

Portrait of an ESTJ - Extraverted Sensing Thinking Judging (Extraverted Thinking with Introverted Sensing)

The Guardian

As an ESTJ, your primary mode of living is focused externally, where you deal with things rationally and logically. Your secondary mode is internal, where you take things in via your five senses in a literal, concrete fashion.

ESTJ's live in a world of facts and concrete needs. They live in the present, with their eye constantly scanning their personal environment to make sure that everything is running smoothly and systematically. They honor traditions and laws, and have a clear set of standards and beliefs. They expect the same of others, and have no patience or understanding of individuals who do not value these systems. They value competence and efficiency, and like to see quick results for their efforts.

ESTJ's are take-charge people. They have such a clear vision of the way that things should be, that they naturally step into leadership roles. They are self-confident and aggressive. They are extremely talented at devising systems and plans for action, and at being able to see what steps need to be taken to complete a specific task. They can sometimes be very demanding and critical, because they have such strongly held beliefs, and are likely to express themselves without reserve if they feel someone isn't meeting their standards. But at least their expressions can be taken at face-value, because the ESTJ is extremely straightforward and honest.

The ESTJ is usually a model citizen, and pillar of the community. He or she takes their commitments seriously, and follows their own standards of "good citizenship" to the letter. ESTJ enjoys interacting with people, and likes to have fun. ESTJ's can be very boisterous and fun at social events, especially activities which are focused on the family, community, or work.

The ESTJ needs to watch out for the tendency to be too rigid, and to become overly detail-oriented. Since they put a lot of weight in their own beliefs, it's important that they remember to value other people's input and opinions. If they neglect their Feeling side, they may have a problem with fulfilling other's needs for intimacy, and may unknowingly hurt people's feelings by applying logic and reason to situations which demand more emotional sensitivity.

When bogged down by stress, an ESTJ often feels isolated from others. They feel as if they are misunderstood and undervalued, and that their efforts are taken for granted. Although normally the ESTJ is very verbal and doesn't have any problem expressing themselves, when under stress they have a hard time putting their feelings into words and communicating them to others.

ESTJ's value security and social order above all else, and feel obligated to do all that they can to enhance and promote these goals. They will mow the lawn, vote, join the PTA, attend home owner's association meetings, and generally do anything that they can to promote personal and social security.

The ESTJ puts forth a lot of effort in almost everything that they do. They will do everything that they think should be done in their job, marriage, and community with a good amount of energy. He or she is conscientious, practical, realistic, and dependable. While the ESTJ will dutifully do everything that is important to work towards a particular cause or goal, they might not naturally see or value the importance of goals which are outside of their practical scope. However, if the ESTJ is able to see the relevance of such goals to practical concerns, you can bet that they'll put every effort into understanding them and incorporating them into their quest for clarity and security.

Jungian functional preference ordering:

Dominant: Extraverted Thinking
Auxiliary: Introverted Sensing
Tertiary: Extraverted Intuition
Inferior: Introverted Feeling

ESTJ's generally have the following traits:

- Natural leaders - they like to be in charge
- Value security and tradition
- Loyal
- Hard-working and dependable
- Athletic and wholesome
- Have a clear set of standards and beliefs which they live by
- No patience with incompetence or inefficiency
- Excellent organizational abilities
- Enjoy creating order and structure
- Very thorough
- Will follow projects through to completion
- Straight-forward and honest
- Driven to fulfill their duties

ESTJ's have a lot of flexibility in the types of careers that they choose. They are good at a lot of different things, because they put forth a tremendous amount of effort towards doing things the right way. They will be happiest in leadership positions, however, because they have a natural drive to be in charge. They are best suited for jobs which require creating order and structure.

ESTJ Relationships

ESTJ's are very enthusiastic people who are driven to fulfill their obligations and duties, especially those towards their families. Their priorities generally put God first, family second, and friends third. They put forth a tremendous amount of effort to meet their obligations and duties, according to their priorities. They are dedicated and committed to their relationships, which they consider to be lifelong and unalterable. They like to be in charge, and may be very controlling of their mates and children. They have high esteem for traditions and institutions, and expect that their mates and children will support these as well. They have little patience and need for dealing with people who see things very differently from the ESTJ.

