

Personality Type Nine

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THE PEACEMAKER

You cannot find peace by avoiding life. ~ Virginia Woolf

Pleasant, laid back and accommodating, they are motivated by a need to keep the peace, merge with others and avoid conflict.

THE ANGER OR GUT TRIAD (8,9,1) These numbers are driven by anger. They take in and respond to life instinctually or “at the gut level.” They tend to express themselves honestly and directly. Eights externalize anger, **Nines forget it**, and Ones internalize it.

DEADLY SIN – NINES SLOTH – For Nines, sloth refers not to physical but spiritual laziness. Nines fall asleep to their own priorities, personal development and responsibility for becoming their own person.

Healthy Nines are natural mediators. They see and value the perspective of other people and can harmonize what seem to be irreconcilable points of view. They are unselfish, flexible and inclusive. These Nines are seldom attached to their own way of seeing and doing things. They’ve learned to make decisions based on the right priorities. They are inspiring, self-actualized people.

Average Nines, while they come off as sweet and easygoing, are stubborn and out of touch with their anger. These Nines overlook themselves. Though they generally feel unimportant, they occasionally wake up and realize they have to work on investing in themselves. They are willing to stand up for justice on behalf of others but would not likely risk doing as much to stand up for

themselves. They don't ask for much though they appreciate what others do for them.

Unhealthy Nines have trouble making decisions and become overly dependent. To dull feelings of sadness and anger they engage in numbing behaviors. Struggling to maintain the illusion that all is well, they can vacillate between acquiescence and open hostility.

John Waters and Ronna Phifer-Ritchie say Nines are the “sweethearts of the Enneagram.” When Nines are spiritually mature they are chill, easygoing people who know how to relax and go with the flow of life. Adaptable and even-tempered, they don't sweat the small stuff.

The least controlling number on the Enneagram, Nines allow life to unfold naturally, and they offer others the freedom and space to grow in their own time and way. They are quick to love, slow to judge and rarely ask to be recognized for the effort they put into caring for other people. They're free and easy, down-to-earth, practical people who are eminently likeable.

Nines are also no strangers to the principle of inertia. They know from experience that a body at rest stays at rest. When overwhelmed with too many things to do, too many decisions to make or the upsetting prospect of change, Nines can slow to a crawl. If they come to a full stop they know it might take a lot of energy to get themselves going again.

THE NINE'S DEADLY SIN

The deadly sin of the Nine is **sloth**, a word we usually associate with physical laziness. The **sloth** of Nines, however, is spiritual in nature. Average Nines are disconnected from the passion and motivational drive necessary to rise up and live their “one wild and precious life.” Immature Nines don't fully connect to the fire in the belly they need to chase after their God—given life and as a result, fail to become their own person.

For Nines, sloth has to do with their desire to not be overly bothered by life. They literally don't want life to get to them. They cling to and protect their "Hakuna Matata" inner harmony. They ask little of life and hope life returns the favor.

Nines are out of touch with their gut and underexpress their anger. They are out of touch with the good side of anger, the part that inspires, drives change, moves things along and gives them courage to stand up for themselves.

This failure to risk fully engaging with life stems in part from Nine's need to avoid conflict *at all costs*.

Nines so value feeling comfortable and tranquil, maintaining the status quo, and preserving connections with others that they set aside their own viewpoints and aspirations to merge with those of others. This doesn't seem like a big deal for Peacemakers, who often grew up feeling like neither their presence nor priorities matter much to others.

A Nine thinks:

"why rock the boat when nothing I say or do ever seems to make much of a difference in the world anyway? Wouldn't it be easier and more comfortable not to assert my priorities and take the path of least resistance?"

To cope with having countless things to do and not knowing where to start, to avoid the backlog of unanswered questions and postpone decisions crying out for their attention, to keep their anger out of view, and to buoy a low self-esteem, Nines lean on unhealthy coping strategies. They will often turn to food, sex, drinking, exercise, shopping, and the reassuring comfort of habits and routines, performing mindless busywork, or vegging out on the couch and watching TV to numb out and ignore their feelings, wants and desires.

