

SPIRITUAL
RHYTHMS
FOR THE
ENNEAGRAM

*A Handbook for Harmony
and Transformation*



Foreword by **JEROME WAGNER**

ADELE *and* **DOUG CALHOUN**
CLARE *and* **SCOTT LOUGHRIGE**

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by Adele and Doug Calhoun, Clare and Scott Loughrige.
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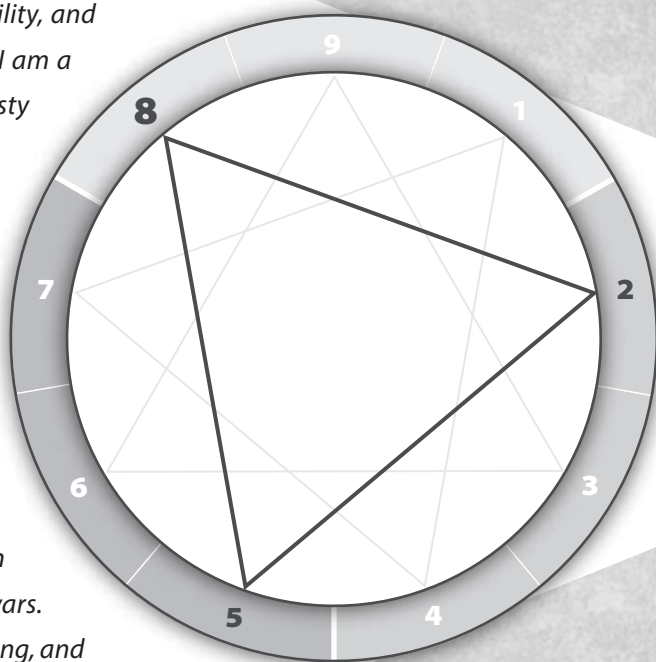
EIGHTS

Strength Is Contemplative Love

I am not interested in power for power's sake; but I am interested in power that is moral, that is right, that is good.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

I am an independent, vigorous person who is comfortable taking the lead. I want to be respected for my strength and dependability, and that is more important than being liked. I am a no-nonsense go-getter who values honesty and faithfulness. I have no room for people who choose to be weak. But I will crusade for those who are weak without choice. I will defend people I care about at any cost. I resist taking orders from people I don't respect or agree with. I will make my opinion known, my presence felt, and challenge the status quo. I want to fight injustice. I am direct, confrontational, decisive, and courageous in the heat of battle. And I can create my wars. Some people may think I'm bossy, controlling, and ready to grab others' power. But I don't want them to have power over me. I am known for having the last word.



WHO I AM AND WHO I AM NOT

Eights bear the image of God as strong. Your life resonates with Isaiah 1:17:

Learn to do right; seek justice.
 Defend the oppressed.
 Take up the cause of the fatherless;
 plead the case of the widow.

Strength is inevitably part of your story. Stories about who we are and who we are not

shape what we do, who we become, and where we get stuck. Eights have a narrative about being tough, strong, and decisive. You skip over the chapters of your life about tenderness, weakness, or vulnerability. This section gives you awareness of some words that shape the narrative of an Eight.

▶▶▶ BELOVED EIGHTS

Spend some time with the words below that describe who Eights are and are not. Circle the characteristics that resonate with your journey. Star words that express your gifts. Underline words that describe parts of your personality that are unusable by God in their present form. Put a checkmark beside characteristics that you *celebrate*.

Eights Descriptive Words List

I AM		I AM NOT	
strong	passionate	weak	ambivalent
powerful	energetic	impotent	phlegmatic
magnanimous	impulsive	small	procrastinator
self-sufficient	hardworking	needy	easy going
independent	industrious	dependent	lazy
assertive	forceful	push-over	shy
confrontational	intimidating	avoidant	meek
challenging	aggressive	wimp	timid
revolutionary	fearless	slave	fearful
in charge	hard	subordinate	soft
in control	rough	helpless	smooth
my way	tough	accommodating	bleeding heart
boss	invincible	subservient	vulnerable

- Which words reflect the image of God in you?
- Which words are you most attached to? Addicted to? Compulsive about?
- Which do you resist and judge the most?
- If you opened up to the words you resist without judgment, how might your life and relationships shift?
- Journal about the words that reflect how God's strength and power affect you.

▶▶▶ GETTING TO KNOW EIGHTS

This Eight shares how she began to know things in her body when she was three years old. She knew something others did not: “I am the one who knew bigger was better.” Notice how this awareness shapes her narrative.

My first memory attached to my gut intelligence is the Christmas I turned three years old. That year, the one big gift I received was a large doll. She was about three feet tall (she was as tall as I was!), had dark hair and dark eyes, and had a red dress. I named her “The Child” and she never had any other name! I distinctly remember feeling more powerful than and superior to my older sister, who had received a normal-sized baby doll as her gift. In my mind, it was simple: I had a child, she had a baby. Obviously, bigger was better. I don’t remember that we ever talked about it or fought about it; it was just something I *knew* was true in my gut—my doll was better than my sister’s.

