

Personality 6

All of the information in this presentation is taken directly from the book *The Road Back to You: An Enneagram Journey of Self-Discovery* by Ian Morgan Cron and Suzanne Stabile published by InterVarsity Press.

TYPE SIX: The Loyalist. Committed, practical and witty, they are worst-case-scenario thinkers who are motivated by fear and the need for security.

The Fear or Head TRIAD (5, 6, 7). These numbers are driven by fear—Five externalizes it, **Six internalizes it**, and Seven forgets it. They take in and relate to the world through the mind. They tend to think and plan carefully before they act.

DEADLY SIN

SIXES: Fear. Forever imagining worst-case scenarios and questioning their ability to handle life on their own, Sixes turn to authority figures and belief systems rather than God to provide them with the support and security they yearn for.

Type 6 “The Loyalist”

There’s no harm in hoping for the best as long as you’re prepared for the worst. Stephen King

Healthy Sixes have learned to trust their own experiences of life. They are aware that certainty and accurate predictability are not likely in most situations. They are productive, logical thinkers who almost always organize their thoughts and actions around what would be most advantageous for the common good. Loyal, honest and reliable, healthy Sixes are clear-eyed judges of character. These Sixes have come to believe that in the end everything will be all right.

Average Sixes question almost everything. They struggle to get out of their heads and the pattern of worst-case-scenario planning. They are overly focused on authority and can be either subservient on the one hand or rebellious on the other. They find the world to be an unsafe place, and they respond with fight or flight. These Sixes, while managing all of their anxiety, are committed to education, church, government, family and social service organizations.

Unhealthy Sixes find danger around every corner. Their anxiety borders on paranoia, as they fear that the world is unfair and that most people are not who they say they are and cannot be trusted. Unable to trust themselves either, they look to authority figures and experts to make decisions on their behalf. These Sixes find fault in others and tend to fall into patterns associated with the mental mechanism of projection.

Sixes see a dangerous world in which disaster can strike at any moment. Appearances are deceiving. People have hidden agendas. They keep their eyes peeled for possible threats and mentally rehearse what they will do when the worst happens. For Sixes, imagining and planning for potential catastrophes is a way of maintaining a sense of safety, control and certainty in an unpredictable world.

Called Loyalists, Sixes are the most faithful and dependable people on the Enneagram. (Sixes are also sometimes called the Devil's Advocate, the Questioner, the Skeptic, the Trooper or the Guardian.) They keep a watchful eye over us. They safeguard our values. They're the glue that holds the world together. Many Enneagram teachers believe these reliable, warm, funny and self-sacrificing people make up more than half the world's population.

SIX'S DEADLY SIN

SIXES' DEADLY SIN IS FEAR, and they suffer a deep-seated need to feel secure. Though we say fear is the sin toward which the Six gravitates, what Sixes actually experience is anxiety.

Fear is what arises when you're in the presence of a clear and immediate source of danger— Anxiety, by contrast, is a vague, free-floating sense of apprehension that arises in response to an unknown or potential threat that may never materialize.

Fear says, "Something wrong is actually happening!" while anxiety is more anticipatory: "What if this happened or that happened? What if . . . What if . . . What if . . . ?" That's the campaign slogan.

ALL ABOUT SIXES

Sixes have a strong need for security and consistency. They appreciate order, plans and rules. They like the comfort and predictability that clear laws and guidelines offer us.

Sixes are the most loyal number on the Enneagram. They are devoted group members who, once they commit to a community, put down stakes and won't abandon it over small matters of disagreement. Though they are typically wary and skeptical of people at first, once you've won Sixes' trust they're with you for life. Sixes want to feel connected to the people they love.

They believe in the importance of family, home, raising responsible children, and marriage, and they make choices based on their values, in part because they have very high security needs.

Sixes are full of doubts and questions. Suffering from analysis paralysis, they turn to friends, coworkers, family members and experts for advice because they don't trust their own thinking. They make up their mind then change it again. They feel pulled one way, then pushed in another. They waffle and

equivocate, driving themselves and others crazy as they swing back and forth between yay, nay and maybe.

