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# **The Enneagram's Nine Personality Styles**

## **Style One**

***People who compare reality to a set of standards. May be objective, balanced and morally heroic or repressive, critical and perfectionistic.***

Ones have a strong unconscious tendency to compare reality with what should be. They generally have a set of ideal standards against which they measure themselves, the behavior of others, and the world around them.

These ideals differ from person to person. Some Ones could be preoccupied with spiritual standards while others, like advice columnists, focus on good manners. Other Ones might be social reformers while others still are simply intent on living upright lives or excelling at their jobs.

Healthy Ones specialize in accurate moral perception and objective evaluation. More than other Enneagram styles, Ones can be ethically discerning, dispassionate and fair. They can make excellent priests and judges as well as constructive social commentators.

Healthy Ones can be selfless and morally heroic, willing to sacrifice personally for principle. If they have a cause or a mission, they will work hard and responsibly to fulfill it. They value ethics and integrity above expediency, profit or easy solutions. People with this style often

display a balanced, cheerful perfectionism that they temper with forgiveness and compassion.

When Ones are less healthy, their preoccupation with principles and high ideals degenerates into a more mundane concern with the rules. Such Ones may still crusade for a cause but have more ego-involvement than they realize. They confuse morality with moralism and discernment with judgment.

A less healthy One might sacrifice to uphold the rules, but unconsciously resent it. Ones can become critical or angry when their reforming zeal isn't shared by the world at large. They might still work hard and hold themselves to strict standards of behavior, but their speech can be punctuated by sharp-tongued remarks, as their anger breaks through. Their calm, ethical perspective can also give way to dualistic thinking—either/or propositions, right/wrong dilemmas that reduce complex situations to simple black and white choices.

A One's attempt to be good is a tense enterprise, often leading to rigid behavior and obsessive worry. Many Ones fight their desires, especially the bad ones. These are often sensual in nature, but, in general, bad impulses are the opposite of whatever the One considers good and virtuous behavior.

Social problems can emerge because Ones have trouble knowing when they are angry and don't realize how scolding or repressive they sound to others. When insecure or feeling criticized, a One's defensive reaction is to start judging. They simply don't accept reality as it is and don't think you should either.

Whatever Ones disapprove of in their own behavior is what they condemn in others. They may not allow themselves to act badly but that doesn't mean they don't want to. Ones in this state tend to beat down or contain their desires and then project them outward.

So a One might see an inviting place to swim on a summer day and suddenly begin to talk about the evils of laziness and the skimpy bathing suits people wear nowadays. The One reverse-projects his sensual desire to swim onto the environment and then indicts the desire.

Very unhealthy people with this style can grow obsessive, paranoid and zealous. They can be cruel and persecutory in the service of

goodness. Unhealthy Ones can be morally vain and hypocritical, as well as obsessed with fulfilling ill-conceived projects and missions. Many forms of religious and ideological fundamentalism are shot through with the spirit of unhealthy Oneness.

## Style Two

***People who see the world interpersonally and define themselves through service to others. May be selfless, loving and giving or dependent, prideful and hostile.***

In the Enneagram's organization, Twos, Threes and Fours form an emotional trio, in that they share general tendencies and undercurrents. People within this trio of styles can experience a kind of ongoing confusion about their identities, confusing who they are with the roles that they play and images of who they seem to be.

All personality styles do this somewhat, but Twos, Threes and Fours are most deeply prone to confuse seeming with being. They share a general propensity for losing track of how they actually feel in favor of how they imagine they feel within the roles they are playing. People with these styles are prone to conflicts in relationships and matters of the heart.

Two is the most purely interpersonal of all the Enneagram styles. Twos are most apt to conceive of life as a fundamental give-and-take between people, regarding all human beings as members of one vast family. Within this point of view, giving love becomes the most important thing a Two can do.

