

same type — this list will not describe each ISFP equally well.

The important thing is that these ten elements, with varying degrees of intensity and in different orders of importance, identify what ISFPs need to be satisfied.

After you have reviewed this list, we recommend that you go back and prioritize the elements in order of *their importance to you*. When doing this, think of past work experiences as well as your present job, and what you found particularly satisfying or unsatisfying. Try to look for *themes* that run through several experiences, not just the events that might be true for one work situation but not for another.

*As an ISFP, career satisfaction means doing work that:*

1. Is consistent with my strong, inner values, and is something I care deeply about and want to contribute my energy and talents to
2. If done with others is in a supportive and affirming climate where I am a loyal and cooperative member of a team
3. Requires attention to detail, where I work with real things that benefit other people and have practical applications
4. Gives me freedom to work independently but nearby other compatible and courteous people, and where I don't feel restricted by excessive rules, structure, or inflexible operating procedures
5. Lets me be adaptable yet committed; where I have a sense of purpose and am able to see and experience the actual results of my accomplishments
6. Lets me use my sense of taste and aesthetics to enhance my physical

work space, personalize it, and make others feel more comfortable

7. Is done in a quietly cheerful and cooperative setting and where interpersonal conflicts are kept to a minimum
8. Gives me an opportunity to experience inner growth and development within a context of work that I feel is important
9. Lets me handle problems promptly and simply, offering practical help
10. Does not require me to perform regular public speaking, lead a large group of people I don't know well, or give people negative feedback

Work-related strengths and weaknesses of ISFPs include:

#### STRENGTHS

Prefer hands-on participation, especially helping professions  
 Welcome change and adapt well to new situations  
 Work hard when they believe their work is important  
 Loyal members of organizations and take orders from supervisors well  
 Thrive in supportive and affirming climates

#### WEAKNESSES

May accept others' behavior without seeking underlying meanings or motives  
 May not see opportunities unless they exist at the present  
 Tend to take criticism and negative feedback personally  
 Don't like to prepare in advance and have trouble organizing their time  
 Feel restricted by excessive rules and bureaucracy

#### *Popular Occupations for ISFPs*

In listing occupations that are popular among ISFPs, it is important to note that

there are successful people of all types in all fields. However, the following are careers ISFPs may find particularly satisfying and some of the reasons why. This is by no means a comprehensive listing. It is included to suggest possibilities you may not have previously considered.

#### CRAFTS/ARTISAN

- Fashion designer
- Carpenter
- Jeweler
- Gardener
- Tapestry worker
- Potter
- Painter
- Dancer
- Designer: interior/landscape
- Chef

The chief appeal of these careers for ISFPs is the opportunity to work with their hands in the creation of something attractive and, oftentimes, useful. They enjoy using their five senses in a practical way as well as working with real things in the real world. Many of these careers offer ISFPs the chance to work flexible hours and the freedom to schedule their own work. Most ISFPs prefer to be autonomous, without having to conform to administrative guidelines.

#### MEDICINE

- Visiting nurse
- Physical therapist
- Massage therapist
- Dental assistant
- Radiology technologist
- Medical assistant
- Veterinary assistant
- Animal groomer/trainer

ISFPs often find satisfaction in careers where they are able to work directly with others and help them either physically or emotionally, especially during a crisis. They

respond well to quick changes and like short-term problem solving.

Helping other people, receiving feedback for their contributions, and doing work they can believe in are important factors in satisfying work.

#### TECHNICAL

- Computer operator
- Surveyor
- Forester
- Botanist
- Geologist
- Mechanic

ISFPs often enjoy work that deals with facts rather than with theory. They tend to prefer using practical and active skills. The opportunity to be out of doors is particularly appealing to ISFPs, and they welcome change and variety in their work.

