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[Eights, Nines, Ones – Confusion of Thinking](#)

Eights, Nines and Ones usually have no inherent trouble with action. Instead, they tend to unconsciously overlook themselves and habitually react from an emotional ground of anger. These three styles generally have the most confusion in the realm of thinking and often struggle with remembering their own needs.

In Enneagram literature, Eights, Nines and Ones are called “instinctual types” in that they tend to be body sensors, people who know things physically and intuitively before they know them cognitively. As an Eight said, “I basically function on impressions. They start in my gut and work their way up to my head.” People in this trio are more prone to difficulties with correct mental conception and often experience a kind of cloud in the mind.

Imagine being in the middle of a lively party full of people you know, none of whom can see or hear you. Like the invisible man you can physically influence events, but you still go unseen. You know you’re present, but for some mysterious reason no one else does. Occasionally someone looks your way, and you start to respond; then you realize that they are looking beyond you to someone else. At other times, you overhear your friends discussing you in your absence.

After trying to interact, you grow increasingly frustrated by the situation. But gradually you begin to think, “Well, maybe I’m not really here.” A kind of dimness starts to settle over your perceptions and gradually you forget why you came to the party, what you want and even who you are. Something in you has given up and accepted the situation. But on another level you feel angry.

Eights, Nines and Ones all feel invisible and angry but react to it differently. An Eight at the imaginary party might grow determined to demonstrate her presence in a way that will be noticed, to correct the injustice of being overlooked. A Nine might become resigned to being unseen and start freshening the party goers’ drinks, forgetting about his anger or expressing it indirectly. A One could start cleaning up the mess at the buffet table, channeling his anger into a preoccupation with order.

Eights, Nines and Ones are generally more kinesthetic and auditory and less visual. They may see the external world clearly but have foggy or distorted inner vision, especially when trying to focus on their own needs and priorities. All three styles can think in polarized opposites and may reduce complex situations into all-or-nothing, “either/or” propositions. This is a thought disorder rather than problem with the heart or will; it’s hard to think clearly about your personal priorities when you feel like you’re not really there.

Eights tend to think in polarities related to being strong – “you’re either with me or against me.” Nines can get mentally absorbed in the irrelevant or feel caught between two opposing choices, neither of which the Nine actually cares about. Ones will distort their thinking by reducing multi-dimensional reality into oversimple black-and-white categories. All three of these styles have less trouble taking action but may struggle with correctly conceiving what to do.

As body sensors, Ones, Eights and Nines all tend to numb their emotions by turning them into physical sensations. Instead of saying, “that hurts my feelings” or “I’m upset,” someone from this trio might say “that makes my skin crawl,” or “I’m restless.” The person is aware of a physical feeling rather than an emotional one.

Eights can turn their emotions into sexual lust and physical energy, while Nines can turn theirs into sleepiness, headaches or skin rashes.

Ones may translate their emotions into body tension and rigidity – what is called “character armor.” A One could need to cry but instead feel tense, irritable or exhausted.

In Enneagram books the tendency to delete your personal position is called self-forgetting, but another term for it might be hypnotic amnesia. This difficulty is often described as a condition of “mental sleep” but another term for confused polarized thinking is pseudo thinking.

To varying degrees, Eights, Nines, and Ones grow up feeling overlooked. People with these styles can experience their early world as indifferent or as a place where their vulnerabilities and needs had no place. Unlike Twos, Threes and Fours who felt misidentified, Eights, Nines, and Ones felt invisible or ignored.

Carried forward in time, adults with these backgrounds habitually overlook themselves in anticipation of being unseen by others. Eights, Nines, and Ones all tend to neglect their needs, as a way to avoid the pain of being neglected by others. If Twos, Threes and Fours tend to be self-rejecting and Fives, Sixes and Sevens tend to be self-opposing, Eights, Nines, and Ones tend to be self-deleting.

Adult Eights delete themselves and then compensate by overstating their presence. Nines delete themselves and then focus on adapting to and accommodating their environment. Ones delete themselves and displace their needs onto objectified principles, forgetting what they actually want, attending instead to what “should” be done.

The general challenge for Eights, Nines, and Ones is to begin to see themselves and recover their own presence, to acknowledge their needs and focus on their personal priorities and inner sense of themselves. As they grow and change they also begin to think and recognize their needs more clearly.

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[Twos, Threes and Fours – Confusion of Feeling](#)

Twos, Threes and Fours share an ongoing confusion about their identities, mistaking who they are with how they appear to others. All personality styles do this to a degree, but Twos, Threes and Fours are the most prone to confuse seeming with being. People in this trio tend to reject how they actually feel in favor of how they’re supposed to feel, according to the roles that they play.

Twos, Threes and Fours are sometimes called “heart” or “feeling” types which would seem to indicate that they are well-versed in realms of emotion. Actually, they have the most difficulty with matters of the heart. One key to understanding this contradiction is in what NLP calls direct feelings versus derived feelings – whether your feelings are directly experienced or derived through your other senses.

Imagine skiing down a mountain. As you concentrate on the descent, you grow immersed and involved in the experience, feeling the immediate pleasure of the wind on your face, the snow rushing past you, the sound of your speeding skis, the vibrant sensations in your legs and arms, the building excitement and vitality in your chest and, deeper inside, a mounting sense of joy and fulfillment...

Now imagine skiing down the same mountain with a different mentality. This time as you begin to descend, you are wondering how you look in your new ski clothes and evaluating your performance on the slopes – the perfect form you’re demonstrating, your impressive speed, what the onlookers below are probably saying about you, what your friends would think if they could see you now, how proud your first ski teacher would be...

In the first experience, you feel your body and emotions directly. In

the second experience, your feelings are “once removed,” derived from inner pictures and words, from an image of what you are doing.