People with this style have a well-developed capacity to identify emotionally with the needs of others. They have a strong unconscious habit of sending themselves over to other people and intuitively divining what another person might be feeling or needing. Healthy Twos practice this habit voluntarily; they willingly identify with another before returning to their own point of view. They are able to care for the needs of others, yet value their own emotional truth, and effectively attend to their own needs. The phrase "lend yourself to others but give yourself to yourself" describes what Twos do when healthy.

At their best, Twos are capable of truly selfless love and have exceptional ministerial skills. The biographies of some saints portray Twos dedicated to relieving material and spiritual suffering. Whether or not it has succeeded, the classical intention of Christianity is fundamentally Twoish.

When Twos are less healthy, they still send their attention over to others, but now they forget to return to their own position. They begin to repress their own needs and funnel their energies toward taking care of others whether others need it or not. Now they over-identify with others, losing their sense of themselves and compulsively giving in hopes of being recognized, appreciated and loved. Through the medium of other people, Twos try to give to themselves, to satisfy needs that they have rejected in themselves and relocated in others. Twos at this stage can also begin to fear being abandoned and alone.

Unhealthy Twos use flattery, manipulation and seduction to get others to respond to and define them. The Two's need to give is so strong that it becomes selfish and what is given comes with an invisible price tag. It is often a high price as Twos, to compensate for having lost their real self, begin to inflate and exaggerate the importance of what they give to others. This exaggerated self-importance is otherwise known as pride, and when Twos are very unhealthy, pridefulness becomes their most striking feature.

Not surprisingly, Twos can struggle in relationships since it's important to know your own true feelings and motives in order to relate honestly to others. When Twos are deeply unhealthy, they are typically quite deluded about their motives. They replace their real feelings of selfish desperation and aggression with the image of an altruistic martyr who is owed big sums for their wonderful efforts. What maddens and confuses others about unhealthy Twos is the way they package what feels like hostility as love.

The saintly high side of this style is very high indeed while the lowest expression can be drastically destructive. The motif of stalking an objectified loved one goes with the unhealthy side of this style as does the metaphor of the vampire, who lives on the blood of others.

## Style Three

***People who measure themselves by external achievement and the roles that they play. May be truthful, accomplished and sincere or conniving, competitive and false.***

Threes identify less with roles of interpersonal helpfulness and more with images of success and productivity. Threes often expect to be loved for what they do rather than for who they are. Their image-confusion is between seeming accomplished and being true to their less-than-perfect inner self. Less healthy Threes tend to cut off deeper feeling in favor of outer appearances. They deny their imperfections and present a public image that the world will find laudable. This image is precisely the opposite of who the Three secretly fears she might be.

Healthy Threes are often highly accomplished and live by creeds of excellence and professionalism. They are strong at setting and meeting goals and usually master many life skills. Threes learn fast, make good leaders, and do well in high profile, socially established occupations where performance can be measured by results. Most are organized, flexible and industrious. When healthy, they usually make excellent role models and talented teachers of whatever skills they have mastered. Threes can also display a sometimes amazing capacity for taking efficient, effective action. They are especially good at multi-tasking, doing many things at once.

Healthy Threes can be energetic and cheerful, with a positive eye to the future and a self-confident, open approach to challenges. Their actions are often governed by a sense of honor and they value family and friendship in addition to work. Threes sometimes arrive at these priorities after a struggle with moral expediency and a conscious search for meaningful values.

When Threes are less healthy, their strategy of being successful and well rounded yields to a desire to seem that way and they start to cut corners to maintain an image. Threes can slip into impersonations and play a role of themselves, adopting chameleon-like poses in order to seem noteworthy in different contexts. They begin to deny their personal feelings and increasingly identify with a mask. Most Threes have an Achilles heel, a sense of inadequacy that they compensate for with achievement and role-playing.

Intimate relationships can suffer as Threes re-route their feelings through their image of who they should be. They may present a persona to friends or partners, hiding a deep sense of flaw and, instead, offering a mask for others to love. Expediency and efficiency become more important, and an unhealthy Three may begin to enjoy the feeling of non-feeling. They may think of themselves as high-performance engines whose purpose is to race from task to task, securing outcomes before dashing on to new finish lines. It's not uncommon for Threes to talk in sports metaphors and believe that life is only a game, a game that's played to win.