#### SERVICE

- Crisis hotline operator
- Teacher: elementary (science)
- Police officer
- Cleaning service operator
- Storekeeper
- Waiter/waitress
- Beautician

Many ISFPs find fulfilling work in service careers. Careers that let them help meet the needs of people or animals in specific and tangible ways are most rewarding. They tend to prefer work environments that share their values and foster and encourage interpersonal harmony, cooperation, and appreciation for the work of all. Many ISFPs enjoy teaching a specific subject area, usually with young children, where they have the opportunity to include lots of spontaneity and fun.

#### CLERICAL

- Bookkeeper
- Legal secretary

- Typist
- Clerical supervisor
- Administrator

Clerical careers, if in the right kind of environment, can provide satisfaction for ISFPs. The critical factor is the ability to use their excellent practical skills but in a supportive and affirming climate. ISFPs work best when working as part of a team, in a stable work group that respects the individual need for privacy and growth. They prefer work settings that allow them to create and maintain a pleasant and personalized work environment.

### *Implications for the Job Search*

Knowing the particular strengths and blind spots of your type can afford you a tremendous advantage in your job search campaign. In all aspects of the process, from conducting research into available positions, identifying and contacting prospective employers, developing personal marketing tools such as résumés, arranging and conducting job interviews, negotiating salaries, to finally accepting a position, people will act true to their type. Being able to capitalize on your assets and compensate for your liabilities can make the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful job search.

The differences between types are sometimes subtle and other times dramatic. It is the subtle variations in advice we offer that make the real difference between success or failure in a job search. The concept of "networking," or meeting with and talking to people to gather information about potential jobs, serves as a good example. Extraverts will naturally enjoy networking and are advised to do so on a large scale, while Introverts find more limited and targeted networking, especially with people they already know, easier. Sensors tend to network

with people in a defined scope, while Intuitives will go far and wide to find people often seemingly unrelated to their field of interest. Further, Feelers take networking, like everything else, very personally and enjoy establishing warm rapport, while Thinkers will be more objective and detached in their style. Finally, Judgers tend to ask fewer and more structured questions during their networking, while Perceivers could ask questions of all sorts all day long! One valuable search technique, many ways to implement it.

### *Pathways to Success*

As we will detail in the following pages, your strengths and talents for the job search lie in your personal warmth, desire to please others, and commonsense approach to problems. However, in order to find a satisfying career, you will need to work hard at developing your assertiveness and objectivity so you don't take rejection personally and become discouraged.

As an ISFP, your most effective strategies will build on your abilities to:

*Conduct research and collect a lot of data.*

- Read as much as you can about the field, position, or organization you are considering. Gather information about a specific company by reading past articles that discuss the company or the industry as well as company annual reports.
- Go check out the company or business as part of your preparation for interviewing. Look at the way people dress, act, and seem to feel about working where they do. Can you imagine yourself there?

Marc was preparing for an interview for an assistant curator position at a science museum. He decided to get as familiar with the museum and its current exhibits as he could before the interview. He spent hours in the museum getting a feel for the layout and organization. He read as much as possible about the new curator to learn about her career path and her goals for the museum. By the time the interview came, Marc had plenty of questions and was able to offer specific thoughts about what was needed when he was asked what he might contribute to the organization.

#### *Conduct limited, targeted networking.*

- Start with your close friends, family, and co-workers (past and present). Ask them to help you generate a list of people who might know of jobs for which you would be qualified.
- Conduct informational interviews with people who actually hold the position you are looking for. Ask them questions to learn what the job, its responsibilities, and limitations really are.

Roger began his networking at one of many summer backyard cook-outs he and his friends had each summer. He began telling his friends of his boredom with his current job and how he wanted to do something different. His friends began brainstorming ideas and then came up with people they knew for Roger to talk to. It was more of a game than a task, and Roger was surprised how much help he got from just one evening of talking.

#### *Build and use a support system.*

- Remember that searching for a job often takes more time and energy than per-

forming a job. Ask friends for advice and support during this difficult period.

- Take people up on their offers to help. Many of the best contacts are made through purely social connections. Don't rule out anyone as a source of information.

#### *Learn by doing.*

- Look for opportunities to be trained on the job, or where employers offer a training program, giving preference to trainees after completing the program.
- Offer your services on a volunteer basis to learn the skills needed to perform the job you seek. You will have both the skills and some real experience to demonstrate to prospective employers.

