate-Diplomat couples, with their constant focus on each other's feelings, sometimes forget that emotions rise and fall like tides – a process that sometimes should be finished in solitude instead of always being confronted and experienced together. When emotions are running high and one partner needs space, the other can consider a hands-off method of support, temporarily withdrawing instead of sharing too much emotion.

These couples can also temper their own emotional expectations of each other and their relationships. Advocates and Diplomats honor their partners by allowing them their flaws – it's a great act of love to accept imperfection, and balanced couples regard lofty expectations as inspirations, not requirements. Simply reveling in each other's presence now and then is an important and healthy emotional expression, as is requesting personal solitude. Setting aside time for joyful moments together that don't place heavy demands on each other is a great way to reconnect.

Some ideas to balance time together and apart include:

- Clearly express any need for solitude or time to process emotions.
- Grant each other space with a respectful and supportive attitude.

- Rejoin after alone time and verbally affirm appreciation for the support.
- Engage in something pleasant, simple, and immediate together (watch a movie, make dinner, go for a walk).
- Use these moments to focus on each other in the present without bringing up the future or the past.
- Plan similar “in-the-moment” breaks throughout the week – they needn’t be long or involved, but making them frequent is invaluable.

Giving each other space to be emotional without judgment is critical, as is appreciating that space, but it’s just as important to find ways to be together without constantly needing the heady feedback of deep emotional exchange. It can be exhausting.

### *Being Responsible*

Advocates and their Diplomat partners can also rebalance their shared life by ensuring that practical matters are attended to together. Deep, meaningful conversations may be immensely rewarding, but it’s sometimes necessary to talk about bills and chores, too. Both types may focus on higher personal goals than laundry, but by forming cooperative goals and following through, balanced couples support each other’s attention to mundane responsibilities.

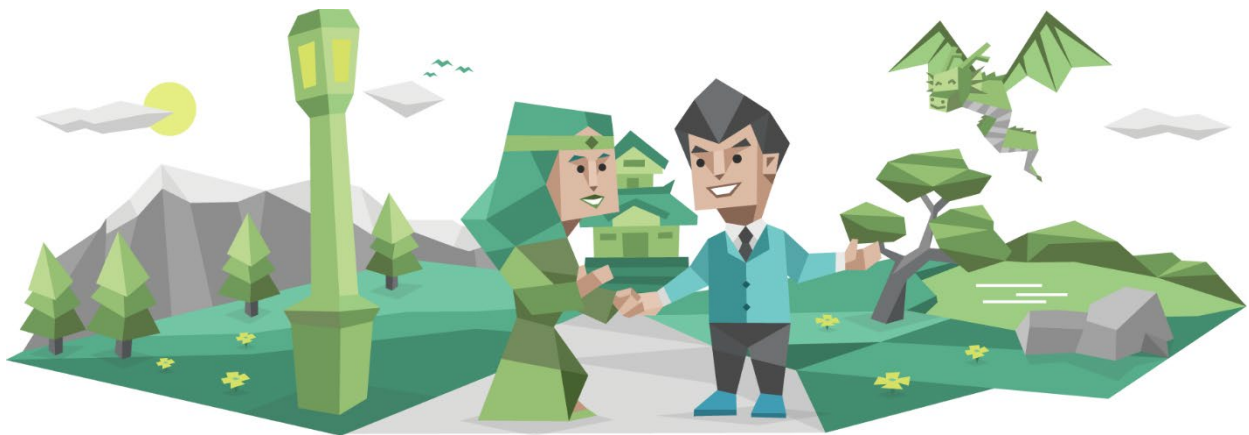
Advocates have a special advantage in this area, as the Judging trait contributes to their desire for planned order. One technique Advocates can use – and kindly share with their Diplomat partners – is to deliberately make their personal interests dependent on completing tasks and responsibilities. For example, Advocates might tell themselves that they’re not going to stream their favorite show until the dishes are done, or perhaps they can watch and wash at the same time.

Some ways to prioritize mundane but necessary tasks:

- Discuss issues of shared life maintenance together.
- Write a to-do list together in order of priority.
- Claim and complete at least one item per person per day, cooperating whenever possible.
- Update the list every day with new items as needed, and proudly cross off accomplishments.
- Engage in personal indulgences together after necessary work is done.

Advocate–Diplomat couples must focus on taking action. They don't lack for ideas or enthusiasm, but gentle, firm commitment to finish things together is critical.

## Advocate–Sentinel Relationships



If not always likely to share the same specific dreams, these types nonetheless find appealing commonality in their sense of dedication. Advocates' adherence to their values appeals to Sentinels' sense of what is right and fair, and their mutual focus on this builds trust. However, Advocates offer their lovers more than just agreement – they inspire Sentinels to think bigger, even as they respect their stable practicality.

## Balanced Advocate–Sentinel Relationships

### *Mutual Care*

Advocates and Sentinels both love to nurture and protect their loved ones: Sentinels by creating and preserving stability, and Advocates by fostering values and offering emotional support. Both types regard a deep, trusting connection as an essential part of all relationships, and they commit intensely once they find their significant others. Advocates may find that their fanciful imaginations and idealism fascinate and attract Sentinels who are ready to expand their horizons a little.

The revolutionary views of Advocates may be challenging at times, but Sentinels consider these partners' unconventional perspectives equally alongside the enduring, traditional truths they hold dear. Left to themselves, Sentinels may avoid change, but their love and trust open them to the unabashed hope, encouragement, and imagination that Advocates bring into their lives. Advocates love idealistic progress, but they also love Sentinels for the prudent caution that, from a less trusted source, might feel like a dampening of their ideas. Sentinels help their partners compose their thoughts more practically by making supportive contributions that don't diminish Advocates' dreams, but instead help them become beautiful realities.

### *Exploring Humanity*

Sentinels are very focused on values, but Advocates open them even more to people's incredibly complex uniqueness – they love to examine the human core of any issue. When Sentinels get frustrated by people's seeming unpredictability, Advocates' insight into human motivations helps them understand and stabilize their personal relationships. Tolerance as an ideal can make life easier by relieving friction,



and Sentinels practice this virtue better with the helpful empathy of their Advocate partners.

Stability, in turn, is a value that Sentinels help their Advocate partners develop, especially when it comes to human interactions. Advocates tend to operate heavily in the realm of ideas, and they are profoundly affected by their social encounters. When Sentinels see them getting pulled in too many directions at once or reacting too strongly to social situations, they tend to gently remind their lovers of the solid reality right in front of them. Their love helps keep Advocates focused on established aspects of their social lives, not just potential.

### Unbalanced Advocate–Sentinel Relationships

#### *Out-of-Sync Perspectives*

The difference between what is practical and what is possible is a common issue in Advocate–Sentinel relationships. Over time, Advocates may find Sentinel partners questioning their choices, perhaps expressing unwelcome expectations that Advocates will settle down and stabilize. Advocates have powerful imaginations, and they sometimes get preoccupied with chasing impossible dreams. While spending too much time trying to rearrange the universe in their minds, Advocates might fail to recognize that their Sentinel partners may see revolutionary changes as threats to their hard-earned security. When this happens, even the most patient and loving Sentinels may begin to doubt the relevance of their partners' priorities in life, as well as their future together.

Problems can be introduced into the relationship by either of these partners, though. Sentinels live in a world of rules and traditions, and if they become too rigid in their thinking, they may completely dismiss their Advocate lovers' utopian dreams as

immature or impractical. Sentinels can become very critical when things they see as necessary in life are challenged or left unaddressed by their partners. This kind of disapproving behavior is very hurtful to Advocates; it's like telling them they are foolish for their beliefs and ideas. Advocates vehemently dislike being suppressed or disrespected, especially for their high hopes.

Transformational, soul-searching talk from Advocates may baffle Sentinels, but by focusing exclusively on tradition and security, Sentinels may miss authentic opportunities for personal growth and advancement in life. Growth-oriented Advocates may eventually become bored with plans that are all about conventional living and respond too harshly with impatient criticism and pressure to change, further widening the gap between them.

### *Lopsided Roles*

The differences between Advocate imagination and Sentinel practicality may become troublesome in subtle, insidious ways. In unbalanced relationships, they may begin to take on roles of authority and subordinate, like parent and child or boss and employee. Advocates love to dream and talk, but those who fail to follow through with sustained action (especially on matters that aren't interesting to them) aren't being fair in a loving relationship, and Sentinels may naturally pick up the slack. This may or may not be a source of irritation; some couples are quite happy to compensate for each other, finding a kind of balance.

However, most Sentinels are likely to want balanced contributions of effort from committed partners, and they may become frustrated if they're forced to shoulder most of the practical responsibilities. Sentinels who face lopsided burdens for too long may begin to act like angry, nagging parents. In response, Advocates who don't

value these necessary tasks and issues equally may act resentful, as though they are being forced to do things they don't want to. This pattern can result in a lot of discord and frustration for both types, causing what should merely be matters of shared attention to become threats to the relationship.

### Rebalancing Advocate–Sentinel Relationships

#### *Learning from Each Other's Perspectives*

Finding practical approaches to imaginative ends together may help Advocate–Sentinel couples appreciate each other's unique lifestyles. Sentinels can help Advocates by adding a bit of considered sensibility to their enthusiastic inspiration, as Advocates can grow by listening to the moderating voice of Sentinel partners and seeing their functional methods as helpful for reaching lofty goals. Advocates may also find they're less distracted by daily annoyances as their partners create stability around them. Advocates can show their appreciation, recognizing not only the personal advantages of this order, but also how profoundly important it is to their partners.

Advocates want to bring positive change, and those trying to coax their Sentinel partners out of their shell can rebalance their sometimes-strident efforts by cultivating a gentle, understanding approach. They can protect their Sentinel partners from changes that seem too sudden or risky, then help them progress at an acceptable pace. Sentinels value security, and when their relationships offer deep safety and support, they may realize they can be less rigid about their approach to life. Wise Sentinels challenge themselves to set foot on a more audacious path now and then, holding their Advocate partners' hands for support and knowing that they're respected and loved.

The following tips may help both types move forward:

- Seek ways to tap into each other's unique strengths.
- Allow time to process new ideas and experiences before engaging in them.
- Respect each other's limits and sensitivities to change.
- Show appreciation for each other's assistance and good judgement.

In balanced relationships, Sentinels create reliability and stability, crafting a foundation that allows these lovers to advance in life; Advocates, always looking to the future, expand just how far they can go together.

### *Acting Like Equals*

If a contentious, unequal dynamic develops because one type finds themselves pressuring the other to participate in shared obligations, both partners need to evaluate their own attitudes. Balancing differences in fundamental priorities is challenging, but that's no excuse for demeaning each other. Advocates who fail to make enough realistic contributions to the relationship demean Sentinels to a caretaker role, and Sentinels who demean Advocates' abilities are insulting – it's no way for adults to treat each other.

It's important for Advocates to realize that it isn't their partners throwing unpleasant responsibilities on them – choosing to live as a couple comes with its own demands. The fact that Sentinel partners are concerned with these responsibilities and try to highlight their importance reflects deep concern for their mutual well-being. Instead of resenting life's demands, Advocates can affirm their own power and growth by joining Sentinels in creating a satisfying life together.

For their part, Sentinels can work to respect that the Advocates they love have certain lofty priorities that are profoundly important to them. Sentinels may not always understand Advocates' focus on possibility, but they can rebalance by seeing their partners' high-reaching inspiration not as immaturity, but as admirable ambition. Furthermore, when Advocates choose to take equal roles in accomplishing things that matter to Sentinels, it's only fair – and loving – for their partners to return that effort.

These couples can focus on these basic steps to help:

- Discuss each other's priorities for a life together.
- Work toward each other's goals.
- Don't wait to be asked for participation; take individual action.
- Offer to help each other whenever possible. Actively seek opportunities to cooperate.

Advocates can keep in mind that working to match Sentinels' sense of responsibility is a wonderful, self-affirming expression of power, which ties into developing the qualities mentioned in the Personal Growth chapter.

## Advocate-Explorer Relationships



Advocates' heads are full of creative ideas and dreams, and Explorers are curious about everything – these two don't take long to find common ground. Advocates' focus on the intangible can be intriguing to Explorers, opening them to new frontiers of exploration. In turn, Explorers' sense of curious, vigorous engagement is perfect for helping Advocates step out of their thoughts and into experiences. Explorers think nothing of grabbing hold of life with both hands, a perfect balance for Advocates' sometimes cerebral reservation.

### Balanced Advocate-Explorer Relationships

#### *Differing Focus, Mutual Passion*

Explorers' focus on hands-on pursuits is far from limited, as they may change their minds often, and Advocates may come to see their dauntless attempts at mastery as inspired. Where Advocates may think about broad changes they'd like to see, Explorers demonstrate the power of single-minded effort, developing their own potential as they follow their interests. Their fascination can be infectious, and it may even inspire Advocates to act on their own goals – and, of course, Explorers are game to help. Although the scope of their focus may differ, Advocate-Explorer couples

share a passion for the things that are important to them. When love aligns their interests, these two types become partners, progressing together as they work to overcome barriers both personal and external. Neither is likely to give up when they have a goal in mind.

### *Joyful Discovery*

Balanced romantic relationships between these two types are truly exciting – full of energy and unexpected experiences. Advocates are enthralled by Explorers' free spirit, their enthusiasm for living in the moment, and their willingness to seize opportunity. Fascinated by their desire for freedom and novelty, Advocates find Explorers to be thrilling company. Similarly, ever-curious Explorers are easily intrigued by the almost mystical essence that surrounds Advocates. When these two find love together, they give each other a long path of discovery and excitement.

Although their individual tastes may be infinitely varied, any shared interests give these types an excellent opportunity for fun times together. Advocates think in terms of "what ifs," and Explorer partners are likely to respond with, "Let's go do it." These couples find much joy and excitement in each other's company, both in public and private. They may also share immediate passion: Advocates because they revel in the intimacy, and Explorers because they can be happily impulsive, rarely denying themselves their desires. In love, this isn't a bad thing.

## Unbalanced Advocate–Explorer Relationships

### *Conflicting Approaches to Life*

Advocates often focus on the welfare and feelings of other people, while Explorers sometimes set these same concerns aside. Entrepreneurs, the Explorer type that's

polar opposite of Advocates, exemplify this spirit, often boldly disregarding anything beyond their own motivations and goals. If Advocates see such people as selfish, they may go too far in criticizing or even condemning them. When accused this way, Explorers may label their Advocate partners as too rigid and unrealistic out of resentment. Advocates want to cooperate, especially with their partner, but they may draw firm lines based on their own values, which can lead to fierce disagreement.

Both Advocates and Explorers can be dedicated to their perspectives, and when unbalanced stubbornness takes over, Advocates may provoke fierce resistance by pushing Explorer partners too hard to examine themselves. In turn, Explorers may not always understand Advocates' world of ideas, and when they become exasperated, they may simply walk away. Explorers often just want to accomplish goals that matter to them, and imposed rules may begin to feel like a loss of essential freedom.

### *In Their Own Worlds*

The tendency of Advocates to live inside their heads may make their more experience-oriented Explorer lovers feel alone in their hands-on pursuits. Explorers find little compulsion to spend time in the realm of pure imagination – they want to experiment with their ideas, not just develop them as guiding principles. When unbalanced, both these types may fail to find any enthusiasm for each other's personal interests, and they may not be respectful enough of their partners as a result.

This disconnect may also happen with typical events and matters of daily life. When unbalanced, these couples often don't devote enough time to working together on everyday tasks that affect them both. Although motivated in their pursuit of personal



goals, Explorers are no fonder of uninspiring chores than Advocates – they'd both rather do something fun. This avoidance may make them happy at first, but by staying in their own worlds instead of dealing with responsibilities together, long-lasting happiness may be at risk.

### Rebalancing Advocate-Explorer Relationships

#### *Stepping into Experiences Together*

Finding ways to de-stress and experience sheer joyful abandon through shared activities are great ways to start to rebalance these relationships. Advocates are likely to ruminate on the meaning of life, the universe, and everything, so action-oriented Explorer partners may be the perfect people to drag them out of their mind-palaces to relax and indulge a bit. Advocates enjoy beauty, form, and culture, and Explorers like to experience new and exciting things, making common recreational ground easy to find. With a little work and time – and by taking themselves a little less seriously – Advocate-Explorer couples can learn to embrace each other's differences.

Advocates and their Explorer partners may also find common ground by occasionally stepping into each other's worlds. Explorers can work to support their Advocate partners' lofty beliefs and ideas by contributing their own considerable energy and skills out of love, if not always deep personal interest. In turn, Advocates can rebalance by occasionally putting aside impassioned concerns about society and instead work on exploring things their partners care about – their values can be served by going deeper into the connection they share.

Some strategies these couples can try:

- Have *fun* together. Roll with the bumps and try new things often.

- Take turns engaging each other's interests, but don't be too demanding of each other.
- Kindly give each other a little recovery time after fun and excitement – alone if needed.

Advocates can appreciate the passion that their Explorer partners have for engaging the moment, and they may enjoy focusing on something exciting together. It's just a matter of these lovers ensuring that each other's interests receive some attention.

### *Getting Real*

Everyday life should flow smoothly enough that it doesn't distract from their higher goals, and Advocates and Explorers can overcome the risk of chores piling up by actively sharing mundane things. Balancing personal time and interests with shared responsibilities is critical in any relationship, and these types are wise to make a special effort to make their lives functional. It's also imperative to thank each other for contributions; feeling appreciated goes a long way to ease the burden of such chores.

Advocates and Explorers don't need to face everything themselves, though, and there's no shame in seeking assistance. With these couples, hiring outside help often makes a positive difference, as neither takes much satisfaction from household responsibilities. Balance doesn't mean drudgery, and there's nothing wrong with outsourcing areas of life that bring no satisfaction to either of these types, if feasible. If not, a little music and some good company can make attacking chores together a lot more fun.

Some tips:

- Decide to be responsible together.
- Ensure that enough time is spent on necessary life tasks as well as personal interests.
- Consider hiring help for the least rewarding chores.
- When things must be done, choose to do them together and make them as painless as possible.

Taking some time to handle daily issues together may not always be fun and exciting – but it can be if these two types add their imagination and zest for life to routine tasks and projects.

## Conclusion

### *Embracing Possibilities*

A consistent theme throughout Advocates' lives is the thoughtful intention to foster harmony and progress in themselves, the world, and especially their relationships with other people. When it comes to romantic love, these types are wise to maintain their ideals, but they should also look past their exacting views to embrace the varied, grand possibilities that await. With understanding and tolerance, love can be built and sustained beautifully between Advocates and any other type. There is no perfect match between types, only wonderfully satisfying matches between people who feel drawn to each other and are willing to forgive mistakes, learn, and grow together.

The information we've provided in this chapter can help Advocates on their journey of understanding, both of themselves and their relationships. It's not always easy to get an accurate sense of just how differently other people think and feel, especially for a type whose perceptions are so tightly bound to their hopes and ideals. Learning

about other types' needs helps Advocates increase the objectivity of their own insights, enabling even deeper connections with those who occupy that most special place in their hearts.

### *Moving Forward Together*

To Advocates, the best romantic relationships aren't passive. They aren't only about shared laughs and pleasure; in the long term, they also include conscious, progressive action together. When lovers happily occupy large portions of each other's lives, the less glamorous or pleasant aspects of those lives also become intertwined. Everyone has flaws and baggage, and expecting each other to handle such things alone or out of sight doesn't create the kind of interconnected relationships that Advocates crave. Rebalancing is all about facing each other's issues with patience, love, and forgiveness, and taking deliberate steps together in the real world to work things out.

Advocates love to think, dream, and understand things in their heads, but thought is only the first stage of progress, in life and in love. Finding practical ways to cooperate and compromise with romantic partners is key to moving forward together. This applies to achieving hopes and dreams, as well as maintaining personal freedom and individuality. The rebalancing sections above give just some ideas on how Advocates and their partners can respect each other while getting what they need to be happy. Although it's unrealistic to believe that any relationship will be all sunshine, it's fully possible to master difficult times together and walk out the other side smiling, hand in hand – Advocates can create this happy path for themselves and with those they love.

## Additional Tools and Tests

Want to dig even deeper into your romantic relationships? If you have access to the toolkits area of the website, we offer a variety of additional tools and tests to help you explore.

### [Get to Know Your Partner](#)

Would you like to get to know your partner a little better? Try this simple, but very fun and effective, game.

### [Couple Analysis](#)

A great tool for couples. Learn how your personalities are likely to interact, and how you can connect on an even deeper level.

### [Type Guesser \(Romance\)](#)

Are you trying to figure out what personality type your partner belongs to? You may find that this simple tool helps.

### [Romantic Fulfillment Test](#)

Grasp the roles that confidence and optimism play in your relationships, as well as what makes someone a good match for you.

### [Intertype Test](#)

Do you have a partner? Do you want to understand your relationship better? Learn more about it with our easy Intertype Test.

## Loyalty Test

With this test, you will find out how you build relationships and loyalty in four major areas: Romance, Work, Friendships, and Family.

## Advocates' Friendships



Advocates make for warmly supportive friends. As with any other pursuit in their lives, these types bring their visionary qualities to their friendships: Given time and the opportunity to build trust with accepting individuals, Advocates share much of their rich inner lives. However, sharing doesn't always come easily to this Introverted type, whose firm values protect a fragile inner core. Advocates need to feel that their treasured ideas and values are in safe hands. Part of the trust they express comes from knowing that their friends understand them on a deeper level.

It may take a while for Advocates to form solid friendships, and early impressions can strongly affect the length of this process. In friendship, it's as though Advocates are searching for a kind of soulmate, with whom they can discover hope for the future regardless of the circumstances of the present. These types are insightful and tend to weed out those who don't share their deep idealism. As Advocates share more with potential friends, they conduct a quiet assessment to determine whether interests are mutual enough and trust is present. Although Advocates will likely end up with just a few true friends – maybe even just one – the friendships they keep are the result of a rich mutual understanding that forges a permanent bond.

### *Purposeful Friendship*

So long as their friends are sincere and trustworthy, Advocates are often happy with just a few friendships. These types don't require a lot of day-to-day attention to maintain their friendships, either. Advocates also differentiate between acquaintances and true friends, and they are unlikely to settle for friendships of mere circumstance. They place less emphasis on casual workplace social circles or chatting up baristas at the coffee shop, where the only thing they have in common is day-to-day familiarity.

However, Advocates may get more attention and popularity than they care to receive. Their quiet and determined idealism, creative expression, and aura of thoughtful support naturally draw others to them.

Although they like their true friendships to be deep, Advocates also love to connect on a more recreational, lighthearted level. They are witty and imaginative, and sharing fun experiences with another human being carries a strange allure.

### *Enhancing Their Perspective*

Advocates tend to have distinct views that favor idealism over reality, but they appreciate their friends for their minds and spirits, as well as how their influence and ideas contribute to the friendship. Advocates benefit from balancing their own vision with their friends' ideas, creating a more complete picture of life; a trusted friend can provide a different and valuable viewpoint. Expanding their focus and being open to an evolving mindset move Advocates forward in life, and their abundant empathy opens the door to deep bonds that bring refreshed perspectives.



Advocates may sometimes feel defensive against the world at large, but the special relationships they can form with friends provide relief from that friction, even if they don't see eye-to-eye on everything. In friendship, this type can hear contrasting views without perceiving them as challenges or insults – and this is one of the most valuable aspects of a deep, trusting friendship. Advocates can be among the most stubborn types, but when they feel in their hearts that a friend cares for and respects them, they trust their instincts and lower the blast shields to hear different thoughts and ideas.

## Advocates and Friends from Other Roles

Advocates are specialists at seeing the best in other people. They are compassionate and generously offer conscious acts of appreciation that make them highly valued as friends, even to those with very different natures. Maturity, wisdom, and mutual respect can help create rewarding friendships between Advocates and all of the other personality types.

Any pairing can be an interesting adventure for this friendly, if outwardly reserved, type. Knowing there may be occasional glitches in some potential friendships doesn't discourage them. Advocates rarely give up on a friend once they grow close, and all types appreciate such sincere dedication – it's an uncommon and valuable quality that Advocates can be proud of.

Let's examine the challenges and joys that Advocates are likely to face in friendships with others belonging to each of the major Roles: Analysts, other Diplomats, Sentinels, and Explorers.

## Advocate–Analyst Friendships



For Advocates, having an Analyst across the table can feel like having an extension of their own minds, expanding their perspective. In friendship, Advocates and Analysts can blend these tendencies to create balance and achieve great things. When these friends work together, they combine dreamy inspiration and technical thinking, taking turns fitting each other's goals into their unique worldviews.

### Balanced Advocate–Analyst Friendships

#### *Beautifully Constructed Possibilities*

Analysts enjoy using their inherent rationality to play the role of advisor, priding themselves on the logic and impartiality they can contribute to Advocates' way of thinking. Where others may be inclined to provide support mainly out of loyalty or sensitivity, Analysts can be bluntly truthful with even their closest friends. Advocates may see this honesty as a blessing and a challenge.

Having everything they say go through Analysts' rational filters can take some getting used to. However, Advocates usually come to trust in the benefits of adding a critically perceptive vantage point to their own. What's more, Advocates are the

perfect type to nudge Analyst friends toward compassion and tact, speaking the same insightful language but having greater emotional understanding. When Analysts learn the value of expanding their emotional intelligence, this friendship can really blossom.

### *The "What If" Machine*

Capture their imaginations with just the right topic, and Advocates and their Analyst friends are in their element: They both like juggling hypotheticals and challenging the status quo. Asking "What if...?" is an adventure for both types, and they won't run out of fresh material for a long time. Their unique priorities in life lead these friends to inspire and challenge each other in very pleasant ways, and any minor topic can grow into a full-fledged undertaking of thought.

For these friends, any conversation that exercises the imagination and opens their worlds to exciting prospects can be extremely satisfying. With visions that are different yet similarly resolute, Advocates and Analysts complement each other, inspiring new thought and expanding each other's curiosity. When they are balanced and open to new views, these friends can open each other's eyes to the world around them.

### *Productive Cooperation*

Advocates and their Analyst friends can also have a lot of fun if they decide to develop any of their ideas into reality. Both love to explore ideas, but they may not always be able to act independently on them. For Advocates, passionate ideals alone are very fulfilling; they can imagine grand outcomes but not necessarily the mechanics to get there. Analysts, on the other hand, often conceive intricate mechanics instead of taking simple, realistic steps.

When they're willing to work together rather than claim the superiority of their own style, they can unleash the combined force of their imaginations. Few things are more fun than a friend who helps personal dreams become reality. This mutual enjoyment gives both parties the motivation to invest real effort in their ideas, rather than just chatting about them.

### Unbalanced Advocate–Analyst Friendships

#### *Conflicts of Nature*

Advocates and Analysts may have occasional tension in their friendships, especially if they aren't comfortable enough with themselves to be able to accept others as they are – a matter of personal growth. This tension can arise from the different filters they tend to use to make decisions: emotional humanism versus detached rationalism. It's all too easy for these friends to forget just how differently they think at times. If forthright individuals feel strongly about an issue, they can easily upset each other.

Advocates are sensitive to criticism and tension, and Analysts are often gleefully provocative. When Analysts forget their Advocate friends' feelings, their behavior can become an unbalanced type of debate that can seem more like an attack. When Advocates forget that ideological arguments are akin to an intellectual game to Analysts, they may overreact with raw emotion, viciously decrying them instead of playing along. Although their emotions may not be as near the surface, Analysts nonetheless feel such accusations very deeply when they come from a friend.

### *Solutions Instead of Compassion*

These friendships can also experience a more personal gap in emotional expression, as Analysts are rarely comfortable or experienced with others' emotions, or even their own. It's not that they don't have strong feelings, they just aren't very perceptive, articulate, or enthusiastic when it comes to sharing them. When Analysts fail to invest enough effort into being sensitive, Advocate friends who don't understand the underlying disconnect may react with overblown resentment, taking Analysts' distance as apathy about the friendship, and they may dismiss them accordingly.

Similarly, in personal situations where Advocates expect compassion, Analysts often disappoint, offering clever examination and solutions rather than a gentle ear. Advocates often fail to understand the reasons behind Analysts' clumsiness and tend to withdraw when they feel abandoned, ironically blaming that abandonment on a friend who never committed such an act. This can cause the two to lose faith in each other. Without some conscious effort to understand their very different responses in the face of personal need and emotional trouble, these friends can't give each other their best support.

## Rebalancing Advocate–Analyst Friendships

### *Keeping an Open Mind*

The primary problems in Advocate–Analyst friendships usually involve the clash between the more humanistic Feeling trait versus the more detached Thinking trait. Rebalancing comes from making a concerted effort to understand each other: Advocates and Analysts may not speak the same interpersonal language, but they do share deep perspectives and insightful minds, and both are well-equipped to develop the understanding needed to overcome their differences. Sharing their ideas and

points of view comes naturally to them, and such conversations are usually welcomed by both. The key is patient listening, as well as considering each other's approaches (even if only out of respect).

Advocates and Analysts can also "agree to disagree" on some things. That doesn't mean they need to squelch discussions or disagreements. However, when they hit a point of unpleasant contention, they can simply back off, reminding themselves to simply observe non-judgmentally. Being a curious, interested observer fits both personality types, and the approach can help prevent natural differences from becoming problematic.

Some helpful practices these two can employ:

- Listen to each other quietly with respect.
- Verbally affirm the value of each other's opinions, regardless of agreement.
- Ask questions about how each other's different views are implemented in daily life.
- Recognize that different approaches are appropriate for different people.

These friends can also bend their formidable imaginations to find mutually satisfying solutions. Both types are well-versed in hypothetical thinking, and when Advocates and Analysts use their different approaches to create ideas that appeal to both, they can generate days of conversation and entertainment, and maybe even something actionable.

