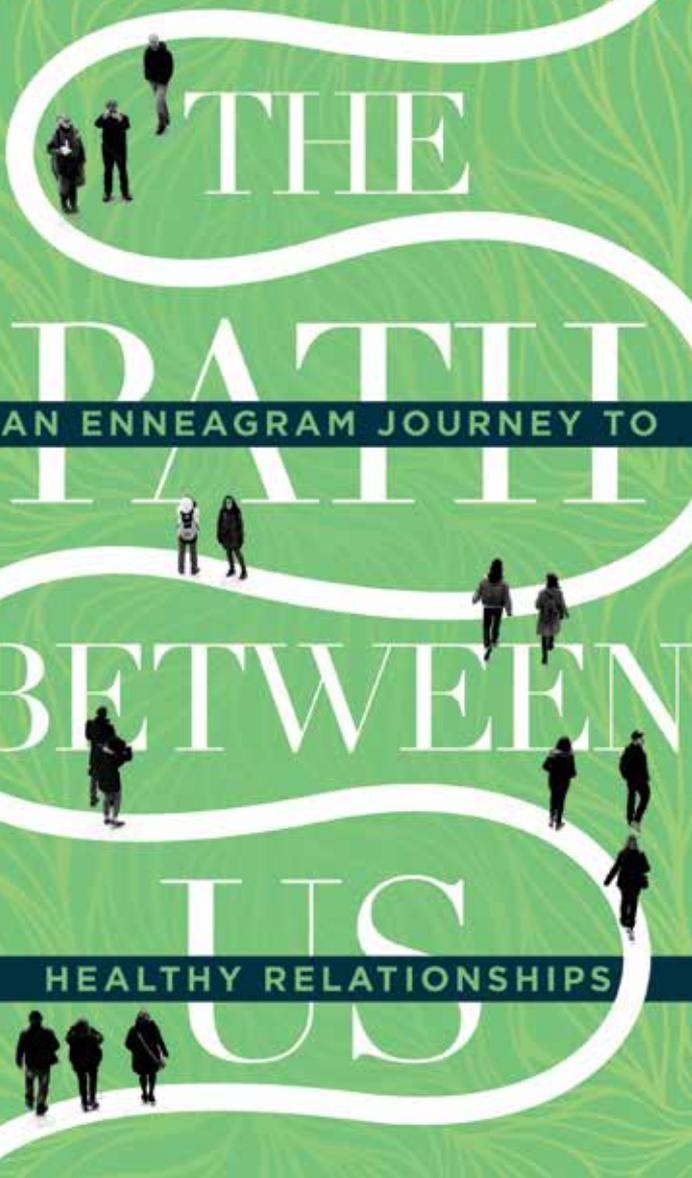


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8s

VULNERABILITY IS NOT WEAKNESS



*M*elissa called and asked if we could talk about a problem at work, so I suspected it was in regard to her relationship with a colleague at her new job. The head of recruiting at a high-tech startup, Melissa is smart, creative, and very successful. She's a good leader, but like other Eights she often struggles in relationships with her co-workers. Eights function best when they can choose who they work with, but Melissa inherited her staff when she joined the company. From earlier conversations, I knew that she would not have chosen Emily.

Melissa had previously told me how tired she was of hearing Emily whine about the database system. "Instead of whining, why can't she just learn it!" Melissa usually worked fifty-five hours a week and was angry that Emily struggled to work forty, often missing work-related events for her aging mother's doctor appointments, her granddaughter's ballet recitals, and other personal conflicts.

When I answered the call from Melissa, she was already operating at an increased volume, as is typical for Eights. Like other Eights, who seldom have time for or any interest in small talk, she jumped right in. “It’s about Emily. We just completed her six-month performance review. I started by asking her if she had anything she wanted to talk about before we discussed her evaluation. I thought that was such a great way to start—you know, kind of personal.”

But Melissa was not prepared for what she heard next. With a shaky voice, Emily said, “I don’t think you respect me. You are always so impatient and demanding. Sometimes I even feel bullied by you. Other people I have talked to said they have felt that too.”

I could tell by her tone that Melissa was still angry, but I also knew she was hurt. I asked how she responded to Emily.

“Well,” she said, “I paused and then asked some questions.”

“What kind of questions?”

