

## Idealists Seek Wisdom and Self-Knowledge

*While trusting their intuition to guide them*

### Idealist Sub-types

Idealists are the most caring and people-oriented of the temperaments. They include the following sub-types:

- ENFJ – Idealist Teacher
- INFJ – Idealist Counselor
- ENFP – Idealist Champion
- INFP – Idealist Healer

### Characteristics of Idealists

Typically Idealists/Catalysts make up only 5 to 10% of the population. They are aware of and live by their values, and base their decisions on them. Idealists are usually emotionally intelligent, authentic, and optimistic. They are gifted communicators who find great joy in building meaningful, interdependent relationships. Idealists see potential in others and in themselves, and they will facilitate growth. At work, they act for the good of the group, have an office filled with self-help books, and you'll often find them working in the HR department. For them, the means always justifies the end. In other words, *how* Idealists do something is more important to them than the results.

### Potential Weaknesses

"Their heart rules their head" is a fitting description of Idealists. They are tuned into their own emotions, as well as the feelings of others, and can be over sensitive and take things too personally. Their emotions are easily aroused and they can be quick to show displeasure, especially on their face. At work, Idealists have a strong desire to be liked. Consequently, they can be too easy on poor performers – set unclear or no expectations, refuse to hold people accountable, and fail to take corrective action, even when they know they should. Lastly, Idealists may have a tendency to exaggerate and use a lot of superlatives in their descriptive language.

### Tips for Communicating with Idealists

If you want to communicate effectively with Idealists, try the following:

- Present the big picture and desired outcomes
- Don't weigh them down with too many details
- Ask what's important and non-negotiable to them
- Emphasize benefits to them, the team, and the organization
- Acknowledge their efforts and contributions to the team
- Ask about their personal development and learning
- Observe body language, especially their facial expressions
- Encourage them to use their intuition and "trust their gut"

### Coaching Idealists

When using a Coaching style of leadership to develop people, keep temperament and individual preferences in mind. At the same time, challenge Idealists to step outside their comfort zone to learn and grow.

When coaching Idealists...

- Create a safe environment for coaching
- Present the coaching opportunity as a way to increase self-awareness and be more authentic
- Ask them to articulate goals and desired outcomes
- Be sure they are clear about their values and how they drive their decision-making
- Show respect, genuine care, and appreciation
- Challenge them to be better, while helping them feel good about themselves
- Help them be aware of body language and their tendency to exaggerate

*by JGC*