

ADVOCATE GUIDE TO RELATIONSHIPS

Enhance romantic partnerships, friendships,
and parent-child relationships



16Personalities

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Introduction

Why Relationships Matter to Advocates

Human connections are of paramount importance to Advocates. People with this personality type work diligently to ensure that their ties to other people remain strong – not through cursory “How are you?” texts but through the slow, steady work of bringing hearts and minds together.

From the outside, Advocates may not seem especially social. As Introverts, they need time on their own to recharge and reflect. But make no mistake: Advocates love building connections with people who share their values, and they are extraordinarily kind, generous, and dedicated to those they care about.

Advocates feel a strong drive to be of service, and it can be hard for them to stand back when they see friends and loved ones struggling. Often, this assistance is welcomed, but at times, Advocates may need to make sure that they don’t push too hard or impose their own standards and principles. Advocates may need to practice leaving room for the people in their lives to disagree with them – even if this means rebuffing their well-intended efforts to help.

The Heart of the Matter

This guide covers a variety of relationships, including those between romantic partners, friends, and parents and children. In each chapter, we’ll discuss how Advocates can share their gifts – including their devotion, altruism, compassion, and creativity. We’ll also address how Advocates can overcome common stumbling blocks and build caring, balanced, sustainable connections with people whose personalities and priorities differ from their own.

No relationship is perfect, just as no person is perfect. Advocates are idealists to the core, always looking for untapped potential in everyone and everything, so they may find it particularly hard to accept when things don’t go smoothly. In their heart of hearts, Advocates want to build soul-level connections with their friends and loved ones – relationships based on trust, harmony, and shared goals. This is a beautiful vision, but it can be a tall order as well.

Being able to tell the difference between a minor spat or misalignment and a true dealbreaker can help Advocates more wisely determine when they want to invest their love and energy unreservedly in a relationship, when they need to speak up for themselves, and when they need to meet a friend or loved one halfway. It's our hope that the insights in these pages will help Advocates build the enduring, meaningful relationships that they long for while also cultivating acceptance for themselves and the people around them.

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





Romantic Relationships

Not ones for casual encounters, Advocates treat the process of finding romantic partners seriously. It's one of the most significant investments that 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 that 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 potential partners resort to manipulation or dishonesty, as Advocates have little patience for fakeness.

One of the things that 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 that 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 that 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 for it.

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 Advocates 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 Advocates are in relationships as it is when they are not.

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 inspiration to grow and develop as individuals and as a couple.

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 that 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 that both types can take to work toward meeting each other's emotional needs include:

- 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 that 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 buildup 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 stressed 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. That 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 that 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 that 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 that 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 that 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, and 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 that 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 that 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.

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 that 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 of 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 working on exploring things that their partners care about – their values can be served by going deeper into the connection that they share.

Some strategies these couples can try include:

- Have *fun* together. Roll with the bumps and try new things often.
- Take turns engaging in 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 in 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.

Here are 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 that 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.



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 that 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 that 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 moves 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 that they can form with friends provide relief from that friction, even if they don't see eye to eye on everything. In friendships, 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 stubbornest 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 that 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 will be 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 that 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 to 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 examinations 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 that they need to squelch discussions or disagreements. However, when they hit a point of unpleasant contention, they can simply back off, reminding themselves to observe nonjudgmentally. Being a curious, interested observer fits both personality types, and this approach can help prevent natural differences from becoming problematic.

Some helpful practices these two can employ include:

- Listen to each other quietly and 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 that 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 each other, 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 that they share emotions is one of the most beautiful features of Advocate-Diplomat friendships, but emotional independence is a skill worth developing.

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. Ignoring practical, down-to-earth matters and pursuits is not a balanced approach to life. This can especially create a challenge for friends who have closely entwined lives, such as 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 that 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 with 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 with 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 that 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 that 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 that 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 the loftier pursuits that 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 tendencies 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 that 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 earthbound 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 spent 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 with – 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 and perhaps people watch. When

Advocates lose sight of the fun present 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 expectations more than sensible assessments, 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 counterbalancing 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 the 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 being overly rigid 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.

Here are some tips to help these friends rebalance their differing ideas of how to have fun:

- Participate in activities that matter to each other.
- Focus on enjoying each other’s company as well as the activity.
- 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 that they have fun with you.

Ultimately, friends are friends. Even though Advocates and Sentinels are sometimes caught off guard by the different ways that 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

Unexpected Potential

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 in 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 accomplishments 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 that 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 in 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 that 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's 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 Noncommitment

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.



Parenthood

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 that 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 that 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 that 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.

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 summer-job employers to encourage them to hire their child or completing their child's science fair project for them using resources and abilities that 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 overidentify 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 that 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 that 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 that 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 (like a lower grade) of not paying attention or being disorganized. Instead of swooping in to save them, Advocate parents should help them 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 that 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 that 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.

Parenting for Each Stage of Development

Infancy (From Birth to Approximately 1½ Years)

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.

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.

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 overtaxing 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 that 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 babysit.
- 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 nine 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 ensures 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 coworkers 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 that 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 that 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 Advocate parents may believe that 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 will 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 that 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 that 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 that 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 with 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 with 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 burnout, 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 that 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. Their challenges may range from difficult school assignments to figuring out how to help a friend who is being teased. Confidence is what gives children the strength to work hard and do the right thing when life brings such tests. 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 that 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 that 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 that they ace 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 that 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 that 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 that 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 that 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, or 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 that 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 that 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 that 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 that they make toward becoming self-sufficient adults. Finding new ways to engage with them 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 rediscover 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.

Final Words

For Advocates, relationships aren't just a way to fill time or stave off loneliness, but rather an essential part of what makes life worth living. Advocates know how precious it is to find another human being with whom they can share their values, their hopes and fears, their innermost thoughts and dreams. And they feel honored to serve as a sounding board and source of support for the people in their lives as well.

It makes sense, then, that Advocates prioritize quality rather than quantity in their connections. They want to build an inner circle of kindred spirits, not surround themselves with casual acquaintances. And just as they hold themselves to high standards in their relationships, they hope for a similar level of dedication and commitment from the people in their lives.

As they learn and grow, Advocates come to recognize when their standards for their friends and loved ones are in danger of becoming unrealistic. People with this personality type have more than enough perspective and insight to allow for foibles and disagreements without accepting an unhealthy or imbalanced relationship.

In this guide, we've addressed a range of Advocate relationships, including romantic partnerships, friendships, and the bond between parent and child. While each of these relationships is different, they all offer a wealth of opportunities for Advocates to share their unique gifts and strengths, fulfill their calling of uplifting others, and foster connections based on authenticity, trust, and love.



So... What's Next?

You've reached the end of this book, dear Advocate, but fear not – we've created many more resources for you. Here are a few that might capture your interest:

- Want more tests and insights to help you better understand and strengthen your relationships? Explore our [Relationships Specialized Tests](#).
- Looking to enhance your academic or professional life? Check out the [Advocate Guide to Careers](#).
- Ready to build a strong foundation for your self-development? Our [Advocate Guide to Personal Growth](#) may be just what you need.



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