“I wanted her to give me objective proof for her feelings, so I asked her what happened to make her feel that way. I told her I had been very honest with her about my expectations and her responsibilities. I tried to explain to her that our department is very important to this phase of building the business and that we have a responsibility to recruit the right people for crucial positions or the company will fail.”

There was a long pause, and then Melissa asked me very sincerely, “Suzanne, why can’t people *just do their jobs?*”

What's Going on Here?

Which person in this story do you identify with most? Why?

Is Melissa a bully? Why or why not?

What does Emily really want from Melissa?

How can the Enneagram explain what's happening here?

Through the lens of the Enneagram, this story is about so much more than an aggressive boss and an intimidated or ineffective employee. It's about two people who see the job and their working relationship—and the world—from completely different perspectives. Melissa is an Eight. Emily is not. Melissa thought she was encouraging Emily to fulfill her professional responsibilities, so she was blindsided by Emily's emotional outburst. Although they managed to finish the performance review, Melissa shared with me that she had no confidence that things would change. Eventually, Emily asked to be transferred.

Most Enneagram numbers broker peace with others as they go through the day—bridging emotional distance with a quick exchange, observation, or compliment before each going their own way. Unfortunately, Eights don't feel the obligation that prompts this kind of relational cleanup, so they usually move on to the next thing. It can feel like Eights don't care about us, but the fact is they simply aren't thinking about us—they are thinking about what needs to be done next.

In this story about Melissa and Emily, like so many stories that make up our days, we know what happened but we don't know why. The Enneagram helps us understand the dynamics, motivations, and experiences of all nine numbers and their interactions and relationships with one another.

THE WORLD OF EIGHTS

An Eight's first response to anything is "What am I going to *do*?" This can be tricky in relationships because many other people initially ask, "What do I *think*?" or "What do I *feel*?" Eights tend to get along very well with Threes and Sevens, who are also all about doing. These three numbers struggle with others who seem to be burdened by feelings or slow to respond because they think too long before they act.

In the context of relationships, doing as a first response often seems aggressive to other Enneagram numbers who are

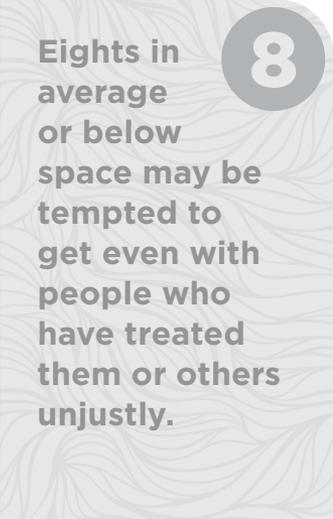
**Every number
avoids something.**

more oriented toward thinking or feeling. So Eights need to stop long enough to consider that for some, thinking must come before acting, and for others, feelings determine what action will be taken and when. This isn't just a matter of preference—it has to do with how we see. For example, Fives and Sixes think it's outrageous and irresponsible to take such quick action since they are so sure people need to evaluate multiple options and outcomes first.

But any kind of pause is difficult for Eights since they want to have control over what's happening inside of them and in the world. Sometimes Eights act too quickly, leaving no room for other perspectives or to allow others to offer what they have to give. Even so, people still look to Eights to make decisions and lead, expecting them to slow their pace, explain the plan, and ask for suggestions. With a focus on doing, none of that would occur to an Eight. Todd Dugas, an Eight who serves as the executive director of a recovery center, explains it this way:

I used to feel resentment toward my staff because they were not doing their part. And then when I thought about it, I realized I never trained them or told them what I really wanted. I just gave them the basics and expected that they would expand on that somehow. Maybe that's because sitting down, interacting with them, and really having a conversation was a struggle. I also struggled with other staff members who were *just* barely doing their job. I used to get rid of those people all the time.

Eights need to pay attention when they move so quickly in a relationship that others can't keep up. Others will often go



Eights in average or below space may be tempted to get even with people who have treated them or others unjustly.

along, but it's likely because they don't feel like they have a choice. And this often results in resentment.

One Eight said: "The biggest misunderstandings we have at home are centered around times when I have expectations of others that I haven't clearly articulated. When they are not operating at the same speed or intensity as I am, I get really frustrated, really fast. Explaining what we are doing and why can be burdensome. But at times I need to include the others in my family plan." The truth is, when Eights choose inclusion it requires very little time and the payoff is significant: it alleviates misunderstanding and creates significant connections.

