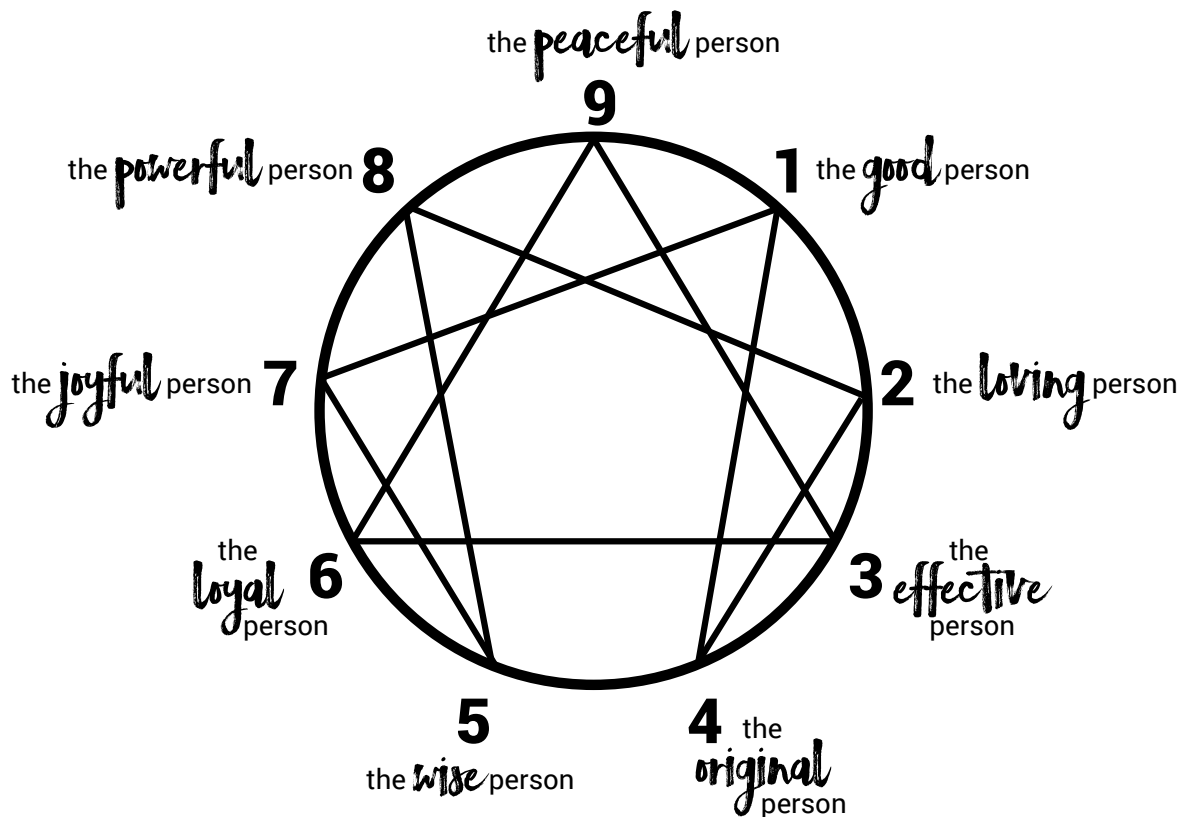


THE ENNEAGRAM

MOVING
FROM
FALSE
SELF
TO
DEEP
CONNECTION



“...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:16-19)

In the early hours of April 15, 1912, on its maiden voyage from South Hampton to New York City, the Titanic sank when it collided with an iceberg in the cold waters of the North Atlantic Ocean. Tragically, more than 1,500 people lost their lives. At the time, the Titanic was the largest, most well-built and luxurious ship ever conceived. It was thought to be unsinkable. As one crew member reportedly said, “Not even God himself could sink this ship.” But what those aboard the Titanic didn’t know was that hidden beneath the surface of the water something was waiting to sabotage the life of the great ship (and the lives of everyone on board). Ultimately the Titanic sank because people failed to acknowledge and deal with what was going on beneath the surface.

