THE ROAD BACK TO YOU

AN ENNEAGRAM JOURNEY TO SELF-DISCOVERY

IAN MORGAN CRON
and
SUZANNE STABILE
1 A Curious Theory of Unknown Origin / 9

2 Finding Your Type / 21

3 Type Eight: The Challenger / 40
   "Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way."
   General George S. Patton Jr.

4 Type Nine: The Peacemaker / 63
   "You cannot find peace by avoiding life."
   Virginia Woolf

5 Type One: The Perfectionist / 90
   "Perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor,
   the enemy of the people."
   Anne Lamott

6 Type Two: The Helper / 110
   "I want you to be happy, but I want to be the reason."
   Unknown

7 Type Three: The Performer / 129
   "The real question is, can you love the real me? . . .
   Not that image you had of me, but who I really am."
   Christine Feehan

8 Type Four: The Romantic / 148
   "If you've ever had that feeling of loneliness,
   of being an outsider, it never quite leaves you."
   Tim Burton
9 Type Five: The Investigator / 167

"I think I am, therefore, I am. I think."
George Carlin

10 Type Six: The Loyalist / 188

"There's no harm in hoping for the best as long as you're prepared for the worst."
Stephen King

11 Type Seven: The Enthusiast / 205

"Just think of happy things, and your heart will fly on wings!"
Peter Pan

12 So Now What? The Beginning of Love / 226

"The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves."
Thomas Merton

Acknowledgments / 231

Notes / 234
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A THREE

1. It's important for me to come across as a winner.
2. I love walking in a room and knowing I'm making a great first impression on the crowd.
3. I could persuade Bill Gates to buy a Mac.
4. The keys to my happiness are efficiency, productivity and being acknowledged as the best.
5. I don't like it when people slow me down.
6. I know how to airbrush failure so it looks like success.
7. I'd rather lead than follow any day.
8. I am competitive to a fault.
9. I can find a way to win over and connect with just about anyone.
10. I'm a world-champion multitasker.
11. I keep a close watch on how people are responding to me in the moment.
12. It's hard for me to not take work along on vacation.
13. It's hard for me to name or access my feelings.
14. I'm not one to talk much about my personal life.
15. Sometimes I feel like a phony.
16. I love setting and accomplishing measurable goals.
17. I like other people to know about my accomplishments.
18. I like to be seen in the company of successful people.
19. I don't mind cutting corners if it gets the job done more efficiently.
20. People say I don't know how or when to stop working.
The real question is, can you love the real me? . . .
Not that image you had of me, but who I really am.

CHRISTINE FEEHAN

*Healthy Threes* have transcended the goal of merely looking good and are moving toward being known and loved for who they are, not for what they accomplish. They still love to set goals, rise to challenges and solve problems, but their self-worth is not tied to these things. They try to balance their abundant energy between work, rest and some kind of contemplative practice, recognizing the importance of *being* instead of *doing*. They feel valuable, which unleashes a tender benevolence that is focused on the common good.

*Average Threes* push achieving to overachieving, spending too much time at work or the gym. Highly driven, their need to perform even extends to the time they spend coaching the children’s soccer team or volunteering at church. They see love as something to be earned, so they quiet their inner convictions, valuing what others define as success and striving to do more and do it better. They are confident in their abilities but also image
conscious, constantly worrying that a poor performance will cause them to lose standing in other people’s eyes.

**Unhealthy Threes** find failure unacceptable, which renders them unable to admit mistakes and causes them to behave as though they are superior to others. Desperate for attention, these Threes may turn the deadly sin of self-deceit into the sin of intentional deceit, telling others fabricated stories about themselves and their accomplishments in order to maintain their image. At their worst, unhealthy Threes can be petty, mean and vengeful.

I grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut, home to many of the most successful hedge fund managers, venture capitalists and investment bankers in the world. There are more Threes who live in Greenwich than child actors in rehab. Chief among them was my father.

Like all Threes, my father believed he could only be loved by being or appearing to be successful, avoiding failure at all costs and matching his image to please a crowd. For a number of years he had a glamorous, high-visibility career in film and television as managing director of Columbia Screen Gems Motion Pictures in Europe and the Middle East until at age forty he lost everything through a series of terrible personal and professional decisions. In regard to his career my dad was a failure, but you’d never have known it from looking at him or listening to him.

Even when our family was financially on the ropes my father continued buying handmade suits from Jermyn Street in London, drove a pricey (albeit secondhand) British sports car and managed to be the only person I know who could pull off wearing a cravat. He’d tell people stories about how Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner performed comedy sketches in our living room when we lived in London; about going on safaris with William Holden; and how the actor Roger
Moore, who played James Bond, had my father to thank for his career. Every story was “true” but embellished, and he made it sound like they’d all happened in the last month, not a decade earlier.

My dad believed well-heeled Greenwich folks only really value people who are accomplished, wealthy, sophisticated and well connected, so he morphed into “that guy” to win their admiration.

But my dad’s talent for projecting the perfect image to impress a crowd wasn’t limited to high-society Greenwich types. He could do it anywhere with anyone. Here’s how it worked: when my dad arrived at a party the first thing he did was read the room. He wanted to know the general makeup of the crowd—who was there, what their preferences, values and expectations were—as if trying to answer the questions, *What persona do I need to craft and put on to win these people’s approval? Who do they want me to become before they’ll love and admire me?* Once he knew the answer to those questions (which took all of thirty seconds), he performed an instant makeover and became “that guy.” Seriously, I once witnessed my dad walk into a group of car mechanics standing around a service station garage, and before you could say “carburetor” he’d picked up on their mannerisms, talk style, mood and general demeanor. My dad didn’t know the difference between a muffler and a glove compartment, but by the time we left, those mechanics thought he could’ve been the host of NPR’s *Car Talk.*

**THE THREE’S DEADLY SIN**

I wouldn’t blame you if after reading these stories you pegged my dad as a poseur. But would you feel more compassion toward him if you knew he created and projected his shimmering image of success and achievement as defined by whatever crowd he was with because he believed that being, or at least looking, successful was the
The Performer

only way he could prove his worth and win love? Would your heart warm toward him if you knew that from the time he was a boy he thought he had to constantly craft his image to win other people's approval until eventually he couldn't tell the difference between his fake image and his authentic self anymore?

This is the Performer's snare.

According to the Enneagram, the deadly sin of the Performer is deceit—not because they deceive others as much as because they deceive themselves. As Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote, "No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true."

In crafting a persona that will impress and perhaps even help them form relationships with high-influence people who can help them get ahead socially or professionally, Threes lose touch with who they authentically are. In time they so overidentify with their glittering persona that their true self gets lost in the performance. They, along with everyone else, are fooled into believing their false image is who they really are.

The strategy of projecting a false image to meet an unmet need is not unique to Threes. All of the numbers in the Feeling or Heart Triad (2, 3, 4) reject the idea that they can be seen for who they are and unconditionally loved, so they abandon their true selves to inhabit roles. Twos throw up a chirpy, likable image they can change in a heartbeat to please who they're with; Fours (spoiler alert!) project an image of uniqueness for reasons you'll learn about shortly; and Threes cast an image of success and achievement to win admiration.

Immature Threes need to win and make it look easy. For them, taking second place is a patronizing euphemism for being the first loser.
Whether they’re in the classroom, on the athletic field, on a trading floor, on a stage, pastoring a megachurch, in the boardroom or serving the poor, Threes have to be the star. Because Threes grow up believing the world only values people for what they do rather than for who they are, becoming king or queen of the hill is a matter of life or death. Confusing success for love, Threes who lack self-awareness have to ace every test, close every deal, deliver a sermon that rivals the “I Have a Dream” speech every Sunday and break every corporate sales record. Life is all about racking up accomplishments that garner applause.

Threes are shape shifters who can switch personas to match the environment. “Threes don’t have one persona, we are Legion,” a pastor and now spiritually self-aware Three once half-joked with me. At a recent workshop a sharply dressed woman came up during a break after a talk on Threes and confessed, “My business partner swears she can hear the sound of my ‘audience analysis software’ launching in my brain when we walk into a room full of potential clients. Before the introductions are over I know exactly who I have to become to close the deal.”

Unaware Threes are social chameleons. As you can imagine, however, their ability to create and project the image to make the sale or get the girl or guy can leave them wondering who their authentic self is. Once in a blue moon, when Threes slow down long enough to reflect on their lives, they might feel like they’re a fraud. I wear a thousand masks, but which is the authentic me? When this flash of insight comes to them it surfaces a Three’s worst fear: What if there’s no one behind the image? What if I’m no more than an empty suit?

Unless Threes have a wise spiritual adviser who helps them stay with that feeling of emptiness long enough to give their authentic self a chance to emerge, they will panic and retreat behind their persona again, this time redoubling their efforts to succeed and
impress in order to mask their emptiness. More often than not it
takes a fall on the scale of a Greek tragedy before a Three wakes up
and realizes that “To thine own self be true” is a better life motto
than “Image is everything.”

ALL ABOUT THREES OR PERFORMERS

There’s a lot to love about healthy Threes. They are optimistic, re­
silient people with audacious dreams who inspire others. When
they’re spiritually healthy and self-aware they have nothing to prove.
They want to talk about your dreams and celebrate your accomplish­
ments rather than flaunt their own achievements or sell you a line.
There’s not a hint of falseness about an evolved Three. They’re no
longer terrified of failure, and they share openly about what they’ve
learned from their mistakes. They’re generous and wise, and often
volunteer their considerable skills to helping organizations be more
effective at achieving their mission.

Yet there is a sad restlessness for un­
healthy Threes—always striving, always
keeping an eye out for advancement. Po­
litically savvy and dressed to kill, they’re
somehow always working a crowd as if asking, “How’m I doin’?”
Some Threes get squirrelly when they have too much downtime in
one place, so they need activity-based vacations like a scuba-diving
trip or a bike trip across France, and good luck convincing them not
to bring a briefcase full of work along with them. As Hurley and
Donson note, sometimes Threes will pretend to be interested in
conversations with people when they’re not. If they know you’re not
“a player” or think you’re not interesting enough, they will smile and
nod like they’re hanging on your every word when they’re actually
making a real estate deal or producing a record in their head or
periodically glancing over your shoulder to see who and where the
real players in the room are.
Recently Suzanne and I spoke at a conference where the audience was full of very successful men and women. One night a corporate lawyer in his mid-sixties named David shared with the group how he had once believed life was all about what you owned, who you knew and how good you looked, until at age fifty he had a "meet Jesus" crisis that brought him face-to-face with himself. "I've put a lot of effort into knowing and becoming my true self," David said, touching his hand to his heart. "Today I think far less about working and winning and more about 'David-ing.'"