ESTJ Strengths

- Generally enthusiastic, upbeat and friendly
- Stable and dependable, they can be counted on to promote security for their families
- Put forth a lot of effort to fulfill their duties and obligations
- Responsible about taking care of day-to-day practical concerns around the house
- Usually good (albeit conservative) with money
- Not personally threatened by conflict or criticism
- Interested in resolving conflict, rather than ignoring it
- Take their commitments very seriously, and seek lifelong relationships
- Able to move on after a relationship breaks up
- Able to administer discipline when necessary

ESTJ Weaknesses

- Tendency to believe that they are always right
- Tendency to need to always be in charge
- Impatient with inefficiency and sloppiness
- Not naturally in tune with what others are feeling
- Not naturally good at expressing their feelings and emotions
- May inadvertently hurt others with insensitive language
- Tendency to be materialistic and status-conscious

- Generally uncomfortable with change, and moving into new territories

What does Success mean to an ESTJ?

People with the ESTJ personality type have a high value for social order and structure. Throughout his or her life, the ESTJ develops a set of judgment standards that they use to order events and impressions that exist in the world. These standards are essentially social principles. The ESTJ believes very strongly in their principles, and strongly disapproves of any violation. The ESTJ believes that their principles define appropriate behavior and attitudes, and therefore should be followed unconditionally. Just as they naturally create rules, and are therefore natural leaders, ESTJ's also believe in following existing social rules. They often lead, but can follow easily if they trust the authority of the system they're following. The ESTJ can be quite harsh about the violation of a principle. It is more important to the ESTJ that the principle is honored than that they consider the position or feelings of the individual who transgressed against the principle. Their harshness of manner may damage personal relationships, until the ESTJ incorporates standards for behavior within personal relationships into their system of social rules. The ESTJ truly enjoys being around other people, and wants to promote traditional relationships. An ESTJ may feel successful if they are able to live their lives within their defined system of principles, but their true and lasting success will come from the ability to create and sustain good and lasting principles, and thus to address all situations in their life adequately and consistently.

Allowing Your ESTJ Strengths to Flourish

As an ESTJ, you have gifts that are specific to your personality type that aren't natural strengths for other types. By recognizing your special gifts and encouraging their growth and development, you will more readily see your place in the world, and be more content with your role.

Nearly all ESTJ's will recognize the following characteristics in themselves. They should embrace and nourish these strengths:

- They believe strongly in doing their duty, and perform out of a sense of duty, rather than an expectation of getting something in return.
- They usually have a good memory.
- They're natural leaders.
- They are usually good strategists and "game" players.
- They are generally law-abiding and hard working.
- They are Loyal -- to their family, friends, country, etc.
- ESTJ's who have developed their Introverted Sensing to the extent that they regularly use their tremendous inner stores of data when forming their principles for behavior enjoy these very special gifts:
 - They understand and create effective and fair principles that are unconditional, and in so doing, they perform a great social service.
 - They may make outstanding Judges and Politicians.
 - They live their life in a highly ethical and moral manner.
 - They are great strategists, and may make great military commanders.
 - They're able to create systems for behavior to meet all of the needs that they encounter in life. In such a way, they are satisfied because their world is organized in a principle-centric way that is effective and enduring.

Potential Problem Areas

With any gift of strength, there is an associated weakness. Without "bad", there would be no "good". Without "difficult", there would be no "easy". We value our strengths, but we often curse and ignore our weaknesses. To grow as a person and get what we want out of life, we must not only capitalize upon our strengths, but also face our weaknesses and deal with them. That means taking a hard look at our personality type's potential problem areas.

Most of the weaker characteristics that are found in ESTJ's are due to Extraverted Thinking taking over the personality to the extent that other functions work only to serve Extraverted Thinking's agenda. In such cases, an ESTJ may show some or all of the following weaknesses in varying degrees:

- May be unaware or uncaring of how they come across to others.
- May deliberately bully people into behaving a certain way (with the justification that they're enforcing a principle.)
- May quickly dismiss input from others without really considering it.
- May have difficulty communicating their thoughts and feelings to others.
- Maybe have difficulty understanding the importance of considering people's feelings, and trying to meet their emotional needs.
- May hold grudges, and have difficulty forgiving people.
- May have an intense and quick temper.
- May be highly controlling towards others.
- May be unable to place value on individual life.
- May be unable to see the long-term impact of their behavior.

