

THE ENNEAGRAM



All notes on the Enneagram have been taken directly from sources on the internet (Sites have been referenced). There is much information available. I encourage you to explore this fascinating resource more for yourself and I hope that you will find it beneficial in your parenting journey.

The Enneagram system

(<https://www.eclecticenergies.com/enneagram/introduction>)

The Enneagram is a personality typing system that consists of nine different types. Everyone is considered to be one single type, although one can have traits belonging to other ones. While it's uncertain whether this type is genetically determined, many believe it is already in place at birth.

The nine types (or "enneatypes", "ennea" means "nine") are universally identified by the numbers 1 to 9. These numbers have a standard way of being placed around the Enneagram symbol. Enneagram authors have attached their own individual names to these numbers. On this site the type names by authors Riso and Hudson are used. They are:

1. The Reformer 2. The Helper 3. The Achiever 4. The Individualist The Investigator 5. The Loyalist 6. The Enthusiast 7. The Challenger 8. The Peacemaker 9.

People of a particular type have several characteristics in common, but they can be quite different nevertheless. It depends among other things on their level of mental health. Unhealthy (neurotic) people from a particular type can look quite different from healthy ones. Riso and Hudson distinguish 9 levels of mental health (see their book [Personality Types](#)) and have type descriptions for each level of each enneagram type.

Wings

Usually one has characteristics of one of the types that lie adjacent to one's own that are more prominent. This is called the wing. So someone who is a type 5, might have a 4 wing or a 6 wing. This may be abbreviated to "5w4" and "5w6". If one doesn't have a dominant wing, it is said that the wings are balanced.

Enneagram type descriptions

Type 1 - The Reformer

Perfectionists, responsible, fixated on improvement

Ones are essentially looking to make things better, as they think nothing is ever quite good enough. This makes them perfectionists who want to reform and improve, who desire to make order out of the omnipresent chaos.

Type 2 - The Helper

Helpers who need to be needed

Twos essentially feel that they are worthy insofar as they are helpful to others. Love is their highest ideal. Selflessness is their duty. Giving to others is their reason for being. Involved, socially aware, usually extroverted, Twos are the type of people who remember everyone's birthday and who go the extra mile to help out a co-worker, spouse or friend in need.

Type 3 - The Achiever

Focused on the presentation of success, to attain validation

Threes need to be validated in order to feel worthy; they pursue success and want to be admired. They are frequently hard working, competitive and are highly focused in the pursuit of their goals, whether their goal is to be the most successful salesman in the company or the "sexiest" woman in their social circle.

Type 4 - The Individualist

Identity seekers, who feel unique and different

Fours build their identities around their perception of themselves as being somehow different or unique; they are thus self-consciously individualistic. They tend to see their difference from others as being both a gift and a curse - a gift, because it sets them apart from those they perceive as being somehow "common," and a curse, as it so often seems to separate them from the simpler forms of happiness that others so readily seem to enjoy.

Type 5 - The Investigator

Thinkers who tend to withdraw and observe

Fives essentially fear that they don't have enough inner strength to face life, so they tend to withdraw, to retreat into the safety and security of the mind where they can mentally prepare for their emergence into the

world. Fives feel comfortable and at home in the realm of thought. They are generally intelligent, well read and thoughtful and they frequently become experts in the areas that capture their interest.

Type 6 - The Loyalist

Conflicted between trust and distrust

Sixes essentially feel insecure, as though there is nothing quite steady enough to hold onto. At the core of the type Six personality is a kind of fear or anxiety. Sixes don't trust easily; they are often ambivalent about others, until the person has absolutely proven herself, at which point they are likely to respond with steadfast loyalty.

Type 7 - The Enthusiast

Pleasure seekers and planners, in search of distraction

Sevens are essentially concerned that their lives be an exciting adventure. They are future oriented, restless people who are generally convinced that something better is just around the corner. They are quick thinkers who have a great deal of energy and who make lots of plans. They tend to be extroverted, multi-talented, creative and open minded.

Type 8 - The Challenger

Taking charge, because they don't want to be controlled

Eights are essentially unwilling to be controlled, either by others or by their circumstances; they fully intend to be masters of their fate. Eights are strong willed, decisive, practical, tough minded and energetic. They also tend to be domineering; their unwillingness to be controlled by others frequently manifests in the need to control others instead.