- ▶ What does “The Child” story bring up in you?
- ▶ What is your memory of your first Eight experience?
- ▶ What is it like for you to know something is true instinctively and in your gut?

TRUE SELF AND FALSE SELF: THE POWERFUL PERSON

Who we are or are not comes with expression and energy. The attitudes, behaviors, and motivations of beloved Eights convey powerful energy. Your true self emerges from union with God. It is not built by powering up and balancing the scales of justice. Your false self is the compulsive, deeply entrenched, old nature—the psychological or ego self that is constructed on a complex mixture of nature, nurture, and agency. This section will help you begin to recognize compulsive and impulsive false self reactions, as well as true self FLOW that loves God, others, and self.

True Self Eights: Sacred Strength

Eights are designed to reflect God’s strength and passion. A true self Eight has user-friendly power and intensity that serves the marginalized and needy. Eights are resourceful, decisive, and assertive. You drive hard, live large, initiate, champion, and take risks that can be

noble and heroic. Passionate, earthy, and at home in the world, your presence says, “I am here!” Beloved Eights are comfortable wielding power and being in control. You prefer respect to approval. You don’t need to fill every leadership vacuum. When Eights live present to God, others, and self, you are warm, powerful,

Breath Prayer

In silence and solitude, ask God to help you see yourself clearly. Begin with breathing. Breathe in: “Made in God’s image,” and then breathe out: “I am not God.” Spend a few minutes with this breath prayer. Feel the goodness and freedom of being made in God’s image; feel the liberty of letting God be God. Breathe this prayer in and out throughout the day.

empathetic, independent, and vulnerable. As a leader, you are decisive and think about how much strength is needed in any given moment. Centered Eights embody God's sacred strength.

False Self Eights: Constrict in Control, Aggression, and Lust

Compulsive false self Eights over-identify with being strong and in control, which makes your energy user-unfriendly. Constricting around default and repetitive patterns of anger and control, you deny weakness and avoid vulnerability. This instinctive, reactive self finds it hard to soften and trust others. In your false self, Eights are unaware

of how you can be aggressive, confrontational, oppressive, self-centered, self-righteous, domineering, insensitive, and prone to excess. Although lust is the vice of the Eight, we use this word to reflect the intensity or force that drives the Eight to power up and take control. These lusty, tough, bossy, "go big or go home" personalities often get things done through intimidation and autonomy rather than collaboration. You take on injustices with your own brand of justice. Eights who can't be the boss or lead the charge may act out or pull away. If you can't call the shots, direct the program, right the wrongs, and have *the* last word, you may take your marbles and leave.

▶▶▶ **TRUE OR FALSE SELF**

As you think about your true and false self, consider these questions. Notice what comes up for you; notice without judgment. What questions particularly invite you to jot down or journal responses?

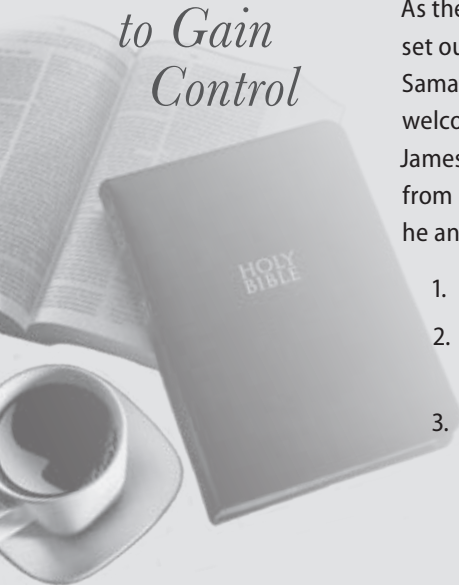
- ▶ How do true self Eight characteristics show up in your relationships with others?
- ▶ Where do false self Eight qualities show up in your relationships with others? How does anger show up? ("I've had enough!") How does guilt show up? ("I haven't done enough!") How do you pull away or act out when you don't have control?

*Gut
Reactions
to Gain
Control*

This reading highlights the disciples' gut reaction to people they couldn't control, and Jesus' response to resistance. Notice who he "rebukes."

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village. (Luke 9:51-56)

1. When does "calling down fire" show up as your go-to, ego response?
2. Who are the Samaritans in your life that trigger you to power up? How easy would it have been for you to just go on to another village?
3. Jesus didn't rebuke those who didn't welcome him. He rebuked the Eight-like, call-down-fire reaction from his own followers. What might true self Eight energy look like in this instance?



- What makes you constrict your muscle (power and control)? What is a cue to relax your muscle?
- How do you feel the difference between centered, true self energy and edgy, false self energy?

