

The NT Cluster: Keirsey “Rationals”

David Keirsey characterizes all NT's as sharing the qualities of being **abstract** thinkers who approach situations in a **utilitarian** mode. The defining quality of the NT is thus a preference for the macroscopic over the microscopic, for theory over details, and for the “big picture” over the specifics.

	INTP	INTJ	ENTP	ENTJ
Creativity	Leave alone; creates complex webs of ideas.	Leave alone; creates a single new theory and becomes attached to it.	Creates by debating, focusing on big picture issues and flaws in reasoning.	Creates by selling the idea; will not deal with details.
Stress behavior	Hides, broods, nitpicks.	Hides, broods, plans loose-cannon decisions.	Argues every little point.	Runs amok with Machiavellian maneuvers.
Stress reduction	Focus on goals; limit extent of nitpicking.	Make special effort to consult others.	Focus on goals; limit extent of idea-testing.	Make eye contact; listen mindfully to others.
Orientation to groups	Groups provide data and critique ideas, but the INT often thinks group interaction is too fast and too irrational. INT's make excellent expert sources and thrive on respect as such.		Interaction is fun, but the fast-thinking ENT often feels held back by consensus-building processes or the different intellectual biases of team members. ENT's lose interest if they feel cooperation is not forthcoming.	
Orientation to other people	Prepares ideas. Strong INT's work out an objectively defensible theory, often remaining oblivious to human factors in decision-making.		Prepares case. Strong ENT's are focused on <i>convincing others</i> of their theory, using reason as the primary tool.	
Orientation to ideas	All NT's have a strong preference for <i>original</i> ideas organized into <i>coherent structures</i> .			
Preferred problem to solve	Nuanced, open-ended, intellectual, satisfy different stakeholders by cleverly reasoned management of meaning.	Theory-focused, intellectual, but focused on finding a single superior theoretical structure.	Development of intellectual strategy for reaching agreement on open-ended issues. (The true rhetorician)	Discovering an overarching intellectual theory that works for others; then strategizing how to sell it.
Management strength	Coordinating the nuances of their own area of expertise with larger goals.	Developing an entire new approach by kitbashing existing ideas.	Testing options for completeness and logical soundness.	Selling innovative ideas; empowering others; making the tough decisions.
Management weakness	Appearance of detachment and lack of concern for others; sometimes this appearance hides genuine obliviousness to the environment.	Forgets to bother with gaining input from or consensus with others; ideas may be rejected because others are nursing hurt feelings or resent end runs around established procedures.	Work environment may feel hostile or contentious to strong F's and strong SJ's, both of which are uncomfortable with disagreement.	Subordinates may feel invaded, steamrolled, and left with inadequate guidance. The ENTJ can also come across as ruthless and disloyal.
Communication strength	Nuance.	Confidence.	Balance.	Inspiration.
Communication weakness	Overestimates others' grasp of nuance.	Difficulty adapting to less cerebral, abstract listeners.	Difficulty reaching a focused conclusion.	Can leave listeners feeling hornswoggled and bemused.
Resists rules by	Fretting. INTP's are good at some nuances, so their inability to work within rules that seem arbitrary bugs them.	Ignoring the rulebook: it's obviously meant for lesser beings.	Debating the rulebook, with the goal of rewriting it along more rational lines.	Proposing a radical new rulebook along more rational lines.
Deals with feelings by	Hiding and putting it in writing. Go away.	Ignoring feelings: people should have more self-control.	Discounting feelings: people should have thicker skins.	Developing a system for manipulating feelings.
Reward	All NT's want applause for performing impossible intellectual backflips. Scheduled promotions, atta-boys for making nice, and empty warmth annoy them.			

The SJ Cluster: Keirsey “Guardians”

Keirsey characterizes all SJ’s as sharing the qualities of being **concrete** thinkers who approach problems in a **cooperative** mode. The defining qualities of the SJ include a preference for details over theories, respect for rules and tradition, dislike of abstract arguments that are not supported with concrete examples, and strong ties to others.