VULNERABILITY AND SELF-PROTECTION. Eights avoid vulnerability to protect themselves emotionally. As children, others made comments about them such as, "She's so bossy" or "He doesn't listen to anybody." As adults, they are often labeled as aggressive, so others frequently adopt a defensive stance in relationships with them, feeling a need to protect themselves in some way. The irony is that Eights also feel the need to protect themselves, but they do it by avoiding helplessness, weakness, and subordination.

In her now-famous TED talk on the subject of vulnerability, Brené Brown, a leading researcher and writer, said, "Vulnerability is the idea that in order for connection to happen we have to allow ourselves to be seen—really seen." Eights want to feel connected to those who are close to them as much as any other number. But they have a big problem:

one of the very few things they are afraid of is being exposed in moments of weakness, limitation, or indecision. If Brown is right and connection depends on our ability to be vulnerable, and being vulnerable suggests we are willing to be seen, then that relational motivation is key. I think Eights feel as exposed as the rest of us do at times. They just express it differently.

An Eight who is married and the mother of four explained her vulnerability in her family relationships:

I will want to trust you with everything even though that is hard for me. I will be in your corner all the time. I will fight *for* you more than I will fight *with* you. I will surprise you with my mushy tears and maybe even eventually I won't try to cover them up. I will feel angry at you when you are being angry at me, and I'll have to work really hard to find the feelings underneath that. I will love you beyond reason and that might scare me in the beginning.

Although Eights can be vulnerable in close relationships, they always struggle with their discomfort of expressing softer feelings.

Despite their best efforts to protect themselves, Eights, like all of us, have experiences in life that they are not prepared for. In those times, when they feel emotionally exposed, Eights allow us to see them. If only briefly, we are given an opportunity to know them in a new way. In such

moments, the Eights in my life have taught me that they are not intending to be aggressive—they are just trying to protect themselves.

When my daughter Joey was a little girl—six or seven years old—she would get up in the middle of the night to open and rewrap the Christmas packages under the tree that had her name on them. She did such a good job that it took us a couple of years to catch on. When we talked with her about it she explained that she didn't like surprises. "When I open my presents, I might cry or laugh or say the wrong thing. I don't like that. I want to know everything before it happens." Not knowing made her feel vulnerable. She is now nearly forty with children of her own, and she still wants to know everything before it happens.

Eights abhor weakness in themselves and those close to them, so if they can't distinguish between being vulnerable and being weak, they avoid both. But it's very difficult to be in a relationship with someone who can't or won't be vul-

8

Eights have good boundaries for protecting their own space, but may be unaware that they are getting into others' business.

nerable. It makes others feel as if their presence doesn't matter, like they don't have anything to offer, and that they could never be trustworthy enough. Good, solid relationships are built in vulnerable times, so Eights need to work on that confusion

about weakness and vulnerability by staying connected to others when they're down or when things don't line up, and then sharing with others what means the most, what frightens them the most, and what they consider most important.

In my experience, most Eights are old souls. They arrive on the planet with an unexpected wisdom that shows itself so gracefully you could almost miss it. They tell me that when they were little they were very uncomfortable around others who seemed to be weak and halfhearted, so they made the decision to be strong. Many of them take responsibility for themselves and others at a very early age because they are born leaders. But this chosen strength costs them their innocence. If you're an Eight, you will spend part of your adult life trying to regain your capacity to encounter the world without having to protect yourself from it. The ability to do that will come to you only in the context of safe relationships.

STANDING UP FOR THE UNDERDOG. Eights' preoccupation with self-protection means they are the best equipped to challenge oppressors and stand up for people who aren't as strong as they are. I love this about the Eights I know. Their concern about injustice and their belief that they are responsible for protecting the innocent is both powerful and gentle at the same time. However, Eights often miss out on what's in it for them; when Eights engage with those who are marginalized, they need to be aware that the giving can be mutual and relational.