Part of the problem is Sixes see both sides to everything. If you're a Six reading this book right now you might be thinking, Yes, I see your point but on the other hand . . . Sixes are surprised when they discover that other people aren't as fearful as they are, but they identify right away with their ongoing battle with self-doubt and second-guessing themselves. When faced with decisions, Sixes freeze like deer transfixed by car headlights, paralyzed about which direction they should go.

"I'm not afraid, but I'm very nervous."

John Irving

There are two kinds of Sixes, each of whom manages fear, their need for security and their relationship to authority differently.

One Six is very loyal and gives their full attention to authority because they think that's where security lies. Always loyal to authority, these Sixes seek to please and obey the rules. They are deferential to their bosses, trying their best to please because they view the authority as the source of their security. We call these folks phobic Sixes.

There's another kind of Six who also focuses on authority, only they're not nearly as agreeable or compliant. These folks are wary of authority figures. They keep a weather eye on those in charge in case they try to pull the wool over someone's eyes or pull a fast one. Called counterphobic Sixes, these folks will strike if they smell a rat. They seek security not by avoiding or placating a perceived threat but by deliberately provoking and attacking it. Their security comes from conquering the source of their fear, not capitulating to it.

In reality, most Sixes are a mixture of phobic and counterphobic, which reflects their vacillating, doubting temperament. The phobic Sixes fall back and flee while the counterphobic Sixes try to conquer or defeat whatever their

fears are. Most Sixes bounce back and forth between these two poles. Whether Sixes are phobic or counter-phobic, the bottom line is fear, and the focus for all Sixes is authority.

SIXES AS CHILDREN

Kids who are Sixes learn to worry early...when these kids figure out the world isn't safe and the adults in charge can't always be trusted, they respond by obeying or rebelling. Wherever they go they know who is in charge, and keep their eyes dialed in on them.

These kids respond to life in a measured way. They'll watch one or two kids jump off a twenty-foot ledge into a lake before possibly doing it themselves. They're hesitant because kids who can't trust their environment find it hard to trust themselves. Kids who lack self-confidence typically have a difficult time receiving encouragement, so they miss out on the very messages that would make them more secure and help them to trust themselves at a deeper level.

They are good followers and listeners. Because they're loyal they hold groups of friends together. They like to be part of a group, so team sports and school activities are a win for them. They find a sense of comfort in routines that are predictable, and they grow up to be the folks who hold together all of the communities we all count on to make sense of our lives.

Many (not all) Six kids find themselves in unstable situations growing up. Because they are unable to trust their environment, they doubt themselves and look to other people for courage and advice. If they grow up with an alcoholic, for example, they learn never to let their guard down and to always assume the worst will happen so as not to be caught unawares.

Sixes make terrific friends or partners when they're spiritually healthy and growing in self-knowledge. Quick-witted and charming, Loyalists can leverage their anxiety and be very funny. Sixes like Larry David can turn their exaggerated anxieties, insecurities and catastrophizing into fodder for self-deprecating stories that will keep their friends laughing for days. Listen to early recordings of Woody Allen stand-up routines if you want to hear a phobic Six who made his fortune airing his self-doubts, or a counterphobic Six George Carlin aggressively questioning everything and everyone.

SIXES IN RELATIONSHIP

Sixes' way of seeing the world through fear-tinted lenses can wreak havoc on their relationships. They're not easy to be with, particularly in the beginning of the relationship. People who need security and certainty will keep their guard up. They will try to guess what you're thinking.

Afraid of being emotionally blindsided and having been hurt in the past, they will watch for hints of imminent betrayal or abandonment. A Six will pepper you with you questions like, "Are we still good?" " They will alternate between pushing you away and clinging to you. And because they're doubtful, Sixes will assume you too are doubtful, which leads them to question you.

It helps Sixes in the throes of doubt to remind them of your commitment to them. Never scold, dismiss or make fun of Sixes' doubts about their relationship with you unless you want to amp up their anxiety that it's not going to work out. Calm, reasoned reassurance is the key.

