

# THE ENNEAGRAM

Since the beginning of mankind, individuals all over the world have been fascinated by understanding their true personality. Over time, scholars have created many personality tests to help people discover who they are. In recent years, personality tests have grown increasingly popular and many people have become obsessed with categorizing and labeling themselves based on these tests. One of the most intriguing tests based on personality is the Enneagram. For centuries, the nine type Enneagram of Personality test has been used to help understand the similarities and differences of values and goals between individuals.

The Enneagram is most commonly known as a personality test that categorizes characteristic traits of indi-

viduals into specific types. But the Enneagram is more than a silly trend. It is based around the truth and honesty of people who look inside themselves. It not only reveals the characteristics that are shared and different from one individual to the next, but it also shows each type's reactions to their peers, environments, and stress (Heuertz & Rohr, 2017). These reactions are known as psychological defense mechanisms. Though types can share these mechanisms, there is always one defense mechanism that correlates to each of the different Enneagram types (Lapid-Bogda, 2010).

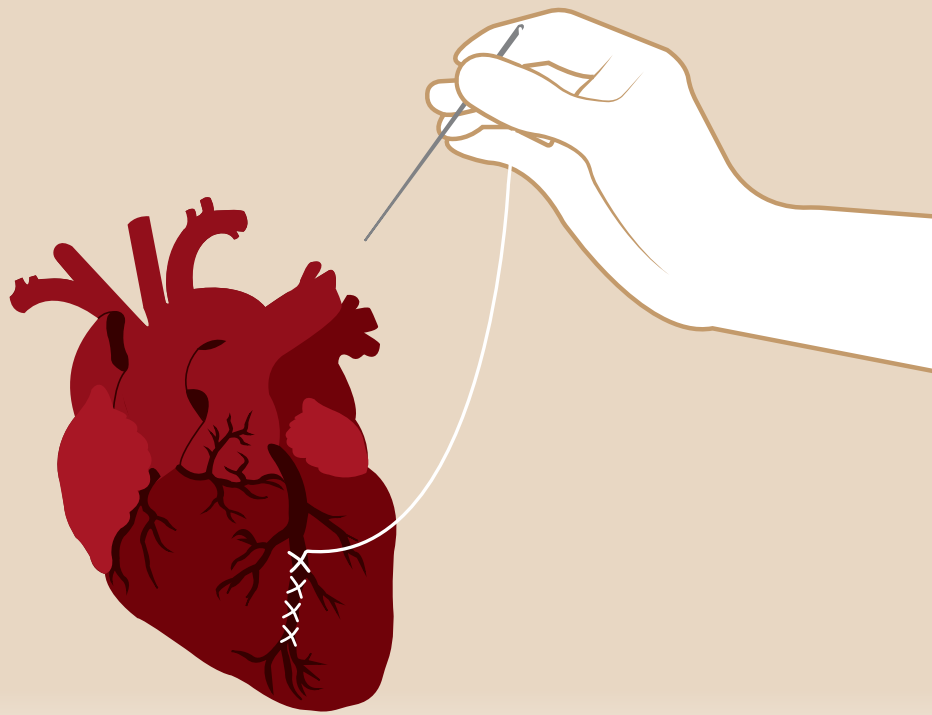


# THE PERFECTIONIST

The start of the Enneagram begins with type One. The main aspect of the One is reaching and maintaining perfection (Heuertz & Rohr, 2017), which often labels Ones as the Perfectionists. This name is given as a stereotype because this type tries to follow and live by high-set standards (Xiong, n. d.). Their main goal is to be balanced and lead with the moral of fairness and justice. They follow their beliefs of right and wrong in how they think, feel, and act. Ones have a strong desire to go above and beyond in their work and duties, and always feel like they can achieve more. Type Ones also follow the moral of thinking through the outcomes and effects before they act. Famous type Ones include: Confucius, Nelson Mandela, Margaret Thatcher, Joan of Arc, Michelle Obama, and Meryl Streep (Enneagram Institute, 2017).