But Nines should take heart: they are more courageous and resourceful than they know. Remember, on the Enneagram any number's blight is merely a distortion of that number's blessing.

ALL ABOUT NINES OR PEACEMAKERS

Nines share several common traits that characterize them as a group, like self-forgetting, difficulty making decisions and a tendency to be easily distracted.

SELF-FORGETTING AND MERGING.

Nines forget their opinions, preferences, and priorities. Instead they merge with the feelings, viewpoints, and pursuits of others and in so doing they erase themselves. They neglect their soul's summons to identify, name and assert what they want in life and to go hard after it. They can merge so deeply with the life program and identity of another that they eventually mistake the other's feelings, opinions, successes and aspirations for their own.

Perched at the summit of the Enneagram, Nines enjoy an unobstructed view of the world. From this vantage point they not only have the benefit of seeing the world the way every other number sees it, but they also naturally incorporate into themselves a measure of the core characteristic strengths associated with every type. Riso and Hudson observe:

"Nines can embody the idealism of Ones, the kindness of Twos, the attractiveness of Threes, the creativity of Fours, the intellectual horsepower of Fives, the loyalty of Sixes, the optimism and adventurousness of Sevens, and the strength of Eights. ...The only type the Nine is not like is the Nine itself."

Average Nines have less stamina and energy than any other number on the Enneagram. There are often a lot of unfinished projects in a Nine's wake.

To avoid conflict and inner turmoil, Nines fall asleep to their anger. This doesn't mean it disappears, only that they have to work hard to contain it. They have to constantly maintain two boundaries – first to defend their inner peaceful center from being negatively affected by their outer world and

second to defend their serene interior against being unsettled by upsetting thoughts and feelings that arise within them. It takes effort to ignore your anger and hold up two boundaries. It is no wonder they feel inexplicably tired so much of the time.

When Nines feel overwhelmed – like when conflict threatens to arise or people are telling them what to do – or sometimes for no reason at all, they tune out and withdraw into a place in their minds that enneagram teachers call Nine’s “inner sanctum.” They uncouple from their anger and life energy and ignore the call to action on something.

While in their inner sanctum they replay past events or conversations and what they wish they’d said or done differently. If anxiety pushes them to retreat, they may be thinking *“Why am I upset right now? Is this my fault or someone else’s?”* Or they simply retreat to reconnect or recover their comforting sense of inner peace. They can become increasingly absent-minded and less productive if they feel the need to retreat too deeply.

Nines often become jacks-of- all-trades but masters of none. They are generalist who, because they know a little about a lot can be very enjoyable conversationalists. When they are stressed they can tend to meander and lose track of where they are going in a conversation.

AMBIVALENCE AND DECISION MAKING

Nines frequently feel torn between wanting to please others and wanting to defy them. When faced with having to make a decision this or a similar conversation goes on in their heads:

“Do I think this is a good idea or not? Do I want to do this or don’t I? Do I say yes to this person’s request or do I say no and risk disconnection?”

Because there are so many angles from which to examine an issue, so many factors to take into consideration, and so many pros and cons, Nines often never get to making a decision. They sit on the fence and agonize while waiting for someone else to decide or for the situation to naturally work itself out on its own.

Though you may not pick up on it at first, the more you pressure a Nine to make a decision or do something the more they quietly dig their heels in and resist.

People who want to help a Nine need to realize how important it is not to rob them of whatever choice they do make.

Nines can see all points of view. And they seem them as equally valid. Their ability to see two sides to everything makes them excellent mediators. Nines are so good at seeing and identifying with every point of view that people often walk away feeling the Nine not only understood them but also agreed with them, even though the Nine never actually came out and said so.

