

TYPE FOUR



Fours desire deep connections with their own inner worlds and with others and feel most alive when they authentically express their feelings and experiences.

Four Questions

If you answer Yes to three or four of these questions, your likely Enneagram is type Four.

1. Do you think of yourself as original, one of a kind, so that no one is quite like you?
2. Are you introspective and like spending time exploring your inner world of thoughts and feelings?
3. Do you believe you are what you feel, even though your feelings change regularly?
4. Are you good at and enjoy helping others explore their feelings and experiences in great depth?

Strengths | inspiring | creative | introspective | expressive

Development areas | intense | self-conscious | moody | guilt-ridden

Fours search for deep experiences and emotional connection and avoid rejection and feeling not-good-enough. Symbolized by the jigsaw puzzle piece, Fours perceive themselves as a puzzle, trying to figure out why they feel so different from others and what makes them unique.

Individualistic, emotionally sensitive, and creative, Fours seek deep meaning, authentic connections, and they tend to idealize that which seems unavailable, being especially attuned to what is missing in their complex worlds. Focusing on their internal experiences as a way of understanding and finding meaning, Fours seek to be deeply understood and want to be perceived as unique, special, or different.

Although all Fours have a special connection to suffering and have robust, complex inner lives full of nuance and symbolism, some Fours are hyper-active and risk-taking, silently enduring their suffering as a badge of virtue; some Fours are hypersensitive and more despairing, wanting to be accepted unconditionally for who they are; and some Fours exhibit a flair for the dramatic and engage in extreme competition with others in hopes of winning and taking center-stage, thus minimizing their sense of not being good enough.

The Four's interpersonal style combines an abundance of self-referencing speech – that is, the extensive use of words such as I, me, my, and mine as well as personal stories – and they often use emotion-laden and metaphoric language. It is as if their own inner worlds are the center of the universe, or at least, the center of their universe.



While we can all suffer at times and almost everyone wants to be understood, for Fours, the search for deep experiences and connection and the avoidance of rejection or feeling not-good-enough is their primary, persistent, and driving motivation.

Core development areas

- Integrating objectivity with emotionality to find an equilibrium of your heart and mind
- Finding a deep sense of self-worth without comparing yourself to others
- Focusing simultaneously and equally on yourself and other people

Three great development ideas

Appreciate the ordinary.

Do a task that you find tedious, paying attention to every aspect of it. Stay in the present moment while doing the task, not thinking about anyone or anything else, and find pleasure in it. Select a different mundane task each day and follow these same directions. Learning to appreciate the present will help you focus less on both the past and the future.

Take pleasure in other people's positive qualities and accomplishments.

A counterintuitive way to do this is to first take genuine pleasure in your own positive attributes. Do not use any caveats or "buts," such as "I'm smart, but he's smarter" or "I'm empathic, but I spend too much time thinking about myself." Simply enjoy who you are. Once you can do this, allow yourself to appreciate other people's qualities and achievements. Each day, think positively about yourself, then select another person to think positively about without making any comparisons to yourself.

Minimize your self-referencing behavior.

Self-referencing behavior means that you tend to focus on yourself rather than other people — even if you are not aware of doing so — through word choice, storytelling, and the sharing of intense personal experiences and feelings. To challenge yourself every day, practice talking with one person and really listening to him or her, making no verbal references to yourself and not sharing any personal stories.