David is a highly evolved Three. He no longer believes he has to work eighty-hour weeks and be widely acknowledged as the best at everything he does to be loved. In general, Threes have more difficulty recognizing and connecting to their feelings than any other number on the Enneagram. Not only do they not pick up on their own feelings, they won't pick up on yours very well either. Remember how we saw in the last chapter that Twos may be clueless about their own emotions but can zero in to yours with the accuracy of Doppler radar? Threes are just plain in the dark about feelings—their own and yours as well.

Threes do feel feelings more than have feelings. Because they can't access or recognize their feelings very well, Threes will unconsciously observe how other people are expressing their emotions and copy them. What gives away the fact that they aren't actually connecting to the sorrow they're visibly expressing at a funeral by looking sad is that they can be thinking about an unfinished work project at the same time.

Threes can mask and postpone feelings so they won't blow their "I have it all together" cover. In the moment, they can be feeling depressed, angry or scared and maintain their upbeat, confident poker face. At the end of the day, Threes care most about efficiency and completing a task. Feelings are messy, and they slow your progress toward your goal, so Threes don't spend too much time on them.

According to Riso and Hudson, the message Threes picked up in
childhood is that it’s not okay to have your own identity or feelings. As kids, Threes felt they needed to set aside their true selves to become the perfect prototype of whatever sort of person the important people in their lives associated with success. I once said to a Three in his spiritual journey, “How much you must have loved your father that you left your true self behind to please him.” The man wept, as if relieved to know that love, not emptiness, lay behind his mask.

Here’s a question: What would incentivize Threes to change in a culture that applauds and rewards them for embodying our cultural definition of success? *America is a Three country!* Countless numbers of us look at Threes and think, *Man, I wish I were him or her.* I say this because we are all complicit in perpetuating a world that encourages these wonderful folks to continue living in service to a lie. It’s wrong of us to ask Threes to use their gifts to help grow our companies or raise money for our church’s capital campaign—especially since when we’re done using them, we turn around and criticize them behind their backs for being inauthentic or narcissistic. This is one reason Suzanne and I love the Enneagram. Doesn’t knowing the worldview and motivation that drives a Three’s personality help awaken in our hearts some compassion for their, and hopefully every other, number’s plight?

We’re awestruck when we meet a Three who is evolving spiritually despite having to get up every day and swim against the riptide of our success-oriented, image-obsessed culture. And there are plenty of these good people around doing the work of becoming themselves. They’re saints in the making.

**THREES AS CHILDREN**

Early in life Threes pick up the wounding message “You are what you do.” As a result they become high-performance achievement machines, striving to excel and be acknowledged for their accomplishments because they constitute the basis of their identity. If they sense their parents or culture prize academic achievement
above all else, they’ll set their sights on going to Harvard while they’re still in middle school. Likewise, if Threes grow up in a culture or family where climbing the ranks of the Mafia to become a don represents ultimate success, then that will become their life’s goal. Strange, I know, but it’s contextual.

The saddest thing of all is how a Three will conform to their family’s or culture’s preferred image even if it means having to become someone who bears no resemblance to who they truly are or doing things that go against their nature. Tennis player Andre Agassi has a story like this. In 1991, Agassi appeared in a television ad for a camera called the Canon Rebel. In the commercial the cocky, fashionably attired super-athlete steps out of a white Lamborghini, casts an insouciant gaze toward the camera, lowers his Ray-Bans halfway down his nose and declares, “Image is everything.” Oh, to be young and Three!

In his memoir, Open, Agassi describes growing up with a father whose love for him was tied to his performance on the court. Agassi shocked the world when in his book he publicly confessed for the first time that he had hated playing tennis from the time he first picked up a racket to the day he retired. What drove him to become a champion wasn’t a passion for the game but his desire to win the heart of a father whom he describes as unable to “tell the difference between loving me and loving tennis.” Other Threes describe growing up in homes where they worried that parents, peers or coaches would overlook or forget them if they didn’t bring home extraordinary grades or trophies.

My friend Allen’s parents grew up dirt poor. Growing up they repeatedly told Allen and his twin brother, “We want you to do

“Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be.”

PARKER PALMER
more with your lives than we did with ours.” Early on, when both kids began bringing home straight A’s and excelling at basketball, Allen’s mom and dad became so ecstatic and heaped so much praise on them that they felt they had no choice but to keep it up.

“My parents are great, and they loved us more than anything in the world,” Allen says now. “They just had no idea how much pressure they were putting on us to succeed. It would break their hearts if they knew we grew up unconsciously believing their love for us was conditioned on our kicking ass at everything we did and how scared we were of disappointing them. They never once said, ‘We’ll only love you if you succeed!’ But we were kids, and that’s what we unconsciously heard.” Sadly, the unlived lives of parents sometimes push their children toward destinies not of their own choosing.

Kids who are Threes wake up in the morning with a plan for their day. Socially aware, they know what they’re going to wear to school and who they’ll sit with at lunch. They know who the cool kids are and may go against their own feelings or wishes in order to be accepted in their circle. These kids come tricked out with all the onboard equipment they need to achieve and succeed.

They try to do the things that are valued by the people around them, and they take it hard when they fail. They are focused and naturally competitive because they believe they are loved for their achievements. These are the kids who want to stand out. And they do.

THREES IN RELATIONSHIPS

As the number least in touch with their feelings on the Enneagram, it only makes sense that Threes would have things to work out in the relationship department.

As part of their larger self-marketing campaign, spiritually unaware Threes will want to project the image of the perfect family to the outside world, but keeping up appearances can exhaust their partners and kids. Out of touch with their feelings and eager to make
the right impression, Threes can consciously or unconsciously act
the role of the quintessential devoted parent and spouse. Other
Threes on autopilot can unconsciously view their partner or their
relationship with them like an action item on their task-management
list. Those people can become one of the many projects they’re
working on at any given time. For instance, you might hear Threes
talk about how they and their partner sit down once a year to set
spiritual, financial, physical or social goals for their marriage or rela-
tionship or to discuss ways in which they can make the day-to-day
management of the family more efficient or productive. Clearly being
intentional about relationships is admirable, so long as they remain
spiritual unions we cultivate, not business partnerships we manage.

Without exception, the relationships of spiritually unevolved
Threes suffer because they’re almost all workaholics. They have so
many projects running and so many goals to achieve they can’t give
their undivided attention to people they love. As Helen Palmer re-
marks, a “Three’s heart is in their work,” so whatever feelings they
have are used toward accomplishing a goal or task, and there’s not
much left over for other people.

Threes have a supernatural talent for multitasking. They can si-
multaneously juggle driving, closing a multimillion-dollar deal on
their cell phone, eating a sandwich, listening to an audiobook
version of David Allen’s bestseller *Getting Things Done*, and con-
versing with their spouse about a problem one of the kids is having
at school. It’s not merely impressive, it’s Cirque du Soleil impressive,
unless you’re their partner, child or friend who feels devalued and
less important than the Three’s ambitions.

Because Threes alter their appearance to win over different types
of people, they keep their circles of friends separate from one an-
other. If they threw a party and mistakenly invited all their friends
from the different spheres of their lives they’d lose their minds—no
one can change hats that fast.
Threes prize friendships that are free and undemanding. Life is all about getting things done, so Threes steer away from high-maintenance, complicated or demanding friendships that take time and energy away from accomplishing goals.

The defensive strategy of Threes is identification. Threes defend themselves against harm by completely immersing themselves in the task they’re performing, or equating their identity with their title and the institutions for which they work. Because of this, Threes will defend their firm’s reputation or the crazy number of hours they spend at the office to the death.

As Richard Rohr observes, the saddest number on the Enneagram is an unsuccessful Three, one whose ambitions were greater than their talent. I would add that it’s heartbreaking to meet Threes in the second half of life who never woke up to their own game. It’s a terrible thing to be seated next to a seventy-year-old guy at a dinner party who is still dropping names, telling you where he went to college or boasting about how young he was when he made partner and how much money he cashed out with at retirement.

THREES AT WORK

If it’s not clear already, Threes feel most in their element at work. More than any other type, they crave achievement and recognition, and for most adults that means killing it at their job. For Threes who don’t work outside the home, like stay-at-home parents, their natural tendency to hunt for external validation can emerge in other ways, such as comparing notes about whose kids figured out potty training in utero and were accepted early decision to Princeton while they were still in pre-K.

Choosing success over substance, Threes are revered in America. They’re avatars of an American ideal—the smart, charismatic, ambitious, type-A man or woman. But be careful.

“Work is more fun than fun!”

NOEL COWARD
There's a fine line between a type and a stereotype. Some folks think all Threes are like the character Don Draper from the AMC series *Mad Men*. Could a Three who isn't spiritually mature become a success-crazed, image-obsessed high achiever who charms and claws his or her way up to the top of the corporate food chain, or a smile-flashing, glad-handing candidate stumping for votes at a state fair? Sure, but those are more stereotypes—widely held, formulaic caricatures of a particular kind of person. Threes are people, not clichés. Like all of us, they're complicated, and they come in an infinite variety of shades and tones. They're not all CEOs or celebrities, nor do they aspire to be. They show up in almost every profession, from music to the mission field. They can be anyone from David Bowie to Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. But they all believe the same lie: you're only as loved as your last success.

As a university professor friend of mine once told me, "Come listen in to the conversations that take place between professors at a faculty meeting at my school. When they're not reminding each other where they earned their PhDs, they're dropping the name of the prestigious journal that recently published one of their articles, mentioning the invitation they've just received to give the plenary address at a well-known academic conference or jockeying for tenure."

When they're spiritually healthy, these charismatic, productive, go-get-'em folks are authentic, visionary leaders and extraordinary builders who deserve our admiration. Like every number, though, when they're not mature and don't know their blind spots they're an accident looking for an intersection.

People will say Threes are willing to do whatever it takes to get ahead. They care about titles, who's next in line for promotion and who occupies the corner office. Threes make phenomenal salespeople, though they develop a kind of pride around their ability to turn it on and become whomever the customer wants them to be to make the sale.
Because status matters so much to Threes, so do status symbols. When they build equity they find out which toys message success in their setting and go get them. If they’re investment bankers or professional athletes, it might be boats, second homes or Teslas. If they’re social justice advocates they’ll wear extra tattered clothing as part of a campaign to showcase their commitment to living in solidarity with the poor.

