

# Enneagram of Personality

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The **Enneagram of Personality**, or simply the **Enneagram** (from the Greek words *έννέα* [*ennea*, meaning "nine"] and *γράμμα* [*gramma*, meaning something "written" or "drawn"<sup>[1]</sup>]), is a model of human personality which is principally understood and taught as a typology of nine interconnected [personality types](#). Although the origins and history of many of the ideas and theories associated with the Enneagram of Personality are a matter of dispute, contemporary Enneagram understandings are principally derived from the teachings of [Oscar Ichazo](#) and [Claudio Naranjo](#). Naranjo's theories were partly influenced by some earlier teachings of [G. I. Gurdjieff](#). As a typology the Enneagram defines nine [personality types](#) (sometimes referred to as "enneatypes"), which are represented by the points of a geometric figure called an [enneagram](#),<sup>[2]</sup> which also indicates some of the connections between the types. As there are different schools of thought among Enneagram theorists about some aspects of how it is understood, its interpretation is not always unified or consistent.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Enneagram of Personality is not a typology that is commonly taught or researched in academic [psychology](#).<sup>[citation needed]</sup> It has been widely promoted in both business management and spiritual contexts through seminars, conferences, books, magazines, and DVDs.<sup>[3][4]</sup> In business contexts it is generally used as a typology to gain insights into workplace dynamics; in spirituality it is more commonly presented as a path to higher states of [being](#), [essence](#), and [enlightenment](#). It has been described as a method for self-understanding and self-development<sup>[3]</sup> but has been criticized as being subject to interpretation, making it difficult to test or validate scientifically.<sup>[5]</sup>

## History

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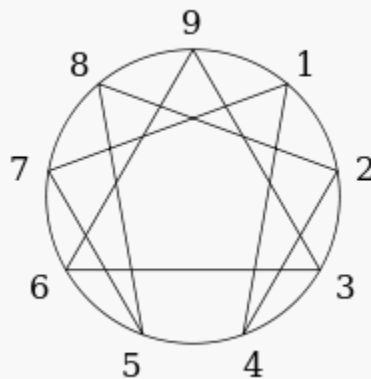
The origins and historical development of the Enneagram of Personality are matters of dispute. Wiltse and Palmer<sup>[6]</sup> have suggested that similar ideas to the Enneagram of Personality are found in the work of [Evagrius Ponticus](#), a Christian mystic who lived in 4th century Alexandria. Evagrius identified eight *logismoi* ("deadly thoughts") plus an overarching thought he called "love of self". Evagrius wrote, "The first thought of all is that of love of self (*philautia*); after this, [come] the eight."<sup>[7]</sup> In addition to identifying eight deadly thoughts, Evagrius also identified eight "remedies" to these thoughts.<sup>[6]</sup>

[G. I. Gurdjieff](#) is credited with making the enneagram figure commonly known<sup>[8]</sup> (see [Fourth Way enneagram](#)). He did not, however, develop the nine personality types associated with the Enneagram. [Oscar Ichazo](#) is generally recognized as the principal source<sup>[9]</sup> of the contemporary Enneagram of Personality. Ichazo's "Enneagon of Ego Fixations", together with a number of other dimensions of personality mapped on the enneagram figure, forms the basis of the Enneagram of Personality. The Bolivian-born Ichazo began teaching programs of self-development in the 1950s. His teaching, which he calls "[Protoanalysis](#)", uses the enneagram figure among many other symbols and ideas. Ichazo founded the [Arica Institute](#) which was originally based in Chile before moving to the United States<sup>[2]</sup> and coined the term "Enneagram of Personality".<sup>[3]</sup>

[Claudio Naranjo](#) is a Chilean-born psychiatrist who first learned about the Enneagram of Personality from Ichazo at a course in Arica, Chile. He then began developing and teaching his own understanding of the Enneagram in the United States in the early 1970s, influencing others,

including some Jesuit priests who adapted the Enneagram for use in Christian spirituality. Numerous other authors, including Helen Palmer, [Don Richard Riso](#), [Richard Rohr](#) and [Elizabeth Wagele](#), also began publishing widely read books on the Enneagram of Personality in the 1980s and 1990s. Ichazo disowned Naranjo and the other teachers on what he felt were misinterpretations and uses of the Enneagram. Among Naranjo's early students there are also differing understandings of Enneagram theory.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Enneagram figure



Enneagram figure



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The [enneagram figure](#) is usually composed of three parts; a circle, an inner triangle (connecting 3-6-9) and an irregular hexagonal "periodic figure" (connecting [1-4-2-8-5-7](#)). According to esoteric spiritual traditions,<sup>[9]</sup> the circle symbolizes unity, the inner triangle symbolizes the "law of three" and the hexagon represents the "law of seven" (because 1-4-2-8-5-7-1 is the repeating decimal created by dividing one by seven in base 10 arithmetic).<sup>[10]</sup> These three elements constitute the usual enneagram figure.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Nine types

