

the Team Trek JOURNAL

Guardians Seek Safety and Security

While helping others

Guardian Sub-types

Guardians “guard” our laws, policies, procedures, rules, and hierarchies. They include the following sub-types:

- ESTJ – Guardian Supervisor
- ISTJ – Guardian Inspector
- ESFJ – Guardian Provider
- ISFJ – Guardian Protector

Characteristics of Guardians

Typically Guardian/Stabilizers make up 40 to 45% of the population, although their traits are so well suited to the business environment, they frequently make up a much larger percentage of a work group. We recognize Guardians as detail-oriented, responsible, organized, hardworking and dependable – they even like to be held accountable for their work. They keep appointments, arrive on time, and are quick to decide in meetings. Guardians are loyal, interdependent team players who genuinely enjoy helping others, so we sometimes mistake them for Idealists. For them, the means always justifies the end. In other words, *how* Guardians do something is more important to them than the results.

Potential Weaknesses

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” influences the way many Guardians think and then act. They tend to be conservative in their thinking, respect traditions, and can be uncomfortable with and resist change. They frequently are so immersed in details that they fail to “zoom out” and see the big picture. Strategic planning can be a challenge. Because Guardians are so committed to being responsible themselves, they can be impatient with people who break the rules and don’t follow proper procedures. They don’t let others get away with much and if in a leadership position, may need to remind themselves not to be a micro-manager.

Tips for Communicating with Guardians

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

- Always plan ahead, have your facts straight, and be prepared to give examples
- Show respect by being on time for meetings
- Present information in a detailed, step-by-step manner
- Stay focused on them and on the topic; avoid distractions
- Help them solve problems and answer all their questions without taking ownership
- Emphasize benefits to them, the team, and the organization

Coaching Guardians

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

When coaching Guardians...

- Create a safe environment for coaching
- Show respect and take time to get to know them
- Always keep your appointments and be on time
- Present the coaching process in detail
- Be clear about goals and desired outcomes
- Challenge Guardians to see the big picture and long-term benefits
- When giving feedback, focus on facts and examples
- Show Guardians how to be better team players
- Make specific requests as you move to action
- Help Guardians see and appreciate “shades of grey”

By JGC