Threes’ issues with feelings become really clear when you see them at work. They live for setting a goal, killing it, setting another goal, killing it, setting the next goal, killing it. This is where Threes get their energy, but it costs them. Imagine a Three is working on an important project at work when their spouse or a friend calls to say they’re feeling angry or upset with them about something. The Three might have feelings about the situation as well, but having to deal with feelings threatens their ability to complete their project on schedule. So they disconnect in order to stay focused on work. It’s as if they say, “I’m going to slip this emotion into my “Feelings to Deal with Later” file and come back to it when I’m finished with this task.”

How often do you think Threes go back to deal with the feeling? Rarely. Once that project is done they’re on to the next one. By midlife, what do you think a Three’s “Feelings to Deal with Later” file looks like? If it hasn’t already burst, it’s definitely overflowing. A Three’s ability to postpone or set feelings aside explains why people often experience them as superficial, emotionally shallow and difficult to connect with. Productivity, efficiency, goals and measurable results—these are what Threes care about and do better than anyone else, particularly efficiency. Threes want to get to the finish line of a project or task as quickly as possible, and this desire for efficiency affects relationships and decisions.

Threes are pragmatic. They’ll do whatever it takes to get the job done. To achieve a goal a Three might cut corners for the sake of expediency, which can hurt the quality of their work. They’re not
necessarily unethical, but they might embellish or leave out a few facts to secure a position, angle for a promotion or close a deal. As a songwriter I occasionally did work with a successful publisher in New York City who was a textbook Three. One day I asked a fellow songwriter whether he thought this likeable but shrewd publisher was a straight-up guy. He laughed and said, “Doug’s not a liar but he’ll ‘sculpt’ the truth if he has to.”

Threes often run people over on the way to the goal line, which they may or may not apologize for. They demand loyalty from their employees, so if your boss happens to be an immature Three, I wouldn’t openly question her decision to introduce a new product line unless you want to watch its big launch from the penalty box.

Enthusiastic and confident, a Three’s talk style is promotion or sales. Threes would rather say too little than too much. They love selling people on an idea, the company they work for, the product they sell, the cause they champion, the hobby they enjoy.

Threes are charismatic, and because they’re adaptive and attuned to what others want from them, they know exactly what to say to inspire and motivate the people who work for them. They gravitate toward careers where moving up is dependent on making good impressions and where promotions are handed out to those who best embody the values of the company or people they work for.

WINGS

Threes with a Four wing (3w4). It’s difficult to be a Three with a Four wing. Fours, as we’ll see in the next chapter, are Romantics who care greatly about depth and authenticity. These people take having a rich inner life to a whole new level. Because Threes can be chameleons and Fours value authenticity, 3w4s experience tremendous confusion and interior dissonance. At the same time they’re projecting an image to please the crowd, the Four wing is pointing at them and screaming, “Phony! Fraud!” Threes with Four wings are more introspective and in
touch with their shame and other feelings than 3w2s. They're sensitive, artistic, emotionally intense, and they work more carefully on "crafting" the right image. Threes with Four wings aren't as driven to be stars as 3w2s, but they can be more pretentious.

**Threes with a Two wing (3w2).** Charming and intimate, 3w2s make great entertainers, politicians, salespeople and pastors. When their lust for attention and recognition overtakes them or when they feel unappreciated, however, they can become angry and hostile. More than 3w4s, they need to be stars.

They actually embody some of the characteristics they have employed in an effort to be seen as more loving, generous and kind. These Threes still have a strong desire to be recognized for their achievements, but they also use some of their energy to help other people be successful.

**STRESS AND SECURITY**

**Stress.** When Threes get stressed they take on characteristic behaviors of unhealthy Nines. They retreat to the couch with the remote or lose themselves in unproductive busywork. Seemingly worn out, they lose their characteristic optimism and confidence and become self-doubtful. Lacking motivation, stressed-out Threes might lose interest in working out, eating healthy food and paying attention to their appearance.

**Security.** When Threes are feeling secure they move to the positive side of Six, where they become warmer and more in touch with their feelings and the feelings of others. Less competitive and defensive, Threes in this space have more energy to devote to family and friends. No longer needing to be the star or in control, they care more about what's best for the group and want to connect to something that's bigger than they are. Threes who are connected to the positive side of Six can finally experience being loved for who they are instead of for what they do.
SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Being a Three and living in America is like being an alcoholic living above a saloon. In our success- and image-obsessed culture they are more revered and rewarded than any other number on the Enneagram. Is it any wonder spiritual work is hard for them? Because the adaptive strategies of their personality work so well and for so long, they might not start working on themselves spiritually until midlife, or when they fail and can’t cover it up.

Inevitably as Threes awaken spiritually and become self-aware, they will feel naked and ashamed. There’s no getting around it. In that moment, what they need is a kind but strong friend who will call them back to the truth of who they are, should they start marketing and packaging themselves for mass consumption again. Actually, we all need at least one friend who can encourage us in the struggle to become ourselves. It’s not work one should do alone.

We all need to hear we are loved for who we are, but Threes need to hear it until the day comes when they look in the mirror and see not an image so much as the reflection of a son or daughter of God. The healing message for Threes is “You are loved just for who you are.” Angels sing when this message penetrates a Three’s heart.

TEN PATHS TO TRANSFORMATION FOR THREES

1. It’s important for every number to develop a practice of silence, solitude and meditation, but it’s particularly essential for Threes since you place such high value on activity and productivity.

2. Find a spiritual director to accompany you on your journey to reclaim your authentic self. It’s hard to walk the path alone.

3. Challenge your definition of success, and craft a new one based on your feelings, desires and values, not those inherited from family or culture.
4. Don't wait until you have an affair, become an alcoholic or are the youngest person in your family to have a heart attack before you ask the question, "Who am I if I'm not my persona?" Do it now.

5. Material success and being real are not mutually exclusive. Success is great if the person responsible for it is the real you.

6. Take an inventory of who and what gets sacrificed while you're frantically racing to cross the finish line first—spouse, kids, health, friendships.

7. Take a vacation and do not bring work with you.

8. Try being just another bozo on the bus. Resist the temptation to take the leadership rein or to be the center of attention. Instead, try being a collaborative team member who wants to help others shine and succeed.

9. Have at least one close friend with whom you can be real and vulnerable. As a Three, you probably have a lot of friends, but make sure some of them are people who can love you when you're a complete disaster, not just when you're projecting an image of success.

WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BE A FOUR

1. I like things that are unconventional, dramatic and refined. I’m definitely not a fan of the ordinary.

2. I never really felt like I belonged.

3. I have so many feelings in a day it’s hard to know which ones to pay attention to first.

4. Some people think I am aloof, but I’m really just unique.

5. In social situations I tend to hang back and wait for others to approach me.

6. Melancholy is comfortable for me, so it’s annoying when people try to cheer me up.

7. I’m not like everyone else . . . phew.

8. I’m very sensitive to criticism, and it takes me a while to get over it.

9. I spend a lot of time trying to explain myself.

10. When people tell me what to do I’m often tempted to do the opposite.

11. Sometimes I just disappear and go radio silent for a few days.

12. I’m okay with sad songs, sad stories and sad movies. Overly happy people give me a headache.

13. I feel there is something essential lacking in me.

14. It’s really hard for me to settle into a relationship because I’m always looking for my ideal soul mate.

15. I’m self-conscious. It’s hard for me to find my place in a room full of people.

16. People say I’m too intense and my feelings overwhelm them.

17. I’m either an artist or highly creative. I come up with one amazing, creative idea after another. It’s executing them that’s hard.

18. Lots of people misunderstand me, and it makes me frustrated.

19. I pull people in, but then I get nervous and push them away.

20. I worry a lot about abandonment.
If you've ever had that feeling of loneliness, of being an outsider, it never quite leaves you.

TIM BURTON

Healthy Fours have a considerable emotional range, and they manage it by not speaking or acting on every feeling they have. They know they don't have to be special to win God's unconditional love. These Fours have found a way to live, for the most part, outside the pattern of shame and inferiority. They are deeply creative, emotionally honest and connected, and attuned to beauty.

Average Fours struggle daily with learning to accept themselves as they are. Such efforts are complicated as they seek their identity by exaggerating their uniqueness. These Fours are coy; they want you to want them but they play hard to get. Their melancholy often goes unchecked, causing painful distance between themselves and others. Average Fours are moody, melodramatic, needy and self-pitying.

Unhealthy Fours tend to be manipulative, playing the role of victim in order to create or maintain relationships. They find
themselves lacking when compared to others, which only exacerbates their self-debasement. These Fours feel so much shame they are unable to connect to the very part of themselves that believes they can change and be better.

Shortly before our first child, Cailey, was born, Anne began to research baby strollers. Like us, most of our friends were in their late twenties and either pregnant or popping babies out like vending machines. There was no shortage of people to ask for advice.

“Everyone says we should buy a Graco,” Anne announced over dinner one night.

“Everyone?” I replied, arching one eyebrow.

I don’t like it when someone says I should do something on the basis that everyone else is. During their yearly migration, thousands of Norwegian lemmings commit mass suicide because everyone they know is doing it.

“Could we be more creative?” I asked.

“It’s a stroller, not a prom dress,” Anne said, using her “I’m eight months pregnant so don’t screw with me” voice.

“Noted,” I said, quickly dropping the subject.

However, the next morning while flipping through baby catalogs I happened upon an ad for a cool stroller. Sure, it was expensive, and the manufacturer would have to ship it to us from their factory in England, but it was for our first child, right? I ordered one immediately.

“Are you crazy?” Anne objected when I told her the news. “We could drive to Sears right now and buy a Graco for half the price.”

“We’re having a girl. Don’t you want her to have an English pram?”

“A pram?” Anne scoffed, shaking her head in disbelief as she turned on her heels and walked out of the room. “Mr. ‘I Gotta Be Me’ strikes again.”
"Wait until you see it," I promised. "You’ll thank me."

Three days before Anne's due date the box containing our new pram appeared on our doorstep. I was eager to unveil and admire it until I saw the words "Assembly Required" writ large across the side of the carton.

When it comes to being handy I'm genetically challenged. In fact, a career counselor once informed me that my spatial visualization and finger dexterity scores were more like those of a clam than a human being. "Feel free to write songs about tools, just don't pick one up," he advised. "You'll hurt someone."

I put aside my counselor's warning and took a deep breath. "I can do this," I declared over and over while dragging the box into the house. Once inside I laid out the pieces to the pram on my living room floor. Holding the instruction manual open in one hand and scratching my head with the other, I surveyed the sea of nuts and bolts, springs, plastic fasteners, and other curious miscellanea at my feet. There were so many parts I wondered whether I was expected to assemble a pram or a Boeing 747.

Not one to back away from a challenge, I vowed I would have the pram ready to roll by the time Anne arrived home from work. But a few hours later she found me slumped on the couch, staring at the ceiling and strumming a plaintive lament on my guitar like Leonard Cohen having a bad day.