To win, they push themselves harder, deriving a kind of high from being hyperactive and using their relationships mainly as springboards for professional gain. Their once healthy flexibility degenerates into arrogant calculation and amoral strategizing. Threes comfortably operate in occupations where appearance and persuasion are important—public relations, sales, advertising—and they often turn themselves into a commodity to market.

For very unhealthy Threes winning becomes everything and a Three's mask can fully eclipse his soul. They can be amoral, Machiavellian, heartless, slick, and plagiarizing. They start to believe their own lies and con people without conscience. Their aim is to maintain an illusion of superiority from which they derive a vindictive sense of triumph. Anyone who has ever been deliberately and maliciously deceived has felt the sting of this attitude.

## Style Four

***People who live principally in their imagination and feelings. May be artistic, articulate and inspiring or whiny, elitist and negative.***

Like Ones, Fours compare reality with what could be. While Ones tend to look for imperfection about them and try to correct what's wrong, Fours often turn away from reality and live in their imaginations, feelings and moods.

Along with Twos and Threes, Fours gravitate towards vanity and image-confusion but may express it paradoxically. Fours are more likely to identify with an image of being defective, especially if it confers on them a quality of uniqueness or exempt specialness. A Four

might, for instance, bemoan his inability to succeed in the everyday world, but this complaint could carry a subtle quality of boasting. The Four could have a self-image that is romantically tragic but also elitist.

Healthy Fours tend to be idealistic, have good taste and are great appreciators of beauty. They filter reality through a rich, subtle subjectivity and are very good at metaphorical thinking, the capacity to make connections between unrelated facts and events. The Four tendency to see things symbolically is enhanced by their emotional intensity. This creates raw artistic material that almost demands to be given form. Self-expression and pursuing self-knowledge are high priorities for people with this style.

Fours naturally practice synesthesia, a chronic blending of the senses that leads to intense multilevel reactions. A Four entering a new situation could see something that triggers a mental image which, in turn, evokes a feeling, which then reminds the Four of a song, which triggers more images that evoke more smells, tastes, feelings and so on. The Four's moods and feelings can run together like a watercolor in the rain, producing a kaleidoscopic rinse of impressions in reaction to even small events.

Fours value the aesthetics of beauty as much as they are attuned to the tragic nature of existence. When healthy, people with this style work to transmute the pain of living into something meaningful, through creative work of all kinds. Fours are talented at articulating subjective experience and can be fine teachers or psychotherapists in this regard. They may also be empathetic foul-weather friends, able to understand the dilemmas of others and especially willing to listen to a friend's pain.

Because of the strength of their emotional imaginations, people with this style are often described as artistic. Many of the world's most accomplished artists have been Fours, and nearly all people with this style need to find creative outlets. Fours work in all kinds of occupations, but, whenever possible, they try to make their work creatively interesting. A Four's sensory richness is like the raw material of creativity. Healthy Fours give themselves creative outlets that help them express their intense inner life.

When Fours are less healthy, they begin to focus on what is unavailable or missing in their lives. They can become negative and critical, finding fault with what they do have, seeing mainly misery in

the present. They then turn inward and use their imaginations to romanticize other times and places. Fours can live in the past, the future—anywhere that seems more appealing than here and now. Fours tend to envy whatever it is they don't have, embodying the saying "the grass is always greener on the other side."

The need to be seen as someone special and unique may become more neurotically pronounced too. Fours can seem very in touch with their feelings, but, when unhealthy, they translate their authentic feeling into melodrama. They can be full of lament and nostalgia, demanding recognition yet rejecting anything good they get from friends. They might also grow competitive and spiteful, unable to enjoy their own successes without taking away from the achievements of others.

