**Relationship Tips for the Nine Types**

by Peter O’Hanrahan

**Tips for relating to Ones**

Don't take too personally: Their critical or judgmental attitude.

To create rapport: Respect their integrity and take things seriously.

Try to avoid: Making agreements that you may not keep; ignoring traditional good manners.

Join them: In seeing how things can be improved.

To handle conflict: Ask them to be direct with their anger and get past their resentment; admit your mistakes; speak with personal conviction and authority. Challenge them to see more than one right way.

To support their growth: Help them be less critical of themselves and more accepting of their mistakes and imperfections; ask them to mediate their judgement with fairness and forgiveness; remind them to share responsibility with others; encourage them to have fun.

**Tips for relating to Twos**

Don't take too personally: Their tendency to be overly nice or flattering.

To create rapport: Step forward to make contact; give approval or appreciation.

Try to avoid: Hurting their feelings by being too critical or not taking them seriously.

Join them: In valuing warmth, personal contact and partnership.

To handle conflict: Ask them to take responsibility for getting what they want rather than indirectly blaming others or evoking guilt. Head off hysterical outbursts by bringing out their dissatisfaction or resentment.

To support their growth: Help them pay attention to their own needs and feelings and to set boundaries with other people; encourage them to take time out for themselves; remind them to breathe into their belly and feel their feet on the ground.

**Tips for relating to Threes**

Don't take too personally: Their competitiveness and their need to look successful.

To create rapport: Appreciate their work; speed up in talking to them.

Try to avoid: Getting in the way of their forward momentum or taking too much of their time.

Join them in: Being active, getting results, earning recognition.

To handle conflict: Allow for aggressive exchanges while staying on track with goals. Remind them that successful results can come with many different styles, and that people are important. Challenge their rhetoric or propaganda while allowing them to save face.

To support their growth: Help them look inside and tell the truth about who they really are; support them in having feelings, especially about their failures; encourage them to slow down and pay attention to their health. Value them for who they are, not only for what they accomplish.

**Tips for relating to Fours**

Don't take too personally: Their disappointment, moodiness, or critical attitude.

To create rapport: Appreciate their emotional sensitivity and their creativity.

Try to avoid: Insisting on being rational, unemotional, or conformist.

Join them in: Valuing style, individualism, and excellence.

To handle conflict: Challenge them to avoid wounded withdrawal on the one hand, and angry outbursts on the other. Stay in the middle ground. When they are upset, don't take everything they say too literally since it may be only the feeling of the moment.

To support their growth: Support Fours in achieving emotional balance and staying on track. Encourage them to express their feelings safely and directly rather than getting caught in chronic negative attitudes or depression. Help them fight their inner critic and resist internalizing blame. Get them to watch what they say and consider their impact on others.

**Tips for relating to Fives**

Don't take too personally: Their tendency to withdraw physically or emotionally.

To create rapport: Approach them slowly and thoughtfully. Give them room to think things over.

Try to avoid: Pressuring them for immediate contact or fast decisions.

Join them in: Talking about ideas and valuing the inner life.

To handle conflict: Don't make assumptions about what's going on with them. Ask them for direct communication. Agree to disagree. Emphasize the importance of relationship. Watch out for control by withdrawal. Challenge them to be more warm and generous. Give them lots of information.

To support their growth: Support Fives in getting into their bodies and accessing their instinctual energy. Make it safe for them to share themselves, especially their feelings. Remind them to let others know that they care, and that they will return to the relationship or project after a break. Help them deal with feelings of emptiness.

**Tips for relating to Sixes**

Don't take too personally: Their suspicious attitude or negative outlook.

To create rapport: Appreciate their attention to problems; agree on rules and procedures.

Try to avoid: Changing the rules abruptly, or withholding important information.

Join them in: Acknowledging what can go wrong before moving ahead.

To handle conflict: Put your cards on the table as much as possible. Don't be ambiguous. Challenge them to take responsibility for their reactions instead of coming up with external reasons. Refuse to take on their projections. Assume that they will act antagonistic when they feel threatened.

To support their growth: Help Sixes to face their fears directly, get reality checks, and ask for personal support. When possible, get them to see the humor in situations. Provide enough safety to get them to relax their mental scanning operation and get more into their bodies and feelings.

**Tips for relating to Sevens**

Don't take too personally: Their short attention span or their cheery self-absorption.

To create rapport: Appreciate their stories and positive ideas.

Try to avoid: Being too negative or interrupting the flow.

Join them in: Having fun and envisioning new possibilities.

To handle conflict: Challenge them to take responsibility for their actions, while staying as positive as possible. Get them to stop talking and listen. Let them know what you or others need from them. Repeat it often.

To support their growth: Encourage their sobriety. Help them to get more "down and in." Support them in staying grounded, balancing their good ideas with common sense. Stress the importance of feedback. Be there for them when they begin to feel their pain.

**Tips for relating to Eights**

Don't take too personally: Their bossiness or aggressive attitude.

To create rapport: Make direct contact.

Try to avoid: Controlling them without their agreement, making them sit still for long, or showing disrespect.

Join them in: Getting things moving in work or play.

To handle conflict: Stand up to them and confront them directly (in your own style). Accept their angry energy while challenging them to not go off the deep end. Be tough on destructive or threatening behavior, empathetic to underlying hurt feelings. Distinguish between Eights who care about people, and those who don't.

To support their growth: Support them in using their energy in constructive ways. Confront them on unconscious aggression or their use of anger as a comfortable habit. Help them get in touch with their vulnerability. Assume that they need love and care even when they don't show it.

**Tips for relating to Nines**

Don't take too personally: Their tendency to space out or forget to do things.

To create rapport: Slow down and "hang out" a bit. Listen to them; stay peaceful.

Try to avoid: Coming on too strong, getting impatient.

Join them in: Setting the context and looking at the big picture. Body based activities, including walking, exercising, cooking, eating, music, etc.

To handle conflict: Fairness is a crucial issue for Nines. Since they avoid conflict and anger, they are more likely to withdraw or become passive/aggressive, with occasional eruptions. Try to find out what's going on inside and let them know you won't abandon them. When and if they do blow up, help them set boundaries on their rage.

To support their growth: Give them personal attention. Help Nines create structures and schedules for their lives to keep them on track with priorities. Ask for their cooperation rather than trying to push them around. Challenge them on their need to be comfortable, and help them take risks. Be accepting, but persistent.

Used by permission of the author.

Visit Peter’s site: <theenneagramatwork.com>