

Enneagram Personality Types  
Type 4 - The Individualist

**Strengths and Natural Essence:** Creative; artistic; emotional sensitivity, understanding and depth; emotionally intuitive; empathic; connection to darker emotions; respectful and accepting; romantic, beauty and power, capacity for growth.

**Catastrophe:** “I am unlovable/flawed”

**Basic Fears:** Afraid of not being seen, loved, and accepted for who they are; afraid of not having a unique identity but also afraid of not fitting in.

**Common Traits:** Identification with a deficient self, feeling inadequate, over-focus on flaws, overdo focus on pain and suffering, self-consciousness, pessimism, fantasize of the “perfect partner” or “being saved”, over-focus on own feeling state - getting lost in own emotions and thoughts, “misfit” feeling, envy, comparing self to others, “push-pull” pattern in relationships, chronic self-rejection.

**Achilles Heel:** While they have a deep desire for authentic love, by feeling inadequate and flawed, the Four focuses on these feelings and closes oneself off to the realistic possibility of experiencing this love. By over-focusing on painful emotions, the Fours can fail to take action, engage in unhealthy behaviors, and fail to use their strengths. By over-focusing on “what’s missing”, Fours can create drama in their own minds and in their relationships with others.

“The Four represents the archetype of the person who experiences an inner sense of lack and a craving for what is missing, and yet can’t allow for the attainment of what might provide satisfaction. The archetype’s drive is to focus on what is lacking as a step to regaining wholeness and connection, **but through an over-focus on the experience of a flawed self they become convinced of an inner deficiency that prevents fulfillment.**” – Beatrice Chestnut (from *The Complete Enneagram*)

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“While Fours have a gift for emotional sensitivity, they can become attached to their feelings in a way that can prevent them from thinking objectively or taking action. They can see what’s missing so clearly that they may be blind to what is good or hopeful in a situation, often to their own detriment.”  
– Beatrice Chestnut (from *The Complete Enneagram*)

**Wanted Image:** Unique, artistic, special, creative, accepted and loved for who they are.

**Personality Adapted in Childhood:** When something happened early on that created a perceived loss of love. The Four experiences some sort of abandonment or disapproval. To gain control of the situation, the Four learns to believe that something they did or something they are, caused it... creating an inner sense of unredeemable deficiency.

This causes feelings of “not being good enough” to be loved as a defense mechanism to opening up and allowing oneself to be loved because if it weren’t to work out, this would cause a re-experience of the painful feelings of being abandoned or disapproved of.

“They dwell in painful feelings of hopelessness and melancholy to protect themselves from the sadness and shame that comes from believing they are essentially unlovable and so will never get the love they need and want.” – Beatrice Chestnut (from *The Complete Enneagram*)

**Wake-Up Call:** When you realize your over-focus on self-deficiency, emotions and pessimism is actually preventing you from experiencing joy, from being in loving and healthy relationships and preventing you from using your strengths and natural gifts in a productive and helpful way.

“The sadness at the core of the heart type personalities reflects their feelings of not being loved for who they are and their grief over having lost touch with their real selves because they’ve disowned who they really are and created a specific image to try to get the love (or approval) they need. They have core issues related to unmet needs to be deeply seen, accepted, and loved for who they are.”  
– Beatrice Chestnut (from *The Complete Enneagram*)

**Path of Transformation:** Awareness of over-focus on flaws and feeling deficient, awareness of over-attachment to fantasizing and to thoughts and emotions; creating and believing in a more confident and lovable self-image, seeing the good in themselves and not just “what’s missing”, opening up to the love they long for.

“When Fours can wake up to the ways in which they dwell in suffering or dramatize their emotions as a way of distracting themselves from their deeper need for love, they can express a special kind of wisdom that is informed by deep emotional truth.”  
– Beatrice Chestnut (from *The Complete Enneagram*)

### Questions for Growth

1. How does my focus on inadequacy and inner lack actually cause more harm than good? How does it prevent me from connecting with others and experiencing joy and love in my life?

2. How does pessimism and always seeing “what’s lacking” show up in my life?
  - a) Does it show up with my perception of myself? My perception of others? My perception of my life situation?
  - b) How does it affect me? Affect my performance? Affect my emotions? Affect my relationships?
  
3. In what ways do I engage in envy and comparison to others? How does this affect my emotions and behaviours? How does it contribute to my core beliefs of lacking and being unlovable?
  
4. How do I get caught up in my own inner world of thinking and feeling? What patterns do I have with this? How does it affect me?
  
5. How does fantasizing and day-dreaming show up in my life? How is it affecting my perception of reality?
  
6. How do you think your personality type (Four) affects you in negative or self-sabotaging ways? How does shame come into play with this?

7. What are the strengths and positives of your personality type? In what ways can you let go of the Four's self-sabotaging thoughts and behaviors to better grow and bring out your natural essence and strengths?

