

Rationals Seek Knowledge

While being tough-minded and pragmatic

Rational Sub-types

Tough-minded and pragmatic Rationals take pride in their ability to think objectively and frame coherent arguments. They include the following sub-types:

- ENTJ – Rational Field Marshal
- INTJ – Rational Mastermind
- ENTP – Rational Inventor
- INTP – Rational Architect

Characteristics of Rationals

Typically Rational/Theorists make up only 5 to 10% of the population. They are visionary and strategic, able to see the big picture and “connect the dots.” Rationals are expert at analyzing systems to understand how they work, so they can figure out how to make them work better. They are usually adaptable, flexible, efficient, and responsive to new ideas and ways of doing things. These independent thinkers have exceedingly high standards and may show a lack of respect for tradition or positional authority. For competent Rationals, the end always justifies the means. In other words, *what* they accomplish is more important to them than *how* it was done – an opposite view from most Guardians and Idealists.

Potential Weaknesses

Because Rationals have a strong preference for “zooming out,” they are not usually concerned with “zooming in” and often pay little attention to details or the necessary follow-up. They are happy to leave daily management to the Guardians. Rationals are not very good at small talk and may come across as impersonal and not concerned about people and their feelings. When this gets out-of-balance, Rationals may even seem detached or arrogant. In addition, their healthy skepticism can feel overly critical to their more people-oriented colleagues.

Tips for Communicating with Rationals

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

- Always clear your mind so you can communicate in a logical, objective, and organized manner
- Get clarity on the context and desired outcomes of the conversation
- Don’t waste time giving too many details or long explanations
- Keep small talk to a minimum and don’t repeat yourself
- Stress the practical applications of your ideas
- When you disagree, be careful how you challenge their thinking
- Encourage them to “trust their gut”

Coaching Rationals

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

When coaching Rationals...

- Create a safe environment for coaching
- Present the coaching process from a strategic point of view; skip the details
- Be able to clearly communicate the coaching principles you’re following
- Ask them to articulate clear goals
- Help Rationals see how their behavior is perceived by others
- Be organized, efficient, and keep small talk to a minimum
- Challenge Rationals to limit criticism of themselves and others

by JGC