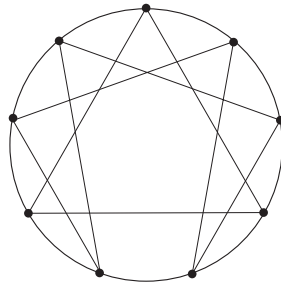


# Enneagram Overview

The enneagram is a universal system with many applications. It has a number of unique features, one of which is its association with this intriguing-looking geometric figure:

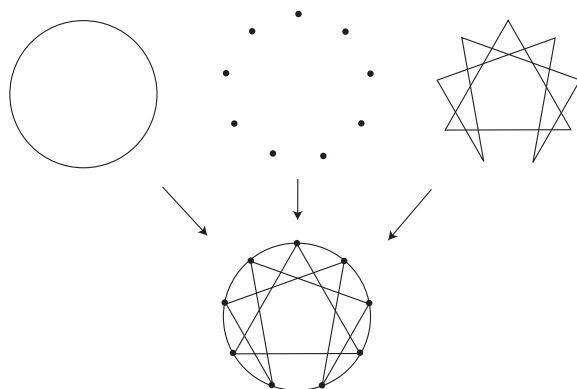


This figure is not just symbolic of the enneagram, it actually *is* the enneagram. This means that the enneagram system is not just a mental construct made-up by a person—it's an independent system based on precise geometric relationships involving the circle, its nine points, and various connecting lines. So once we have a basic grasp on how the system works, we can explore it for ourselves, using its geometry as a guide.

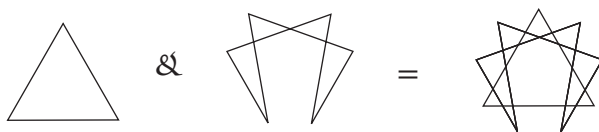
When we first look more closely, what we see is a circle with nine points placed on it so that they are equidistant ( $40^\circ$  apart). The points (called *enneagram types* or *points of view*) are connected by an interesting series of lines that are symmetrical vertically although not horizontally. There are many other interesting characteristics of the geometry, but the three essential features are the *circle*, the *points*, and the *lines*.

## The Circle, Points, and Lines

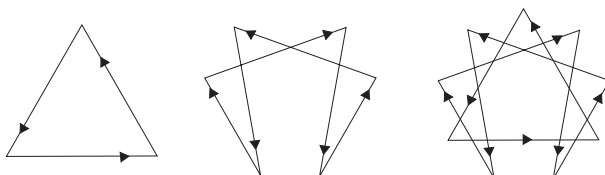
The geometry of the enneagram has a profound meaning. It serves as a symbolic reminder about the nature of life and life processes. The circle represents *wholeness*, the points represent the *nine different ways* in which life can manifest, and the lines, the *energetic ties* that connect the parts with the whole.



If we just look at the inner lines themselves, we can also break them up to create two other figures: the *triangle* and the *hexad*.



There's also an *energy flow* associated with these inner lines, as shown by the arrows on these figures:

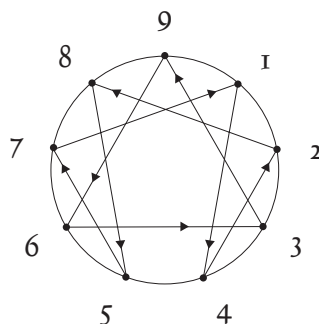


## The Nine Types

Although the enneagram can be used for multiple purposes, it's most often used today as a system for distinguishing nine different patterns of motivation that give rise to nine personality types. Each point on the enneagram circle represents one of the types.

However, I see the nine points as representing something more basic than personality—something more like innate temperament or disposition. So I prefer to think of the types as *energy types*, *motivation types*, or *individuality types*. But for simplicity's sake, I refer to the enneagram the same way as everybody else does: as the *personality enneagram*.

Each of the types can be described in many ways, depending on our purpose. However, the most basic way of describing the types is simply with a number—a number associated with one of the nine points on the enneagram circle:



Referring to the nine types by number gives us an objective way to talk about each type, while at the same time allowing us to change the type label according to application. Type One is always Type One, but Type One can also be called the Pioneer, Definer, Lawmaker, Judge, Crusader, etc., depending on the context. We'll look at a variety of these contexts in order to see the different dimensions of the types.