Explanation of Problems

Nearly all of the problematic characteristics described above can be attributed to the common problem of Extraverted Thinking overtaking the ESTJ personality to the point that all other personality functions exist only to serve Thinking's needs. A healthy and successful personality needs to have a good balance between its dominant and auxiliary functions. For an ESTJ, dominant Extraverted Thinking needs to be well-supported by the auxiliary Introverted Sensing function. If Introverted Sensing exists only to support the agenda of Extraverted Thinking, then neither function is living up to its potential, and the subject ESTJ is not reaching their potential in their job or their personal relationships.

In the case where auxiliary Sensing is underused, the ESTJ will live entirely within the boundaries of their existing principles. They will hold up their own set of principles as an inalienable representation of the Right Thing To Do, and apply everything they encounter in life to this principle system. If they perceive behavior that does not fit into their set of principles, they will ruthlessly judge it and shut down any alternative view of the violation. In being so tied to their Extraverted Thinking process, they lose the ability to truly consider incoming information, and therefore lose the ability to synergize with other people and solve problems in an effective way. Perhaps most importantly, the ESTJ loses the ability to connect with their own Self. They become out of touch with their own personal needs, and dissociated from their core self. The net effect of these happenings is an ESTJ leader who expects absolute adherence to his or her demands; who lacks the ability to see long-range implications associated with these demands; who is unwilling to consider alternate solutions or plans; and who is dissociated from any personal priorities or value system. Such a leader is unlikely to be effective and successful in their job or personal life, although are likely unaware of the reasons for their problems.

It is quite common for people to allow their dominant function to overrule their personality. In the case of the Extraverted Thinker, allowing Thinking to dominate without counter-balance can have great impact on the social interactions of the ESTJ. Female ESTJ's may be viewed as overbearing, controlling, or masculine, and may not be as readily accepted by social standards. This may cause low self-esteem in the female ESTJ. Male ESTJ's are somewhat worse off, because social stereotypes may encourage them that they are entitled to be domineering. They may have no interest in growing beyond their limited outlook.

Extraverted Thinking is a personality function that creates structure by identifying and adhering to logical principles. It is a social form of judgment, in that it is defined by the external world, rather than by an inner sense of right and wrong. The true strength of Extraverted Thinking is its highly ethical nature. It is not swayed by individual appeals -- it believes wholeheartedly in the merit of the Principle. If the Principle exists, then it should be followed. Once the Extraverted Thinking type has identified the principle, it is their business to enforce that principle. The Extraverted Thinker does not expect anything back for living by that principle. It expects that the principle should be respected without condition. In other words, the ESTJ believes that you should do what's right because it is what's right, rather than doing what's right because you want something in return. In this ideal sense, Extraverted Thinking judgment is the cornerstone of laws and legal systems. Extraverted Thinking has much to offer our society, in its purity of intention.

Introverted Sensing, the auxiliary function of the ESTJ, is the means of observing data and storing it for future reference. Introverted Sensing is capable of considering and storing huge amounts of data. When this data is fed into the dominant Thinking function, the personality uses real data to form principles and enforce structure upon the world. In the case where the ESTJ has an overly-dominant Thinking function, the importance of the auxiliary Sensing function is reduced. Data cannot be seen outside of its context within a principle. The ESTJ will not be able to see beyond the fact that a principle has been violated. They will be unable to see the data objectively.

Solutions

An ESTJ who is interested in coming into his or her own potential should consciously try to suspend judgment until all of the facts are known. An effective ESTJ is not afraid to redefine principles when information cannot be understood or dealt with effectively within their known systems. Practicing this sort of behavior will help auxiliary Introverted Sensation to flourish, and thereby allow the entire personality to become a more effective and positive force.

For example, an ESTJ friend recently told me that he was convinced that his mother's cleaning lady was a con-artist. I asked him why he thought so, and he said "because she takes money and does absolutely nothing." Apparently the house was not being cleaned to his standards. He believed that the cleaning lady was paid to do a certain job, and he expected that it would be completed to a certain standard for a certain fee. This was his principle. She violated that principle by not doing the job well enough. The fact that she took money for a job that she didn't do was nothing less than criminal behavior to him. When I asked him if the cleaning lady had been given directions on what specifically to clean, he said he didn't know, but that she was a cleaning lady so she should know what to do (another principle.) We soon discovered that the cleaning lady was paid about half the going rate for her job. When I explored this situation a bit further (out of concern for my friend's mother) I discovered that the cleaning lady had almost no guidance on what to clean, but that she was busy the entire time that she hired, and that she was perhaps not the cleanest of cleaning ladies. When she was given more direction, she performed to a better standard. My assertion that the cleaning lady kept busy the whole time that she was hired was flatly rejected by my ESTJ friend. He would not consider that piece of information, nor would he consider the fact that she was paid much less than the standard rate for cleaning ladies. Within his principle system, she was a con-artist, and he did not consider data that might offer an alternate explanation.

