

Appendix A: Myers-Briggs test | www.16personalities.com

Defender Personality | ISFJ-A / ISFJ-T (Myers & Briggs, 2020)

Introduction

Love only grows by sharing. You can only have more for yourself by giving it away to others.

BRIAN TRACY

The Defender personality type is quite unique, as many of their qualities defy the definition of their individual traits. Though sensitive, Defenders have excellent analytical abilities; though reserved, they have well-developed people skills and robust social relationships; and though they are generally a conservative type, Defenders are often receptive to change and new ideas. As with so many things, people with the Defender personality type are more than the sum of their parts, and it is the way they use these strengths that defines who they are.

Defenders are true altruists, meeting kindness with kindness-in-excess and engaging the work and people they believe in with enthusiasm and generosity.

There's hardly a better type to make up such a large proportion of the population, nearly 13%. Combining the best of tradition and the desire to do good, Defenders are found in lines of work with a sense of history behind them, such as medicine, academics and charitable social work.

Defender personalities (especially Turbulent ones) are often meticulous to the point of perfectionism, and though they procrastinate, they can always be relied on to get the job done on time. Defenders take their responsibilities personally, consistently going above and beyond, doing everything they can to exceed expectations and delight others, at work and at home.

We Must Be Seen to Be Believed

The challenge for Defenders is ensuring that what they do is noticed. They have a tendency to underplay their accomplishments, and while their kindness is often respected, more cynical and selfish people are likely to take advantage of Defenders' dedication and humbleness by pushing work onto them and then taking the credit. Defenders need to know when to say no and stand up for themselves if they are to maintain their confidence and enthusiasm.

Naturally social, an odd quality for Introverts, Defenders utilise excellent memories not to retain data and trivia, but to remember people, and details about their lives. When it comes to gift-giving, Defenders have no equal, using their imagination and natural sensitivity to express their generosity in ways that touch the hearts of their recipients. While this is certainly true of their co-workers, whom people with the Defender personality type often consider their personal friends, it is in family that their expressions of affection fully bloom.

If I Can Protect You, I Will

Defender personalities are a wonderful group, rarely sitting idle while a worthy cause remains unfinished. Defenders' ability to connect with others on an intimate level is unrivalled among Introverts, and the joy they experience in using those connections to maintain a supportive, happy family is a gift for everyone involved. They may never be truly comfortable in the spotlight and may feel guilty taking due credit for team efforts. Still, if they can ensure that their actions are recognised, Defenders are likely to feel a level of satisfaction in what they do that many other personality types can only dream of.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Defender Strengths

- **Supportive** – Defenders are the universal helpers, sharing their knowledge, experience, time and energy with anyone who needs it, and all the more so with friends and family. People with this personality type strive for win-win situations, choosing empathy over judgment whenever possible.
- **Reliable and Patient** – Rather than offering sporadic, excited rushes that leave things half-finished, Defenders are meticulous and careful, taking a steady approach and bending with the needs of the situation just enough to accomplish their end goals. Defenders not only ensure that things are done to the highest standard but often go well beyond what is required.

- **Imaginative and Observant** – Defenders are very innovative, and use this quality as an accessory to empathy, observing others' emotional states and seeing things from their perspective. With their feet firmly planted on the ground, it is a very practical imagination, though they do find things quite fascinating and inspiring.
- **Enthusiastic** – When the goal is right, Defenders take all this support, reliability and imagination and apply it to something they believe will make a difference in people's lives – whether fighting poverty with a global initiative or simply making a customer's day.
- **Loyal and Hard-Working** – Given a little time, this enthusiasm grows into loyalty – Defender personalities often form an emotional attachment to the ideas and organisations they've dedicated themselves to. Anything short of meeting their obligations with good, hard work fails their own expectations.
- **Good Practical Skills** – The best part is, Defenders have the practical sense actually to do something with all this altruism. If mundane, routine tasks are what need to be done, Defenders can see the beauty and harmony that they create, because they know that it helps them to care for their friends, family, and anyone else who needs it.

