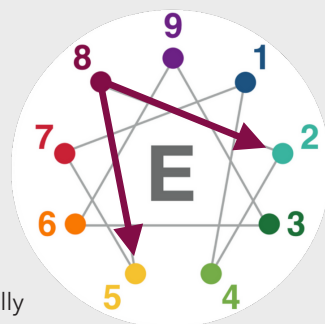


# ENNEAGRAM TYPE 8

## Session #4 - Childhood Patterns & Defense Mechanisms

### Childhood Pattern

- Type Eight children grew up with the lens that the world is an aggressive and antagonistic environment and only those who are strong, tough, and smart will survive.
- These children saw how the weak, innocent, and vulnerable were taken advantage of, hurt, or betrayed.
- They did not want to be one of these vulnerable people, so they decided to protect their hearts by putting on a very strong armor to protect them from getting emotionally hurt or betrayed.
- It is good to know that Eights are actually very sensitive inside. Their heart is so soft and tender that if it is exposed and taken advantage of or harmed, it would be devastating to an Eight. This is another reason why it feels necessary for survival to wear this protective armor. They rarely remove the armor to allow others to experience their tender side, but if and when they do, it is an amazing experience.
- Eight children can be extremely confrontational, challenging, and rebellious.
- They do not want to be controlled or challenged in any way, so they control others first. They have an intense energy about them that can dominate a whole room. They will command and direct others with confidence.
- Eights do not trust others easily and worry a lot about betrayal. In fact, many Eights were betrayed in some way growing up, which is where they lost their "innocence" and decided to put on their protective armor.



### Type 8

#### The Protective Challenger

**Core Fear:** Being weak, powerless, harmed, controlled, manipulated, and at the mercy of injustice.

**Core Desire:** To protect oneself (deteriorates into constant fighting and conflicts).

**Self-Image:** I am outspoken, direct, opinionated, bold, decisive, tough, and compassionate.

**Core Weakness:** Excess - Constant need for intensity, control, and self-extension. Constant need to push everything, assert themselves willfully.

**Message Your Heart Longs to Hear:**  
You will not be betrayed.

### Reflecting on Your Childhood

- In your family, were you given adult responsibilities early on? What were they and how did it make you feel?
- What was your relationship like with your mother early on and what is it like now? How does this affect you?

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## Childhood Messages

### Wounding Childhood Message:

*(The message you were hearing or thought you were hearing while growing up.)*

"It's not okay to be vulnerable or to trust anyone."

### The Message Your Heart Longs to Hear:

*(The message the gospel answers for you.)*

"You will not be betrayed."

## Going Deep Within Yourself

What emotions and thoughts surface when you read these two messages above? Dig deep and express what is really happening in your heart. Become attune with yourself.

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## Defense Mechanism: Denial

**Denial** is a defense mechanism by which individuals unconsciously negate something that makes them feel anxious by disavowing its very existence.

In order for Eights to believe that they are strong enough to take on any challenge, they must deny any potential or real vulnerabilities that would keep them from taking on the challenge.

Since they need to believe in their own invincibility, Eights do not acknowledge (even to themselves) their personal, physical, and emotional limitations.

When an Eight was a child, they learned how to handle unpleasant experiences by refusing to accept that they were actually happening to them.

When they get older, they may have denied the reality of unpleasant information altogether. They might admit that something is true but deny or minimize its seriousness. They might also admit that both the information and its severity are true but deny any personal responsibility for it.

Eights use denial on a regular basis but do so more blatantly when they feel anxious, vulnerable, sad, or intensely angry.

## Going Deep with God

- How does the gospel and your relationship with God speak to the messages above?
- What is the message that God is telling you? What has he secured for you?
- How does it feel to know and hear this from him?

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## Reflection Time

- Give three examples of how you use denial.
- How do you naturally see detail as "helpful"? How does denial actually cause you harm?
- What would it look like to not use denial as a defense mechanism? Give several examples.

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