Type 9 - The Peacemaker

Keeping peace and harmony

Nines essentially feel a need for peace and harmony. They tend to avoid conflict at all costs, whether it be internal or interpersonal. As the potential for conflict in life is virtually ubiquitous, the Nine's desire to avoid it generally results in some degree of withdrawal from life, and many Nines are, in fact, introverted. Other Nines lead more active, social lives, but nevertheless remain to some degree "checked out," or not fully involved, as if to insulate themselves from threats to their peace of mind.

Instinctual variants

In addition to the Enneagram type, people are also considered to be one of three instinctual variants. The self-preservation instinct (dealing with oneself), the sexual (dealing with another person) and the social instinct (dealing with a group) can be most pronounced.

Using the Enneagram in Parenting

(<http://www.thesabbathlife.com/enneagram-parenting/>)

While not exactly an owner's manual for parenting, the Enneagram is a powerful tool for helping to know what to do now with our kids.

Here's an important disclaimer: **Don't type your kids.** Don't use the Enneagram as a label on your kids. The minute you label them, you limit them. Your kids are human beings, made in God's image. They're ever growing, evolving, and changing right in front of our eyes. Most likely, your kids exhibit characteristics of multiple types. But it's also possible that a single type screams out to you in your every interaction with them.

Your work is not to crack the code of your kid's personality. **Rather, it's to be the very best version of yourself that you can be.** It may be helpful to avoid all together thinking of your child as a particular type—as a One, or a Four, or a Seven. Perhaps it's better to use language to yourself (and with your partner, if you talk about these things) that there's some "Three-ness" coming out in an interaction, or that their behaviour appears "Five-ish."

The Enneagram not so much categorizes our eccentric habits, but rather names our deepest motivations. And no matter how well we know our own kids, we just don't have access to their most basic drivers. Only they know that, and it takes a lot of maturity until they can start to wrestle with that and articulate it for themselves.

So let's first and foremost work on our being the best parents we can be.

Type 1

Ones see the world as it should be, with an intuitive sense of integrity. **As a parent, a One brings a strong sense of right and wrong.** A One communicates order and a right way to do things. But a blind spot in parenting can be when this goes too far and turns into legalism and setting standards that can never be met. If you catch yourself doing this, extend yourself grace. Be humble and seek forgiveness when you've projected your idealistic standards on your kids.

Type 2

Twos have the gift of emotional connection. **As a parent, a Two naturally embodies Christ-like self-sacrificial love.** They can pour themselves out like no other. But the blind spot here can be a complete negligence of self care. Twos may forget to take care of their own needs in the midst of fixing meals,

making transportation arrangements, doing the laundry and all the other endless host of parental responsibilities. If you find yourself here, tag team with your partner. Or find a sitter for an afternoon. Recharge your batteries and show yourself the compassion you love to give your kids.

Type 3

Threes flourish when they're accomplishing things. **As a parent, a Three brings the gift of being a great cheerleader.** You instill incredible confidence. You communicate, "You can do this!" But as a blind spot, a Three may build up unrealistic expectations of achievement for your child, living vicariously through their accomplishments. When you find yourself here, show your child unconditional love, untethered to achievement. Tell them how proud you are for the kind of person they are and are becoming. Show appreciation for their character and not just their trophy case.

Type 4

Fours get a kick out of doing things differently. **As a parent, Fours bring the gift of individuality and an imagination for beauty.** Fours can intuitively join in the imaginative play of young children or read the moodiness of a teenager. But a blind spot for a Four can be undervaluing the emotional need of your child to belong and fit in with a peer group. If you catch yourself here, discern with your child (and perhaps with the help of your partner) the fine line between being yourself and really connecting with others.

Type 5

Fives intuitively see the deeper connections in the world. **As a parent, a Five can instinctively play the part of the wise guide to children.** Fives are natural teachers and delight in introducing their kids to everything in the world. But a blind spot for a Five in parenting can be budgeting your limited social energy. Fives can easily throw up boundaries that kids, especially young kids, don't respect or know what to do with. If you find yourself fighting this, be extra mindful to be present to your child. Maybe your boundaries and "me time" aren't as necessary as you think they are.

Type 6

Sixes know faithfulness and steadiness. **As a parent, a Six brings the gift of vigilant boundary-making for the sake of safety.** A Six knows how to keep your child safe and secure. But as a blind spot, a Six can easily fall into the cliché helicopter parent, smothering your child.

