



ENNEAGRAM TYPE NINE

Key Traits

Over-Adjustment and Merging: The prominent Type Nine habit of adapting themselves to others' agendas represents an "over-adjustment" because Nines typically don't just meet others halfway, they lose the ability to access what their positions are and give in to others completely—often without anyone knowing they've done it.

Resignation: At the heart of the Nine's coping strategy of "going along to get along" is their tendency to resign themselves to not getting what they want.

Indecision: Nines tend to be disconnected from their internal guidance system, so they can experience extreme difficulty when they need to access their desires to make a decision.

Easygoing Nature/Affability: Although the downside of giving up your desires to go along with the agendas of others is that you become more and more disconnected from yourself, the upside is that people tend to find you likable, pleasant, and easy to be around.

OVERVIEW

Type Nine represents the archetype of the person who seeks to harmonize with the external environment as a way of staying comfortable and peaceful, even though this means a loss of contact with their internal environment. Akin to the meaning behind both "fusion" and "union," this archetype's drive is to maintain a sense of calm and connectedness through merging with the outside and diminished awareness of the inside.

Type Nines are the prototype for that tendency in all of us to tune out our own inner knowing as a way of "going with the flow" and "not rocking the boat." The Nine archetype represents the model for wanting to stay comfortable, resist change, and do what's easiest, even if that means not asserting yourself or falling asleep to your own priorities as a way of getting along with others. Nines thus represent the prototype for all the personality types of the universal human tendency to go on automatic and remain asleep to ourselves.

The Nine archetype can be seen at the societal level in cultures that put the collective ahead of the individual, and also in the concept of bureaucracy. The same underlying principles are at work when large institutions become resistant to change through an unconscious maintenance of the status quo, an inability to make creative decisions, and a disconnection from the original animating principles that might drive innovation and evolution.

In the Enneagram framework, Type Nines are adaptable, likable, and easygoing. They specialize in detecting tension and finding ways to mediate and diffuse conflict. Oriented toward inclusion, consensus, and harmony, they excel at understanding and valuing different perspectives and mediating between them to resolve disputes and maintain peace. They are genuinely caring and unselfish, and their specific “superpower” lies in providing steadfast support to others in a way that makes everyone around them feel honored and included.

As with all the archetypal personalities, however, Type Nines’ gifts and strengths also represent their “fatal flaw” or “Achilles heel,” as they can overadjust to others and then have a hard time registering their own desires and asserting their own agendas. They get in their own way by focusing too much attention on what others want and deferring excessively to the people around them. By accommodating others and avoiding conflict in order to achieve comfort, they end up becoming deaf to their own inner voice. However, when they can learn to wake up to themselves, access their own internal compass, and initiate action on their own behalf, they can balance their attention to others with an ability to act in support of themselves.



FOCUS OF ATTENTION

Nines focus attention on others, on what is going on in the environment, and on avoiding conflict and achieving harmony. Nines typically tune into what other people want, but do not have a clear sense of their own agendas.

THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

Nines focus on getting along with others without “rocking the boat” and creating conflict. They’re emotionally steady and do not feel many highs or lows. Though they are anger types, Nines usually don’t feel their anger very often—they (unconsciously) dissociate from it as a way to avoid conflict or separation from others—so it tends to leak out in repressed forms, such as stubbornness or passive-aggressive behavior, or escape in big bursts every once in a while.

BEHAVIOR PATTERNS

Nines like to “go with the flow,” and they automatically accommodate the agendas of others as a way of unconsciously avoiding expressing (or even registering) any preferences that could lead to conflict, though they may passively resist later when hints of latent desires surface. They dislike feeling controlled, but like structure and clear lines of authority. They make good mediators because they have an easy ability to see all sides of an issue and naturally find the common ground in conflicting points of view.

