

INTRODUCING THE NINE TYPES

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. By discovering your Enneagram Type you will:

- Establish stronger connections with your child
- Eliminate self defeating behaviour patterns
- Deepen parent – child communication
- Reduce stress in your home
- Gain self awareness and identify your parenting strengths
- Support the flowering of your child's personality

Parenting does count—not to produce a personality type, but to influence how healthy a child of that type will be. It is therefore not difficult to see that when parents work on themselves through tools such as the Enneagram, they are not only doing something good for themselves, they are making possible one of the greatest gifts they could give their children—an emotionally healthy childhood and a happier future. Parents who help their child develop self-esteem, emotional stability, open curiosity, trust in self, an enjoyment of life, strength and self-confidence, easiness with themselves, the ability to regulate themselves, and empathy for self and others (qualities found in the nine types) set the stage for the development of all of their child's potentials and future accomplishments.

There are nine different Enneagram styles, representing nine distinct habits of thinking, feeling, and taking action, connected to nine unique personal and spiritual developmental paths. Each of us has only one place or number on the Enneagram; while your Enneagram style remains the same throughout your lifetime, your characteristics may soften or become more pronounced as you grow and develop.

It is important to take your time in discovering your own Enneagram style, being careful not to prematurely type yourself or others. The following overview of the system and the style descriptions will give you a preliminary understanding of the Enneagram system and the core issues of each style.

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Type One: The Perfectionist

The principled, idealistic type. Ones are ethical and conscientious, with a strong sense of right and wrong. They are teachers and crusaders, always striving to improve things but afraid of making a mistake. Well-organised, orderly, and fastidious, they try to maintain high standards but can slip into being critical and perfectionistic.

As Parents: Though firmness and structure can help children feel secure, some Type One parents could use more flexibility. A Perfectionist parent may demand self-control, reasonableness, regularity, and the ability to delay rewards – that their child be a Little Adult.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems with repressed anger and impatience.

Healthy: Ones are wise, discerning, realistic and noble, as well as morally heroic.

Unconscious childhood messages: “It’s not okay to make mistakes”.

Wake Up Call: Feeling a sense of personal obligation to fix everything themselves.

Type Two: The Helper/Carer

The caring, interpersonal type, Twos are empathetic, sincere, and warm-hearted. They are friendly, generous, and self-sacrificing, but they can also be sentimental, flattering and people-pleasing. They are driven to be close to others, and they often do things for others in order to be needed.

As Parents: Twos usually enjoy their children, like being parents, and encourage their children’s interests. Because they’re so involved, sometimes they do too much for their children instead of allowing the children to make mistakes and learn for themselves. May demand generosity, thoughtfulness, helpfulness, and attention to others – that their child be a Little Helper.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems taking care of themselves and acknowledging their own needs.

Healthy: Twos are unselfish and altruistic and have unconditional love for themselves and others.

Unconscious childhood messages: “It’s not okay to have your own needs”.

Wake Up Call: Believing that they must go out to others to win them over.

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Type Three: The Achiever/Motivator

The adaptable, success-oriented type. Threes are self-assured, attractive, and charming. Ambitious, competent and energetic, they can also be status-conscious and highly driven for personal advancement. Threes are often concerned about their image and what others think of them.

As Parents: A lot of parents, especially Threes, want their children to have Three-like qualities: energy, confidence, drive, and optimism. They think that if the children are cheerleaders, presidents of the class, and professionals they'll be successful and happy. But children come with their own personalities and can be successful in many different ways. May demand being outstanding at tasks, fulfilling family hopes, physical perfection, and popularity – that their child be a Little Star.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems with workaholicism and competitiveness.

Healthy: Threes are self-accepting, authentic, and everything they seem to be – role models who inspire others.

Unconscious childhood messages: “It’s not okay to have your own feelings and identity”.

Wake-Up Call: Beginning to drive themselves for status and attention.

Type Four: The Individualist/Creative

The romantic, introspective type. Fours are self-aware, sensitive, reserved and quiet. They are self-revealing, emotionally honest and personal, but they can also be moody and self-conscious. Withholding themselves from others due to feeling vulnerable and defective, they can also feel disdainful and exempt from ordinary ways of living.

As Parents: While Fours have a lot to give in terms of insight, creativity, and warmth, they also need to support their children's interests, whatever they are. Fours can emotionally overwhelm children who are not at home in their world of feelings. Most kids won't be as sensitive as they are. May demand sensitivity, artistic creativity, emotional depth, and understanding – that their child be a Little Therapist.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems with self-indulgence and self-pity.

Healthy: Fours are inspired and highly creative, able to renew themselves and transform their experiences.