Social awareness is the ability to pick up on the feelings of others and understand what life looks like from their point of view. This kind of awareness requires listening and observing. It's foundational for a respectful and meaningful exchange between two people even if the relationship is not ongoing. When Eights are busy getting things done on behalf of someone else, there's a good chance they are solving the problem without much social awareness. There's a delicate balance here that all numbers need to work on. Twos, for example, pay too much attention to being socially aware. But relationships are defined by the way two or more people are connected, so we need to be reminded that all relationships require a balance of give-and-take for both parties.

INTENSITY AND ANGER. In Enneagram wisdom, the Eight's passion is lust, which is best defined as intensity. They are all-in people full of high energy and an impatient drive toward action. When things don't line up or obstacles appear, Eights often respond with anger. Paradoxically, they believe anger has been helpful to them in making their way in the world, but I suspect Eights use anger to cover softer, more tender feelings. The problem seems to be, in part, that after a while they have trouble accessing any feelings *other than* anger, something that is often detrimental to their relationships.

When we remember the Eight's concerns about appearing to be weak, it makes sense that they would automatically mask sadness, fear, and vulnerability with anger as a way of protecting

themselves. However, speaking for the other numbers on the Enneagram, Eight anger is often perceived as a barrier, not a boundary. The less aggressive types (Two, Four, Six, Nine) tend to be guarded in their encounters with Eights, and when that happens, the truth and authenticity Eights look for in relationships are less likely to become reality.

Wendi, a friend who is an Eight and teaches elementary school, told me about a debate she had with a colleague regarding the placement of kids in kindergarten and first grade classes. Wendi thought they had reached a consensus about what would be best for the children and that the problem was solved. When she found out their agreement had not been honored, she was very upset. She stormed down for an angry confrontation that left a huge rift in their relationship. But in the wake of her righteous anger, Wendi considered her actions:

If I had waited and processed what was happening in a calm and thoughtful way before I talked to her, perhaps I could have presented my thoughts and feelings in a way that she could hear them. And if not, then at least I wouldn't have to reexamine my behavior afterwards. I'm learning to stop and think before I go talk to anyone when I am angry. I want to be respected and seen as level-headed and smart and wise and mature. Overreacting leaves me in a place of feeling like I need to justify my behavior.

Eights rarely regret confrontation. They rely on the energy they get from their need to be independent, but they often miss the reality that their aggression overshadows their intent.

The real problem is that lust, intensity, and anger masquerade as expressions of deep emotions, so Eights are fooled into believing that they are in touch with their feelings when that is often far from the truth. It takes an awareness of intention for Eights to recognize, feel, and then name their feelings.

DISCONNECTION FROM FEELINGS. Eights have an abundance of passion for everything and nothing in particular, often substituting intensity for other feelings such as joy or sadness or vulnerability or embarrassment. An encounter with tender feelings such as hurt or fear elicits a consistent and quick response of decisive action in order to feel strong again. Any sense of weakness or dependence is avoided at all cost. Problems arise because relationships thrive on *interdependence*—frequent but unplanned mutuality between people who are in relation to one another. Eights need to realize that tender feelings are not a sign of weakness.

The illusion of control is shattered when Eights are confronted with feelings they can't repress. We've all seen it: a display of tenderness for someone close who is both fragile and strong, a love for one whose life is marginalized but whose response to life is not, a deep affection for another who

overcomes indescribable odds with regularity. Eights aren't afraid to feel—they're afraid their feelings will betray them.

FEAR OF BETRAYAL. In my workshops, Eights talk a lot about being betrayed, frequently naming some of the people who have been disloyal to them. I listened to Eights tell these stories of betrayal for a long time before I began to say things like, "I wouldn't call that betrayal—don't you think it could have been a mistake?" Or, "I think that was a poor choice, but I wouldn't call it betrayal." When I reframe these events for Eights, they seem surprised. It doesn't occur to them that what they experience as betrayal might be something else, or might be very different if viewed from the other person's point of reference.

One afternoon at a family birthday party, I had a chance to talk about betrayal with Joey, our resident Eight. Sitting side by side, feet in the swimming pool with refreshing beverages in hand, I asked her to explain betrayal to me from her perspective. Her answer was simple: "I experience betrayal every day because people who don't know me make a judgment about who I am and then feed that judgment with their own feelings without ever making an effort to know me or connect with me in any way."