The difference between direct and derived feeling is like the difference between drama and melodrama or love versus sentimentality. Direct feelings are generally deeper than derived feelings and too many of the latter can lead to fraudulence – trying to feel the way you “should” according to your images. In Enneagram books, the tendency of Twos, Threes and Fours to play roles is typically described as vanity, but another name might be image identification. Another term for derived feeling is pseudofeeling.

As children, Twos, Threes, and Fours often felt misidentified, that is, either too strongly praised or criticized for their outer behavior or function to others. The child’s deeper emotional needs were rejected and who they appeared to be was more important than who they were, rather like a case of mistaken identity.

To varying degrees, people with these Enneagram styles experienced their early world as socially conditional. The price of family and social acceptance was performing or playing a role, singing for their supper. A Two might have been rewarded for the helpful roles he played, a Three for her outer accomplishments, while a Four might have been typecast as different, talented or unique.

Carried forward in time, adults with these backgrounds can habitually reject their true feelings in favor of outer validation, resulting in their playing roles that are disconnected from who they really are. Adult Twos repress their personal needs and play roles of helpfulness. Threes reject an imperfect, insecure inner self and play the role of a successful, confident person – the precise opposite of how they really feel. Adult Fours reject themselves for being flawed or ordinary and then play a compensatory role of someone who is unique and special.

Unconsciously, Twos, Threes, and Fours are often asking themselves “Who am I now?” Their central wound is to their sense of identity and daily life can be experienced as a kind of ongoing identity crisis. What might be called the ruling paradox of these styles is “To be loved for who I am, I must pretend to be who I am not.”

The area of greatest confusion offers the most potential for growth. The general challenge for Twos, Threes, and Fours is to learn to distinguish their direct feelings from their derived ones, to become real to themselves and others. As they grow and change, people in this trio reclaim and accept the self who often hides behind roles.

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[Fives, Sixes and Sevens – Confusion of Action](#)

Fives, Sixes and Sevens form another emotional trio. Unlike Twos, Threes and Fours, people in this group aren’t confused about who they are or how they feel. Instead, they unconsciously anticipate life’s dangers and habitually react from an emotional ground of fear. Fives, Sixes and Sevens generally have the most trouble claiming their personal power and taking congruent, decisive action in the world. In Enneagram literature, people in this trio are called “mental types” because they go through life leading with their heads. Most are thinkers who overuse their minds as if to compensate for suppressing their body instincts. Fives, Sixes and Sevens often struggle with dilemmas of doing and experience a kind of knot in the will.

Imagine seeing the world as a hazardous place populated by forces that can act on you unfavorably, against which you have no sure defense. It’s as though you’re not at the top of the food chain and have to keep watch for larger predators who can overwhelm, injure or trap you. Within this worldview, your power to choose, to say “yes” or “no,” is not completely your own. Your personal preferences are less important than those of others – they have rights and you don’t.

Whatever people ask of you, you feel you must say “yes,” even if your true answer is “no.”

Because they displace their power, Fives, Sixes and Sevens all unconsciously question their competence to handle present and future challenges. To compensate they tend to live in the future, mentally preparing for what will happen by thinking in visual and auditory “loops.” They see images of the future in their mind’s eye, then talk to themselves, then see more images, then talk to themselves – all in order to quell their anxiety and prepare for what’s coming next. It’s like narrating home movies in your mind’s eye or seeing previews of coming attractions.

Fives, Sixes and Sevens can have complicated decision making strategies because they are often trying to do two things at once – choose and not choose. To an outside observer, people in this trio seem to replace doing with thinking. On the inside, thinking feels to them like a kind of doing, what might be called pseudo action. The fear these styles feel is sometimes described in Enneagram books as cowardice but another term for it is self-opposition. While Twos, Threes and Fours tend to be self-rejecting, Fives, Sixes and Sevens tend to be self-opposing, in that they turn their power against themselves.

To varying degrees, Fives, Sixes and Sevens grew up feeling unprotected, overpowered or inappropriately needed and may have sensed early on that life was dangerous. The child’s true wishes could have been opposed by others who needed to overprotect, control or abandon the child. People with these styles experienced their early world as non-negotiable. Young Fives can feel swarmed or pressured by social expectations. Sixes might have felt unprotected or dominated, while Sevens often felt confined or over-obligated.

Carried forward in time, adults with these backgrounds habitually suppress their wills and deny their true preferences as a way to anticipate outer opposition. Fives, Sixes and Sevens all tend to project their power onto outside people or forces. Where they once were opposed by others in the past they now oppose themselves.

Adult Fives can feel as if others have the power to ask anything of them and the Five can’t say “no.” They avoid asserting themselves directly and then later draw too-strong boundaries after they feel invaded. Sixes may refuse to directly say “no,” instead deferring their choices to romanticized authority figures upon whom the Six feels dependent. Sevens agree to things that they don’t want to do or feel trapped by the pain of others. After creating a jail of expectation and obligation, Sevens feel as though they have no options. To compensate, they then break out of jail and escape into new plans and possibilities, over-flexing their capacity to choose.

The primary wound for Fives, Sixes and Sevens is to their sense of power and volition. While Twos, Threes and Fours are preoccupied with identity, Fives, Sixes and Sevens are preoccupied with competence. Their running unconscious question isn’t “Who am I?” but rather “Am I capable? Can I really do this?” The ruling paradox for each of these styles is: “to have my power I must first give it away to others.”

As they grow and change the general challenge for Fives, Sixes and Sevens is to reclaim and master their own power and take responsibility for their actions. As they mature, people with these styles get in touch with their instincts and “motive force” and begin to exercise their wills instead of projecting them. They start to say “yes” and “no” from a feeling of free choice and learn how to assert themselves appropriately.