



# ENNEAGRAM TYPE ONE

## Key Traits

**Inner Critic.** Having an inner critic that operates almost all the time.

**Over-control.** Controlling or over-controlling themselves to the point of being or seeming rigid or overly focused on being correct or appropriate.

**Virtuousness.** Ones try to be good and do the right thing almost all the time.

**Perfectionistic or Reform-minded.** Ones are improvement-oriented—they try to perfect everything they do. They can easily see how things could (or should!) be reformed or made better.

**Criticality.** Ones can be critical of themselves and others. They can tend to be judgmental, even while they may try to control the expression of their criticality (in the effort to be virtuous) or fail to notice its impact.

**Repression of Anger.** Although they sometimes don't want to see or admit it, Ones tend to be angry about the fact that things aren't always the way they think they should be. Then they try to repress this anger because they may believe it's not appropriate or virtuous to be angry. Then it leaks out as annoyance, resentment, irritation, or righteous indignation.

**This content is adapted from the below publications. Browse them [here](#).**

The Complete Enneagram: 27 Paths to Greater Self-Awareness by Beatrice Chestnut, PhD.;

The 9 Types of Leadership: Mastering the Art of People in the 21st Century Workplace by Beatrice Chestnut, PhD.;

[Forthcoming] The Enneagram Guide to Waking Up: Find your path, face your shadow, discover your true self by Beatrice Chestnut, PhD and Uranio Paes, MM.

## OVERVIEW

Type One represents the archetype of the person who seeks to be good and “do the right thing” to satisfy an urgent need to be virtuous and responsible and to avoid fault and blame. This drive provides a defensive protection in a world that demands and rewards good behavior and punishes bad behavior.

This archetype also exists as the “superego,” that part of the psyche that stands in for the parental voice of authority. This internal force exercises its power to tame the excesses born of raw impulses, animal instinct, and unrestricted forms of self-interested self-expression.

Type Ones are thus the prototype for that part in all of us that strives to match high standards of good behavior as a way of proving ourselves worthy and avoiding blame or fault. This archetypal stance prioritizes following the rules as a way of bringing about a perceived higher good through invoking a higher order.

This effort also necessarily involves stifling or “civilizing” natural impulses, instincts, and feelings that would lead us to break the rules to our advantage. Type Ones stay vigilant not to let these forces get out of control. Ones tend to inhibit their experience of the wisdom of the “animal within” and the natural rhythms of spontaneity, instinctive expression and play. Rigidity, criticism, and continuous judgment are as characteristic of this archetypal character as their belief in justice, fairness, and good order.

Type One individuals are reliable, responsible, honest, well-intentioned, conscientious, and hardworking. They sincerely want to improve themselves and the world around them. Their specific “superpower” can be seen in their high integrity and the passion and dedication they bring to the fulfillment of their ideals and the pursuit of high standards. They have well-developed powers of criticism and an intuitive sense of the perfection of nature and the natural order of things. They are diligent, practical, and thrifty. They can be discerning and objective, meaning that they excel at analyzing situations and clarifying issues while separating out any emotions that may be involved.

As with all the archetypal personalities, however, Type Ones’ gifts and strengths also represent their “fatal flaw” or “Achilles heel:” they get in their own way by overdoing their focus on virtue and thus undermine their own self-confidence, balance, and inner peace through over-control, self-repression, and excessive judgment. However, when they can learn to tame their sometimes harsh criticality and take things less seriously, they can call on their gifts of discernment, reliability, and idealism to make the world a better place.

## FOCUS OF ATTENTION

Like the “superego” function of Freud’s model, Ones focus on noticing error (in the form of deviations from an internally generated ideal), discerning right and wrong, and displaying a reliance on rules and structure. They see whatever is happening in terms of detecting and conforming to what is right or appropriate. They adhere to internal standards of good and bad, and “the right thing to do” or “the right way” to do something.

## THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

Emotionally, Ones often feel resentment and irritation—or anger that is restrained. The communication of aggression is in conflict with their belief that expressing anger is bad, so anger and other instinctual impulses are typically held back. They then leak out as resentment, annoyance, criticism, and self-righteousness. Ones believe usually that there is a “right way” to do things and that we should all try to be more perfect.

