

EXPLORING *The Enneagram*

TYPE FOUR: THE INDIVIDUALIST

(AKA The Creative or The Romantic)

People with an Enneagram Four personality tend to be creative, sensitive, and expressive in their behavior. They like to be unique and seek to find their own identity. Though they desire relationships, they may seem distant and reserved, especially in group settings.

Basic Desire

The basic desire of the Four is to build a distinct, meaningful identity and to express it in the world. They tend to crave authenticity, but may struggle through uncertainty and doubt along the way to discovering their individuality. Fours may feel misunderstood if others fail to recognize their unique, identifying traits.

Fours tend to defend themselves by unintentionally adapting characteristics from friends, in order to appear more genuine.

Basic Fear

The basic fear of Four is that they do not matter or have significant impact on the world. Less healthy Fours often feel misunderstood, outcast, and unrelatable. In order to distinguish themselves from others, Fours may work hard to be unique, creative, and expressive.

In summary, Enneagram Fours tend to...

- Seek their own identity separate from others
- Want to leave a lasting impression on the world
- Fear having no significance
- Be creative, artistic, and expressive
- Seem reserved or withdrawn in large groups

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Every type has strengths and blind spots, and these are often amplified in professional settings where we often encounter a diverse group of people with vastly different backgrounds and value systems.

Strengths typically associated with Four include...

- Ability to connect deeply with their own emotions
- Sensitivity to and understanding of others' feelings
- General awareness of their own growth areas
- Imaginative and creative deep-thinking
- Being consistently and authentically themselves

Weaknesses typically associated with Four include...

- Withdrawing in times of difficulty
- Fixating on what they don't have
- Tendency to focus too much on themselves
- Reacting strongly and emotionally to hardship

MOTIVATIONS

When people experience pain, stress, or dissatisfaction, it can usually be attributed to energy-draining activities. Therefore, it's important to know what kinds of activities energize each personality type and which activities drain them.

Fours tend to be motivated and energized by...

- Building connections and relationships with others
- Taking personal time to reconnect with themselves
- Expressing their emotions through a form of art
- Feeling valued and accepted for who they are

Fours tend to be stressed and drained by...

- Casual or meaningless conversation
- Parties and large groups of unfamiliar people
- Lack of personal creativity
- Being interrupted or facing an argument

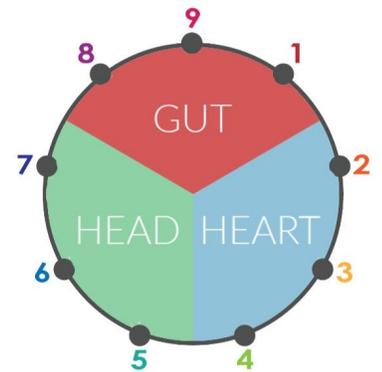
FOUR'S CORE EXPERIENCE: SHAME

Heart types (types 2, 3, 4) have a focus that is on their own value and identity. Shame is an emotion common to most of the nine Enneagram types (based on our experience) but the types in the Heart triad can experience a more chronic sense of it, which expresses in their behavior and inner experience of their own right to “be” without having to “do” anything else to prove it.

A Type Two will outwardly direct their feelings towards others. They are highly empathetic and caring, trying to earn the affection of others to avoid shame. Their fixation on meeting others’ needs may distort their awareness of their own needs and emotions.

A Type Three is out of touch with their feelings, and especially their shame. They need positive affirmation and validation from others in order to build up their self-worth. Through success and accomplishment, they build up an image for others to see that masks a feeling a shame that lives within.

A Type Four internalizes their shame and uses it as a form of identity. They are most in touch with their longing and incompleteness, using emotion as a way to self-protect from rejection. They dramatize lesser emotions as a way to gather the attention of others and avoid deeper feelings of inadequacy.

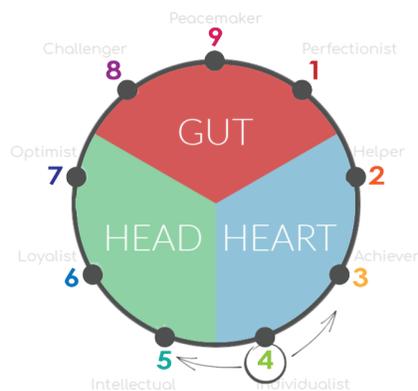


OKAY, I'M A FOUR. NOW WHAT?

There are several factors that determine what *kind* of Four you are. The first is your...

Wing

The wings for Four are Three and Five.



Four with a Three wing (4w3)

People with a 4w3 personality tend to identify most with Four (The Individualist), but may share some traits with the Three (The Achiever). They are creative, energetic, and productive in their behavior. They are generally more sociable than other four types. They want to be unique and expressive, hoping to make a lasting impact on society.