HARMONY: STRENGTH IS CONTEMPLATIVE LOVE

Eights are often thought of as the powerful number, but you are much more than just one number! You bear the image and harmony of a three-in-one God. When beloved Eights are present to their head and heart intelligence, they harmonize and FLOW with the contemplation of Fives (IQ) and the care of Twos (EQ). This section creates

awareness of how FLOW is the unique gift of the Harmony Triads.

In harmony and FLOW, an Eight's instinct for justice flows with thoughtfulness and compassion. Your just action rights the wrongs in ways that respond wisely to need and oppression with the IQ of a Five and express sacrificial love of others with the EQ of a Two.

▶▶▶ MORE THAN A TYPE

This Eight shares how she detached from the addiction to power and opened to the wisdom and will of another. When lusty, earthy Eights embrace your compassionate strength (EQ), you become approachable, protective, and nurturing. When you integrate your thoughtfulness (IQ), you slow down to observe. “Ready, *fire*, aim” transforms into “Ready, *aim*, fire.” No longer relying solely on your gut instincts (GQ), you become discerning. Notice how this Eight integrates her head and heart intelligence with her gut intelligence.

As a child, I needed to protect and guard myself. Weakness made me vulnerable and put me in a place where someone could (or would) use my words or emotions against me. This threat and the unconscious belief that people were against me made me confrontational and angry with others. It also made me deny the soft part of my feelings and emotions. The Harmony Triads gave me tools to integrate a Two's warmth with my power. The Fives' detachment helps moderate my passionate gut responses. Silence, solitude, and breath prayer “unhook” me from anger and need to control.

- When do you ignore tenderness and vulnerability in the heat of the moment? How could a warm-hearted response actually express your user-friendly strength?
- How do you ignore the time it takes to think things through and instead go with your gut? How might slowing down and waiting connect you to love of God and neighbor, as well as help you get the job done?
- Imagine yourself tempering your energy for justice with contemplative love, an energy that produces warmth rather than heat. What do you see?

▶▶▶ GQ, EQ, IQ

This directing and challenging Eight courageously embraces contemplative waiting (IQ) and love (EQ). Notice how the willingness to pause warmed her actions with wisdom and care.

My father's death shut down my Two heart center and the deep, loving side of me. I wanted to be able to love, but love seemed lost to me; so I pushed full steam ahead. When I tried to reach out to people, they would walk away. Right now, as a relationship fails, I sense God's invitation to wait and observe (IQ) with love (EQ). I am not to plow through and shut off love. I am to contemplate what is and not react. Harmony Triads help me realize I have GQ, IQ, and EQ within me. God created me to be a whole person. What a gift! I am an Eight coming alive to all that is possible.

- ▶ When Eights engage their head, they observe, detach, and moderate their gut agency to learn more about an issue. Where do you see IQ in yourself?
- ▶ When Eights engage their heart, they see people and events with compassion and not just as problems to be solved. Where do you see EQ in yourself?
- ▶ What is it like for you to have IQ, EQ, and GQ?

Reactions to Wrongdoing

In this story, Jesus tells us about how enemies sabotaged a man's harvest. Notice the distinction between the responses of the man and his servants.

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

"The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

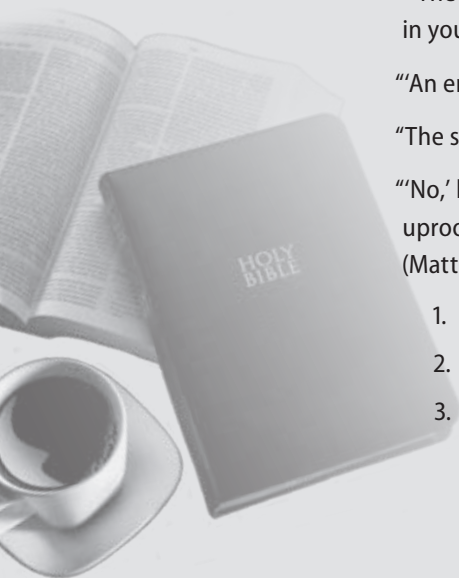
"An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

"No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.'"

(Matthew 13:24-30)

1. Who do you identify with in this parable?
2. When have you wanted to power up to destroy evil?
3. How are you with waiting and letting things unfold when something bad is happening? Can you imagine acting like the man in this story? What is it like for you?



HEALING CHILDHOOD HURTS: OPENING TO INNOCENCE

Children are wired for resilience. Still, residual childhood distress can leak into adult Eight relationships. Eight children can lose the message, “The world can be trusted.” The default message you can learn is, “Don’t trust; don’t show weakness.” To survive, you toughened up and pushed back. Your defenses protected and mitigated against connectedness and thoughtfulness.