### *Caring about Each Other's Needs*

If Advocates want to rely on Analysts for emotional support, they can gently encourage these friends to develop suitable skills. Although they should be careful

not to indict Analysts as inadequate, there's nothing wrong with asking a friend for help – and helping them understand what's needed. Analysts value their true friends and enjoy expanding their abilities. Advocates can help them understand that, far beyond the logic of something being “right” or “wrong,” there's the simple truth of how friends make each other feel through their behavior.

It's very important for Advocates to be up front, literal, and vocal about their needs; that's how Analysts are, and it speaks to them. Whether asking Analysts to be less harsh in their arguments, more open with their feelings, or sympathetic in times of need, Advocates are usually impressed at how quickly Analysts learn when motivated by friendship. Analysts are very capable of emotional evolution, especially when Advocates serve as excellent examples. And of course, when either friend tries to understand the other, positive feedback is always appropriate, such as “I really appreciate the way you try to see my perspective.”

Both friends can use the following tips:

- Deliberately make emotional needs known in plain language.
- Be specific about the support needed: ideas, sympathetic listening, or reassurance.
- Ask questions about each other's feelings – don't assume anything.
- Give feedback on each other's support, showing an appreciative attitude.

Advocates can also keep in mind that Analysts have every right to make requests in return; they may need a break from emotional connectedness. The friends can dive into a common interest or recreation together, dialing down the seriousness to perhaps share some humorous observations about the world around them.

## Advocate–Diplomat Friendships



For Advocates, close Diplomat friends mirror the best aspects of their own personality. They're perfectly happy enjoying each other's company for hours, and they aren't likely to run out of things to say. Because Diplomats are relatively rare in the constellation of personality types, these friends try hard to maintain such precious friendships regardless of any difficulties. When they see how much they have in common, they work to preserve their friendships and create lifelong bonds.

### Balanced Advocate–Diplomat Friendships

#### *A Mental and Emotional Extension*

Advocates and Diplomats share experiences with and through each other, gaining the benefit and wisdom of each other's triumphs and trials. Friends of these types will often say to each other something to the effect of, "I had the most amazing idea the other day." Advocate–Diplomat friends push and pull each other through life with energy and compassion. It's almost as if their honest, in-depth communication offers them a chance to live two lives at once.



This deep knowledge of their friends' uniqueness, combined with their caring nature, makes them each other's ideal confidants, nurses, and emotional resources. Each knows what the other needs and when they need it. Sometimes they offer comfort and sympathy, sometimes encouragement. Other times, they may provide pointed feedback and gentle nudges. These friends are inexhaustible wellsprings of emotional support.

### *A Creative Bond*

When Advocates and their Diplomat friends have a mutual interest, they inspire each other, sharing core similarities that drive both in similar directions. This doesn't necessarily mean the same direction – they are, after all, individuals. But by weaving together harmonious yet unique paths, Advocates and Diplomats glimpse things through each other's different points of view. Such coordinated efforts can be real gifts. Advocates and their Diplomat friends stir up profound feelings and ideas in each other.

When it comes to pursuing creative expression and ideas together, Advocates find that other Diplomats make willing and helpful partners. Even when the setting is relaxed, Diplomats explore life and hold all its pieces in their minds, sharing what they see. When these two types are together as trusting friends, their pleasure arises from exchanging insights and dreams. And when they carry that over into action together, their friendship reaches a whole new level.

## Unbalanced Advocate–Diplomat Friendships

### *Isolated and Insulated*

One key challenge for Advocates and their Diplomat friends comes from the same source that fuels their friendships – their similarity. Having friends who think likewise can be very reassuring and inspiring, but when these friends agree too readily and uncritically, it can isolate them from useful or cautionary input. They may convince each other that their ideas are worth pursuing – maybe even the *only* ideas worth pursuing – even when that's simply not the case.

When these friends fall into this unhealthy pattern, they may also build walls to shield each other from the outside world's sometimes unpleasantly harsh criticism, particularly if they're both Introverted, losing diversity of thought in the process. These friends' mutual reassurances risk creating shared delusions by preventing the grounding benefits of fresh outside perspectives. By firmly, even nobly, defending and supporting one another, Advocates and their Diplomat friends can unintentionally perpetuate each other's ignorance.

### *Emotional Transfer*

Similarity may also lead Advocates and their Diplomat friends to unconsciously manipulate each other. They aren't likely to try to pull the wool over each other's eyes – their compassion and quest to be genuine go against such impulses. However, that very compassion and desire to make others feel better about themselves can lead to unbalanced bias. Both types project their feelings onto others readily, and if they lose their objectivity, they may confuse their own opinions for their friends' best interests. When this happens, criticism or advice becomes more about what they want than

about what is right for those receiving it, and the high level of emotional connection between these friends makes it hard to be objective.

Advocates and Diplomats are also natural compromisers when it comes to the emotional states of friends; thus, they can be more susceptible than most to this kind of influence. If a friend is upset or negative, it's contagious. Rather than confront their friends, these types may go along to get along, which can perpetuate unbalanced behavior. The way they share emotions is one of the most beautiful features of Advocate–Diplomat friendships, but emotional independence is a skill worth developing. This again ties back to the importance of personal growth as an underpinning factor of healthy relationships.

### *Floating in Space*

Advocates and their Diplomat friends place lots of importance on imagination and dreams, but when they begin to exclude what the real world offers, they miss out on important opportunities. It's not a balanced approach to life to pay little attention to practical, down-to-earth matters and pursuits. This can especially create a challenge for friends who have closely entwined lives, for example working together or sharing an apartment.

There's nothing wrong with flitting like butterflies from one lighthearted pursuit to another, or from sharing deep introspective thoughts together about how things could be – this is a wonderful part of such friendships. However, Advocate–Diplomat friends should be careful not to become lost in a sort of divine chaos that feels exciting at first but becomes a disconnection from reality – with very real consequences. When friends forget how much joy can be found in engaging in

earthly matters together, the relationship can become unbalanced. Dreams can be beautiful, but shared experiences in the moment are no less so, with the right friend.

### Rebalancing Advocate–Diplomat Friendships

#### *Broadening Their Circles*

Advocates and other Diplomats should sometimes break out of their cloisters and ask, “What if ...?” out in the wider world. This may mean joining larger groups with more diverse ideas, from book clubs to community college classes, or finding some other way to break out of the bubbles they may inadvertently create together. This may be difficult, particularly for Advocates, because of their Introverted trait and how much they value their friendships. They may not want to dilute their connection to a specific person by including other people. However, including others can be invaluable in rebalancing their most special friendships.

All Diplomats, including Advocates, crave authenticity, so if they catch but a glimpse of worthy qualities outside their immediate social circle, they explore and ultimately embrace those people. However, they need that glimpse first, so they must consider the possibility that someone with whom they didn't initially feel commonality may have something of value to offer through friendship after all. If these friends notice that their strong mutual support prevents them from seeing potential value in others, they have little choice but to seek balance together by widening their social scope. They can use the following steps:

- Agree together to broaden each other's social limits.
- Keep an eye out for different, interesting people.
- Make their acquaintance and engage them socially.
- Discuss together anything learned from others' unfamiliar perspectives.

- Maintain the privacy of your own friendship, but try to include others now and then.

When both friends work together to engage new people who might challenge them, they can comfort and reassure each other, not to affirm their limits, but to support each other in expanding them. Who knows what fun new friends might bring?

### *Exercising Independent Thought*

Advocates and their Diplomat friends can rebalance subtle manipulations by focusing on sharing their own feelings, thoughts, and ideas. These friends carry a certain gravity with each other because of the trust inherent in the relationship, but there is a difference between subtle pressure and honest, gentle sharing. That is a difference Advocates may want to fine-tune, especially among Diplomat friends, where emotions abound and harmony is prized over all else. Advocate-Diplomat friends likely don't want to reject each other's criticisms or concerns when they come from a good place, but they should acknowledge that manipulation can also take this form; that realization may make them aware of when it happens.

The word "manipulation" may sound harsh or unlikely, but it's important to understand that we're talking about unconscious prejudice, not deliberate machinations. In fact, conscious manipulation is a betrayal of trust that these sensitive friends find repugnant; therein is the key to rebalancing. Because these friends care so genuinely for each other's well-being, merely mentioning the appearance of any unfair pressure will hit home and likely halt it. When one of these friends takes the time to gently express their concerns, the other will quickly look at their own behavior anew, then do whatever it takes to restore balance.

It's helpful for these friends to keep these ideas in mind:

- Express criticism as constructive concern, openly and without emotional pressure.
- Don't be afraid to respectfully consider but reject each other's advice.
- Make appreciation clear to each other while staying firmly on a personal path.
- Try not to get too caught up in each other's emotions – a little distance can enable better objectivity and, ultimately, better care for each other.

These friends want to be supportive, not controlling. It's enough to honestly make their opinions known and offer their help to each other – they don't need to feel responsible for each other's decisions, nor take each other's independence as rejection. Instead of trying to push each other subtly, they can give their support to the directions they each choose for themselves.

### *Rediscovering the Tangible*

Balancing their inner, imaginative life with some real-world experiences is a huge benefit to Advocates and their Diplomat friends. Instead of encouraging each other to only live internally, these types can make it a point to get out and experience the world. Such an effort at balancing their lives – with local fairs, the arts, or live music – can only make their friendships richer. Instead of watching and discussing a film (though there's nothing wrong with that), perhaps a few frames of bowling or a spontaneous hike would expand their lives. A little interaction with the material world wouldn't hurt these pairs, who otherwise live through imagination.

This applies not just to matters of fun and fancy, but also to daily responsibility. In each other's happy company, boring tasks and routine life maintenance can be pleasant experiences. By supporting each other's focus on things that matter – but perhaps aren't the most exciting – these friends can affirm the deep care they have

for each other. Whether that means running errands together, offering moral support to boost energy, or even pitching in on a few chores now and then, Advocates and Diplomats can help keep each other on track. When matters of daily life are under control, both types can gain the freedom to move on to loftier pursuits they enjoy together.

Here's a little guidance:

- Make time to do basic, grounded things together, every week.
- Focus on things that both enjoy that require attendance or participation.
- Try and pick things that exercise basic skills in a hands-on way, such as painting or tennis.
- Consider keeping each other company or even helping with chores and errands – make responsibilities fun by doing them together.

Regardless of any potential hiccups, these friends' shared interests, imaginations, and tendency to seek win-win situations make them kind and inspiring companions – and they're also equipped with the compassion to resolve conflicts should they arise.

## Advocate–Sentinel Friendships



Sentinels are loyal and down-to-earth friends who are always eager to advise and support. Their style is far more grounded and matter-of-fact than Advocates', and they seek dedicated and sincere friendships based on trust and stability. Sentinels' dependability comes with a degree of rigid conventionality, however, so Advocates may dismiss Sentinel friends as unimaginative or lacking creativity. That makes for an incomplete assessment, though, as each type is creative in different ways – ways that can balance each other wonderfully.

### Balanced Advocate–Sentinel Friendships

#### *Different Kinds of Creativity*

Advocates' perceptive imaginations can seem like magic to Sentinel friends, opening them to fun possibilities they wouldn't see on their own. When it comes to inviting new experiences into this friendship, Advocates tend to lead, although they are unlikely to push Sentinels into anything too wild.



Sentinels' creativity is fueled by the question, "How can we make this happen?" Sentinels can perform logistical miracles that amaze their Advocate friends. Although they may not always dream as big as their Advocate friends, they often enact more of their ideas because they so easily see how to make them happen. Truly, this friendship can be a match made in heaven when these types collaborate.

### *The Dreamer and the Doer*

Advocates are known for focusing much of their energy on thought, spending their free time on grand ideas, if not always action. Sentinels are doers, naturally seeing clear steps to make things happen. Sentinels understand the concept of responsible, fulfilling daily living more than any other Role, and they can help their Advocate friends balance their cerebral passions with practicality to create workable progress that's sensible as well as idealistic.

Because of their focus on the future, Advocates invite judicious change as a matter of course, something that astounds Sentinels, who tend to resist change in favor of personal traditions. Advocates can help their Sentinel friends see the benefits of occasionally letting go of rigid concerns and engaging in the exploration of possibilities, creating a balance between security and necessary progress. Sentinel friends find inspiration in the original ideas that come so naturally to Advocates, driving them to expand the scope and scale of their life goals. In balance together, these friends have meaningful, fun adventures, as well as satisfying shared accomplishments.

### *Solace*

Advocates can drown in worries when negative emotions take over, but Sentinels' steady footing and realistic composure can help them overcome personal chaos

arising from darker imaginings. When Sentinel friends say, "We'll get through this," they mean it, and Advocates feel the truth of their support – it's not just a reassurance or the tendering of hope, it's a promise. Sentinel friends freely give their resolve and their certainty that they will find a solution or, at least, a more earth-bound perspective.

Of course, Sentinels, in turn, find that the deep and sincere care of Advocates is touching far beyond what reason might dictate. There can be something powerfully reassuring about a friend who looks past earthly matters and practical perspectives into the soul itself, giving pure empathy and care regardless of circumstance. Sentinels can release their worldly troubles and simply appreciate the warm, enveloping concern of Advocate friends like a soft blanket around them.

### Unbalanced Advocate–Sentinel Friendships

#### *What Is Fun?*

When Advocates meet with their Sentinel friends, they're likely hoping to bond and share profound, timeless insights mulled since their last encounter. Sentinels, on the other hand, may be looking forward to an afternoon hanging out, catching up, and engaging in favorite established pastimes together. Both types want to enjoy each other's company, but how they prefer to spend shared time can be profoundly different. Without fuller understanding of each other's views of what is important – or what counts as fun – they might have misunderstandings or unbalanced feelings of annoyance.

Advocates will want to spend their time together exploring esoteric topics and possibilities together in conversation, perhaps in a café. They'll want to talk about what they've been up to recently, as well as their ideas and plans – things that exist

inside their bright mental landscape. For Sentinels, however, such discussions serve only as a reference point for the reality of the moment, and they'll likely be more interested in talking about – and actively engaging – whatever is right in front of the pair. For them, a café is not just a place to share each other's thoughts, opinions, and hopes, it's also a place to enjoy good food and drinks together, perhaps people watch. When Advocates lose sight of the fun present in the moment, they may leave their Sentinel friends behind.

### *Concepts vs. Execution*

These friends can balance each other's lives, but if they criticize each other's methods, the unbalanced behavior can lead to conflict and tension. Both types tend to have fixed ideas of what they want to achieve, but they may go about it in very different ways. Advocates organize their worlds around concepts and visions of greater hopes and ideas, whereas Sentinels organize their worlds around details and stability. This can become an issue when they try to work together toward a common goal, such as a social endeavor or shared outing.

Advocates' focus on the intangible becomes unbalanced when it leads to indifference or irresponsibility, such as the details of executing mutual activities. They may act based on unrealistic expectation more than sensible assessment, causing plans to falter or go awry in ways that frustrate Sentinels, who think they can see how problems could have been avoided. Sentinels, on the other hand, might insist too rigidly on details, hanging their own – and others' – happiness on procedural matters instead of a broader outcome of fun and enjoyment. Although neither intends to be intolerant of the other's style, it can turn out that way when these friends make plans together.

## Rebalancing Advocate–Sentinel Friendships

### *Appreciating Fundamental Differences*

For these types, having fun together requires understanding that they may have different definitions of fun. One of the first steps to closing the gap between Advocates' conceptual focus and Sentinels' fixed, pragmatic view is simply to acknowledge that difference. Although there may never be a full meeting of the minds, there can be a meeting of the hearts and a sense of acceptance and mutual respect. With patience, each can work to understand that the other is coming from a good place, which creates common ground for enjoying each other's company.

It's a fool's errand to ask Advocates to be less passionate or Sentinels to relax their need to maintain practical control. However, the best way forward is to take a step into each other's worlds, at least a little – they needn't lose who they are or cease counter-balancing each other. Sentinels can still ask their Advocate friends to take a deep breath when they are too distracted with new ideas or passions, and Advocates can still ask their Sentinel friends to lighten up a bit when they're obsessed with serious responsibilities. The mere intent to accept and explore each other's ways a little at a time will be enough to rebalance this caring friendship. Both friends can do the following:

- Respect each other's differences. Apply what you know about what your friend prefers or dislikes.
- Ask questions about how each other's differences are applied in daily life. Try to get a glimpse of each other's point of view.
- Make time to do things together that appeal mainly to one friend, then alternate fairly.

These two will likely always have to make room for the other's style. However, if they believe that their own approach is just fine for themselves, then they must give their friends the respect and space to do things their way – treating others as they wish to be treated.

### *Understanding Is Caring*

Advocates should recognize that it is no small matter to disrupt a Sentinel's best-laid plans. Sentinels take their responsibilities seriously, and even seemingly minor disruptions of their code can lead to hurt feelings. Advocates can rebalance such missteps, both by letting their compassion open the door to compromise, and by taking time to appreciate what Sentinels contribute to shared plans. It's great to have a grand concept for a fun shared activity, and a good plan well-executed ensures that concept becomes reality. Recognizing the value of Sentinels' realistic logistics not only demonstrates respect, it also helps Advocates learn a skill that will help them accomplish their enthusiastic hopes.

For their part, Sentinels should try not to control every little detail; making something happen in a successful and fun way doesn't require absolute predictability. Sentinels are unlikely to be carried away by abstract concepts or stretched profundity, but they can open themselves enough to enjoy an unrestrained moment. They can rebalance over-rigidity by realizing that tight control of an endeavor sometimes severely limits its potential – that Advocates' seemingly "unrealistic" hopes may be the first step toward unexpected, amazing experiences together.

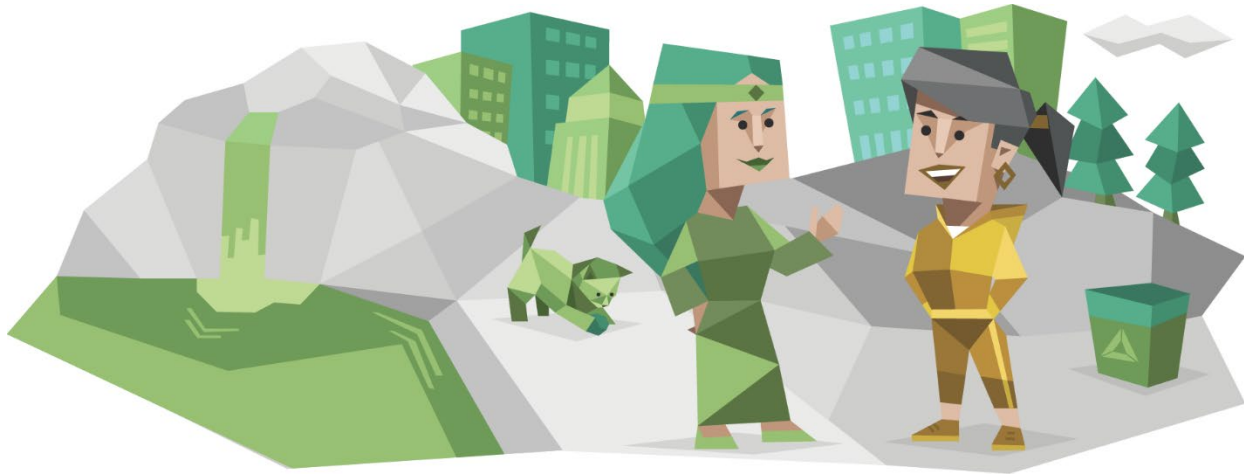
Some tips to help these friends rebalance their differing ideas of how to have fun:

- Participate in activities that matter to each other.
- An activity doesn't have to be engaging to enjoy the company of friends.

- Try to respect the specificity of friends' needs. You don't always need to know "why."
- Ask your friend how you can support them so they have fun with you.

Ultimately, friends are friends. Even though Advocates and Sentinels are sometimes caught off-guard by the different ways they approach activities, they can have even more fun together when they focus on each other's unique contributions.

### Advocate-Explorer Friendships



When both types behave in balanced, understanding ways toward each other, Advocate-Explorer friendships can easily epitomize "opposites attract." With a little effort, this friendship can be very fulfilling for both types, even as others wonder how these oddly matched friends make it work. Such friendships require a lot of mutual understanding. If Advocates and their Explorer friends are dedicated and flexible enough, and share a few mutual interests, though, their friendships will be anything but boring.

## Balanced Advocate–Explorer Friendships

This might be one of the more exciting combinations of personality types, with interesting opportunities for both. Explorers are more adaptable than idealistic, pragmatically in tune with the everyday world instead of the fantastic goals that are so central to Advocates' worldview. Advocates' initial impressions of potential Explorer friends are likely to be concentrated on the latter's spontaneity, unpredictability, and focus on engaging the present moment. This can intrigue Advocates, who may see Explorers as doorways to enlightening, interesting experiences.

### *Yin and Yang Balance*

Advocates and Explorers have a few particularly notable differences which, in a good friendship, can benefit both. Although Advocates love to have fun, they can be so serious-minded as to disconnect from immediate reality – moralistic ideas and visions of the future often dominate their thinking. Explorer friends offer a healthy distraction that helps bring Advocates out of their heads and into the moment. The self-gratifying immediacy of Explorers' typical pursuits offers a satisfying and healthy break for Advocates caught up in their ruminations and existential stress.

Meanwhile, Advocates offer some useful ideological structure for their more spontaneous Explorer friends. Advocates love to share their contemplative and compassionate view of life with others. For novelty-seeking Explorers, being inspired to explore the deeper meaning in everything can stimulate their sense of adventure. This is especially true if it involves working directly on something tangible together. Explorers can find great satisfaction in doing something that applies their skills in a new way, guided by an imaginative Advocate friend.

## Unbalanced Advocate–Explorer Friendships

### *Different Levels of Interest*

These two have the potential to balance each other through their differences, but they may also clash. They tend to have very different lifestyles: Advocates try to live for intangible values born from their imaginations and beliefs, whereas Explorers connect to the world around them by engaging in practices rather than ruminations. When either takes their own perspective too far, they can easily alarm each other by unfairly criticizing their differences.

When this happens, Advocates are quick to judge how Explorers should feel about things, especially in conceptual and social areas. They may think their Explorer friends are being selfish by focusing on accomplishing their own, more tangible interests instead of sharing broader societal concerns. In turn, Explorers may get annoyed at Advocate friends for expressing high-minded opinions yet failing to follow through with any realistic ideas or practical actions. Explorers put great focus on personal accomplishment and have little respect for what they may see as endless talk.

This isn't nearly so simple as a case of altruism versus selfishness, though. Explorers often maintain a "live and let live" attitude, which at its core is highly respectful of others. Advocates pour their energy into their ideas for positive change, but that drive can easily become sanctimonious or controlling. The issue here isn't that one of these friends has an inferior approach, but rather that they can fail to respect how well their differing approaches work. When in sync, these two balance each other wonderfully, but if they allow their perspectives to become unbalanced, their differences make for a slippery slope into judgment and resentment.



### *Mutual Disdain for the Mundane*

Fun Explorers may pull Advocates out of the clouds, but even with the best of intentions, these two might step into an irresponsible dynamic. Explorer friends are likely to encourage Advocates to set aside some of life's obligations, whether blowing off a homework assignment or loosening a budget for a night out. For their part, Advocates easily get caught up in shared moments of joy with friends, happily ignoring rational concerns in favor of feeling good. When things go too far out of balance, they enable each other to disregard consequences.

This may play out differently in friendships than with roommates, families, or spouses. Nonetheless, friends can be an unbalancing influence on each other when they become a refuge from reality. Although Advocates tend to maintain firm priorities, their priorities can easily become unrealistic, and too much fun indulgence with spontaneous Explorers only makes matters worse. Being supportive of each other can do unintentional harm when these friends don't discriminate what they support; inspiring shared experiences can enrich the soul while leaving bank accounts dangerously impoverished.

### *The Tortoise and the Hare*

As much as Advocates can enjoy sharing experiences with Explorers, they may be in for some disappointment as well. Explorers seize interests with passion, but they may just as easily drop them. It's not that Explorers can't maintain commitment if something fascinates them – they are at their best when they strive to master a craft – but if the passion dies down, it's difficult for them to maintain their energy. Advocates who have invested time and energy with their Explorer friends in a mutual

pursuit may find this upsetting, and if they allow this perfectly natural frustration to grow without resolution, conflict may result.

Advocates may see this as a matter of trust, something very important to them. When they feel they cannot trust Explorer friends to be consistent in shared pursuits, that insecurity can push Advocates into an unbalanced overreaction. They may withdraw their time and energy entirely because they just can't bear the unpredictable changes. In turn, Explorers are baffled by what they see as slavery to constancy, and they may grow resentful when Advocates reject their spontaneous inspirations. Explorers who lose their sense of balanced patience may view Advocates as stuck up or stuck in a rut and, either way, may disdain their feelings and need for stability.

### Rebalancing Advocate-Explorer Friendships

#### *Respecting Interests*

Good friends often find interest in subjects they don't care about simply because a friend cares so much. When it comes to their different approaches to life, Advocates and Explorers may need to be willing not only to overlook differences but also go along for the ride occasionally. Friendship is participatory. If either type is rigid and refuses to pay any attention to the things that excite the other, the relationship won't have much of a foundation.

Of course, in addition to adapting to each other's needs, Advocates and Explorers can have great friendships while maintaining separate interests, too. In fact, they probably should. Friends of Explorers must appreciate their need to do their own thing. Advocates also have their preferences, and they may need to pursue certain things without the company of Explorers. On some level, such friendships may require sufficient distance and flexibility to allow the individuals room to be

themselves. True friends don't need to share everything; they can give each other space, and then come together to make plans that are rewarding to both.

These steps can help keep both friends satisfied:

- Try to understand each other by discussing differences.
- Allow each other's differences without judgment.
- When friction occurs, take time apart to engage individual interests.
- Come back together often for things that both friends enjoy.

For an Advocate-Explorer friendship to ultimately work, both types should have enough in common that they enjoy, rather than simply tolerate, the unique pursuits of the other person. Sometimes this may require friends to take an unselfish step outside of their comfort zone or area of interest, even as they hold on to the values and interests that make them who they are.

### *Looking out for the Little Things*

Advocate-Explorer friends may both want to ignore their boring responsibilities, but because they care for each other, they should avoid becoming enablers and try to keep a caring, watchful eye on each other's well-being. Mutual support is a great benefit of friendship, even if friends share similar flaws.

This can be as simple as each friend taking a moment to ask themselves not only what would make their friend happy, but what would serve them best in the long run. When facing shared decisions about anything from life choices to recreational plans, these friends can add a layer of respect for each other by considering each other's welfare as well as pleasure. Advocates are especially good at this and likewise deeply appreciate such efforts from Explorer friends. These friends can absolutely

indulge in fun and excitement together – they just need to make sure their reach doesn't exceed their grasp.

These friends can help each other by employing these steps:

- Try not to distract each other from life responsibilities.
- Keep each other's well-being in mind when planning things together.
- Inquire about each other's availability based around consideration for other priorities – “after you're finished doing [blank], want to hang out?”

If these friends take time to observe what's going on in each other's lives, they'll recognize when they can get together for fun and when other priorities demand their attention. Prying each other away from stress is great, as long as they recognize when to let each other focus on important things.

### *Accepting Non-Commitment*

Advocates should know that Explorers may be uncomfortable committing to things – not because they can't follow through, but because they don't want joy to turn into obligation. This may not make sense to Advocates, who value commitment. Predictability never was the charm of this pairing, though, nor is it needed for Advocates to feel appreciated. It's that sense of unexpected inspiration that makes Explorer friends so valuable to Advocates seeking personal balance. Explorers pull them into the moment, where they can see the deeper dimensions of a subject or experience without distraction from thoughts of the future or past.

That said, Advocates can help Explorer friends recognize that the difference between spontaneity and jerking the carpet out from under them can be a matter of communication. Advocates need consideration for their feelings, and frankly, a little

hand-holding goes a long way when leading Advocates into changes and the unknown. Explorers can make it clear that although their interests and direction may be subject to sudden change, their support will always be there. Instead of turning away to follow their own path, they can offer a friendly hand and the option to join; this helps Advocates feel valued and respected whether they choose to participate or not.

Advocates care about their friends. To create balanced friendships with Explorers, they can work to accept their unique qualities and needs: The stricter the arrangement, the less likely Explorers are to be comfortable. Any efforts to control or direct them – something that Advocates may want to do in reaction to Explorers' spontaneity – are likely to push them away. Advocates can moderate their desire for steadiness by appreciating how Explorers' spontaneity can benefit them; such friends will be ready to drop what they're doing and join them at a moment's notice.

It's important for both friends to:

- Be gently honest with each other when something isn't fun anymore.
- Be understanding when one or the other wants a change.
- Try to manage expectations internally and be flexible.
- Ask for – and give – their best effort to stick with important things together.

Early and frequent communication can help Advocates and Explorers manage changing preferences while enjoying time together. There's no better method than staying honest yet considerate toward each other. With a little care, this friendship can be a lasting source of happiness.

## Conclusion

Advocates are known for their never-ending desire to put things together in wonderful ways. This inclination takes on a new dimension as Advocates incorporate the unique qualities and needs of other personality types into their friendships. Advocates care deeply about forging lasting, reliable relationships with those who share their values and perspectives. When Advocates open themselves to understanding and appreciating people with whom they may not share easy or immediate compatibility, the friendships dovetail beautifully with personal growth.

Advocates' combination of traits makes them passionately progressive but not always open-minded; they have deep values and a tendency to want to change the world to suit their own views. Friendships with people who don't completely share their perspective might not provide obvious reassurance, but ultimately, they may create even greater gains. If personal growth is about embracing change, then it can't always be comfortable. Thus, surrounding themselves with similar-minded people may not give Advocates the chance to achieve their greatest growth.