The last thing an Eight wants is to hurt someone they love. When they discover they have hurt you, their inner response is far from mechanical. Even if they maintain their composure, they suffer greatly and are devastated to learn they have taken advantage of your vulnerability in any way.

STRESS AND SECURITY

One of the strengths of the Enneagram is that it's not static like so many other systems of its kind, and yet it's predictable. Depending on where someone is on their journey and the way circumstances unfold, each number can be in the healthy, average, or unhealthy range. When Eights are healthy and at their best in relationships, they are positive, playful, and generous. They can be very accepting and willing to hang in there with whatever is going on. In this space they are committed,

truthful, and supportive of others as long as others are committed to success.

We all have the same initial response to stress: we exaggerate behavior in our number.

At their most unhealthy, Eights are combative, possessive, arrogant, uncompromising, and quick to find fault. An Eight explained that the neediness of her children is something that really sets her off: "I tell my kids, get it together, guys. You are better than this. I didn't get four degrees to do your laundry. I'm raising men, not weak little boys. Take care of yourself!" However, Eights can learn to recognize that neediness in others is usually an attempt for connection, and that there is something to be gained by reaching back.

Excess in any number is not a good thing. Eights in stress respond with aggression, intensity, and palpable self-assurance. The primary defense mechanism of Eights is to deny all feelings that crop up from time to time. It pushes them to

work harder and do more, when what they need to do is stop.

I think it's fair to say that what most of us experience as stressful—deadlines, confrontations, arguments, crises, the problematic behavior of others, or events that seem to be spinning out of control—Eights consider comfortable. They wade right into situations like these with excitement and resolve. One Eight explained, “I walk in like the Terminator, looking to identify friend or foe. Who is against me? Who is for me? That's how I protect myself. I want to look the part so nobody can control me. When I put on my highest heels, I'm 6'1", so I can look down on everyone in the room.”

For the sake of our relationships it's important to acknowledge that some—perhaps most—Eights actually believe they can change reality to conform to their way of seeing things. Now as you're reading this, don't say to yourself, “That's crazy!” Remember

8s and Others

1s: Eights are committed and energetic like Ones, but they don't share the same focus: Ones generally focus on the problem, and Eights focus on the solution.

2s & 5s: Eights share a line with both Twos and Fives on the Enneagram, moving to Two in security and Five in stress. Eights need tenderness, affection, and awareness of the feelings of others from Twos. Eights need a Five's ability to move slowly, gathering necessary information before acting, as well as the ability to appreciate times when neutrality is of value.

3s & 7s: Eights do really well with Threes and Sevens because they all think fast, work hard, play hard, get a lot done, and are not prone to tender feelings. These three types are all oriented to the future and energetic in going after things, and make great coworkers and colleagues.

4s: Eights have a difficult time being present to the mood changes of a Four. But once Eights learn to allow for that they may discover that Eights and Fours actually have a lot in common: they are the most intense and passionate numbers on the Enneagram, and they are both committed to being honest regardless of cost.

6s: Eights have a hard time being patient enough to wait for Sixes. Sixes are methodical so they see things in real time, whereas Eights usually focus on the future. But when Eights listen to Sixes and wait for a response, it can be a win/win.

8s: Eights with Eights represent a lot of passion, so one of them will need to focus inward at times and responsibilities will need to be divided. Keep in mind that an Eight with a Seven wing is very different from an Eight with a Nine wing.

9s: An Eight can have a fascinating relationship with a Nine when both are mature and in healthy space. Nines need to have their own energy, agenda, and understanding of what is theirs to do; when Eights willingly and intentionally follow Nines, that can be a beautiful thing.

Eights think your way of seeing and doing things is crazy too. That's one of the reasons we need the Enneagram.

Eights deny their own limits, which is why they're either all in or not in at all. Unfortunately, without Enneagram knowledge or some life experience they deny others' limits too. Many Eights even deny that *there are limits*. The stress this causes takes its toll on them and on their relationships with others.

In stressful situations, male Eights simply refuse to stop. They expect more and more from themselves and from others, and anyone who can't keep up is suspect. If you live with or work with an Eight, then you know their anger can fill a room. It's daunting for people who are new to the experience. When male Eights fail, as they will at some point, they sometimes retreat, but more often they keep going and doing. I've heard many stories from male Eights who have been diagnosed with stress-related illnesses

such as heart attacks and strokes because they couldn't accept that there is a time and a place for stopping.