	ISTJ	ISFJ	ESTJ	ESFJ
Creativity	Works alone to optimize complex existing processes.	Works alone to optimize existing processes, with a focus on helping others.	Works in committees to optimize complex existing processes.	Works in committees to optimize the decision-making process.
Stress behavior	Distributes blame.	Hides and works slowly toward perfection, missing deadlines.	Engages in manic pursuit of compliance with rules.	Scrutinizes every shade of meaning for insult.
Stress reduction	Make an effort to give compliments.	Focus on goals; draft the entire project before fiddling with details.	Stay in your office; trade projects instead of taking on everyone’s needs.	Try self-affirmations and be willing to ask for help.
Orientation to groups	Groups introduce uncertainty and bias into work. Groups are mostly filled with stupid people (ISTJ) and unappreciative people (ISFJ). A good meeting is brief, follows an agenda, focuses mostly on announcing news, and has a 50% chance of being cancelled.		Groups are necessary to workplace morale and can be a good source of ideas. On the down side, groups often talk themselves into excessive risks (ESTJ) or fail to appreciate the importance of good internal processes (ESFJ). Consensus is vital to a successful group; debate is threatening.	
Orientation to other people	Defends order. Other people are viewed as sources of chaos and misjudgment.		Defends conformity. Other people are viewed as potential buddies as long as they behave.	
Orientation to ideas	All SJ’s have a strong preference for <i>acceptable</i> ideas that <i>fit within an existing structure</i> . SJ’s are best at applying others’ theories or doing the research that builds incrementally on an existing theory.			
Preferred problem to solve	Accountant: objective, rule-focused problems.	Catechist: personal, rule-focused problems.	Deal-maker: negotiates over concrete issues.	Cause worker: joint action on an issue but not intellectual analysis.
Management strength	Detail-oriented administration. If it’s really necessary that every i be dotted, the ISTJ is the person to see that it’s done.	Compassion in bringing others “into the fold,” which is why the rare ISFJ manager is usually found in social work or pastoral ministry.	Maintaining order, continuity, and tradition within a group.	Maintaining morale within the group.
Management weakness	Easily frustrated by minor deviations from rules. Has difficulty adapting to change. May seem cold.	Easily frustrated by conflicts between “getting it right” and “helping others,” as the ISFJ values both. Can become biased because loyalties are personal.	Faced with new ideas, can become inflexible and judgmental. Misses trends and opportunities. Demands conformity as a moral good.	Can seem emotionally erratic, overinvolved in employees’ lives, and oversensitive. Has difficulty making tough decisions.
Communication strength	Accuracy.	Stoicism.	Friendliness.	Warmth.
Communication weakness	Pedantry.	Tendency to lose control without warning.	Folksiness; difficulty adapting to situations in which everyone isn’t of the same mind.	Difficulty separating emotions from task.
Deals with theory by	Reducing it to a set of rules. Theories that don’t reduce to rules are ignored.	Promoting the theory (in its simplest form) while making endless individual exceptions.	Dismissing theories; rules are what count.	Claiming to have a theory.
Deals with uncertainty by	Quantifying.	Repeating why the rulebook is eternally true.	Ignoring it: what is there to be uncertain about?	Becoming angry: nuance is an insult.
Rewards	All SJ’s want predictable rewards for behavior that conforms to expectations. Special rewards for exceptional effort irritate them just as much as missing a scheduled promotion.			

The SP Cluster: Keirsey “Artisans”

Keirsey characterizes all SP’s as **concrete** thinkers with a **utilitarian** mode of problem-solving. The defining qualities of the SP include a preference for action over cerebration, for results over possibilities, for sensations over ideas, and for risks over security.

	ISTP	ISFP	ESTP	ESFP
Creativity	Leave alone to putter.	Wanders off, sometimes to nearest coffee shop, sometimes to next state.	Brainstorms brilliantly in groups, especially with hands-on models.	Needs to dramatize the situation before getting down to brainstorming.
Stress behavior	Hides; overworks.	Vanishes, abandoning deadlines and commitments.	Makes extravagant promises that won’t be fulfilled.	Interrupts work to self-dramatize.
Stress reduction	Go home; do something else.	Stay in touch.	Make plans to fulfill promises as they’re made.	Open discussions with neutral topics rather than self, self, self.
Orientation to groups	Groups are an interruption to hands-on work. Groups are useful only if they involve demonstrating a well-tested new technique for achieving goals.		Groups are great places to “jam.” Team-building exercises with blocks and models were made for ES_Ps. The difficult part is moving from a plethora of ideas to specific implementation steps.	
Orientation to other people	Evades. IS_P’s have little interest in other people.		Invades. ES_P’s can’t function if they don’t have an entire playgroup in their sandbox.	
Orientation to ideas	All SP’s have a strong preference for <i>original solutions</i> that <i>work in the here and now</i> . Someone else can come along behind them, fitting the solutions into a theory. Or not. The SP doesn’t care.			
Preferred problem to solve	“Why doesn’t the widget work?”	“How can I express my inner world using three spools of copper wire, a gallon of blue paint, and a stuffed buffalo head?”	“Let’s reinvent the discipline!”	“Sometimes, a girl’s just gotta burst into song.”
Management strength	Excellent at tackling emergencies. Tend to offer flexibility to employees.	Competitive and willing to take risks; in tune with trends.	Flexible, attuned to others, competitive, enthusiastic.	People-focused and good at relating with people.
Management weakness	Space needs may seem invasive to others. Threatened by lack of flexibility. May seem insensitive.	May feel burdened by responsibility, especially by following rules. Blows hot and cold with employees.	Competitiveness may reduce abilities to delegate or to cooperate with other departments.	Oblivious to practical considerations, including signs of dissent.
Communication strength	Wit under fire.	Charm.	Daring.	Benevolence.
Communication weakness	Tend to be overprepared or underprepared.	Inconsistency of tone; difficulty following established agendas.	Undisciplined; likely to over-rely on shock value.	Lack of conciseness and focus; difficulty moving from stories to principles.
Deals with theory by	Tossing it out, along with the instruction sheet. ISTP’s then develop heuristics of their own.	Attending to it in spurts, alternating with seemingly random behavior.	Serial monogamy with intense infatuations. Rarely gets to know a theory well.	Waving it away.
Deals with rules by	Fiddling with them.	Forgetting them.	Changing them.	Trampling them to dust.
Rewards	All SP’s want more access to the resources they use for their tinkering. Ordinary rewards like money and fame are valued largely for what they translate to in access to tools.			