One of type Ones' most significant fears is failure, which affects how they act and behave to avoid this. According to Xiong, (n.d.), type Ones find that some aspects of their personality are difficult, such as: having high expectations that are not always met, having the heavy pressure of being accountable, the disappointment of others failing to match their standards, dealing with their anxiety, and doing everything too deliberate-

ly. The Enneagram Institute (2017) states Ones face the pressure of being perfect, which often makes them feel miserable, and that nothing is ever finished or the best it could be. They will also push down and bottle up their own desires and instinctive feelings to do the right thing and follow the rules, guidelines, and principles of behavior set forth by society. This makes Ones often face feelings of constraint and defiance. Type Ones can be very limiting and harsh on themselves in order to be approved by their peers and themselves, and this can cause a buildup of anxiety within them. This leads type Ones to use the defense mechanism Reaction Formation, which is used by reacting completely contradictory to their real emotions and actions they feel are improper, in hopes of minimizing their anxiousness caused by those negative feelings and actions (Lapid-Bogda, 2010). Lapid-Bogda (2010) also states the emotions responsible for Ones' anxiety are deemed improper to the type because they feel they are not right or fair, even though these are completely normal feelings every individual faces. Consequently, even though type Ones may feel negatively or not want to do something in a situation, they will react positively and still do the right thing.



# THE HELPER

**T**he next personality in the Enneagram is type Two, which are most commonly called the Helpers, as this type tends to put others' needs before their own (Xiong, n.d.). Characteristics of Twos involve being compassionate, nurturing, and accommodating to others. They are also known to listen, have patience, and be appreciative of others. This type has a strong need to be loved, useful, and cared for. They strive to meet these needs by trying to help others the best they can by any means possible. Famous type Twos include: Eleanor Roosevelt, Elizabeth Taylor, Lionel Richie, Nancy Reagan, Stevie Wonder, and Josh Groban (Enneagram Institute, 2017).

Type Twos have a major fear of not being loved and being useless. They try to see themselves in a positive light, which can hurt them internally by feeling the urge to ignore and suppress their own pride and self needs. One of the largest feelings this type tries to deny is guilt from selfishness, which leads them to feel negatively towards themselves for even thinking about the emotion. Like type Ones, Twos tend to bottle up their own feelings in order to succeed in reaching their desires. Type Twos can become overly possessive and manipulative in an attempt to focus on others instead of their own

elves. When not helping others, they feel worthless and unwanted. This type is blind to seeing their own personal significance and have to rely on the opinions and approval of others to justify their worth. This can lead to serious negative effects for Twos as they rely on the justification of others for their value, and can result in type Twos using all of themselves to be needed by their peers and ignoring their own personal wants and needs. They believe the act of self-sacrifice is the only way of showing worthiness to others. But always taking the high road and caring for others before themselves can lead this type to harbor feelings of bitterness that they would rather not face, relating to feelings of selfishness and pride (Enneagram Institute, 2017). Type Two tries to combat these feelings by using the defense mechanism Repression. They use Repression to conceal their emotions and needs from their own selves. Although they hide their true feelings, the influence from those emotions can still get to the individual and change the way they feel and act (Lapid-Bogda, 2010).

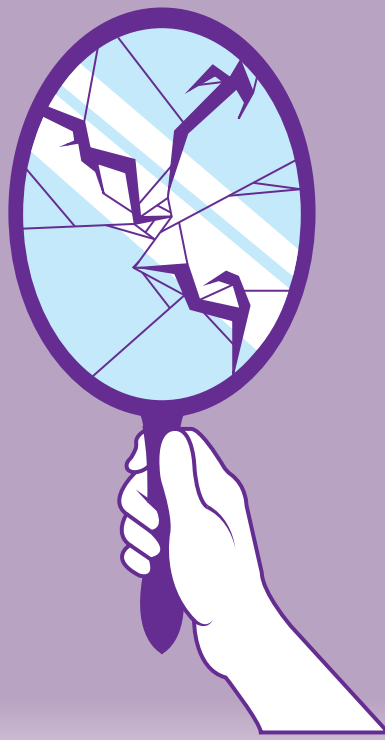


# THE ACHIEVER

Following type Two in the Enneagram is type Three. This type is known as the Achievers, as they are success-driven and highly ambitious. They typically have a lot of energy and have an optimistic outlook on the world (Xiong, n.d.). Threes have a main goal of being valued and praised by others. They are often idolized by their peers because of their achievements and skills. Type Threes have an abundance of self-confidence and pride in their talents and abilities. They have been shown to also inspire others to work toward their goals. This type has been known for its hard work and efforts in reaching goals and success. Threes strive to stand out and be important, much of this drive is based on honoring their family. Well-known type Threes include: Augustus Caesar, Oprah Winfrey, Muhammed Ali, Tom Cruise, Whitney Houston, and Elvis Presley (Enneagram Institute, 2017).