When female Eights are highly stressed, they are bossy and strident. Their anger is unmistakable and they refuse to be appeased. But unlike their male counterparts, when they eventually hit the wall, they tend to slide down it, cry for a while, and go to bed. If they are fairly healthy, they might take their leave with a word about returning. If not, they leave no doubt in anyone's mind that they are angry and that they will be unavailable for an undisclosed amount of time.

Although Eights thrive on stress, that excess energy can reach a point of diminishing returns. When this happens, they intuitively draw from Fives and pull back from the world. That's a good thing. It offers space to think things through and reengage with life and others from a better place. When Eights are feeling secure they have access to some Two energy and behavior. That is good because, in this space, they connect emotionally with others in a way that allows for an exchange of tenderness that is often covered up by aggression.

LIMITATIONS IN RELATIONSHIPS

It would be a misunderstanding to think that Eights don't desire and value relationships—they do. But they don't need or have time for many relationships, so they aren't usually friends with coworkers. Keep in mind that Eights are collegial and good team players. It's just that meaningful social connections are usually lived out in other areas of their lives.

Eights prefer a few friendships with people who also value independence. To be friends with an Eight, you will need to be trustworthy and safe, and the relationship needs to be reliable but free of expectations. One of my apprentices says, “It is literally *impossible* for me to have a meaningful relationship with someone who doesn’t have the self-confidence to stand up for themselves.”

Many Eights experience a lack of balance that is the result of an overemphasis on doing and an unconscious habit of ignoring feelings—theirs and others’. But that focus on doing can cost them dearly.

As the oldest of three boys and the only Eight in his family, Jeff was well-suited for making decisions for his parents as they aged, but he didn’t necessarily want to do it alone. Though Jeff wanted his brothers to be involved, as time passed, he had more and more responsibility and they had less. He assumed they couldn’t or wouldn’t do what needed to be done and ended up having his mother move in with him after her health declined.

Following the well-established family pattern, Jeff handled everything after his mother’s death: he chose the funeral home and casket, wrote the obituary for the newspapers, and gave the eulogy. After the service, Jeff’s twelve-year-old daughter asked why he never cried. In that moment of endings and beginnings and vulnerability, Jeff gathered her up and hugged her fiercely. But he couldn’t tell her what he

believed to be true: if he had let his emotions take over, there would have been no one to do what needed to be done in burying his mother. I think many Eights live a lifetime believing they must ignore their softer feelings in order to get the job done.

The truth is that what we see and the way we see also determine what we miss. I'm convinced that Eights have no idea how their unwillingness to be vulnerable affects other people. Eights don't know that their take-charge aggressiveness makes others feel like their presence is unimportant or unneeded. Eights don't realize that many of us take their lack of vulnerability to mean they don't trust us with who they really are, warts and all. Long-term, committed relationships are built, in part, by walking beside someone, neither leading nor following, in celebration and suffering.

Eights are usually in charge no matter where they are or who they're with. So it's important for them to remember that relationships are built on mutuality and collaboration, and both are easy to dismiss for those who are always in leadership mode. One of my favorite people, writer and pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber, once told me about how she had to be mindful of how much weight her opinion carries with her congregation at House for All Sinners and Saints:

The way the church runs, we don't have a committee system . . . so everything is sort of "opt in." I'll say, "Who wants to have a liturgy guild meeting for Ash Wednesday

and the Sundays in Lent?” And whoever shows up is the liturgy guild that day. But in order for it to work, I have to be willing to let go of two things, which are control and predictability. You can’t predict who will come . . . or if anyone will come. And I have to let go of control, meaning I have to allow them to participate. So, it’s a very particular type of leadership. It’s not “anything goes”—I’m still leading, I’m still holding that space. But, if somebody has an idea I have to check in with myself and I have to check in with the room. And I have to do it honestly. And I have to do it quickly. . . . I have to be responsible with the fact that my voice has a lot of weight. And it takes a bit of self-awareness, and I don’t always do it right, but that’s the stuff that ends up being hard. But if you do enough of your work you can manage it. You’re not going to run roughshod over everyone.