When these messages get triggered in adult Eight interactions, then raw, ragged, unprocessed pain can erupt and sabotage the FLOW of an Eight’s loving strength. Suddenly a needy four-year-old inside you begins to act out and call the shots. Defaulting to the false self, Eights can get stuck on the edge of intense anger, lust, and powering up. These controlling and visceral gut instincts are not necessarily the same things as feelings. They arise almost unbidden and seek to dominate rather than connect. Eights who think it is weak to process past pain, defense structures, and childhood lies need to hear how much courage it takes to explore these things. It is part of healing and growth in loving God and others and self with your whole self—head, heart, and gut.

The Harmony Triad offers a way for Eights to partner with God’s healing presence and reclaim your virtue of innocence. Innocence is disarming, vulnerable, and noncontrolling. Innocence can be reclaimed again and again.

Prayer of Ignatius of Loyola

Allow this prayer of Ignatius of Loyola, which addresses the heart, head, and gut energy of the Enneagram Triads, to become your prayer.

It is my will to win over the whole world, to overcome evil with good [GQ], to turn hatred aside with love [EQ], to conquer all the forces of death [GQ].

Take, Lord, and receive all of my liberty, my memory, my understanding [IQ], and my entire will, All I have I call my own.

*You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.*

▶▶▶ RECEIVING THE DISMISSED CHILDLIKE SELF

Receiving your dismissed child can heal and help you recover the innocent and trusting part of you again. Remember, within every passionate and gutsy Eight there is a tender, caring Two who wants to connect with others and wonders if your big emotions exclude you from love. There might also be a private little Five who is detached and unwilling to share your time and energy with others. To recognize where you dismissed your childlike self, pay attention to where you may have ignored tenderness (EQ) and thoughtfulness (IQ).

In this story, look for the heart-full, Two inner child who couldn’t trust her vulnerability to others. Be curious about how she dismissed her larger-than-life Eight because it wasn’t “safe” to use her voice and show up.

My long battle with my GQ began when I was five. I would “sense” that something was right or wrong and would say so. The authorities (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles,

pastors, church leaders, and teachers) told me I didn't know what I was talking about. I couldn't know because girls/children/women didn't have wisdom to know anything that didn't come from a man. If I tried to share a feeling, I was told, "Don't feel like that." I knew in my gut that they were *wrong*! But if I led with my gut anger and confrontation, it just led to deeper rifts in relationships. So my everyday life became a persistent battle of holding back my gut instincts to be "nice." Being alienated from and dismissing my Eight self was exhausting. Sometimes I just wanted to hide.

- What might it be like to have an embattled narrative shape you? What do you dismiss and hold on to?
- Within the Eight, there is a Five child who hides and wonders, "Do I have energy for this?" Where does this message show up in your life?
- Within the sometimes bullying Eight, there is a gentle heart who wonders, "Will I be loved or rejected?" Notice when your inner child asks this question.

▶▶▶ JOURNALING YOUR DISMISSED CHILDLIKE SELF

Integrating and accessing your head and heart can help you moderate the strength of your responses. Accessing your heart (EQ) softens your strength, making it user friendly. Integrating your head (IQ) slows down instinctive reactions. Checking out what your heart feels and your head perceives gives you more than instincts to work with on your path to harmony.

Journal about what you did with tenderness that made you feel weak or vulnerable. Courageously explore when you began to defend yourself with an inner hustler that just muscled through. This is hard work. Feel free to choose among the questions and return to other questions at another time.

- What is your story about finding the world untrustworthy? What default reactions and triggers of your childhood self still operate today?
- Where do you dismiss your power or overpower because of anger or past trauma? What is causing you to muscle up right now? What is that about? If you softened to nurture yourself and others, what might happen?
- Where has your trust been repaired/healed or increased/solidified?

Eights tend to be playful and tender with children. What would it look like for you to open up to the childlike innocence that makes you less intimidating to others and gives you the hearing you want?

Immediate and intense Eights have a default stance of "just do it." You find God's invitation to wait frustrating and difficult. Waiting feels like a waste of time and sabotages control. Thus spiritual practices of waiting and slowing put beloved Eights in a place to know who you are when you can't be in control. It may be helpful for you to read the chapter "Invitation to Wait" in *Invitations from God* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun.

When you feel your inner hustler bullying, pushing, and charging ahead, consider the possible collateral damage. How much intensity do you really need to use? What might unfold if you slowed down and took a pause? This week practice intentionally slowing. Drive more slowly. Talk more slowly. Eat more slowly. What happens as you open and create some space around what you are doing? Notice how slowing moderates your intensity.

DISCERNMENT: CONSOLATIONS AND DESOLATIONS

Ignatius of Loyola taught that God's Empowering Spirit moves in all three centers of intelligence—head, heart, and gut. When making a decision, Ignatius suggested noticing your consolations and desolations by asking: What does my heart feel? What does my mind think? What does my gut sense?