Defender Weaknesses

- **Humble and Shy** – The meek shall inherit the earth, but it's a long road if they receive no recognition at all. This is possibly Defenders' most significant challenge, as they are so concerned with others' feelings that they refuse to make their thoughts known, or to take any duly earned credit for their contributions. Defenders' standards for themselves are also so high that, knowing they could have done some minor aspect of a task better, they often downplay their successes entirely.
- **Take Things Too Personally** – Defenders have trouble separating personal and impersonal situations – any situation is still an interaction between two people, after all – and any negativity from conflict or criticism can carry over from their professional to their personal lives, and back again.
- **Repress Their Feelings** – People with the Defender personality type are private and very sensitive, internalising their feelings a great deal. Much in the way that Defenders protect others' feelings, they must protect their own, and this lack of healthy emotional expression can lead to a lot of stress and frustration.
- **Overload Themselves** – Their strong senses of duty and perfectionism combine with this aversion to the emotional conflict to create a situation where it is far too easy for Defenders to overload themselves – or to be overloaded by others – as they struggle silently to meet everyone's expectations, especially their own.
- **Reluctant to Change** – These challenges can be tough to address since Defender personalities value traditions and history highly in their decisions. A situation sometimes needs to reach a breaking point before Defenders are persuaded by circumstance, or the strong character of a loved one, to alter course.
- **Too Altruistic** – This is all compounded and reinforced by Defenders' otherwise wonderful quality of altruism. Being such warm, good-natured people, Defenders are willing to let things slide, to believe that things will get better soon, to not burden others by accepting their offers of help, while their troubles mount unassisted.

Romantic Relationships

When it comes to romantic relationships, Defenders' kindness grows into a joy that is only found in taking care of their family and home, in being there for emotional and practical support whenever it's needed. Home is where the heart is for people with the Defender personality type, and in no other area of their lives do they strive with such dedication to create the harmony and beauty they wish to see in the world.

The trouble is, these are the benefits of an established long-term relationship, and Defenders' unbearable shyness means it can take a long time to reach this point. Defenders are most attractive when they are simply themselves in a comfortable environment such as work, where their natural flow shows this kindness and dedication. Relationships built on established familiarity are a warm prospect for Defenders – they take dating seriously and only enter into relationships that have a real chance of lasting a lifetime.

Our Upward Course Is Due to Our Soundness of Heart

Defenders' shyness and sensitivity shield what are, beneath the surface, powerful feelings. While not always evident to others, this river of emotion can't be taken lightly or for granted. Defender personalities can value the idea of committed

romance almost as highly as some regard to religious beliefs. Hard as it may be if either dating partner doubts their feelings, they must part ways before real emotional damage is done.

As their relationships do progress, Defenders often continue to struggle with emotional expression, but they have the opportunity to let physical affection stand-in for their loving words. People with this personality type take no greater joy than in pleasing others, often even considering this a personal duty, and this applies to intimacy as well. While dutiful sex may not sound especially attractive in those specific terms, intimacy is tremendously important to Defenders, and they spare no effort in this department.

Nor is the pleasure they take in ensuring their partners' happiness limited to the bedroom – Defenders spend an enormous amount of time and energy finding ways to keep their relationship satisfying for their partners. All they ask in return is commitment, love and, perhaps most of all, appreciation.

Like All the Best Families, We Have Our Disagreements...

However, not everyone is prepared to pay even that small price for the benefit of Defenders' kindness. Suppose their partners aren't willing or able to express this thanks, or worse still are openly critical of their Defender partners. In that case, they will find that given time and pressure, all of those repressed emotions can burst forth in massive verbal attacks that all the future regret in the world won't blunt.

These outbursts are something to watch out for. Still, the more pervasive issue in Defenders' relationships is that it can be too easy for their altruism and kindness to be taken advantage of, maybe even without their partners realising it, while leaving Defenders' own needs and dreams unfulfilled. This is something that Defenders' partners, and Defender personalities themselves, must look after if they want the sort of long, fulfilling relationships they dream about. Expressing appreciation is often more than just the right words; it is reciprocation.

Suppose these couples can manage this balance of mutual appreciation and goal-setting. In that case, they will come to find that the best Defender qualities emerge later in the relationship, as they work towards establishing families and homes together.

While perfectly capable in the workplace and among friends, Defenders' true passions lie in taking care of their families, from playing with their children to the everyday needs of the household, efforts Defenders are only too happy to contribute.

Defenders are trustworthy, loyal, loving and faithful, and nothing brings them more joy than the commitment of a respectful and thriving relationship. The best matches are those who share these sensibilities, namely those who share the Observant (S) trait, with one or two opposing qualities to ensure that both partners have room to grow, develop and help each other along, 'til the end of their days.

Friendships

Given how generous Defenders are with their warm praise and support, it's not surprising that others enjoy their company enough to call them friends. The challenge is to be considered a friend back – people with the Defender personality type are shy and a little protective of themselves, but they also need to be able to connect on a deeper emotional level. It makes sense then that most of Defenders' friends are caused not by random encounters on a wild night out, but through comfortable and consistent contact, as in class or in the workplace where they have the time to get to know each other little by little.