On the other hand, friendship shouldn't feel like a class, always challenging the mind to expand. Everyone craves the comfort of trustworthy friends with whom they can share their deepest secrets – people who will stick with them through thick and thin. It's also critically important to have friends who are simply fun and relaxing to be around. Fortunately for Advocates, personality types who are very different can also provide these benefits.

Regardless of people's differing methods and perspectives, Advocates can almost always find something to appreciate and admire about them. Advocates want to see the best in people, and when they let this desire for connection lead them into

unexpected friendships with diverse people, they find rewards that far exceed their own assumptions.

## Additional Tools and Tests

Want to dig even deeper into your friendships? If you have access to the toolkits area of the website, we offer a variety of additional tools and tests to help you explore.

### Type Guesser (Friendships)

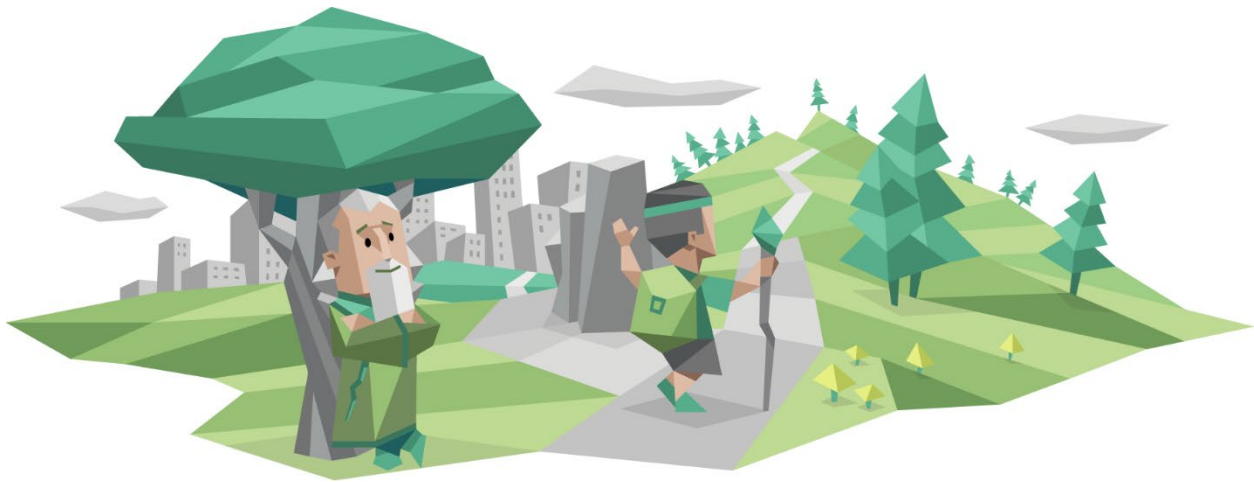
Are you trying to figure out what personality type your friend belongs to? You may find that this simple tool helps.

### Personal Authenticity Test

Can you be your true self with your friends and family? Let's explore how you feel about your authenticity in those circumstances.



## Advocates as Parents



Like all Diplomat parents, Advocates focus intently on promoting morality and ethical behavior in their children from a very young age. They are very principled, driven, and compassionate, and they do their best to ensure that their children can fight for causes they believe in, as well as separate the good from the bad. This doesn't mean that Advocate parents encourage their children to become fanatics, but they do stress the importance of having a clear moral compass and noble goals.

Advocate parents also encourage their children to listen to their emotions when making decisions and to be sensitive and kind whenever possible. They believe that doing what's right is much more important than merely doing what society or their peers expect them to do. Advocate parents will be prouder if their children befriend a lonely classmate than if they win the title of prom queen or king. Having their children grow up as sensitive, principled individuals is one of the key goals for parents with this personality type. When Advocates are confident in themselves, they can trust their instincts and their hearts, and they teach their children to do the same.

### *Imaginative and Creative*

Advocates who are in touch with their values often place a lot of importance on imagination and creativity. Parents with this personality type encourage their children to explore various hobbies and personal interests, hoping they find inspiration to pursue their own passions. They don't try to get their children to "follow the crowd," instead attempting to embolden them to think independently. More than anything, they want their children to be true to who they are, regardless of what society says that they "should" be.

Taking their own advice, confident Advocates also take a creative approach to parenthood, using their insight and imagination to approach issues that they, or their children, may face. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to the many dilemmas that life will undoubtedly serve up, and Advocate parents realize the necessity of being able to provide appropriate responses and creative solutions. They excel at combining their empathy with ingenuity to take unique, individually tailored problem-solving approaches to the pickles that they and their children encounter.

### *Dedicated and Empathic*

Devotion to their ideals is a cornerstone for Advocates who have a healthy grasp of their own identity, and this dedication easily transfers to their approach to parenthood. Meeting their children's needs, both emotionally and physically, is a soul-quenching endeavor for these parents. Although some parents may feel drained by their children's constant neediness, Advocates are invigorated by all opportunities to bond with their children while providing them with the love and support they need.

At their best, Advocates are very sensitive and empathic, especially when it comes to their family members. As parents, they will help their prepubescent child cover up their first pimple before school without judgment, and they will be on hand with ice cream and a shoulder to cry on when their teenager is rejected by their first big crush. Children with Advocate parents are unlikely to find themselves lacking in compassionate connections, especially when they are needed most.

### *Difficulty Detaching*

Advocates' empathy and compassion help them create strong emotional bonds with their children, which may seem idyllic – until it's time for their children to start making their own way in the world. In some cases, the emotional bonds between parent and child can be taken too far, becoming an unbalanced exaggeration of an otherwise healthy affection. What initially appears to be a loving bond can spiral into codependency, and Advocate parents may have difficulty accepting that their children have become adults who need to lead independent lives.

Unbalanced Advocate parents may find themselves behaving like the ignominious helicopter parents of suburban folklore who are overly involved in every aspect of their children's lives. In their unceasing desire to "do what's best" for their children, they commit unseemly acts such as calling potential employers to encourage them to hire their son or daughter or completing their child's science fair project for them, using resources and abilities no second-grader would possess. With mom or dad always taking care of their problems, such children can eventually become entitled adults who fail to take responsibility for their actions or behaviors.

### *Overly Sensitive*

Because of their sensitivity and focus on morality, Advocates can be deeply offended by things that other personality types would probably shrug off. Few things are more hurtful to Advocates who over-identify with their beliefs than seeing their children challenge or, in certain cases, fully reject them. In such circumstances, Advocates may blame themselves for being unable to instill the right values in their children, and they may try to fix that by resorting to emotional manipulation.

Parents with this personality type should be especially careful during their children's adolescent years. Teenagers often rebel against their parents' authority, and Advocates shouldn't immediately assume that their kids are actively fighting their beliefs or that all their teachings were ignored. Otherwise, Advocates may try to focus all their efforts on mitigating damage and strengthening their relationships with their children – which may provoke even stronger pushback.

### *Lacking Follow-Through*

Advocates have infinite ideas, thanks to their strong Intuitive trait; however, their pursuit of these ideas can be hampered by impracticality and unrealistic expectations. Often a result of inexperience and immaturity, their impracticality often manifests as a lack of attention to detail, resulting in failure to follow through with their plans. Advocate parents may have every intention of sticking to a detailed grocery budget, but if they don't determine what items they need to get from the store in advance, they are likely to spend more than expected.

Even when caught up in their ideas and causes, Advocate parents aren't necessarily being irresponsible. They just tend to shy away from details when they are caught up in the more exciting aspects of a situation or when they are focusing on the big

picture. Their Judging trait generally promotes decisiveness and structure; however, when they become exceptionally stressed, busy, or distracted, those traits become compromised. Planning for a big protest may take priority in their mind over cleaning the house or helping with the school holiday party. Details can slip through the cracks when they become consumed with more idealistic pursuits.

### *Inspiring Independence*

As much as they may believe they are helping their children by constantly solving their problems, Advocate parents who do not allow their children to struggle and learn from their mistakes are doing them a disservice. Fortunately, the same passion they have for helping their children can easily be transformed into a passion for promoting their growth and development. Many Advocates consider themselves aficionados of personal development, as they seek out and engage in growth opportunities themselves. This drive to constantly improve and evolve is inspirational and can be harnessed to help Advocate parents serve as mentors to their children rather than the saviors they may aspire to be.

The key to inspiring healthy independence throughout children's lives is to provide the proper balance of challenge and support. Advocate parents certainly don't need to let their children wallow in confusion, but they shouldn't be too quick to jump in and solve their problems either. Allowing children to experience failure is just as important as supporting them during their greatest trials. A child who "forgets" to study for a history test must accept the consequences of their behavior (not paying attention, being disorganized). Instead of swooping in to save them, Advocate parents should help them to cope with the consequences and learn from them.

*Improving Understanding of Self and Others*

One of the best ways to counter a tendency to be overly sensitive is to improve understanding of self and others. If Advocate parents are unaware of their own triggers (what makes them feel insecure or offended), it's easy for them to get carried away by any perceived slights. Likewise, if they fail to understand that their children have their own unique values and personality traits, they may assume that they are being defiant or difficult. Despite the influence that Advocate parents have over their children, it's important to respect and support their differences. Children may not choose to be vegans like their Advocate parent, but that doesn't mean they don't value life or love animals any less.

One of the rewards of parenthood is the opportunity to learn from children and grow as human beings. Sometimes parenting brings out the negative side – like yelling at the toddler who threw their cup on the floor *again* – but it also brings out the best and most authentic parts of a person's personality. Advocate parents are especially selfless, and their self-sacrifice and compassion will not go unnoticed, even though it might be taken for granted for some time. Reflecting on the aspects of parenthood that are especially hard, like dealing with rebellious teenagers, will allow Advocates to see what aspects of themselves they need to improve or balance. Rebellious teens hate it when their Advocate parents “lecture” them about their choices, and Advocates can learn that subtle statements about their opinions may resonate more than full-fledged diatribes. After all, Advocates are most inspirational in their actions; if they model the values they hold dear, their children will likely respect and adopt those values as well.

### *Embracing a Daily Rhythm*

Difficulty with details and follow-through is a struggle for many Advocate parents. However, Advocates can deal with these issues in ways that allow for the flexibility they desire – while still promoting the structure necessary to participate in their passions and get the kids to soccer practice on time. The best way for Advocates to achieve balance between structure and flexibility at home is to incorporate a structured rhythm in their daily lives.

Creative Advocates may balk at the idea of structure, equating that word with boredom and conformity; however, they will quickly appreciate the order and simplicity that a daily rhythm provides. Besides reducing stress and chaos, routines have the added benefit of providing stability for children, decreasing the likelihood of tantrums and other difficult behaviors. Additionally, when used correctly, structure allows for more freedom to pursue creativity and connections with their children.

Now that we have discussed some of the potential strengths and weaknesses of Advocate parents, we will consider how those strengths and weaknesses impact their parenting during different developmental stages.

## Parenting for Each Stage of Development

Each stage of a child's growth presents both unique challenges and exciting milestones. Learning how to navigate these stages can seem daunting, but the opportunity to build a healthy attachment and create meaningful memories is worth the struggle.

Renowned psychologist Erik Erikson proposed a theory of psychosocial development that identified eight stages, five of which take place between birth and 18 years of

age. (The ages listed for each stage are approximate.) Children develop at their own pace and meet each milestone in their own time, sometimes skipping stages, achieving them in an unexpected order, or trying one milestone and then falling back to an old one – the latter especially common with walking. This is usually normal, but it's worth checking with a pediatric physician regarding questions and concerns.

The following paragraphs discuss what to expect at each stage of development, as well as how Advocates' strengths and weaknesses affect their parenting at each stage.

### Infancy (From Birth to Approximately 1½ Years)

The first priority for infants in the journey to attachment is having their basic needs met. From being fed to receiving affection, infants either learn to trust that their Advocate parents provide for them or suffer from a sense of mistrust in all subsequent relationships. If parents are inconsistent or neglectful in providing for their children, their infants will have difficulty creating positive, trusting attachments with their parents.

On the other hand, attentive and affectionate parents, especially those who engage in consistent physical contact such as snuggling or transporting their children in a baby carrier on their body, will develop trusting, hopeful relationships with their infants and are likely to have very little difficulty building comfortable attachments.



## Balanced Parenting During Infancy

### *Building Loving Bonds*

There are few things in life as exciting as bringing home a new baby. Advocates, with their deep desire to connect with others, find this stage particularly satisfying. Advocates who tap into their empathy and sensitivity when a child is born have no trouble giving their infants the attention and affection needed to build a loving bond. Infants need affection that goes beyond just daily care. They crave the physical connection that their parents provide through cuddling, rocking, speaking softly, and making eye contact. A parent's loving smile does more than just entertain an infant, it creates a primal connection that inspires the trust they need to create positive relationships. Building empathic, emotional bonds with their children is Advocates' number one priority throughout the lifespan, and the infancy stage is one of the most rewarding times to interact with their children.

### *Motivated Caretakers*

As parents, Advocates thrive on feeling needed and enjoy being their children's primary caretaker, which can motivate them during the extraordinarily draining infant stage. Some parents may struggle to maintain energy during this phase, thus experiencing mood swings or other inconsistent behaviors, but Advocates' desire to feel needed coupled with their reliability allows them to not only survive this stage but even relish it.

The moment their child is born, the first time they smile, the first time they utter "mama" or "dada" – these are all meaningful and motivating experiences for Advocates. Advocate parents live for these simple moments, from cuddling with their sleepy, satiated baby in the rocking chair to making silly faces at them while changing

their diapers. Few parents are as attuned to and appreciative of the meaningful moments that build loving bonds with their children as Advocates are.

### Unbalanced Parenting During Infancy

#### *Taking on Too Much*

Many new parents experience a great deal of pressure to maintain their pre-infant lifestyle after a child is born. When Advocate parents become too focused on living up to unrealistic expectations, they may find themselves taking on more than they can handle. Both new Advocate parents and veterans alike may attempt to play the role of “super parent” by jumping back into work right away or obsessing about keeping the house spotless. When Advocates cave into this pressure to appear perfect, they end up over-taxing themselves physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally.

To further complicate matters, Advocates hate to feel as though they are a burden to anyone – they often feel it is their role to be the helper. Asking for help, even when they truly need it, can be extraordinarily difficult for Advocates. The infant and toddler years are some of the most challenging for parents, and an unwillingness to seek or accept help from others greatly increases the possibility that Advocate parents will experience frustration, exhaustion, and even depression.

#### *Struggling with Expectations*

In addition to struggling with taking on too much, Advocates may have unrealistic expectations of their children during this stage. They may believe that their infants should achieve certain milestones more quickly than is necessary or fret that their children aren't hitting milestones “on time.” Anxious Advocate parents may be more

concerned about getting their children to sit up, roll over, feed themselves, or walk before they are truly ready, rather than appreciating their children's current abilities and engaging with them at their level.

Although it is certainly exciting to see a baby roll over for the first time or sit up on their own, trying to push children to achieve these milestones early only causes frustration for both parties involved. Just because an infant isn't saying their first words at the same time as another child doesn't mean that they are not on track developmentally. Development, especially at this stage, is not a measure of parental ability. Advocate parents and their infants will be much happier and more relaxed if the babies are allowed to grow and develop at their own pace.

## Rebalancing Parenting During Infancy

### *Seeking Support*

Learning to balance their needs with their children's needs is one of the most important things Advocates can do. To do so, Advocate parents should take time to understand and accept their own limitations. It's not unreasonable to request the maximum time off after the birth of a child or to let people know you will only be stopping by the holiday meal this year. Being a healthy parent is more important than being a "super parent," as well as more realistic.

Although Advocates tend to feel guilty, even self-indulgent, when they put their own needs ahead of the needs of others, they will find that doing so makes them happier, healthier parents. Not everyone has the time, energy, or resources to take a weekend retreat or get weekly massages, so the following suggestions are effective ways for busy, burned-out Advocate parents to recharge in just a few minutes:

- Enjoy a 30-minute bath while your partner is putting the kids to bed.
- Take a relative up on their offer to baby-sit.
- Meet with a friend for coffee at home or at a coffee shop once a week.
- Engage in a deep breathing exercise or yoga stretches for five minutes.
- Find time to journal each day.
- Talk to a friend or partner about your thoughts and feelings regularly.

### *Determining Developmental Needs*

Developmental milestones are approximate – not set in stone. Children who attain certain milestones earlier are not necessarily “advanced,” and those who achieve them later are not always “delayed.” A child who begins speaking at 9 months old may be hailed as brilliant, whereas a sibling who doesn’t speak until 13 months may be (incorrectly) assumed to be “behind” in development. Labeling a child as advanced or delayed, especially this early in life, can be detrimental to their development, as well as their self-esteem, as labels often affect how others treat them.

Pediatricians and family physicians are parents’ best resources for determining whether they should be concerned about a child’s development. They can provide resources that cover what to expect at different stages regarding physical, intellectual, psychological, and behavioral development. Regular appointments with a physician ensure that any issues are addressed as soon as possible, which can help to put Advocate parents’ minds at ease. Many resources are available to new parents (and veteran parents who might want a refresher) to help improve understanding of infant development, including:

- Books that discuss infant and child development in detail, such as: “The Whole-Brain Child” by Daniel J. Siegel, MD, and Tina Payne Bryson, PhD; “What to

Expect the First Year” by Heidi Murkoff; and “The Baby Book” by William Sears, MD

- Online resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s [Child Development site](#)
- Courses in child development from an online or local university or community college
- Friends, family, and co-workers who have had experience with infants

## The Toddler Stage (From Approximately 1½ to 3 Years)

Once they are mobile, young children become very interested in exploring their environment with their senses. Crawling, walking, grabbing items, putting things in their mouths, and attempting verbal communication are just a few of the ways toddlers learn about the world around them.

During this stage, Advocate parents must provide a safe harbor for their children while still allowing them to experience and explore their surroundings. Children who can test boundaries yet still receive parental support and encouragement develop a sense of autonomy. Children who are overly restricted, criticized, or made to feel guilty for their desire to test boundaries ultimately experience a sense of shame and may suffer from feelings of incompetence or low self-worth. These feelings can last throughout their lives and may ultimately jeopardize their ability to achieve goals and develop positive character traits, such as reliability or confidence.

## Balanced Parenting During the Toddler Stage

### *Compassionate and Engaged*

Extremely supportive, Advocates make an ideal “home base” for their children during this stage. Their focus on meaningful engagement with their children combined with a sincere determination to meet their needs ensures that their children never feel abandoned, ignored, or unloved. Even though children at this age seek independence, they still crave (and need) a trustworthy caregiver, and Advocates do not disappoint.

Advocates’ compassion, for themselves and others, is especially useful during the trying toddler years. Although this stage can certainly be challenging, confident Advocate parents enjoy promoting their children’s curiosity and independence while still maintaining a safe environment. They take pleasure in helping their children learn how to pick out their own clothes and dress themselves while also promoting their children’s natural creativity and self-expression. Helping their children learn to become creative, self-reliant, and competent is among Advocate parents’ greatest joys.

### *Providing Safe Boundaries*

Advocates excel at setting up reasonable boundaries that allow their toddler children to feel as though they are unrestricted but still allow some parental control. Toddlers working to build a sense of autonomy need to have the perception that they are allowed to play or explore freely. Something as simple as setting up a space where a toddler can color, glue, and paint without worrying about the mess or allowing them to pick out their own books at the library can feel incredibly liberating to children at this stage.

The toddler years are the first time when Advocate parents need to develop their ability to determine what boundaries their children need and how to successfully create them. Providing a safe yet inspiring environment gives Advocates the sense of control they need to remain confident. When set up properly, this structure can expand and contract with a child's changing needs and abilities.

### Unbalanced Parenting During the Toddler Stage

#### *Difficulty with Defiance*

This stage can be especially challenging for Advocate parents if they take a toddler's willful or defiant behavior personally. When the children they have so lovingly raised begin using their newly acquired favorite word (No!), parents can become frustrated and discouraged. From throwing a fit every evening at bed time to refusing to eat any form of fresh produce, toddlers often seem as though they are focused almost exclusively on challenging what their parents have taught them.

As much as they truly want to foster their children's independence, Advocates struggle when their children's behavior does not match their expectations. The toddler stage is when identity development begins, and children often behave in a way that does not fit their parents' personal mold. Behaviors such as hitting their siblings or yelling at their parents, which are normal during this stage although not desirable, can be especially demoralizing to Advocates who feel that their children's morals should be more developed at this point. When Advocate parents are more focused on an idealized version of their children, they may miss opportunities to promote and support the unique aspects of their toddlers' personalities.

### *Overly Involved*

Advocates thrive on feeling needed and can become completely focused on meeting their children's every need. In an attempt to "help" their children, Advocates may inadvertently raise children who struggle with poor self-regulation and a lack of initiative. Constant interventions at the toddler stage can result in the expectation that everything will be done for them, perhaps resulting in failure to take responsibility for their own behaviors.

Although unbalanced Advocate parents may believe they are being compassionate and attentive, their behaviors may stunt development. Forcing children of this age to engage only in structured or educational games may seem like it will promote learning, but it prevents them from learning how to generate their own ideas or solve real-world problems. Similarly, stepping in every time their children argue or fight will impede their social development because they never learn how to resolve conflicts for themselves. Despite their best intentions, overly involved Advocates run the risk of limiting their toddlers' growth and their ability to deal with the challenges they will face as they grow older.

## Rebalancing Parenting During the Toddler Stage

### *Modeling Respectful Behavior*

As much as Advocates love to promote their children's growth, it can be disheartening to watch formerly cuddly and relatively docile infants turn into defiant, raging "No" machines. Parents may wonder "What happened to that sweet baby?" But Advocate parents should remember that the toddler stage is just that – a stage. The wild mood swings and forceful gestures of independence – like screaming and



running through the grocery store when they don't get the cereal they want – eventually balance out, once they hit their school-aged years.

Advocate parents must understand that their children are in the process of establishing autonomy and are not intentionally rejecting them. Much like college students who party when they are supposed to be studying, toddlers are pushing boundaries and finding their own way; they are not focused on defying their parents, as much as it might seem. Just because children are becoming more independent, however, doesn't mean that parents should allow them to get away with demanding behavior.

Advocate parents should still redirect their children and model appropriate ways to behave. Some ways to do that include:

- Teach toddlers to raise their hand or place their hand on a parent's arm if they need to speak instead of interrupting. The parent will know the toddler has something to say and will still get to finish their own sentence.
- Practice labeling emotions using pictures (smiley face, sad face, angry face), and have the toddler point to the face that matches their emotion. This should eventually help them feel understood and prevent them from acting inappropriately on their emotions.
- Read stories in which problems are solved via good behavior and emotional control (such as the "Little Blue Truck," "Where the Wild Things Are," and "The Runaway Bunny").

### *Focusing on Appropriate Growth*

Advocate parents can prevent or undo any negative consequences of their constant interventions with some of their own personal discipline and development. The most

effective way is to tap into their natural desire to encourage their children, as well as their ability to inspire others to believe in their cause.

Advocate parents can encourage a toddler's development by regularly looking for opportunities to promote growth and autonomy. The focus should be on age-appropriate growth, skills, and abilities – not making sure they *always* do *exactly* what they're told, which isn't a reasonable expectation at this age. The following actions will allow Advocates to support their children while also inspiring independence:

- Let toddlers pick out what they want to wear (from two or three options).
- Have them try pouring their own cereal.
- Allow them to wash their own hands and face after mealtime.
- Make time for play with no agenda.
- Encourage them to resolve conflicts through sharing and using kind words (and resist the temptation to solve issues for them).

## The Preschool Stage (From Approximately 3 to 5 Years)

The preschool years, from approximately 3 to 5 years of age, are a prime time for brain development, and children at this stage accumulate knowledge at an extraordinary rate. Children absorb information like sponges through constant activity and a seemingly infinite stream of disparate questions. Learning at this stage takes place through play, especially the unstructured and imaginary kind, as well as lots of social interaction with family and peers. Creativity is also exercised extensively through make-believe games and stories.

To work through this stage effectively, children must have the opportunity to make some of their own decisions, as well as be allowed to initiate activities, ask questions,

receive answers, and lead others in exploratory play. Children without such opportunities, or who are made to feel as though their constant questions or childish make-believe games are annoying, will experience feelings of guilt, frustration, and incompetence. Consequently, they may suffer from poor self-control, low self-esteem, or a lack of initiative.

### Balanced Parenting During the Preschool Stage

#### *Natural Teachers*

As promoters of lifelong learning, Advocate parents genuinely look forward to inspiring their children to enjoy learning as well. They happily answer their preschool children's seemingly ceaseless streams of questions and take great pleasure in finding creative ways to engage their children in learning opportunities. From trips to the library to impromptu nature lessons in the park, Advocates take any chance they can to engage and educate their preschoolers.

But educational opportunities are not the only form of teaching that Advocate parents engage in – modeling morals and values for their children from a young age is just as important to them as any other form of learning. Advocate parents teach their children to not only respect others but also appreciate their differences as well. They insist on integrity, encouraging their preschoolers to apologize to a neighbor whose flowers they dug up, then helping them to understand why digging up the flowers was wrong in the first place. Advocate parents feel they have a moral obligation to instill their values through modeling and consistent reinforcement.

### *Emotionally Engaged*

Life with a preschooler isn't just about learning and "teachable moments." Emotional engagement is Advocates' number one priority – both building strong bonds with their children and teaching them how to develop their emotional intelligence. Children at this stage are starting to learn the importance of self-control, empathy, and interpersonal relationships (especially with peers), and they need compassionate guidance to properly develop such skills.

Emotional intelligence is best learned through modeling, and this is where Advocate parents truly shine. Advocates who have developed their own self-control and are able to engage in meaningful interactions can lovingly communicate these concepts to their children. Imaginary play is an especially useful outlet for practicing these skills. Something as simple as playing a game of house can be a perfect opportunity for Advocate parents to model healthy relationships and lovingly redirect less-than-desirable behaviors. Not only do they pass on their emotional wisdom, parents who engage in this type of play with their preschoolers also enhance their emotional bonds as well.

## Unbalanced Parenting During the Preschool Stage

### *Pressure to be Perfect*

The preschool years bring a new level of energy as children become more interested in making sense of the world around them. Children at this stage are more mobile and opinionated than ever, which can try parents' patience. Parenting is an exhausting endeavor for even the most energetic individuals, and this stage can be especially draining because of constant questions and unceasing motion. As an Introverted and especially private personality type, Advocates who don't take time to

recharge regularly are likely to burn out, which can lead to exhaustion, anxiety, and a short temper.

Advocates who fall into the trap of perfectionism are especially likely to become overwhelmed during this stage. Just keeping up with work, chores, and the multiple needs of everyone in a household can be exhausting. Life becomes even more challenging when parents must also run their children from preschool to play dates to swimming lessons to karate classes. Parents in today's digital society may also feel burdened to make every birthday party and family vacation worthy of posting on social media. Running around doing errands and attempting to be the "perfect parent" can quickly take a toll on Advocate parents, who would much prefer to focus on the meaningful aspects of life over the marketable content.

### *Overestimating Abilities*

During the preschool years, children transition from completely dependent infants to increasingly independent individuals. As their preschoolers grow more competent and communicative, Advocate parents risk overestimating their children's capabilities. Their desire to one day view their children as equals can result in unrealistic expectations that frustrate both parent and child.

Specifically, Advocates, as morally focused individuals, may assume that their preschoolers can easily grasp any ideas or moral constructs they expose them to, regardless of how complicated they may be. This is especially true when the information they provide is hypothetical. Saying "You shouldn't hit people. How would you feel if someone hit you?" seems like a perfectly reasonable question – but children at this stage are incapable of putting themselves in another person's shoes. They may respond with the requisite "I would feel bad," but what they are really

thinking is “I would feel bad if someone hit me, but mostly I feel bad because I got in trouble.” Empathy and morality are still undeveloped at this stage, and Advocate parents who expect their children to be proficient in these skills will struggle to communicate effectively (and appropriately) with their preschoolers.

### Rebalancing Parenting During the Preschool Stage

#### *Adjusting Expectations*

Rather than letting their perfectionism drive them to the brink of burn-out, Advocate parents must learn to say “no” to the endless play dates and activities and say “yes” to a much-needed break whenever necessary. Children benefit more from healthy, happy parents than from birthday parties with now-expected Internet-inspired homemade cakes, pony rides, and goody bags worthy of the Oscars.

Although Advocate parents may initially feel some guilt for not “living up” to societal (or their own perfectionistic) expectations, they ultimately will feel liberated from the unnecessary obligations. Their natural tendency is to live life based on their values, not societal expectations, so they must find their way back to what is truly important to them and how they want to raise their children. It’s also important for Advocates to find ways to take care of themselves while parenting. Some ideas for bringing balance into the busy preschool stage include:

- Limit activities such as play dates, sports, art classes, etc., to just a couple days a week rather than every other day.
- Resist the temptation to make sure that every event or activity is social-media worthy.
- Schedule regular breaks – parent date nights, drinks with friends, or solo walks in nature – anything that is recharging and refreshing.

- Spend quality time with your preschooler with no agenda or expectations.

### *Accepting Age-Appropriate Abilities*

The preschool stage is one of the most delightful stages, as preschoolers can communicate with and understand their parents much more effectively than they could in earlier years. Advocate parents who focus on the progress that children have made are more successful in their interactions than those who dwell on undeveloped skills. From silly jokes to profound questions, preschoolers often display a type of genius that is truly inspiring. Additionally, children at this stage have a level of empathy that can make them sincerely compassionate.

