



The INTP: Personality, Careers, Relationships, & the Quest for Truth and Meaning

By Dr. A.J. Drenth

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INTPs are the most philosophical of all types. They love contemplating life and considering the broad ways things are interconnected. They are also concerned with the perennial question of “how to live.” They loathe the idea of a mediocre life and have a deep sense that they should be doing something important. But in order to know what that entails, they feel they must first know themselves; self-knowledge must precede action. Unfortunately, pinning down who they are is rarely as easy as it might seem. It can take years, even decades, for INTPs to find themselves. And as much as they’d like to, they can’t put their lives on hold while they figure themselves out. Hence, they may at times feel forced to make unwanted compromises in their careers or relationships.

Despite these challenges, INTPs can and do progress in their quest. And this book can aid and expedite that process. Through the structured lens of personality typology, it reveals the deeper sources of their struggles and dilemmas, as well as potential solutions. If you’re looking for a clear, honest, and penetrating analysis of the INTP, this book is for you.

Chapter 1 contains a general overview, as well as a function-by-function analysis, of the INTP personality type, including a look at the tug-of-war between the INTP’s dominant (Ti) and inferior (Fe) function.

Chapter 2 examines INTPs’ typical course of growth and development across the lifespan.

Chapter 3 explores the “negative potentials” of the INTP personality type. This includes a careful look at the INTP’s “dark side,” as well as the degree to which INTPs are prone to various psychological problems such as depression, ADD, autism/Asperger’s, narcissism, etc.

Chapter 4 tackles one of the INTP’s most poignant and recurrent concerns—their quest for truth and meaning.

Chapter 5 examines INTPs' political, religious, and philosophical propensities. This includes analyses of the relative contributions of each of the INTP's four functions to the ways in which they see and understand the world.

Chapter 6 dives deeply into some of INTPs' most pressing career concerns. This includes addressing issues such as the degree to which they should focus on the intrinsic versus extrinsic value of their work, the pluses and minuses of working independently, the potential merits of a day job, creative versus analytical careers, etc. This chapter also enumerates the INTP's most common career strengths and interest areas, drawing on the six "RIASEC" interest themes developed by John Holland. Furthermore, it examines the relative merits of specific careers and majors—the hard sciences, social/moral sciences, computers/IT, freelancing, scholarship, medicine, psychology, etc.—in light of the INTP's personality, skills, values, and interests.

Chapter 7 explores the ways INTPs think and function with respect to relationships, including their unconscious motivations. It also discusses relationships as a forum for learning and experimentation, the danger of concealing negative thoughts and assumptions, INTP communication issues, Ti-Fe identity issues, and INTP attitudes toward family and parenting.

Chapter 8 might be viewed as an extension of Chapter 7. It explores, on a type-by-type basis, how INTPs may fare when paired with various personality types.

Chapter 9 compares and contrasts INTPs with related personality types—INTJs, ENTPs, ISTPs, and INFPs. By highlighting noteworthy similarities and differences, this chapter will help INTPs better distinguish themselves from these other types.

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