### Tips for Transformation

- **Observe the ways you devalue yourself and get stuck in envy, shame and inferiority.** Notice how often you perceive yourself as flawed and lacking. Are you overly focusing on the negatives? Are you failing to see your inherent strengths and qualities of beauty? Drop comparisons to others and practice recognizing yourself as lovable and whole.
- **Practice seeing the positive.** Notice when you are focusing on negatives and what is lacking - in yourself, in others, in situations. Practice dropping the judgment and pessimism and switching to what is positive with each thing. What positive traits do you, others and situations have? What are you grateful for with this person or situation?
- **Notice when you allow your emotions to take control.** Notice when you begin to feel negative emotions and then how shame, guilt and feeling flawed plays into this. How do these emotions then affect your actions? Can you separate yourself from your thoughts and emotions (meditate, go for a walk, watch a comedy) to re-create balance. Notice how when you strongly attach to emotions and focus on what's lacking or negative, you may create unnecessary drama with others.
- **Catch yourself when fantasizing.** The Fours have a deep longing for authentic love and can get caught in day-dreaming about what this ideal love looks like. The Fours focus on what's missing in relationships so they chronically feel like an "outsider". Because they are 'up in their heads', Fours can feel very different from others, creating a delusional belief that they don't fit in. This can continue feelings of inadequacy and can create painful emotions such as sadness and loneliness. Practice letting go of fantasies and begin living in the moment, radically accepting reality as it occurs. Practice reaching out and socializing with others regardless of your thoughts and emotions. See how reaching out, helping out and asking others questions feels compared to being absorbed by thoughts.
- **Accept that misunderstanding and dis-connection may occur but that it doesn't indicate being flawed or unlovable.** Because of past abandonment and/or disapproval, Fours are very sensitive to criticism, dis-agreements or any signs of disapproval. Be aware of how Fours have a heightened awareness to this and a tendency to distort situations and take things personally. Acknowledge that dis-agreeing or not seeing eye-to-eye is going to happen in any relationship but that it does not represent you being flawed or unlovable. Practice

acceptance and belief in the self when these things occur and do not get caught up in the painful emotions that come with feeling misunderstood.

### **Activities for Transformation**

#### **>> Practice being aware**

Practice paying more attention to your thoughts and emotions. Are they focused on lack and pessimism? Ask, am I getting caught up in the emotions of this situation?

#### **>> Connect with love**

When you find yourself in an emotional situation - when you're feeling lacking, envy or inadequate, or seeing things very negatively...slow down and connect to love. Remember that the Fours "ego mind" can become very active and overwhelming. Drop the ego thoughts and choose to see things from eyes of love. Know that you are whole and complete and have strengths, uniqueness and positive qualities. Connect with the positivity and opportunities for growth in each situation.

#### **>> Affirmations**

When you find yourself in a challenging situation, connect and use grounding and trusting affirmations:

"I am lovable, I am strong, I am enough"

"I choose to let go of my thoughts of negativity and lacking. I choose to replace them with thoughts of love."

"I love and believe in myself. I wish to be myself and no one else."

"I do not attach or identify to my emotions. I know that they are often strong and enhanced but that they do not represent me as a person."

"I choose to see all things with love."

"I choose to un-attach from thoughts and stories of the mind."

"I choose to not allow my emotions control my behaviours and actions. I choose to take action on what's important to me."

#### **>> Strengthening the Root Chakra**

When unhealthy, Type Fours typically have underachieve root chakras related to feeling grounded with themselves and in their personal preferences and their personal path. Throughout the program, pay attention to the meditations and activities that support strengthening the root chakra. By strengthening the root, you'll be able to subsequently strengthen and empower the chakras above. Start by doing the Grounding and Receiving Love meditation from Intro Week 1 daily.

### >> Connect to personal power/Strengthen the Solar Plexus

Unhealthy type Fours frequently have a deficient solar plexus, lacking self-esteem and confidence. Work on strengthening the solar plexus and practice activities that build self-esteem.

### >> Challenging thoughts

Work on challenge underlying beliefs that Type Fours may be functioning from. These include:

- “I am lacking therefore I’ll be rejected or abandoned by others.”
- “There is something fundamentally wrong with me.”
- “I am weaker than others.”
- “I am too sensitive therefore I cannot be loved.”
- “Others have what I want but I cannot get it because there’s something fundamentally wrong with me”.
- “What I have is boring and lacking something essential. What I have is mundane and boring; what I desire most is ideal and at a distance.”
- “No one understands me. I am destined to be misunderstood.”
- “I will never be able to fit in. I feel as though I don’t belong.”
- “If others disagree, criticize or misunderstand me, then they always will and I’m better off alone.”
- “I am special but others don’t recognize it.”

### >> Connecting with your wounded inner child

In module 6, we’ll be looking at the different “personalities” of your wounded inner child. Type 4’s often have experiences from their past that made them feel that they were inadequate, flawed and unloveable. They’ve learned to focus on their flaws in order to protect themselves. The work for the type 4 is to recognize that everyone has flaws and to work on self-acceptance and self-love so that their true beauty and creativity can emerge.

To read more about the Enneagram and the Type Four (The Individualist), see *‘The Complete Enneagram; 27 Paths to Greater Self-Knowledge’* by Beatrice Chestnut.