Advocate parents who feel frustrated or overwhelmed by this stage have a multitude of resources to better understand preschooler capabilities. There is no shame in looking for help or asking for advice. Even Advocates who aren't necessarily struggling with their preschoolers can benefit from learning more about this stage. Some of the most useful resources include:

- Family members or friends who have or have had preschool-aged children
- Preschool teachers, daycare providers, and nannies
- Pediatricians and child therapists
- Books, websites, social-media groups, and blogs about parenting (use discretion, of course)

## The School-Age Stage (From Approximately 5 to 12 Years)

The early school years are an important period of skill development for young children. Not only are they still constantly absorbing new information, but they are also working on becoming proficient in increasingly complex subjects, from relationships to mathematics to athletics. Children who are both challenged and supported in these areas flourish in their abilities as well as their self-confidence.

If they do not receive consistent support, children at this stage can begin to feel inferior to their peers and will be less likely to develop long-term goals or work toward achieving them. On the other hand, if they are not sufficiently challenged, children in this stage can begin to feel overconfident, potentially leading to a lack of modesty and compassion.

### Balanced Parenting During the School-Age Stage

#### *Passionate and Encouraging*

Often avid learners themselves, Advocates encourage their children to pursue their academics with passion and curiosity. Despite their love of learning, “traditional” educational environments do not necessarily appeal to individuals of this type. Advocate parents may find options like charter schools or homeschooling to be better choices for educating their school-aged children.

Even the compassionate parents, Advocates provide support and encouragement to children who are struggling. At the same time, they don’t let their compassion prevent them from upholding their high expectations. Advocates’ children are expected to put effort into gaining knowledge and developing their skills: Although



they will certainly come to the aid of children who are struggling with a certain class or the school bully, Advocate parents will also encourage their children to work on finding solutions to such problems themselves.

### *Excellent Mentors*

The school years are a time of intense learning, and Advocates are natural mentors who have no trouble modeling the skills needed for academic success. Advocate parents do not shy away from teaching their children the value of hard work and the importance of traits such as innovation and creativity. Few types understand the necessity of these traits the way Advocates do.

At a stage in life when children are constantly being told what to do and conforming to strict schedules, innovation and creativity often become neglected or viewed as unnecessary. Imaginative Advocate parents understand the importance of these traits in an ever-changing world and encourage their children to incorporate their unique ideas and perspectives into their academic and personal lives. They encourage their children to integrate their passions and causes into their lives as well – from developing a science project focused on global warming to organizing a student council community volunteer day. Advocates are often extraordinarily effective at inspiring and promoting passion in their children during this stage.

## Unbalanced Parenting During the School-Age Stage

### *Struggling with Confidence*

One of the most important skills for children to develop during their school years is confidence. Everything from persisting on a difficult school assignment to standing up for a friend who is being teased, confidence is what gives children the strength to

work hard and do the right thing. Advocate parents who may have lacked support or encouragement during their own formative years are especially likely to lack confidence in their own abilities. Struggling in a school setting or being belittled by a domineering parent or teacher may come back to haunt Advocates, preventing them from developing – and therefore modeling – the confidence necessary to thrive.

If they fail to overcome this barrier themselves, Advocate parents run the risk of raising children who shut down in the face of adversity. It does little good for an Advocate to tell a child to “stand up for what they believe in” and to “persevere when the going gets tough” if they fail to model these behaviors in their own lives. Their children will not only struggle with their own confidence, but also may see their well-intentioned parents as hypocrites who fail to “walk the walk” when things become too challenging.

### *Overly Impassioned*

Advocates’ passion for a cause can create issues for their children at this stage if it isn’t properly balanced with their children’s needs and abilities. School-aged children certainly benefit from volunteering and standing up for their beliefs. However, they also need parents who can help them address the issues they face in day-to-day life. From a school crush that is not reciprocated to the trauma of being picked last for the kickball team, children at this age need parents who can help them deal with personal issues that deeply affect them.

Always focused on saving the world, Advocate parents who fail to validate their children’s feelings on “smaller issues” will find that their children are less likely to seek their help or support in the future. Sure, the world isn’t going to end if a child doesn’t make the basketball team, but that can feel catastrophic to a child. To children in this

stage, everything that happens to them is a big deal. Advocate parents who don't recognize this and don't help their children deal with their issues in a balanced and effective way will ultimately struggle to maintain a close relationship with them.

### Rebalancing Parenting During the School-Age Stage

#### *Promoting Confidence*

The beauty of confidence is that it is a skill that can be developed at any age – it's never too late to improve this particular trait. Parenthood is a very effective motivator, and Advocate parents have every desire to help their children be successful in life. Individuals with this personality type are put off by self-promotion and any behavior they view as self-serving, so they may have to overcome their misguided belief that being confident is the same as being arrogant.

Additionally, Advocates should keep in mind how important it is for their school-aged children to develop a sense of competence to effectively move through this stage. Children should be encouraged to take pride in their work and be taught to view failures as new opportunities. Hang spelling tests they aced on the refrigerator and celebrate with extra dessert after dinner or a (slightly) later bed time that weekend. Children thrive when their parents acknowledge their achievements and when they learn that their hard work will pay off. When children fail, Advocate parents can help them dust themselves off and look for a light at the end of that proverbial tunnel. Didn't make the dance team? That's fine – they can join cheerleading or debate instead! Children who realize that failure isn't the end of the road but rather the beginning of another path will be more confident and successful throughout their lives.

The following tips will help Advocates improve their own self-confidence and therefore promote it in their children:

- Write down one personal strength and how it helped you overcome a specific challenge. (“My eloquent speaking helped me to nail my most recent job interview.”)
- Think of something that causes fear or hesitation regularly – possibly a fear of failure or criticism – and write down three things you can do to overcome that fear (such as take a class on speaking skills to overcome a fear of public speaking).
- Work toward becoming an expert in a specific skill (like mastering the guitar or becoming fluent in a second language) – something that will really promote a sense of competence.
- Practice positive self-talk – nothing brings down confidence as quickly as the negative thoughts people have about themselves.

### *Meeting Them Where They Are*

Well-meaning Advocates place high expectations on their children, hoping to encourage them to make a difference in the world. Unfortunately, when the focus is constantly on what is expected, parents are apt to miss out on what their children really *need*. What children need most from their parents is unconditional love and acceptance, and Advocate parents are more than capable of providing this for their children.

Advocates who are prone to fixating on the “big picture” can benefit from focusing on what their children are dealing with in the moment. Rather than trying to hammer a square peg (an Advocate parent’s idea of what is important) into a round hole (what

the child thinks is important), parents should make a point to engage with their children in the “here and now.” Some ideas for doing this include:

- Start a gratitude practice where both parent and child state three things they are grateful for that day and one thing that is bothering them.
- Begin a mindfulness practice such as a short meditation to promote being “in the moment.”
- Have a weekly or monthly appointment when parent and child can engage in an activity together (such as hitting up an arcade, taking a hike, or checking out a museum).

## Adolescence (From Approximately 12 to 18 Years)

Adolescence is the transition from childhood to adulthood, a time when children focus on developing their own distinct identity. This transitional period centers around an individual’s sense of their role in relationships: with themselves, friends, family, and society in general. To determine their roles, adolescents in this stage begin the all-important process of identifying their personal values and beliefs. Educational and future career goals are made and relationships are formed based on these values and beliefs, making this a pivotal, foundational stage for the rest of their lives.

### Balanced Parenting During Adolescence

#### *Promoting Positive Values*

During this stage of identity development, children need their parents’ support and understanding more than ever. Advocate parents encourage their adolescents’ growth by promoting positive values, such as respect, compassion, and integrity,

while also providing them with freedom to explore any other values that inspire them. Mature Advocates understand the importance of allowing their children to go through the difficult yet necessary process of personal development with the proper balance of support and space.

Regardless of the struggles their children may face during this tumultuous time, Advocates remain steadfast in their devotion. Their dedication, both to their children and to the promotion of positive values, provides a solid foundation for Advocate parents and their children. This foundation allows identity-seeking children to venture further into self-discovery while still feeling supported and loved.

### *Unconditional Love and Commitment*

Advocate parents' unconditional love and support are indispensable as they help their children cope with the many challenges they will face. Discoveries are often made through trial and error, so many mistakes will be made during this stage. An adolescent who skips class needs to know that their actions have consequences but that their parents will still love them regardless of their mistakes. Children at this stage are more likely to communicate with their parents if they are confident that they will not be judged: They must feel that their parents' love and acceptance will not be revoked.

This is especially true when they deal with issues that are truly serious – such as getting pregnant, getting suspended or expelled, even going through a particularly rough breakup. Advocate parents who stay loving toward their children during these dilemmas can establish themselves as a true source of empathy and wisdom when their children need it most. As overwhelming and terrifying as some of these scenarios may seem, Advocates who tap into their compassion and empathy can

confront these situations from a place of wisdom rather than one of panic. They should treat their adolescents with respect – but still strive to be the wise, understanding adults in the room.

### Unbalanced Parenting During Adolescence

#### *Imposing Ideals*

Similar to the issues they may have faced during their children's toddler years, Advocates may struggle with adolescents' burgeoning independence. Advocates are very accepting of the pursuit of personal development, but they may have their own ideas about what this process should look like and what values their children should espouse. A vegan parent may be personally offended when their adolescent suddenly becomes a bacon-obsessed meat-eater. Likewise, Advocates with passionate political or religious views may find their children's desire to explore "oppositional" beliefs insulting, as though they've been personally attacked.

Advocate parents who believe that personal development can be done only within specific, approved parameters – regardless of where those boundaries are on any scale – may inadvertently prevent their adolescents from going through the self-discovery process. They may engage in emotionally manipulative behaviors, attempting to subtly guilt their children into behaving (or believing) the way they want them to. Adolescent children are unlikely to respond well to this type of parental control and may act out in rebellious ways or stop communicating with their parents altogether.

### *Difficulty Letting Go*

The adolescent stage requires that children become more independent from their parents, making critical life choices on their own and relying less on their parents for basic support. Advocate parents can struggle with feelings of rejection if they believe that their children no longer need them or desire their affection. They may also find themselves mourning the end of childhood, remembering that sweet kindergarten child they walked into class on the first day of school. If they become too absorbed by a sense of loss at this stage, Advocates can slip into an existential crisis of sorts, pining for days gone by rather than looking forward to the opportunities that lie ahead for both parent and child.

For some Advocates, parenthood is their “cause” – being a parent is the most important part of their identity. If they fail to maintain or nurture other parts of their identity throughout their children’s younger years, Advocate parents may fervently hold on to their role as primary caregiver. If parenting has prevented them from maintaining friendships, pursuing meaningful hobbies, or engaging in work that they enjoy, Advocates may feel lost and lonely as their children inevitably begin to spend more time away from home. They may begin to experience bitterness, a deep sense of loss, and even a sense of panic about the uncertainty of their own future, with this defining role of parent no longer at life’s center.

## Rebalancing Parenting During Adolescence

### *Celebrating Individual Ideals*

Discovering ideals that are personally meaningful is one of the most important aspects of identity development for Advocates. Rather than being offended or insulted if their children’s ideals do not match their own, mature Advocate parents



are able to celebrate the fact that their adolescents have gone through the process of self-discovery. When their children understand right and wrong and have a well-developed moral compass, Advocates can take a step back and appreciate a parenting job well done.

The best way for parents at this stage to encourage their children to develop their own personal ideals is to encourage them to privately focus on embracing values that are meaningful to their individual journey. Although adolescents should be encouraged to draw from family values during this process, Advocate parents should avoid pressuring or guilt-tripping their children into agreeing with their own values and beliefs.

The following tips can help Advocates focus on finding themselves while also remaining a source of advice and inspiration to their children:

- Embrace a spiritual or meditative practice.
- Take up (or rediscover) an artistic hobby such as writing, painting, photography, or sewing. Practice the skill and enjoy the benefits of creative healing and inspiration.
- Engage in self-reflection through journaling or even guided counseling to better understand who you are and who you would like to become.

### *Promoting Healthy Independence*

The adolescent stage requires that children become more independent from their parents, which is especially difficult for Advocates who thrive on being their children's caretaker or stake their own identity primarily as a parent. Rather than taking this desire for independence as a personal affront, Advocate parents should learn to view

this new stage as both a beautiful and necessary part of their children's personal evolution.

Advocate parents should encourage their children to take responsibility for their decisions and celebrate any progress they make toward becoming self-sufficient adults. Finding new ways to engage at this stage that take advantage of adolescents' burgeoning skills is a wonderful way to bond.

The following are just a few ways that Advocate parents can spend time with their adolescent children and explore new hobbies or causes:

- Join your children in one of their favorite hobbies or activities, whether it's running, cooking, singing, or playing video games.
- Find or re-discover a spiritual practice to engage in together (anything from a religious practice to meditation, yoga, or tai chi).
- Audit a college course that parent and child both find interesting.
- Volunteer together at the humane society or another charity on a regular basis.

## Conclusion

Parenting is one of the most challenging experiences that anyone can face, regardless of their personality type. Advocates have their own unique strengths – innovation, altruism, insight, and integrity – which they can leverage to build positive, proactive relationships with their children. Parenting brings tremendous potential for personal development, and Advocates can gain a much deeper understanding of themselves and others if they use this opportunity to do so.

The advice provided above is based on general growth stages for children and basic strengths and weaknesses that many Advocates share. Every child is different, and parents are the best judges of what their children need. Parents should use the advice above in a way that works best for their own families: If following a tip leads to more stress, frustration, or burden, set it aside, and try something else. For special situations, such as behavioral or medical issues, it is best to consult with a professional pediatrician or pediatric psychologist. With their training and expertise, they can help create a plan that works for everyone involved.

## Additional Tools and Tests

Want to dig even deeper into your role as a parent? If you have access to the toolkits area of the website, we offer a variety of additional tools and tests to help you explore.

### Parenting Styles Test

Whether you have children already or hope to become a parent in the future, this test offers you useful insights into your parenting style.

### Type Guesser (Parent)

Are you trying to figure out what personality type your parent belongs to? You may find that this simple tool helps.

### Type Guesser (Child)

Are you trying to figure out what personality type your teenage child belongs to? You may find that this simple tool helps.

## Advocates' Academic Path



War, poverty, racism – these are some of the most fundamental problems we face as a species. Many see these ills as unfortunate but, ultimately, the way of the world. For those people, trying to change things may be considered futile. Advocates, however, balk at this apathy and instead dedicate their lives to eradicating one or more of society's ills. This moral obligation permeates their studies as well.

Advocates don't learn just to learn; they learn with purpose. Every book they read, every essay they write, and every debate they participate in adds to a well-rounded knowledge base to aid them – and others – in the future. Advocates consider learning to be enlightenment, as knowledge wipes away ignorance.

Unlike some idealists who simply dream of a better and more just world, Advocates work tirelessly to make their visions realities. Their drive is summed up perfectly in a quote from civil-rights activist Angela Davis: "I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept."

### *Lacking Interest in the Mundane*

Despite their noble intentions, Advocates are as liable as any human beings to run afoul. The road to wisdom is rewarding, but it can be rocky. They experience this rockiness firsthand when they come face-to-face with aspects of education that seem over-technical, robotic, or mundane, like standardized testing and uninteresting mandatory classes.

Advocates require a strong personal connection to a topic to feel fully invested, and they may question the importance of material that holds no interest for them. Their imaginations run deep, causing them to think of all the things that could be done. They may even feel trapped in subjects that don't apply to the mission they've set for themselves. These types take issue with benchmarks set for the sake of standardization – they can become annoyed when required to take numerous tests that have little to do with subject mastery, but rather how well one can study. This aversion to the mundane may lead Advocates to completely avoid, and perhaps discount, whatever doesn't fall within their realm of interest.

### *Honing in on a Vision*

Throughout history, Advocates have been famous for their extraordinary impact on the world, including leading revolutions against the unjust, championing the people, and changing society through dedication and hard-honed vision. For Advocates, depth matters over breadth. Whether their goal is to end systemic poverty or improve the local kindergarten's literature program, they give it all their focus and drive. From the time they're young, Advocates' intuition has already started to shape their goals. When they're asked in class what they want to be when they grow up, they're likely to have clear ideas and sustained intent to follow through well into their

adult lives. This sustained intent may manifest itself as joining the high school newspaper staff, then majoring in journalism in college, with the eventual goal of winning a Peabody Award for investigative journalism for covering the government of a far-off, neglected, impoverished country. All they need is a goal, and they begin mapping the steps from point "A" to point "B."

## How Advocates Learn

Extraordinarily passionate about their causes, Advocates channel all their energy into achieving their goals. That said, they also possess the wherewithal to understand that their causes may have flaws. Their moral compass dictates that they hold strong in their convictions; but more than that, it dictates that they be reasonable, level-minded people who can listen to others. They are, after all, part of the Diplomat Role group, whose goals are often defined by the needs of others. These types recognize that communicating with those others is essential to choosing the right path.

### Balanced Learning Habits

In an academic setting, Advocates might disagree with other students or teachers, but they also take the time to listen to their perspectives. When they get a low grade on a paper, Advocates take the balanced approach of discussing with the professor what the paper was missing and how they can improve their work next time. The grade may be upsetting, but it's also how the academic system communicates that there's room for growth, something Advocates inherently value – so they listen.

### *Considering Impact*

In addition to being attentive listeners and careful thinkers, Advocates possess insatiable curiosity, directed particularly at culture and other humanistic enterprises.

For them, such activities represent the very essence of humanity at its best. They may agree with the following quote from the film *Dead Poets Society*: “We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for.”

Advocates are more than just motivated by creative and artistic endeavors; these are often some of the main reasons they love life. Although they can certainly make themselves knowledgeable in any field, from the physical sciences to math, economics, business, and beyond, they always feel most at home being of service to the heart and soul of human expression.

That's why, when it comes to school, Advocates are often concerned with what their art or work portrays. Although public opinion may be important, Advocates absolutely must feel personally fulfilled. They check in with their emotions and intuition to see whether decisions *feel* right. They pursue fields that make them feel whole and at peace – and walk away from those that are noble but ultimately not for them.

### *Trying the Mundane*

Advocates specialize in subjects that have great meaning to them, but they also understand the need to learn “mundane” skills: doing their taxes, filling out checks, changing a tire, etc. Within the realm of academics, this could take the form of developing long-term study habits for classes they don't enjoy. Advocates understand that such skills, though not visionary and inspiring, are necessary in everyday life.



Rather than shrugging off things they aren't inherently interested in, Advocates dig in their heels and at least attempt to master the material in front of them. They're propelled forward by the sense that the slog of mundane learning is only temporary, and that the skills they're learning will support work they consider meaningful.

### Unbalanced Learning Habits

#### *Obsessing About Impact*

Solving the unsolvable can take a toll on even the hardest individuals, and Advocates can exaggerate this tendency. By shouldering the burdens of the world, they risk being crushed beneath the weight. Feeling that they personally can't be at peace until they become ideal versions of themselves, they can become obsessive in their learning behaviors, leaving little time in their schedules for relaxation and self-care. In extreme cases, Advocates may even skip meals or lose sleep as they study through their lunch breaks or read late into the night.

Such workaholic tendencies, though intense, have limits to their scope. When left alone too long with their thoughts, Advocates may develop "tunnel vision" and relentlessly pursue areas of study that seem most relevant. They may become perfectionistic, worrying that the papers they write are the absolute best they can produce, or going over endless possible solutions to problems. It may even get to the point where they temporarily eliminate all forms of enjoyment and relaxation to reach their goals more quickly. Unfortunately, work done under stress and exhaustion often lacks the quality of work done by a well-rested mind.

### *Opposing Alternatives*

Approaching differing views with patience and open-mindedness works for some Advocates, but others struggle. Some Advocates dismiss the idea of spending time or attention to branch out. They may even justify their opposition as a moral imperative. Although people with this personality type may be visionaries when it comes to the broader strokes of their plans, no one can anticipate exactly what the future holds. By holding too stubbornly to their beliefs, they may disregard conflicting but essential data, or entire fields of research and discussion, rather than revising their worldviews to accommodate them.

This reluctance to accommodate alternative views is a result of Advocates' combined Intuitive and Judging traits. In their minds, they see the ideal (perhaps "perfect") way to do things – the correct answer to the question, the appropriate experiment to conduct for an unknown variable, or the most effective way to present a group project – and they may try to mold imperfect models to match the images in their minds. However, the pursuit of singular, perfect solutions can lead them to ignore the possibility that they could be wrong.

### *Failing an Idealized Self*

Advocates have an ideal vision of the world, but that vision begins with themselves: well-educated, well-spoken, open-minded, perpetually kind, and never willing to "settle for less." This, however, is an unrealistic expectation to have for anyone. Unfortunately, soft-hearted Advocates are particularly hard on themselves for mistakes that everyone makes. Their strict moral philosophy relies on determination and goodness, which may make it difficult for Advocates to even consider settling for "failure," as they see it as a flaw rather than a normal human experience.

A failing grade isn't necessarily a problem, but it can be assigned exaggerated meaning. For example, Advocates may think that failing a law class will risk their chances of becoming future reformers of the criminal justice system, or that not meeting their own expectations in an art class undermines their identities as creative people. Failure seems like a direct threat to their identities and may lead them to believe that a "C" in a class directly correlates to unfulfilled ambitions. They may think terrible – but false – thoughts about themselves, deeming themselves unintelligent, incapable of effective or productive work, or otherwise lacking compared to other students. If the core aspects of their identity come under fire, it can leave Advocates feeling destroyed.

## Rebalancing Learning Habits

### *Taking Their Own Advice*

Food, sleep, and even leisure time are all necessities, not luxuries, a fact that Advocates are quick to remind others but slow to accept for themselves. When these types make personal sacrifice a routine, they soon find that they have nothing left for others and even themselves. It's important for these types to make daily routines a priority, not an afterthought.

When scheduling time for meals, rest, and relaxation (using an alarm can be a good reminder to take a break), quality can be as crucial as quantity. A series of two- and three-hour naps interspersed throughout the day won't equal eight hours of uninterrupted rest, though a 20-minute nap in addition to solid nightly rest makes a tremendous difference. Also, a fast-food breakfast burrito gobbled down during a commute may fill you up, but it can't compare to a balanced breakfast with a loved one.

Here are some steps Advocates can take to assess and fulfill their needs:

- Consider what specifically is missing in your life. Do you need quiet? Sleep? Stability?
- Consider how you currently spend your time. Are your primary needs being met? Before answering, consider how you would advise a loved one: For instance, would you chastise a friend for taking a short nap after a heavy study session?
- Select one need that is not being met and then implement some short increments of time when you focus on meeting that need: 10 minutes for a nap, an hour to cook a good meal, 30 minutes of cuddling with a significant other.
- Schedule time every day, preferably at the same time, to fulfill that one need.

### *Discussing in Good Faith*

Most Advocates hate the phrase “for the sake of argument.” They’re more likely to believe in universal, “capital-T Truths,” and they dream of universal agreement. However, even if such certainties exist, these types hardly have a monopoly on them. Leaving the door open for reasonable doubts and opposing views can reveal new, unconsidered worlds, even if doing so detracts from their zeal. Although empty contrarianism is annoying, the role of informed devil’s advocate, played by trusted friends or other credible sources (or even by Advocates themselves), should be valued, not dismissed.

This can work especially well when it comes to drafting papers that respond to an issue at hand. Rather than relying only on their personal views, Advocates can instead open themselves to other schools of thought. Learning more about contrary

ideas allows them to see their arguments' weak points as well as strengths, and it allows them to present well-rounded papers that address both sides. The same thing can be said for group projects: When it comes to collaboration, the best ideas come from respectful discussion and debate.

Here are some tips for Advocates to pursue discussions in good faith. When considering a topic or individual that directly opposes your beliefs:

- Ask the individual "how?" and "why?"
- Research the conflicting idea.
- Process the information without making any initial judgments; give the idea the benefit of the doubt.
- See how the new idea compares against the existing knowledge set.

### *Creating Diversified Identities*

When determined, Advocates are relentless in their pursuit. No matter what it takes – blood, sweat, or tears – they achieve their goals once they're decided upon. The problem, however, may become a lack of awareness for anything beyond their goals. Advocates' dedication is amazing, but it can also be limiting. In academics, these types may make the mistake of pigeonholing themselves in one subject. They may even focus exclusively on everything relevant to their long-term goal – running an independent business, for example – without also spending time exploring other interests.

To achieve balance, they can make time to research their interests, then dedicate at least an hour a week to them: Joining the astronomy club, reading a book on Antarctica, or listening to informational videos online are all worthy pursuits. Some simple steps toward this goal include:

- Think back on things of interest that you didn't try because they weren't relevant to your long-term goals. For example, perhaps you enjoyed a theater class but decided against taking another one because it would have taken time away from pursuing a program of study in organic chemistry.
- Sign up for casual events that don't require huge time commitments, like once-a-week after-school improv sessions rather than a daily one-hour class.
- After you become involved, take the time to decide whether the interest is enriching. If so, take active steps to stay involved.

## Advocates in High School

### *Selectively Brilliant*

In the teachers' lounge, while discussing an Advocate high school student they have in common, instructors in different subjects may feel like they're talking about completely different people. One might experience the students as laconic, listless, and dull; but to another teacher, the same student can be a bright, focused, and driven member of every discussion.

When Advocates connect with a subject, their precociousness becomes evident, whether in a presentation on the deeply moral themes of Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment* or a stirring essay on the history of the American Civil Rights movement. Their classmates may see such work as a tedious but necessary hurdle on the path to graduation, but Advocates may experience the kindling of a passion for moral justice that burns for the rest of their days.

### *Learning for Authenticity*

The humanities and social sciences strike a natural chord within young Advocates' hearts, but they may experience dissonance when exposed to less soulful studies. Math and science certainly aren't beyond their grasp, but they can perform poorly without some means of putting rote facts, figures, and seemingly arbitrary calculations into a broader human context. Their lack of interest in such classes may frustrate teachers and parents alike as they struggle to comprehend how academic passion could be distributed so unevenly.

Advocates' curious behavior is a consequence of their steady inner compass, lending them a quiet, fierce integrity that makes them mature beyond their years. At a time when their peers' identities are malleable as clay, these types are stubborn marble. Others' approval matters to them, but remaining in sync with their ideals always matters more. The need to "fit in," which looms so large in the minds of many teens, is widely rejected by Advocates, for whom popularity is a foreign currency, while authenticity is worth far more than gold.

### Balanced High School Learning

Some students can scarcely be bothered to crack a textbook, and academic curiosity often amounts to a single question "Will this be on the test?" Advocates may find themselves excused from their shortcomings in some subjects because of the commitment they show to the topics that matter to them. However, those who take advantage of overworked teachers' low expectations are hardly living up to their potential. Nor will aggressively pushing them out of their comfort zones lead to much success, either. Advocates can balance some of their academic reluctance by approaching learning with open minds and realistic standards.

### *Remaining Open to Possibilities*

A fortunate few Advocates may encounter teachers who supply inspirational context for every stray fact or theorem, discussing not whether it's on the test, but why it matters. But most of the time, Advocates must sharpen their contextualization skills on their own to excel in subjects that don't come to them readily. They are fully capable of this when they see the situation with a balanced point of view, staving off adolescent cynicism and realizing the value of their early education.

For example, sketching the chemical structure of a hydrocarbon may seem like busywork – until Advocates begin to ruminate on the possibilities of chemistry to solve world hunger or cure devastating diseases. The motivating potential of Advocates' passion can't be understated. They just need to be exposed to bodies of knowledge and ideas they didn't think they were interested in.

To let down their guard and open themselves up to such alternatives, they can look to the Socratic paradox for inspiration: "I know one thing: that I know nothing." The sooner they recognize that hard, unforgiving work is necessary to make their visions a reality and that there is *always* room for their insights to grow, the sooner they'll be able to take meaningful steps toward realizing a better world.

### *Realistic Standards*

Advocates subscribe to a work ethic that correlates directly with their passion, and they keep working without breaks when passion is ignited. They dislike the idea of not fulfilling their commitments and moral obligations. That said, Advocates who approach their studies with a balanced mindset aren't keen on sacrificing their health to meet goals, nor are they overly perfectionistic. They do what they can to turn in quality work but avoid agonizing over the details when there's no more to gain. They



schedule time to commit the effort needed to succeed, but they set realistic expectations.

Hard-working Advocates aren't completely against letting loose occasionally. They take their interests very seriously, yes, but they aren't completely against hanging out with friends on a school night – taking the time to remember that they're just teenagers. Nobody is expected to have everything figured out, and much of their joy is in the discovery.

## Unbalanced High School Learning

### *Dismissing Details*

Advocates who spend math class reading English literature may not be the picture of teenage rebellion, but their grades can plummet as surely as if their time was spent shooting spitballs or sending secret texts. In a larger sense, Advocates who pursue their narrow scholarly obsessions with no concern for the broader curriculum may discover that knowledge gaps limit them in unforeseeable ways. Budding environmentalists with a tenuous grasp of the underpinnings of climate science may be able to convince only the already-converted.

Ignoring finer details is a troublesome habit for those who indulge only their interests, one that can hinder their progress even in classes they otherwise wholeheartedly engage in. Young Advocates with a passion for history intuitively may understand the importance of individual events but not feel the need to memorize actual dates for a test. Students with a more literary bent might have points deducted from even the most articulate essay due to a failure to properly cite their sources. Their refusal to meet the demands of a rigid curriculum can hold them back, in both the short and long term. A few such bad experiences may cause them to drift away

from an academic path that previously felt like destiny, in which they could have done lots of good.