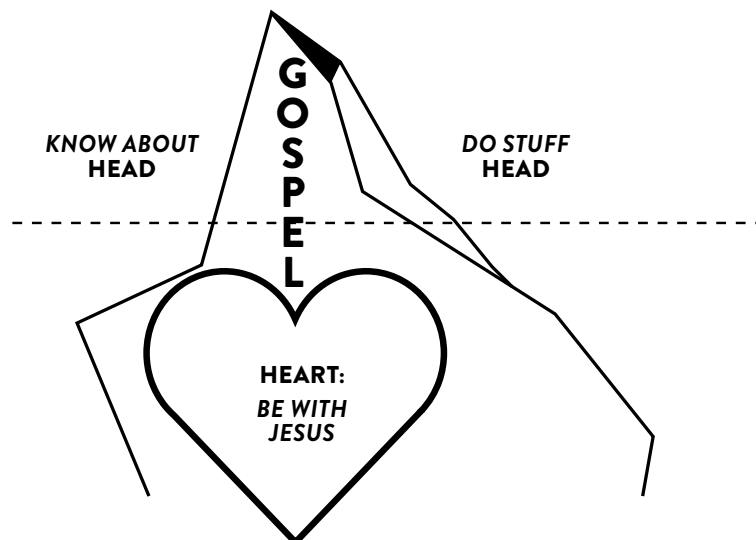
“... THAT ACCORDING TO THE RICHES
OF HIS GLORY HE MAY GRANT
YOU TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH
POWER THROUGH HIS SPIRIT IN
YOUR INNER BEING ... TO KNOW THE
LOVE OF CHRIST THAT SURPASSES
KNOWLEDGE ... ”

EPHESIANS 3:14-19

In the same way, our spiritual life—our relationships with God and others—is in danger of sinking if we don’t become aware of and deal with what’s going on beneath the surface in our lives.

GOING BENEATH THE SURFACE

Human beings are like icebergs—what you see on the surface is only a fraction of the truth. Only about 10% of an iceberg is visible to the human eye, but there is typically a whole lot more going on beneath the surface. Similarly, there are mass layers in our soul that are hidden and remain untouched and unaffected by the gospel of Jesus: mistrust, unrepentant sin, false narratives, guilt, fear, shame, emotional wounds, misplaced worship. To paraphrase Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19, we desperately need the gospel to make its way from our heads to our hearts—into the core of our inner being—to the places that need to be healed and transformed by the love of Christ. In a culture obsessed with information and busyness, it’s easy for Christians to drift into a surface-level relationship with Jesus in which we know about Jesus (head) and do stuff for Jesus (hands), but at our core we remain functionally disconnected from relationship with Jesus (heart). Paul essentially prays that we would go beneath the surface, where the real us meets the real Jesus, and we come to know and trust the love of Christ intimately for our redemption and true identity. This is why many have emphasized



that the most difficult and significant journey we could ever take is only eighteen inches long, from our head to our heart.

HOW DO WE GO BENEATH THE SURFACE?

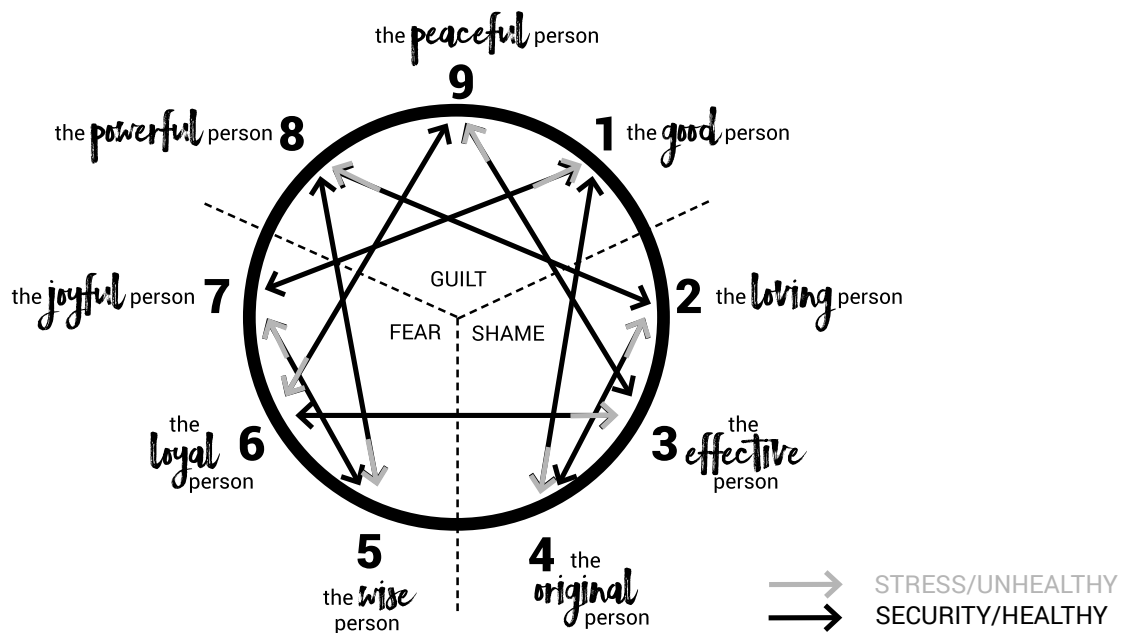
But how do we follow Jesus on this inward journey? How do we drive the gospel beneath the surface to strengthen our hearts in such a way that we can experience deep relationships with God and others?