"This is a metaphor for my life," I moaned, gesturing toward the unfinished stroller lying on its side on our living room floor, its bare axle sticking up in the air, as if flipping me the bird. "I'm hopeless."

Anne smiled and sat next to me on the couch. "You're a torture to yourself," she said, patting my hand.

It wasn't the last time Anne has told me that over the course of our marriage. After all, I'm a Four on the Enneagram.
THE FOUR’S DEADLY SIN

Fours feel something important is missing from their essential makeup. They’re not sure what it is, whether it was taken from them or they had it long ago but lost it—only that the missing part is nowhere to be found and they’re to blame. The result is that they feel “different,” ashamed, uncertain about who they are and ill at ease in the world.

When I was twelve a bicycle repairman told me that my wobbly front tire was “out of true,” an expression I had never heard before but immediately recognized as describing not just the bike but myself. Out of true. That’s how a Four feels.

Fours believe they alone have this tragic flaw, so when they compare themselves to others (which is all the time), they feel inferior. As Richard Rohr puts it, Fours often feel “ruled by a hidden shame.” The joy and completeness others seem to enjoy is a daily reminder of what they themselves lack.

There’s a scene in the film version of Wuthering Heights that marvelously portrays a Four’s inner sense of abandonment, loss and separation. The main characters, Catherine and Heathcliff, are standing outside the home of their wealthy neighbors, the Lintons, who are hosting a party. With their noses pressed up against the window glass, Catherine and Heathcliff watch the elegantly dressed guests dance and laugh the night away. It’s clear from the plaintive expressions on their faces that they wish they could join the festivities, but this is as close as they’re going to get. They’re outsiders.

Like Heathcliff and Catherine, Fours yearn to join the party of life, but the absence of that fundamental something disqualifies them from getting an invitation. They’ve been exiled to the Island of Misfit Toys through some nameless fault of their own.
It's no surprise that envy is the deadly sin of Fours. They envy the normalcy, happiness and sense of comfort with which others seem to move through life. They instantly spot who has a more interesting life, a happier family or childhood story, a better job, superior taste, a more privileged education, more distinguishing clothes or unrivaled artistic talent. This envy, coupled with their pervasive sense of “irredeemable deficiency,” launches Fours on a never-ending quest to find the missing piece without which they never feel at home in the world. Sadly, by fixating on what's missing, Fours are blind to what's present in their lives, namely the many wonderful qualities they already possess.

In case you were wondering, envy and jealousy are different. Envy has to do with desiring a characteristic others possess, while jealousy occurs when we feel like something we already possess is at risk of being taken away from us. Though envy is their big sin, Fours experience jealousy as well. For them, jealousy has to do with their fear of abandonment and expresses itself in the possessiveness they feel toward the people they love.

ALL ABOUT FOURS OR ROMANTICS

As you might guess, Fours are prone to melancholy. Like the Old Testament figure Job they can steep in lament. After all, it’s hard to be chipper when the now-dated U2 song “Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For” or the Radiohead song “Creep” play like the soundtrack in the movie of your life.

Don't, however, mistake melancholy for depression. The Four's pining and wistfulness has a bittersweet quality to it. If back in my twenties you gave me the choice between going on an all-expenses-paid trip to Disney World or to the west of Ireland where I could sit atop a cliff overlooking the sea and write songs, I'd have taken Ireland in a heartbeat. As Victor Hugo, the author of Les Misérables, once wrote, “Melancholy is the happiness of being sad.”
Unfortunately, the Four's melancholy can spiral into melodrama. A Four can take a minor tiff with a friend and turn it into a Wagner opera, while a breakup with a girlfriend or boyfriend can rival a scene from *Dr. Zhivago*. All these theatrics often push away the people with whom the Four most wants to make a heartfelt connection. As is the case with every type on the Enneagram, the strategies we employ to get our needs met so often work against us.

You would think, given their desire to fit in and belong, that Fours would want to try to be like everyone else to blend in more, but that's the last thing Fours want. The need of the Four is to be special or unique. They believe the only way they can recapture or compensate for their missing piece and finally secure an authentic identity is by cultivating a unique image, one that distinguishes them from everyone else. Perhaps then people will love and accept them and they can return from their exile on the Island of Misfit Toys.

The Four's need to be special was never clearer to me than during a premarital counseling session I had with a couple named Roger and Linda. Roger, a skilled chiropractor, wasn't surprised when he learned he was a One. Linda thought she might be a Four but wasn't sure, so I described to her what Fours were like. Halfway through, the lights went on.

"Wait, there are other people just like me?" she wailed, like I'd told her she had six weeks to live.

"Well, sort of, but—"

"That can't be. I thought I was different," she said, burying her face in her hands and sobbing uncontrollably.

Most Fours could teach Anguish as a Second Language. They're drawn to all things tragic, and their talk style is lament. They can play the role of the tragic romantic, or sometimes the artist who suffers for their art, and they can always be counted on to tell sad stories. I don't talk about suffering or sad topics all the time, but when I do it doesn't seem to have the same depressive effect on me.
that it does on others. In fact, sad stories move me as long as they’re honest and not sentimental. The dark, intense emotions they arouse help me explore my own depths and find meaning. Over the years, however, I’ve learned not everyone sees the world through the same lens I do. Back in 1990 I thought director Tim Burton’s then-new film *Edward Scissorhands* sounded like the perfect movie to take a girl out to see on a first date. Turns out it wasn’t for everybody.

Fours are the most complex of all the types on the Enneagram; what you see is never what you get. There are always more layers of things going on underneath the surface. Their waters run deep. *Who am I? What’s my purpose? How does the narrative of my life fit into the grand scheme of things?* These are the angsty, existential, reading-Albert-Camus-on-a-rainy-day kinds of questions that occupy a Four.

As you can imagine, Fours wrestle with dissatisfaction. They always want the unavailable. What they have is never what they really want, and what they want is always somewhere “out there” just beyond their reach. If only they knew that what they want is inside them.

Fours don’t have feelings; they *are* their feelings. Their feelings form the basis of their identity. Who on earth would they be without them? However, Fours aren’t satisfied with having regular, run-of-the-mill feelings; they want *supersized* feelings.

As a younger man, I never met an emotion I didn’t want to embellish or intensify. If I felt good, I wanted to feel ecstatic, so I’d play a Sinatra big band record and invite ten friends to dinner at the last minute. If I felt blue and introspective, I would listen to Samuel Barbers “Adagio for Strings”—anything to adrenalize whatever I was feeling in the moment.

Given their love and overidentification with charged emotions, the Four’s mood is in a constant state of flux. They swing from one feeling state to another as deftly and quickly as a monkey swings
from one tree branch to the next. As author Tom Condon points out, a Four's issues and emotional landscape aren't much different from those of a teenager. Both share “the sense of alienation, their conscious search for identity, their preoccupation with who they are as unique from others, a tendency to romanticize death, the conviction that no one else has ever felt what they feel, and a keen awareness of both the elation and pain of love.”

So. Spot. On.

Fours' moods are like fast-moving weather patterns. In the blink of an eye they can go from up to down, back to average, then plummet, then soar and finally return to baseline. In fact, Fours can feel overwhelmed from experiencing so many feelings at one time that when it comes time to organize them, they don't know which one to pick out and talk about first. Do you see the problem? If the identity of the Four is hitched to their feelings, then it's always changing. Their sense of self never stabilizes. Until they wake up it's like watching someone riding the emotional equivalent of the El Diablo roller coaster at Six Flags.

Fours have rich imaginations and fantasy lives, where they go to reflect and pine about the past. Fours spend lots of time longingly looking back on their childhoods saying, “If only, if only,” or “What if?” When they're not fantasizing about the past, they're imagining a future when they'll live in the perfect place, have the ideal job, have the right set of friends or finally be completed by their soul mate.

Life is a Catch-22 for Fours. They want to belong in the world, but they feel deficient. So they compensate for what they sense they lack by projecting a special image, which leads to them acting out in ways that only makes fitting in harder. Take my friend Don, a remarkable songwriter and a poster-child Four. When he was in eighth grade Don and his family moved from Missouri to Kansas.

“I am solitary as grass. What is it I miss? Shall I ever find it, whatever it is?”

SYLVIA PLATH
Though only four hours apart, it might as well have been a parallel universe across the globe. After trying and failing to make friends with the popular kids at his new school, Don changed course. It began with him riding to school on a yellow moped, wearing a red helmet with toy gun sucker darts stuck to the top like a pair of antenna, his black Samsonite briefcase affixed to the back with a bungee cord. Some days he’d show up for class wearing his father’s Air Force flight suit and a pair of science goggles.

Do you see how all these eccentric, compensatory behaviors worked against Don’s desired goal of achieving social acceptance? Though sucker darts and flight suits might not be your thing, Fours are known for wearing clothes that set them apart and attract attention. Fours will make it look like they just threw it together, but trust me: it was well thought out.

The search for authenticity means everything to Fours, and they can spot a poseur from a mile away. Reading J. D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* in high school was a watershed moment for me because I so identified with the main character Holden Caulfield’s contempt for “phonies.” I can’t tell you how many Fours tell me they had the exact same reaction. We don’t like mediocrity, superficiality or people who are unsparingly optimistic all the time. My daughter reminds me that when she was sixteen she whined at the dinner table, “I just want to be happy,” to which I replied, “Where did you acquire this taste for luxury?” I like happiness, but given the state of the world, who can expect perpetual glee? Besides, people who haven’t suffered or are always happy are less interesting than shrubbery.

Fours are people who are attracted to the offbeat and avant-garde in life. They care deeply about beauty and art. They decorate their homes in a way that reflects their originality and create things that give expression to their feelings and slant vision of the world. They take up unusual hobbies and often have a wildly interesting and diverse group of friends.
All of these elite interests can give people the impression that Fours are snobbish or aloof. To be honest, we occasionally view ourselves as superior to the huddling masses who we think have shallow feelings or substandard taste, or that we're exempt from pedestrian chores like doing the laundry or raking leaves when we're preoccupied with larger questions of life, but sometimes our standing off to the side of the crowd is more an invitation to notice and come over to connect with us than anything else.

Fours find meaning best expressed through imagery, metaphors, story and symbols that can express feelings and truths that test the limits of language. As an Episcopal priest living in Nashville I see more than a few Fours on Sunday mornings. We love liturgical churches where incense, bells, statues, icons, sacraments, colored vestments and pageantry satisfy our appreciation for mystery and transcendence.

And don't get us started on martyrs. Fours love us some martyrs.