Unhealthy Fours can be moody or hypersensitive while acting exempt from everyday rules. Buoyed by their sense of defective specialness, they might give themselves permission to act badly, be selfish or irresponsible. They may refuse to deal with the mundane and the ordinary, unconsciously reasoning that they are not of this world anyway. Fours at this stage incline towards feeling guilty, ashamed, melancholy, jealous and unworthy.

Deeply unhealthy Fours can inhabit a harrowing world of torment. They can be openly masochistic and extravagant in their self-debasement. The lives of spectacularly self-destructive artists often reflect this kind of scenario. At this stage, a Four could become unreachably alienated. Stricken by a profound sense of hopelessness, they can sink into morbid self-loathing or grow suicidally depressed. They see their differentness in entirely negative terms and banish themselves into a kind of exile. The desire to punish themselves and others is also determined and strong.



## Style Five

***People who pull back from the world and live in their mind. May be wise, farsighted and knowledgeable or abstract, stingy and schizoid.***

Fives, Sixes and Sevens share a general undercurrent of fear and form another emotional trio. Unlike Twos, Threes and Fours, people within this group are not confused about who they are or how they feel. Instead, they tend to unconsciously anticipate life's dangers and react from an emotional baseline of fear. Fives, Sixes and Sevens are generally thinkers—people who live more in their heads than in their bodies. They struggle with taking action, asserting their wills and handling power.

A Five's fears are specifically social; people with this style habitually guard against being invaded or engulfed by others. This is the most explicitly antisocial of Enneagram styles. When defensive, Fives can be withdrawn and standoffish as a way to manage their hypersensitivity to others. Generally, they fear close relationships as these can lead to feeling overwhelmed, smothered or swarmed.

Fives live in their minds, in contrast to Fours, who inhabit their emotional imaginations. People with this style have well-developed abilities to analyze and synthesize knowledge. They may be perceptive, wise and objective, able to stay centered and logical when others around them are confused or panicked.

Healthy Fives usually strike a balance between interacting with the world and withdrawing from it. This style is frequently associated with knowledgeability and, sometimes, intellectual genius. Healthy Fives actively offer the world the fruits of their knowledge, often through teaching and writing. But, whatever they do, healthy Fives make their talent for accumulating knowledge count for something beyond itself. Fives can be idealistic and sometimes courageously contribute to the social good.

Healthy people with this style also practice what the Buddhists call non-attachment, an attitude characterized by an equal mixture of detachment and compassion. Within this stance Fives can play the games of life without being overly attached to results and, as friends, they may be able to understand your point of view almost as well as

their own. They are sympathetic and kind-hearted but able to see events from a distant perspective and avoid getting personally upset.

When Fives are less healthy, they slide from nonattachment into disassociation, the inner state of being cut off from feelings. They may be hyperaware of the world's demands, and yet respond passively by withdrawing. Most outsiders see a Five's capacity to pull back as a kind of independence. It is a defense as well; the Five is making a strong antisocial boundary to compensate for being overly sensitive in the first place.

Cutting themselves off then becomes a defensive habit. The idea is: If I can just learn to live with less I'll avoid the influence of others. This leads to a tendency to hoard, to save what little they have in order to need less from others. Fives can hoard time, money, space, land, information or emotional availability. It doesn't matter what is hoarded, the pattern is the same; the Five tries to protect against flooding by stacking up supplies on some dry inner island.

Unhealthy Fives also stay distant from their own emotions by living in a world of information and ideas. The more they cut themselves off, however, the more they struggle with feelings of emptiness, loneliness and compulsive need. It's like trying to talk yourself out of being hungry. At this stage, a Five may be slow to know how she feels because she can only reach her feelings through a lengthy sequence of thinking. Unhealthy Fives worship gods of reason and try to look distantly down on their own emotions. This can also translate into a superior/arrogant attitude towards other people.