### *Impossible Standards*

Another hurdle for Advocates to overcome in high school is their relentless internal perfectionism and noble ambition, which all too often manifest as work turned in late or not at all. Having bitten off more than they can chew and refusing to “cut corners” or take an easier path, some may discover they can’t possibly get done what they set out to achieve in the time allotted, leading to stress, rushed work, and missed deadlines. No matter how exhaustive the research or articulate the writing, a term paper on the history of capital punishment that is delivered two weeks after the term ends will probably be greeted with the same unenthusiastic response – and a grade to match – as an essay that still exists only in the realm of the Advocate’s imagination.

## Rebalancing High School Learning

### *Forming a Connection*

Attending to details, no matter how mundane, is an important part of life. Ask any student who has graduated high school only to wonder how to apply for financial aid for college, how to interview properly for a job, or how to keep track of deadlines. Advocates try not to neglect their work, but they may feel reluctant to lend the same passion to “mundane” topics as they do to their preferred subjects. However, to rebalance this, they must choose to have faith that such banal, technical, and day-to-day information will one day prove its value.

One possible approach is developing a mentor relationship with the instructor of a class that’s giving them trouble. This can help Advocates understand where the

instructor is coming from while also adding depth to the course by filtering it through the lens of that instructor's perspective. It's no longer geology, it's Ms. Smith's passion for the Earth expressed through teaching, a childhood dream that found a way into the real world.

Now this relationship, which is something more personal, can convince Advocates to approach some of the humdrum details – sources to cite, dates to memorize – as a favor to Ms. Smith, which is something Advocates are geared toward naturally. It's not Ms. Smith's fault she has to hand out tests, so it's not fair to her (or to Advocates themselves) to punish her with poor performance.

Advocates are perfectly capable of dealing with routine details if they find a way to make them personally relevant. By creating such relationships with their instructors, they can discover new relevance in topics and their specifics, boosting their motivation and attention.

### *Tempering Perfectionism*

High school is difficult. With the added pressures of the future, parents, peers, and extracurricular activities, it can be exhausting to even the most laid-back people – and downright back-breaking to expectation-laden Advocates. Always looking to do their best in whatever they commit to, Advocates often sacrifice themselves to sustain their other obligations.

Advocates who learn to take a kinder, more measured view of themselves may find that their accomplishments and efforts, even if they fall short of an idealized vision, are still worth taking pride in. This is the principle expressed in the Japanese aesthetic concept of *wabi sabi*: Perfection lacks depth. In flaws and fragility, real beauty is discovered. Practicing imperfection in small ways – trying to paint a photo-realistic

image with little painting experience, for example – can help build a sense that failure is acceptable, even necessary: a critical aspect of self-acceptance in the learning process. With this in mind, Advocates can resolve to learn the way children do, with unencumbered wonder and exploration.

Young Advocates can develop healthy school-life balance by creating a schedule that makes room for real life. A schedule isn't just a productivity-boosting tool: Allocating time for chores and assignments makes it easier to set aside time for friends, as well as time to be alone and relax. Schedules allow Advocates to press the "off" button they usually deny themselves; this is a personal act of kindness – and a sanity-saver. Setting realistic expectations for their time allows teenagers to enjoy their lives.

Some suggestions to help Advocate students rebalance:

- Create a fixed schedule. Work when needed, and rest when it's over. For example: Dedicate one hour to studying during school hours (study hall, perhaps) and two hours after school. In those two hours, focus on the most important tasks first – an essay due next week, five math equations, 30 minutes of assigned reading – and then close everything once those two hours are up.
- Eliminate distractions during scheduled study time. Turn off the phone, log out of social media, and avoid social situations that would interfere with getting the work finished.
- Relax after time is up. Finally sitting down to finish that TV show that has been in your Netflix cue for two months can be a terrific way to reward yourself for a job well done.

## Work or College

By many measures, Advocates are an uncommon personality type, but they still face a common dilemma when leaving high school. Should they immediately go into the world of work, or should they continue their studies?

For some Advocates, the choice is obvious: academic certification is a requirement for several occupations these types might be drawn to, including teaching, psychotherapy, and law. If they don't attend college, the doors they long to open will remain closed to them. Some Advocates have a non-negotiable stopover on their journey to becoming the people they wish to be.

The college experience doesn't have to be a chore. In fact, many Advocates find their crusade for social justice, tempered beneath their stoicism, to be an integral part of the curriculum. Through the simple camaraderie of so many like-minded people – finally! – their flower of rebellion finds space to bloom. Even so, Advocates are usually too mission-oriented to remain in academia for long before venturing out to put theory into practice.

Some choose work over college because they can't bear the costs of college – whether personal, financial, practical, or principled – or because their zeal for change is so potent that it just can't be deferred any longer. Without the guidance of education or their parents, they may need time to define themselves and their goals. It's reasonable to accept more basic positions like waiting tables or doing physical work while continuing a path of self-discovery outside the regimen of school and parental oversight. Working to support interests and save money, whether for eventual schooling or some other future interest, is a balanced reason to delay school in favor of work.

Others know full well what they want and find rewarding careers by climbing up the corporate ladder or working for themselves. They might also take paths somewhere in between, leveraging recognition for their community service to secure a role in a not-for-profit organization, or using their passion for writing to contribute freelance articles as an activist while still dealing with the reality of paying the bills.

It's important for Advocates to realize that many roads can be rewarding. If they truly wish to build a better world, they'll find a way to do so, even if their role is smaller – or merely different – than they had originally anticipated.

### Balanced Decision-Making

#### *Embracing Honesty*

It's important for Advocates to consider their options with unwavering honesty. The difficulty of this task shouldn't be underestimated. When surveying the world through a healthy lens, Advocates know perhaps better than anyone how good people are at deceiving themselves. They may be tempted to believe that, because they see it in others, they're immune to it themselves. They can ask themselves questions, consult with friends and mentors, gather a range of opinions and information, and perform other reality checks to help orient and clarify their worldviews.

Any option can be just the challenge Advocates need to move their visions forward, or a means of escape from the weight of responsibility. It can be all too easy to convince themselves that one is the same as the other. When honest and patient with themselves, they can distinguish between an obstacle and an excuse, then progress.

### *Following Through*

Advocates leaning toward college understand that it's a long commitment, though following through on a conviction is hardly a challenge for this type. They recognize that time spent on self-improvement isn't an exercise in narcissism. This is especially true if it provides them with the credentials necessary for entering a helping profession that delivers good to humanity, or a complex intellectual and moral framework for handling the personal or global problems they long to solve. When taking a balanced approach, Advocates embrace the idea that college isn't an abdication of responsibility but an acceptance of it, if time there is used effectively.

Advocates who don't attend college can still find ways to advance their goals. Entry-level jobs in the service industry can be meaningful if Advocates find satisfaction in their community of coworkers and customers. Such positions can also support them financially while they volunteer for a social cause they consider to be their "true" career, especially if the skills they develop during their volunteer work make them more viable candidates for positions in the nonprofit sector.

## Unbalanced Decision-Making

### *Eternal Waiting*

In unbalanced Advocates, their combination of imagination and perfectionism can manifest as inaction. The period after high school is a time of exceptional personal consequence, and unbalanced Advocates can allow the weightiness of decisions sink them into inaction. Their imaginations, though a powerful tool, can work against Advocates, as they envision a perfectly formed solution falling into their lap.

The habit of waiting for the “right” opportunities while ignoring other viable options can be supremely unhealthy. Advocates may wait for signs from the universe to dictate their next course of action, spending more time deciding if something *feels* right rather than *making* it feel right. Those who spend years agonizing over a course of study or employment may find that, in retrospect, little was gained from excessive deliberation, and much perhaps was lost.

### *Haunted Rumination*

Choices that are later seen as “wrong” have a way of haunting Advocates. When they have an unbalanced view of their own decisions, they overanalyze not only future decisions but also past decisions, with little self-confidence or self-forgiveness. Learning to live with their choices is as necessary as making choices in the first place.

What some Advocates may not realize is that endless rumination and self-consumption are choices in and of themselves. Thinking through choices helps avoid future mistakes, but it also can keep Advocates from acting, and that inactivity can cost far more than either time spent in school or a more intentional push into the professional world.

## Rebalancing Decision-Making

### *Adjusting Course*

There's a fine line between deliberation and procrastination, and Advocates need to work harder than most to distinguish between the two. Their tendency to delay stems, ironically, from their need to commit to a course of action. When they feel that nothing can be *undone*, their only choice is well-considered decisions, but what counts as “well-considered” can be altered to fit any mood. The question is, does this



deliberation arise out of sensible caution or a lack of self-confidence to step into the unknown?

Advocates must learn to understand that few decisions are permanent. Changing their minds based on new information is their prerogative – and a sign of maturity. Snap decision-making feels unnatural to Advocates, but those who err a bit more on the side of rashness may find that even when they make a wrong choice, the consequences may not be nearly as irreversible as they had feared.

Here are some steps for Advocates considering their course, as it's never too late to act:

- Request a tour of a local university.
- Attend the orientation of a university or local college.
- Request an informational interview at an interesting company or non-governmental organization.

Advocates don't have to make a commitment to do these things. They're simply obtaining information, and they should feel no pressure to sign up for anything that isn't inspiring. Hopefully, though, the rush of inspiration will fill them again – and then, voilà, they're off on another life chapter.

### *Finding Inspiration in Others*

Not everything calls for Advocates' admirable dedication to examining root causes and first principles. People with this personality type are often best served by ignoring their impulse to build from scratch and instead embracing faith in humanity. Trusting the efforts of others who came before them sometimes requires repeated

failures to improve on processes that were already in common use. Trusting previous work makes it possible to build on others' accomplishments to advance vital causes.

Besides saving time that might be wasted re-inventing the wheel, these little leaps of faith are personally essential for a personality type who puts so much stock in the well-being of humanity. Without faith – in the people they're trying to work with and help, and in the individuals who are seeking to help them – Advocates deem little worth fighting for.

A huge reason these types procrastinate is because they're not sure where to begin. They can remedy this by utilizing those around them for research, support, and perspective:

- Find others you admire, preferably mentors you're close to or local entrepreneurs whose work you follow.
- Have in-depth conversations with them about their own academic paths.
- Ask questions like, "When you were my age, did you know what you wanted to do?" and "How many times did you stumble on your path?"

When looking at the greats, we often see only their accomplishments: Bitter nights and horrid failures are edited out as history makes men and women into myths and legends. The truth is that everyone fails, even the prodigies and the talented. Advocates shouldn't fear failure: As the adage goes, "The master has failed more times than the beginner has tried."

## Advocates in College

### *Disappearing Mirage*

Younger Advocates who chafed against the strict schedules and curricula of high school may initially see the university ivory tower as a welcome hermitage, a place where their burgeoning ideas can, at last, begin to take shape. The liberty of higher learning can be a boon to budding Advocates, but college has its challenges. Those who are lulled by the siren song of endless electives and roving Socratic discussions may be rudely awakened by the steeper expectations and heavy workload inherent in high education.

Not to say their dreams for college are illusory, only that Advocates are often caught flat-footed by the shift, having strode so easily through their previous academic years. College may be the first time these types will confront the disconnect between their ideals and reality (but hardly the last!). Bridging this gap can propel Advocates through life; college is frequently an amenable practice ground for conflicts and challenges to come. Their guiding spirit of principled rebellion, often misunderstood in the more rigid environs of high school, may serve them well in college, where they're likely to encounter professors and classmates who encourage what a little pushback does to open up a conversation.

### *Growing into Themselves*

Few Advocates are satisfied restricting their moral deconstruction to the classroom. Their fellow students may appear more riotous in their attempts to break from tradition – juvenile campus pranks, shadowy hazing rituals, and all-night keggers – Advocates' revolts are quieter and filled with purpose. For them, extracurricular activities aren't limited to intramural sports and amateur stagecraft. They include

campaigns and protests, each a response to some egregious policy or action that they couldn't stand to see go unchallenged. After all, they seek to change the world – so why not start with the institutions that are supposed to represent that change?

Advocates, as they grow more into themselves, learn the difference between protesting for meaningful change and protesting over every hurt feeling. They come to know where their efforts do the greatest good, as they look a problem's underlying cause rather than fight with every symptom of it. This means setting aside some battles, passing over a scrape so they can survey the broken leg; knowing when to do that is a balanced approach to their revolutionary spirit.

It's also important that "Advocates" not become "Adversaries," at least not entirely. If they're going to protest, it should be an act of communication with the other side, rather than demonization, or they will only polarize the issue and make others feel as though they need to defend themselves.

## Balanced College Life

### *Understanding Others*

Advocates may struggle to reconcile their utopian ideal of the university experience with the shabbier realities of campus life. Just as they once looked askance at high school classmates who viewed study solely as a means to an end – get good grades to get into a good college – Advocates in college are equally puzzled by university students who see their degree as merely a passport to higher-paying work. The same confusion about this attitude that drove them to deep introspection as adolescents draws their attention outward in college. Advocates' passion is fierce, and when it is marshaled in the service of their studies, few can match their rigor or eloquence.

Advocates who make the effort to understand others remember that compromise is essential to their goals, even if it sometimes feels like politics. They do not need to compromise their values, however – after all, the changes they strive for are usually social ones, and no movement for social justice has rested entirely on the back of one person, no quest for equity on unilateral action. Forging alliances to broaden acceptance is an essential skill for Advocates to master. Fortunately, they're excellent listeners, and if they learn to incorporate what they hear into what they say, they can build support for their ideas.

### *Learning beyond Coursework*

People with this personality type enjoy classes within their chosen field, but the same general education courses that left them cold in high school are no more compelling in their college incarnations, and they are just as much a requirement. Advocates who summoned the discipline to conquer these obstacles back then may have less trouble doing so now because they have at least the semblance of choice in the matter. This is assuming they neither attempt to get those courses all out of the way in the beginning (potentially souring their college experience from the outset) nor save them for last (when academic fatigue might undo all they've worked so hard to achieve).

Advocates should realize that the necessary and the desirable can go together. They may roll their eyes at basic prerequisites like introductory composition, perhaps even marvel at their peers' poor writing or shallow thinking, but what they learn isn't determined by those peers. They should instead recognize the value of their time, commit to learning what they can from basic and advanced studies alike, and push themselves to be creative with opportunities, not just taking a syllabus at face value. They must recognize that in every course, their education is in their own hands.

## Unbalanced College Life

### *A Negative Outlook*

Putting an idea out there for all to judge can be difficult, and some Advocates immediately hide behind righteousness and shoot down the suggestions of those around them. They're certain of what's wrong but are unable to discern what's right.

Aside from the financial burden that a lengthy college career can exact on Advocates – whose academic debts might later force them into professions that fulfill their fiscal needs while robbing them of their spirit – the mental toll shouldn't be underestimated, either. When taking an unhealthy approach, they pursue their studies with the weight of the world on their minds, an all-or-nothing attitude that often exacerbates the pressures of mere academic performance. Even in the absence of family or work responsibilities (and students often have either or both), Advocates in college who burn too brightly risk flaming out far too soon.

### *False Growth*

Finally, a protracted academic stint (or one that ends too soon) can exact a burden on personal growth. Unwary Advocates can make college a gilded cage, losing themselves in a maze of theories and ideas. All they learn only convinces them that they must find out more, and as they do, some risk becoming comfortable, wielding their philosophical might against younger minds in classroom discussions, rather than trying themselves in the broader world – the proverbial big fish in a small pond.

In some cases, this route is less circuitous than it seems, particularly if the destination is a tenured professorship that grants them the liberty of mind that they have long

sought. More often, however, a protracted college stay indicates they're only delaying the life that waits outside the cloister of academia.

### Rebalancing College Life

#### *Cost-Benefit Analysis*

When contemplating their path through college, Advocates might consider this thought experiment: A genie offers them the ability to accomplish anything human beings can achieve – ending hunger, curing disease, providing comfort and opportunity to the homeless, preventing war – but it asks for two to eight years of their lives and some percentage of future earnings as a price in return. Is it worth it?

Equating college with magic may be far-fetched, but in a sense, this is the bargain that higher education offers, granting the skills, experience, and, yes, credentials needed to advance such causes. It's by no means the only path, but it's a powerful one.

To calculate their cost-benefit analysis and rebalance their approach to college, Advocates can take the following steps:

- Contact potential mentors you admire through email or personal introduction. Explain that you're getting in touch for advice about your path.
- Consult school resources and information about outreach and informed planning.
- Form an academic planning "dream team," made up of:
  - A guidance counselor who can help you direct emotional intuition into a fulfilling path.
  - Friends with personal insight regarding the chosen path.

- Financial planning and career counselors who can help you create a concrete plan for the next two to four years.

Advocates don't need to do things the way their mentors lay out, but it also does no harm to gather information from people who know the academic system well. If they find themselves navigating the complex terrain of the collegiate world, Advocates will find even a small amount of preparation invaluable.

### *Balancing the Burden*

For those who feel restless in a purely academic environment, internships and volunteer work may bridge the gap, not only giving them the sense that they're already "being the change they wish to see in the world," but perhaps shortening their post-college transition into that world. Advocates can overburden themselves, though. A full course load is often more than enough to handle, and although unpaid work may eventually lead a suitable career, those who are supporting themselves with a part-time (or full-time) job may not have the luxury of devoting their attention to anything more than what's already on their plate.

Though college should be taken seriously, Advocates need not see everything they do as a matter of apocalyptic concern. Even they need to blow off steam, and refusing to make time for less mentally and emotionally taxing pursuits is a recipe for burnout. Aside from making sure they get out into nature or to a festival or fair from time to time, Advocates may want to ensure that their course schedules always include a "fun" class, whether it directly relates to their chosen major or not.

Here are some suggestions for Advocates who want to let loose without guilt:



- Set aside an hour every day, dedicated solely to self-care that adheres to these guidelines:
  - Nothing related to personal development. No learning new languages, trying out computer programming, volunteering on a campaign – this time should be focused on relaxing the mind and body.
  - Low- or no-stress activities are best. For example, while traveling sounds like a good idea in theory to expand personal horizons, going to a foreign country often comes with unexpected challenges. Make it easy on yourself.
  - Something that is wholeheartedly enjoyable and doesn't feel like work: Watching guilty-pleasure TV shows, for instance, or taking long, luxurious bubble baths.
- Schedule your time around that self-care hour. Map out the rest of your schedule to distribute work equally to ensure that the self-care hour is possible. It's hard to enjoy one hour of self-care if it leads to cramming for a test the next morning.
- Take time to enjoy life; your assignments can wait.

## Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning goes beyond the rigors of school, though a return to academia is certainly an option. Older Advocates who have embraced themselves fully are better able to give the benefit of the doubt to areas of study or schools of thought that might have struck them as irrelevant – or worse – in their younger years.

### *Gathering the Necessities*

For many, “learning” and “education” are virtually synonymous, and both terms are bound by the formal institutions, schools, and universities that confer certificates upon graduation. This isn’t the case for Advocates, who are often profoundly ambivalent about the prospect of formal education, simultaneously reverent of its potential for personal transformation, yet acutely aware of its uses as a tool for indoctrination. As much as Advocates feel that they’re “in the world, but not of it,” they might take a similar approach to education, gathering from it what they need while being careful to remain untainted by what they don’t.

To outside observers, people with this personality type may have strange notions of what counts as necessary. In some cases, they will discover as they mature that there are, in fact, deficits in their knowledge base, then work diligently to remedy their ignorance. Other Advocates, however, will continue treading the same well-worn paths, stubbornly insisting that, though they haven’t learned everything they can know, they at least know what’s important.

### *Forever Learning*

Of all the personality types, Advocates are among those who feel most comfortable with the prospect of lifelong learning – the notion that education isn’t a thing to possess, nor something that must be gained from some institution, but that it is instead a never-ending journey into the unknown. They know that their hunger for knowledge will never be truly fulfilled, just as their yen for justice will never be sated. All Advocates can hope for is that every day brings them a bit closer to their unreachable ideal and that, somehow, they can find balance in their discontent.

## Balanced Lifelong Learning

### *Joy in Learning*

Understanding there is beauty in a clumsy first effort – just as there's beauty in a child's excitement when they first learn that red and yellow make orange – Advocates pursue many things that too many people attempt only in childhood, such as a new instrument, art medium, dance style, unfamiliar sport or game, distant campsite, or hobby in nature.

Many Advocates, when content, continue to learn throughout their lives, not to prove anything to anyone, least of all themselves, but for the joy of trying things and getting better at them. They can do something not because it serves some greater altruistic purpose but simply because it's fun. Engaging the world around them with no other agenda but curiosity and a light heart resonates with Advocates' deeply cherished authenticity, and it is perhaps the greatest expression of their individuality.

### *Enjoying Learning over Improvement*

Self-improvement is important, but so is enjoyment. Advocates can take a more balanced approach to lifelong learning by taking time to appreciate the life they've developed for themselves, as well as praise themselves for the skills they've learned. They can also develop the ability to separate learning a new skill from needing to perform that skill *well* the first time around.

In fact, Advocates may separate learning new skills from their self-image completely. They feel accomplished when they succeed at something, but they don't base their self-worth upon what they have learned (or failed to learn). This personality type can accept themselves as they are but also strive to learn when they can.

## Unbalanced Lifelong Learning

### *Stubborn Worldviews*

From an early age, Advocates tend to formulate a cohesive set of opinions about the world. Those who refuse to adjust their ideas when appropriate find themselves lacking. By focusing on honing their mastery of subjects they already have an affinity for, rather than diversifying their learning, they often pursue only knowledge that supports their fundamental views. This limits their growth – and even solidifies their ignorance – as they focus on one thing without truly having an open mind to others.

Although some Advocates recognize and compensate for their certitude, knowing that different perspectives bring forward different and equal truths about the world, others unfortunately just allow their beliefs to congeal into an impenetrable ideological mass. This can conflict with their perception of themselves as fundamentally correct in their views. While the world changes around them, such Advocates may be reluctant to learn about new technologies, philosophies, or methods, always considering their own to be better than the rest.

### *Making the Magnificent the Mundane*

Aside from the diminishing returns of a too-narrow focus, Advocates who refuse to diversify their learning and self-exploration risk growing weary of the very obsessions that once ignited their passion. Their over-serious approach to knowledge robs them of the joy of learning and discovery. Unable to divert their attentions from their mission, whether fixing the world's suffering or exercising their moral purity, the pure pleasure of a day off to learn a light-hearted skill can become perverse and selfish in their eyes.

This unrelenting, adamant nature can hold Advocates back as powerfully as it once propelled them forth. Once just one strong argument away from changing the world, those suffering a severe case of burnout may be equally certain that no such argument exists – or if one does, everyone else is too stubborn and apathetic to hear it. Early cynicism has its disadvantages, but late-blooming cynicism can grip the hearts of older Advocates and be particularly devastating. With nothing to replace their former passion, they can quickly become despondent, so certain are they that every alternative course was ruled out in their youth.

### Rebalancing Lifelong Learning

#### *Broadening Scope*

The goals that Advocates pursue are often so grand that they can consume their lives – and many see little reason to avoid that. Any sacrifice in the service of such ideals seems a small price to pay for the good they can do. But that point of view can easily grow to be quite exaggerated, and often unhealthy.

Although Advocates might spend their formative years becoming authorities in their chosen subjects, as they mature they might find at least some of their time better spent attaining a greater breadth of knowledge. Seemingly unrelated topics could yield fresh insights into their principal areas of concern.

Being “set in your ways” isn’t inherently bad. However, there’s always room for improving on an existing routine. Advocates can begin by picking a contrary opinion – considering, for example, an opposing opinion on yellow mustard when they prefer honey mustard. Here are some steps they can follow:

- Rather than immediately dismissing an argument, choose to take time to understand the other side. Even a small variation can loosen up the tight grip an existing routine has on life. Begin to open new vistas of learning by considering the following.
  - How your stance may appear to others.
  - Some benefits of what the other side is proposing.
  - “Trying on” the contrary opinion for a few minutes.
- Based on these small excursions:
  - Adjust your routine based on what you liked or disliked.
  - Keep your old routines “as is” if that’s what works better.
  - Make the choice to apply this exploratory spirit to other areas of your life.

There are always new experiences and new things to learn. They don’t have to be earth-shaking or life-changing. Learning can benefit life without being too disruptive. And once Advocates rediscover the joy in learning something new, they might choose to stretch their experiences even more. They may find that the benefits of continued learning far outweigh the risks.

### *Reclaiming Innocence*

Advocates’ greatest peril is that learning can become a joyless process tied to endless rumination on the injustice and misery inflicted on others. Buried in articles and political philosophies, these types can lose touch with the human beings those ideas represent. Learning something fun – to craft things, or to play an instrument – isn’t a distraction from their greater concerns. It’s an opportunity to share time and effort, to reconnect with the friends, family members, and communities that those concerns serve. It’s a return to what makes humanity beautiful, and that upwelling of pure

positive emotion can breathe new life into the darkest struggles. A good way Advocates can do this is through simple mindfulness exercises. Here are a few steps:

- Find an object to focus on.
  - A plant
  - A cup
  - A body of water
- Take a few minutes to focus on the following aspects of the object.
  - What colors are there to it?
  - What is the texture of its surface?
  - Does it have a scent?
  - What are its physical features?
  - In what ways has it been used in the past?
  - In what ways can it be used in the future?

This simple exercise takes only about five minutes, and it can pull Advocates out of a bad head space and into the reality around them. They can focus on what's in front of them, how they feel in that moment, completely unaware of the future – just as children would.

## Conclusion

Education can mean a lot of things to a lot of people. For Advocates, it's a way to advance their life goals and help them contribute to causes they care about. But it can be so much more if given a chance. Advocates' challenge isn't so much in the hard work of learning. It's more about managing expectations and finding a reasonable pace so that learning doesn't become soulless drudgery but a rewarding

experience. This involves blending their passion and soft hearts with practical, realistic expectations.

By taking time for self-care, setting plausible expectations for themselves, and finding meaning and merit in the mundane, such balance is within their reach. They can understand that an “A+” doesn’t equate self-worth, give themselves room to fail and to be wrong, as well as celebrate their accomplishments.

People are never simply “balanced” or “unbalanced.” All of us go back and forth, evolving and devolving. Balance is more akin to the seasons – winter, spring, summer, and fall. They come and go, but they always repeat. Progress, however, comes when Advocates learn how to deal with those seasons.



## Additional Tools and Tests

Want to dig even deeper into your academic path? If you have access to the toolkits area of the website, we offer a variety of additional tools and tests to help you explore.

### Thirst for Knowledge Test

What is your interest in gaining knowledge? How does your desire for learning affect your life? This tool will help you explore that.

### Academic Exploration Test

Do you ever wonder what areas of study might suit your personality? Find out which subjects might be the most satisfying for you.

### Perfectionism Test

Perfectionism is a desire to be remarkable and outstanding in everything you do. Let's see what role it plays in your life.

### Type Guesser (Academic)

Are you trying to figure out what personality type your classmate belongs to? You may find that this simple tool helps.

# Advocates' Career and Professional Development



Advocates want to be both satisfied and challenged by their work. Although many other types are motivated by compensation or recognition, Advocates have different aspirations. Idealistic and creative, they seek to use their skills and knowledge to make a difference.

This section discusses Advocates' needs regarding professional development, the common frustrations they face, and ways they can use their strengths to find meaning and purpose in their careers. Ultimately, we hope this guide provides the knowledge and tools for Advocates to pursue their ideal career paths.

## *Meaningful Work*

Even stable jobs with good compensation won't satisfy Advocates unless they feel they're helping others on a significant level. They want to work on behalf of those who don't have the resources to fight for themselves – and against those who use

their clout only for personal gain. For Advocates, earning money and winning “Employee of the Month” awards matter less than honoring their values.

Meaningful work can be found in many fields, even those that initially seem better suited to other personality types. Technical and data-driven, engineering might seem disconnected from Advocates' interests, but engineers tackle some of the major issues facing the world today. This kind of big-picture usefulness brings out the best in Advocates, whatever their field.

Nor are people with this personality type limited within cubicle walls. They might derive satisfaction from helping customers find ingredients for healthy meals, finish up home projects, or host events. Because they're driven by a sense of purpose, Advocates tend to thrive in a range of professions.

### *Creativity and Insight*

In addition to a sense of meaning, Advocates need to have creativity in their work. The best careers for them combine innovation with a relatively high degree of independence. Adept at spotting opportunities to step in and make a difference, they will likely feel constrained when they can't pursue such desires.

Their needs may be incompatible with some work environments, particularly those driven by profit rather than service. High-pressure sales and cutthroat business practices are particularly distasteful to people with this personality type. When an employer's priorities don't match their own, many establish their independence – either by assuming leadership positions or by starting their own companies.

### *Personal and Professional Growth*

For Advocates, “professional growth” has little to do with promotions and pay increases. They want to learn and develop, growing their skills as well as their understanding. Thanks to this mindset, they have the capacity to achieve amazing things and the determination to put their idealism to work.

Despite their indifference to prestige, Advocates may ascend the career ladder to mentor and support their colleagues. For people with this personality type, professional growth is most rewarding when it promotes their ideals and enables them to make a difference in others' lives.

These ideals can take on abstract forms as well. Advocates are often drawn to creative pursuits, such as writing, music, and art, which allow them to explore deeper themes of personal growth, morality, and spirituality. Through such endeavors, they can share their worldviews in a positive, proactive fashion, enriching the lives of their audience.

## Jobs and Skill Sets for Advocates

Advocates do their best work in positions that combine creativity with compassion. What follows isn't a firm prescription as to what they must do to be successful or happy. Rather, we hope it provides some decision-making insight. Perhaps the most important question for them to ask when searching for a career isn't, “What do I want to do for a living?” but rather, “How can I pursue purpose and meaning?”