FOURS AS CHILDREN

Fours often say they felt different and misunderstood by their parents, siblings and peers growing up. My older brothers were rough-and-tumble guys who didn't shy away from the occasional playground brawl while I was physically small and more introspective. They played football and roughhoused, while I played guitar and read P. G. Wodehouse. They went to Catholic school, and I belonged at Hogwarts. I definitely grew up feeling like a bastard at a family reunion.

As children Fours seem to be both approachable and unavailable at the same time. They live with a sense that they are not like other children so they try to make a place for themselves by capitalizing on their differences. That often backfires, sabotaging their chances of getting what they really want, which is a sense of belonging.

The wounding message Fours hear all the time is "There's something off about you. No one understands you, and you'll never
belong." These kids feel lonely and misunderstood most of the time. They desperately want people to "get them," but the often eccentric ways they use to communicate who they are and how they see the world make them all the more incomprehensible to people. The present seems unbearable at times, and the future is fraught with anxiety, so they think a lot about the past. They try to figure where they lost that missing piece, how things might have been different and why God abandoned them. If you see a Four looking off with that longing, 100-mile stare and breathing glottal sighs, they're probably playing the "What if?... What if?... What if?" refrain in their head. Call it what you will, but those little brains and hearts grow up and become Fours like Bob Dylan, Meryl Streep, choreographer Martha Graham and Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman, so let's not rush to say to them, "Why can't you be like other kids?"

FOURS IN RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the stage on which the drama of a Four's life unfolds. They can be high-maintenance friends or partners. They are always scouting around for the ideal someone who will help them overcome their feeling of unworthiness and complete them. That's a lot to ask.

Fours are intense. They want to dig down to the heart to deal with whatever's going on between you and them. If they're on an emotional mountaintop, they want you to be there with them, and if they're feeling low and morbidly self-interested, they might invite you over so they can share their woes over a bottle of wine in the hope that you can fix them.

Fours can leverage trivial events or situations into opportunities to show off their Shakespearean flair. When their demand for peak emotional experiences exceeds supply, they might instigate a drama with friend or a partner, then after several weeks of silence extend an awkward apology in the form of a poem or song they've written
and performed on your voicemail. Their penchant for theatrical behavior can earn them a reputation for being drama queens or crisis kings. For some people the Four's highs are a little too high, their lows a little too low. It can be tiring.

Fours are also a challenge in relationships because they're concerned about re-experiencing the abandonment they endured or perceive they endured as children. This anxiety plays itself out in what Helen Palmer describes as a push-pull dance. Looking back, there were times, particularly in our early marriage, when I would unconsciously start to think, *Maybe I love this woman too much. What if I lose her, or worse, what if she leaves me? I couldn't endure it.*

Once this fear of abandonment set in I would unconsciously begin to push Anne away, emotionally distancing myself from her by dwelling on her faults, being vaguely critical, ruminating on what was missing in our marriage or withholding affection. After a few hours or weeks I'd wake up and panic, thinking to myself, *Oh no, I've gone too far. I adore this woman, and the last thing I want to do is lose her.* So I'd run back to pull Anne in, saying things like, *I love you so much. I'm here for you. Are you here for me?*

Another variation on the push-pull dance happens when Fours say to themselves, *If I could only find the right partner, the right therapist, the right church or the right friend, then I'd be complete.* Once Fours find this perfect someone or something they'll pull them in until they get close enough to realize that whoever or whatever it is won't fill the hole in their soul. Then the Four will push them away. Maybe they stop returning calls or showing up for

> "What does all this mean finally, I kept asking like a college kid. Why does it make me want to cry? Maybe it's that we are all outsiders, we are all making our own unusual way through a wilderness of normality that is just a myth."

*ANNE RICE*
things without explanation. But then when the same person begins to move too far away from them, they start to desire them again.

More than anything else what Fours need are partners and friends who know how to “detach without withdrawing.” You have to be able to listen without necessarily agreeing with them. If you love a Four, you can’t allow yourself to get sucked into their swirling emotional vortex. You have to remain detached and let Fours do their thing until they’re done—but whatever you do, unless they’re really crazy, don’t leave them. If you do, it only confirms their worst fear, which is that they are “irredeemably deficient.” Fours in relationship need to have their feelings acknowledged and need their loved ones to understand that melancholy is not depression. People who love Fours can help them by encouraging them to look at both the positive and negative sides of things.

As is true with all types, when Enneagram Fours are mature, healthy and self-aware they make wonderful friends, coworkers and partners. They’re hard working, generous and marvelously creative. They’ll awaken you to the beauty and transcendent nature of the world by guiding you into emotions you would otherwise never dare to feel. As artists, they can say clearly what you always felt vaguely. Meditate on van Gogh’s *Starry Night over the Rhone* or listen to Sufjan Stevens’s record *Carrie and Lowell* or Prince’s *Purple Rain,* and you’ll appreciate the Four’s gift for guiding people into or through necessary emotional waters they would never otherwise dare wade into alone.

You know how when you’re in pain you want someone to be with you who won’t try to fix you or make you feel better? When you’re in that spot, reach out to a Four. They’re more empathic than any other type. Fours instinctively know how to honor and bear witness to the pain of others. They know there’s nothing they can do to help other than be in solidarity with you until whatever afflictive emotion you’re experiencing has finished its work in you. So when your dog needs to be put to sleep and you can’t bear the idea of going to the
vet alone, don’t call a Two. They’ll show up with a casserole and a new puppy. Fours will drive you to the vet’s, stand alongside you and help hold the dog during those final moments, and give you nothing other than the ministry of their presence. There’s no such thing as a Four who can’t sit shiva. That said, Fours can be incredibly funny people. Their weird take on the world and sense of irony can produce outrageous, comedic moments.

FOURS AT WORK

As you might imagine, many Fours gravitate toward careers in the arts. A disproportionate percentage of our most beloved actors, poets, novelists, musicians, dancers, painters and filmmakers are Fours on the Enneagram. But Fours don’t exclusively choose arts-related career paths. They can be anything from a chef to a yoga teacher to a worship pastor to a web designer. Because Fours are comfortable accompanying people on their journeys through painful times, they make great therapists, pastoral counselors and spiritual directors. They’ll thrive as long as their work affords them the opportunity to express their creativity, depth of feeling and distinct style.

If you want Fours to perform ordinary or routine tasks, forget it. First, they’ll feel it’s beneath their sensibilities. Fours will procrastinate if you ask them to tackle projects that involve too many details, like writing reports or fussing around with spreadsheets. If you meet a Four whose day job is waiting tables or driving a cab, chances are it’s a side gig to support their art or some other creative passion.

To feel fulfilled, a Four’s work has to have a higher purpose, make use of and highlight their area of expertise, tap into their fertile imagination and interior life, and make it possible for them to establish emotional connections with others. They dislike uniformity, regulation, and an abundance of rules and expectations.

Fours aren’t always great on teams where their gifts might get buried in the mix. They want to be seen and appreciated for bringing
unique perspectives. They won't necessarily be resentful if you don't implement something they suggest as long as it's clear you heard and understood their idea. Sure, they're temperamental, but if you give them something special to do and let them go, they'll often outperform your expectations.

As Helen Palmer cautions, when it comes time for a Four's performance review, avoid saying things to them like, "Why can't you write copy like Andrew does?" If you do, the Four will spend the rest of the day feeling envious of Andrew instead of focusing on the copy you want them to write.

As leaders Fours make decisions on the basis of feelings and intuition, which can freak data-oriented people out, and they lead by force of personality, which can intimidate the people who work for them. Their ability to bring compatible people together and create a climate of collaboration versus competition is invaluable. They're inspiring and bring out what's special in others.

Unfortunately, the push-pull dance of the Four occurs not only in personal relationships but in the workplace as well. One day they'll treat you like Employee of the Month and the next day they may squint at you and act as if you're a recent hire. Don't worry, they'll be back—it's just part of the dance.

Finally, if you work for a Four, be real. Inauthentic or frivolous people are invisible to them.

**WINGS**

*Fours with a Three wing (4w3).* Fours are sandwiched between the Performer (Three) on the one hand and the Observer (Five) on the other. Fours with a dominant Three wing want to be both the most unique and the best. Their energy is competitive, and they have enough of the Three's image-consciousness that they are more aware than other Fours of the need to dial back their emotional intensity and quirky idiosyncrasies to be socially acceptable. With
the added energy of the Three, two things are likely: first, they will be more outgoing, which translates to overly dramatic; and second, they are usually more productive, turning dreams and ideas into reality. Both of these tendencies show the Four's desire to be noticed. Often these Fours have more frequent mood swings than Fours with a Five wing.

**Fours with a Five wing (4w5).** Fours with a Five wing are likely more introverted and unconventional. They are very concerned with uniqueness, but they have less need to be noticed by an audience than 4w3. They are quietly different, often eccentric. They spend more time alone and find it easier to let their emotions be without having to talk about them or respond with some kind of action.

**STRESS AND SECURITY**

**Stress.** Fours in stress will begin to look and act like unhealthy Twos. Here they repress their own needs and become excessively dependent on others. Craving attention, they'll need a ton of reassurance and affirmation from friends and partners, and jealousy might surface.

**Security.** Fours in security take on the traits of a healthy One, where they stop talking about their creative ideas and actually become disciplined enough to buckle down and realize them. They are more aware of what's happening in the present, more centered and calm. When Fours are connected to the positive side of One they are much more successful in relationships, knowing they can have feelings without talking about them or acting on them. This is a very mature place for Fours.

**SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION**

All their lives, Fours have felt different and separate from others. Is it any wonder they came to believe they could only recapture the love they yearn for by becoming unique and special? Their sense of identity has never been quite stable, as they've tried on one after
another like suits looking for the right fit. Fours shouldn't be angry with themselves, since everyone has peculiar, counterintuitive strategies for getting their needs met.

So first, Fours need to hear this loud and clear: there's nothing missing. It may be hard to believe, but God didn't ship them here with a vital part absent from their essential makeup. Fours arrived on life's doorstep with the same equipment everyone else did. The kingdom is inside them too. Everything they need is here.

As part of the Feeling Triad, the Four's journey toward spiritual health and vitality will involve doing some work in this realm. They must learn how to regulate and stabilize their emotions. It's hard at first, but Fours must figure out how to observe and detach from their feelings rather than exaggerate them, wallow in them or act them out impulsively. To do this Fours need to cultivate what's called equanimity, a sorely ignored virtue in the Christian tradition. Equanimity refers to the ability to remain emotionally composed and steady regardless of what's happening around us. Remember, feelings are like waves on the surface of the ocean. Don't attach or identify with them but with the vast ocean beneath them. More than once in life I've had to say to myself, I am not my feelings.