But the approach of using a number as the most basic designator for each type gives us an open-ended way of thinking about the enneagram and the types. It supports a creative way of looking at our individuality: as a single essence but with an infinite number of manifestations.

Of course, using numbers to describe the types is not terribly informative, especially for newcomers. So we do use labels and descriptions to talk about the energy associated with the type. The labels I've chosen are designed to give a flavor of the type but without pejorative connotations.

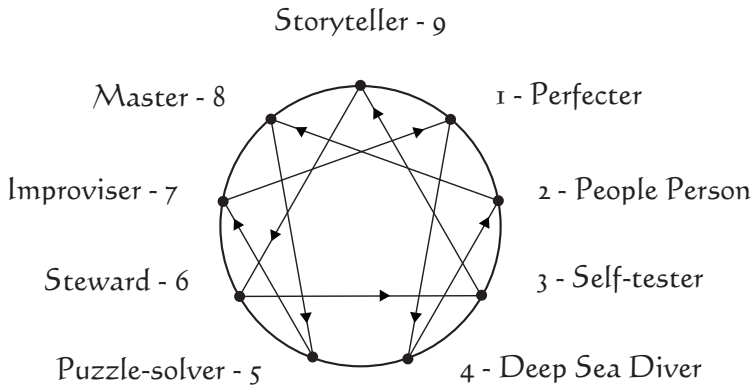
These are the first of many descriptions of the types. You'll notice that each time I describe the type, I usually do it a little differently, from a slightly different angle. So although we have here just one label per type (to keep things simple at the start), at the end we wind up with many labels, each of which reflects a different facet of the same energy.

Chapter 2 introduces the types in more depth; subsequent chapters break down into wing types, subtypes, and points in a process.

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## The Nine Types

<b>1</b> <b>THE PERFECTER</b>	careful, conscientious, serious, single pointed, idealizing, values-oriented
<b>2</b> <b>THE PEOPLE PERSON</b>	supportive, involved, concerned, committed, interactive, people-oriented
<b>3</b> <b>THE SELF-TESTER</b>	busy, practical, Type A, aspiring, competitive, adaptive, task-oriented
<b>4</b> <b>THE DEEP SEA DIVER</b>	sensitive, aesthetic, intense, deep, creative, original, meaning-oriented
<b>5</b> <b>THE PUZZLE-SOLVER</b>	shy, detached, ingenious, reflective, private, innovative, knowledge-oriented
<b>6</b> <b>THE STEWARD</b>	cautious, ambivalent, skeptical, sensing, anxious, equivocating, safety-oriented
<b>7</b> <b>THE IMPROVISER</b>	curious, fun-loving, restless, shifting, entrepreneurial, stimulation-oriented
<b>8</b> <b>THE MASTER</b>	strong, assured, masterful, grounded, frank, magnetic, power-oriented
<b>9</b> <b>THE STORYTELLER</b>	kind, unassuming, imaginative, open, accepting, fair, nature-oriented



## The Nine Types on the Enneagram

### My Take on the Types

There are three key assumptions I make when talking about the nine enneagram types:

1. type is with us for life (we never switch types)
2. type is innate (with us from birth)
3. type is a source of positive motivation

The first of these assumptions—that type is with us for life—is based on traditional teachings on the enneagram. The second and third are not.

Type is often said to be the product of early childhood conditioning. But it makes more sense to consider it innate. For one thing, our type never changes; if we start out as Type 3, we stay Type 3 for life. For that reason alone, it would make sense to assume that type is innate, that it is mysteriously hard-wired into our circuitry. Otherwise, it could potentially change. But a more telling reason is that research on infant cognition and perception overwhelmingly supports the idea that individuality is present from birth.

When the enneagram teachings were first disseminated in the 1970s, this research was not yet conclusive and the influence of both

behaviorism (which held that infants were blank slates) and Freudian theory (which characterized young infants as completely self-absorbed) was still strong. So that's why the enneagram types were assumed to be the product of conditioning, which was assumed from a Freudian viewpoint to have a more or less detrimental effect on the developing infant. As a result, the personality that emerged in early childhood was almost sure to be deficient in some way.

