

Introducing Enneagram

Enneagram is a model for personality-mapping/gauging. It categorizes human personality into nine types that are interconnected and related to each other. Though everyone has a personality that is a mixture of all nine types, one type will be the dominant; and this dominant type is called a person's "core type". The "core type" determines and motivates a person's majority of actions. The nicknames given to each and their focus are the following: Type 1 – Reformer/Perfectionist – whose focus is on quality; Type 2 – Helper/Caregiver – whose focus is on service; Type 3 – Achiever/Performer – whose focus is on delivery; Type 4 – Individualist/Romantic – whose focus is on creativity; Type 5 – Observer/Investigator – whose focus is on insight; Type 6 – Loyalist/Skeptic – whose focus is on vigilance; Type 7 – Enthusiast/Adventurer – whose focus is on vision; Type 8 – Challenger/Protector – whose focus is on drive; and Type 9 – Peacemaker/Mediator – whose focus is on harmony.

Enneagram system of personality-mapping divides these nine personality types into three groups, each consisting of a triad, based on if the focus of each of the triad is on feeling, thinking, or instincts. The *heart-triad* – Types 2, 3, and 4 – tend to focus on feelings; the *head-triad* – Types 5, 6, and 7 – are oriented towards thinking; and the *gut-triad* – Types 8, 9, and 1 – are slanted towards instincts. Thus, the *heart-triad* is more emotional; the *head-triad* is more intellectual; and the *gut-triad* is more instinctual, even though each of the types within each of the triads have their own specific and unique way of expressing their emotional, thinking, and instinctive natures respectively.

Enneagram system also speaks of *personality wings*. According to this theory the characteristics of an Enneagram Type is blended with the traits of the types on its either side. Thus, an Enneagram type's traits would include the traits of its personality wings – that is the types on its either side. For example, the personality of Type 1 – Reformer/Perfectionist – would be colored by its personality wings – namely Type 9 – Peacemaker/Mediator, and Type 2 – Helper/Caretaker. Thus, there are 18 personality wings to the 9 personality types. Personality wings give a second and a third side to the personality of an Enneagram type. Though personality wings do not change a person's dominant character structure, and core motivations, they do explain some of the differences we find in the behaviors of people who share the same Enneagram type. They also help us to understand the nuances behind a person's motivations and behaviors. Though every Enneagram type has two personality wings by strict definition, generally one of these personality wings exert greater influence in most individuals. However, in some persons, both the personality wings may wield equal influences.

In analyzing Enneagram personality types, we must also take into consideration the three basic survival strategies, called instincts/subtypes – namely, *self-preservation instinct*, *one-to-one instinct*, and *social instinct*. *Self-preservation subtype's* focus is self-management and preserving oneself from in needs and threats; *one-to-one subtype* prefers personal-level relationship than groups; and *social subtype* prefers to deal with groups, and establishing social structures. These instinctual patterns greatly influence each Enneagram type's everyday life's relationship with others. Hence, knowing your and your partner's instinctual variants would make a great difference in the manner you relate to each other.

Thus, in understanding the personality of Enneagram types, we must take into consideration their dominant or core types; if they belong to the heart, head, or gut triads; their personality wings and influences; their instinctive subtypes, and how each of these factors affect their core personality types.