### *Health Care*

Counseling, psychology, and medicine speak to two of Advocates' primary motivators: service and purpose. In these fields, they enjoy helping others improve their minds and bodies. The professions also exercise Advocates' creativity, requiring them to synthesize information and insights as they determine how to best help their patients.

These jobs also suit Advocates' Introverted nature, allowing them to work with patients individually and then step away to ponder the experiences. Although medical TV dramas don't depict it, these careers are about more than time spent with patients. Researching, writing notes, and filling in charts are equally necessary for these positions, which allows Advocates time to reflect in solitude. Here are a few specific healthcare careers that are a good fit for Advocates' skills and preferences:

- Physician
- Physician's assistant
- Nurse practitioner
- Nursing assistant
- Physical therapist or physical therapist aide
- Medical technician
- Pharmacy technician
- Optician
- Midwife or doula
- Massage therapist
- Healthcare administrator
- Community health worker
- Hospital orderly

- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- Therapist
- Addiction counselor
- Marriage counselor
- Social worker
- Career counselor
- Religious worker

### *Education*

Growth and learning are central to Advocates' worldview, so working with students suits them well. Imaginative and curious, they connect with younger students using their intuition and empathy. With older students, they present their subjects with unique passion, particularly the humanities.

Advocates tend to treat their students as individuals with specific traits and needs. Looking beyond test scores and conventional metrics of success, they glimpse the unique potential of each student. Even though these types may feel taxed by constant contact with pupils and colleagues throughout the day, they nevertheless believe they're changing lives for the better.

Advocates rarely seek leadership roles, but they are likely to make good administrators. In general, they do better as visionary leaders rather than rule-enforcers and paper-pushers. Given the right administrative opportunities, Advocates may enact reforms that improve the academic environment and boost students' morale. Here are a few positions in the field of education that will likely suit Advocates well:

- Preschool, elementary, or high school teacher
- School principal
- Special education teacher
- Teacher's aide or teaching assistant
- Adult education teacher
- English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher
- Tutor
- College lecturer
- Guidance counselor
- School psychologist
- Religious educator

### *Social Activism*

Advocates care about values, justice, and fairness. Other types might pursue careers in law for the drama, the power, or the paycheck. Advocates, however, pursue them to uphold their values and assist those who can't defend themselves.

These types contribute more than ideals to their work. They also bring determination, good will, and insight into human behavior, and this combination of traits makes them potent agents of change. By combining thoughtful deliberation with grand vision, they move and inspire all but the most unreasonable of adversaries. What follow are some positions in social justice that may work well for Advocates.

Entry level:

- Communications associate at a nonprofit organization
- Volunteer or assistant in a political campaign

## Advocates' Career and Professional Development

- Foreign aid worker
- Legal advocate

### Intermediate level:

- Documentary filmmaker or photographer
- Dispatcher (e.g., for emergency dispatch, domestic violence hotlines, or suicide hotlines)
- Social worker
- Manager or specialist at a nonprofit organization

### Professional:

- Lawyer at a non-governmental organization (also known as an NGO)
- Diplomat or liaison
- Researcher at a policy institute
- Environmental impact researcher
- Investigative journalist

## Career Alternatives

We live in an age of possibilities, where putting in time at a corporation isn't the only way to earn money. Advocates are imaginative and bold, and their ability to identify and empathize with people's needs enables them to add value beyond the confines of conventional employment.

### *Self-Employment*

Advocates value self-determination and independence, so working for themselves is a natural fit. Self-employed people can thrive in a range of fields, including



photography, graphic design, freelance writing, information technology (IT), and website design. To identify suitable opportunities, Advocates should consider the talents and interests they bring to their hobbies and passion projects.

Although no job is perfect, self-employed individuals create their positions through passion and reinvention. Their work is dictated more by personal choice than by a manager's imperatives. When they channel their interests in a way that truly benefits their clients, they experience the true rewards of their ideas and efforts. Creative, principled, and mission-driven, Advocates can derive great satisfaction from these aspects of self-employment.

### *Professional Volunteerism*

Supported by minor income from other endeavors, some Advocates devote themselves to matters of conscience and progress. Although unlikely to lead to financial prosperity, this path may offer unparalleled personal satisfaction and growth. Some Advocates transition into volunteerism later in life, providing wisdom and vigor as well as expertise from previous occupations.

Advocates with specialized training – from welders and carpenters to teachers and doctors – can be a blessing in underserved communities. Whatever their work experience, they can join nonprofit organizations, found their own groups, and even act individually. Almost anyone with warmth, patience, and a high school education can tutor younger children, making an incredible difference in their lives and futures.

By following such a path, Advocates satisfy their desire to foster harmony and healing in the world. They can dip their toe in while keeping a day job, or plunge in and devote their time to helping others without the distraction of a profit motive.

## Workplace Cooperation between Types

The following section covers pairings between Advocates and each of the four Role groups in the workplace. It includes brief overviews of potential synergies and obstacles, as well as some tips to help Advocates navigate these tricky waters. By taking this information to heart, Advocates can promote harmony, positivity, and progress in their work environments.

### Advocate–Analyst Cooperation



Like Advocates, Analysts thrive on big-picture visions and bold creativity. Imaginative, abstract thinkers, they spot strange patterns and generate wholly unexpected new ideas. Together, these two types can combine their imaginative firepower to hatch big plans and tackle major challenges. When an organization needs an injection of fresh ideas, they can look to Advocates and Analysts as a brainstorming dynamo. Together, these two personalities create a feedback loop of constant improvement, ushering in novelty and catalyzing change.

## Balanced Advocate–Analyst Cooperation

### *Big-Picture Creativity*

They're not blinded by the status quo, so Advocates and Analysts spot potential where others might not see it, seizing opportunities that no one else even recognizes. They also balance each other's strengths well, with Analysts focusing on systems and rationality and Advocates attending to human thought and emotion. As collaborators, these two types can venture into entirely new territory, tackling problems previously deemed unsolvable.

### *Rational Counterbalance*

Advocates' altruistic instincts are wonderful but at times impractical. Compared to Advocates, Analysts tend to be more comfortable with the impersonal world of systems and puzzles, allowing them to optimize and streamline processes. As a result, ever-rational Analysts can help ensure that Advocates' efforts aren't only well intended, but also feasible and sustainable.

Advocates can turn to Analysts when they need people to evaluate or improve the viability of their ideas. Given their candor and incisiveness, Analysts are likely to diagnose Advocates' blind spots and emotional biases, then suggest course corrections and strategy enhancements that make Advocates' initiatives feasible in the long run.

## Unbalanced Advocate–Analyst Cooperation

### *Ivory Towers*

When Advocates and Analysts work well together, they enjoy a sort of intellectual head rush. For these two types, the joy of finally finding conversation partners who banter about big concepts and abstract ideas is powerful. If this devolves into cliquishness, however, they may wall themselves off from other colleagues, closing their ears to alternative viewpoints and worldviews.

Although Advocates and Analysts counterbalance some of each other's weaknesses, their similarities leave them susceptible to blind spots. These two types may overlook nitty-gritty details – and implementation isn't among their strong points. As a result, when they make plans without consulting more pragmatic colleagues, they may set themselves up to fail, whether by neglecting practical details or by creating incredible visions without the ability to implement them.

### *Values vs. Logic*

When it prioritizes optimization over compassion, Analysts' hardline rationality can dismay Advocates. Meanwhile, Advocates who honor their values of harmony and cooperation may find that Analysts accuse them of being too soft or over-emotional. When their working relationships fall into this pattern, Advocates and Analysts may become locked into debate over their different approaches.

These debates can veer into pedantic, unproductive territory, preventing the colleagues from addressing other issues and tasks. If they work too hard to prove themselves right instead of arriving at a solution, their hostility and refusal to communicate may dampen overall workplace morale and productivity. Other

colleagues may even dismiss Advocates and Analysts as impractical or inefficient for spending so much time and energy on their philosophical disagreements.

Over time, Advocates' aversion to open conflict may cause them to disengage entirely from these debates. Although they may no longer argue, they're likely to be seething internally, seeing their Analyst colleagues as imperious and insensitive. Points of contention can't be resolved without open discussion, so when they disengage in this manner, Advocates worsen the working relationship, reducing their chances of making progress.

### Rebalancing Advocate–Analyst Cooperation

#### *Asking Why*

By asking thoughtful questions, Advocates can break stalemates with Analyst colleagues. Analysts tend to be pleasantly surprised when people are curious enough to ask them to explain their opinions or comments. In this context, they don't mind being challenged a bit, provided it enhances the discussion. This gives Advocates the opportunity to make a counterargument or offer their own analysis.

To initiate civil, worthwhile conversations with Analysts, the key is to ask for additional details through “why,” “how,” and “what” questions – for example, “Why do you recommend that course of action?” or “What do you think needs to change?” These queries prompt the type of intellectual engagement Analysts respect. Loaded or rhetorical questions – such as, “Do you have any idea how this would affect our client base?” – are unhelpful and should be avoided. Remember, Analysts' interest in optimization and effectiveness may be one-sided, but it's valid, so try the following steps:

- Ask Analysts thoughtful questions about their motivations and rationale. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification.
- Avoid loaded or rhetorical questions.
- Stick to "why," "how," and "what" questions that demonstrate real curiosity.
- Listen honestly and patiently to their responses, considering the reasoning behind Analysts' perspectives.

Intellectual engagement is a hallmark of positive Advocate–Analyst communication. By asking thoughtful questions, Advocates can ease tensions and create the momentum to move forward.

### *Inquiring and Explaining*

Unlike Analysts, Advocates crave discussions about "who," not just "why" or "how." By asking questions that steer conversations in this direction, they can help their Analyst colleagues understand how best to communicate with them. For example, Advocates might say, "Who will benefit from your proposed changes?" to encourage Analysts to consider some of the human ramifications of their ideas.

Like Advocates, Analysts care about improvements and positive change, and they appreciate when Advocates explain the conditions under which they work best. Analysts don't excel in terms of emotional intelligence, and they're certainly not mind readers. By explaining what makes them tick, Advocates give their Analyst colleagues the tools to improve the relationship and facilitate productive collaboration. Try the following:

- Directly and respectfully explain that human considerations are simply an important component in the situation, so it makes sense to take them into account.

- Steer the conversation toward social dynamics or interpersonal concerns by asking questions that show the utility and necessity of exploring this terrain. This can promote the style of big-picture collaboration that Analysts and Advocates do best.
- Grant Analyst colleagues the same consideration when they steer a conversation toward systems or analysis.
- Make requests or suggestions by emphasizing that a constructive working environment is necessary to generate improvement and positive impact.

Advocates can help Analysts to see to the usefulness of considering the human impact of their decisions. In doing so, they can create common ground with even the most optimization-oriented of Analysts.

### Advocate-Diplomat Cooperation



Advocates and other Diplomats have the advantage of speaking the same language. For them, purpose matters more than profit, and they aim to better society and improve lives through their work. Because they're so often accused of idealism and

impracticality, Advocates and Diplomats delight in finding others who are as values-driven as they are.

## Balanced Advocate–Diplomat Cooperation

### *Visionaries with Purpose*

Together, Advocates and other Diplomats can foster harmony and growth within an organization. They excel at creating new initiatives, particularly those with qualitative rather than quantitative upsides. They might envision campaigns to improve customer loyalty, bolster employee morale, or rebrand an organization in a fresh and more approachable way. These types also believe in helping their colleagues reach their full potential, which can breathe new life into their workplace. Although their contributions might not immediately boost the bottom line, Advocates and Diplomats act in ways that benefit organizations – and the people they serve – in the long run.

### *Change Agents*

These types may seem to be all talk and no action, but this isn't the case. When necessary, they translate their big ideas into bold steps to make their dreams of a better world into reality. In the workplace, they feed off each other's sense of mission and purpose, which strengthens their resolve and gives them the motivation to tackle major challenges – particularly those that result in quality-of-life improvements for their customers or coworkers.

If they find themselves in an organization that sacrifices people's well-being in favor of profit or productivity, these two types won't hesitate to work toward reform, whether in the form of fair compensation or stricter environmental standards. They



advocate for others, acting from an essential belief in the goodness and dignity of their customers and colleagues. If they work in the corporate division of a retail chain, they might strive to offer better value to customers *and* better benefits to store employees. Although it may put them at odds with their managers, this mindset creates an organizational culture infused with meaning and purpose – exactly the type of culture toward which many consumers and potential employees gravitate.

### Unbalanced Advocate-Diplomat Cooperation

#### *Too Much of a Good Thing*

Advocates and other Diplomats may become stuck in their world of values and ideals, inadvertently excluding the insights of those who think differently. If these two types isolate themselves, they can create a high-minded or even self-righteous echo chamber, dismissing other personality types' pragmatic insights as narrow-minded or boring. Carrying out visions – or turning a profit to make their efforts sustainable – may not be their common strong point, and unheard coworkers may feel frustrated, hurt, or ignored.

Without a concrete “how-to” strategy, inattention to day-to-day details like budgets, timelines, project management, and necessary compromises can derail their visions for change. Unless Advocates and Diplomats recruit other personality types – and value their advice – they may generate beautiful mission statements and grand plans that go nowhere.

#### *Hard Decisions*

These types love to spot potential and stick to their ideals, but this can make them shy away from painful but necessary decisions. Even if they rationally recognize the

need to slash budgets or fire employees, they may hesitate, imagining and re-imagining the potential repercussions for the people affected.

If taken too far, the desire to find an ideal course of action that benefits absolutely everyone can spiral into inaction and denial. Together, Advocates and Diplomats may fixate so much on the silver lining of a bad situation, or the possible ramifications of a hard decision, that they don't work to fix things. By avoiding difficult but necessary decisions, they may avoid short-term discomfort, but they will also undercut their long-term chances of success.

### Rebalancing Advocate–Diplomat Cooperation

#### *Opening the Doors*

The Diplomat Role group contains many of the rarest personality types. When they work together, the thrill of finally finding kindred spirits may make them cliquish or insular. They can build upon their shared strengths, but they may be left with no one to counterbalance their weaknesses.

Instead, they can draw on their natural inclusivity and innate interest in other people to forge connections, inviting various colleagues to share their perspectives. Pragmatic Sentinels, rational Analysts, and in-the-moment Explorers may spot solutions that don't occur to Advocates and their fellow Diplomats. To facilitate this exchange, Advocates can set up meetings or informal chats to run their ideas past colleagues with different thinking styles. This is vital in the early stages of a project, when ideas are still malleable and changes in direction are still easy.

Advocates should also seek others' opinions whenever they feel stalled. Just as it's natural for people with this personality type to struggle with difficult decisions,

Sentinels excel at finding practical solutions, Analysts promote efficacy, and Explorers take quick action. These traits can all help Advocates and fellow Diplomats break free of inaction and denial. Ways to go about this include:

- Set up group brainstorming sessions with a range of personality types to receive early feedback on new ideas.
- Ask a range of colleagues for feedback on action plans and in-progress projects.
- Consult colleagues with different thinking styles in the face of difficult, seemingly intractable decisions.
- After projects are completed, set up meetings or informal conversations to discuss what went well and what could be improved in the future.

These strategies can help Advocates' non-Diplomat colleagues feel included and heard, and they also can create a working environment that benefits from a diversity of perspectives.

### *Speaking the Truth*

Advocates generally avoid open conflict, which can lead them to harbor resentments that boil over. This may manifest as stonewalling, judgment, or avoidance. Alas, sensitive Diplomats struggle to function in tense, unsupportive environments. When they sense Advocates' disapproval, they may drop everything to please or appease these colleagues, even if there are more pressing matters to attend to.

Although it runs counter to their nature and may lead to hurt feelings in the short term, Advocates must discuss any frustrations kindly but openly with Diplomat colleagues. Only when issues are addressed and resolved can Diplomats get back to focusing on their work. To air conflicts promptly and create environments where

both types speak up and collaborate, maximizing their ability to make valuable contributions, keep these hints in mind:

- In charged situations, settle any emotional energy and return to equilibrium before offering feedback to Diplomats. Try to address issues after the emotional rush has passed, but before situations have a chance to repeat themselves.
- Air frustrations in an open, constructive manner. Make “I” statements – for example, “I felt upset when I saw this work hadn’t been done” – rather than judgments or accusations.

It will challenge both types, but Advocates and Diplomats alike should speak their feelings rather than harbor resentments. By bringing issues to the surface, they and their colleagues can set things right, establish mutual understanding, and move on.

### Advocate–Sentinel Cooperation



Like Advocates, Sentinels find energy and self-respect in helping others. This shared commitment to service and integrity helps these two disparate types find common

ground. Although Sentinels are pragmatic, they aren't ruthless, and Advocates can count them as allies in doing what's right. As a team, these two types can reform organizations, boost employee morale, and encourage honesty and dedication in their coworkers.

### Balanced Advocate–Sentinel Cooperation

#### *Caring and Integrity*

Although Advocates are ideologically driven and Sentinels tend to be more practical and concrete, their underlying goals are often in alignment. Together, they tend to ensure that the principle of fairness is upheld by concrete actions and enduring changes.

#### *Taking the Devil out of the Details*

Advocates love big ideas – sometimes at the expense of small but essential details. This is where Sentinels stand out as excellent collaborators, keeping an eye on day-to-day operations, ensuring that things run smoothly, and anticipating practical challenges. When a budget needs to be upheld, or a project timeline needs to be enforced, there are few better allies than Sentinels.

When they want to try something new, Advocates can turn to Sentinels for a grounded point of view. Sentinels have practical savvy, and they know what's worked in the past and what hasn't. Advocates might be tempted to dismiss them as stodgy, but Sentinels' insights can save precious time and energy, particularly in the early stages of a project. In workplace partnerships, Advocates and Sentinels counterbalance each other beautifully, combining idealism with know-how, vision with practicality. The result is likely to be new initiatives that get implemented.

## Unbalanced Advocate-Sentinel Cooperation

### *Broken Communication*

Advocates think in terms of grand abstractions – such as purpose, truth, and beauty – and this can lead to miscommunications with concrete-minded Sentinels. When Sentinels push for short-term specifics rather than long-term visions, Advocates might judge them as small-minded or unimaginative. In turn, Advocates may find themselves labeled impractical or ineffective.

In unbalanced relationships, Advocates lose respect for Sentinels' opinions, so they don't consult Sentinels regarding new ideas. As a result, they lose the benefit of Sentinels' diligent, detail-oriented approach. Although Advocates may think they're better off without Sentinels' input, their unwillingness to collaborate with these colleagues can cause frustration and headaches when it's time to implement or troubleshoot projects – two areas where Sentinels excel.

### *Disparate Values*

Advocates share some values with Sentinels – such as loyalty – but they certainly don't agree on all counts. Compared to Advocates, Sentinels are more invested in proven methods and protocols. They think more about what works than about what *might* work, something that can frustrate progress-oriented Advocates. In the workplace, this often manifests as disagreements over the best ways to do things, with Sentinels leaning on historically successful protocols and Advocates pushing for new ideas and advancements.

This can be especially apparent in the way these types evaluate their coworkers. In colleagues and potential new hires, Advocates appreciate intangible qualities like

thoughtfulness and vision, regardless of proven skills or track records. Meanwhile, Sentinels look to past performance and seniority to assess team members. These differing priorities may create tension when Advocates and Sentinels need to cooperate for hiring, teambuilding, or assessing employee performance.

### Rebalancing Advocate–Sentinel Cooperation

#### *Talking Specifics*

When Sentinels ask for clarifying details, Advocates might see them as narrow-minded or unimaginative. For them, lofty concepts and goals should transcend workaday, practical metrics. Sentinels' interest in specifics is perfectly valid, however, and by honoring it, Advocates can create stronger, more fruitful working relationships.

To communicate effectively with Sentinels, Advocates can ground their use of abstract terms like “vision,” “community,” or even “service” with concrete details. This might entail outlining specific benchmarks they'd like to hit as opposed to reciting a mission statement, or discussing the tangible upsides of a new approach rather than the intangible benefits. At times, Advocates won't realize that they're vague or unclear, so they can benefit from asking their colleagues for feedback:

- Ask Sentinels to ground a qualitative vision or goal, such as improved customer loyalty or employee satisfaction, in concrete details. How can the goal be measured? Is it sufficiently precise? What actions can be taken to achieve it?
- Regularly ask Sentinel colleagues for advice on how to translate ideas into concrete terms, as this is their strong suit. Solicit feedback regarding which aspects of a plan should be more specific or actionable.

- When suggesting a change, support the argument by outlining tangible benefits. Intangible and theoretical aspects concern Sentinels less than the known and predictable details.

By bridging the gap between their big ideas and specific goals, Advocates can win over Sentinels and pave the way for clear communication.

### *Showing Appreciation and Respect*

Sentinels tend to put considerable time and energy into their work. Although they rarely ask for praise, they feel motivated and energized when they receive it. By expressing appreciation for Sentinels' contributions, Advocates can help their colleagues feel seen and respected, paving the way for positive, productive relationships.

The best compliments are genuine, not forced, so Advocates should offer praise only when moved to do so. Whether an informal email, a quick chat, or a verbal thank-you at a group meeting, the goal is to acknowledge Sentinels' specific contributions and explain what makes these contributions praiseworthy.

Consider the following tips for effective communication:

- Don't force compliments. Offer genuine appreciation so that feedback always matters.
- Praise specific actions and explain why. Be as detailed as possible.
- Acknowledge Sentinels via quick thank-you emails whenever they're especially helpful.
- When appropriate, thank Sentinels in front of others.



These gestures allow Advocates to not only offer encouragement, but also communicate in the specific terms that Sentinels appreciate.

### Advocate-Explorer Cooperation



Like Advocates, Explorers love to move forward with tasks and explore novel solutions. Although they prefer nitty-gritty problems to Advocates' grand challenges, both types value independence and discovery over rules and tradition. They especially enjoy turning a fixed idea on its head, creating a whole new perspective. This common ground enables Advocates and Explorers to work together as innovators.

### Balanced Advocate-Explorer Cooperation

#### *New Solutions*

Advocates can turn to Explorers whenever they need to break new ground, whether that means revamping an organization's culture, opening a store location, or branching into a different market. Explorers are more comfortable with risk than

Advocates, and they may help Advocates move past their cautious natures to spot and pursue new opportunities.

### *Complementary Strengths*

Advocates often find that Explorers' strengths complement their own. Although Advocates excel at grasping, creating, and transforming ideas, they live in their heads, and they sometimes struggle to fit such big ideas into such a small world. Explorers, who are masters of hands-on execution and on-the-fly troubleshooting, can tackle boring details as well as the fraught, time-sensitive situations that make Advocates cringe.

Together, these two types can generate new ideas and execute them. Let's say that Advocates, who excel at spotting high-level problems, realize their company isn't perceived as approachable or accessible. Their Explorer colleagues might address this realization by starting email newsletters, creating behind-the-scenes videos, or launching interactive social-media strategies. In such relationships, Advocates can lean on their true strengths – including pattern recognition and idea generation – and then entrust the implementation to Explorers.

## Unbalanced Advocate–Explorer Cooperation

### *Values vs. Utility*

Although established standards don't bind Explorers or Advocates as tightly as they might Sentinels, Advocates do live by a code. Their values, including thoughtfulness and compassion, are active forces in their lives, as real as any action. Explorers have values of their own, but they focus more on utilitarian solutions than ideals, which influences the way they handle business.

For instance, Explorers might bolster sales by mining their personal networks or using client lists from previous employers – activities that would probably challenge Advocates' sense of integrity. In such situations, Advocates may stonewall or criticize their Explorer colleagues, refusing to collaborate or even communicate. By writing off colleagues in this manner, Advocates narrow the circle of people whom they can count as allies. This is rarely a wise decision, as Explorers' enthusiasm and resourcefulness may make all the difference in bringing projects to fruition.

### *Now or Later*

In stark contrast to Advocates, Explorers often downplay consequences. Given a choice between a bird in the hand or two in the bush, Advocates might well choose the two in the bush. Explorers, on the other hand, tend to shy away from long-term planning and prioritize immediate gains.

In the workplace, this can manifest as priority misalignment. Advocates tend to focus on building lasting relationships with clients and upholding mission statements, whereas Explorers likely favor near-term profits and risky ventures with big payoffs. If communication breaks down, Advocates may judge their Explorer colleagues as shortsighted or trigger-happy. Meanwhile, Explorers may dismiss Advocates as impractical or uptight. If they don't collaborate, Advocates can miss out on exciting opportunities, and Explorers may lose sight of the big picture.

## Rebalancing Advocate–Explorer Cooperation

### *Exciting and Actionable*

Although Explorers like new ideas, they aren't as likely to be fulfilled by conceptual discussions as Advocates are. To connect with Explorers, Advocates should set aside

philosophical debates and instead explain what makes an idea interesting or exciting. They may highlight the novelty of initiatives or some intriguing challenges that might arise – two surefire ways to capture Explorers' attention.

Explorers also respond well when Advocates communicate in terms of action steps, not just high-level abstractions. Rather than declaring a commitment to environmental sustainability, Advocates might suggest specific behaviors, such as recycling, emailing rather than printing memos, or stocking the kitchenette with reusable mugs rather than paper cups.

Try the following specifics to elicit Explorers' creativity:

- Highlight what makes an idea or initiative exciting, distinctive, or intriguing.
- Communicate large-scale ideas via specific actions, behaviors, and goals.
- Limit philosophical discussions, or at least ground them in concrete details.
- Ask Explorers for input. They excel at identifying – and taking – the next steps to move projects forward.

Explorers' most pronounced strengths include curiosity, openness, and spontaneity. By communicating the novel, exciting aspects of an idea and connecting concepts to action, Advocates can capture the attention and commitment of these valuable team members.

### *Open Communication*

In unbalanced working relationships with Explorers, Advocates may choose to withdraw instead of openly addressing differences of opinions. This stonewalling comes at a cost, however. Beyond generating a surprising amount of drama, it curtails any chance of collaboration.

To revive communication, Advocates can treat Explorers the way they would wish to be treated. This means soliciting Explorers' opinions and acknowledging their contributions and strengths, such as troubleshooting problems, mastering new techniques, and getting things done. This also entails expressing genuine curiosity about what Explorers hope to achieve and how they plan to achieve it.

The following steps may help these disparate types find common ground:

- Reopen communication by asking Explorers for their input and acknowledging their work.
- Focus on listening, learning, and asking questions rather than debating or being right.
- Express curiosity about their definitions of success.

Resourceful and tenacious, Explorers care about getting things done and moving projects forward. If they practice open, respectful communication, Advocates often come to respect and admire the proactive, fearless spirits that their Explorer colleagues bring to the workplace.

## Conclusion

Advocates' strengths – including creativity, dedication, and insight – are invaluable in many workplaces. To achieve job satisfaction, however, they must seek out positions that suit their personalities. This often entails pushing beyond their comfort zones, acclimating themselves to risk, and creating mission statements to maintain the motivation needed to reach their full potential.

When interacting with coworkers, Advocates must balance their principles and their desire for independence with the necessities of collaboration, communication, and

openness to other mindsets. This can be achieved by taking alone time, setting boundaries, and soliciting the opinions of people who think differently. By taking the time to find both the right field and the right workplace, Advocates may carry the resulting sense of meaning and purpose into every aspect of their lives.

## Additional Tools and Tests

Want to dig even deeper into your professional development? If you have access to the toolkits area of the website, we offer a variety of additional tools and tests to help you explore.

### Job Preferences Test

Among the most important things you decide in life is how you're going to make a living. Discover which job fields fit you best.

### Job Burnout Test

We've all heard the term "burnout." But what does it mean to you? This test will guide you as you take a look at how burnout affects you.

### Career Values Test

What should your job look like for you to call it "ideal"? What aspects matter most to you? This tool will help you answer these questions.

### Leadership Styles Test

What is your leadership style? There is no right or wrong answer to that question. This test will help clarify your preferred approach.

### Leadership Styles II Test

The second part of our Leadership Styles test will explore your desire to be a leader and willingness to delegate power.

### Motivation Test

On average, we work for about 90,000 hours over our lifetime. With that in mind, it's helpful to figure out exactly what motivates you.

### Ambition Test

How eager are you to succeed, and at what cost? Ambition can be a double-edged sword – explore how it works in your case.

### Professional Authenticity Test

When at work, are you acting in a way that is consistent with your true self? Explore difficult questions about authenticity with this test.

### Goal Orientation Test

What's the underlying motivation you feel when confronting a challenge? See which of the Goal Orientations influences you most.

### Type Guesser (Workplace)

Are you trying to figure out what personality type your coworker belongs to? You may find that this simple tool helps.



## Final Words



We've covered many different topics in this profile. Our hope is that you will now better understand not only yourself, but also other people and their perspectives. It is often tempting to try to change others, especially if we believe our reasons are good and noble, but such attempts usually fail. By simply understanding each other better, we can be more aware, genuine, and peaceful as we each make our way through the world.

This profile is not meant to be read once. Don't file it away and never open it again. Whenever you wish you understood someone better, or struggle to understand yourself, take another look. Maybe you'll find a relevant insight or piece of information.

Furthermore, spend some time on our [website](#) – for example, by exploring our [articles](#) or additional [Tools & Assessments](#). If you lead a team, our [Team Assessments](#) can help you understand its unique dynamics. There is a wealth of inspiring advice and information on the website, and we strongly recommend that you take a look. If you have some spare time, consider lending us a helping hand by taking additional

[surveys](#) or simply [sending us a message](#) and sharing your thoughts about this profile or the website in general. We would love to hear from you.

Best of luck on your path, Advocate. It may not be easy, but few things worth doing are. Ultimately, what matters most is that your path reflects who you really are, deep within. Our lives are often too full of troubles, conflicts, and worries that lie beyond our control or matter little in the grand scheme of things. But if you remember to take a break from time to time and think about your values, dreams, and ideals, the right path will become just a little clearer of superficial distractions. We modestly hope that we have lighted a few lanterns along the way too.