Remember how Carol found the job she enjoys? The physicians' office offered on-the-job training, which she took while working temporarily at her previous job. She got the chance to learn on the job and quickly understood what the job would really be like. Luckily for Carol, she didn't need to try more than one program.

#### *Follow your impulses and natural curiosity.*

- Use your short-term problem-solving capabilities by organizing the sometimes long and overwhelming job search into manageable pieces. Reward yourself when you meet each goal of people contacted, or phone calls made.
- If an obstacle arises, meet the challenge with a willingness to adapt. Demonstrate to prospective employers your ability to accept and respond to changing situations.

After careful consideration, Colleen decided that she would enjoy being a dog

trainer — it matched her interests, her love of animals, and the opportunity to work hands-on with dogs and with their owners. She researched the best grooming and training center and went on an interview. To her disappointment, she learned that there were no openings for a trainer, but she was offered a job in the grooming department and told there was the possibility that a training position would open up “down the road.” Her desire to work with animals and the chance to be associated with the high-quality operation she saw during her interview persuaded her to take the job. She decided it was worth the gamble and that it would also give her a chance to demonstrate to the owner her ability to learn quickly and be a valuable member of the staff. After four months, Colleen’s patience was rewarded when a trainer position became available and she was offered the job.

### Possible Pitfalls

Although all people are unique, there are certain *potential* blind spots which many ISFPs share. We specify “potential” because some of the following *may* be true of you, while others may clearly not apply. While considering them, you may notice that these tendencies do not relate just to the job search but rather describe pitfalls that you may have experienced in other aspects of your life as well. It is therefore helpful to consider each one in terms of your past experiences by asking yourself, “Is this true for me?” And if so, “How did this tendency prevent me from getting something that I wanted?” You will probably notice that the key to overcoming your blind spots is the conscious and thoughtful development of your third and fourth functions (Intuition and Thinking). We recognize that many of the suggestions will be difficult to imple-

ment, but the more you use these functions, the fewer problems they will cause you in the future.

*Consider all data available to you, even that which may contradict your personal feelings.*

- Look at the “hard consequences” of your actions and decisions. List the pros and cons of a job so you are sure to consider both the positive and the potential negative as well.
- Develop a method of analyzing information before accepting it at face value.

*Look for options besides those readily available at the moment.*

- Generate a list of possible job options without limiting yourself to what you have done in the past or what you are immediately qualified for.
- Use your ideas of a fantasy job as a springboard to thinking more creatively. Ask a friend who knows you well to help you, and make it a game.

*Work hard to prioritize your activities and keep yourself organized.*

- Use your skills at short-term planning to get things done and to keep from becoming overwhelmed with the size of the task.
- Develop a complete outline for your career search. Include all the perceivable steps that will be necessary along the way.

*Try to make more objective decisions.*

- Don’t overemphasize the importance of rapport developed with an interviewer. Try to develop some healthy skepticism about others to avoid being too trusting.

- Pay attention to the less tangible but critically important factors such as the corporate culture and employer's philosophy, which will help keep you from becoming disillusioned after taking the job.

*Focus your attention on the future so you will see beyond the present reality and understand choices in their larger context.*

- Try imagining a job one, five, and ten years from now. Will this opportunity be one that allows you to grow, or will you be limited in the company or organization?
- Look at the business within the market and decide if the way it is growing or changing will still be acceptable to you

in the future. Be sure it isn't just the people you will be working with *now* that make the job appealing.

### *The Final Piece*

Now that you have a solid understanding of your type under your belt, you can see how your strengths and preferences suit you better for some kinds of jobs and for some approaches to a job search. But as an ISFP, you've already noticed that you are not equally drawn to *every* career or field listed in the Popular Occupations section. The next and final step in the process is to look at how your type meshes with your personal interests. So now turn to Chapter 24 to put your new knowledge to work by finding out how your interests, skills, and values can combine with your type to let you find the work you were meant to do.