BLIND SPOTS

- Their own anger and other feelings that are versions of anger, like frustration and stubbornness
- Their tendency to express anger passive-aggressively when they don’t consciously acknowledge it
- Their own desires, agenda, and opinions
- The potential value of conflict
- The need for healthy boundaries with others
- Balance connecting with people with boundaries and saying “no”

WHEN BLIND SPOTS ARE INTEGRATED

- Become more powerful and direct by getting in touch with anger
- Notice when anger leaks out as passive resistance or passive aggressive behaviors
- Communicate more clearly about what they want and how they feel; take action in service of their own priorities
- Utilize constructive conflict as a way to develop stronger relationships



THE PASSION IS SLOTH

Sloth is the passion that drives Type Nine. As the core emotional motivation of this type, sloth is a kind of laziness—not in the usual sense of not wanting to do things, but rather a reluctance to take important actions for themselves that are needed in the moment. This is usually an action that should be taken to support their own needs, but it can also be any first step that can change the reality around them. Through sloth, Nines consistently and unconsciously neglect themselves and their potential role in making a difference in the world.

THE VIRTUE IS RIGHT ACTION

Right action is the virtue that provides an antidote to the passion of sloth. When in touch with right action, this type resists giving way to others or putting others ahead of themselves. They realize that they don't have to be overly modest or forget themselves to have value and create harmony. They know how to make their specific contribution to the world by embracing their own importance and knowing that they belong. They initiate projects that can change the world, instead of just doing more of the same old operational, routine stuff.

THE PATH FROM SLOTH TO RIGHT ACTION

The Type Nine paradox is grounded in the polarity between the passion of sloth and the virtue of right action. For this type, becoming more aware of their tendency to stay comfortably invisible and not bring their gifts to the world is how they begin to wake up. By becoming more aware of how sloth operates in their lives, they move away from their tendency to erase themselves and work toward expressing their power. For this type, being in right action means waking up to how important they are and learning to assert their own priorities.



THE TYPE NINE SUBTYPES

SELF-PRESERVATION NINE: APPETITE

Instead of feeling an ongoing connection to their feelings, desires, and power, Self-Preservation Nines focus on merging with physical comforts and routine activities, such as eating, sleeping, reading, or doing crossword puzzles. SP Nines are practical, concrete people who focus on everyday things rather than abstractions.

SOCIAL NINE: PARTICIPATION

The countertype

Social Nines fuse with groups. They act out laziness when connecting with their own inner life by working hard to be a part of the different groups in their lives. Fun-loving, sociable, and congenial characters, Social Nines can be workaholics, prioritizing the group's needs above their own. This high level of activity makes them the countertype of the three Nine subtypes.

SEXUAL NINE: FUSION

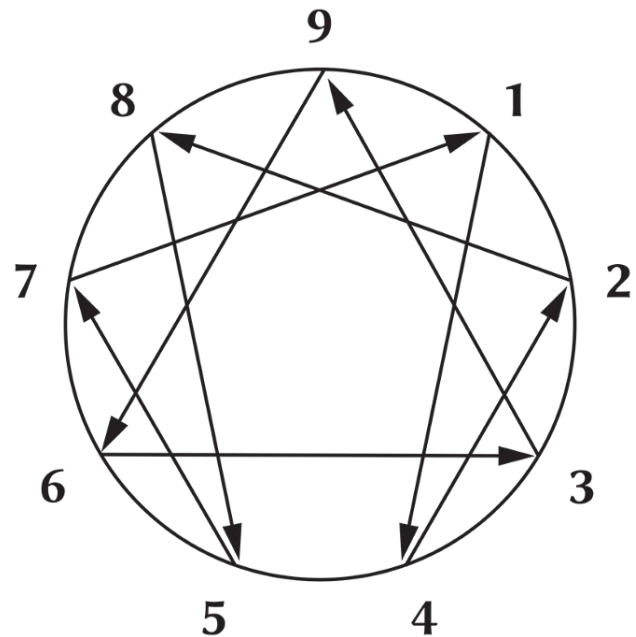
Sexual Nines express the passion of laziness by merging with the important people in their lives. Sexual Nines unconsciously take on the attitudes, opinions, and feelings of others, because it can feel too hard to stand on their own. These Nines tend to be kind, gentle, shy characters who are not very assertive.



