

**Harmonics Groups in the Enneagram**  
**How People Cope When They Don't Get What They Want**

The harmonics groups also reveal the fundamental way that our personalities defend against loss and disappointment (as indicated by the Group they are in).

**Positive Outlook Group**  
**Deny that they have any problems.**

Twos, Sevens, and Nines respond to conflict and difficulty by adopting a “positive attitude,” reframing disappointment in some positive way. They want to emphasize the uplifting aspects of life and to look at the bright side of things. They are morale-builders who enjoy helping other people feel good because they want to stay feeling good themselves (“I don’t have a problem”). They have difficulty facing the dark side of life; they do not want to look at anything painful in themselves or others. Also, they have trouble balancing their own needs with the needs of others. *Twos* focus primarily on the needs of others, *Sevens* focus primarily on their own needs, and *Nines* try to focus on both, although often with the result that they have trouble adequately fulfilling either.

| Type |   | Emphasizes  | Avoids Seeing   | Problems with Needs  |
|------|---|---|---|--|
| 2    | “You have the problem. I am here to help you...”    | Positive self-image. “I am a caring, loving person.” They focus on their good intentions. | Their own neediness, disappointment, and anger.   | Twos overemphasize the needs of others, and neglect their own needs.                                     |
| 7    | “There may be a problem, but I’m fine....”          | Positive experiences, enjoyment, activity, excitement and fun.                            | Their pain and emptiness: their role in creating suffering for self and others.               | Sevens overemphasize their own needs, and easily feel burdened by the needs of others.                   |
| 9    | “What problem? I don’t think there is a problem...” | The positive qualities of others and of their environment. They idealize their world.     | Problems with their loved ones or their environment as well as lack of their own development. | Nines can feel overwhelmed by their own needs and needs of others. They do not want to deal with either. |

**Competency Group**  
**Cut off feelings and solve problems logically.**

Ones, Threes, and Fives deal with difficulty by putting aside their personal feelings and striving to be objective, effective, and competent. They put their subjective needs and feelings on the back burner; they try to solve problems logically and expect others to do the same. They also have issues related to working within the confines of a structure which evolved from their relationship with their families. (“How do I function within a system? Can I use it to my advantage? Will it hamper me from doing what I want to do?”) They are not sure how much they want to give themselves over to the values of the system, and how much they want to withhold themselves from it. *Ones* operate inside the rules, following them so well that no one would dare question their integrity. By contrast, *Fives* tend to operate outside of the rules. *Threes* want to play it both ways, having the benefit of the rules and structures while not having the restrictions.

| Type |  | Emphasizes  | Avoids Seeing   | Problems with Needs  |
|------|--|---|---|--|
| 1    | “I am sure that we can solve this like sensible, mature adults.” | Being correct, organized, and sensible. They focus on standards, improving themselves, and knowing the rules. | By repression and denial. Feelings are channeled into activity, getting things done perfectly. Feelings also held as physical rigidity in the body. | Ones want to work with the system. They try to be a “good boy or girl,” and are irritated with people who disregard the rules. |

| Type |  | Emphasizes   | Avoids Seeing   | Problems with Needs   |
|------|--|--|---|---|
| 3    | “There’s an efficient solution to this—we just need to get to work.”               | Being efficient, capable, and outstanding. They focus on goals, being pragmatic, and knowing how to present self.                    | By repression and keeping attention on tasks, staying active. Achievement offsets painful feelings. Threes look to others for feeling cues. | Threes want to work with the system but also like being outside of it—bending rules and finding “short-cuts.”             |
| 5    | “There are a number of hidden issues here: let me think about this, by myself....” | Being the expert and having deep information. They focus on the process, objective facts, and on maintaining clarity and detachment. | By splitting off and abstracting feelings, Fives stay preoccupied and cerebral, as if their feelings were happening to someone else.        | Fives reject the system and want to work on their own, outside of it. They have little patience with rules or procedures. |

**Emotional Realness (Intensity) Group**  
**React strongly and need response from others.**

Fours, Sixs, and Eights react emotionally to conflicts and have difficulties knowing how much to trust other people. “I need you to know how I feel about this.” When problems arise, they look for an emotional response from others that matches their concern. “This is really bothering me! It should bother you, too!” They have strong likes and dislikes, and others are going to hear about them. In conflicts, they need to deal with their feelings first, and usually once they are able to do so, things can blow over fairly quickly and permanently. If they are not able to ventilate their feelings, however, they can become increasingly resentful and vindictive. They have difficulty balancing their need for independence with their need to be nurtured and supported by others. To trust and accept affection of others is their deep desire, but to do so feels like losing control. They fear being betrayed and need feedback from people in order to “know where others stand” toward them. They are either looking for advice and direction (“parenting”) or defying it. Subconsciously, *Fours* want to be parented, whereas *Eights* want to play the role of parent and provider, and *Sixes* want it both ways, sometimes being the parent, sometimes being parented by someone else.

| Type |  | Emphasizes  | Avoids Seeing   | Problems with Needs   |
|------|--|---|---|---|
| 4    | “I feel really hurt, and I need to express myself...”          | A rescuer, someone to understand them and support their life and dreams; Fours want to be seen.           | Abandonment—that no one will care for them; that they will not have enough support to find and become themselves.         | Keeping others interested by limiting access, playing “hard to get,” and holding onto supporters.                           |
| 6    | “I feel really pressured, and I’ve got to let off some steam!” | Both independence and support. Sixes want someone to rely on, but also needs to be “the strong one.”      | Being abandoned and without support, but also fears becoming too dependent on others.                                     | Being committed and reliable while trying to maintain their independence; they are engaging, but also defended.             |
| 8    | “I’m angry about this and you’re going to hear about it!”      | Independence and self-reliance. Eights want to need others as little as possible, to be their own person. | Being controlled or dominated by others. Thus, they fear intimacy and becoming vulnerable by trusting or caring too much. | Keeping their guard up, not letting others get too close, and toughening themselves against hurt and their need for others. |