Fours shouldn't worry about settling for having ordinary, medium-sized emotions. Regular feelings don't make Fours any less special, and once they get their emotional house in order, balancing highs and lows, they'll find they actually can form and hold on to relationships with others more easily. With prayer, meditation and self-knowledge, Fours' need to be unique will mellow. For Fours an important healing message is “We see you. You're beautiful. Don't be ashamed.”

Have you ever seen the soft gaze that comes over a mother's face when she's looking into the eyes of her newborn? Fours need to remember this is how God looks at them. God sees, hears and understands them, and their identity can only be found in him. They should never settle for less.
TEN PATHS TO TRANSFORMATION FOR FOURS

1. Beware of self-absorption. Listen to others when they share stories about their own suffering, and realize it’s not just you.

2. Watch out you don’t instigate a drama or crisis with family or friends when your emotions start to feel run of the mill. All the world is not a stage, and you’re not Shakespeare.

3. Go out of your way to find and express appreciation for what’s present and unique in the people you love rather than always focusing on what’s missing.

4. Offer yourself the gift of unconditional self-friendship as you work to unwind lifelong feelings of shame and inferiority. Never give up on yourself!

5. Don’t wallow in suffering, but figure out what’s causing it and do what you can to heal it.

6. Keep an eye out for envy! You never come out ahead when you compare yourself to other people.

7. Stop fantasizing about the ideal relationship, career or community and getting stuck in longing for it. Instead, work hard for what’s possible and see it through to completion.

8. Don’t look for beauty and meaning only in the extraordinary or unusual but in the ordinary and simple as well.

9. When the past calls, let it go to voicemail. It has nothing new to say to you.

10. Don’t embellish and get swept up in your feelings. In the words of Jack Kornfield, “No emotion is final.”
WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BE A FIVE

1. I can take care of myself, and I think others could do the same.
2. I don’t always say things out loud, but in my head I am pretty sarcastic and cynical.
3. I often feel awkward around other people.
4. I’m okay if people ask me a few specific questions about myself, but I don’t like it when people want too much information.
5. I need time alone.
6. If I want people to know how I feel I will tell them. I generally wish they wouldn’t ask.
7. I think thoughts are more reliable than feelings.
8. I need a couple of days to process an experience or know how I feel about something.
9. People are wasteful. I hold on to what I have.
10. Often I find that I would rather observe than participate.
11. I trust myself. That means I think about things for a while and then I make my own decisions.
12. I can’t understand why people get together to “just hang out.”
13. I’m a listener.
14. I have to be very careful with my time and energy.
15. I get tired when I have to be with people for too long.
16. I often felt invisible as a child. Sometimes as an adult I choose to be invisible.
17. Sometimes I think I should be more generous. It’s hard for me.
18. In groups, being uninformed makes me very uncomfortable.
19. I don’t like big social gatherings. I’d rather be with a few people.
20. Material possessions don’t make me happy.
TYPE FIVE

THE INVESTIGATOR

*I think I am, therefore, I am. I think.*

GEORGE CARLIN

Healthy Fives have a long view of things. They manage an appropriate balance between participation and observation, engaging with others comfortably and demonstrating true neutrality. These Fives are likely to have depth in knowledge in several areas of their lives, and they willingly share their findings with others. They live in a world of abundance, seeing themselves as part of the whole environment instead of separate from everyone and everything.

Average Fives hold to a scarcity mentality, which leads to hoarding time, space and affection. They feel more at home observing rather than participating in the external world, and thinking substitutes for feeling. Fives in this space tend to rely on themselves rather than faith, and they carefully measure how much time they spend with others. They struggle with anything that makes them feel incompetent or incapable.

Unhealthy Fives don’t want to depend on anyone for anything. They have a defensive personality that is preoccupied with
security, independence and privacy. These Fives are trapped in believing there is not enough and often express that way of thinking with judgment, cynicism and sarcasm. When they do participate in family or social gatherings, they stay separate from others.

Bill and I met and became fast friends in seminary. He was a psychiatrist who had decided to leave behind a thriving practice to pursue a doctorate in theology. We shared a love for Flannery O'Connor, Willie Nelson and G. K. Chesterton, and we spent hours hiking, playing squash and fly fishing together. Thankfully our wives became close friends too, so they were company for each other whenever Bill and I headed off to the mountains.

Bill was the most brilliant person I'd ever met up to that point in my life. He had attended an Ivy League university where he majored in classics, graduated first in his class from medical school and then spent two years in Switzerland studying Jungian psychoanalysis. He was a man who seemed to know more than the average savant about a wide range of subjects like art, philosophy, ancient history and architecture—not to mention he could read Homer's *Odyssey* in Greek.

Once while ordering lunch at a Mexican restaurant Bill broke into conversation with the waiter in Spanish. I'm not talking "¿Dónde está el baño?"—level Spanish; I mean "I hear Gabriel Garcia Marquez's new novel is quite good. Have you read it?"—level Spanish. You could bring up any obscure topic and somehow Bill knew at least a little something about it. He probably should have backed up some of the information sloshing around in his head to one of those secure servers you hear about in the Utah desert.

During our final semester Bill and I had a conversation during which he mentioned an upcoming trip to visit his sister who suffered from a serious lifelong illness. I was stunned. I had no idea Bill even
had a sister, let alone that she was ill. In the days that followed I thought about our friendship, and it gradually dawned on me that there was a lot I didn't know about Bill. We'd spent hours hiking and fishing the Roaring Fork together, and in all that time he'd shared only a fraction of what I had told him about my own history, struggles, joys and disappointments. Fascinated to know about other people's lives and a great listener, Bill always found a way to shift the focus of conversation back to me whenever I asked him about his own life.

At the time I wasn't familiar with the Enneagram and didn't know that withholding personal information is a classic trait of Fives.

THE FIVE'S DEADLY SIN

Fives like Bill experience the world as intrusive, overwhelming and draining. It's a place where demand always outpaces supply. It asks for more than they want or think they have to give. Typically introverted and analytical, Fives don't believe they have enough inner resources or energy to meet the demands of life. They feel drained by prolonged involvement with other people or by having too many expectations placed on them. Every handshake, phone call, business meeting, social gathering or unexpected encounter seems to cost them more than it does other people. Fearful they don't have sufficient inner resources to function in the world, they detach and withdraw into the mind, where they feel more at home and confident. They monitor the amount of time they spend with others and hightail it back to the realm of the mind whenever possible to refuel.

We don't hear the word *avarice* very often, but avarice is the deadly sin of Fives. Typically we think of it as a greedy craving for money or material gain, but in Enneagram-speak it refers more to the Five's need to retain, a desire to clench and protect what little they already have rather than a desire to acquire more. Afraid there
won't be enough, Fives pare down their needs and hoard the barest essentials to ensure they can maintain a self-sufficient existence now and in the future. For Fives this not only includes withholding their many resources but their time, energy, physical space, personal information, solitude and privacy as well. Fives value autonomy and self-containment, so they stockpile these things because they never want to be put in a position where they have to depend on others to take care of them. The idea of losing their independence and self-reliance terrifies them. Needless to say, Fives are reluctant to share their prized necessities with others.

Avarice also expresses itself in the Five's excessive desire for acquiring knowledge, information, ideas, conceptual models, expertise, interesting facts and understanding for how things work. Fives look to knowledge to provide them with what most people find through relationships, such as love, comfort and support.

Fives, Sixes and Sevens make up the Fear or Thinking Triad (also called the Fear or Head Triad), and each number has a distinct strategy for finding a sense of control and safe refuge in this unpredictable world. Fives are motivated by a desire to understand. To them, gathering knowledge and mastering information are not just interesting endeavors but keys to survival. By embarking on a lifelong quest for information, often about unusual or challenging subjects, Fives believe they can insulate themselves from emotional and spiritual harm. Albert Einstein, Oliver Sacks and director David Lynch are but a few examples of Fives who departed from well-worn paths to pioneer ideas and explore subjects few others have. What better way to build self-esteem (and sometimes feel superior to others) and insulate yourself from others than to become an expert in a niche field of study?
Fives are minimalists. They don't need or want too many things. In their minds, the more possessions people have, the more energy they'll have to expend thinking about them, maintaining them or restocking them. Unfortunately, Fives' desire to keep life simple and economical can reveal itself in their appearance. They don't win fashion shows.

In the end avarice catches up to Fives. They hoard too much, emotionally speaking. Their greed for privacy and their fear of self-disclosure lead to isolation. Believing the old maxim “He who has the knowledge has the power,” they prefer to keep too much knowledge and those few necessities to themselves. Even worse, they scrim on love and affection and stingily withhold it from the people who most want to support and care for them.

**ALL ABOUT FIVES OR INVESTIGATORS**

Fives can be a bit difficult to get to know, but they do share some general characteristics that mark them as a tribe.

*Fives prefer to observe.* Fives can appear to be loners, and sometimes they are. They often strike people as emotionally distant, not entirely present or at home in their bodies, aloof and sometimes intellectually arrogant. In part this is because Fives observe life from a distance rather than jumping in and participating in it. Watching from the sidelines, along with obtaining knowledge, is their first line of defense. If they can observe and understand what’s happening maybe they’ll feel in the loop or be prepared should something suddenly be expected of them. Not all Fives are smart, but they’re all observant. You might glimpse them at a party observing the crowd from the periphery or circling a social event like an anthropologist performing work in the field, collecting and analyzing information on people and the general goings-on. This tendency to observe is not passive, however; far from it. Fives are actively watching—taking in information and filing it for future use.
Despite their tendency toward observation, many Fives are social. Some especially enjoy being with fellow knowledge lovers, the intellectually curious, or those who share their enthusiasm for a niche subject or hobby, such as rare book manuscripts, German opera or perhaps collecting *Star Trek* paraphernalia.

One benefit of all this observation from the periphery is that Fives can remain objective even if they have a dog in other people’s fights. When it comes to being neutral, Fives are like Switzerland. If I’m faced with a major life decision and my feelings are clouding my judgment, I call my friend Chris. As a Five he can sort through the facts, study the situation from every angle and then present me with a well-reasoned, unbiased case for why he thinks I should choose a particular course of action, even if it’s not what I want to hear or might somehow negatively affect his life. And because Fives are capable of being neutral, they rarely react; rather, they respond. When stewarded properly, this is an amazing gift. (Like Nines, Fives are able to see both sides to things, but because they’re not worried about causing conflict they’ll shoot straight up with you.)