The table below gives the principal characteristics of the nine types along with their basic relationships. This table is based on *Understanding the Enneagram: The Practical Guide to Personality Types* (revised edition) by [Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson](#).<sup>[12]</sup> Other theorists may disagree on some aspects. The types are normally referred to by their numbers, but sometimes their "characteristic roles" (which refers to distinctive [archetypal](#) characteristics) are used instead.<sup>[13]</sup> The "stress" and "security" points (sometimes referred to as the "disintegration" and "integration" points) are the types, connected by the lines of the enneagram figure, that are believed to influence a person in more adverse or relaxed circumstances. According to this theory, someone classed as a One type, for example, may begin to think, feel and act more like a Four type when stressed, or more like a Seven type when relaxed.

Type	Characteristic role	Ego fixation	Holy idea	Basic fear	Basic desire	Temptation	Vice/Passion	Virtue	Stress	Security
1	Reformer	Resentment	Perfection	Corruptness, imbalance, being bad	Goodness, integrity, balance	Hypocrisy, hypercriticism	Anger	Serenity	4	7
2	Helper	Flattery (Ingratiation)	Freedom, Will	Being unloved	To feel love	Deny own needs, manipulation	Pride	Humility	8	4
3	Achiever	Vanity	Hope, Law	Worthlessness	To feel valuable	Pushing self to always be "the best"	Deceit	Truthfulness, Authenticity	9	6
4	Individualist	Melancholy (Fantasizing)	Origin	Having no identity or significance	To be uniquely themselves	To overuse imagination in search of self	Envy	Equanimity (Emotional Balance)	2	1
5	Investigator	Stinginess (Retention)	Omniscience, Transparency	Helplessness, Incapability, Incompetence	Mastery, Understanding	Replacing direct experience with concepts	Avarice	Non-Attachment	7	8
6	Loyalist	Cowardice (Worrying)	Faith	Being without support or guidance	To have support and guidance	Indecision, doubt, seeking reassurance	Fear	Courage	3	9
7	Enthusiast	Planning (Anticipation)	Wisdom, Plan	Being trapped in pain and deprivation	To be satisfied and content	Thinking fulfillment is somewhere else	Gluttony	Sobriety	1	5
8	Challenger	Vengeance (Objectification)	Truth	Being harmed, controlled, violated	Self-protection	Thinking they are completely self-sufficient	Lust (Forcefulness)	Innocence	5	2
9	Peacemaker	Indolence (Daydreaming)	Love	Loss, fragmentation, separation	Wholeness, peace of mind	Avoiding conflicts, avoiding self-assertion	Sloth (Disengagement)	Action	6	3

## Wings

Most, but not all, Enneagram of Personality theorists teach that a person's basic type is modified, at least to some extent, by the personality dynamics of the two adjacent types as indicated on the enneagram figure. These two types are often called "wings". A person of the Three personality type, for example, is understood to have points Two and Four as their wing types. The circle of the enneagram figure may indicate that the types or points exist on a spectrum rather than as distinct types or points unrelated to those adjacent to them. A person may be understood, therefore, to have a core type and one or two wing types that influence but do not change the core type.<sup>[14][15]</sup>

## Connecting lines

For some Enneagram theorists the lines connecting the points add further meaning to the information provided by the descriptions of the types. Sometimes called the "security" and "stress" points, or points of "integration" and "disintegration", some theorists believe that these connected points also contribute to a person's overall personality. From this viewpoint, therefore, there are at least four other points that can affect a person's overall personality; the two points connected by the lines to the core type and the two wing points.<sup>[16][17]</sup>

## Instinctual subtypes

Each of the personality types is usually understood as having three "instinctual subtypes". These subtypes are believed to be formed according to which one of three instinctual energies of a person is dominantly developed and expressed. The instinctual energies are usually called "self-preservation", "sexual" (also called "intimacy" or "one-to-one") and "social". On the instinctual level, people may internally stress and externally express the need to protect themselves (self-preservation), to connect with important others or partners (sexual), or to get along or succeed in groups (social).<sup>[18]</sup> From this perspective, there are 27 distinct personality patterns, because people of each of the nine types also express themselves as one of the three subtypes.<sup>[19]</sup> An alternative approach to the subtypes looks at them as three domains or clusters of instincts that result in increased probability of survival (the "preserving" domain), increased skill in navigating the social environment (the "navigating" domain) and increased likelihood of reproductive success (the

"transmitting" domain).<sup>[20]</sup> From this understanding the subtypes reflect individual differences in the presence of these three separate clusters of instincts.