GROWTH PATH

As Nines work on themselves and become more self-aware, they learn to escape the trap of creating discomfort and disharmony by erasing themselves in an attempt to create peace and harmony. By creating a stronger connection to their own inner world, asserting their needs and wants, and acting more powerfully on their own behalf, they can avoid their tendency to overadjust to others to the point of forgetting themselves completely.

For Nines, the growth process involves observing the way they go to sleep to their own needs in order to get along with others; exploring the ways they seek to stay comfortable and avoid their own feelings and desires; and making active efforts to connect with themselves as much as they endeavor to stay connected to others. It is particularly important for them to learn to access their desires, manifest their own power, and act on their own behalf.



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 3

The path of growth for Type Nines calls for them to reclaim their ability to actively “do” to further their own goals. Nines’ early impulses to accomplish things and set their own course of action may not have been seen and supported in childhood, which likely motivated the adoption of a survival strategy oriented to going along with others rather than staying focused on their goals and ambitions. Nines may have felt that as children they had to decide between their own needs and wants and those of important others, and so going along with others and muting their own goals may have been something they did to cope.

When there isn’t very much awareness around the move to Three, it can occur as an anxious and confused sense of “doing” in response to extreme situations of not having done enough. Navigated consciously, however, a Nine can use “the move to Three” developmentally to reestablish a healthy balance between supporting and attuning to others and doing what it takes to further their own achievements. Nines can focus on the qualities of this “child–security” point to understand what they may have needed to go to sleep to in themselves in the past to get along in the world. “Moving back to Three” can thus be a way of re-engaging with their lost sense of initiative and self-interested action. For this reason, it can be both a move toward a sense of security and a way to embrace and reintegrate something that had to be avoided early on, such that Nines can free themselves up to move forward on their growth path toward the Six Point.

By reincorporating Type Three qualities, Nines can consciously remind themselves that it’s okay to want some attention for themselves and that it’s important to value themselves and their accomplishments. Instead of quietly avoiding things and resisting others’ demands by disappearing, Nines can seek to embody the high side of Three and spark themselves to act in positive ways to reach specific goals by thinking more about how they appear to others. In this way, Nines can use their Three child-security point as a way of reclaiming their inner doer, and balance out their talent for deeply understanding the perspectives of others with a deeper understanding of their own desire for productivity and effectiveness for their own sake.



MOVING AHEAD TO **TYPE 6**

The Inner Flow growth path for Type Nines brings them into direct contact with the challenges embodied in Type Six: allowing for a clearer perception of fears, anxieties, thoughts, and feelings about what might go wrong as a way to motivate action and mobilize the inner resources of faith and courage.

Not surprisingly, Nines can find the anxiety and sense of threat they might feel as they move to Six to be uncomfortable. But these feelings (experienced consciously and managed mindfully) can help move Nines out of inertia and stimulate them to action in support of themselves. This shift may involve a greater sense of urgency about tapping into real desires, as well as genuine capacities for taking action to handle problems and deal with threats to their well-being. As inaction and staying comfortable can, in the extreme, represent real threats to Nines' safety and well-being, moving to Six can help Nines find reasons to act on their own behalf.

The Nine working consciously in this way can make ready use of the tools healthy Type Sixes themselves use: analytical skills and proactive activity in support of self-protection. The Six stance has a basis in intuiting and tuning in to threats to the self and maintaining an alertness to security concerns, which can serve to balance out Nines' focus on staying comfortable and distracting themselves with inessentials. The mental activity of vigilance and critical analysis natural to the Six helps Nines to go into their heads to more purposefully analyze what is going on in their lives and how they may be forgetting themselves in ways that undermine their security. The intuitive ability of Sixes also helps Nines develop more active ways to access what is going on inside them.