**Fives collect knowledge.** Knowledge and information of almost any kind (even the strangest information) provide Fives with a sense of control and a defense against feelings of inadequacy. Fives also collect information or knowledge because they don’t want to appear foolish or uninformed, or be humiliated for not having the correct answer. They don’t want to feel incapable or inept, which is what they believe they are. Needless to say, the best and worst thing that ever happened to Fives is the advent of the Internet. Once they tumble down that bottomless wormhole, these information junkies fall into their trance of knowledge collecting and there’s no telling when they’re coming back and what new and fun information they’re hauling back.

> *“Understanding is a kind of ecstasy.”*  
> **CARL SAGAN**
with them. I saw this in action when one afternoon I called to check in on my friend Bill.

“My printer broke and I’ve been on the Internet trying to figure out how to fix it,” he said.

“Bill, how long have you been working on this?” I asked, sighing.

“Since 8:00 a.m.,” he admitted.

I looked at my watch. “It’s 5:00 p.m.! Did you think to take the printer back to where you bought it and have them repair it?”

There was a long pause.

“It’s an old Inkjet. They stopped making parts for it years ago,” he said, sheepishly.

“You’re a $200-an-hour psychiatrist and you just wasted an entire day reading up on how to repair a printer you couldn’t give away at a yard sale?” There was a pause.

“Yes, but now I know the history of printing beginning with the Gutenberg press to the present day,” he said triumphantly.

As humorous as that story may be, Fives really do end up as roadkill on the information highway. For Fives, computers and the Internet provide another way to avoid interaction with people—which is the last thing they need.

**Compartmentalization and privacy.** Compartmentalization is a signature defense mechanism against feeling overwhelmed in the life of a Five. Believing their inner resources are limited and seeking to feel in control, Fives assign their job, marriage, hobbies, friendships and other commitments to separate mental cubbyholes. This way they can determine precisely how much energy each will require to maintain, apportion it correctly and deal with one compartment at a time. Soon they discover life will not cooperate with their desire to keep the different areas of their lives partitioned off

“I cannot live without brain-work. What else is there to live for?”

*SHERLOCK HOLMES*
from each other. Similarly, Fives maintain friendships in each compartment with people who neither meet nor know about each other. A few years ago I arrived at the funeral of my Five friend Sam, and to my amazement the church was packed. Unable to find a seat, I stood at the back and wondered whether I'd stumbled into the wrong service. Apart from three or four people, I hardly knew anyone there, despite the fact that for ten years Sam and I had been part of the same men's Bible study and hung out together regularly.

At the post-service reception I learned some of the mourners were members of an astronomy club Sam had been active in for a long time. Several others were fellow crew members from a boat he raced on. I met five guys he biked with on Saturday mornings, and a bunch of bird watchers who had flown in from Baja, California. Astronomy? Blue-footed boobies? Who was this guy?

To maintain their privacy, Fives tell each group of friends or colleagues one part of their story, but they never tell any group their whole story. They won't tell you about every activity they're involved in or introduce you to the friends they've made in their different spheres. As a young Five once jokingly told Suzanne, "I'm terrified I will wake up from a coma one day and the people standing around my bed will be from all the different parts of my life. What if I don't know how long I've been unconscious and what they've told one another?"

Fives aren't ruled by their feelings. Of all types Fives are the most emotionally detached. This doesn't mean Fives don't have emotions, but that they want to have control over unpredictable feelings that might threaten to overwhelm them. For Fives, detachment means they can have an emotion and then let it go. Then they have the next emotion, and then let it go. Fives fancy themselves rational thinkers and see the rest of us as being irrational. In particular, they look at feeling-centered types like Twos, Threes and Fours and wonder how they can possibly waste so much energy on all that inner turmoil.
I'm a Four. When it comes to feelings I'm flypaper. I've had feelings show up and stick around so long I should've charged them rent. At seminary if I became worked up over something I would go to Bill, who listened patiently to me. If I became emotionally incontinent, however, he would move from looking concerned to regarding me with all the warmth of a snow owl, blinking and staring at me as if to say, "When does this end?"

Fives need to have time to process emotions. At Enneagram gatherings people will hear their number described and become emotional because they finally feel understood (or, on the flip side, embarrassed and exposed). Not so with Fives. They take in all the information and don't feel anything until they have a few days on their own to process it in private. For them life is like a knowledge salad bar. They get in line, pick what they want, then bag it up, take it home, eat it and over the next week digest it. They need extended periods of time alone where they can process their thoughts and feelings.

This delay can bewilder people of other types. When Bill and I went to see the movie Philadelphia years ago, I responded like a typical Four. When the lights came on at the end of the film I sobbed like a baby. I was all but looking for a grief counselor in the lobby, while Bill gave me that signature snow owl stare. At the time I thought he was a little heartless, but now I know Bill had to go home where he could try to think his way to his feelings.

**FIVES AS CHILDREN**

Many Fives I know say they grew up with a parent who was intrusive or engulfing, while others describe childhoods that lacked
affection or deep, meaningful interactions with their caretakers. Sensitive and quiet, these Five kids took refuge in the realm of their minds where they could fend off or hide from an overbearing parent, as well as work through their feelings out of sight.

As kids, Fives are curious, imaginative and comfortable being alone. Many are computer whizzes and voracious readers who enjoy collecting things. My Five friend Dan grew up with six rowdy siblings in a tiny house in rural Texas. To escape the mayhem he turned one-half of his father's tool shed into a haven.

"I spent a million hours in that shed reading *The Lord of the Rings* and taking things apart to figure out how they worked. It was where my friends and I made our first foray into the world of computer coding. My brothers and sisters were loud, outgoing attention seekers, while I didn't ask for much really. I couldn't have faulted my mother if one night over dinner she had looked up from her plate at me and said, 'Wait, who are you?'"

Kids who are Fives are usually quiet and self-contained. They are uncomfortable when they can't take care of themselves, so they have learned to hold on to themselves instead of others. They find answers to most of their questions within themselves, and they have far more information about things than they share.

These kids have mixed feelings about school. They are smart and enjoy learning, and they usually make good grades. However, the social demands of school are hard to read and a challenge to accommodate. It feels to them like people either want too much time with them or not enough. They are comfortable spending time alone so they would be content with just one or two friends, but they aren't adept at sharing feelings, and their need for personal space is difficult for other kids to understand.

These thoughtful kids have significant fears, so they often appear to be more serious than they are. They have to be invited to be playful, and even then it feels a bit frivolous and awkward. Deep
down, they are tender and compassionate and would like to be more open with their love and affection, but the vulnerability they feel is too much to navigate.

We all pick up wounding messages as kids. If you’re a Five, come up with words to articulate the wounding message you picked up; it will probably be some variation on the broad themes of competency and connection, like “You’re not capable of handling the demands of life and relationships. To survive you’ll need to emotionally detach and hide.”

**FIVES IN RELATIONSHIPS**

When it comes to relationships, Fives may be the most misunderstood of all types. It’s important to remember just how taxing social engagement can be for them. For example, Anne and I have a Five friend named Georgia who is a private tutor for children with profound learning disabilities. Quiet and kind, Georgia can only take so much social interaction before her tank empties and she has to go home to recharge. At large gatherings she and her husband, an outgoing Seven, will often drive two cars, as she almost always wants to leave before he does. At our weekly small group supper club Georgia often clears the table and withdraws to the kitchen to wash the dishes while the rest of us continue talking. It’s Georgia’s way, and we’ve learned not to insist she stay and socialize. Georgia isn’t cold, but connecting with her can be challenging. Like all Fives her talk style is presentational or lecture; if you ask her what she feels, she’ll tell you what she thinks. Fives have tall, thick boundaries. It’s as if Georgia’s on the other side of a three-lane highway and you have to yell over traffic to establish a real connection with her.

Fives don’t want to be sucked into your emotional dramas, which is another relational challenge for them. They aren’t cold-hearted jerks; on the contrary, they will listen and be supportive while you talk about your feelings. But they don’t want to be made to feel
responsible for those feelings. They'll take responsibility for their own emotions, and they expect you to take responsibility for yours.

Fives have to have independence. People who are in a relationship with them need to understand that this is not a preference but a necessity. Because Fives want to maintain their independence and self-sufficiency, you might wake up one Saturday morning to find your Five spouse has taken the dogs and headed off somewhere without leaving a note telling you where they have gone or when they plan to return. When they surface several hours later you might have to ask them where they went or else it might not occur to them to tell you.

People in a relationship with a Five have to recognize and honor the Five's need for privacy and times of solitude. At home Fives usually have a space where they can withdraw to recharge. A Five friend who is a huge audiophile built out a room in his basement where he goes to read, smoke cigars and listen to his collection of John Coltrane records. His wife calls it "the hermitage." For Fives on a tighter budget, their retreat might be a leather chair tucked away in a nook or a simple workbench in the basement. Often their special space is littered with books, papers, years of National Geographic magazines and odd curios picked up while traveling. But this is their space and their mess, and it's unlikely a Five will express appreciation if you trespass on it without a very good reason.

The high value Fives place on privacy also extends to keeping their cards close to the vest. Though Fives want to get together or be included, they rarely initiate social interactions, so I was surprised when my friend Adam called at the last minute to ask whether I wanted to join him for dinner.

"If it were any other night I'd love to get together, but tonight is Anne's birthday and the kids and I are surprising her by taking her to that great Italian place she loves over on 12 South," I explained.

"Okay," he said. "Some other time." And he hung up.
Later I contemplated what would have happened if our roles had been reversed. What would Adam have said if I had called to ask if he wanted to join me for dinner, but he had a conflict?

He'd say, "I can't." Full stop. He wouldn't tell me why he couldn't go—where he was going instead, what he was doing or who he was doing it with. That's private. He would provide only the facts I needed to know and no more. By comparison, I shared "insider information" about my family's plans. I even gave him the restaurant's dang address. Fives may not be aware of it, but when people share these trivial life details it's a way of leaving a door open for the other person to talk about what's happening in their life. Adam might have said, "How are the kids? Does Anne still enjoy her job? I contracted food poisoning from the calamari at that restaurant, so don't order it." This may sound like mundane stuff, but disclosing even little things about our lives is like Miracle-Gro for relationships. By keeping everyone on a need-to-know basis, Fives can make their friends and even their partners wonder, "Do I really know this person? Will I ever know this person?" Like flowers, relationships don't grow in the dark. Relationships bloom in the light of self-disclosure.

Spouses of Fives sometimes tell Suzanne and me they feel emotionally neglected. The husband of a Five once told me, "My wife and I have been married for thirty years and adore each other, but she's so independent and mentally self-sustaining that I know she could adjust to life without me better than I could without her. It's taken time for me to be okay knowing she doesn't need me as much, or at least in the same way, as I need her."