It is generally believed that people function in all three forms of instinctual energies but that one usually dominates. According to some theorists another instinct may also be well-developed and the third often markedly less developed.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Criticism

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In 2000, the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops'](#) Committee on Doctrine produced a draft report on the origins of the Enneagram to aid bishops in their evaluation of its use in their dioceses. The report identified aspects of the intersection between the Enneagram and Roman Catholicism which, in their opinion, warranted particular scrutiny and were seen as potential areas of concern, stating that "While the enneagram system shares little with traditional Christian doctrine or spirituality, it also shares little with the methods and criteria of modern science... The burden of proof is on proponents of the enneagram to furnish scientific evidence for their claims."<sup>[22]</sup> Partly in response to some [Jesuits](#) and members of other religious orders teaching a Christian understanding of the Enneagram of Personality, a 2003 Vatican document called [Jesus Christ, the Bearer of the Water of Life - A Christian Reflection on the 'New Age'](#) says that the Enneagram "when used as a means of spiritual growth introduces an ambiguity in the doctrine and the life of the Christian faith."<sup>[23][24]</sup>

## See also

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- [A. H. Almaas](#)
- [Personality psychology](#)
- [Riso-Hudson Enneagram Type Indicator](#)
- [Tritype](#)

## References

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1. **Jump up**<sup>^</sup> "Strong's Greek: 1121. γράμμα (gramma) -- that which is drawn or written, i.e. a letter". *biblesuite.com*.
2. **Jump up**<sup>to: a b s d</sup> [Ellis, Albert](#); Abrams, Mike; Dengelegi Abrams, Lidia (2008). *Personality theories: critical perspectives*. SAGE. ISBN 978-1-4129-7062-4. Ichazo has disowned Naranjo, Palmer and the other Jesuit writers on the Enneagram on the grounds that his descriptions of the nine types represent ego fixations that develop in early childhood in response to trauma.
3. **Jump up**<sup>to: a b s</sup> [Clarke, Peter Bernard](#) (2006). *Encyclopedia of new religious movements*. Psychology Press. ISBN 978-0-415-26707-6.
4. **Jump up**<sup>^</sup> [Kemp, Daren](#) (2004). *New age: a guide : alternative spiritualities from Aquarian conspiracy to Next Age*. Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 978-0-7486-1532-2.
5. **Jump up**<sup>^</sup> [Kaluzniacky, Eugene](#) (2004). *Managing psychological factors in information systems work: an orientation to emotional intelligence*. Idea Group Inc (IGI). ISBN 978-1-59140-198-8.
6. **Jump up**<sup>to: a b</sup> [Wiltse, V.](#); [Palmer, H.](#) (July 2011). "Hidden in plain sight: Observations on the origin of the Enneagram". *The Enneagram Journal* 4 (1): 4–37.
7. **Jump up**<sup>^</sup> [Harmless, W.](#); [Fitzgerald, R.R.](#) (2001). "The sapphire light of the mind: The Skemmata of Evagrius Ponticus". *Theological Studies* 62: 498–529.
8. **Jump up**<sup>to: a b</sup> ["International Enneagram Association - History"](#). *internationalenneagram.org*.
9. **Jump up**<sup>^</sup> [Palmer, The Enneagram](#), p.36
10. **Jump up**<sup>^</sup> ["The Theory of Process and The Law of Seven"](#). *rahul.net*.
11. **Jump up**<sup>^</sup> [Wagele, Enneagram Made Easy](#), pp. 1–11
12. **Jump up**<sup>^</sup> [Riso, Don Richard](#); [Hudson, Russ](#) (2000). *Understanding the Enneagram: The Practical Guide to Personality Types*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. ISBN 978-0-618-00415-7.

13. [Jump up](#) Baron, Renee. *What Type Am I: Discover Who You Really Are*. p. 162.
14. [Jump up](#) Riso, *Wisdom of the Enneagram*, p.19
15. [Jump up](#) Wagner, *Wagner Enneagram Personality Style Scales*, p.26
16. [Jump up](#) Riso, *Wisdom of the Enneagram*, pp. 87–88
17. [Jump up](#) Wagner, *Wagner Enneagram Personality Style Scales*, p. 30.
18. [Jump up](#) Palmer, *The Enneagram in Love and Work*, p. 29
19. [Jump up](#) Maitri, *The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram*, pp. 263–264
20. [Jump up](#) "[The Instincts: Taking a Broader View](#)", by Mario Sikora, *Enneagram Monthly*, June 2007.
21. [Jump up](#) Riso, *The Wisdom of the Enneagram*, pp. 70–71
22. [Jump up](#) "[A Brief Report On The Origins Of The Enneagram](#)", Draft from the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices, 10 October 2000, corrected 23 October 2001
23. [Jump up](#) Richard Smoley, Jay Kinney (2006). *Hidden Wisdom: A Guide to the Western Inner Traditions*. Western Mystery Tradition Series (revised, illustrated ed.). [Quest Books](#). p. 229.[ISBN 978-0-8356-0844-2](#)
24. [Jump up](#) "[Jesus Christ, the Bearer of the Water of Life. A Christian Reflection on the 'New Age'](#)", Pontifical Council for Culture, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

## Further reading

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