



# What Is the Enneagram and Why Is It So Popular?

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WRITTEN BY: Everything Enneagram

#enneagram has more than 400 million views on TikTok but what actually is the Enneagram, and why should you care?

The Enneagram is a personality framework. It refers to nine personality types, each of them representing a worldview that resonates with the way you think, feel and act. It is the lens through which you view yourself, others and the world around you.

## Where it comes from

The Enneagram is one of the oldest, most robust personality-typing tools. Tracing its origins reveals that it is a phenomenological system that dates back thousands of years and has been discovered and re-discovered in many contemplative traditions.

One of the pioneers of the modern Enneagram movement worldwide, David Daniels, explains that while the Enneagram symbol has origins in ancient works, Georgian philosopher George Gurdjieff is credited with both the symbol's reintroduction to the modern world at the turn of the 20th century and the use of the symbol to describe various processes found in nature, music, and patterns of daily human life. However, it was not until the 1960s when Bolivian philosopher Oscar Ichazo connected the Enneagram to personality that the modern archetypal framework was born.

## Connecting Enneagram to personality

The word, Enneagram, is derived from two Greek words, ἐννέα [ennéa, meaning "nine"] and γράμμα [grámma, meaning something "written" or "drawn"].

Everyone emerges from childhood with one of the nine Enneagram Types dominating their personality. Research has shown that one's genes and their environment are inextricably intertwined, suggesting that both nature and nurture are important when it comes to personality development. The Enneagram Institute states that while it is common to find a little of yourself in all nine of the Types, one of them should stand out as being closest to yourself – your dominant Enneagram Type.

In addition, several more points can be made about your dominant or basic Type:

- People do not change from one basic personality Type to another.
- The descriptions of the personality Types are universal and apply equally to males and females, since no Type is inherently masculine or feminine.
- Not everything in the description of your Type will apply to you all the time because you fluctuate constantly among the healthy, average, and unhealthy traits that make up your Type.
- The Enneagram uses numbers to designate each of the Types because numbers are value neutral— they imply the whole range of attitudes and behaviours of each Type without specifying anything either positive or negative.



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- The numerical ranking of the types is not significant.
- No Type is inherently better or worse than any other.

## It's all about what motivates you

The Enneagram is based on your motivation. Rather than just explaining your behaviours and how you show up in the world, it also describes your inner motivation and what drives you. This is possible because the Enneagram delves deeper into your core fears and defense mechanisms that often lie in the unconscious layers of your personality. Once you know this, you are able to uncover and change certain patterns of behaviour that are keeping you stuck, unmotivated or unhappy.

*"The Enneagram doesn't put you in a box. It shows you the box you're already in, and how to get out of it."*  
-Ian Morgan Cron

## The motivation focus is what makes it so popular

Hundreds of personality assessments, frameworks, tools and questionnaires exist, each with their own approaches and set of theories. The Enneagram stands out because it is one of the few that not only focus on behaviours or external traits (your WHAT), but also the reasons behind it (your WHY).

It is unique because it is the only personality framework that categorises individuals into distinct personality types based on their WHY (not just their WHAT), which is determined by their underlying motivations, fears, desires and inner worlds.

The Enneagram also provides a more detailed and nuanced understanding of motivation than other personality assessments. It recognises that you are dynamic and fluid, meaning that you can change and evolve over time, and its multidimensional and holistic framework integrates a variety of different perspectives and traditions to offer a deep and comprehensive understanding of personality and human nature.

Acting as both a mirror and map, your Enneagram report offers you a pathway of understanding, explaining how and why you "tick" the way you do, and giving you real, relevant and relatable guidance and direction, tools and tips for transformation, enabling and empowering you to become the best version of yourself.

