The Enneagram
Find your unique perspective on life

by Kathy Krentkowski, MA, LCPC, LMHC

The Enneagram is an ancient typing system that paints a portrait of an individual’s giftings, expressions, limitations, motivations and ways of generally interpreting and responding to the world. When used as a tool it can help you reflect on who you are and who you want to be, as well as what stands in the way and keeps you stuck.

The word "Ennea-gram" actually means "nine points". The geometric figure associated with the Enneagram maps out nine basic ways of relating to and perceiving the world. The Enneagram is not a psychological test that has to be given by a professional. It is a test anyone can take in a variety of formats.

From a spiritual point of view, the Enneagram helps us reflect on the specific ways we were made in the image and likeness of God. We are creatures who act, feel and think. Each of us reflects some part of God’s goodness (Type 1), loving care (Type 2), effectiveness (Type 3), uniqueness (Type 4), wisdom (Type 5), faithfulness (Type 6), joy (Type 7), protection (Type 8) and peacefulness (Type 9). We each carry a thumbprint of God. The Enneagram can help you consider how God's likeness is reflected in you, as well as the ways we demonstrate our fallen nature. When we feel insecure and threatened we tend to lose our center which distorts how we think, feel and respond in life. When we know the way these distortions manifest and become aware of them as they arise, we can learn to course correct when we veer off track.

A brief description of the nine types are:

Type 1 – The Principled Reformer
Virtuous, with a strong sense of what is right and wrong, this person may be idealistic and have high standards. They may fear making a mistake and may become perfectionistic and critical. This person most longs to hear the words, "You are good".

Type 2 – The Loving Helper
Caring and often the first to help meet a need, this person is interpersonal, empathetic and sincere. They may struggle with people-pleasing and neglect to identify and care for their own needs. This person most longs to hear the words, "You are wanted and loved for being you".

Type 3 – The Effective Achiever
Success-oriented and ambitious, Type 3 produces and creates easily. They may be status-conscious and concerned about their image and what others think. This person most longs to hear the words, "You are loved and valued for being yourself".

Type 4 - The Romantic Individualist
Unique and often artistic, this person is introspective and self-aware. They may be moody, emotionally self-conscious and may feel they do not belong. This person most longs to hear the words, "You are seen for who you are".

Type 5 – The Investigative Observer
Cerebral, insightful, curious and concerned with knowledge, this person may isolate and become preoccupied with thinking. This person most longs to hear the words, "Your needs are not a problem".

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**Type 6 - The Faithful Loyalist**
Reliable and hardworking, Type 6 is concerned with security. They may become defensive, anxious and suspicious. This person most longs to hear the words, "You are safe".

**Type 7 – The Joyful Enthusiast**
This eternal optimist can be busy, spontaneous and playful. In turn, they may be scattered, undisciplined, distracted and avoid painful emotions at any cost. This person most longs to hear the words, "You will be taken care of".

**Type 8 – The Protective Challenger**
Powerful, dominating, strong and assertive, at best, Type 8 is heroic. They may be confrontational and intimidating and usually has trouble being vulnerable. This person most longs to hear the words, "You will not be betrayed".

**Type 9 –The Peaceful Mediator**
Harmonious and often bringing people and things together, this person is easy-going, stable and trusting. They may be too willing to go along with others to keep the peace. They tend to be passive. This person most longs to hear the words, "Your presence matters".

For some, reading the descriptions are enough to lead them to their primary number. Others may need to take a test to discover their number. Some people resonate with more than one Type, but there is usually one number that is more dominant than the other. I suggest people who take the test read about their top-scoring numbers and see which is the best fit. Remember this is a self-discovery tool – you must do the discovering. It may be helpful to talk about your results with someone who knows you well until you gain confidence that your Type is a good fit.

Personality and self-help tools are used by some people in a way that makes the self an idol. In the search for greater self-awareness and self-help, we mustn’t make "self" our highest power. This is not the way I suggest using this tool. As regenerated followers of Christ, we are afforded the ultimate opportunity to surrender to the Spirit’s leading of our self.

As you discover your Enneagram Type and reflect on how the descriptors are true for you, allow the Spirit to search your heart and mind and remember it is God who does any good work in us. When we accept our ultimate connection to the Father as restored sons and daughters because of Christ’s work on the cross, and we practice dwelling in this secure relationship, we can allow ourselves to shine as our truest self – a beautiful miracle created by God to reflect his glory. Your Enneagram Type shows the colors by which you reflect this beauty.

For more information on the Enneagram, I suggest visiting the website https://www.enneagraminstitute.com where you can take the test and learn more.

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