Type Threes face a growing fear of being useless. The Enneagram Institute (2017) explains in an effort to minimize this threat, Threes depend on seeking attention from others. This relates to their hard drive for success. Threes feel if they achieve their ambitions and inspire others, they are fulfilling their need of self-accomplishment. This can lead to the type overworking

themselves and using their success to compete against others. On the quest of reaching their desires, Threes can become distant from their true selves, even to the point of not knowing who they really are. This type believes emotions get in the way of success, and will push their feelings out of the way of their goal-orientated path. They substitute emotions for action, and focus on working ahead. Deep inside, this has negative effects on Threes as they don't feel they can be who they are and have to be someone who is accepted by everyone. According to Lapid-Bogda (2010), Type Threes use the defense mechanism Identification, which involves observing the personalities and styles of other individuals and then merging them with the Threes' own. Most of the time, Threes do not know they are doing this. This type usually uses Identification with people they look up to and view as role models. Using this defense mechanism can hurt Threes' sense of self because it is hard to separate their true personality from traits and characteristics they have absorbed from others.

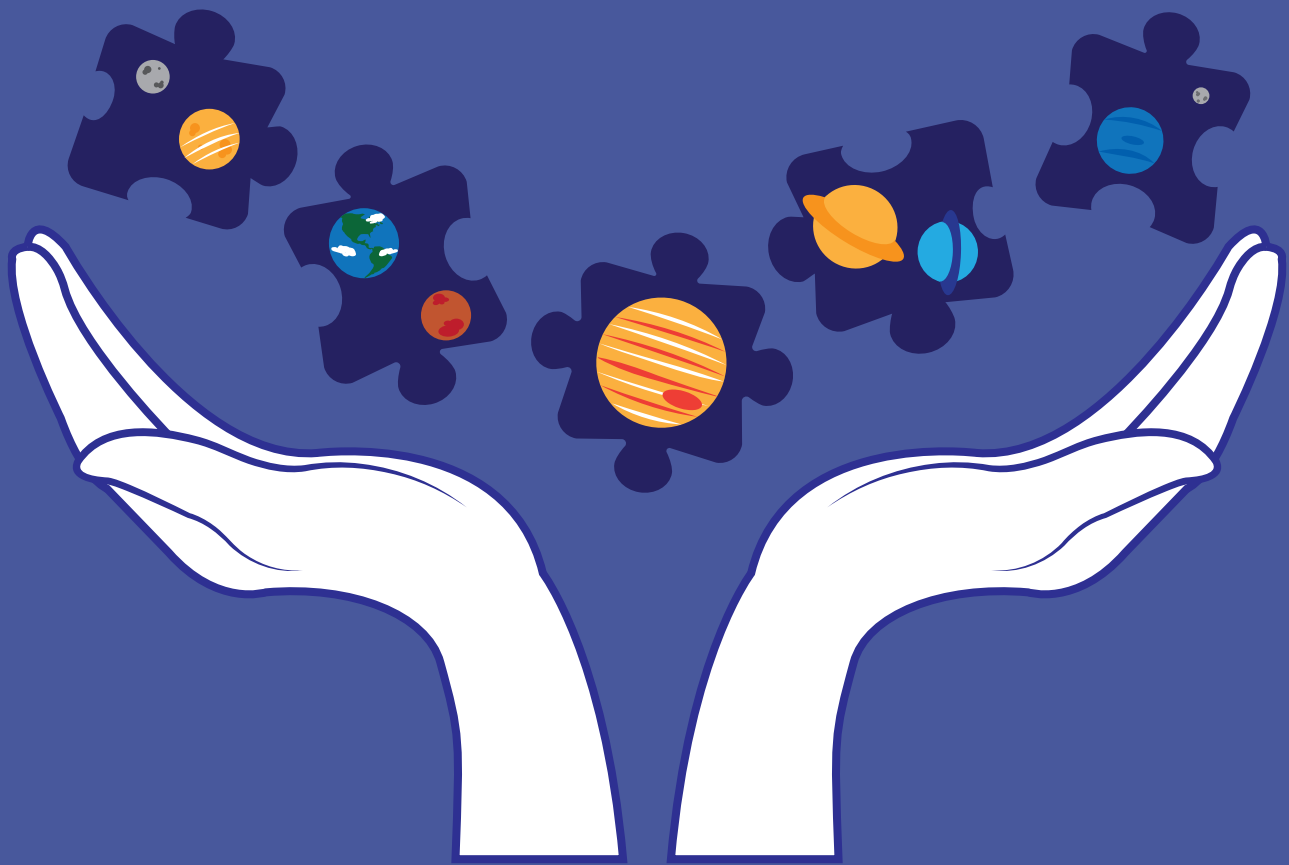


# THE INDIVIDUALIST

**N**ext in the Enneagram line-up is type Four, who are given the name the Individualists. This type shows the characteristics of being sensitive, artistic, and emotional. They have also been known to be a bit more self-centered and egoistical, as they tend to get wrapped up in their own sadness and pity (Enneagram Institute, 2017). Fours thrive in their talents and creativity, and have a deeper outlook on life and the world around them. They have a main need of being unique and standing out (Xiong, n.d.). This is because they feel that no one else is like them or could ever understand them. This type seems more self-absorbed because not only do they believe their talents are extraordinary, but also that their flaws are unique to only them. While focusing on the differences of their gifts and imperfections, Fours also have a large awareness of their self-image. Some Fours accept themselves wholly as they want to live their lives honestly, because they feel they can then realize who they really are. Examples of famous type Fours include: Edgar Allan Poe, Virginia Woolf, Judy Garland, Frida Kahlo, Winona Ryder, and Johnny Depp (Enneagram Institute, 2017).

Fours have a massive fear of not being important and being the same as everyone else. They face the anx-

xiety of this fear a lot of the time. This makes them feel incredibly self-conscious about the image they themselves perceive, as well as others around them. That is one reason their main focus is to be different from everybody else. However, putting in so much effort to stand out can make Fours lonely and yearn to be cared for and appreciated. Still, they focus on their uniqueness, which leads to loneliness, which leads to feelings of moodiness. Fours can let their emotions get the best of them and control their behavior (Enneagram Institute, 2017). Sometimes, this type will even change and morph their personalities into their moods in search of their true identity. Most of the time these moods are related to despair. Type Fours use Introjection as their defense mechanism. They take in negativity and criticism about themselves and add it to their self-worth. Fours would rather deal with their own self-deprivation than face negativity from others (Lapid-Bogda, 2010).

