“YOU ATE MY SANDWICH?”: KEEPING (OR LOSING) YOUR COOL BY PERSONALITY TYPE

**3 WEEKS AGO 6 COMMENTS**

Remember that episode of *Friends*, “[The One with Ross’s Sandwich](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0583563/),” where the usually reserved and logical Ross has a total meltdown when he finds out that his boss ate some of his special Thanksgiving-leftovers sandwich and threw the rest away? “You-you-you-you *threw* my sandwich away,” he says, beside himself. “*My* sandwich? *MY SANDWICH*?!” Afterwards, his boss puts him on mandatory sabbatical and sends him to a therapist to deal with his “rage.”

Although the scene makes for a hilarious episode of a popular sitcom, what if it happened in real life? When we, or those around us, become angry for no apparent reason, it’s not so funny. Often, there is a deeper, unrelated issue behind it. In Ross’s case, he was actually upset because he had turned 30 years old, had been evicted from his apartment, and was about to get divorced for the second time. As he put it, “That sandwich was the only good thing going on in my life” – and someone took it away from him.

When stress and pressure build up inside us, it can sometimes make us incapable of coping with minor, everyday annoyances, and when set off by even the smallest of triggers, we can explode. These emotional overreactions can be embarrassing to us, and disturbing to our friends and family. And it may be the case that some personality types are more prone to such episodes than others. To explore this issue, we asked our community to agree or disagree with the statement, **“You rarely become angry without reason.”**

A majority (68%) of respondents agreed overall, and the Identity aspect was by far the most significant factor in influencing their responses. Let’s look at the data and find out which personalities are cool as a cucumber, and which are hot as a jalapeño.

Responses to the statement “You rarely become angry without reason.”

| **Types** | **Agree** | **Disagree** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| INTJ | 65.85 | 34.15 |
| INTP | 61.54 | 38.46 |
| ENTJ | 64.31 | 35.69 |
| ENTP | 61.39 | 38.61 |
| INFJ | 68.81 | 31.19 |
| INFP | 66.28 | 33.72 |
| ENFJ | 70.9 | 29.1 |
| ENFP | 68.96 | 31.04 |
| ISTJ | 68.99 | 31.01 |
| ISFJ | 73.8 | 26.2 |
| ESTJ | 66.38 | 33.62 |
| ESFJ | 74.09 | 25.91 |
| ISTP | 66.89 | 33.11 |
| ISFP | 70.4 | 29.6 |
| ESTP | 64.38 | 35.62 |
| ESFP | 72.01 | 27.99 |

Sentinels (ISTJ, ISFJ, ESTJ, ESFJ)

All Sentinels share the Observant and Judging traits, which makes them down-to-earth, pragmatic types who like stability and order. So it makes sense that these personality types are more likely to stay calm under pressure.

Sentinels tend to work well within social structures and value cooperation. Generally averse to conflict, they may have learned that a patient, impartial approach to people and situations can help things go more smoothly. That’s why we often see Sentinels in such professional roles as judges, teachers, and human resources administrators. Even when they do become angry, it is likely to be for a concrete, justifiable reason, and these personalities will make an effort to express their frustration constructively and seek a fair solution.

Explorers and Diplomats (ISTP, ISFP, ESTP, ESFP) & (INFJ, INFP, ENFJ, ENFP)

Explorers share with Sentinels the Observant trait, so these personality types also tend to handle their anger more pragmatically than others, focusing on dealing with upsetting things rather than simply reacting to them. Flexible types who are comfortable with changing circumstances, Explorers are less rigid and have a less intense attitude in general, which may help them keep their cool. They love to live in the moment, which means that they can become suddenly angry when provoked by perplexing and frustrating people or situations – but it also means that they can let go of that anger just as quickly and move on to the next, more pleasant experience. Less apt to allow their frustrations to bottle up inside them, they are also less prone to seemingly inexplicable outbursts of anger.

Diplomats, interestingly, agreed at the same rate as Explorer personalities, despite some core differences in their traits. Diplomats’ responses were largely influenced by their Feeling trait, which was one of the indicators in our results, albeit a fairly minor one.

Diplomats, along with those Sentinel and Explorer types who possess the Feeling trait, may be less susceptible to becoming angry without reason because they are more emotionally sensitive. They are aware of and concerned with the effects their behavior has on other people. Valuing personal connections and relationships, these personality types may feel guilty if they inflict anger and negativity on someone else – especially if they weren’t angry with that person, but because of some unrelated, internal issue – so they attempt to hold themselves in check. Additionally, their inherent need for harmony makes them adept at resolving conflicts, not instigating them.

Analysts (INTJ, INTP, ENTJ, ENTP)

Agreeing at the lowest rate, Analysts were thus the most likely Role to become angry without reason. People with Analyst personality types tend to have strong opinions about how things should be, and to invest a great deal of time and energy in strategizing and executing their visions. Even when no specific inciting incident occurs, if they sense that things aren’t going according to their plans, or that something doesn’t conform to their strict standards or personal convictions, they can become upset more easily. Due to their core Thinking trait, Analysts are inclined to put logic and efficiency first, burying their feelings rather than communicating them, so, just like Ross in *Friends*, they’re much more likely than other types to let their anger build inside of them until it finally boils over, unpredictably and seemingly without reason.

Turbulent Entrepreneurs (ESTP) agreed with our research statement the least of any personality type (45%). As Social Engagers and Explorers, Turbulent Entrepreneurs are all-or-nothing types who tend to act now and deal with the consequences later, and their up-front honesty gives them a reputation for having a certain disregard for others’ feelings. Given that combination of spontaneity and insensitivity, heightened by a Turbulent Identity, it seems inevitable that Turbulent Entrepreneurs would succumb to more frequent fits of anger for no apparent reason. But even when this happens, their natural sociability and perceptiveness can still help them maintain strong connections with others.

Conclusions

Turbulent Identities, as the name implies, tend to translate into emotional volatility – and that may include seemingly unprovoked outbursts of anger. While those of us with more carefree attitudes toward life are less likely to get angry over nothing, those of us who live with stress and frustration simmering closer to the surface may be more likely to release it as anger, sometimes when we least expect it.

At the end of the day, we must realize that a sandwich (even one with Monica’s famous Moist Maker) is just a sandwich – there are things that just aren’t worth losing our cool over. Understanding what truly lies behind our anger can help us manage it more effectively, saving ourselves, and those around us, from a lot of unnecessary negativity.

Have you had any “you-ate-my-sandwich” moments lately? How do you think your personality type influences how you deal with anger? Share your thoughts below.

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How do you try to communicate effectively with your teachers/peers (verbal or nonverbal)? Are there any barriers to communication that you have to worry about while at school?

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