I believe Eights think they are protecting themselves by being in charge. However, being the one who always leads, controls, and makes decisions in a relationship can be isolating. And it often keeps Eights from learning to handle the surprises that life inevitably brings. It’s important to note that we all protect ourselves from certain things (for example, Nines protect themselves from conflict, Sevens are very conscientious about avoiding pain, and Fours are diligent in their concern about abandonment). Eights are committed to protecting themselves from unexpected emotions, but as you can

see with Nadia's story, Eights need to learn to not run roughshod over everyone.

THE PATH TOGETHER

Eights are demonstrably clear about how they relate to others. If you watch them, it's obvious who does and who does not have access to their softer, more tender side. My daughter Joey and I were teaching together one day when she offered the group a very clear statement of how an Eight approaches relationships at work.

Cupping her hands, she explained, "I only have this much 'warm and fuzzy' in me. That is absolutely it. There is no more. Ever. Most of that goes to my husband and my sons. Whatever I have left over goes to making authentic personal connections with prospective clients. I do not inquire about my colleagues' personal lives, and I don't share details about mine. I come to work every day to do the job that I have been tasked to do—and I place great importance on doing that job well. If my colleagues can put their energy into doing their job well, we can enjoy the camaraderie of that effort together. If not, I have nothing to share with them. I have friends. I do not come to work to explore friendships."

Though it will be counterintuitive, it is vital for Eights to realize that bringing your feelings into balance as you encounter others will be beneficial to you and to those in relationship with you. Because your feelings have not made a

regular appearance in your arsenal for taking on the world, they are one of the purest parts of your being. Allowing yourself to stop and consider how you feel about a situation and taking those feelings into consideration before *doing* will serve you well as you make your way on this fantastic Enneagram journey.

RELATIONSHIPS *for* EIGHTS

After all is said and done . . .

One of the greatest gifts of the Enneagram is that it teaches us what we can have, what we can't have, and what we just have to accept and allow. For Eights, everyone else can't be as strong as you are. Here are some other things for Eights to keep in mind:

You can . . .

- be in leadership positions if you have people who are willing to follow you—and that requires respecting how they see the world.
- realize that you can lead and make plans, although you can't control the outcomes.
- hire people who are aggressive, but remember you will always have to work with people who are not.
- learn the value of moderation, collaboration, and patience—and cultivate the self-awareness to practice them.
- protect yourself emotionally, remembering that you can't avoid vulnerability.

But you can't . . .

- be fully heard without giving consideration to the other eight ways of receiving information.
- avoid or deny vulnerability and still be successful in relationships.
- always lead—you must learn to follow another leader gracefully.
- affect the world without being affected by it.
- solve every problem with action and strength.
- share feelings you haven't allowed yourself to experience.

So you'll need to accept that . . .

- you're not always right.
 - you can't guarantee the outcome.
 - you thrive on stress, but other people don't.
 - there's something bigger than yourself to focus on.
-

RELATIONSHIPS *with* EIGHTS

The main thing to keep in mind in relationship with Eights is that their aggression is not personal. They mean no harm, so don't be misled by their strong opinions and passions. Here are some additional ways you can build better relationships with the Eights in your life:

- Even though Eights are strong and assertive, don't forget that they still need care.
 - If you don't stand up for yourself, if you are not forthcoming, if you fail to be honest, and if you are indirect, then you are invisible to Eights.
 - Don't beat around the bush: Eights want communication to be brief, straightforward, and truthful.
 - Be aware that Eights are controlling in relationships simply because they don't want to be controlled.
 - Bring your best effort to anything you do. Do what you say you will do and let them know you are all in—or not.
 - Eights don't like it when you talk behind their back—and they don't understand why you would. Given the opportunity, they would say to you, “Why would you tell somebody else what you think about me? Tell *me*. I can handle it.”
 - If Eights are not happy with you, they tell you. If they don't tell you but seem a little distant, it most likely has nothing to do with you.
 - Acknowledge the contributions that Eights make, but don't flatter them because they neither trust nor need flattery.
 - Encourage Eights to exercise regularly. A good exercise program uses up some of their excess energy.
 - Be aware that Eights sometimes mistake tenderness for manipulation.
 - Intensity is always well-received. Be secure and strong in yourself and in what you think and believe.
 - Keep in mind that Eights are often unaware of how they affect others.
-

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