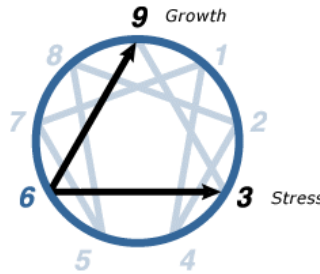


Personality Type SIX: The Loyalist

*The Committed, Security-Oriented Type:
Engaging, Responsible, Anxious, and Suspicious*



Generally, Sixes are reliable, hard-working, organizing, vigilant, dutiful, evaluating, persevering, cautious, anxious, believing *and* doubting, conservative *and* liberal.

Sixes get into conflicts by being pessimistic, defensive, evasive, negative, worrying, doubtful, negativistic, reactive, suspicious, and blaming.

At their best, Sixes are courageous, cooperative, disciplined, grounded, secure, faithful, self-expressive, funny, and affectionate.

Recognizing Sixes

Type Six exemplifies the desire to create a stable, safe environment, to cooperate and create with others, and to be adequately prepared for the various difficulties that life presents. Sixes are meticulous, disciplined, and persevering. They are good with details, and they have a talent for seeing potential problems and dealing with them before problems get out of hand. They organize resources, prioritize tasks, and see projects through. Sixes are not necessarily "group people," but they like the feeling of "belonging" somewhere—of being part of something greater than themselves. They enjoy being of service and really want to contribute to the world. They bring reliability, responsibility, hard work, and a sense of honor to all their affairs. They approach others as if to say, "I am here for you. You can count on me."

Sixes do their best to be solid and responsible, but they are often troubled by an undercurrent of doubt and anxiety. In fact, Sixes often seem a bit jittery and uneasy in general. They live in a state of worry—and *then find something to worry about*. They often "scan" their surroundings for problems, expecting that something negative could happen at any time. Consequently, they are usually careful about the management of their affairs, and generally cautious in their dealings with others. At the same time, they are always on the lookout for someone they *can* trust, someone they can rely on. Because it takes them a while to feel confident that someone is truly on their side, Sixes will sometimes "test" people by provoking them in some way to see how they will react. Once they have decided that someone has passed the test, there is almost no limit to their loyalty or to the sacrifices that Sixes will make for the sake of the trusted person.

Sixes know that once they make a commitment, they do so 110 percent. They find it difficult to leave a relationship once they have begun to trust someone and to rely on them. Thus, they want to be sure that they are putting their energies into someone who will be there for them consistently. Once they have

established a solid relationship, they show their trust and affection by supporting the other person in every way they can, especially by being reliable and trustworthy themselves.

One sign that Sixes have issues with trust is that they approach others with a sincere but *cautious* friendliness. When Sixes are relaxed, they have a natural talent for engaging people and for finding common interests. They often get others to like them by joking around and bantering, and through other forms of physical and social bonding. They want to find things about people that are familiar and that they can relate to—looking for common interests and experiences that would be the basis of trust. They tend to get nervous in situations in which they do not know where others stand—where there are too many unknowns, too many unfamiliar elements.

Fundamentally, Sixes are looking for someone to trust because they do not really trust themselves. They do not have much faith in themselves and their own abilities, so they look outside themselves to a person, a job, an authority figure, or a belief system of some sort for guidance and security. This doesn't solve their insecurity in the long run, however, because the more Sixes rely on others for their confidence, the more self-doubting and insecure they become. They will keep bouncing back and forth between depending on others and trying to prove that they are tough and independent themselves.

Some Sixes tend to collapse into their anxiety more often, feeling fearful, anxious, dependent, and openly seeking support from others. These are called "phobic Sixes." Other Sixes are more apt to impulsively leap into activities connected with their fears—such as a person with a fear of heights who decides to take up rock climbing, or a person who fears authority figures becoming a spokesperson for an antiestablishment group. These are called "counterphobic Sixes." In truth, all Sixes have both phobic and counterphobic aspects, and they express their different responses in different areas of their lives. A Six might be phobic around her boss, for instance, but behave counterphobically with her spouse.

In brief, Sixes want to have security, to feel supported by others, to have certitude and reassurance, to test the attitudes of others toward them, to fight against anxiety and insecurity, and to have everything be predictable as a way of defending the self from threats from the environment. **Sixes do not want** to feel abandoned, to have uncertainty, to have contradictory expectations placed on them, to feel pressured, to have to accept new ideas rapidly, to work with people who they feel are not carrying their weight, or to have their security systems and beliefs questioned, especially by anyone they see as an outsider.

