

EXPLORING *The Enneagram*

TYPE EIGHT: THE CHALLENGER

(AKA The Protector or The Leader)

People with an Enneagram Type 8 personality tend to be self-confident, powerful, and assertive in their behavior. They love engaging in debates and are skilled at making difficult decisions. They are fiercely independent and dislike being reliant on others.

Basic Desire

The most basic desire of the Enneagram Type 8 is to protect themselves and remain in control of their own lives. They seek to defend themselves and others from injustice. Eights often tend to advocate for the underdog, as they work to protect those they feel are unable to protect themselves.

Protectors defend themselves by avoiding and denying vulnerability. They believe, somewhat subconsciously, that vulnerability will make them appear weak; therefore, they avoid it at all costs.

Basic Fear

The basic fear of the Type 8 is that they might be controlled or hurt by others. They tend to avoid situations that make them feel helpless and stand up for themselves in all circumstances. When stressed, they may guard themselves more from others.

In summary, Enneagram Eights tend to...

- Stand up for themselves and those around them
- Be skilled at making hard decisions
- Fear being controlled and losing their autonomy
- Struggle being vulnerable with themselves or others
- Be perceived as argumentative

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 Eights include...

- Ability to express themselves in every situation
- Acting quickly and decisively
- Effectively leading others to success
- Defending and protecting other people
- Fair and logical decision-making

Weaknesses typically associated with Eights include...

- Being perceived as intimidating
- Tendency to disregard others' opinions
- Difficulty following rules or orders
- Taking charge when it isn't their place

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.

Eights tend to be motivated and energized by...

- Taking charge and leading others
- Feeling free, understood, and respected
- Making decisions that help other people
- Physical action and exercise
- Logical and practical ideas and solutions

Eights tend to be stressed and drained by...

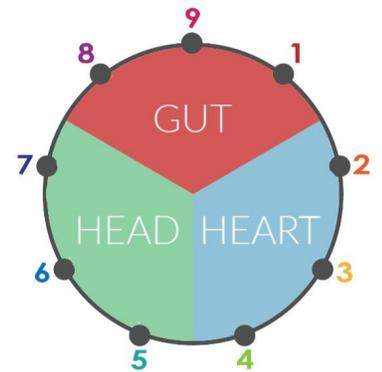
- Being controlled by or subordinate to others
- Feeling unimportant or insignificant
- Facing vulnerable or emotional situations
- Others' dishonesty or misdirected blame
- Feeling out of control or helpless

EIGHT'S CORE EXPERIENCE: ANGER

The Gut Center experiences things first in the body, for example:

- “That made my blood boil.”
- “I have butterflies in my stomach.”
- “My skin is crawling.”
- “I had a gut feeling about that.”

The most common emotion for the body center is anger, and those who have primary access to this center tend to react before thinking. Types Eight, Nine, and One are all within this center, but have different ways of coping with this emotion.



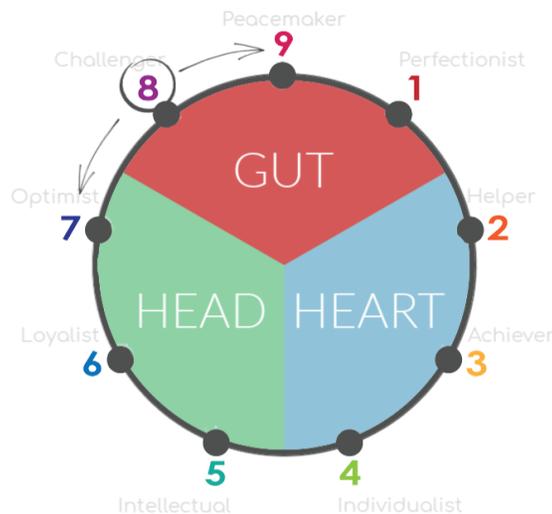
Eights tend to externally process their anger. They can easily and quickly access this emotion as a defense mechanism to avoid vulnerability and being hurt by others. They have a strong reaction to perceived injustice, and often respond to instinctual anger in a physical way - through raising their voice or making their presence larger and more intimidating.

OKAY, I'M AN EIGHT. NOW WHAT?

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

Wing

The wings for Eight are Seven and Nine.