Rather than simply rejecting the new information that became available, my ESTJ friend could have altered his principles slightly to allow for differences in personal capabilities and results amongst individuals, and to allow for the fact that the cleaning lady getting a lower rate of pay did offset the lower quality of service at some level. Using the new data (made available by Introverted Sensing) to tweak and redefine his principles would allow him to create a more effective system of principles that would be better able to handle similar future challenges.

In general, developing Introverted Sensing is the ESTJ's key to optimizing the effectiveness and resiliency of their principles. It will also improve their general balance of character, and therefore open the door to growth within other aspects of their psyche.

Living Happily in our World as an ESTJ

Some ESTJ's have difficulty fitting into our society. Their problems are often associated with being controlling of others, having unreasonable expectations for others' behaviors, failing to consider others' needs and ideas, and generally coming across too strongly. These issues stem primarily from the common ESTJ habit of using Extraverted Thinking in a mode in which it quickly and automatically applies existing principles against the external world, rather than taking the time to weigh their inner data against their principles for behavior. ESTJ's need to be able to use their rich store of internal data to feed their principles. Insisting on adherence to steadfast principles while ignoring factual information is a recipe for trouble, such as we have seen with various dictatorships throughout history. In order to flourish in a healthy way, the ESTJ has to recognize the importance of their inner data stores, and needs to use all available data to form good principles. In order to accomplish this, the ESTJ needs to recognize the importance of Introversion, and develop the use of their highest introverted function, Introverted Sensing.

Specific suggestions:

Try to gather all available facts before you pass judgment. Ask questions if necessary. Make sure that you understand the idea that is being communicated. After you understand the idea, figure out how it fits into your principle system.

- Be willing to create new principles and change existing principles based on new facts.
- If you become angry, walk away. When you allow anger to control your actions, you lose, and quite possibly somebody else loses too. After you have dealt with your anger and calmed down, continue with what you were doing.
- Try to identify the personality type of everyone that you encounter frequently in your life. Remember that Intuitives sometimes speak in an indirect, wandering way. Try to have patience with this, and remember that everyone has something to offer.
- Remember that you have the most to learn from those people who are very different from you. They have something to offer you, no matter how difficult it may be for you to see it at first.

Ten Rules to Live By to Achieve ESTJ Success

1. Feed Your Strengths! You have been given the great ability to create logical, ethical principles that transcend personal experience. Allow these principles to be as good as they can be by creating them with consideration for all available data.
2. Face Your Weaknesses! See your weaknesses for what they are, and seek to overcome them. Especially, resist the tendency to judge too quickly, and remember the importance of considering other people's feelings.
3. Talk Through the Facts or write them down. You need to step through the facts in order to define good principles to live by. Verbalizing them or putting them down on paper may be a valuable tool for you.
4. Take in Everything. Don't dismiss ideas prematurely because you think you already know the answer. Seek first to understand, and then to be understood.
5. When You Get Angry, You Lose. Your passion for your principles is admirable, but becomes destructive when you fall into the "Anger Trap." Remember that Anger is destructive to personal relationships, and can be extremely hurtful to others. Work through your anger before you unleash it upon others. Disagreements and disappointments can only be handled effectively in a non-personal and dispassionate manner.
6. Be Yourself in Relationships Don't expect yourself to be a "touchy-feely" or "warm fuzzy" person. Realize that your most ardent bonds start with the head, rather than the heart. You expect your actions to speak for themselves to your loved ones. This may not be enough for some. Be aware of other's emotional needs, and express your genuine love and respect for them in terms that are real to YOU. Be yourself.
7. Be Accountable for Yourself. Don't blame the problems in your life on other people. Look inwardly for solutions. No one has more control over your life than you have.
8. Be Humble. Judge yourself at least as harshly as you judge others.
9. Resist the Urge to Control Others. You can't force others to adhere to your ways of thinking. You may think that you know what's best for others, but you really only know how they can best act according to your ideas of what is right. Just as you are entitled to live as you see fit, so are they. Instead of judging and controlling others, focus on using your judgment to create better impartial principles.
10. Spend Some Time Alone. Encourage the development of your introverted side. You'll find many tangible benefits to becoming a better-rounded person.

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