Consolations point Eights toward God's presence and a power that doesn't force or coerce you. Consolations are evidence that an Eight is heading in the direction of GQ agency that IQ ponders how to stand in EQ solidarity with others. Desolations such as shame, lust, and anger distort the FLOW of God's strength. Desolations alert Eights that you have fallen into your false self and lost inner freedom to discern well. (More information on Harmony Triad discernment is found in Soul Resource 5.)

Eights experience consolations such as sacred strength, contemplative power, insightful justice, compassionate confidence, warm direction, detached decisions, enlightened courage, and holy

Healing Prayer

When Eights process your wounds in the presence of a God who is strong enough to lovingly hold you—intensity, lust, anger, and all—you open yourself to change. Healing prayer can help Eights recover your childlike innocence and give you access to emotions other than anger.

This is a way to do healing prayer on your own. Relax into silence and solitude. Breathe deeply. Don't force it. Become present to God and yourself. Ask God to show you where you need ongoing healing. Wait quietly for God to bring a past sorrow or trauma to mind. When something comes to mind, follow this simple trail of healing prayer.

- ❖ *Imagine yourself and Jesus back in the memory. Get your bearings. Where is Jesus? Where are you?*
- ❖ *What are you feeling? (mad, shamed, weak, powerful, vulnerable, alone, or something else)*
- ❖ *Do these feelings remind you of a time you had similar reactions? You can go with Jesus to that place and time or stay where you are.*
- ❖ *Continue to name what you feel in your experience. Ask Jesus if these feelings point to a lie you began to believe at that time. Give it a name.*
- ❖ *What is Jesus saying to you about this lie? Listen. Is there an image, word, or phrase that he speaks to you?*
- ❖ *Repeat the truth you have heard from Jesus about yourself gently and frequently. Let the truth be an antidote that lets the pain go into Jesus and sets you free.*

vulnerability. Consolations can lead Eights to relinquish control and trust that God is at work in what is. This is freedom.

Eights experience desolations such as lust,

arrogance, domination, bullying, insensitivity, forceful confrontation, powering up, self-righteousness, judgment, control, excess, and anger. These desolations leave you bound.

▶▶▶ PRESENT TO WHAT'S HAPPENING INSIDE

Both desolations and consolations can give us a thread to follow that leads toward love of God, neighbor, and self. Here we focus on consolations and desolations particular to Eights. This Eight is studying the map of his soul. He notices signposts of desolation in his messy life that block discernment. Notice how the consolations and desolations of this Eight direct him toward healing and God.

My life right now is messy and chaotic. Relationships are broken and tense. I don't like this uncomfortable and uncontrollable place (desolation). So I automatically block what I don't want to see. Which also means I miss seeing some good things God provides in the mess. When I remember that my defense mechanism of denial is at the bottom of my resistance, I remember that I can choose to open my eyes and ears in the chaos and be present to what is (consolation). When I am in presence, I'm not trying to control and I see more. But being present is challenging for me. I need my EQ and IQ to pull me away from the edge of ruthless strength and center me in receptivity and gratitude (consolation).

- When is your instinctive response to desolation "messy and chaotic"?
- Name a current desolation. Check God's motions in your gut. Is your gut just mad and pushing against your desolation? How is the desolation leading you to God?

Prayer Practice for Waiting

God waits. And so do we. Waiting is especially hard for Eights who resist this daily given. When you wait or go slow, breathe deeply into your inability to control time. Breathe in: "God you are here." Breathe out: "I have strength to wait." Let this breath prayer open you in developing the muscle of patience. To fight waiting doesn't make things move faster. Something unexpected might happen if you wait for God to show up.

▶▶▶ DESOLATION AND DENIAL

Defensive and aloof Eights have the default defense mechanism of denial. Denial refuses to admit the truth about oneself. Denial protects Eights from being vulnerable or accountable. Early on, Eights denied your need of others and took responsibility for protecting yourself by acting strong and autonomous. You denied the presence of helplessness, weakness, subordination, and tenderness and treated these traits as though they did not exist. But they do exist in us all. Without judgment, notice where you constrict in desolation and denial.

- Looking back on your life, when has denial kept you stuck and unable to move forward? How has denial impacted your decision making?
- Where does your body hold the denial of pain and frustration? What do you want to do with that denial?
- How does revving up serve or hinder the FLOW of strong love for God and neighbor? How can awareness of this help you choose what to do?

▶▶▶ CONSOLATIONS AND INNOCENCE

The Spirit's invitation to consolation engages heart presence that feels for others as well as head presence that tells an Eight's inner hustler to "take a time-out!" Engaging EQ and IQ helps Eights get reacquainted with your inner, innocent child—the one who knows how to play and trust. Innocence is open and teachable. It accepts that others may know better than you.