## BEHAVIOR PATTERNS

Ones can be perceived as being rigid and highly structured in their behavior, relying on ritual and repetitive forms of doing things. Typically, they follow the rules and are reliable, ethical, and hardworking.



## BLIND SPOTS

- anger and its effects,
- the impact of criticism,
- feelings and impulses,
- the downsides of the pursuit of perfection,
- rigidity,
- and need for relaxation.

## WHEN BLIND SPOTS ARE INTEGRATED

- are more relaxed and flexible,
- display humor and lightness,
- make time for fun,
- are more accepting of their feelings and needs,
- are less judgmental,
- and accept and channel their anger consciously.

## THE PASSION IS ANGER

As an emotional passion, anger appears in its repressed form for Ones as resentment that seeks resolution in pursuing perfection and virtue. Ones display hostility toward the imperfect way things are and try to force things to conform to their ideal of how things should be.

## THE VIRTUE IS SERENITY

Serenity can be understood as a state of being totally peaceful within, while fully accepting the way people and things are. In Serenity, Ones feel no need to go against what happens or against the impulses they experience.

## THE PATH FROM ANGER TO SERENITY

The paradox underlying the Type One personality patterns centers on the tension—or the opposition—between the passion of anger and the virtue of Serenity. Another way of viewing this polarity—and the path of growth from one to the other—is that the experience of one pole is a preoccupation with self-judgment and striving to be good and the other pole is a state of acceptance and inner peace, free from the activity of the judging mind.



# TYPE ONE SUBTYPES

## SELF-PRESERVATION ONE: **WORRY**

Self-Preservation Ones are the true perfectionists of the three Ones. They express the passion of anger through working hard to make themselves and the things they do more perfect. In this subtype, anger is the most repressed emotion; the defense mechanism of reaction formation transforms the heat of anger into warmth, resulting in a friendly and benevolent character.

## SOCIAL ONE: **NON-ADAPTABILITY**

Social Ones (unconsciously) consider themselves to be perfect; they express anger through focusing on being the perfect model of “the right way” to be. They have a teacher mentality that reflects an unconscious need for superiority. In the Social One, anger is half-hidden—there’s a transformation of the heat of anger into cold. This is a cooler, intellectual personality type in which the main theme is control.

## SEXUAL ONE: **ZEAL**

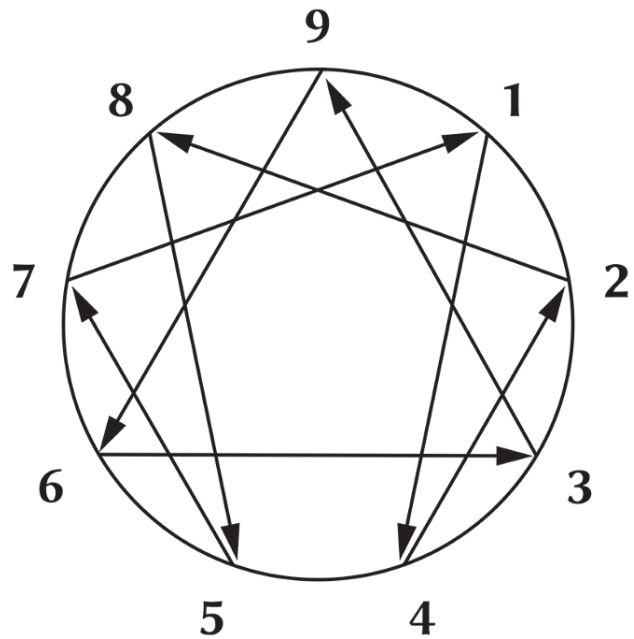
### **Countertype**

Sexual Ones focus on perfecting others; they are more reformers than perfectionists. The only One who is explicitly angry, they act out anger through their intense desire to improve others and get what they want. They feel entitled in the way a reformer or a zealot can feel entitled: they believe they have a right to change society and get what they want because they have a higher understanding of the truth and the reasons behind “the right way to be.” The countertype of the Ones, they are more impulsive and outwardly angry—they go against the “counter-instinctive” tendency of the One to repress anger and impulses.