Little effort was made to subject these ideas to serious empirical scrutiny but they nevertheless became very influential. As a result, those who originally developed and taught the personality enneagram were considerably influenced by them. Viewing personality as basically the same thing as an enneagram type, they attributed to type an essentially negative character. Type became viewed as a false self that was said to obscure our original state of essential being. The nine types were said to represent nine ways that the self becomes fixated, compulsive, and unbalanced.

Because everyone who learned the enneagram received more or less the same teaching, this view of the types as distorted versions of the self became widespread. However, the basic assumptions of this view have been increasingly undercut by scientific research, especially research on genetics and infant development. This research shows that many psychological attributes that we once saw as the effects of social conditioning and maladjustment are actually innate, including the basic structures of the personality. That's why it becomes hard to avoid the conclusion that the basic structures of personality (and therefore enneagram type) are present at birth, not acquired later on.

It we throw out the idea that type is a form of conditioning, we can also throw out the idea that type is inherently neurotic, disturbed, or fixated. If type exists from birth (at least in nascent form), then it cannot be defined as disturbed unless we want to make the claim that human nature is inherently unbalanced. I'm not willing to make that claim, and I doubt that many other people are, either.

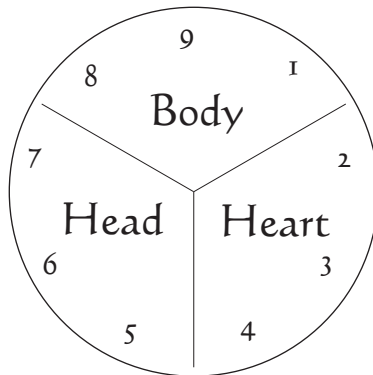
I assume that theory will eventually catch up with practice. Meanwhile, I am developing an approach to the enneagram and the nine types based on a more positive assessment of human personality and potential.

## The Three Energy Centers

One of the easiest ways to get acquainted with the types is by looking at the kind of energy associated with them. While each type has its own distinctive energy, the type energy arises out of one of three energy centers: the Body Center, Heart Center, or Head Center.

- **Body Center** (Types 8-9-1). The energy of the body center is fiery and quick to ignite (or explode), but also quick to cool. It comes through the gut, and is instinctual or sensate in nature (attuned to nature and natural processes).
- **Heart Center** (Types 2-3-4). The energy of the heart center is watery and flowing. It comes through the feelings, and spreads out and seeps downward, unless it is contained within a vessel. Because it is heavy and fluid, it requires stimulation in order to circulate.
- **Head Center** (Types 5-6-7). The energy of the head center is airy, cool, and light. It moves upward and is hard to contain but easy to agitate, like the air. It is invisible but pervasive.

We each have the energy of all three centers within us. At the same time, depending on our enneagram type, one of these energies will predominate, influencing us more than the other two; see Chapter 3 for more.



The Three Energy Centers

## Connecting Points

Each enneagram point of view is connected to two other points via the inner lines on the circle. These connecting points are of special significance, because they represent two additional sources of energy that support the energy of our type. The charts below and opposite give a brief introduction to the connecting points for each point of view.

The nature of the connection can also depend on whether we're moving *with* the arrows or *against* the arrows describing the flow of energy on the inner lines. Moving with the arrows takes us to our *stress point* (the place we access when we need more support); moving against them takes us to our *security point* (the place we access when we're feeling more confident and outgoing). See the charts on this page and the next for a brief summary of how the two connecting points relate to the point they connect; see Chapter 4 for more. (Note: the top descriptions refer to the stress points; the bottom descriptions refer to the security points.)



