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**Someone in Anytown, USA**

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## Conscientiousness

Focused or Flexible

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### Introduction to Conscientiousness

It's a work day, breakfast is over, and you're dressed and ready. So how will you approach the tasks at hand? Some people work best with a clear schedule, a set of priorities and a due date for every step in the process. Others are, shall we say, less regimented. They approach a task with as much imagination as organization, and with a willingness to bend and modify in order to exercise some urge of creativity.

How about you? Do you walk in a straight line toward a clear goal, or are you more likely to dance your way down whatever path will get you wherever it is you're headed? The following paragraphs describe ways in which you approach the tasks life brings to you, and to what extent you are focused or flexible in how you choose to proceed.

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### Your approach toward your obligations is:

**FOCUSED AND FLEXIBLE**

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## Words that describe you:

- Casual
- Informal
- Compliant
- Reliable
- Organized
- Solid
- Dependable
- Uncommitted
- Genuine

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## A General Description of How You Interact with Others

When you take on a task at work or at home, you are reliable; you get the job done. In an organized way, you define the goal, lay out a plan, figure how long the task will take, and get to work "solid and dependable you".

But and this is important you're not a slave to the plan. You're committed to it, but not chained to it; the connection is more casual and informal. You know that sometimes "the best laid plans" fall off the tracks; when this happens, you clean up the train wreck and start over, undeterred.

Though not happening often, when plans change, you're okay with it. In fact, sometimes you change the plan. It's too nice of a Saturday to finish organizing the garage. Let's go for a bike ride instead. True, the next rainy Saturday will likely find you back in the garage, but for now the work can wait.

What an interesting combination of qualities in you're organized, but casual; solid, but compliant; and dependable, but informal. At home and at work, people know they can rely on you. You take great satisfaction in knowing that people think of you as disciplined and responsible, but you also know that you have something of a free spirit in you, and when this spirit moves you, off you go, following the impulse of the moment. You are rightly proud of your work ethic, but you also enjoy your willingness to lay the tools down, crank up the music and play like a child.

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## Negative Reactions Others May Have Toward You

Some people live like Marines: duty-bound, disciplined and driven. To these people you might seem uncommitted; where they would never leave work for play or change plans in the middle of their life's forced march, you let the circumstance sway you and move in a different direction, and they don't understand.

Others live like kites on a string, attached by thin threads to the solid ground of responsibility and are blown about by every gust of impulse or imagination. To these people you might seem too cowardly, like you'll flirt with your impulses but never give in fully, play on a Saturday but never blow off the entire work-week to "follow your bliss".

While these Marines and kite-flyers might look down on you for your combination of focus and flexibility, others might be envious. They can't free themselves from a sense that they're not doing enough, or from the equally frustrating feeling that they're not free enough.

And here you are with your accomplishments and your pleasures, getting the job done but also getting your hair blown back as you run with the wind. As far as these people are concerned, you're lucky you've got the best of both of the worlds in which they feel they fail.

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### **Positive Responses Others May Have Toward You**

What a great life you have, and a great attitude to boot. You know when to buckle down and push ahead to get the job done, and you do it well. You know when to lay the tools of your trade aside, grab your kite and head for the meadow where you can run with the wind. Many people will see and admire in you this lovely combination of a person who can focus, but who is flexible enough to know when to let the spirit move you in some new and livelier direction.

It's a life they aspire to, and they delight in seeing it played out in your life. They may ask your advice and turn you into a mentor of the full and balanced experience. They will want to know how you do it, what the costs are, and if you get frightened that you're not working hard enough or playing often enough. They may make you think about your own life more than you have, so you can share it with those who want to emulate this balance between flexibility and focus. They may be correct lucky you!

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