Type 7

Sevens are full of abundant joy. **As a parent, a Seven is gifted at making lasting memories together.** Road trips, vacations, ice cream dates, impromptu dance parties—a Seven parent knows how to have fun. A blind spot for a Seven parent can be avoiding discipline. Being a disciplinarian can be a stretch for a Seven. Be careful of setting up the unfair roles of yourself as "good cop" and your partner as "bad cop" when it comes to disciplining the kids. Be the first in the house to model for your kids clean up time or other seemingly "boring" tasks.

Type 8

Eights challenge the status quo, especially if they see someone left out. **As a parent, an Eight can exude a profound sense of tenderness for their children.** You protect your children at any cost and are willing to go toe-to-toe with bullies. A blind spot for an Eight as a parent can be overdoing anything and everything. Your protection of your children may be out of proportion as can your discipline of your children. If you find yourself here, take a deep breath. Count to ten. Make the effort to emotionally connect with your child rather than seeing them as either just a victim or violator of your order of the world.

Type 9

Nines live to maintain a sense of equilibrium in their world. **As a parent, a Nine naturally knows how to mediate conflict in the household.** You see where everybody is coming from. You relate and empathize and can help the others in your family do the same. A blind spot for a Nine parent can be burnout from trying to keep everybody happy. Dealing with all the conflict that naturally happens in a family can be emotionally taxing. It can be easy to withdraw. Make sure you're expressing your own opinions and desires. Don't simply blend in with the rest of your family.

Understanding ourselves through the Enneagram provides ways to wake up to the default habits and hang-ups that can sabotage our best intentions to be good parents and supporters of our partner's parenting.

Knowing Me Knowing Them: Understand Your Parenting Personality

By Tracy Tresidder

As parents, it is crucial to the flourishing of our children that each of us has a good understanding of our own personality and of the ways in which our behaviours and reactions positively and negatively affect our children. With greater awareness comes greater flexibility and more choice as we respond to the challenges of parenting.

Knowing your Enneagram Type will help you discover how your personality motivates the way you behave as a parent and how your child's personality interacts with your own. You will discover how to recognize your greatest parenting strengths and weaknesses and how to free yourself to become a true guide and coach to your child.

Parents can provide an emotionally healthy childhood and the foundations for their children to flourish. Discovering the differences between your type and your child's can be an incredibly enlightening and useful experience. Unfortunately, many parents have very little understanding of their own personality. They have little awareness of their habitual behaviours and the way these behaviours affect others, especially their children.

Following is a brief example of the 9 Parenting Personalities:

- **Type One** parents are seeking a perfect world. They work diligently to improve themselves and teach their children responsibility and strong moral values. On the negative side, Ones can become highly critical and judgemental of themselves and others.
- **Type Two** parents are very warm and encouraging; they listen well and are playful. At times, however, they can become overly concerned, worrying too much about everyone else's needs.
- **Type Three** parents are busy and organised. They encourage their family members to be goal orientated and active. On the negative side, they can become over-controlling and impatient, putting too much focus on achievement.
- **Type Four** parents want a unique connection with their children. They are warm and compassionate and encourage their children to get in touch with their feelings. However, their focus of attention can easily go to what is missing in their lives and they can become melancholy and sad.
- **Type Five** parents can be kind, perceptive, devoted and knowledgeable. They can also find it difficult to relate on an emotional level and may withdraw to have some quiet adult time.
- **Type Six** parents can show up in two different ways. They can be very loving and devoted to their children, with a strong sense of loyalty and humour. However, some Sixes are constantly scanning for danger, fearing the worst-case scenario, which can develop anxiety in their children. Others confront their fears and can become overly assertive, which can overwhelm their children. Both these characteristics can appear in the same person.
- **Type Seven** parents are full of energy and optimism for their family. They seek out fun things for their children to do; they enjoy being happy and playing. However, when this upbeat energy is overplayed the Seven parent can be overwhelming to their children, leaving them feeling neither seen nor heard.
- **Type Eight** parents are the strong protectors of their children. They are loyal, caring, involved and devoted. However, their intensity can also be overbearing for their family.
- **Type Nine** parents are good listeners and mediators and can merge into the world of their children. They are easy going and flexible, but can also be stubborn and overly permissive with their children.

It is worth remembering that your first task here is to build your own self-awareness and inner knowing by trying on a new way of being to support the flourishing of your children. It is about what you are doing 'with' yourself and your children - not what you are doing 'to' your children.