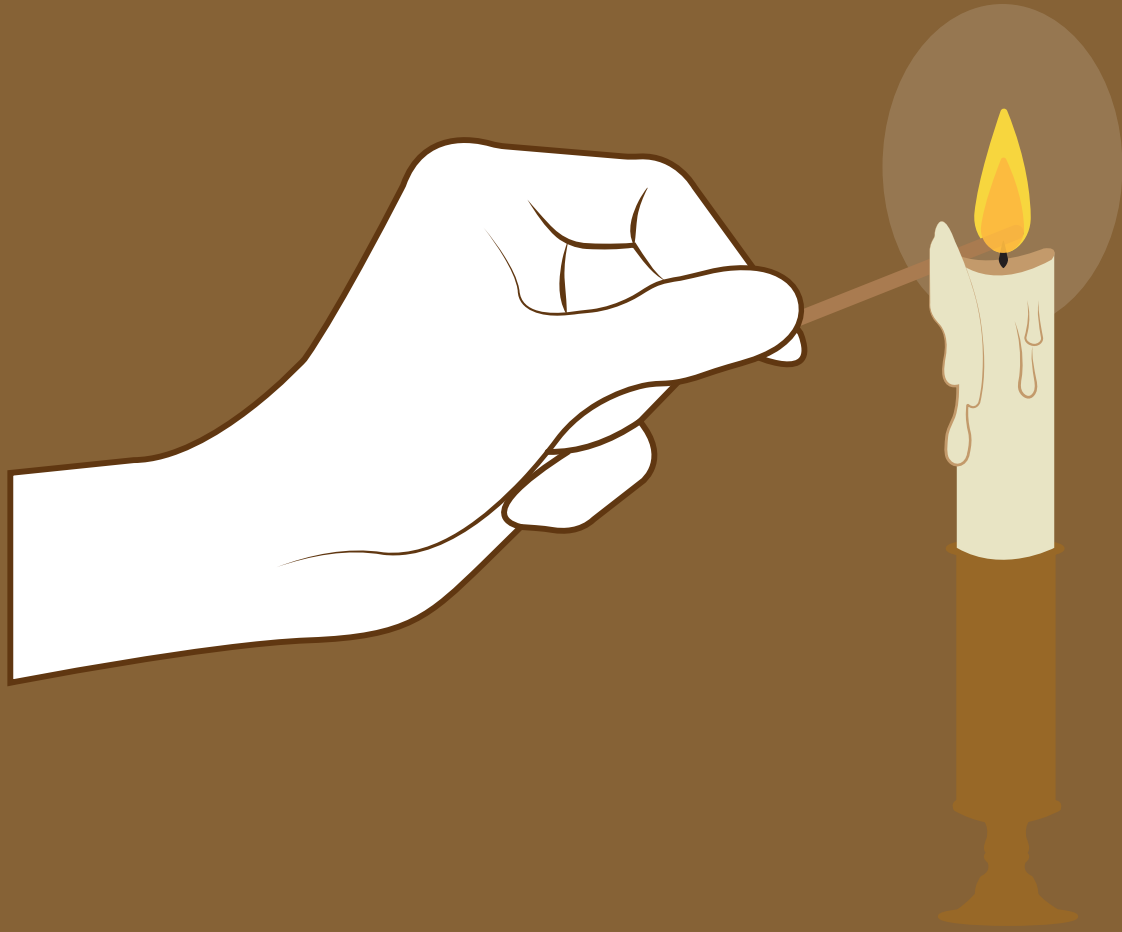


# THE OBSERVER

**X**iong (n.d.) introduces the next Enneagram personality type, which is Type 5, also known as the Observer. This type is quite inquisitive about the world and likes to understand how things function. Fives have also been called Investigators for trying to fulfill their need for knowledge. Fives think through all possibilities and consequences before they act. Type Five has been stereotyped as cold and introverted because they tend to not dwell on emotions and can become entranced in their own minds. The Enneagram Institute (2017) explains Fives have a main goal of learning and understanding everything around them. Well-known type Fives include: Albert Einstein, Vincent Van Gogh, Stephen Hawking, Bill Gates, Agatha Christie, Stephen King, Kurt Cobain, and Tim Burton.

Type Fives fear not being as capable and successful as others. To combat this anxiety, Fives generally have one area of study they focus on profoundly. Becoming

an expert in an area of study helps this type feel like they are accomplishing a great deal and helps boost their sense of self. (But the intense studying and researching Fives work so diligently on can have negative effects.) Instead of facing the causes of their anxiety, Fives will retreat into their minds and focus on subjects that can distract them from their problems (Enneagram Institute, 2017). Type Fives use Isolation as their defense mechanism. They separate themselves from their relationships, actions, emotions, and thoughts to avert being overwhelmed. By doing this, they withdraw into their consciousness (Lapid-Bogda, 2010).



# THE LOYALIST

Following type Five is Enneagram type Six. Sixes are commonly called Loyalists, as they are honest, dependable, protective, and sincere towards their families, peers, and beliefs. They are more loyal to others and their views than themselves (Xiong, n.d.). Sixes have a main goal of being in a secure and comfortable environment. This type typically has issues having faith in others, but once their trust has been gained, they will stay loyal and connected through thick-and-thin. Famous type Sixes include: Johannes Brahms, Sigmund Freud, Marilyn Monroe, Mark Twain, J.R.R. Tolkien, Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, and Ellen Degeneres (Enneagram Institute, 2017).