God's Spirit calls Eights out of denial into innocence that depends on and is vulnerable to others. Vulnerability takes real strength. It's not wimpy. Don't deny that recovering innocence is important. It matters as much as changing the world, landing the deal, and passing the legislation. The world needs leaders who are "as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

- Describe a situation in which the Holy Spirit invited you out of denial and into an innocence that trusts others. What happened? What consolations came to you?
- When has innocence helped you FLOW with trusting, user-friendly strength?

SPIRITUAL RHYTHMS FOR EIGHTS

He (Jesus) is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. (Colossians 1:28-29)

Eights are equipped to "strenuously contend." Your energy makes you a dynamo. It is your great gift. Paul says that this energy is not an end in itself. Your energy exists for the sake of others. It is not about you alone. Practicing the wise use of your energy creates new neural

pathways. As you "contend," partner with the Spirit to become "mature in Christ." Discernment takes spiritual maturity. It is not the same thing as to blast off. Attending to the Spirit's motions in your soul on a daily basis matures and ripens an Eight's fruitfulness so you have strength to lovingly and wisely direct.

These spiritual rhythms are all ways Eights can lean into God's invitations to transformation and mind renewal. Not every practice will be the one for you. Say yes to the practices that best capture your desire to be with God right now.

▶▶▶ PRACTICING PRESENCE: EIGHTS

Re-read the FLOW definition in the Key Terms section. Notice the presence of Trinitarian harmony.

Father, Son, and Spirit belong and flow together.

Head, heart, and gut belong and flow together.

Faith, love, and hope belong and flow together.

Divine harmony calls Eights to intentionally practice integrating your force with IQ and EQ so your power reflects God's own sacred strength. Let the following meditative prayer move through your entire created being so it holds you together. Staying with this prayer for a season can help Eights lead with EQ and IQ.

Find a comfortable and awake position. Remember that the Spirit of God dwells within you and prays for you. Ask God to give you an open and receptive head, heart, and gut.

Gut Presence: Put yourself in the presence of the Spirit. Fill your belly with breath. Notice what is happening in your body without judgment. Let your body tell you what it knows. Is there something your body wants to do in this prayer? Do that. Experience your force—your big energy. Give thanks for your ability to “strenuously contend.” How and when does your body react rather than let vulnerability in? Where do you push in or lash out before observing?

Heart Presence: Put yourself in the presence of Jesus. Breathe into your heart space. Feel your tenderness. Notice your heart's need to be held and cherished. Breathe in and create even more space around your heart. Notice your childlikeness and kindness. Invite self-compassion. Welcome softer emotions; name them and breathe: “I can trust you.” Tell Jesus what in you needs some care, a kind word, or a soothing touch. How does Jesus respond to you?

Head Presence: Put yourself in the presence of the Wise Creator. Breathe into your magnificent mind. Breathe into your head and shoulders. Feel their weight and tightness. Breathe into your intellect. Observe your life in the body. What does your head tell you? What is it like to trust information and perspectives rather than your gut instinct? Is there a place where your gut goes “Ready, *fire*, aim”? Ask your head to show you how to go “Ready, *aim*, fire.”

Pray into your Harmony:

Strength Is Contemplative Love
“Strength is contemplative love” is a breath prayer that helps you engage the life-giving intellect of Fives that can hold things loosely, observe, detach, and learn more about an issue before reacting; as well as the

Human progress [Five IQ] is neither automatic nor inevitable. . . . Every step toward the goal of justice [Eight GQ] requires sacrifice [Two EQ], suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
(WITH OUR ADDITIONS)**

tender heart of Twos that is loving, nurturing, warm, and able to connect with how others are feeling.

Memorizing this prayer brings awareness of what is most true about you to real-life situations. You are more than your type. Breathe it in as you

prepare to take the field, scale the mountain, launch the company, lead the board meeting, or face the music. Anytime you feel yourself get triggered and are tempted to forget who you are, breathe “strength is contemplative love.” Let go of the constriction around power and control that keeps you stuck in your gut. Open to the FLOW of God’s loving power. Then call on all your God-given strength.

FLOW Practice for Eights

In FLOW, Eights are Free, Loving, Open, and With. You stand in the presence of the three-in-one God and integrate heart and head with your strong effort. Strength gets channeled through the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love. When you notice that you are constricting and stuck in powering up, when you tighten around leading and grab the helm, this is the moment to breathe and ask the Spirit to give you inner freedom to stay with and open to your head and heart. Ask, “How much force or energy do I need to keep love flowing as I get this job done?” Feel the freedom to dial it back. At the end of the day, log what happened when you were not in FLOW. Celebrate when God’s strength flowed through you. Confess when it didn’t. Begin again tomorrow.