We have found the Enneagram to be one of the most effective tools we can use to follow Jesus on the inward journey into our hearts. To be clear, there is no power in the Enneagram. The Enneagram is just a tool. All the power for salvation and transformation lies in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16). The Enneagram is helpful because it has the ability to serve the gospel. The Enneagram is a vehicle the Holy Spirit can use to drive the gospel into the uncharted terrains of the soul, so that we can be strengthened with power in our inner being— to know and grow in the love of Jesus.

“THE MOST DIFFICULT AND SIGNIFICANT JOURNEY WE COULD EVER TAKE IS ONLY EIGHTEEN INCHES LONG, FROM OUR HEAD TO OUR HEART.”

WHAT IS THE ENNEAGRAM?

Unlike other personality theories that measure how you do tasks, the Enneagram is an ancient tool that describes your personality in terms of who you are and how you relate to God, to others, and to yourself. Enneagram is a Greek word—ennea meaning “nine” and gram meaning “diagram.” So, as you can see below, the Enneagram is a diagram that represents nine different yet interconnected personalities or ways of relating.



TRIADS

As the diagram also reflects, the nine personality styles are divided into three triads. The Gut triad consists of 8's, 9's and 1's; these are people who process the world and relate intuitively. The Head triad is made up of 5's, 6's and 7's; these are people who process the world and relate cognitively. In the Heart triad we have 2's, 3's and 4's; these are people who process the world and relate emotionally.

MOTIVATING EMOTION

As you can see, each triad shares the same core emotional struggle: Gut people battle guilt and a sense that they are not good enough, Head people battle fear and a sense that they are not safe, and Heart people battle shame and a sense that they are not accepted. These three primary emotions—guilt, fear, and shame—and the defenses we develop to manage and overcome them form the primary barriers in our relationships with God, others and ourselves. We see this for the first time after the fall in Genesis 3:

- Genesis 3:7 — underlying emotion: shame; defense strategy: I cover
- Genesis 3:8-10 — underlying emotion: fear; defense strategy: I hide
- Genesis 3:11-13 — underlying emotion: guilt; defense strategy: I blame

John Starke writes, *“The Enneagram helps us see how fear might be controlling us, how shame might be motivating us, how guilt might be crippling us. Like a tracer chemical in the blood stream that helps identify the disease, the Enneagram brings to the surface indicators of what might be motivating sinful or harmful actions and patterns. With those resources, we can press into Christ, seeking healing and transformation in the gospel.”*

HEALTHY & UNHEALTHY ARROWS

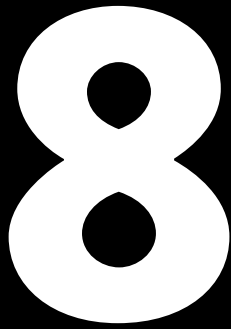
The above diagram also shows that each personality has stress and security arrows. These arrows indicate the direction of growth or integration and the direction of unhealth and disintegration. In other words, there's a number you slide to when you are growing in health and functioning out of your God-given identity in Christ and there's a number you slide to when you are not healthy and operating out of the flesh. As you grow, you tend to slide over and borrow from the blessings of that type. When you fail to grow, you tend to slide over and borrow from the brokenness of that type.