Eight with a Seven wing (8w7)

People with the 8w7 personality tend to identify most with Eight (The Challenger), but share many attributes with Seven (The Enthusiast), as well. They tend to be self-confident, sociable, and pragmatic in their behavior. They are ambitious and independent, preferring to follow their own path. They are generally more comfortable with conflict than 8w9s.

Eight with a Nine wing (8w9)

People with the 8w9 personality tend to identify more with Eight (The Challenger), but share several traits with Nine (The Peacemaker) as well. They are confident, patient, and protective in their behavior. They are generally more gentle and subdued than 8w7s.

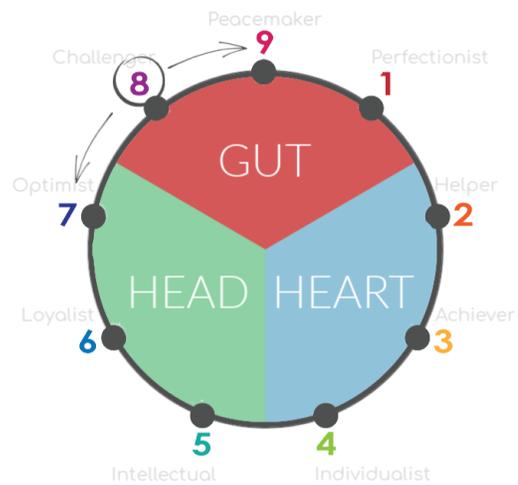
Growth & Stress Points

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 Eight has a line with a red arrow connecting to Five and another line with a green arrow connecting it to Two.

Five is the Stress Point. When they're worn out from all the action and exertion of their lifestyle, they tend to retreat into isolation and detachedly begin planning their next move.

Two is the Growth Point. In safe situations, Eights show their neediness and lean on the people close to them. They are able to connect with the caring, love, and generosity beneath the bluster of their persona.



Living & Working With Eight

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

Communication | Be upfront and direct while remaining open to their ideas.

Meetings | Remain logical and practical, allowing eights to share new ideas or suggestions.

Texts & Emails | Avoid casual conversation—be clear and concise.

Giving Critical Feedback | Share feedback respectfully and constructively to avoid defensiveness.

Conflict | Stand your ground and call them on inappropriate action, while also listening to and considering their side.

For Your Health...

- It goes against the grain, but act with self-restraint. You show true power when you forbear from asserting your will with others, even when you could. **Your real power lies in your ability to inspire and uplift people.** You are at your best when you take charge and help everyone through a crisis. Few will take advantage of you when you are caring, and you will do more to secure the loyalty and devotion of others by showing the greatness of your heart than you ever could by displays of raw power.
- It is difficult for Eights, but **learn to yield to others**, at least occasionally. Often, little is really at stake, and you can allow others to have their way without fear of sacrificing your power, or your real needs. The desire to dominate everyone all the time is a sign that your ego is beginning to inflate—a danger signal that more serious conflicts with others are inevitable.
- **Remember that the world is not against you.** Many people in your life care about you and look up to you, but when you are in your fixation, you do not make this easy for them. Let in the affection that is available. Doing this will not make you weak, but will confirm the strength and support in yourself and your life. Also remember that by believing that others are against you and reacting against them, you tend to alienate them and confirm your own fears. **Take stock of the people who truly are on your side, and let them know how important they are to you.**
- Eights typically want to be self-reliant and depend on no one. But, ironically, they depend on many people. For example, you may think that you are not dependent on your employees because they depend on you for their jobs. You could dismiss them at any time and hire other workers. Everyone is expendable in your little kingdom—except you. But the fact is that **you are dependent on others** to do their

jobs too, especially if your business concerns grow beyond what you can manage alone. But if you alienate everyone associated with you, you will eventually be forced to employ the most obsequious and untrustworthy operatives. When you do, you will have reason to question their loyalty and to fear losing your position. The fact is that whether in your business world or your domestic life, your self-sufficiency is largely an illusion.

- **Eights typically overvalue power.**

Having power, whether through wealth, position, or simple brute force, allows them to do whatever they want, to feel important, to be feared and obeyed. But those who are attracted to you because of your power do not love you for yourself, nor do you love or respect them. While this may be the Faustian bargain you have made, you will nevertheless have to pay the price that whatever power you accumulated will inevitably be at a cost to you, physically and emotionally.