### POINT 3

**Nine:** supports a “slow & steady” approach & the ability to kick back

**Six:** curtails rashness, promotes cautiousness & contributes to the development of a service ethic



### POINT 6

**Three:** promotes self-confidence & the incentive to excel

**Nine:** brings greater serenity, calmness & groundedness



### POINT 9

**Six:** brings greater awareness & alertness

**Three:** helps translate intentions into actions

**POINT 1**

**Four:** allows judgment to be informed by deep conviction

**Seven:** brings spontaneity, enthusiasm & the ability to lighten up

**POINT 2**

**Eight:** helps develop assertiveness & self-confidence

**Four:** supports the deepening of surface emotions & sense of genuineness

**POINT 4**

**Two:** provides the incentive to cooperate & connect with others

**One:** enhances self-discipline, self-reliance & the ability to behave appropriately

**POINT 5**

**Seven:** brings a playful curiosity, ingenuity & ability to see connections

**Eight:** enhances groundedness, assertiveness & the ability to act

**POINT 7**

**One:** supports the development of precision & care

**Five:** brings the ability to slow down, reflect & be still

**POINT 8**

**Five:** promotes greater sensitivity & a sense of interiority

**Two:** supports the development of heartfulness & good will

## Enneagram Subtypes

Studying the wing types gives us a way to make finer-grained distinctions of within-type differences. Another way to break down the type is by looking at how different people of the same type seek fulfillment in life.

Some people are *extremely independent*. They enjoy doing things on their own, and like their own space. Others are *intensity-seekers* who are inspired by the thrill of romance, the fascination of the deep, or the dizzying heights of the spiritual transcendent. Yet others are focused on *social relations*, and are at their best when participating in group activities like social galas, community work, or political activism.

In the language of the enneagram world, the independent types are *self-presentation subtypes*, the intensity-seekers are *sexual subtypes*, and the participatory types are *social subtypes*.

It's easy to see that the subtypes are not actually dependent on the enneagram types (despite their name). They actually constitute a completely independent way of characterizing ourselves and the people we encounter. Here's a more detailed breakdown of how this scheme works:

- Arena of the **self** (focus on ONE = self-preservation subtype)  
(*selfhood, individuality, survival, responsibility, ethics, independence*)
- Arena of **intimacy** (focus on TWO = sexual subtype)  
(*love, intimacy, passion, creativity, the Shadow, mysticism, the Beloved*)
- Arena of **social relations** (focus on THREE = social subtype)  
(*group dynamics, community, diplomacy, politics, social awareness, status*)

I call these three areas of focus **arenas** because they are like spheres of activity in which things can take place. Put them together, and you have a three-ring circus—just like in life!

Each of us participate in all three arenas, usually on a daily basis. We take care of our personal needs, seek creative or intimate fulfillment, and play various roles as members of our community and society. But for most people, one of these arenas tends to be more dominant than the other two. It's the one that shapes our orientation to life on an habitual basis. Now the real power of the three-arena subtype system becomes

apparent when we combine it with the nine-category enneagram system. We can then generate a matrix of 27 **subtype profiles** that are quite detailed in nature. The chart below lists three subtypes per enneagram type; on the next page are the subtypes mapped onto the enneagram.

We can use this chart in two ways. First, we can use it to see how the three subtype arenas are influenced by the distinctive motivations of each enneagram type. Conversely, we can see how knowing the three distinctive subtype orientations enables us to make finer distinctions among individuals of each enneagram type.

### Subtype Arenas

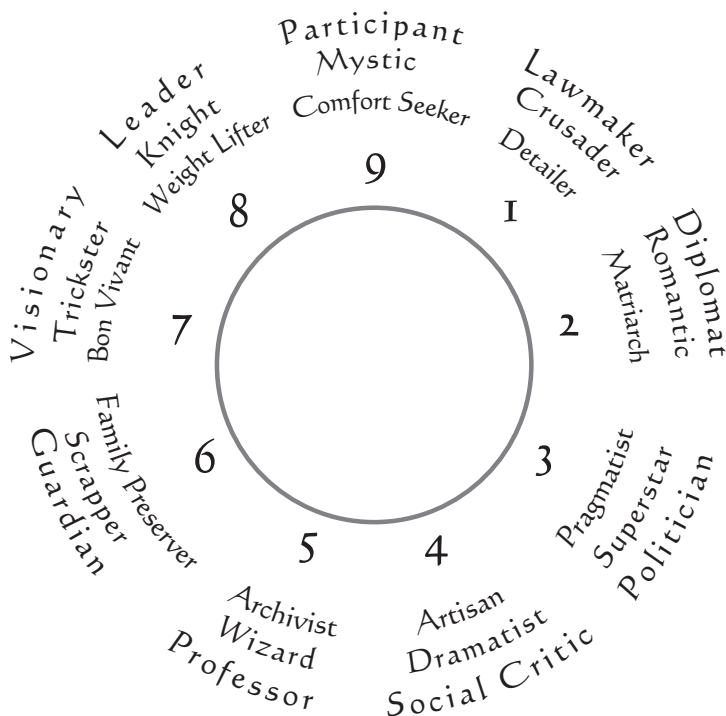
T Y P E	<b>SELF-PRESERVATION ARENA</b> <i>(focus is on the self, protection, bodily integrity, the home &amp; garden)</i>	<b>SEXUAL ARENA</b> <i>(focus is on intimacy, sexuality, creativity, aspiration &amp; intensity)</i>	<b>SOCIAL ARENA</b> <i>(focus is on the social group, environment, &amp; political arena)</i>
1	Detailer	Crusader	Lawmaker
2	Matriarch	Romantic	Diplomat
3	Pragmatist	Superstar	Politician
4	Artisan	Dramatist	Social Critic
5	Archivist	Wizard	Professor
6	Family Preserver	Scraper	Guardian
7	Bon Vivant	Trickster	Visionary
8	Weight Lifter	Knight	Leader
9	Comfort Seeker	Mystic	Participant