A task for growing Nines is to discern and declare which of two viewpoints is most acceptable from *their* point of view. It is important for them to learn how to identify, give voice to and stick to their own point of view regardless of how much pressure they feel to change it in the moment to appease others.

A related challenge is the conundrum of prioritizing some tasks over others. Since all undertakings seem equally important to Nines, it's hard for them to decide what to tackle first. Lists can be very important to Nines to help them stay on track.. although they may resist a list with tasks prioritized for the week it can help them avoid drifting into "doing the next thing that presents itself," and not getting done what they really want to accomplish.

PRIORITIZING AND DISTRACTIONS

When faced with having to wake up and address their own priorities, Nines will sometimes focus on inessential tasks and leave the more essential ones until last. This is a defensive maneuver on the part of the Nine to turn their attention away from identifying their own life priorities, having to feel their anger and acting on their own behalf.

Nines are easily pulled away by distractions. Everyone else's priorities are more important than theirs, such distractions are a great way to self-forgo and avoid the pain of not knowing what you want in life.

NINES AS CHILDREN

Many Nines grew up in homes where they either were, or perceived themselves to be, overlooked and where their preferences, opinions or feelings were of less importance than those of others. The wounding message Nines heard is "Your wants, opinions, desires and presence don't matter much." Nines as kids are very easy to be with. They're not always the first ones to jump into activities or shoot their hand up to answer a question in class, but they bring harmony and cheer wherever they go. As kids Nines feel very uncomfortable when there's conflict between parents and other family members, so they'll try to play the role of mediator while looking for a place to stand where they won't be forced to choose a side.

NINES IN RELATIONSHIP

Mature Nines make wonderful partners, parents and friends. Loyal and kind, they will go above and beyond the call of duty to support you. They're fun, flexible and don't complain much. They love life's simple pleasures.

Nines always have their special place in the home where they can retreat to be quiet and engage in an activity that enhances their experience of peacefulness.

A healthy Nine is someone who has woken up and found their voice or come into their own. They know they're important enough to invest in and that they matter in the lives of their family, friends and coworkers. A healthy Nine is spiritually inspiring. They're receptive to the world, yet not so open or lacking in boundaries that they lose their sense of self-definition. Nines who are asleep get in trouble in relationships when conflict arises (and when doesn't it?) and they refuse to acknowledge and resolve it. Denial is a big defense mechanism for them.

Because they want to avoid conflict and painful conversations, others have to hold Nines' feet to the fire to address serious problems in relationships. Their desire to skirt conflict and fuse with another person is so strong that Nines will cling to relationships long past their expiration dates.

WINGS

Nines with an Eight wing (9w8). This is one of the most complex combinations on the Enneagram, given the Eight's need to go against power and the Nine's need to avoid conflict. Eights are energized by anger, while Nines avoid it at all costs. Talk about a walking contradiction! These two numbers bring a new twist to the "opposites attract" cliché, but it is also a powerful place within the system. More energized, confident, stubborn, outgoing and inner-directed than the 9w1s, 9w8s have more access to anger and express it more openly if they or others are threatened.

Though they will sometimes change their minds, 9w8s find it much easier to be clear and direct about things that are important to them. Although the Eight wing doesn't make it more likely that they will act on their own behalf, they are energetic in acting on behalf of the underdog and the common good. These Nines tend to be more confrontational than other Nines, but they are also quick to be conciliatory.

Nines with a One wing (9w1). Nines with a One wing (the Perfectionist) have a strong sense of the difference between right and wrong. One energy helps these Nines stay a little more focused, so they are able to accomplish more, which enhances their confidence. The 9w1s are more critical, orderly, introverted and passive-aggressive than other Nines. Because of their concern about matters of right and wrong they're apt to be involved in peacemaking efforts or other social justice causes. These Nines are principled and modest as leaders, and people want to follow them because of their integrity and steadfastness.

