



The Top 9 Misunderstandings About the Enneagram

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WRITTEN BY: Everything Enneagram

They don't need to be absolutely accurate, but they do need to be 100% useful.

1. The Enneagram is a personality test

FACT: The Enneagram is a personality-typing system. It is an archetypal framework that explores core motivations, fears, and coping mechanisms of nine distinct personality types. The Enneagram is not a typical personality test that assigns traits to individuals.

2. Your behaviour decides your dominant Enneagram Type

FACT: Your dominant Enneagram Type is determined by a motivation, core fear and basic desire, which is associated with a predictable pattern of behaviour in times of strain and comfort. Your external traits do not determine your Enneagram Type, they are determined by your inner motivation.

3. One Enneagram Type is better than another

FACT: All Enneagram Types are equal. There isn't an Enneagram Type that is inherently better, or worse, or something to reject or strive towards as all Types are equally dealing with their own unique strengths and struggles. The Enneagram numbers are value neutral. The same goes for the names associated with the numbers – these labels are oversimplifications of a very rich archetype.

4. The Enneagram assigns labels that are difficult to change

FACT: The Enneagram is not fixed or static. While the Enneagram framework describes nine distinct personality types, it also recognises that humans are dynamic and can change over time. It is essential to approach this tool with an open mind and a willingness to learning, acknowledging that it is a complex system that can offer valuable insights into the human experience.

5. Your dominant Enneagram Type can change

FACT: Many Enneagram authors and master teachers believe our Type is inborn and it's forged and solidified during our formative years. Once these patterns have been created and repeated enough, these entrenched habits of dealing with the world continue to shape our fears, motivations and how we relate to and engage with the world.



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6. You can have more than one dominant Enneagram Type

FACT: While you might find yourself identifying with the characteristics of more than one Enneagram Type, you will primarily have one dominant personality Type throughout your lifetime. However, because the Enneagram symbol is an interconnected structure and the nine archetypes represent varying perspectives, it's normal and expected to experience and act out patterns of the other Enneagram Types.

7. You are your dominant Enneagram Type

FACT: You might resonate with your dominant Enneagram Type but that does mean that you are your Type. You can begin to over-identify with the qualities of your Type and take them as truth instead of what it's intended to be – a reminder that we can make different choices to expand and grow. Promoting typist behaviour is harmful as it wrongly claims we can't evolve from our Type.

8. You can use your Enneagram Type as an excuse for bad behaviour

FACT: Your Type is not an excuse for bad or hurtful behaviours. The Enneagram offers you knowledge to allow you recognise negative situations and see them for what they are. The nine Types are not narrowly framed stereotypes; they form part of an expansive personality framework that offers you a way to develop into a more actualised person who is aware of your strengths and struggles and is able to shift unhealthy patterns of behaviour.

9. You can guess someone's Enneagram Type

FACT: You only see people through the lens of your own Type so you can't guess someone's Enneagram Type. More importantly, you shouldn't, as it takes away their opportunity to come to it on their own terms.