On the enneagram below,

- the **self-preservation subtypes** are on the *inner circle*
- the **sexual subtypes** are on the *middle circle*
- the **social subtypes** are on the *outer circle*

Although it takes a certain amount of time to really absorb the differences between the 27 subtype categories, it's well worth the effort, because it really brings the enneagram system to life. Also, people who have trouble initially typing themselves sometimes find that they can recognize themselves more easily by looking at subtype (rather than type) profiles. See Chapters 5 & 6 for details.

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The 27 Subtypes

## Wing Types

Each of the enneagram types has a neighbor on either side. These are its *wings*. Usually, one of those wings will exert a stronger influence than the other. As a result, it's possible to break each type into two halves, depending on which wing dominates. So if a person is a Three, he's probably a hard worker. But if he has a strong Two wing, he's probably more attracted to working with other people; if he has a strong Four wing, he's probably more attracted to working independently

The 18 wing types are mapped onto the enneagram below and also listed in the chart on the following page. See Chapter 7 for more.



The 18 Wing Types

## Enneagram Wing Types

1w9	<b>THE DEFINER</b>	reserved, quiet, detailed, devoted, irritable
1w2	<b>THE REFORMER</b>	impassioned, adamant, determined, convicted
2w1	<b>THE SOCIAL WORKER</b>	concerned, engaged, sympathetic, encouraging
2w3	<b>THE SOCIALIZER</b>	gracious, engaging, inviting, sociable, eager
3w2	<b>THE MANAGER</b>	adaptable, organized, clever, pleasant, polished
3w4	<b>THE PROFESSIONAL</b>	business-like, ambitious, focused, independent
4w3	<b>THE SPECIALIST</b>	individualistic, distinctive, in style, high-powered
4w5	<b>THE ARTISTE</b>	deep, intense, moody, disciplined, focused
5w4	<b>THE ICONOCLAST</b>	unconventional, offbeat, shamanic, penetrating
5w6	<b>THE THINKER</b>	dry, intellectual, proficient, self-contained
6w5	<b>THE SERVER</b>	thoughtful, conscientious, attentive, retrospective
6w7	<b>THE WIT</b>	jumpy, self-conscious, witty, winsome, respectful
7w6	<b>THE COMEDIAN</b>	funny, edgy, fun, high-spirited, playful, restless
7w8	<b>THE ADVENTURER</b>	adventurous, energetic, fast-moving, high-energy
8w7	<b>THE POWER BROKER</b>	confident, blunt, forward-moving, unrepentant
8w9	<b>THE POWERHOUSE</b>	grounded, solid, massive, deliberate, forceful
9w8	<b>THE MOUNTAIN</b>	steady, patient, absorbing, waiting, observant
9w1	<b>THE ANTICIPATOR</b>	open, child-like, idealizing, starry-eyed, impatient

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## The Types as Phases of Transformation

So far we've looked at the basic geometry of the enneagram, its three energy centers, its 18 wing types, its 27 subtypes, and its connecting points. My intent is not to overwhelm but to provide an overview of the system—we'll return to each of these topics in later chapters.

But you might notice that I don't just talk about the types and their variants, but try to map them whenever possible onto the enneagram. This is because seeing them on the enneagram helps us understand the underlying properties of each point of view. We notice things we wouldn't notice if we were just reading a list of type attributes.