STRESS AND SECURITY

Stress. In stress Nines start to act like unhealthy Sixes (the Loyalists). They become overcommitted, worried, rigid, wary of others and anxious, even though they don't know why. These Nines become more self-doubting, which makes decision making even more difficult than usual. Interestingly, they also become reactive—a big departure for a number that is rarely, if ever, quick to react.

Security. When Nines are feeling comfortable and safe in the world they move to the positive side of Three (the Performer), where they are more goal-oriented, decisive, self-confident and in touch with their life's agenda. Flourishing Nines struggle less with inertia, take command of their lives and believe their presence in the world matters. More importantly, Nines connected to the positive side of Three can experience and enjoy genuine peace and harmony.

SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

The Nine's weakness for merging is the dark side of an enviable spiritual gift. But in my mind the spiritual advantages of being a Nine more than make up for the work they have to do in their lives. If the goal of the spiritual life is the realization of union with God, then healthy Nines' ability to merge gives them a spiritual leg up on the rest of us. When it comes to attaining a unitive knowledge of God and becoming "one with Christ," healthy Nines almost always cross the finish line first. They're natural contemplatives.

Nines are open and receptive in every way. Even as kids, they seem to possess an innate awareness of the sacramental dimension of the world. They have a profound awareness of the interconnectedness of all things in creation. Lovers of the outdoors, they pick up on the presence of God in the natural world and how everything expresses God's glory. Because they value being over doing, Nines know how to rest in God's love and share themselves more generously than the rest of us.

And because Nines are able to see both sides to everything, they're comfortable with paradox and mystery, which comes in handy when it comes to dealing with a religion that includes a virgin birth and a God who is both Three and One at the same time. If you're a Nine, be encouraged: when healthy, your capacity for merging can place you in the same league as other great Nine spiritual leaders like Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama.

If nothing else, Nines should hear these words: Wake up and say yes to the adventure of your own life!

Waking up will involve reclaiming personal authority and responsibility for their life. It will mean finding and resurrecting their own thoughts, passions, opinions, dreams, ambitions and desires. This will be scary. They'll have to stop hiding and drafting behind other people. If Nines love themselves as much as they love other people, they will allow themselves to go on this adventure of becoming their own person.

Nines don't like to admit it, but they're angry. I get it. I'd be angry too if I repeatedly felt overlooked. They're angry for the sacrifices they've made to keep the peace and hold relationships together, but when they get the urge to stand up for themselves or act on their own behalf, they don't do it. Nines are afraid if they let their stored anger out it's going to hurt or kill someone, but that's not true. It might lead to conflict, which you can survive, but not homicide. Nines need to know that when they discover right action and move toward it, a feeling of self-worth will emerge in them.

The healing message Nines need to hear is "We see you and your life matters." God didn't invite you to this party to live someone else's life. We need you here!

TEN PATHS TO TRANSFORMATION FOR NINES

1. Journal on the question "What is my calling or life's program? Am I pursuing it or postponing it to keep the peace?"

2. Ask someone to help you find a task-management or to-do system to help you stay on task. There are lots of great apps out there just for this purpose.
3. Practice saying no when someone asks you to do something you don't want to.
4. Be aware of the numbing strategies you use to avoid having to deal with life, whether that's a glass of wine or shopping or Girl Scout cookies.
5. Don't be afraid to have opinions and express them. You can start with small things and build up to important ones.
6. Resist the urge to fall back on passive-aggressive behaviors like procrastination and avoidance. If you feel angry, be honest and open.
7. Understand how important and unique your voice is. People deserve to hear what you think, not have their own views mirrored back to them.
8. Remember that what feels like intense, terrible conflict to you might just be a typical disagreement for someone else. Take a breath and engage.
9. Realize that your tendency to merge with others can be a beautiful gift if directed toward God. Other types envy this spiritual advantage you have. But don't fuse with another person and miss out on the chance to become your own person.
10. When you feel paralyzed in the face of a decision, consult someone who won't tell you what to do but rather will help you tease out what you want to do—then do it!