Type Sixes are also known to be indecisive and carry a lot of anxiety with them. Type Sixes have many sources of worry, but one of their biggest fears is being alone and unwanted. This fear is what makes Sixes so loyal to others. Addressing other anxieties, Sixes will try to put

off their problems and issues because they feel they are too large to handle and they are scared of failing. They are also anxious about making the right decisions on their own and putting too much pressure on every little mistake they make. This type does not feel very confident in themselves and instead tries to seek validation from others (Enneagram Institute, 2017). Type Sixes use the defense mechanism Projection, as a way of coping with their anxieties. They unknowingly take their rejected feelings, images, and ideas about themselves and accredit them to others. Sixes use this defense because they do not want to believe these feelings about themselves. This can actually raise Sixes' anxiety levels, instead of decrease them, and can make it hard for this type to see what is actually true (Lapid-Bogda, 2010).



# THE ENTHUSIAST

**M**oving on from type Six, type Seven is introduced. This type is known as the Enthusiasts, who crave new experiences, are impulsive, and full of energy. They tend to have an optimistic view of the world and are unafraid of trying new things. They like to be involved with many different activities, which can make them seem a bit all-over-the-place (Xiong, n.d.). Type Sevens' main goal is to live a life that is not boring and gives them plenty of freedom. Sevens are full of excitement and determination about seeing the world. They are quick at learning new information and solving problems in their way. Well-known type Sevens include: Thomas Jefferson, Amelia Earhart, Elton John, Benjamin Franklin, Britney Spears, Robin Williams, Jim Carrey, and John F. Kennedy (Enneagram Institute, 2017).