Practice Confession

Vulnerability and transparency about who you are connects you to God and others. Confess your:

- ▶ *Vice of self-reliance and lust:* ask God and a trusted accountability partner to help you make the journey to vulnerability and innocence.
- ▶ *Anger:* “I’ve had enough.” Name where you have lashed out or backed out. Ask God to help you send your energy in the direction of love.
- ▶ *Guilt:* “I haven’t done enough.” Ask God for grace to see when “this is enough.”
- ▶ *Shame:* “I am too much; I am too brash, lusty, driven, vengeful . . .”

Receive words of assurance: “Before a holy and righteous God, as God’s Beloved Eight, you stand completely in the clear.”

Breath Prayers

Notice your magnificent breath. Feel the oxygen fill your lungs and lift your chest. Follow your breath in and down. Take time to notice what is happening in your gut. Feel the strength of your created life as you breathe in: “You have formed my inward parts; I am powerfully and wonderfully made . . . may my soul know that very well.” Spend a few minutes with this breath prayer. Follow your breath to trust that you don’t have to be the all-powerful Creator.

Keep breathing into your body. Breathing in from the soles of your feet, fill your belly with breath, and continue breathing to the crown of your head. Feel your experience. Breathe into your head, your heart, and your gut. Without judgment, notice whatever comes up. If memories come, welcome them with your wise, loving strength. Stay with them. Take action to stay inside and hold yourself in a loving way.

❖ *Inhale:* “Made in God’s image.”

Exhale: “I am not God.”

❖ *Inhale:* “God, you are here.”

Exhale: “I have strength to wait.”

❖ *Inhale:* “Strength is,”

exhale: “contemplative love.”

Practice the Presence of People

Moderate your gut reactions to people by being present and listening until they stop talking.

- ▶ When you want to get the job done, you can run over others. Let the people in the room matter. Take a moment to see them. Say their names to yourself with kindness.
- ▶ Notice when people seem threatened or overwhelmed by you. Is that the response you want them to have? Ask some trusted friends or colleagues, “What is it like to be on the other side of me?”
- ▶ In conversations, make sure you have heard a person before you launch in and hold forth. Ask them, “Did I get what you are saying?” Ask, “Is there more?” When they say “no more,” you have practiced their presence.
- ▶ When you have no more bandwidth for practicing the presence of people, offer an explanation. Say “I need to focus,” or “I’m in a groove; can I get back to you tomorrow?” or “Sorry to be abrupt. I can’t focus on anything else. I’m under a self-imposed (or real) deadline.”

Practice Trusting

Trust something besides you and your gut. Take a risk—risk is the other side of the coin of trust.

- ▶ Ask God for the grace to appreciate and trust heart people and their emotions. Validate someone’s emotions.
- ▶ Ask for humility to learn from head people who don’t see things as instinctively as you do. Validate someone’s ideas.
- ▶ Let go of control, join in, be a participant, and trust that things can unfold in a good

way, even if you aren’t leading, because God is present.

- ▶ When you want to act like an independent operator or when you don’t want to be told what to do by anyone, you are on your edge, trusting yourself alone. What is God wanting to say to you about this? How can you trust enough to collaborate with someone rather than go it alone?

Practice Empathy and Understanding

Your strength and gifting to serve the marginalized, oppressed, and needy becomes more powerful when packaged in empathy and compassion.

- ▶ Express heart concern for others as you take on the world. Relationships don’t work without empathy and compassion.
- ▶ Notice when your energetic or overbearing presence dismisses what others think and feel. Apologize and say, “I didn’t mean to come on so strong. What am I missing here?”
- ▶ When you listen to people’s stories and opinions, be curious and use your IQ, EQ, and GQ. Monitor your gut reaction to challenge and debate. You don’t need to power up. How could you have a good conversation without being threatening?

Practice Detachment

Detach from your agenda, plans, and way.

- ▶ Detachment is the gift of your head IQ. When you are so attached to your ideas, expectations, and leadership that you can’t open and let go, it’s time to pray: “God, your will; nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else.” This prayer loosens your muscle and constriction around control.

- ▶ Detachment opens a space to hear or create something new.
- ▶ Step back and consider how much you need to force your agenda. Less just might be more.
- ▶ Detach from the need to have others be as committed to success, truth, or perseverance as you are. They have their own attachments.

Blessing for the Beloved Eight

As we close this section, take time to breathe in this blessing and create space in your soul.

May the Holy Three bless your vulnerable journey home to your true self.

May God the Father give you wisdom to understand that strength is made perfect in weakness.

May the heart of Jesus infuse and compel your heart's passions, helping you to be tender with yourself.

May the Holy Spirit ground you with patience to wait for all that will be accomplished in you.

May the sacred strength of the Trinity lead you on your road, empowering you and loving you.

Empathy for EIGHTS

*You may not control all the events that happen to you,
but you can decide not to be reduced by them.*

MAYA ANGELOU

Children need to find their caretakers trustworthy. Eights had caregivers that undermined their trust. To survive, they had to toughen up. When we understand how the power-and-push strength of an Eight developed, we create space for empathy. Here you can explore your responses to Eights and how you might grow in empathy, seeing them as God does.