The NF Cluster: Keirsey “Idealists”

Keirsey characterizes all NF’s as **abstract** thinkers who approach situations in a **cooperative** mode. The defining qualities of the NF include a preference for ideals over practicalities, for people over rules, and for images over statistics.

	INFP	INFJ	ENFP	ENFJ
Creativity	Leave alone to journal, doodle, or stare into space.	Leave alone to create, though the INFJ will tend to focus on a single theme.	Jam with like-minded others.	Reach a group consensus that everyone feels good about.
Stress behavior	Hides; broods; resents.	Hides and plots revenge.	Keeps talking until you <i>feel</i> the same way as he/she does.	Runs around taking on extra work, then makes a second circuit to complain about it.
Stress reduction	Listen to compliments; look for ways to help.	Limit nastiest impulses to thoughts or journals.	Work on accepting agreements in principle and/or compromises.	Say no to requests.
Orientation to groups	Groups are emotionally stressful; they demand instant responses, get hung up on detailed data, and neglect to express appreciation. INF’s need lots of strokes—and the option to go away and think—to make group interaction bearable		Groups are fun <i>if</i> everyone is on board for warmth and cooperation. Groups become stressful if members are argumentative, seem cold, don’t provide strokes, or aren’t enthusiastic about reaching consensus.	
Orientation to people	People are potentially threats to the INF’s separateness and opportunities for passionate attachment.		People are the major source of rewards, but it’s a lot of work to keep everyone happy all the time.	
Orientation to ideas	All NF’s prefer <i>creative</i> solutions to <i>open-ended</i> problems within a <i>coherent structure</i> . NF’s judge a solution based on whether it feels right (meets their own emotional needs) rather than through logical tests. NF’s thus tend to assume that everyone else’s needs are met in the same way theirs are.			
Preferred problem to solve	Develop the overall framework of a large, complex project; embroider a few details.	Bring out the full potential of something unappreciated, provided it can be done one-on-one or in writing.	Facilitate groups; plan party themes. (Not to be trusted with implementation.)	Evangelize for an approach that will force others to self-actualize.
Management strength	Imagination; ability to see good in a situation.	Skepticism paired with willingness to champion the underdog.	Charming, fun, innovative; willing to help others improve.	Entrepreneurial, decisive, and charismatic.
Management weakness	Easily feel incompetent.	Can become paranoid.	Short attention span. Tends to blow off details and deadlines. Hostile toward bureaucracy.	Tend to take on excessive burdens and to enable others’ negative as well as positive behaviors.
Communication strength	Fresh perspective.	Conviction.	Spontaneity.	Charisma.
Communication weakness	Self-critical.	Defensiveness; difficulty articulating message when not emotionally at ease.	Tendency to ride off in all directions at once.	Easily divided attention leaves details undealt-with.
Resists rules by	Equating good intentions with compliance.	Claiming rules are cruel and unfair.	Relying on force of personality to overcome laws of physics.	Arguing that rules interfere with human potential.
Deals with thinking by	Becoming emotionally attached to a theory and selectively screening environment for facts that fit. Large portions of reality may be ignored.	Indexing facts by associated feeling and accessing them that way. The structure of feelings becomes the theory. Large portions of reality may be invented.	Relying on group interaction to validate experience; if it flies, it’s reality. Reality is fluid, with or without mind-altering substances.	Resonating to a theory and backfilling with discovery of facts to fit. Reality may be dramatically rewritten with every revelation.
Rewards	All NF’s want to feel loved, influential, and authentic.			