Unconscious childhood messages: “It’s not okay to be too functional or too happy”.

Wake-up Call: Holding on to and intensifying feelings through the imagination.

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Type Five: The Thinker/Observer

The intense, cerebral type. Fives are alert, insightful and curious. They are able to concentrate and focus on developing complex ideas and skills. Independent and innovative, they can become preoccupied with their thoughts and imaginary constructs. They become detached, yet high-strung and intense.

As Parents: It's sometimes difficult for Fives to disengage from their own projects or thoughts and join in on the child's frequency. Five-Observer parents need to be careful, if their minds are on something else, not to become irritable or too authoritarian with their kids. May demand independence, studiousness, intellectual gifts, and curiosity – that their child be a Little Genius.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems with isolation, eccentricity and nihilism.

Healthy: Fives are visionary pioneers, often ahead of their time and able to see the world in an entirely new way.

Unconscious Child Messages: "It's not okay to be comfortable in the world".

Wake-up Call: Withdrawing from reality in concepts and mental worlds

Type Six: The Loyalist/Questioner

The committed, security-oriented type. Sixes are reliable, hardworking and responsible, but they can also be defensive, evasive and highly anxious – running on stress while complaining about it. They are often cautious and indecisive but can also be reactive, defiant and rebellious.

As Parents: Six parents are very loyal, but they may be overprotective. It takes a lot of courage for Six-parents to let their children out in the world where the dangers are, but kids are safer when they learn to solve their own problems. Six parents need to monitor their tendency to take the devil's advocate position, for this can erode children's confidence. May demand dependability, obedience, perseverance, and trustworthiness – that their child be a Little Trouper.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems with self-doubt and suspicion.

Healthy: Sixes are internally stable, self-confidence and self-reliant, courageously supporting the weak and powerless.

Unconscious Childhood Messages: "It's not okay to trust yourself".

Wake-up Call: Becoming dependent on something outside the self for guidance.

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Type Seven: The Adventurer

The busy productive type. Sevens are versatile, optimistic and spontaneous. Playful, high-spirited and practical, they can also be overextended, scattered and undisciplined. They constantly seek new and exciting experiences, but they can become distracted and exhausted by staying on the go.

As Parents: Sevens like having playful children. But if the children are very serious, worried, or aggressive, Seven-parents have to make big adjustments. May demand vitality, good humour, resilience, and spontaneity – that their child be a Little Entertainer.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems with superficiality and impulsiveness.

Healthy: Sevens focus their talents on worthwhile goals, becoming joyous, highly accomplished and full of gratitude.

Unconscious Childhood Messages “It’s not okay to depend on anyone for anything”.

Wake-up Call: Feeling that something better is available somewhere else.

Type Eight: The Asserter

The powerful dominating type. Eights are self-confident, strong and assertive. Protective, resourceful and decisive, they can also be proud and domineering. Eights feel that they must control their environment, often becoming confrontational and intimidating.

As Parents: Eight parents are protective and can be good role models for taking action and having confidence. They need to be aware that anger can devastate children, and they need to try not to impose their will on them. Eights can have a difficult time adjusting to their children and perceiving how they are different from themselves. It is helpful to look for qualities in their children they may not be used to thinking of as strengths, such as the ability to back down or to show vulnerability. May demand toughness, self-sufficiency, courage, and willpower – that their child be a Little Entrepreneur.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems with allowing themselves to be close to others.

Healthy: Eights are self-mastering – they use their strength to improve others’ lives, becoming heroic, magnanimous, and sometimes historically great.

Unconscious Childhood Message: “It’s not okay to be vulnerable or to trust anyone”.

Wake-up Call: Feeling that they must push and struggle for make things happen.

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Type Nine: The Peacemaker

The easygoing, self-effacing type. Nines are accepting, trusting and stable. They are good-natured, kind-hearted, easygoing and supportive but can also be too willing to go along with others to keep the peace. They want everything to be without conflict but can tend to be complacent and minimize anything upsetting.

As Parents: Many Nines have a knack for being able to perceive and enter the world of a child. They can provide enormous warmth and understanding. Nine-parents may need to work on following through with their children and being able to say no. Rather than always negotiating, they need to take a definite stand and uphold a position of authority. May demand quietness, lack of demands, gentleness, and non-neediness – that their child be a Little Angel.

Unhealthy: They typically have problems with passivity and stubbornness.

Healthy: Nines are indomitable and all-embracing; they are able to bring people together and heal conflicts.

Unconscious Childhood Messages: “It’s not okay to assert yourself”.

Wake-up Call: Outwardly accommodating themselves to others.

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