Type Sevens have a fear of missing out on experiences. They want to do everything there is to do, and then some. They often feel frustrated because they cannot accomplish everything they dream. This type also has issues with committing and locking themselves in

on important decisions, because Sevens often have trouble staying focused on one topic and lose interest rather quickly (Xiong, n.d.). Sevens also have issues with deciding on the best decisions that will help them in the future. Instead of facing these problems, they move on to keeping their minds at work, which helps reduce their worry about the issues. Sevens don't truly know what they want, so they try to do everything. Their philosophy in doing so will make sure they do not overlook or miss the best options in life. This means quantity over quality for Sevens and they often are only disappointed by the results of their rash decisions (Enneagram Institute, 2017). The defense mechanism type Sevens use is Rationalization. This means that Sevens take their negative actions and emotions and try to explain them in a positive light. They use this defense mechanism to hide their misery and guilt of their actions and try not to be blamed for their mistakes and faults (Lapid-Bogda, 2010).





# THE LEADER

**N**ext in the Enneagram line-up is type Eight, who are often called the Leaders. Eights have been known to be overly protective, dominating, powerful, independent, and self-absorbed. Type Eights stand up proudly for their beliefs. They are very to-the-point when they discuss what needs to be accomplished and will work extremely hard to complete their goals (Xiong, n.d.). Eights are often seen as overpowering and brutally honest. Their main goal is to be and stay in control of their lives and environments. This type will not back down from a challenge and want to be remembered by the world. Eights who have become well-known include: George Gurdjieff, Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ernest Hemingway, Martin Luther King Jr., Aretha Franklin, Pablo Picasso, Frank Sinatra, and Donald Trump (Enneagram Institute, 2017).

One of this type's worst fears is to be controlled by others and feel powerless. They try to not owe anything to anyone, or otherwise repay their debts as quickly as possible. Type Eights do not like to show weakness or

vulnerability to others, because they are afraid of losing their tough image and being rejected. They try to avoid being vulnerable whenever possible because they have problems acknowledging their weaknesses (Enneagram Institute, 2017). Type Eights use the defense mechanism Denial. They do not want to take credit or responsibility for their negative actions and emotions. Most of the time, Eights try to make themselves believe these flaws and negative traits do not exist or are unimportant (Lapid-Bogda, 2010).



# THE PEACEKEEPER

**A**t last, the final Enneagram personality type is introduced as type Nine. The name given to Nines is the Peacekeepers. They try to avoid conflict as best they can and are naturally helpful, friendly, compassionate, and indecisive (Xiong, n.d.). Nines are generally laid-back and easy-going. Their main goal is to stay out of the way of conflict and to have peace between everyone. Famous type Nines include: Abraham Lincoln, Walt Disney, Audrey Hepburn, Jim Henson, and Morgan Freeman (Enneagram Institute, 2017).

Type Nines do not always show a lot of initiative and can be passive when making difficult choices. They have a fear of disrupting the balance of their environment, so they normally try their best option for avoiding problems (Enneagram Institute, 2017). If they can not go around conflicts, they will try to numb themselves from

it. Type Nines use the defense mechanism Narcotization. They try to desensitize themselves from feelings of being overwhelmed. Instead, they focus on comfortable activities and ignore the causes of their anxiety (Lapid-Bogda, 2010).



**T**he Enneagram is more than just a personality test. It is a complex system that has been studied for hundreds of years by people all over the globe. The Enneagram of Personality shows how people are unique while also being relative with their peers. It describes how even with a world of over seven billion humans, there are nine main types of personality that each individual relates to. Learning more about the Enneagram of Personality can help people understand themselves, as well as others.

I, myself, am a type Two. Helping others is the most important thing to me. I also accept the negatives of being a type Two with the fear of being unloved and useless. I understand my defense mechanisms and try to move forward through them. I believe learning about the Enneagram has really helped me grow and under-

stand myself more, along with the people around me.

I personally love to discover and learn which Enneagram type resonates with the people I know. It helps me see what they value the most and the way they function day-to-day. I believe knowing the different types can help people connect and accept others more openly.

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