CHILDHOOD WOUND

The Enneagram resonates with most people as it aids our understanding of how the gospel story intersects with our personal story. The truth is, our present is shaped by our past; who we are is shaped by where we come from. No matter how healthy and godly your family of origin or childhood experience was, on some level every family is dysfunctional, and in a fallen world nobody gets out of childhood unscathed. We all carry emotional wounds from our earliest relationships and experiences. These wounds, if we do not name them and process them, will infect our relationships with God and others. The Enneagram helps us go back so that we can go

forward— identifying the childhood wounds we carry and the false scripts and defensive strategies we learned to help us survive, so that we can bring those to Jesus and begin to heal and re-learn to trust him completely.

Each personality has particular gifts and weaknesses they bring into their relationships. In essence, the Enneagram is trying to introduce you to your false self and the unique ways you bear the effects of the fall, and your true self and the unique ways you bear God's image in your relationships. The false self is an image we create in self-defense to help us feel safe, loved, and accepted apart from trusting in the love of Christ. In this way, the design of the Enneagram helps you take off the mask, so the real you can meet the real Jesus and you can experience the life you were made for in deep relationship with God and others.



TYPE EIGHT

THE POWERFUL PERSON

IMAGE OF GOD

Eights reflect the power and protection of God.

IN GENERAL

Self-confident, Decisive, Willful, Confrontational

CORE DESIRE

To be in control

FOCUS OF ATTENTION

Taking charge

AVOIDANCE

Vulnerability and weakness

DRIVING EMOTION

Guilt

BESSETTING SIN

Lust

CHILDHOOD WOUND

Suffered betrayal, rejection, or being undermined by someone's dominance, had to stand up for themselves, taken advantage of, treated unfairly, felt controlled or manipulated.

LIES EIGHTS BELIEVE (FALSE NARRATIVE)

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

SURVIVAL STRATEGY/DEFENSE MECHANISM

I must be strong, invincible and in control to survive in a hostile world where the powerful take advantage of the weak.

HEALTHY - THEIR BEST

Strong
Resilient
Protective
Self-confident
Strong willed
Assertive
Decisive
Inspiring
Empowering
Just
Compassionate

UNHEALTHY - THEIR WORST

Forceful
Insensitive
Domineering
Self-centered
Emotional bulldozer
Gruff
Combative
Vengeful
Explosive
Controlling
Bullying

Eights are powerful personalities. They have a very intense and commanding presence. Eights endeavor to be strong, independent, straightforward, assertive persons who use their strength and influence to make the world a more just place. Eights see the world in black and white—it's either the greatest or the worst idea of all time, right or wrong, true or false, friend or enemy. Eights are energized by disagreement and don't like to admit their faults, for this is a sign of weakness.⁵⁰ Many Eights report being taken advantage of or treated unfairly in their childhood. As a result, they learned to develop an image of power and strength, believing weakness to be unacceptable. They learned to dominate lest they be dominated. This is their defense strategy. .

WEAKNESSES: The underlying emotion Eights are trying to conquer is **guilt**, feeling as though they aren't good enough. Their survival strategy is to be powerful and take control. This leads to their besetting sin of **lust**—the passion for power. They become very angry, confrontational and aggressive and “throw their weight around.”⁵¹ People can feel dominated, controlled, and belittled by Eights, but rarely do Eights notice how they make others feel. They can be emotional bulldozers.