Until next time.

# Addendum: The Puzzle of Personality

Often the very first question people ask after completing our personality test is “What do these letters mean?” We are of course referring to those mysterious acronyms like INTJ-A, ENFP-T, or ESTJ-A. As you may have already learned from the Type Descriptions or articles on the website, the five letters of these acronyms each refer to a specific trait, with certain trait combinations forming various types and type groups. But before we discuss those traits in depth, let’s explore their historical foundations.

## The Historical Detour

Since the dawn of time, humans have drawn up schematics to describe and categorize our personalities. From the four temperaments of the ancient civilizations to the latest advances in psychology, we have been driven to fit the variables and complexities of human personality into well-defined models. Although we are still some time away from being able to do that, the current models account for our most important personality traits and can predict our behavior with a high degree of accuracy.

Personality is just one of many factors that guide our behavior, however. Our actions are also influenced by our environment, our experiences, and our individual goals. On our website, we describe how people belonging to a specific personality type are likely to behave. We outline indicators and tendencies, however, not definitive guidelines or answers. Significant differences can exist even among people who share a personality type. The information on this website is meant to inspire personal

growth and an improved understanding of yourself and your relationships – not to be taken as gospel.

Our approach has its roots in two different philosophies. One dates back to early 20th century and was the brainchild of Carl Gustav Jung, the father of analytical psychology. Jung's theory of psychological types is perhaps the most influential creation in personality typology, and it has inspired a number of different theories. One of Jung's key contributions was the development of the concept of Introversion and Extraversion – he theorized that each of us falls into one of these two categories, either focusing on the internal world (Introvert) or the outside world (Extravert). Besides Introversion and Extraversion, Jung coined the concept of so-called cognitive functions, separated into Judging or Perceiving categories. According to Jung, each person prefers one of these cognitive functions and may most naturally rely on it in everyday situations.

In the 1920s, Jung's theory was noticed by Katharine Cook Briggs, who later co-authored a personality indicator still used today, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®). Briggs was a teacher with an avid interest in personality typing, having developed her own type theory before learning of Jung's writings. Together with her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers, they developed a convenient way to describe the order of each person's Jungian preferences – this is how four-letter acronyms were born.

Of course, this is just a very simplified description of the Myers-Briggs theory. Readers interested in learning more should read *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type* by Isabel Briggs Myers. As we define personality traits and types differently in our model, we will not go deeper into Jungian concepts or related theories in this article.

Due to its simplicity and ease of use, the four-letter naming model has been embraced by a number of diverse theories and approaches over the last few decades, including frameworks such as Socionics, Keirsey Temperament Sorter, Linda Berens' Interaction Styles, and many others. While the acronyms used by these theories may be identical or very similar, however, their meanings do not always overlap. One of the reasons behind such a lengthy introduction is that we want to make it clear that there is no single definition assigned to these type acronyms – each theory defines them in their own way and it is entirely possible that if you meet five people who all say “I am an INFJ”, their definitions of what INFJ means are going to differ.

## Types vs. Traits

Regardless of its structure, any type-based theory will struggle to describe or characterize people whose scores lie near the dividing line. A different way to look at personalities is through the lens of a trait-based rather than a type-based model. What do we mean by that? Instead of creating an arbitrary number of categories and attempting to fit people within them, a trait-based model simply studies the degree to which people exhibit certain traits.

You may have heard the term Ambivert, which is a perfect example in this case. Ambiversion means that someone falls in the middle of the Introversion-Extraversion scale, being neither too outgoing nor too withdrawn. Trait-based theories would simply say that an Ambivert is moderately Extraverted or moderately Introverted and leave it at that, without assigning a personality type.

A trait-based approach makes it easier to reliably measure correlations between personality traits and other characteristics – for example, political attitudes. This is why trait-based approaches dominate psychometric research, but that's more or less

the only area where these approaches are dominant. Because they don't offer types or categorizations, trait-based theories don't translate as well as type-based theories into specific recommendations and takeaways. Assigned categories such as Extravert or Introvert may be limiting, but they allow us to conceptualize human personality and create theories about why we do what we do – something that a more scientifically reliable but colorless statement, such as you are 37% Extraverted, simply cannot do.

## Our Approach

With our NERIS® model, we've combined the best of both worlds. We use the acronym format introduced by Myers-Briggs for its simplicity and convenience, with an extra letter to accommodate five rather than four scales. However, unlike Myers-Briggs or other theories based on the Jungian model, we have not incorporated Jungian concepts such as cognitive functions, or their prioritization. Jungian concepts are very difficult to measure and validate scientifically, so we've instead chosen to rework and rebalance the dimensions of personality called the Big Five personality traits, a model that dominates modern psychological and social research.

Our personality types are based on five independent spectrums, with all letters in the type code (e.g. INFJ-A) referring to one of the two sides of the corresponding spectrum. You can see where you fall on each scale by completing our free personality assessment, NERIS Type Explorer®. This approach has allowed us to achieve high test accuracy while also retaining the ability to define and describe distinct personality types.

## Five Personality Aspects

This section will describe five personality aspects that, when combined, define the personality type: Energy, Mind, Nature, Tactics and Identity. Each of these aspects should be seen as a two-sided continuum, with the “neutral” option placed in the middle. The percentages you would have seen after completing the test are meant to show which categories you fall under, and how strong your preferences are.

Let us now go through the personality aspects one by one:

### Introverted vs. Extraverted

#### *More Than People Power*

When considering people who are Introverts (I) and Extraverts (E), it's natural to go straight to the more social aspects of these personality traits. However, they are more than this. These traits are also defined by their broader response to their environments, which includes other people but isn't exclusively about them.

#### Introvert (I) Personality

##### *Strength in Reserve*

Introverts are well-suited to many situations. A tendency to be reserved helps these personality types to pace themselves. They're likely to listen to others more carefully. Very introspective, Introverts enjoy more focused “alone time” – leading to more and deeper insights. And, while sometimes too sensitive to their environments, this often helps them pick up cues more quickly, making them great at reading many situations.

However, this same reserve means that Introverts tend to find outside stimuli like noise, motion, or intrusive lighting frustrating. Some of this can be an invigorating change of pace – too much unsettles them and drains their energy. These personality types often prefer to be in their own space where they can adjust their environments. Add a human factor to this sensitivity – for example, insistent conversations where they're expected to be just as insistent – and it can exhaust them. They need time alone to regather their energy and restore their calm.

Introverts' reserved, more solitary nature presents challenges, as many societies favor Extraverts and their bolder approach. But it helps Introverted personality types to take things slowly, cautiously, and with less fanfare. Fortunately, if they're willing – and create the time to recharge on their own – most Introverts can handle society's strenuous demands.

In fact, many successful leaders and entertainers come from their ranks, often remaining humble and avoiding an unnecessary spotlight in fame. The Introversion personality trait never needs to disqualify those who possess it from pursuing a goal.

## Extravert (E) Personality

### *The Power of Engagement*

Extraverts are interested in engaging with their environment, and they feed off the responses of the people and events around them. They enjoy pushing limits and seeing what the world can do. This all depends on many other factors and life's natural limitations, but Extraverted personality types lean toward taking the initiative and relying on the world around them for validation.



While all of this is noble and often admired in society, it can also become unbridled. Extraverts may put too much value in their engagement with those around them. Being with others can be so important to these personalities that they often find it difficult if they're stuck alone. Boredom comes too easily. This can lead them to do things simply for excitement rather than thinking through more subtle but important considerations. Becoming the center of attention – at any cost – might be too appealing.

However, when they suitably address these challenges, Extraverts are forces to be reckoned with. People with this personality trait tend to advance projects important to them quickly, whether personal or professional. They often choose to lead when given a chance – and can be dynamic in that role. Their outgoing energy can be vital to a social gathering, and their liveliness can be contagious. And there always remains a sense that people are important to them.

## Intuitive vs. Observant

### *Thought at Every Scale*

Our second personality scale includes the Intuitive (N) and Observant (S) styles. These traits describe what people are more likely to do with the information gathered from the world around them. Intuitive personality types rely on imagining the past and future potential of what they see. Those with the Observant style are more interested in observable facts and more straightforward outcomes. They prefer to avoid layering too much interpretation on what they see.

Being Intuitive doesn't mean someone can't be practical, and being Observant doesn't mean a lack of imagination. They both use their minds and their physical

senses well. The difference is the spin they put on their experiences – it's where their thinking goes after an encounter with their environment. If Intuitive personality types appreciate Observant types' practicality, and Observant personality types appreciate Intuitive types' imaginative perspective, they can complement each other in ways that make for unbeatable partnerships.

### Intuitive (N) Personality

#### *Eyes on the Horizon*

People with the Intuitive trait prefer to exercise their imaginations as they seek new ideas and possibilities. They live their day-to-day lives just like any other personality type. But while that's happening, their minds tend to point inward while at the same time gently focusing somewhere beyond the horizon. Their lives are ones of questioning, wondering, and connecting the dots in the "bigger picture," and they love the theoretical. They often ask, "What if?" and ponder the possibilities the future might hold.

But Intuitive people aren't always the most practical, preferring instead to give things deeper meaning. There may be a long wait as these personality types allow their imaginations free rein. They may also leap in too quickly to more complex matters. An entire theory can come together in moments, leaving others confused. In either case, they can appear out of touch to the Observant individuals in their lives. For some Intuitive folk, there may be some truth to this observation.

That said, when there's a need for innovation or a different perspective, people with Intuitive personality types can usually step up and provide a new direction. Practicality can sometimes be overrated, especially when a situation calls for serious change and "coloring outside the lines." This is where Intuitive people shine. They

bring interesting dimensions to life beyond everyday ideas – and take those who decide to go along with them.

## Observant (S) Personality

### *Do What Works*

The phrase “real-time” was created with Observant individuals in mind. They’re most in touch with what occurs in front of them, in the present. This doesn’t mean Observant personality types have no regard for the past and future. But they view both from the perspective of how each influences their present actions. This makes them focused and practical people. They mostly root their thinking in the actionable, tangible, and useful. But make no mistake, these personalities can be creative within that realm.

One challenge people with the Observant personality trait may face is a too-narrow perspective. They may reject far-reaching solutions in favor of something more obvious. By continuing something that appears practical at arm’s length but doesn’t fit the bigger picture, they might reduce their hard work to busywork.

People with the Observant trait are often a steadying force that tends to get things done. Their energy is very “hands-on” in the sense of working on real things in real-time. While they’re often smart people, spending a lot of time sitting around and pondering possibilities doesn’t cut it for Observant personality types. They want thoughts and talk to lead to action.

## Thinking vs. Feeling

### *How to Think and Feel About the Thinking and Feeling Traits*

Our third, Nature scale reveals the extent to which we value emotions or rationality more when considering options. Does a person tend to use the Thinking (T) personality trait, which relies on the head, or the Feeling (F) trait, which relies on the heart?

But let's not oversimplify. Think of it instead as you might your hand preference: A left-handed person leans more heavily on their left hand, but they still use their right hand, albeit less. We can apply the same approach to a person with a dominant Thinking trait or a dominant Feeling trait – they aren't without some qualities of the non-dominant trait.

### Thinking (T) Personality

#### *"How Does This Help?"*

When presented with a decision, people with the Thinking trait typically lean on objective information. Knowledge is their indispensable tool. Once these personality types gather the facts, they test their alternatives against logic and reason to see which decision, by those standards, proves the most effective or realistic. They generally manage their relationships by employing fairness and effectiveness as their primary method of dealing with others. Their passions are born of respect.

Whatever value people with the Thinking personality trait place on relationships, they can still dismiss emotional responses, either their own or those of others. This is often because of their discomfort with emotions, which don't always follow the rational path they value. Sometimes, emotions just puzzle them. But that doesn't

mean they have hearts of stone. They often feel in deep, profound ways – they would just rather not decide matters from that place. And, perhaps unfortunately, they may see those who do as weaker decision-makers.

Personality types with the Thinking trait are likely to evaluate things almost relentlessly. This isn't as bad as it sounds. They aren't satisfied if they believe something is not well thought out – they revel in the brilliance of an elegant plan. This makes them great to have around when critical thinking and impartiality of any kind is the focus, and this makes them immensely helpful for sorting out ideas and methods. Their primary filter is, *"How does this help?"*

### Feeling (F) Personality

#### *"Who Does This Help?"*

People with the Feeling (F) trait follow their hearts and emotions – sometimes without even realizing it. They may show it to different degrees and in different ways, but however they do it, Feeling personality types tend to be caring, compassionate, and warm. These concerned people can be highly protective of those they care about – whether that is their immediate family or remote populations in need.

However, people with the Feeling personality trait often find they become excessive in their concern for others. They may easily burn out – or cause others to – when they become too involved. These emotionally aware individuals can become depressed if they feel they haven't been as selfless in life as they imagine they should be, or if those they have helped seem to fall down regardless.

Feeling personality types' concern for others typically affects all their endeavors. This can be practical and close, as with family, friends, and colleagues. Or it can be broader, as with world peace, ending hunger, and giving the disadvantaged a boost.

But this reliance on feelings doesn't mean there is no logic – theirs is just a different logic. They see that emotions can't simply be waved away, so feelings and the welfare of others shape their lives more than stark facts and cold objectivity. Weighing things this way makes these personalities valuable to have around when the big question is, “*Who does this help?*”

## Judging vs. Prospecting

### *Crossing the Finish Line (By Whatever Means)*

The Tactics scale, which includes the Judging and Prospecting personality traits, reflects how people plan and deal with the options they have. But this definition doesn't just concern what individuals write in their day planners. It's much broader. These traits answer questions like, “Do you prefer spontaneity or certainty?” “Do you feel more comfortable acting only with all your ducks lined neatly in a row? Or does a certain amount of flexibility or chaos excite you and prove motivating?” “Do you need more choices or fewer?”

## Judging (J) Personality

### *Making Things as They Ought to Be*

People with the Judging (J) personality trait feel most comfortable when the course ahead is well-marked. They would rather come up with five backup plans than deal with events as they come. Preferring to consider their options ahead of time,

personality types with this trait prefer clarity and closure, sticking with the plan rather than going with the flow. It's as if Judging types always keep a mental checklist. When they cross something off their list – or even start an item on their list – they consider it complete and not open to reconsideration.

The downside is, if they take this too far, those with the Judging trait sometimes come across as rigid. However, most are not unreasonably stubborn. It's important to remember their need for structure always is a preference and reality often calls on them to respond in unforeseen ways. Too many surprises in a row can leave these personality types frustrated and stressed. When this happens, they can still be relied on to develop a plan (and a contingency plan), but however well they handle the unexpected, they rarely enjoy it.

Judging individuals tend to have a strong work ethic, putting their duties and responsibilities above everything else. To them, rules, laws, and standards are the key to success. They can be too dependent on these measures, whether applied to themselves or others. But the intent is almost always one of fairness and results.

### Prospecting (P) Personality

#### *Figuring Things Out as They Go*

Prospecting (P) individuals are much more flexible when it comes to dealing with unexpected challenges. This flexibility helps them seize unexpected opportunities as well. These personality types tend to react to their environments rather than try to control them, helping them to make their own luck in whatever the world delivers. People with this trait hold that life is full of possibilities.

All this opportunism can lead to impulsive decision-making, though. At the same time, they can be overwhelmed by the sheer number of options on their radar. People with the Prospecting personality trait can be slow to commit to something because of uncertainty or the potential of everything else. If they don't moderate this trait, indecision or a lack of conviction can be a problem. They can seem unfocused. What was important to them one week may be forgotten the next.

Despite those concerns, this personality trait can offer a great deal of creativity and productivity. Theirs is almost a stream of consciousness quality. In many ways, it's like these types are constantly brainstorming as their minds create a web of options. This can be a powerful tool for finding solutions. And if they aren't satisfied with something in their lives, it's easier for them to let go of it and choose something else. This can lead to serial passions that keep Prospecting individuals stimulated as they explore the buffet of choices always before them.

## Assertive vs. Turbulent

### *Confidence, Achievement, and You*

The Identity scale, made up of the Assertive and Turbulent personality traits, affects all other scales and indicates how confident we are in our abilities and decisions. Identity triggers the way we react to the things life constantly throws at us. How do we respond to success and failure? Criticism or feedback from other people? Unexpected events that suddenly change many things or everything? Even the unknown future?



## Assertive (-A) Personality

### *Calm in the Storm*

Assertive individuals are self-assured, even-tempered, and resistant to stress. They don't worry too much, but this is different from apathy. They aim for goals and want successful results, but they typically won't let nervousness color the path to their accomplishments. They're unlikely to spend a lot of time thinking about their past actions or choices. According to Assertive personality types, what's done is done.

However, problems may arise for them if their confidence turns into overconfidence. Assertive individuals may gloss over problems or details that can interfere with their goals and desired results. They may lean toward assuming all will be positive. Assertive people also sometimes presume they are free to do much more than others would allow or tolerate. If overconfident, these personality types may come to believe their confidence overshadows what others want.

But their confidence remains. It can help them move forward where others might hesitate. People with this personality trait report more satisfaction with their lives. They feel more assured of their abilities to handle the difficult and the unexpected. Through this lens, they often create the kinds of success that matter to them.

## Turbulent (-T) Personality

### *Power of Stress, Activate!*

Turbulent individuals are success-driven, perfectionistic, and eager to improve. They are always trying to counterbalance their self-doubts by achieving more. Just as they push themselves to become better, they're as likely to push their projects or efforts

in the same direction. Turbulent personality types tend to notice little problems and often do something about them before they become larger ones.

There are potential downsides to all this attention and achievement. Always feeling the need to do more, to have more, and to *be* more, Turbulent individuals can also get caught up in endless thoughts of criticisms, slights, or regrets. This can either bog them down or motivate them to do better. Their sensitivity to potential problems can be useful – unless that’s all they think about and the problems clutter their attention. Turbulent personality types may compulsively scan for what might go wrong instead of keeping their eyes on more positive targets – on what could go right.

Careful and attentive people are always important to society and keep it safe. At the same time, a fear of stagnation can bring about great change. Turbulent individuals beautifully cover both. When these personalities balance their worries and concerns with positive action, they’re likely to prove themselves to be of great value.

## Type Groups

Now you know what each type consists of. But how do they fit together?

Our system has two layers: the first (inner) one defines our Roles, the second (outer) one – our Strategies.

## Roles

Personality theory is a study of similarities among people with shared traits and how these traits might be expressed through behaviors and attitudes. Traits are the most fundamental part of our framework and include characteristics like Introversion or

Thinking. The next level contains personality types, in which four of the traits are combined and sorted to create 16 personality types. Roles, simply put, are the next level. At the Role level, the 16 types are divided into four groups.

Which personality types belong to each Role depends on two shared traits that they have in common. While all traits influence behaviors and attitudes, the two traits that determine a Role are shared by only four personality types and instill in them some unique, matching characteristics.

Those with the Intuitive trait (Analysts and Diplomats) are paired with the Thinking/Feeling traits because the Intuitive trait focuses on internal processes like thinking and feeling. While they may ultimately play out in the external world, they are primarily inward-looking.

In like manner, those with the Observant trait (Sentinels and Explorers) are paired with the Judging/Prospecting traits. Judging and Prospecting, while they have their internal aspects, are more likely to be played out in the external, concrete world of action and doing. Sentinels with their Judging trait are likely to bring order to their worlds, while Explorers with their Prospecting trait are likely to instill spontaneity into all the actions they perform.

The four Roles are primarily used when they are more likely to explain concepts in a clearer, less complicated way than involving all 16 personality types might. Using Roles this way is particularly warranted if the topic consists of a trait or traits that are a prominent part of the core traits of the various Roles – such as when Intuitive or Observant have a greater influence. But use is not limited to just that. They're like shorthand when Role commonalities suffice in talking about a subject.

In summary, Roles are just another level of the same theory, with each of the four containing four personality types. Those within a Role share a combination of two prominent traits and, therefore, share some similar characteristics.

The Role layer determines our goals, interests, and preferred activities. There are four roles:

### Analysts – Intuitive (N) and Thinking (T)

#### *Thinkers, Not Robots*

The personality types in the Analyst Role – Architects (INTJ), Logicians (INTP), Commanders (ENTJ), and Debaters (ENTP) – are known for their love of rationality. Because they share the Thinking trait, these types often aim to make decisions with their heads rather than their hearts. But Analysts are far from being robots. Their Intuitive personality trait energizes their imaginations, helping them to come up with creative strategies and motivating them to explore things deeply – whether that’s an intellectual pursuit, a new interest, or even a crazy scheme or thought experiment.

These personalities are driven to understand and create. They have no problem switching between speculative musing and tactical problem-solving. Of course, these broad abilities need to be honed – and, when appropriate, they need to lead to action. Otherwise, Analysts’ active minds can give them a false sense of accomplishment.

These types often love ideas and speculation more than the realities of follow-through. As a result, they risk being outpaced by those who simply sit down and do the work. This can earn these types a reputation for being “armchair analysts” – and, at times, Analyst personalities may forget that they actually need to test their ideas in the real world.

### *Driven by Curiosity*

Analysts are innately curious. This helps them to ensure that their ideas are workable, rather than just clever. These personality types have a strong drive to learn, and they want to find out things for themselves rather than accept received wisdom. These types may be found stockpiling books, questioning teachers, spurring debates, or driving conversations in forums across the Internet.

Analysts are also relentless self-improvers. Once they've recognized a flaw, they apply all of their rationality, imagination, and desire for results to make it right. Especially when it's balanced with self-understanding, this drive can enable Analyst personalities to push the boundaries of what's possible – no matter what anyone else may think.

### *Socially Selective*

Analysts can have a reputation for being lone wolves. These personality types don't necessarily care about befriending everyone they meet, and they definitely don't surround themselves with random people just for the sake of having some company.

Given a choice between spending time with someone incompatible or spending time alone, many Analysts would choose the latter. And they may not be so subtle about it. 71% of people with Analyst personality types say they're good at shutting down unwanted conversations – far more than any other Role. This brusqueness can make Analysts seem rude, unapproachable, or antisocial, particularly to types that value social harmony.

That said, it's important to note that only 17% of Analysts actually describe their ideal social life as “mostly by myself.” Much greater numbers – 30% and 41% respectively

– say they’d prefer to have a few good friends or a partner and a few good friends. As a result, it’s inaccurate to view these personality types as antisocial.

Instead, it makes sense to view Analysts as socially selective. Like other types, they crave social connection. But these personalities won’t feel socially fulfilled by spending time with just anyone. They want to surround themselves with people who really get them – even if it takes effort to find those people. That might be why 46% of Analysts say they actively seek new friendships – which is more than any other Role except Diplomats.

### *Independent Minds*

Analysts have little patience for following in others’ footsteps. 58% of these personality types describe themselves as “very independent” – far more than any other Role. Independence isn’t just a characteristic of these types – it’s an important part of their self-image.

This mindset shows up vividly in how Analysts approach academic and professional settings. These personality types are questioners, reluctant to take anything on faith. And “anything” includes what their teachers or bosses say.

From the outside, this might look like a lack of respect. In our Teachers Survey, Analysts were far less likely than other Roles to say they admired their past teachers. And this mindset persists in the professional sphere as well. 43% of Analysts in the workforce say they would be better than their boss at their boss’s job – again, far more than any other Role. Analyst personalities are also far less likely than other Roles to express admiration for their bosses.

But does this represent a lack of respect? Maybe – but this choosiness might well have other roots. Analysts tend to hold themselves to high standards, and they often hold the people around them (bosses and teachers included) to these high standards as well. In addition, Analyst personality types tend to care a great deal about learning and professional success. 85% of Analysts say they have a strong desire to be an important and successful person.

It makes sense, then, that these personality types hold their teachers and bosses to rigorous standards. After all, an Analyst with a poor teacher or boss may be less likely to become successful. Of course, Analysts – just like anyone – will almost certainly find themselves faced with a less-than-stellar teacher or boss. As a result, figuring out how to navigate these situations is an important part of their development.

### *Problems? What Problems?*

You know who talks a lot about their problems? Not Analysts. In fact, 83% of Analysts say that most people complain too much about their problems.

But that doesn't mean that people with these personality types don't *think* about their problems, and they certainly don't shy away from challenges. 61% of Analysts say they're excited by the idea of being responsible for solving problems, and 85% say they enjoy tackling difficult challenges.

A core strength of Analysts is their faith in their problem-solving abilities. Analyst personalities tend to express the highest intellectual self-confidence of any Role, and this gives them the willingness to try their hand at things that may be hard. Taken too far, this can turn into cockiness – which is rarely an asset, whether in relationships or in other spheres. But as long as Analysts balance their intellectual self-assurance

with their innate curiosity, these personality types can find success and even enjoyment in the face of challenges both large and small.

## Diplomats – Intuitive (N) and Feeling (F)

### *Longing for Connection*

Diplomat personality types – Advocates (INFJ), Mediators (INFP), Protagonists (ENFJ), and Campaigners (ENFP) – care about helping and connecting with others. They prioritize being kind and generous, and in general, they'd rather cooperate than compete. Empathy seems to come naturally to these personalities. It can almost seem as if their hearts and minds resonate with other people's emotions.

These types aim to understand themselves and others. They often have deep insights into human nature, and they can use these insights to influence the people around them. Fortunately, Diplomat personality types tend to do this with care. They are sensitive to other people's feelings, and they want to nudge the people around them in positive directions.

### *Striving for Change*

Diplomats have a deep belief in the ideals of humanism – altruism, compassion, and understanding. These personality types believe it is possible to create a kinder world, and they strive to do so every day.

The Intuitive trait fuels this optimism. Paradoxically, though, it also makes these types hyper-sensitive to wrongdoing. This sensitivity provides Diplomat personalities with the motivation they need to tackle injustice, which is important. If left unchecked, however, this personality trait can trigger self-righteousness or single-mindedness.



In general, Diplomats are motivated by principles rather than practicality. This helps them to stay true to their big dreams and ideas. That said, these types may have trouble enacting plans that are pragmatic rather than passion-driven. Diplomats can be tempted to ignore day-to-day tasks in favor of their big dreams and ideas. As these personalities mature, however, they often learn to balance these necessary tasks with the big-picture thinking they enjoy.

### *A Higher Purpose*

Among friends and family, Diplomat personalities can range from quietly caring to brightly gregarious. Unfortunately, their open hearts can make them vulnerable when others are inconsiderate. That said, these types wouldn't have it any other way. Someone must trust first, and Diplomats will almost always volunteer.

These personality types see magical beauty where others see the humdrum of daily life. This trait attracts many Diplomats to creative expression. These types can be passionately inspired by music, writing, cuisine, theater – or many other creative pursuits.

Diplomats want to bring progress and beauty to the world around them. These types are led by a sense of higher purpose, and they care about serving the greater good. As a result, activism, spirituality, healing, and volunteering are common interests for these personality types.

### *The Need to Belong*

For Diplomats, authenticity and connection aren't just buzzwords. These concepts – which might seem vague or wishy-washy to other types – form the bedrock of

Diplomats' lives. This explains why relationships matter so much to these personality types – and not just *any* type of relationship, but rather real, meaningful bonds.

When asked about their ideal social life, only 8% of Diplomats would like to spend most of their time alone. Instead, the majority of Diplomats express a desire for a partner and a few good friends. These personalities may also worry more about loneliness than other types, with nearly two thirds of Diplomats saying they worry about being lonely in their old age.

For many Diplomats, a central challenge of their lives is to balance their need for authenticity with their need to belong. More than any other personality Role, Diplomats say that the need to belong often motivates them to do things they otherwise wouldn't. This sort of behavior might not bother other types, but it poses a real dilemma for Diplomats. Being fake can feel literally painful to these types, who long to be loved and accepted for who they are, not for their ability to fit in.

For Diplomats, an important part of self-development is learning to be real – even if they fear that doing so won't make them popular. The irony is that many Diplomat personalities only feel a deep sense of belonging and connection once they learn to approach relationships as their whole, true selves.

### *What is Success, Anyway?*

If your life goals are to earn pots of money, land an impressive job, buy a fancy car, and be better than everyone else – well, you're probably not a Diplomat.

But that isn't to say that Diplomats don't have their own type of ambition. 85% of Diplomats say it's important to them to make a lasting impact on other people, outside of their family and closest friends. In other words, these personality types

want to make a lasting difference in the world – which is no small feat. This might explain why Diplomats are second only to Analysts in saying that they sometimes set impossibly high standards for themselves.

Perhaps because they have such a lofty view of success, Diplomats are the Role least likely to consider themselves successful. It's important to note that the great majority of people with these personality types still say they'd be upset if they never became successful. As a result, many people with these types may feel as if they're constantly striving toward ideals and expectations that they'll never meet.

To address this sense of inadequacy, many Diplomats find they must let go of comparisons to other people. 79% of Diplomats say they consciously compare themselves to others either often or very often. By releasing these comparisons, Diplomats can free themselves to do things their own way, in their own time – rather than fretting over whether they're successful yet.

### *Time to Leap*

You know that expression, “Leap and the net will appear”? Diplomat personality types can fall into the trap of thinking they've leapt – metaphorically speaking – when they're actually still perched at the ledge. Because these personalities have such active mental lives and imaginations, they can forget that thinking about starting a business isn't the same as actually starting a business, or that watching videos of dancers isn't the same as throwing themselves into a pirouette.

For many Diplomats, the secret to tackling their greatest challenge is simply to take action. Of course, that's easier said than done. The majority of Diplomats say they overthink simple tasks – so you can only imagine how much they might overthink major life decisions or their most precious dreams.