Four with a Five wing (4w5)

People with a 4w5 personality tend to identify most with Fours (The Individualist), but may also relate to Fives (The Observer). They are introspective, creative, and perceptive in their behavior. They want to form a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. They tend to be much less concerned with public image than other fours.

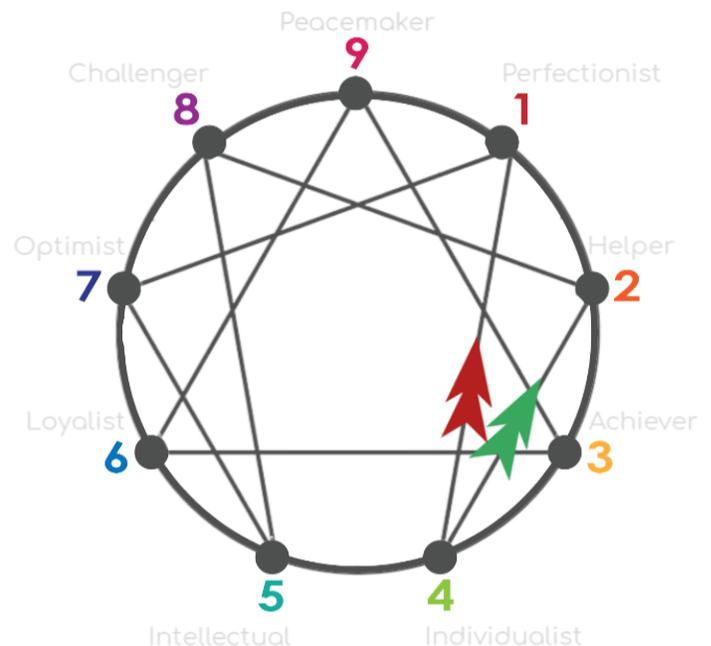
Growth & Stress Points

Growth and Stress points show us how each type behaves under different conditions -- this is why it's helpful to remember that your Enneagram type describes your motivations, not your behavior.

Type Four has a line with a red arrow connecting to One and another line with a green arrow connecting it to Two.

One is the Stress Point. When isolated and self-conscious, Fours move ingratiatingly toward others and try to meet their needs to regain connection.

Two is the Growth Point. When a Four is thriving, they feel comfortable expressing criticism. Healthy growth towards Two allows Fours to serve others with a sense of mission that is bigger than themselves.



Living & Working With Four

If you're not a Three but work or live with somebody who is, here are some tips:

Communication | Avoid being overly logical and focus on sharing your feelings; appreciate their connection with their emotions.

Meetings | Be optimistic and encouraging, inviting fours to be themselves and share their voice.

Texts & Emails | Keep messages to a minimum, avoiding small talk and making an effort to be authentic or expressive.

Giving Critical Feedback | Be sensitive with feedback; share encouragement and frame negative feedback as an opportunity for growth.

Conflict | Openly share your feelings and connect with a Four emotionally; empathize without trying to agree completely, which allows them personal autonomy and individuality.

For Your Health...

- Don't pay so much attention to your feelings; they're not a true source of support for you. Always remember that **your feelings are telling you something about yourself as you are at this particular moment, not necessarily more than that.**
- Avoid putting off things until you are "in the right mood." Commit yourself to productive, meaningful work that will contribute to your good and that of others, no matter how small the contribution may be. **Working consistently in the real world will create a context in which you can discover yourself and your talents.** You will not "find yourself" in a vacuum or while waiting for inspiration to strike, so connect—and stay connected—with the real world.
- Self-esteem and self-confidence will develop only from having positive experiences, whether or not you believe that you are ready to have them. Therefore, **put yourself in the way of good.** You may never feel that you are ready to take on a challenge of some sort, that you always need more time. (Fours typically never feel that they are sufficiently "together," but they must nevertheless have the courage to stop putting off their lives.) Even if you start small, commit yourself to doing something that will bring out the best in you.

- A wholesome self-discipline takes many forms, from sleeping regular hours to working regularly to exercising regularly, and has a cumulative, strengthening effect. Since it comes from yourself, **a healthy self-discipline is not contrary to your freedom or individuality.** On the other hand, sensuality, excessive sexual experiences, alcohol, drugs, sleep, or fantasizing have a debilitating effect on you, as you already know. Therefore, practice healthy self-discipline and stay with it.



- **Avoid lengthy conversations in your imagination,** particularly if they are negative, resentful, or even excessively romantic. These conversations are essentially unreal and at best only rehearsals for action—although, as you know, you almost never say or do what you imagine you will. Instead of spending time imagining your life and relationships, begin to live them.