STRENGTHS: God has uniquely gifted Eights to manifest the glory of His image to the world. Eights reflect the power and assertiveness of God's presence. God is in the business of fighting against evil and injustice and fighting for the oppressed—this is reflected in Eights. When emotionally and spiritually healthy, Eights steward their

power to serve the weak and marginalized of society. They are strong and courageous and take a bold stand against injustice. Healthy Eights are big-hearted, merciful, forbearing, leaders, determined, resourceful, pragmatic, honorable, heroic, empowering, generous, initiating, decisive, vulnerable, accepting of their weaknesses, and leading with a limp.⁵²

The lies Eights believe: *“It is not ok to be weak and vulnerable—you can’t trust people.”*⁵³

The truth Eights need: *“You do not have to be strong to be loved” or “It’s ok to be weak.”*

SPECIFIC PRACTICES FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Eights are tempted to lust for power and control, while battling an underlying sense of guilt. The Spirit of Christ wants to transform this kind of sinful fruit into the fruit of love, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). Spiritual disciplines should be selected with this trajectory in mind. **Downstream practices** are those that come naturally for this type. **Upstream practices** are those that are more challenging for this type because they confront the false self or flesh.⁵⁴

THE DOWNSTREAM PRACTICES

- **Justice:** Eights are energized by regular opportunities to contend for the common good.⁵⁵ They shouldn’t feel bad about leading the way in doing Micah 6:8—“love justice and do mercy.” Eights must seek to learn the brokenness (e.g., poverty, homelessness, illiteracy, pollution, oppression, care for the marginalized: the widows, orphans, poor, and strangers) in their city or context and challenge it with gospel-motivations.

- **Compassion:** Eights are filled with compassion for the underdog. It’s not enough for them to speak out against injustice. Eights have to “get their hands dirty.” They feel the need to get involved, to stand in the shoes of those they’re trying to help. They have a great capacity for empathy. Showing compassion by stepping in and physically serving the underprivileged is a way of living into their true selves.

THE UPSTREAM PRACTICES

- **Accountability:**⁵⁶ Eights tend to avoid vulnerability and letting others get close out of fear of being controlled by them. To overcome this neurosis Eights need accountability from people they know they can trust. They need a context where they can be known—where they can be weak. If not, Eights will spend their lives hiding their true self behind an image of power.

- **Confession:** It’s not enough to be surrounded by people they can trust. Eights need to regularly practice the discipline of confession. They must open up and be honest about their struggles and weaknesses (James 5:16). In this way the Eight will learn his greatest secret—when he is weak, then he is strong (2 Cor. 12:10). Thus, Eights need to practice regularly boasting in their weakness as a pathway of spiritual formation into deeper Christ-likeness (2 Cor. 12:5, 9).

KEY BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

The Scripture Eights should commit to memory is 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. In this passage Paul admits that he is weak. Rather than defending himself through an image of power, Paul owns his weakness, which, he says, keeps him humble and dependent upon the grace and power of God. “Therefore,” Paul says, “I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (12:9).

THE GOSPEL EIGHTS NEED FOR HEALING & GROWTH

When I am weak, then I am strong in Christ (2 Cor. 12:7-10). I can let go of the false idea that I must stand my ground and fight for control because Jesus is my protector and strength. This frees me to be vulnerable and boast in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me.

⁵⁰ Sherrill, 41.

⁵¹ Riso & Hudson, 157.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 155.

⁵³ Sherrill, 42.

⁵⁴ The language of upstream and downstream comes from Sherrill, chapter 5, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*.

⁵⁵ Sherrill, 90.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

HOW TO LOVE ME WELL

- Stand up for yourself and for me.
- Appreciate my strength, confidence, and sense of justice.
- I often speak in a direct and assertive way. Please don't automatically assume it is a personal attack against you.
- Let me know if/when I wound you (I'm often unaware of doing that).
- Encourage me to relax (and even exercise) so I can deal with stress better.
- Acknowledge the contributions I make, but don't flatter me.
- Notice that I have a tender side beneath my strong exterior.
- Back off when I'm angry. I need some space to engage with God and cool down.
- Meet me with some intensity. I like energy and challenges.

HOW I CAN LOVE OTHERS WELL

- Be aware that I can unintentionally throw my weight around and hurt people emotionally.
- Know that others are not against me or trying to control me, especially if they are in a position to tell me what to do.
- Carefully gather information in a thorough, non-biased way which will often mean I need another perspective before coming to my own conclusion.
- Remind myself that others see my willingness to push for and engage conflict as a character issue and a lack of self-control.
- Be careful not to pull away and abandon a relationship or situation because my strength didn't work.
- Be careful about making assumptions about your motives or intentions.
- Slow down and be willing to wait and not immediately act with force.