Fives need and enjoy being with other people, but don't ask them if they'd like to "hang out." A Five wants a reason for getting together like a birthday party, a movie or to go with you to an antique car show, a subject about which they have no knowledge—yet. But if the agenda is just hanging out, they'd rather do that alone.
To further understand Fives, let’s use a car analogy. Imagine you have a tank in which you keep all the fuel you need to interact with people all day. Fives have smaller tanks than other numbers, so as the day goes on they’re checking that gauge more often and becoming increasingly aware that they’re running out of fuel and need to get home.

There are also amazing benefits to being in relationships with Fives. They’re not emotionally needy, don’t have impossible expectations of the people they love and typically stay calm when the folks around them are all falling apart. You can also share your darkest secrets with Fives and know they will hold them in sacred trust. Like a priest, they will keep whatever you tell them under the “seal of the confessional,” in part because they know how important such confidentiality would be to them if the shoe were on the other foot.

Fives won’t often tell you they love you, but this doesn’t mean they don’t. I spend sixty days a year speaking at retreats and conferences. One or two times a year Bill will visit my website to check my calendar and ask whether he can meet me where I’m speaking, even if it involves his having to get on a plane and he’s already heard me give the talk before. That’s love, people.

Love is dangerous and demanding. For a relationship to flourish, two people have to openly share not only their thoughts but also their feelings, which is a challenge for Fives. It requires them to share space, exert less control over the time they have alone, sacrifice privacy, and cope with another person’s overwhelming emotions. To make it work, they have to give up a large measure of the security, independence and privacy that’s held their life together since they were children. Their partners

“A good marriage is one in which each partner appoints the other to be the guardian of his solitude, and thus they show each other the greatest possible trust.”

RAINER MARIA RILKE
and friends can help them by being patient while Fives learn to identify and express their feelings. It’s no small thing when a Five takes the risk of exchanging secrets and commits to walk beside another person. Celebrate it every day if a Five has chosen to undertake this journey with you. Chances are you are more special than you know.

**FIVES AT WORK**

In the professional world Fives are valued for their cool, clear, pioneering, analytical minds. From Microsoft founder Bill Gates to novelist Jean Paul Sartre, from physicist Stephen Hawking to primatologist Jane Goodall, Fives are well represented on any list of the world’s greatest innovators and thinkers.

Not every Five can be a titan of industry or a Nobel Prize winner, so they may choose careers as engineers, scientific researchers, librarians, professors, computer programmers or psychologists. Because they remain calm in a crisis, they make great emergency room doctors and EMTs. Because they’re masters of observation, Fives can evolve into magnificent artists. Author Joan Didion, painter Georgia O’Keefe, lead singer of Radiohead Thom Yorke and actor Anthony Hopkins are but a few of the Fives whose artistic vision has left a mark on the world.

Regardless of what they do or how successful they are, what Fives need most at work is predictability. If Fives know what demands will be placed on them every day, they’ll know how to wisely apportion their inner resources so they’ll make it home without running out of gas.

To this end, Fives don't like meetings. If they have no choice but to attend one, they will want to know precisely when it begins and ends, who else will be there, and what the agenda is going to be. When a meeting is finished Fives are eager to go, so if the person leading it asks if anyone has any last questions and someone’s hand shoots up in the air, Fives will bury their face in their hands and mutter, “Give me a letter opener and this will all be over in a flash.”
In leadership positions, Fives can overfocus on a project and end up not supporting or paying enough attention to other people. To maintain privacy and to guard their inner resources, they set up lines of defense between themselves and others. They'll gladly surrender their prestigious corner office with the glass walls to an image-conscious Three colleague and seek out another spot where people will have trouble finding them—like in the basement, since they hate to be interrupted while they're working. If they're high enough on the corporate ladder they will have an administrative assistant and a few interns who will run interference and insulate them from having to meet or talk to too many people.

Fives would rather you give them a project, tell them when it's due, and allow them to accomplish it however and wherever they choose. Many of the traditional rewards for excellence at work aren't primary motivators for Fives, who aren't typically materialistic and aren't always angling, like Threes can be, for a promotion or a raise. If you want to recognize and reward Fives for a job well done, give them more autonomy. Independence is what they crave, even when they're working on a team. They are generally impatient with group decisions because they don't like long discussions or having to listen to people free-associate ideas.

Fives can successfully hold positions that require making presentations or making speeches, so long as they have time to prepare. They don't like to be unexpectedly put on the spot or asked to spontaneously say or do something. If Fives know what's expected of them and they're kept well informed about what's happening, they perform great.

**WINGS**

Fives are wedged between the passionate, intense Four on the one side and the loyal but anxious Six on the other. Either or both the qualities of those types can be available to the Five.
**Fives with a Four wing (5w4).** These Fives are more creative, sensitive, empathetic and self-absorbed than 5w6s. Independent and often eccentric, 5w4s are not sure what to do with their feelings but would rather process them alone than in a group. Think actor Robert De Niro, photographer Annie Leibovitz or physicist Albert Einstein. Not bad company.

Fives with a Four wing are more likely to experience melancholy. The connection to Four’s energy and depth of emotion helps these Fives be more tender with themselves and less emotionally guarded around others. Healthy 5w4s are able to communicate their own feelings to the people they love.

**Five with a Six wing (5w6).** Fear plays a more prominent role in the life of a 5w6 than in the life of a 5w4. They are more anxious, cautious and skeptical, but they’re also more social and loyal than 5w4. Fives with six wings live more in their minds and will question authority and the status quo.

Fives with a Six wing are also more relational. With a Six influence Fives are more aware of their own fear, which increases their interest in forming alliances with others in the various communities they are a part of. They are often socially awkward, and they remain skeptical of others, but getting to know people is more comforting than disconcerting.

**STRESS AND SECURITY**

**Stress.** In stress Fives instinctually move to the not-so-healthy side of Seven, where they will hoard and cling more tightly to things, which only makes their world feel smaller and smaller. When this happens they turn their attention away from the needs of others and focus almost solely on their own need for safety and independence.

Here also Fives become frivolous, disorganized and distracted to the point of not being able to complete tasks. They’re still living in their heads, but they stop short of thinking through the
consequences of their behavior. In this space Fives can become rude, condescending and disconnected.

**Security.** When Fives feel secure they move toward the positive side of Eight, which is a gigantic move! When this happens Fives become infinitely more spontaneous, outspoken and physically present. The difference is so striking people will say, "What’s gotten into Holly? She’s suddenly so energetic, confident and talkative." Fives who want to know and experience life abundant without it costing them more than they can afford to lose can achieve that on the high side of Eight.

**SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION**

When it comes to spiritual work, Fives have an advantage over the rest of us. They don’t cling to their ego with as tight a grip. Their love for solitude makes them natural contemplatives. They are attracted to simplicity, forming fewer attachments to worldly things and letting go more readily when they do. People of other numbers who are on the road to spiritual transformation might envy the Five’s inner calm and detachment.

When they exaggerate it, however, detachment ceases to be a virtue. For Fives it risks devolving into disconnection from their feelings to prevent injury and depletion. It makes them cold, aloof and relationally unavailable—observers rather than participants in life. From a Christian perspective that’s not detachment. “The ultimate goal of detachment is engagement,” writes David Benner. “We detach so we can re-order our attachments and then, aligned and cooperating with the inflow of Grace into our deepest self, we can allow love to pass through us to touch and heal others in the world.” To mature spiritually, Fives will need to learn this pattern of detaching in order to engage.

Fives need to practice connecting to their emotions in real time. A person can’t celebrate Christmas on Monday and not feel it until Friday! If everything I’ve said in this chapter until now makes Fives feel miserable, I encourage them to feel that misery now, not next
month. Once they master first attaching to feelings and then letting them go, they can teach others how to do it, because the rest of us get entangled in our feelings way too much.

Fives who seek to be free of their default patterns should recognize how often their actions are driven by fear. Like Sixes and Sevens, Fives’ deadly sin is fear, and they’re motivated by a desire for security. Aware that they have limited resources, they wonder how much information, how much affection, how much energy, how much privacy, how much money, how much anything they can afford to give away and how much they should conserve for themselves.

How different would Fives’ lives be if they embraced a mindset of abundance? This mentality says that when we give, we receive. This is the algebra of the gospel. What if Fives trusted that there was more than enough to go around in life, so they could give more away?

To some extent, Fives also have to become comfortable with dependence, or at least interdependence. Fives have been motivated to live so self-sufficiently that they never have to depend on anyone else. Yet there is a humility that comes when we allow other people to take care of us. For Fives, establishing so many boundaries that they never have to experience depending on anyone else sets them up for a great loss. It also deprives those who love them of the joy of caring for them.

TEN PATHS TO TRANSFORMATION FOR FIVES

1. Allow your feelings to arise naturally and experience them in the present moment, and then you can let them go.

2. Recognize when you’re succumbing to a scarcity mentality by hoarding affection, privacy, knowledge, time, love, money, material possessions or thoughts.

3. When something occurs that seems to elicit emotions in other people, try to feel with them in the moment rather than saving those feelings to process later.
4. Try sharing more of your life with others, trusting they won't misuse that information.

5. Venture out of your comfort zone and share more of who you are and what you have with others.

6. Try to remember that you don't have to have the answers for everything. You won't look foolish, just human.

7. Call a friend and offer to hang out, for no reason at all other than to enjoy each other's company.

8. Allow yourself some material and experiential luxuries. Buy a new mattress! Travel!

9. Take up yoga or another activity that will connect you with your body. Overcoming the disconnect between your body and head will be life changing.

10. Even when you're unsure of yourself, jump into a conversation rather than withdrawing from it.

6 TYPE TWO: THE HELPER

If Twos are going to learn how to attend to their own needs: Helen Palmer, *The Enneagram: Exploring the Nine Psychological Types and Their Inter-Relationships in Love and Life* (Sounds True Audio Learning Course, 2005), 8 CDs or audio download, www.soundstrue.com/store/the-enneagram-3534.html.

7 TYPE THREE: THE PERFORMER


8 TYPE FOUR: THE ROMANTIC


"detach without withdrawing": Ibid.

avoid saying things to them like, "Why can't you write copy like Andrew does?": Ibid.
9 TYPE FIVE: THE INVESTIGATOR


10 TYPE SIX: THE LOYALIST

192 "If everything seems to be going well": Steven Wright, Good Reads quotes, www.goodreads.com/quotes/77987-if-everything-seems-to-be-going-well-you-have-obviously.


204 "All shall be well, and all shall be well": Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, ed. Grace Warrack (London: Methuen, 1901).

11 TYPE SEVEN: THE ENTHUSIAST


210 "I Whistle a Happy Tune": Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, *The King and I*, 1951.


218 because they treasure their independence: Ibid.