A lot of what establishes and deepens Defenders' friendships is the mutual support, advice and reassurance that the friends give each other.

Defenders need a lot of positive feedback and admitting this need certainly shows vulnerability. Still, if that vulnerability is well handled, it creates the deep bonds that Defender personalities look for. If badly handled or not reciprocated, it's hard to see the burgeoning friendship surviving without quite a bit of extra effort.

Yet, as their friendships develop, Defenders' sense of loyalty may push them to lean ever more on themselves to meet their friends' needs, to the point of neglecting their own. Defenders show this in a few ways, from going clearly out of their ways to stick to even trivial commitments, to simply not wanting to disagree or say no for fear of causing turbulence. More cynical types would call this naïve and may even take advantage of Defenders' altruism – but these are hardly the type of people who could be called "friends", and they have no business being discussed here.

To What Greater Inspiration and Counsel Can We Turn?

The real friends, those close inner circles, are the ones Defenders truly cherish for their quality of character and quality of discussion. Defenders aren't particularly picky about what personality types they make friends with, at least not initially,

but because they prefer so strongly to avoid conflict and miscommunication, most of their friends are likely to end up being fairly similar personalities.

Parenthood

Defenders' warmth and care make parenting something that often comes naturally to them. Many people with this personality type feel like parenting is the task they were born for, taking no small pleasure in the sense of personal importance and responsibility they feel in ensuring that their children grow up to be healthy, confident and successful. At the same time, Defenders are anything but arrogant, and will hardly take their natural skill in this department for granted.

From the start, Defenders' altruism is apparent in their approach towards their children, ensuring that they have a safe, stable environment filled with love, care and support. In their children's younger years, Defenders' patience comes in very handy as well, as their children learn to become more independent and self-deterministic, testing any limit they can find.

Seeing the World in Its True Light

It is this transition though, from the utter dependence of infants, to the insatiable exploration of toddlers and young children, to the rejection of authority of adolescents that Defenders are taken by surprise.

Very traditional personality types, Defenders accept historic standards, with clearly defined roles as parents and children. They view their role, and often rightly so, as the imparter of their own wisdom and values, ensuring that their children understand the importance of dedication and responsibility.

What many Defender parents may not realise is that more independent children often reject the seemingly overbearing love and support that make Defender personalities such wonderful parental figures. They wish to determine their own values and make their own choices, and Defenders' good intentions can make them feel like every aspect of their lives is sealed off and controlled. All the while, Defender parents must ensure that more dependent children, who are willing to lean on all of this care and support rather than rebel against it, do not take these admirable qualities for granted, neglecting their own independence entirely.

Do Right, even if We Suffer in so Doing

Defenders are uncomfortable when their children don't behave as expected, and oftentimes more insightful children see, and sometimes exploit, this potential weakness with tantrums and mind games. It takes a strong will for Defenders to put their foot down and teach clear and reasonable boundaries and values, while at the same time affording their children the freedom to grow and develop on their own.

Parenting is not easy for any personality type, not if they're doing it right, but Defenders do have the advantage of not just being caring, but being thoughtful and responsible in how they administer that care. Often seen as ideal parents, people with the Defender personality type are able to be there for their children, but to also know that there's more to people than meets the eye, and to respect those differences – if not always to understand them.

Career Paths

In many ways, Defenders are the backbone of the modern workforce. Altruistic and well-rounded, no other personality type is so well-suited to be of service of others. It is no surprise that many Defenders are not just good at supporting their co-workers and customers in human resources and support positions, they genuinely enjoy it, as it gives them the chance to calm frustrations, see things through to a practical solution, and to be thanked, appreciated, at the close of each ordeal.

Be Humble and Earnest

Defenders are skilled at remembering things about others which makes them not only valuable assistants, but well-liked colleagues. People with the Defender personality type can always be counted on to remember a birthday, a graduation, or simply a frequent customers' name, and that can make all the difference. Add to these amiable qualities Defenders' meticulousness, hard work and dedication, and it's no surprise that their careers often progress smoothly, with few of the ups and downs that accompany more high-flying types.

However, Defenders are unlikely to actively seek out managerial positions, and are still more unlikely to brag about their accomplishments. Defender personalities prefer to be rewarded by seeing first-hand the positive impact of their efforts and will remain enthusiastic, simply knowing that what they do is genuinely appreciated by the people they care for. This makes them natural counsellors, technical support, and interior designers, where they are able to help others one-on-one without having to worry about corporate politics.