When Fives are very unhealthy, they may become schizoid and unpredictable, as though disassociated parts of themselves are taking turns talking. They can project an absent, vaguely shocked aura or be pointedly antisocial. Fives can, for instance, sit through parties, speak to no one, but later report having had a good time. Or they might unconsciously alienate others with nasty sneering commentary and unpredictable aggression. The habit of disassociating from their emotions can become so developed that very unhealthy Fives can lose touch with reality, developing weird phobias of invisible objects like germs, and be prone to hallucinations. Aggressive episodes are also possible, followed by bursts of acute paranoia.

## Style Six

***People who anticipate the world's dangers. When healthy they are often courageous, loyal and effective. When unhealthy they can be cowardly, masochistic and paranoid.***

Six is the most explicitly fearful style in the Enneagram. People with this orientation are especially aware of life's dangers and wary of the hazards that may lurk beneath everyday appearances.

There are two types of Sixes: phobic and counterphobic. Their reactions to being fearful are so different that outwardly they can appear to be different Enneagram styles. When phobic Sixes sense danger, they lie low. They may act cautious, compliant or ambivalent in order to avoid potential attack. When counterphobic Sixes sense danger, they often deliberately provoke it by acting outspoken and aggressive, wanting to handle trouble before it handles them. Phobic Sixes can be charming, modest and meek while counterphobics can seem tough, challenging and punchy. Some Sixes are absolutely phobic or counterphobic, but most exist along a continuum where they are more one than the other.

Healthy phobic Sixes are steady, loyal and idealistic. They are dutiful, but in a voluntary, dedicated way. They are usually committed to a group, tradition or cause beyond themselves. They fulfill their promises, work hard and are honorable, protective friends.

Healthy phobic Sixes are often gracious and diplomatic. They put people at ease and are well liked for their discretion and manners. Often they are very funny and have vivid imaginations. Healthy Sixes handle power with integrity and may be fair-minded leaders because they sympathize with underdogs. They can affirm their personal value but also want others in their chosen group to get recognition. They're not pushovers and they will take unpopular stands when necessary. Generally, however, healthy Sixes work towards solutions that benefit the group and allow everyone to win.

When less healthy, phobic Sixes can become more blindly dutiful even as they assume less personal responsibility. They might subtly shift their power onto an outside authority and begin to romanticize those who seem surer of themselves. The Six strikes an unconscious bargain with his hero, a bargain that says, I'll do what you want me to do if you'll protect me from danger. The Six then hides under an imaginary

umbrella, pledging fealty to this outside force, growing addicted to the security that this arrangement seems to offer. The healthy Six capacity for deep loyalty is double-edged when less healthy; Sixes are often loyal to the wrong person.

When they give away their power, phobic Sixes start to chronically worry and feel consciously helpless. To compensate, they become cautious and wary, trying to anticipate the motives of others. They may also try to check their own aggressive or powerful impulses, so that they don't deviate from the submissive role they have agreed to play. They could have trouble finishing what they start as they worry about who will criticize the finished product. They may seem friendly, but can be passive-aggressive or give off contradictory messages as their anger breaks through. Phobic Sixes can also be nervous, hesitant, skeptical, tense, indecisive and attached to victimhood.

When deeply unhealthy, phobic Sixes become addled with fear and openly dependent upon others. They might surrender their life to work, becoming an abject slave to a job or a boss. They could act like weak, powerless losers and yet demand coddling from friends, tyrannizing others with their helplessness, placing strict, narrow limits on what they will risk or try. Very unhealthy phobic Sixes avoid challenges, chronically catastrophize, and may persecute others who deviate from norms. They can also be cowardly, legalistic, petty, intolerant, melodramatic and dogmatic.

When healthy, counterphobic Sixes are often courageous, willing to take a tiger by the tail and yank. They can be physically adventuresome, highly skilled and have a real gusto for living. If they participate in a tradition, it is usually in the role of constructive gadfly. Their underlying mission is to serve the tradition by stirring it up. They consider themselves team players who offer useful alternatives, using the old as a springboard to the new. To this end, they may be energetic, honest, assertive, and have many good ideas.