Fortunately, Diplomats tend to have a deep intuitive sense of what is right for them. Many of these personality types find that by tuning into this wisdom – and honoring it – they can find satisfaction and meaning in their everyday lives, no matter what challenges arise along the way.

### Sentinels – Observant (S) and Judging (J)

#### *Character and Competence*

Sentinels – Logisticians (ISTJ), Defenders (ISFJ), Executives (ESTJ), and Consuls (ESFJ) – are cooperative, practical, and grounded. They feel comfortable with who they are, and they take pride in their good character and their competence. These personality types seek order, security, and stability, and they tend to work hard to maintain their way of things. This leads to a deserved reputation as the cornerstone of any group or organization, from family to church to the office and the factory floor.

Careful and consistent, Sentinel personalities tend to be self-motivated. This means that they rarely need external inspiration to be productive and focused. They work hard and aim never to let anyone down, and they expect other people to embrace this same ethic as well. Given a choice, these personality types prefer to collaborate within a clear set of rules. Following proven methods makes more sense to them than swanning around in search of innovation. Their motto is, “If it works, don’t break it.”

#### *Steady Progress*

That said, Sentinels are hardly unimaginative. They simply take inspiration from the past rather than the future. These personality types remain loyal to established best practices and traditions, whether that’s the best way to make a pizza crust or the

most efficient way to write an algorithm. This enables them to make steady, consistent progress – which is exactly what they enjoy. Sentinels would much rather guide a single project to completion than start (and abandon) a flurry of interesting ideas.

Sentinel personalities thrive in environments that have clear hierarchies and rules. Whether or not they're in a formal leadership role, they care about setting a good example, and they gain great satisfaction from guiding a well-functioning group. This can make them excellent teachers, managers, and community officials, as well as caring parents and hosts.

### *Guidance and Wisdom*

In their personal lives, Sentinels want to offer stability and wisdom to others. They see it as their duty to give their families safe, happy lives that prepare them for the real world. An appreciation of strong relationships allows these personality types to share generously with those they respect and love. Sentinels feel bolstered by having reliable people in their lives, and they make sure they hold up their end of the bargain. Birthdays, dinner parties, and camping trips are delightful events under their enthusiastic direction.

These personality types are happiest without drama – though they can occasionally be stubborn. In particular, inconsistent people can test Sentinels' patience. It can be difficult for Sentinel personalities to accept people who lack their conscientiousness. Fortunately, they often serve as engaged and caring mentors to those who wish to grow in that direction.

### *Love and Care*

Sentinels are the personality Role least likely to say they fall in love easily – but don't let that fool you. Sentinels may not spout love poems, but they do express affection and admiration – they just do it a little differently than other personality types. Sentinels often show their love in practical ways, such as checking the tires on their partner's car or making them a nutritious dinner. To other types, these actions might not look romantic, but Sentinels do these things with love and care.

In all of their relationships, Sentinels want to make contributions. This attitude informs how they treat not only their nearest and dearest but also their acquaintances, neighbors, and coworkers. These aren't the personality types who neglect their responsibilities or leave the office kitchen a mess – in fact, they're often the types who quietly clean up other people's messes, both literal and metaphorical.

Of course, Sentinels wouldn't *mind* being recognized for the ways they help others, but these personalities rarely demand attention. Instead, they work behind the scenes to make everyone's lives run as smoothly as possible, even if that means taking on unglamorous tasks like remembering to buy toilet paper or handling their family's income taxes. They may not be obvious with their feelings, but Sentinels do care and care deeply – you just have to know how to spot it.

### *Due Diligence*

Sentinels have a core set of principles that they bring to their academic and professional pursuits. These principles include diligence, honesty, and respect. The result is that Sentinel personality types tend to work hard, striving to meet deadlines, and generally get things done. This can be seen even from a relatively young age –

Sentinels are far more likely than other Roles to say that they developed productive work habits in school.

These personality types have a clear vision of what it means to do things “right,” and they take great pride in living up to these standards. Sentinels are rarely willing to cut corners and do shoddy work – even if doing so would help them get ahead. They are less likely than any other Role to say that they could compromise some of their principles to advance their career.

Above all, Sentinels stand out for their ability to stick with their work until it’s done – even if the work is tedious or rote. These personality types are far less likely than others to say that they often abandon work in favor of doing something more interesting and fun, and they’re also less likely to say that they get distracted from what they’re working on. For Sentinels, productivity is a bit of a superpower – and they get great satisfaction from exercising their ability to get things done.

### *Planning Ahead*

Sentinels know the value of a well-made plan. Compared to other Roles, Sentinel personalities are far more likely to say they’d rather prepare for problems rather than tackle them as they arise. And Sentinels aren’t afraid to think up every contingency that might arise – as long as they can do something to avert disaster, that is.

Of course, we can’t prepare for everything – although if anyone could, it would be a Sentinel. Like everyone else, these types must occasionally face unforeseen problems. Learning to roll with the punches, so to speak, is an important part of their personal development. Over time, Sentinels can learn to distinguish between when they should stick with their plans and when they’d do well to change course. And

when they do so, these personality types can press through even the most challenging of circumstances, bringing together determination and adaptability.

## Explorers – Observant (S) and Prospecting (P)

### *On the Fly*

Explorers – Virtuosos (ISTP), Adventurers (ISFP), Entrepreneurs (ESTP), and Entertainers (ESFP) – tend to be self-reliant and quick-thinking. These personality types don't mind handling uncertain situations on the fly – in fact, they live for those types of situations. Explorers' flexibility helps them to adapt to the moment, even if they don't feel particularly prepared.

These types tend not to be obsessed with precise detail – unless they're really in the zone, in which case they can muster a level of precision and focus that would make a seasoned engineer blush with envy. Usually, they prefer workability and usefulness to perfection. Explorer personalities enjoy learning different tools and techniques, from rotary saws to sheet music to emergency response strategies.

### *Living for Change*

Explorers can change their minds with minimal regret or second-guessing. People in this Role dislike monotony, and they may stray from their obligations in order to try new things. If these personality types sometimes leave business unfinished, let clutter build up, or misplace important things – it's because they've moved on to something fresh.

These types enjoy being free of obligations, where they can indulge themselves or their interests on their own time. They love delving into something interesting, but their interest tends to wane as soon as something becomes "mandatory." An



Explorer personality might design and build their own dream house, but end up procrastinating on simple repairs after a few years.

### *Social Ingenuity*

This free-form attitude can make Explorer personalities socially dynamic as well. Their spontaneity draws them to appealing strangers and interesting experiences. When things get in the way of a good time, they apply their ingenuity to get around it. Explorers want to see what happens next!

Explorers enjoy being on the leading edge of things – whether that means having the latest technology, trying out fashion trends, or checking out the newest restaurant in town. Many Explorer personalities enjoy sharing these findings with others, and they take pride in introducing their friends and loved ones to the latest and greatest things. The result is that time spent with Explorers is almost never boring or repetitive – and Explorers wouldn't have it any other way.

### *Explorers in Love*

Explorer personality types have a reputation for constantly being on the move – and some people might wonder whether this restlessness applies to their romantic relationships as well. According to our research, however, relatively few Explorers (32%) say they're easily bored by romantic relationships that are stable and predictable. In fact, Analysts and Diplomats are significantly more likely to agree with this statement.

So, what *are* Explorers like in romantic relationships? First, Explorers are slightly less likely than other Roles to say that falling in love scares them. These personality types thrive in unpredictable situations, and what is falling in love if not unpredictable? The

early phases of a relationship are energizing for these types – full of new experiences and fresh discoveries.

It's true that Explorer personalities are somewhat more likely than other Roles to avoid commitment. Still, the majority of Explorers – 63% – say they usually seek commitment in their relationships. And overall, Explorers are slightly more likely than average to say that intimate relationships have increased their maturity more than anything else. So, while Explorers might have a reputation for being commitment-phobes, it's clear that these personality types see the deeper value of long-term relationships – and, more often than not, this is exactly what they're looking for.

### *Doing the Work*

Explorers are highly spontaneous, connecting with their environment in a way that's almost childlike in its wonder and sheer fun. But when they need to work on something that's frustrating or unexciting – well, that can prove something of a challenge.

This may show up in how Explorer personality types approach their academic and professional lives. Explorers are slightly less likely than other Roles to say that they developed productive work habits in school. They're also less likely to say that it was easy for them to do well in school. Many school environments are relatively prescriptive, filled with required courses and standardized curricula. As a result, Explorer personalities often find themselves forced to sit through classes that just don't excite them – which, for these types, can be unmotivating. Unfortunately, this can persist in their professional lives as well – after all, most jobs require at least some degree of routine, unglamorous work.

This isn't to say that Explorers are slouches – far from it. When they're working on something they're passionate about, these personality types can move heaven and earth. And, over time, they often find ways to deal with the necessary evils – in other words, the unexciting tasks – that make work and life run more smoothly.

Perhaps it's most accurate to say that Explorers look for ways to balance work with leisure. They're the Role least likely to say they make themselves finish all of their tasks before they allow themselves to relax. While some personality types might brand this behavior as laziness, this isn't necessarily the case. Explorers' ability to balance work with fun can help them avoid burnout. Ultimately, this can help them to enjoy more fulfillment – and yes, a surprising degree of productivity – in their lives.

### *The Power of Risk*

51% of Explorers say they take risks simply for the fun of it – far more than any other personality Role. This might sound reckless, and indeed it can be. But, done responsibly, risk-taking can be one of the best ways to learn new things, solve tricky problems, and grow as people. As Explorers know, we can only make so much progress in life if we stay in our comfort zones.

As long as they temper this trait with a degree of self-control, comfort with risk can be one of Explorers' greatest strengths. It can motivate them to open up in their relationships and empower them to seek out new academic and professional opportunities.

These personality types don't resign themselves to the "lives of quiet desperation" that Henry David Thoreau famously wrote of in *Walden*. Instead, Explorers can use their own brand of bravery to free themselves from conventionality and create lives that work for them.

## Strategies

The word “strategy” suggests a course of action. In our use, Strategy describes how personality types act in response to the world around them and how they might choose to accomplish things.

Strategies express themselves primarily in two ways: social style and resistance to stress. Social style entails how other people factor into an individual’s Strategy and to what degree. One example might involve whether a person prefers working in a team or alone.

Resistance to stress includes the degree of impact that a stressful situation might have on an individual and their efforts, as well as how resilient they might be when trying to restore themselves after a challenging event. An example of this might involve whether a person quits after a jarring setback or presses forward.

The Energy aspect (Introverted/Extraverted) brings to each combination a social piece. When individuals pursue their goals or satisfy their needs and wants, to what degree will they involve other people? Do they want to achieve things independently, or are they collaborators and team players? Extraverted personality types often wish to have more people around, and Introverts tend to prefer doing things more independently.

But the Energy aspect also speaks to risk and taking leaps of faith. Extraverts tend to be more adventurous, and they are brimming with enthusiasm for the activities in their lives – especially if they involve other people. Introverts feel a pull toward lone activities and are usually calmer and quieter, preferring quiet and solitude or smaller, more intimate groups when possible. Introverted personality types are not as interested in adventures as their Extraverted counterparts.

The Identity aspect (Assertive/Turbulent) describes levels of confidence and resistance to stress. It helps us understand what might motivate someone. Are they being pulled along by their self-confidence, or are they pushed to excel because they are perfectionists focused on preventing mistakes and failures?

Assertive personalities are much less likely to worry about things – even results. Their motivation may involve boldly realizing the potential that they assume they have. They are less concerned with the opinions of others and may stand up to their critics – not to impress them but to “correct” them. Turbulent personalities are self-conscious, cautious, and perfectionistic. They may go one of two ways. They may push themselves to high levels of success to avoid disappointment in themselves, or they may opt out of doing something because of the potential for stress and the chance of failure.

In summary, Strategies combine the Energy aspect and the Identity aspect. Together, they describe how individuals respond to life and reflect their preferred ways of doing things. When merged, the Energy and Identity personality traits influence many areas of life, including social preferences, confidence, stress, and risk-taking, to name a few.

The Strategy layer shows our preferred ways of doing things and achieving goals. There are four strategies:

## Confident Individualism – Introverted (I) and Assertive (-A)

### *Substance Over Superficiality*

Confident Individualists tend to trust in themselves. They enjoy their own company and don't mind spending time alone to pursue their interests. Over time, this can give these personalities an impressive range of skills and interesting ideas.

But these types take pride in their skills for their own sake, not to impress others. They tend not to see the point in social displays and bragging. While they're proud of who they are, these personality types don't always feel the need to prove themselves to anyone else. They prefer substance to superficiality and personal honesty to playing along.

Confident Individualists are motivated by their inner world rather than outside expectations. They're opinionated, but they aren't excessively worried about what others think. These personality types express their thoughts unapologetically. They're rarely pressured into agreeing with others – even if agreeing would be more convenient.

### *Self-Assurance and Self-Reliance*

If left unchecked, this relaxed self-assurance can lead to complacency. These personality types' live-and-let-live attitude goes both ways: They don't push others to change, and in return, they don't particularly want anyone to push them to change. At times, Confident Individualists may miss information and opportunities that challenge their views because they simply don't place much importance on others' approval.

In their personal relationships, these types tend to be strong and honest. Their loyalty and affection are genuine rather than forced. These personalities only express respect and care if they really feel them. Fortunately, if they do feel them, they see no reason to hide how they feel.

No matter how strong their relationships, these types also value self-reliance. They can handle difficult situations well because they tend to be emotionally secure and resistant to stress. Although these personalities rarely seek the spotlight, their quiet examples of determination and honesty can be nothing short of inspiring.

### *Confident Individualists in Love*

Confident Individualists tend to be a bit choosy about their closest confidants. This is especially true when it comes to finding a romantic partner. Perhaps because Confident Individualists know how to find contentment and fulfillment even when they're single, they're in no rush to settle for a partner who's less than a good match.

These personality types may also be less likely to stay with a partner who lets them down. Confident Individualists are less likely than any other personality Strategy to say they often give second chances to those who fail to fulfill commitments to them. Again, perhaps because of their strong intrinsic sense of worth, these types don't necessarily feel compelled to stay in a relationship that isn't working out.

Confident Individualists are the Strategy least likely to say they believe in soulmates. They're also the least likely to say they know a lot of couples whose marriages they envy, or would aspire to have. And it might not come as a surprise, then, that they're the most likely to say they don't want to get married.

It would be inaccurate, however, to assume that Confident Individualists are lone wolves with no interest in committed intimate relationships. The majority of these personality types – 79% – *do* express an interest in getting married. A similar percentage say they're unafraid of being committed to a single partner for the rest of their lives. It's true that Confident Individualists are independent, and they probably won't get into a relationship just for the sake of being in a relationship. That said, these types often do have an interest in romantic connection – they just want to find the right person before they become attached.

### *Unlikely Leaders*

Confident Individualists bring their love of independence into their academic and professional pursuits. They're more likely than any other Strategy to say that learning as part of a group is distracting rather than helpful. As you can imagine, group projects can be frustrating for these personality types – whether at school or in the workplace.

This isn't to say that Confident Individualists *can't* work well with others – far from it. But if given a choice, these types would prefer to operate independently and figure things out on their own. At school, these personalities may be drawn to independent study opportunities. At work, they may try to develop a specific area of expertise that allows them to make their own decisions and do most of their tasks on their own.

From this description, Confident Individualists might not sound like natural leaders, but that isn't necessarily the case. Just over half of these personality types say they're inclined to seek out leadership and management roles. This is well less than their Extraverted peers, but it's still a majority. In addition, nearly 70% of these types say



they have excellent leadership skills. A quick look at famous Confident Individualists includes real-life leaders (Bill Gates) as well as fictional ones (Gandalf).

Confident Individualists tend to hone their ideas and skills on their own, and they often prefer to work alone. That said, these personalities may be willing to take up the reins of leadership if that's what is necessary to turn those ideas and skills into real-world progress.

### *The Right Mindset*

Confident Individualists are more likely than any other personality Strategy to say that control over their mindset is the most important factor in determining their happiness. On average, they rank their mindset as a more significant factor in their happiness than their financial situation, their friends and family, their job, or their health.

This statistic reveals a great deal about Confident Individualists. These personality types believe in their personal effectiveness and their individual worth, and they know how important it is to maintain this mindset. As long as they balance this self-conviction with a willingness to learn from others, Confident Individualists' positive mindset can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, helping these personalities to not only achieve great things but also find lasting happiness.

## People Mastery – Extraverted (E) and Assertive (-A)

### *Bold and Confident*

Personality types with the People Mastery Strategy are known for their ability to handle stress. This helps them to act boldly and maintain confidence, even in the face of challenges or criticism.

Thanks to this confidence, people with this Strategy feel energized and at ease in social situations. They seek social contact as well as stimulating and challenging experiences. These personalities like traveling to see things, people, and places, and trying something new – even things they don't end up liking can be exciting for them.

### *Nothing to Prove?*

If they don't keep themselves in check, though, People Masters can become too confident. These personality types tend to be insulated against self-doubt and the need to prove themselves. As a result, they don't always test, or even consider, their own limits or ambitions.

Taken to the extreme, this can create a pattern of comfort-seeking. They may even roll their eyes at people who chase more intimidating goals. At the other end of the spectrum, these personality types can ignore sensible caution, landing themselves in extraordinary and dangerous situations.

At times, People Masters may not be considerate to those who aren't able to maintain such a comfortable boldness. But this doesn't have to be the case, by any means. By taking others into account, these personalities can actually help to draw other people out of their shells in a way that's energizing and empowering.

### *Finding Balance*

Fortunately, most People Masters fall somewhere in the middle. Ideally, they embrace healthy ambition while finding social fulfillment and connection. Social interaction plays a big part in People Masters' happiness. Although these personality types are self-confident, they still appreciate praise and recognition. They don't need

people's approval, but they still crave friends and loved ones with whom to share their lives.

These types may be opinionated, but they don't always worry about having others agree with them. This can help these personalities to be moderate even in disagreements because their ego and confidence aren't at stake the way they often are for Turbulent Strategies. People Masters are not fond of grudges, and at heart, they want to bring people together to make things happen.

These types often stand out for their charisma and self-assurance. As long as they don't use their talents to steamroll or put down others, these personality traits can be quite appealing. These types have little fear of rejection, and they love including others. This can make these personalities wonderful friends, loved ones, and colleagues, who always aim to energize those around them.

### *People Masters in Love*

According to our research, People Masters seem to fall in love a bit more frequently than the other Strategies. They're also less likely to say that falling in love scares them. It's easy to imagine why this is the case – People Masters' Extraversion leads them into situations where they're likely to meet new people, and their Assertive personality trait helps them to feel confident about the prospect of new relationships.

Some might wonder whether this would make People Masters less reliable than other personality types when it comes to being a good partner. Is it possible that these types' self-assurance would make them complacent or uncommitted once they're actually *in* a relationship? Not necessarily: About half of People Masters say it's necessary to go out of their way to please someone they love, and this response

puts them on par with other types. In addition, People Masters are the Strategy least likely to say that long-term commitments make them anxious.

In other words, although People Masters' confidence and social ease might make them sound like players, these types can be as committed and eager to please their partners as anyone else. And being in a relationship with a People Master can be a wonderful thing – even for people who are completely different. After all, People Masters' social energy and their can-do take on life can be infectious in the best possible way.

### *Speaking Up*

People Masters don't tend to filter their opinions. These personality types say what they think, and they think what they say. As with nearly any trait, this can be a strength or a weakness.

People Masters are often seen as straight-shooters who can be trusted to speak honestly. In academic and professional settings, many teachers, classmates, colleagues, and managers appreciate this quality. After all, if used appropriately, candor is a powerful way to connect with other people. The “what you see is what you get” nature of a People Master personality can be refreshing, whether in the classroom or the workplace.

But there's a difference between being candid and being rude – and at times, People Masters may toe that line. In academic settings, this can put them at odds with their teachers and classmates. And in professional settings, these personality types may gain a reputation for being inconsiderate, arrogant, or even ruthless.

Learning to speak honestly *without* speaking over other people is a step on many People Masters' path to personal development. Fortunately, once they master this balance, People Masters can unleash the many gifts they bring to their schooling and their work. In particular, People Masters can excel at dealing with awkward or tense interpersonal situations – whether that's getting a group project back on track or delivering bad news to a customer in a straightforward but considerate way.

### *Going for It*

79% of People Masters say they see problems as opportunities. These personality types trust themselves to tackle hard problems – *and* to gain insight and experience from the process. Ideally, this conviction becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, with People Masters taking on ever harder challenges and learning important lessons along the way.

What sets People Masters apart isn't just their confidence, however. It's also their willingness to team up with others. These personalities know that we tend to be more effective when we collaborate and ask for help. People Masters can be especially good at creating opportunities for the people around them to use their strengths. And that may just be one of the secrets to People Masters' success.

## Constant Improvement – Introverted (I) and Turbulent (-T)

### *Sensitive Souls*

Constant Improvers tend to be sensitive and introspective. They are often deep individuals who enjoy having their own space and freedom. In general, these personality types feel more comfortable on their own than mixed up in the judgment of the real world.

This may be because they share the two personality traits most representative of sensitivity to their environment – Introversion and Turbulence. As a result, they may find it stressful to deal with tense environments or new situations. In these moments, Constant Improvers can be deeply uncomfortable – although they may not want to let on how they really feel. In reaction, these personalities might retreat inward, react defensively, or try to escape the situation altogether. Alternatively, they might give up their own wants or needs in an effort to keep the peace.

### *Driven by Doubt*

Constant Improvers tend to experience self-doubt. They have a strong drive, but it comes paired with a strong fear of failure. These personality types invest a great deal of their identity in their successes. As a result, even a minor misstep or embarrassment can be crushing.

On the upside, this vigilance offers these personality types a knack for sensing trouble. This can be quite useful in situations that need to balance risk and reward – whether a financial investment or a romantic opportunity. When faced with a potential risk, these types look for ways to prevent problems. Although it slows them down in the short term, this approach can prevent longer-term issues.

Constant Improvers direct much of their attention toward their personal interests. They strive to master hobbies, careers, or new means of self-expression. This level of dedication can create impressive, beautiful results.

People with Constant Improvement personality types can be perfectionistic, dedicating tremendous time and energy to their pursuits. Unfortunately, if they put too much pressure on themselves, this approach can backfire. For example, Constant

Improvers may feel forced to abandon an endeavor because a single detail doesn't line up right.

### *Reality and Romance*

At times, Constant Improvers may experience a nagging feeling that something is missing from their lives. It's worth noting that often this really is just a feeling, not a reflection of reality. These personality types have it in their nature always to be seeking something more – even if their lives actually are going just fine.

But as Constant Improvers assess their lives, wondering what might be missing, they may find themselves focusing on their romantic relationships – or lack thereof. These types are significantly less likely than their Assertive counterparts (also known as Confident Individualists) to say that they enjoy being single. And these personalities are more likely than Confident Individualists to say they often construct an ideal partner in their heads when they're single.

Although Constant Improvers may find themselves longing for romance, they don't necessarily find it easy to start up a relationship. They're less likely than other personality Strategies to say that they usually take the initiative in asking someone out. This makes sense, given that Constant Improvers can feel hesitant about putting themselves out there – and asking someone out is an incredibly vulnerable position to be in.

This might sound like bad news, but it doesn't have to be. As they grow and mature, Constant Improvers often learn how to transform their feeling that something is missing into positive energy – and by doing so, they not only discover gratitude for the good things in their lives, but also become proactive about making helpful

changes. This mindset shift can empower these personality types to find fulfillment in their relationships – as well as in every other aspect of their lives.

### *The “Right” Career?*

Constant Improvers’ longing for “something more” extends to their professional lives. Just over a quarter of these types say that their career is a great fit for them – a rate of agreement that is less than the other Strategies.

This doesn’t necessarily mean that Constant Improvers are in the wrong careers for them – although they might wonder if they are. More than half of these personality types say they often think about switching careers, and they’re more likely than the other Strategies to say that they feel stuck in their current job.

This restlessness doesn’t have to be a bad thing. In fact, restlessness can be an incredible motivator to do great things. The trouble comes when Constant Improvers feel trapped: wanting to make a change, but suspecting they’re unable or helpless to do so. This feeling can have a number of roots, such as self-doubt or a general worry that other people don’t “get” them.

As in other areas of their lives, Constant Improvers who pursue personal growth often discover that their feeling of helplessness is exactly that – a *feeling*. This can be a powerful discovery. In its wake, these personality types are better able to harness their personal and professional strengths and deal with their feeling of “stuckness.” This may take the form of finding a new career, or it might involve advocating for themselves in their current workplaces so that they get more of their needs met. Either way, Constant Improvers often find that they have more agency in their professional lives than they’d realized.



### *The Strength of Sensitivity*

In general, Constant Improvers care a great deal about what others think of them. This can trigger insecurity, to be sure, but when kept in balance, it can create some truly wonderful traits. These personalities are often curious about and sensitive to others' feelings. This can make them excellent listeners, friends, confidants, and partners.

Some types might think that sensitivity is synonymous with weakness, but Constant Improvers know that isn't the case. These personality types often exemplify how sensitivity and vulnerability can be hidden strengths. Their attunement to their own struggles and insecurities can help them to bond deeply with others. It can also motivate them to act with kindness and compassion.

Although they may not always realize it, Constant Improvers offer the world a wealth of gifts. Once they learn to trust themselves as much as they trust others' opinions, these personalities can shine.

### **Social Engagement – Extraverted (E) and Turbulent (-T)**

#### *Boldly Sensitive*

Those with the Social Engagement Strategy are an interesting group. In some ways, Extraverted and Turbulent personality traits conflict with each other. Extraversion leads to risk-tolerance and boldness, and Turbulence leads to self-doubt and sensitivity.

This can mean that Social Engagers tend to do what comes naturally first and think about it later. In this way, they are almost an exaggeration of their underlying personality traits. This may sound like a bad thing, but it doesn't have to be.

Social Engagers venture into the world with enthusiasm. They enjoy being the center of attention and enjoy social status. At times, this may mean that they hide their true selves to impress other people, pretending to be someone else in order to be liked. Fortunately, Social Engagers' genuine interest in others often shines through, helping these personality types to create authentic connections with the people around them.

### *Social Engagers in Love*

Romantic relationships aren't always the easiest – hence Shakespeare's observation that "the course of true love never did run smooth." You might think that Social Engagers' self-doubt would cause them to play it safe when it comes to the rough waters of love, but that isn't the case. These personality types tend to dive headlong into relationships – they're more likely than any other Strategy to say they fall in love easily. And they're also less likely to say they enjoy being single.

Social Engagers are far from passive about their romantic lives. These personalities care deeply about pleasing their partners – in fact, they're the Strategy most likely to believe they need to go out of their way to please the people they love. Social Engagers are deeply devoted, willing to pour all of their affection and care into their partner.

But not everyone is willing – or able – to do this in return. Social Engagers may feel it acutely if their partner doesn't seem equally affectionate or devoted. This can be especially challenging because these personality types care so deeply about receiving praise and admiration. As a result, they might feel hurt by a partner who is reserved in expressing their affection.

As they go through life, many Social Engagers discover that not everyone is as expressive as they are – and that's okay. These types may need to use their social

acumen to connect with the ways their partners *do* share love. For example, they may realize that their partner expresses affection through physical touch, spending time together, or even helping out around the house. Once they attune themselves to the ways other personalities demonstrate their love, Social Engagers can find incredible fulfillment and joy in their romantic relationships.

### *Working It*

Social Engagers may find themselves drawn to lines of work that involve plenty of human interaction. The service industry can be a natural fit for these personality types, as can nearly any job that involves helping customers solve problems. Social Engagers are energized by the opportunity to talk with others, and they're especially invigorated when they can tell that they've actually made someone's day a little better.

This isn't to say that Social Engagers are anything less than ambitious. In their own way, these personalities do care about being successful. Everyone has a unique definition of "success," of course, but many Social Engagers feel especially successful when they receive recognition, such as awards, promotions, or positive feedback on their work. These types tend to be motivated by a desire to impress and please others – not only because they enjoy praise, but also because they genuinely value the good opinion of their bosses, coworkers, and customers. And of course a salary increase is always nice, too.

Social Engagers' ambition and desire to please can make them wonderful employees and colleagues. At times, however, these personality types often discover a need to pause and make sure they're being true to themselves as well. Their personal development path may lead them to consider their own values and needs – and make sure that their professional lives line up with these values and needs.

That said, these types know that their career is just one aspect of their lives. 74% of Social Engagers say they're always looking for new hobbies to get into – more than any other personality Strategy. Whether those hobbies include volleyball, viticulture, or volunteering, these types care about being well-rounded. Paradoxically, this well-roundedness can help them to find more enjoyment in their careers as well as in other aspects of their lives.

### *The Highs and the Lows*

Social Engagers can experience highs and lows – sometimes within a matter of minutes. Their Extraversion can push their Turbulent need for success into overdrive. Meanwhile, their Turbulent personality trait can trigger almost instant self-doubt. Although these types are capable of taking quick action in a way that seems decisive, they may find themselves plagued by uncertainty afterward.

As they grow, many Social Engagers learn how to use this unusual combination of traits to their advantage. Their Extraversion can help them move past the self-doubt that comes with the Turbulent trait, enabling them to expand their comfort zones even when it isn't easy. Meanwhile, their Turbulent trait can help them to be more considerate in their boldness. The result is that these personality types can hold many contradictory traits in harmony, being both fun and responsible, active and reflective.

This push and pull can be stressful, but it's part of this Strategy's charm. These personality types chase their goals relentlessly, but they also indulge their desires and seek out fun. Thanks to this balance, they can lead happy and fruitful lives – sharing adventures and accomplishments with others whenever possible. Whatever direction these personalities pull, they are sure to pull the crowd with them.

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