



The Changeworks

Consulting, Training, Books and CDs

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About the Enneagram's Subtypes

Each Enneagram style has three further suborientations called subtypes, related to three realms of life – survival or how we take care of ourselves, the realm of close relationships, and how we relate socially to the larger world.

Your primary subtype is determined by whether you are unconsciously preoccupied with personal survival (self-preservation), whether you incline towards one-to-one relationships (intimate), or whether your style of relating includes groups of people (social).

We all have portions of our attention and energy focused on each of these three realms, but we may habitually favor one more than the others. If your primary desire is for material security you might be continuously, if subtly, focused on the essentials of life – food, shelter, physical safety and your home.

If your primary desire is for intimacy in one-to-one relationships you might be especially focused on whether you are desirable to others, or be interested in finding or being with your mate, or relate to your friends one at a time in a tightly focused way.

If your primary desire is for community, you might seek safety and security in numbers. You could gravitate towards groups of people and be interested in outer recognition, popularity, honor, status and social acceptance. Your inner thoughts will tend to be filled with groups of people.

As with wings and resource points, your subtype can be either a resource or a limitation depending on how healthy or defensive you are within it. The high side of a preoccupation with self-preservation is that you can really take care of business, be good at details and capable at life-management skills. The low side is that you could be overfocused on mere survival and miss life's other dimensions. Or you could make survival more complicated or difficult than need be out of a conviction that life is hard and your well being is somehow always at stake.

The high side of the intimate orientation is that you have a talent for one-to-one intimacy and could have exceptionally deep, rich friendships. The low side is that you might freight up your relationships with too many expectations and

possibly be dependent, jealous or possessive. There could be a push-pull pattern quality to your relationships, and you could tend to be unrealistically romantic.

With a healthy social orientation you could be a gregarious people-person, someone who works hard and unselfishly to serve your chosen group. When you win everybody in your group wins. The low side is that you might tend to lose yourself in the group, be unable to be alone, or lessen your individuality. You could be especially prone to conflicts about what the group wants versus what you need.

Like your other built-in connections, subtypes are sometimes expressed contextually. While most people have one dominant subtype, you will also notice evidence of the others in your behavior. You could be a social subtype but when you fall in love, you would react more like an intimate subtype. If your business went broke you might be in a self-preservation mode until your survival was again assured. Your other subtypes can also come and go in your responses to immediate situations throughout the day.

The other thing to note about subtypes is that they carry across your other built-in connections. If you are a Seven and your primary subtype is intimate, you will be an intimate subtype in your experience of your Six and Eight wings and your built-in connections to Five and One. This principle does not extend to your parental points, however. Just as you introjected the Enneagram styles of your parents, you have taken in their subtypes.

Identifying your subtype is especially useful for identifying what further motivates you within the framework of your dominant style. Subtypes are also a way to understand the wide variety of expressions that can occur among people of the same Enneagram style.

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