## The motivation focus is what makes it so popular

*"It's enabled me to recognise my patterns - healthy and unhealthy, ones I'm conscious of and ones I'm not - based on my thoughts and feelings that shape my choices and determine my behaviour. Being aware of these patterns allows me to either lean in (my strengths) or figure out how to shift them (my struggles)."*



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*“Knowing why I am doing something is a game-changer if you’re wanting to make transformational changes at the root of something, rather than just quickly putting a bandage on a broken arm.”*

*“The Enneagram has also allowed me to recognise the patterns of the people in my personal and professional. This means my ability to empathise and communicate more effectively is elevated, which makes me happy, healthy and high-performing.”*

There are numerous benefits to using the Enneagram:

- Self-awareness
- Personal growth that is long-lasting and transformational
- Improved relationships
- Career development
- Conflict resolution.

## The nine Enneagram Types

Each Enneagram Type is associated with a specific set of personality traits, behaviours, and patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting.

### Type 1

Enneagram Ones value principles and integrity and are driven by the motivational need to be good and right.

Integrative Enneagram calls Type 1s Strict Perfectionists.

The Reformer according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 1s as the Rational, Idealistic Type: Principled, Purposeful, Self-Controlled and Perfectionistic.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 1s: Champion of Good.

The Good Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.

### Type 2

Enneagram Twos have a motivational need to be liked and appreciated, and they value relationships.

Integrative Enneagram calls Type 2s Considerate Helpers.

The Helper according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 2s as the Caring, Interpersonal Type: Demonstrative, Generous, People-Pleasing and Possessive.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 2s: Hidden Warrior.

The Loving Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.



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## The nine Enneagram Types continued

### Type 3

Enneagram Threes value achievement so they want to be the best and strive for success in all they do.

Integrative Enneagram calls Type 3s Competitive Achievers.

The Achiever according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 3s as the Success-Oriented, Pragmatic Type: Adaptive, Excelling, Driven and Image-Conscious.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 3s: Empowering Motivator.

The Effective Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.

### Type 4

Enneagram Fours have the motivational need to express their uniqueness and be authentic. Integrative Enneagram calls Type 4s Intense Creatives.

The Individualist according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 4s as the Sensitive, Withdrawn Type: Expressive, Dramatic, Self-Absorbed and Temperamental.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 4s: Meaning Maker.

The Original Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.

### Type 5

Enneagram Fives have a motivational need to know, understand, and make sense of the world around them.

Integrative Enneagram calls Type 5s Quiet Specialists.

The Investigator according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 5s as the Intense, Cerebral Type: Perceptive, Innovative, Secretive and Isolated.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 5s: Sound Counsel.

The Wise Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.



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## The nine Enneagram Types continued

### Type 6

Enneagram Sixes value security and belonging as their motivational need is to be safe and prepared.

Integrative Enneagram calls Type 6s Loyal Sceptics.

The Loyalist according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 6s as the Committed, Security-Oriented Type: Engaging, Responsible, Anxious and Suspicious.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 6s: Trusted Integrator.

The Loyal Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.

### Type 7

Enneagram Sevens have the motivational need to experience life to the fullest and avoid pain.

Integrative Enneagram calls Type 7s Enthusiastic Visionaries.

The Enthusiast according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 7s as the Busy, Fun-Loving Type: Spontaneous, Versatile, Distractible and Scattered.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 7s: Illuminator of Possibility.

The Joyful Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.

### Type 8

Enneagram Eights have a motivational need to be strong and in control and avoid showing vulnerability.

Integrative Enneagram calls Type 8s Active Controllers.

The Challenger according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 8s as the Powerful, Dominating Type: Self-Confident, Decisive, Wilful and Confrontational.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 8s: Defender of Justice.

The Powerful Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.



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### Type 9

Enneagram Nines are motivated by a need to be settled and in harmony with the world. Integrative Enneagram calls Type 9s Adaptive Peacemakers.

The Peacemaker according to The Enneagram Institute, describing Type 9s as the Easy-going, Self-Effacing Type: Receptive, Reassuring, Agreeable and Complacent.

The Honest Enneagram book calls Type 9s: Secret Guru.

The Peaceful Person, according to The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles.

### Want to find out your Type?

If you're looking for a powerful and positive impact on all areas of your life, visit Everything Enneagram.