# GROWTH PATH

If you are a Type One, the first stage of your path of awakening involves learning to observe yourself more consciously. This means developing the ability to notice your specific habits of judging yourself and others—without judging yourself further for judging. Your growth journey will involve acknowledging how much attention you pay to correcting errors in your environment, monitoring and criticizing the things you do, and resenting what others are doing that isn't right. To further your journey, you will need to work to feel less responsible (or overly responsible) for making sure things happen the right way, begin to respect your emotions and impulses and develop a greater capacity for compassion for yourself. By learning to recognize when you are overly focused on self-improvement—how you try to be good and avoid being bad—you advance down the path toward greater self-knowledge.



# WINGS AND ARROWS

In using the Enneagram to further growth, as it is intended, the first steps involve observing yourself to make the patterns and habits associated with your main, or “core,” type more conscious. After you have done this for a while, you can create further growth shifts by using the wings and arrows as pathways for growth.

The Enneagram's arrow lines point in the direction of each type's specific path of psychological and spiritual growth and away from important characteristics and experiences we had to repress in childhood (but periodically return to for a sense of security). These connection points indicated by the Enneagram diagram help us see how we can aim to embody the higher aspects of these two specific points to further our inner journey: the point ahead of our core point represents key challenges we need to master to become more whole and the point behind our core type along the arrow lines represent issues from the past that we need to re-integrate such that we can reclaim what we disowned in childhood to ground and support our forward movement along the path indicated by the arrows.



# MOVING BACK TO TYPE 7

The path of growth for Type Ones calls for them to reclaim the playful and spontaneous impulses characteristic of Type Seven. Ones often had the experience in childhood that non-serious pursuits like free imagination and play were not okay. In a world that required them to be more adult and controlled (usually much too early), Ones commonly received messages discouraging their more creative, spontaneous qualities. These messages motivate the young One to repress these impulses habitually.

For this reason, “moving back to Seven” can be simply a soothing break in discipline for the over-controlled One. But Ones risk getting stuck in the back-and-forth between the seriousness and discipline of the One personality and the light rebellion and playfulness of the move to Seven.

When pursued with little or no conscious self-awareness, the One is likely not reclaiming repressed spontaneity so much as temporarily escaping into bad behavior or stimulating activities. Self-recrimination and regret predictably follow.

Navigated consciously, a One can use “the move to Seven” developmentally to re-establish a healthy balance between responsibility and relaxation. Ones can focus on the qualities of this child-security point to recognize and understand their early need to repress the irrepressible Seven qualities. Ones can choose to consciously remind themselves that it’s now okay now to have fun, lighten up, and choose pleasurable options. In this way, the “open possibility” perspective of Seven shows the One a way to consciously choose to shift attention away from the control and stress of trying to make things go right all the time. Learning the lesson of Type Seven—that making free time for play and fun is an essential element of life—can give a Type One a deeply rewarding foothold in the simple pleasures he or she was forced to leave behind in childhood.



# MOVING AHEAD TO TYPE 4

After doing the work of integrating healthy Type 7 qualities, the Inner Flow growth path for Type Ones brings them into direct contact with the challenges embodied in Type Four: allowing for greater range and depth of feeling, more melancholy and longing, and greater creativity and self-expression (instead of just following the rules).

Not surprisingly, Ones often report that they find being in contact with Four traits painful and uncomfortable. But exploring depth and expression of feeling with purpose and consciousness can give the One a sense of relief at finally releasing what they have spent considerable energy holding back. This shift may involve contact with the depressive or melancholic feelings, but exploring these feelings can provide the One with greater emotional freedom in all respects. The growth–stress point of Four shows the path of development the One can take to live more authentically by lessening the over-control of feeling.

The One working consciously in this way can make ready use of the tools healthy Type Fours use: artistic expression and emotional authenticity. The aesthetic sensibility characteristic of Type Four shows how art can be a liberating form of personal expression across the emotional spectrum. Also, as art is inherently creative and flexible, the artist's expression is ideally free of absolutes or preconditions. To get started, it is helpful for the One to select a medium that “feels right” and to give himself or herself time, space, and permission to express without evaluating. Over time, creating art in this way becomes less a focus of conscious design and more “in the flow” of the moment. This practice is naturally tailored to the One's path of exploring feeling and expression non-judgmentally.