If a healthy counterphobic Six is not serving a tradition, he or she is often creative and original. Sixes' ability to look past appearances and to question assumptions leads them deeper into a unique point of view. Artistic expression is attractive as a core assertion of their power and as a way to resolve a general sense of alienation.

Less healthy counterphobic Sixes often have an edgy, restless quality. Some channel their energies into physical activity; they enjoy sports

and tend to be more openly competitive than phobic Sixes. Counterphobics tend to hide their insecurities with cool or tough masks. The point of physical challenge is to expel fear by facing danger. Instead of being passively afraid, they take risks, call up fear, and then beat it. If phobic Sixes are addicted to security, then counterphobic Sixes are addicted to insecurity.

Counterphobic Sixes are often defiant or rebellious towards authority and habitually find counterexamples to whatever others assert. Despite this attitude, counterphobics are often loyal, hard-driven workers and highly idealistic. They may feel more acutely that the world is unfairly biased against them; some Sixes have a ranting quality, especially when they talk about governments and power structures. Many counterphobics are wryly funny and good at satire. When insecure, however, their humor can bite and sting.

When deeply unhealthy, counterphobic Sixes can be aggressive, unstable and senselessly contentious. To quell their inner fears, they take action compulsively and are prone to making bad decisions. They can also be fruitlessly hyperactive as well as paranoid, accusative, belligerent and vengeful. Some counterphobics prize their hatreds and can be aggressively unlikable or even dangerous. When inflamed they can adopt a vigilante-like mentality. Deeply unhealthy counterphobics generally act much worse than the authorities they accuse of abusing power.

## Style Seven

***People who seek multiple choices and positive futures. May be well-rounded, affirming and generous. When unhealthy they can be narcissistic, escapist and insatiable.***

Seven is the last style in the emotional trio that responds fearfully to life. Whereas Fives withdraw socially and Sixes become self-doubting or suspicious, Sevens manage their fears in a much different way. People with this style tend to suppress and escape their fears by willfully focusing on the positive and imagining plans, options and possibilities. Sevens are natural reframers in that they look on the bright side of things, make lemonade out of lemons, and keep happily active. The defensive point of this strategy is to avoid inner pain and be hard to hit as a moving target.

Healthy Sevens are well-rounded renaissance people who can be highly accomplished in many disparate realms of interest. Healthy people with this style are usually adventurous and multi-talented, with an authentic zest for living. Childlike but not childish, healthy Sevens are great receivers. Most have a stimulating, positive outlook and can enthusiastically appreciate life's gifts, even the little ones. Many possess an endearing blend of charm and curiosity; they can be creative, outgoing, generous to friends, and progressively interested in new horizons. Healthy Sevens are usually highly resilient and bounce back well from loss and calamity. They are also sensitive and loyal.

At their best, people with this style seek long-range fulfillment and deeper satisfactions. To this end, they are able to accept the realistic necessity for both pain and commitment in their lives. Accepting life's painful dimension gives a Seven more depth and consequently enhances their joy. Many Sevens report that being willing to make appropriate commitments gives their lives an overall structure within which they can still find variety.

When less healthy, people with this style are prone to escapism and try to avoid the pain in themselves and others. Sevens project their power onto outside forces that can confine, restrict, depress or judge them. Sevens are self-jailing in that they can surround themselves with people and circumstances that will pin them down or obligate them, mimicking what the Seven does to him- or herself. After creating a jail of expectation and obligation, Sevens feel helpless, as though they have no choice. To compensate, they then hyperflex their capacity to choose.

Sevens control and sublimate their pain by indulging their appetites. These can be for food, drugs, ideas, activity, people, new experiences, etc. Unhealthy Sevens eat life but don't digest it. They search out the new, trying to maintain a high by flavoring reality with their imaginations and fantasies of what will be. They can be dilettantish, impulsive, undisciplined, impersonal, glib, narcissistic and acquisitive. Sevens may entertain many interests, but indiscriminately; their knowledge is extensive but not deep, rather like a jack-of-all-trades.

