

## Enneagram Numbers and Types

### WHAT ARE ALL THESE NUMBERS?

It would be lovely if the enneagram provided only one “number” per person and the system could be easily learned. The truth, however, is a bit more complicated. In actuality, our personality types are only a small part of our enneagram profiles. There are several additional influences that create the rich and complex picture that enneagram can unveil.

### TYPES

Our types are determined by our primary focus of attention. Enneagram theory teaches that our unformed, infant temperaments shift in response to early pain. As we move away from our initial discomforts in life, we form a “stance” in the world and this stance creates our personality type. For example, if our early life experience shows us that we feel loved and valued when we serve others, we may develop a stance of giving to others to ensure that our own needs are met. Over time, this stance of “giving to get” develops into personality or character. Our type stays with us for life; it is our home base. Although we will grow and change over our lifetime, the basic stance in our perception of life remains the same. Types are universal and apply to both genders equally; no type is any better or worse than another. Types are typically thought to be sorted into three levels or realms: the unhealthy level, the average level and the healthy level. Where we are in terms of health is far more important than what number we are. And no matter what type we are, we always contain certain quantities of all of the types. Types are merely our primary fixation – they are certainly not the whole story.

### WINGS

Most of us have what is called a “wing.” This is where we tip out of our primary identification or type into one (or occasionally both) numbers that surround us. For instance, a Two could have a One or Three wing; a One could have a Nine or Two wing. Having a wing means that we have some, but not all of the qualities of one of the numbers bordering our primary type. Wings are like condiments; they aren’t the main course, but they add flavor and complexity to the meal.

## **SUBTYPES**

There are three subtypes that each of us have in varying degrees. They are: self preservation, the social instinct and a one-to-one orientation. Each of us has some amount or portion of each of these subtypes, although one is typically much more predominant than the other two. Subtype plays a dramatic role in our temperament and adds additional complexity to our enneagram profiles.

The self preservation subtype creates a person who is quite concerned with material comforts. The main focus of attention is feeling secure and comfortable. When a self preservation subtype walks into a movie theatre, he might notice where the exits are, if the seats are comfortable and how warm the room is. Earthy things like money, safety, security and food are figural in the self preservation subtype's way of perceiving the world.

The social variant subtype is tuned primarily into social structures and relationships. Power structures are noted and social hierarchies are valued and prioritized. If a social subtype person enters a theatre, she may look to see if any important people are in the room or if there are people she must say hello to. She may even scan the room for the manager to ensure that authority will be present if needed. Human dynamics and power are figural for the social subtype's outlook on the world.

The one-to-one subtype (often called the sexual instinct) places the focus of attention on intimate relationships. It is important to note that this does not always mean sexual or partner relationships. The focus is on intimate communication and connection. A one-to-one subtype prefers an "important other" to be available at all times. Life is viewed through the lens of relationship and contact. If a one-to-one subtype enters a theatre, he may first look to see who will sit next to him or who he might befriend. He may also focus on what he will tell his best friend about the movie as soon as it is over. Relationship and deeper connection remains the constant focus for this subtype.