Even when Sixes begin to trust their relationship with you, there's still the rest of the dangerous, fickle world for them to contend with. At times it's hard to be with people who are always imagining and preparing for disasters. If only they could stop awfulizing and relax, right?

When Sixes begin to get stuck in worst-case-scenario thinking, ask them to walk you step by step through the chain of negative events they see happening in it. At each step, stop and say, "You're right, that sounds bad.

Then what would happen or who would be there to help you?" After a while, one of two things will occur. The plot of their nightmare scenario will either spiral into something so irrational as to be absurd and they'll start laughing, or they'll begin to see (often with your guidance) that as horrible as the feared future event would be, they would have the inner and outer resources to cope and thrive if it came to pass.

Remember: worst-case-scenario thinking needs to be managed, not discounted. If you call them pessimists, they'll only argue back that they're realists.

Sixes are always going back and forth about things, and that can be exasperating in relationships. They decide, then second guess; they decide, then second guess...What's the source of all this waffling? They never learned to connect with and trust their inner guidance system. They often doubt their ability to make good decisions because, as a rule, they forget past successes.

The wonderful news about Sixes in relationships is they're troopers. With time and reassurance, they move beyond chronically doubting and questioning the relationship they have with their partner. When this happens, they can become some of the most fun, steady and undemanding companions in the world.

"Anxiety is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn't get you very far." Jodi Picoult

SIXES AT WORK

Years ago I worked with a Six named Dan... Dan kept his eye on me, and when he saw that I was about to make what he thought was a possibly calamitous decision he'd get anxious and pull me aside, saying, "Have you thought through what might happen if you take us in this direction?" More often than not, Dan annoyed me. His need to express his doubts and ask questions about my brilliant ideas not only put the brakes on our moving forward but felt to

me like he was raining on my parade. However, in some instances, if it hadn't been for his doubtfulness and questions I would have driven my parade and our fledgling church straight off an overpass.

Sixes are sharp, analytically minded troubleshooters. They love being on the underdog team trying to resurrect a company or failing program, particularly when others say it can't be done.

There are lots of things we can learn from Sixes. Most of us think and move too quickly. We make decisions on the fly precipitously, if not recklessly. But there's a clarity and wisdom that comes when we're willing to wait and think through the implications of our choices. Because they're the ultimate devil's advocate, Sixes bring that to the table wherever they work. Every business needs a loyal skeptic who isn't afraid to ask hard questions or point out the flaws in a plan.

Six employees will ask you a lot of questions, not because they're opposing you necessarily but because they're trying to figure out what they're supposed to do and to make sure someone has looked at the big picture, should something go wrong.

Sixes have mixed feelings about success as well. On the eve of victory they might procrastinate because they know success will only attract attention. Sixes don't like the exposure that comes when they're in a spotlight because it leaves them vulnerable to attack. Also, Sixes don't thrive in highly competitive environments where they're pitted against their colleagues. Winning at the expense of a coworker doesn't sit well with the person who goes by the name Loyalist.

Because Sixes are conscientious, they tend to take on too much work, which leaves them feeling stressed out, resentful and pessimistic. When it all becomes too overwhelming, they can overreact, which can ripple out and freak out other people. When this happens, get them to break tasks down into manageable steps, and encourage them to delegate more.

WINGS

Sixes with a Five wing (6w5).

These Sixes are more introverted, intellectual, cautious, self-controlled and apt to seek security through allegiance to an authority figure. They gravitate toward a defined belief system and a group that shares their values.

Sometimes misread as distant or aloof, 6w5s simply like to protect their privacy, engage in solitary activities and pursue hobbies.

The 6w5 has a greater need for time alone, which can help them gain a broader perspective on things that contribute to their anxiety. The counter is also true, since with a Five wing the Six may ruminate too much, exacerbating unproductive thinking. Because they overanalyze things for too long without taking action, these Sixes can suffer from analysis paralysis.

Sixes with a Seven wing (6w7).