The biggest single thing it shows us is the relationship of one thing to another. We notice, for example, that some types are connected on the circle, some by lines, and some (seemingly) not at all. (Actually, if you look hard enough, you discover that all the types are connected. It's just that some connections are more obvious or direct than others.)

One of the most useful things that we can notice when we look at the enneagram is the relationship of the types that are right next to one another. We've already talked about this in the discussion on wing types, but we can use the information on wings to look not only at how wings relate to types but at how all the types relate to one another—how Type 1 shifts to Type 2, Type 2 to Type 3, etc.

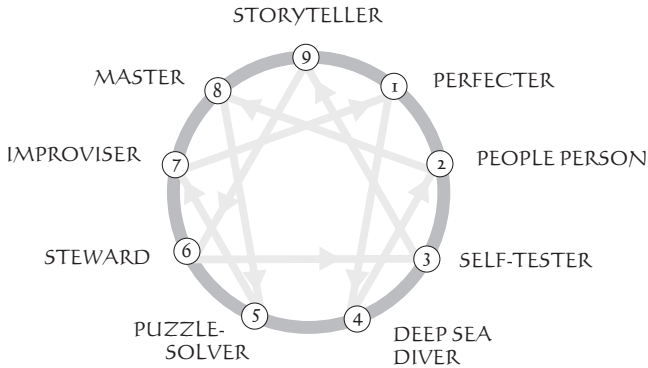
The fact that each type can be seen to shift into the next is not just an interesting artifact. It reflects a profound truth, which is that each enneagram point of view is not just an arbitrary set of characteristics existing in isolation. It is part of a larger context—a context that is both meaningful and highly dynamic.

There is actually an energy that flows between the types following the outside path of the circle—an energy flow that links all the types together. They are all part of a larger process, a process that describes how an new idea arises, is developed, and brought to completion as a finished product.

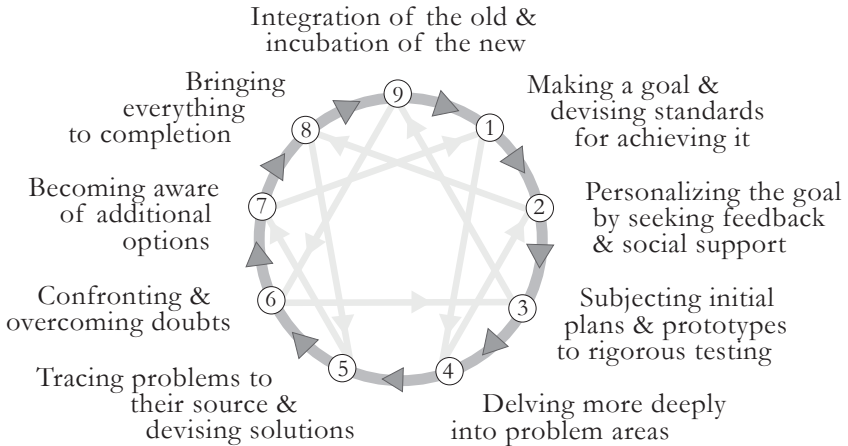
The idea of the enneagram as a process started with G. I. Gurdjieff, who hinted at the enneagram as a sort of perpetual motion machine, with energy flowing around the edge of the circle (and also through the inner lines). Later, Arica founder Oscar Ichazo envisioned the enneagram in quite a different way, as a system for showing

nine types of personality fixation—places where energy backs up and gets stuck. But Ichazo’s approach is difficult to reconcile with the idea of a dynamic process.

If we drop the idea that types are about “stuckness,” then it’s possible to see each type as embodying the energy associated with a particular stage in a larger process—a process that links all nine types and places them in a larger context. Here is the enneagram we know:

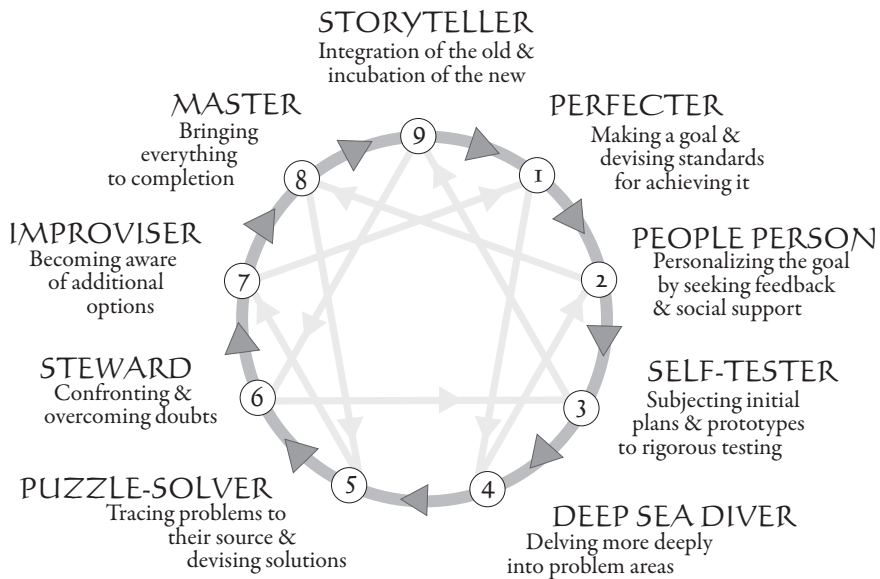


Now here is the enneagram as used to describe a process:



If we start at Point 1 in this process-oriented enneagram, we see how something emerges out of a period of incubation (Point 9) to become an idea or intention in need of development. At Point 2, the development process begins, with the gathering of information and resources. At Point 3, we begin to test out our idea to see whether it has enough merit to proceed. Assuming the answer is yes, we proceed to reflect more deeply on all the ramifications of what we're doing (Point 4), arriving at a mental understanding of whatever problems may arise (Point 5). But this kind of understanding is not enough to overcome all problems, especially our innermost self-doubts—sometimes we need to make a leap of faith to get past our Dweller on the Threshold (Point 6). If we can make such a leap, a breakthrough is possible, leading to more options and feelings of elation (Point 7) and the need to refocus our attention to bring things to a state of completion (Point 8). Then we're ready to for some R & R and time for “just being” (Point 9).

Now let's see what happens when we juxtapose the enneagram of the nine points with the process enneagram:



If we look at the labels and the process descriptions, we can see potential parallels between the enneagram type labels and the corresponding stage in a creative process, even with these very brief descriptions. The parallels are definitely there, although they may be more obvious for some enneagram points than others. This is because the types each have many facets, so the label that works best as a type descriptor for general purposes isn't necessarily the best label for describing the type in terms of its role in a process (but see Chapter 9 for a chart listing dozens of alternative labels for each type). The chart to the right briefly describes the relationship between the types and the stages; see Chapter 8 for details.

## **The Enneagram as a Living System**

Mapping personality to process helps us understand that we can be sitting at a stable point (like our enneagram point of view) without actually being stuck or fixated. It illustrates the fact that we don't have to think of our type as a trap—we can think of it as a source of energy and motivation.

Another possibility is to think of the types as living cells in the body of life. The actual form of the enneagram figure supports this way of thinking, because it directs our attention not just to nine separate types, but to the *relationships* between them and to the *unifying orb* that encircles them. To conceive of the enneagram as a living system enables us to think of new and innovative ways to use the system, for example, for breaking out of dualistic thinking, finding direction in life, and discovering how to be more in the flow of the moment (see Chapter 9).

## How Type Relates to Transformation

<b>PT</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>STAGE</b>	<b>MAIN TASK</b>
1	PERFECTER	Goal Setting	To perfect the foundation for moving toward a goal
2	PEOPLE PERSON	Planning	To get feedback, enlist support & humanize impersonal goals
3	SELF-TESTER	Testing	To see whether our ideas are practical enough to be worth pursuing
4	DEEP SEA DIVER	Commitment	To deepen our understanding of the project & make a commitment to continue
5	PUZZLE-SOLVER	Problem Solving	To fully understand the project & solve any problems preventing its completion
6	STEWARD	Confronting Doubts	To courageously overcome doubts & dutifully allow the project to evolve as it must
7	IMPROVISOR	Elation	To add a bit of magic & sparkle to the project just before completion
8	MASTER	Completion	To pull everything together to create something of lasting value
9	STORYTELLER	Receptivity	To allow this experience to become part of our larger life story