Whether they seek promotion or not it happens often enough, as Defenders' ability to implement ideas and "create order from chaos" is bound to make an impression.

Respecting tradition and security, Defenders have no problem with the idea of moving along in a structured hierarchy, and while they may not always seek out these managerial positions, they fill them well. Defenders are well-tuned to others' emotions and have a strong sense of practicality, extending their own ability to get things done to their teams.

Where Defenders struggle is in generating new ideas and in grasping abstract concepts – fields like academic research and corporate strategy are too intangible and too impersonal to utilise Defenders' strengths. Similar challenges arise in more typical careers when changes are forced through by Defenders' employers – advance warning and a proper explanation can help to smooth the shock, but if the changes cut back on things like the quality of customer service, it can feel like a betrayal in the face of their loyalty and dedication.

Live Pleasantly and Do Good

Strong, well-developed institutions alongside like-minded friends are attractive workplaces for people with the Defender personality type, and careers as nurses, elementary school teachers and social and religious workers are attractive options. Sometimes the desire to help others is enough in itself – it's not uncommon to find Defenders volunteering and helping the community at shelters, food banks and their children's schools. Defenders are warm, service-oriented people, and hardly anyone is more welcome in these (and many, many other) roles.

Workplace Habits

Whether subordinates, colleagues or managers, Defenders share the goal of putting good service and dedication above all else. Whether helping customers directly, helping co-workers get projects finished on time or helping teams keep organised and productive, people with the Defender personality type can always be relied on for their kindness and ability to listen to concerns, and to find ways to resolve them. Win-win situations are Defenders' bread and butter, and no one takes quite the same pleasure in finding satisfying resolutions to day-to-day challenges.

Defender Subordinates

As subordinates, Defenders exemplify the strength of humble dedication. Relied on and respected for their patience and commitment, Defender personalities really only seek one reward for their work: the satisfaction of knowing that whoever they helped feels heartfelt thanks. On the other hand, this humbleness can hold them back – Defenders are quite unwilling to advertise their achievements, often for fear of creating unnecessary friction, which makes it too easy for them to be overlooked when opportunities come along.

Defenders are people of incredible loyalty, often trying to follow favored managers to new positions and locations. This contrasts with their usual feelings on change which, if it compromises their principles (as cutbacks to customer care might), is met with stress and unhappiness. Though perfectly capable of accepting change, Defenders must feel that it's for the right reasons. If a policy change results in disappointed customers, Defenders take it very personally.

Defender Colleagues

Among their colleagues, people with this personality type seek a frictionless environment, a spirit of friends helping friends to get the job done. Close-knit and supportive teams are what Defenders enjoy most, allowing them to express their altruistic spirit among people who rely on their dedication and warmth. Defenders are natural networkers, but they use this skill to keep things running smoothly, not as a tool for professional advancement.

These qualities can be drawbacks though, as Defenders' aversion to conflict and desire to help can be abused by less scrupulous colleagues. Instead of only asking help when they need it, some may ask for help when they just don't feel like working hard, knowing that their Defender colleagues have a hard time saying no. The result is that Defenders can become overburdened and stressed, and it takes a few good workplace friends to put pressure on these less savory characters in order to maintain balance.

Defender Managers

While management isn't necessarily at the top of Defenders' list of goals, it is a natural progression as their hard work and good people skills are recognised over the years. Oftentimes they don't actually enjoy managing others, but this can be one of their greatest strengths – as managers, Defenders are warm, approachable and great listeners. Having no real desire to issue authoritarian dictates from some high tower, Defender personalities prefer to work alongside their subordinates, organising people and minimising conflict.

This helps them to create personal relationships with their subordinates, to be friends in the workplace who simply have different sets of responsibilities. While they may be slow to accept some changes, they are great at helping their teams put them into practice once they've been agreed on. Defenders may be too sensitive to be fully executive material, but they make exemplary floor and office managers who know what it takes to satisfy their customers.

Conclusion

Few personality types are as practical and dedicated as Defenders. Known for their reliability and altruism, Defenders are good at creating and maintaining a secure and stable environment for themselves and their loved ones. Defenders' dedication is invaluable in many areas, including their own personal growth.

Yet Defenders can be easily tripped up in areas where their kindness and practical approach are more of a liability than an asset. Whether it is finding (or keeping) a partner, learning to relax or improvise, reaching dazzling heights on the career ladder, or managing their workload, Defenders need to put in a conscious effort to develop their weaker traits and additional skills.