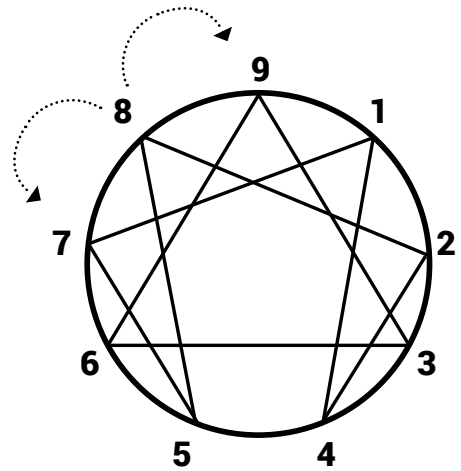
WINGS

Type Eight with Seven wing – 8w7 “The Maverick”

They are more extroverted, enterprising, energetic, quick, materialistic, interested in power, and egocentric.

Type Eight with Nine wing – 8w9 “The Bear”

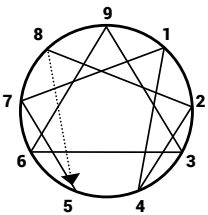
They are more mild-mannered, gentle, receptive, enjoy their comforts, people-oriented, and are quietly strong.



STRESS

What we are like when we are UNDER STRESS

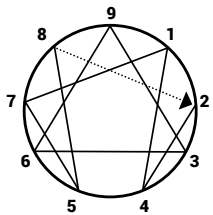
- Type 8 moves toward Average to **Unhealthy Type 5**
- They become secretive and fearful.
 - They are less in touch with their feelings and withdraw from others.
 - They fear that others will turn on them and betray them.



GROWTH

When the Holy Spirit enables us to begin to transform.

- Type 8 moves toward **healthy side of Type 2**
- They become more open-hearted and caring.
 - They open up to others and reveal their vulnerability.
 - They have more empathy and compassion toward others.



TYPE EIGHT :: LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

The Levels of Development are measuring our capacity to be fully present, bearing the image of God uniquely as persons He made us to be and using our personality and gifts in life-giving ways.⁵⁷

HEALTHY LEVELS

- **Level 1** (at their best): Become self-restrained and magnanimous, merciful and forbearing, mastering self through their self-surrender to a higher authority. Courageous, willing to put self in serious jeopardy to achieve their vision and have a lasting influence. May achieve true heroism and historical greatness.
- **Level 2**: Self-assertive, self-confident, and strong; have learned to stand up for what they need and want. A resourceful, “can do” attitude and passionate inner drive.
- **Level 3**: Decisive, authoritative, and commanding; the natural leader others look up to. Take initiative, make things happen; champion people, provider, protective, and honorable, carrying others with their strength.

AVERAGE LEVELS

- **Level 4**: Self-sufficiency, financial independence, and having enough resources are important concern; become enterprising, pragmatic, “rugged individualists,” wheeler-dealers. Risk-taking, hardworking, denying own emotional needs.
- **Level 5**: Begin to dominate their environment, including others; want to feel that others are behind them, supporting their efforts. Swaggering, boastful, forceful, and expansive: the “boss” whose word is law. Proud, egocentric, want to impose their will and vision on everything, not seeing others as equals or treating them with respect.
- **Level 6**: Become highly combative and intimidating to get their way; confrontational, belligerent, creating adversarial relationships. Everything a test of wills, and they will not back down. Use threats and reprisals to get obedience from others, to keep others off balance and insecure. However, unjust treatment makes others fear and resent them, possibly also band together against them.

UNHEALTHY LEVELS

- **Level 7**: Defying any attempt to control them, become completely ruthless, dictatorial, “might makes right.” The criminal and outlaw, renegade, and con-artist. Hard-hearted, immoral, and potentially violent.
- **Level 8**: Develop delusional ideas about their power, invincibility, and ability to prevail; megalomania, feeling omnipotent, invulnerable. Recklessly over-extending self.
- **Level 9**: If they get in danger, they may brutally destroy everything that has not conformed to their will rather than surrender to anyone else. Vengeful, barbaric, murderous. Sociopathic tendencies. Generally corresponds to the Antisocial Personality Disorder.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Riso & Hudson, 78.