Empathy is a true self response that harmonizes and breaks down the we/they divide. You may think Eights are like hit-and-run drivers who knock you down and keep going. Or you may love their intensity, entrepreneurial passion, and no-nonsense ways. Understanding how an Eight's lust for power and intensity developed can create compassionate and empathetic interactions with them.

This Eight describes how shame around her gut responses caused her to dismiss her true self. Sit with this story. Allow compassion for this powerful, vulnerable Eight to rise in you.

When I was in kindergarten, my best friend was killed. My parents pulled me away from my siblings and explained what happened. They also told me that I was not to talk about it. I was not allowed to go to my friend's funeral. She was gone—no goodbye, no closure, no way to process what had happened. I still feel the knot of unfairness in my

gut; to behave this way toward someone I loved dearly. I was sad, angry, and frustrated, and had nowhere to go with all those emotions.

My father was a profoundly damaged Eight, and I lived in horror that I might be like him. Even when my Eight brother's gut responses were approved and applauded, I didn't want to be an Eight. Their deep, brazen, gut reactions to my Eight-ness made me feel guilty about my strong presence. To survive, I functioned as a deformed Two until my mid-thirties. The depths of family misogyny and patriarchy that dismissed my female Eight are bottomless. It has taken a long time to accept that being a strong Eight is a gift from God.

1. As you consider the Eight story, notice:
 - What are you thinking about this Eight?
 - What are you feeling about this Eight?
 - What is your gut instinct about this Eight?
2. When have you constricted around something not being fair? How have you wanted to make it right?
3. How does an Eight's intensity mitigate against connection and trust, torpedoing empathy? How can this give you empathy for Eights?

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFENSE MECHANISM OF DENIAL

Another Eight explores the formation of her defense mechanism.

When I was about eight or nine years old, I was in the back seat of the car while my dad was driving

under the influence. I wanted to be afraid, but I refused. I denied my feelings and vulnerability, put on my armor, and developed an unconscious belief that it wasn't safe to rely on others to protect me. I

protected myself. I denied my vulnerability and powered up to stay in control. As a teenager, I lost respect for my dad and became verbally challenging. As conflict escalated, I dismissed and guarded my heart. It hurt too much to want love from someone who wasn't capable of it.

1. This Eight denied her vulnerability in order to "stay in control." What do you want to say to this Eight?
2. Get inside this Eight's story. When have you dismissed your heart out of fear or hurt? What was it like for you?
3. How might you join the Holy Spirit by praying for an Eight you know?

RELATING TO AN EIGHT

We find grace to see things from an Eight's point of view when we remember that under the tough exterior of an Eight is a tender child who powered up to protect themselves.

- Eights can seem brusque; don't take it personally. They aren't trying to hurt you and are unaware that they have.
- If you feel hurt by an Eight, tell them. Eights trust and respect people who stand up for themselves, so meet them with intensity and truth.
- Honor the courage it takes for Eights to show up with gentleness and vulnerability. Speak your appreciation, but don't gush or flatter.
- Eights often look like they don't need or want affection, but brief purposeful signs of affection are welcome.
- Eights can feel like it is "me against the world." Show them you are on their side by being responsible and with the program.
- Don't make excuses or spin the truth. Eights have a nose for BS.
- Eights like to battle injustice. They have compassion for true weakness and/or limitations, but they have no patience for self pity. If your need is genuine, they will help.

The following list summarizes key characteristics of Eights. Consider your responses to these characteristics.

- *Authentic, true self*: Powerful, strong
- *Compulsive, false self*: Lustful
- *Virtue leading back to true self*: Innocence

- *Personality style*: Challenger
- *Work style*: Insister, asserter, decisive
- *Leadership/action style*: Director
- *Thinking style*: Dialectical
- *Relational style*: Decider
- *Relationships*: Challenging
- *Core motivation*: Power, control
- *Negative fixation*: Anger, guilt
- *Narrative*: "I've had enough," "I haven't done enough"
- *Communication*: Blunt, direct, truthful
- *Eight with a Seven wing*: More joyful, responsive, extroverted
- *Eight with a Nine wing*: More calm, relaxed, receptive
- *Basic fear*: Lack of control, independence
- *Basic desire*: To be strong, in control
- *Drive*: To resist vulnerability, to exercise power and control

Based on the description above:

1. How does it feel to be an Eight? Which descriptors give clues on how to relate to Eights?
2. Is there a better way to say what is true of Eights?
3. Eights are intense and like energetic exchanges. What is it like to meet the strength of an Eight with your own gut intensity and strength?
4. Eights want to be appreciated for their ability to lead and accomplish. How can you express your appreciation for an Eight?

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