Many Sevens have problems with completion. They tend to be strong on initiating action but weak on follow-through. Sevens are usually not afraid to initiate a course of action or a project. Their difficulty comes

in the day-to-day implementation of long-term tasks and enduring their boring stretches.

Some Sevens fear process. They have no well-developed sense of how to do things in a stepwise manner. The thought of putting one foot in front of another is not only boring but also frightening.

Under stress, Sevens also adopt what are called "as if" frames, where they make up positive fantasies about the future and pretend these are present and real. Sevens sometimes avoid difficult situations this way, eliminating the need to struggle, risk failure or have their actions judged. Most unhealthy Sevens are afraid they are inadequate and unconsciously compare themselves with others.

When Sevens are deeply unhealthy, the line between reality and fantasy loosens drastically. They often grow obsessed with grandiose visions and inflate themselves narcissistically. Very unhealthy Sevens may completely refuse responsibility for their actions and resist all realistic constraints on their behavior. They can be wild, impatient, chaotic, delusional and eruptive. Tendencies toward addictions and manic-depressive cycles become grippingly strong. Since they can never permanently satisfy their appetites, Sevens can plunge headlong into hedonism, seeking more to consume. Anyone who gets in the way of a manic Seven will be knocked down; all promises to others are broken. When very unhealthy, Sevens call legal forces down on themselves. The world has to restrain the antisocial behavior born from the Seven's inner cravings.

## Style Eight

***People who need to be strong, to prevail over circumstance. When healthy they often are powerful, protective and committed to a cause. When unhealthy they can be destructive, excessive and sadistic.***

Eights, Nines and Ones share a general undercurrent of anger and form another emotional trio. If Twos, Threes and Fours can be confused about who they are and how they feel and Fives, Sixes and Sevens react fearfully and are confused about taking action. Eights, Nines and Ones react from an emotional ground of anger and have trouble with accurate mental conception, that is to say, thinking clearly. This difficulty is often described as a condition of mental sleep.

Healthy Eights are often dynamic, strong and independent. They demonstrate the virtue of power: how to wield influence for constructive purposes. Many Eights are natural leaders who inspire others, protect the weak and strive for justice. They may use their power to shake things up and have the courage and will to implement new ideas. They are generally honest and direct, bringing an energetic, lusty gusto to whatever they attempt.

Healthy Eights are often generous, loyal friends who protect what is soft and vulnerable in others. This is also a metaphor for how Eights relate to themselves. Beneath their strong outer armor is a younger, more vulnerable part of themselves that they shield. This part relates to an innocence of perception that healthy Eights often have. They are able to see the world as if for the first time, through the eyes of a child. They may have a related love of nature that is a source of spirituality and evokes this innocent quality. Unguarded Eights often demonstrate the strength of gentleness; they are strong enough to be kind, open enough to be touched, secure enough to be wrong, rich enough to be generous.

When Eights are less healthy, their preoccupation with power begins to be tainted by self-interest. While still relatively free of self-doubt, Eights begin to cover up their vulnerabilities with aggressive displays of strength. They overidentify with being powerful as a way to deny their softness and survive in a world that they believe is dangerous. They may also tend to excess—staying up late, doing too much, driving too hard, indulging in addictions partly to numb their more vulnerable feelings.

Less healthy Eights enjoy confrontation and try to make contact with others primarily through fighting. They also push against others to assess their motives and measure the degree of external threat. Eights may narcissistically inflate their presence and seem to take up too much space in a room. To protect the tender childlike part of themselves, they can act overbearing, arrogant and insensitive. Beneath this intimidating shell, an Eight could feel sensitive to betrayal, vulnerable to ridicule, or weak in a way that he is ashamed of.

Most Eights don't quite realize how belligerent they can seem. This is because they defensively deny feedback, especially about ways they might have hurt others. Unhealthy Eights can deny feeling guilty,



usually by covering it up with more aggression, while claiming they have nothing to apologize for. In their mind's eye, they can see people as caricatures, two-dimensional objects that can then be skewered without conscience.