Sixes with a Seven wing are a delightful surprise. Reflecting the playfulness of Seven (the Enthusiast), they are entertaining, animated and adventuresome. They are willing to risk, albeit only a little, so the boundaries of the Six are stretched to accommodate more options.

But the 6w7 doesn't completely separate from their anxiety, so there is always a backup plan in case an adventure becomes a misadventure. Sixes with Seven wings are far more extroverted and willing to sacrifice themselves for loved ones than Sixes with five wings.

STRESS AND SECURITY STRESS.

In stress Sixes move toward the negative side of Three, where they can become workaholics who pursue material success or hoard resources to make themselves feel more secure. In this space Sixes are more inclined to misrepresent themselves and to project an image of competency to fend off their own anxiety and give others the impression they have it all together.

They won't try anything they don't think they can do successfully—which, since they already lack confidence, means they are reluctant to take necessary risks. Security.

When Sixes feel secure they move toward the positive side of Nine, where they are less prone to getting worked up about potential threats in their environment. Under the influence of the Nine's equanimity, Sixes stop planning for disasters and feel less anxious about life in general. In this space they are more lighthearted, flexible, empathic and energetic. They are accepting of others, can see life from more than one angle, and become more likely to trust their gut rather than rely on outside authority figures, groups or belief systems to interpret life for them. More trusting and less jaded, Sixes connected to the positive side of Nine can believe everything is going to be all right.

“Faith is a place of mystery, where we find the courage to believe in what we cannot see and the strength to let go of our fear of uncertainty.”

Brené Brown

Spiritual Transformation On the path toward spiritual growth, Sixes need to hold two conflicting things in tension: that they live in a culture that's never going to let them feel safe, and that they are safe.

Sixes are prone to internalize our world's messages of fear and imminent disaster, so it's vital for them to recognize this pattern and think twice before permitting their anxieties to take over their lives.

Sixes need to be encouraged to doubt themselves less and trust themselves more. They are stronger and more resourceful than they know. They've just been going about transformation in the wrong way. They think the antidote to fear is courage, but they can never seem to muster enough to do the job, so surely that's not the answer. What they need to develop is faith, which is different from courage in that it doesn't require certainty.

Faith asks Sixes to believe and trust in something or someone bigger than they are, who will always have their back, who will never leave them but instead will be there to support them in times of crisis. Sixes need to remember the spiritual truth that they are ultimately safe.

This doesn't mean they're magically protected from disaster or calamity, just that from an eternal perspective this Story ends well. For this message to sink deep down into their bones, they will have to decide that God is either in control or he isn't, that even if everything doesn't work out as planned things will be all right.

TEN PATHS TO TRANSFORMATION FOR SIXES

1. A regular centering prayer or meditation practice is vital for every number, but particularly for Sixes. Your mind never stops working. It's filled with voices expressing vacillating opinions, doubts about other people's trustworthiness, imagined worst-case scenarios and questions about your own ability to make good decisions.
2. Be alert for unhealthy tendencies in your relationship with authority. Are you blindly following or reflexively rebelling? You'll want to find a more nuanced and conscious middle way.
3. To develop self-confidence and trust in your inner guidance system, keep a record in your journal of those times when you made and enjoyed the fruit of good decisions or survived the fallout of bad ones. Either way, you're still here!
4. Practice accepting compliments without deflecting them or being suspicious of the motivations behind the praise.
5. When playing the role of devil's advocate and pointing out the potential flaws in other people's ideas and plans, be sure to acknowledge the

positive dimensions of it as well. You don't want to develop a reputation for being a wet blanket.

6. Limit your exposure to the twenty-four-hour news cycle or to books and films that unnecessarily reinforce your anxious or pessimistic view of life. (Frankly, let's all do this.)
7. Be alert in the early days of a relationship to see whether doubtful thoughts and feelings arise about your partner's commitment to you. What's causing you to alternately question or cling to them?
8. Learn to recognize the difference between legitimate fear and free-floating anxiety, and ascribe different values to them.
9. Memorize and repeat Julian of Norwich's beautiful prayer, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."
10. The contrary virtue to the deadly sin of fear isn't courage but faith, which is a gift. Pray for it.