As with Twos, the healthy versus unhealthy expressions of this style are unusually extreme. Very unhealthy Eights can do immense damage, mostly to others in the service of maintaining their grandiose image of an invulnerable self. A "get them before they get me" attitude rules the Eight's behavior. To this end, they can be suspicious, bullying, vengeful, ruthless and psychopathic. Many of the world's bloodiest dictators have been very unhealthy Eights, and their brutal excesses reflect how unhealthy people with this style ultimately murder their own humanity.

## Style Nine

***People who are receptive to their environment and play down their own presence. When healthy they often are loving, modest and trusting. When unhealthy they can be stubborn, lazy and soul-dead.***

Unlike Eights, who directly express their anger, Nines tamp their anger down. Their central defensive strategy is to self-efface, to blend with and accommodate their environment. This tactic requires that Nines suppress their rough edges and conceal any part of them that might seem disagreeable. Most Nines resent the consequences of this strategy: people overlook them but even their anger comes out in indirect ways.

Since most Nines have taken on the coloration of their environment, there is a confusing variety to people with this style. They can have a wide range of occupations and outwardly appear much different from each other. What they share underneath, however, is a distinct tendency to fall asleep to their inner needs. When you are trying to identify a Nine, you need to look for the absence of something rather than an obvious definite quality that the person asserts.

Nines have sometimes been described as the common people of the Enneagram. When healthy, they possess a deep personal modesty and an elegant simplicity of thought. Healthy Nines are even-tempered, stable, unassuming, nonjudgmental and comfortable with who they

are. They often have a cheerful Seven-like outlook, though they live in the present and not the future.

Many Nines have a calm, egoless focused power that they bring to bear on whatever is important to them. This power is generally rooted in love whether the Nine thinks of it that way or not. Most healthy people with this style want to give to others freely and administrate their world in a way that benefits those they care about.

Nines are natural diplomats and mediators and can be highly skilled at resolving conflicts. Since they seek peace, union and harmony, it is often easy for Nines to find points of agreement between warring parties. From there, a Nine might patiently negotiate a settlement that builds on small positive steps. Healthy Nines are gently dynamic, suffused with a highly integrated sense of self and implicit mission. Most are also flexible and able to state blunt difficult truths in useful ways that somehow don't make others defensive.

When less healthy, a Nine's modesty devolves into self-concealment. They begin to merge blindly with the wishes of others and play the roles their environment wants them to play. In the process, they erase their own needs, priorities and ambitions, hiding their opinions and preferences to keep an apparent peace. The more a Nine absents herself from her own life, however, the more passive, unfocused and ambivalent she becomes.

Less healthy Nines tend to see all sides of a situation and identify equally with each outside perspective. They often focus on absurd or irrelevant details and lose the big picture or forget the original purpose of a task. They can be overly responsible but under-perform, obsessively complicating simple tasks even as they minimize the consequence of not getting important things done. Going in circles relieves them of the necessity to make decisions and personal choices, to take responsibility for having a self that they think might be rejected by others.

Nines often have trouble overtly saying no, but will say it in other ways, usually through silent stubbornness and passive aggression. Nines usually blame others explicitly or indirectly for the life they feel they can't really have. Deep down there's an angry, depressed nihilism in most unhealthy Nines. They have given up on their life and see no reason to rouse themselves to play what they are convinced is an empty, fruitless game.

When deeply unhealthy, Nines can sink into depressed self-neglect and a kind of lazy oblivion that is an imitation of death. They may be apathetic, habit-bound, callous or numb. They could talk incessantly about what they know they should do but then never bother to do it. They might try to avoid conflict but accidentally provoke it through bursts of disassociated nastiness. They might be disorderly, chaotic or cluttered and offer convoluted, ill-formed rationales for their irresponsibility. Deeply unhealthy Nines can do great harm to others through neglect, broken commitments and passive-aggressive behavior while stubbornly believing that their actions have no consequence. Drug and alcohol addiction can also be problems at this stage.

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