Their Hidden Side

Sixes seem like highly organized and responsible people and can often resemble Ones. But the hidden problem is that Sixes are trying to calm their inner anxieties by trying to make their external world trouble-free and predictable. Of course, this is ultimately an impossible task, but Sixes still usually persevere in the effort to make their world safe from danger and mishaps.

The real source of anxiety in Sixes is internal and is perpetuated by their constantly turning thoughts. In short, Sixes cannot stop second-guessing themselves, doubting what they know and consulting what amounts to an "inner committee" of contrary voices. ("Did I get the electric bill out this morning? Yes. I think so. Good. But what did I forget? Oh yes! I was supposed to call Maggie about lunch tomorrow. She is going to be so angry with me. Should I call her now or is it too late?") With their minds revved up in a hypervigilant state, it is almost impossible for Sixes to relax so that they can perceive clearly how to attend to the actual challenges they need to address at any given time. What Sixes really need is more inner quiet. They need to cultivate a sense of peace and inner quiet that would allow them to see and deal with reality more clearly.

Relationship Issues

Sixes can be confusing to others (and themselves) in relationships because they seem so changeable and unpredictable. In one moment, they feel nervous and want to be reassured that their partner is really on board with them. They want to know that the other person is close and available. In the next moment, they can easily feel smothered or overwhelmed by their partner and want to create some distance in the relationship. Moments later, they are looking for reassurance that they have not gone too far in being independent. In short, Sixes are seeking what psychologists call "optimal distance." They want to keep their loved ones close enough so that they will not feel abandoned but not so close that they feel engulfed by the other person. Relationship issues for Sixes include the following:

- Testing the other person to see if he or she is going to stay.
- Getting overcommitted, causing Sixes to feel pressured and taken advantage of.
- Either "clamming up" and not expressing their feelings or venting a stream of anxieties.
- Alternating between feeling dependent and needy at one extreme and feeling defiant and rebellious at the other—running "hot or cold."
- Easily becoming suspicious, reflexively doubting the goodwill of others toward them.
- Blaming people for the Six's own anxieties and projecting negative motivations onto others.

Type Compatibility

To learn more about compatibility issues and relationships with other types, see the [Enneagram Type Combinations](#).

The Passion: Angst (Traditionally "Fear")

The passion of the Six is often described as fear, but fear is an organic response to a real danger in our environment. All types experience fear. Angst, on the other hand, is the emotional experience of existential fear or unspecified anxiety that comes from absence of a sense of support and guidance. It is a sense of dread and despair that results in low- or high-level chronic anxiety and a capacity to continually conjure worst-case scenarios in the imagination. Thus, Sixes are habitually on the lookout for potential disasters with the result that their minds are constantly agitated. Ultimately, this can leave them less prepared to deal with real problems because they are making themselves fearful *imagining* what could go wrong. The more Angst, the more anxious Sixes become, the more their minds become worked up, and the less they are able to access the quiet, inner knowing that would give them clarity about what to do.

The passion of type Six can also be experienced as *doubt*. Traditionally this was sometimes called Faithlessness. Sixes seldom trust their own minds, their own capacity to know, when they are in the grip of doubt. They second-guess themselves, rechecking math they are sure they did correctly, going back to the house to make sure that they locked the door that they actually remember locking, and so forth. As we have seen, Sixes are anxious to have reliable sources of support and guidance in their lives, be they books, friends, advisors, philosophies, jobs, or anything else. But once doubt sets in, Sixes fear that these very support systems will not be there for them. They question even their most ardent supporters as their doubt gives way to growing suspicion or even paranoia.

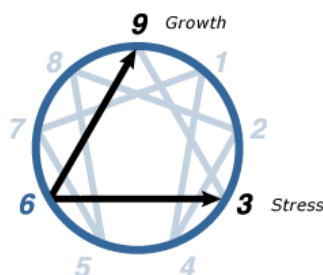
At Their Best

Healthy Sixes are able to elicit strong emotional responses from others: they are engaging, friendly, and playful—truly likable, dependable people. They bring a sense of trust and camaraderie to their relationships and treat everyone—including themselves—as an equal. They are strongly committed and loyal to the people in their lives, and they work hard to build stability, security, and prosperity in their homes, jobs, and

communities. Healthy Sixes are the foundation of any society. They believe in cooperation and shared goals, helping to organize people and tackle problems. They bring a democratic approach to their dealings with others and will fight for the powerless and disenfranchised as they would for themselves.

High-functioning Sixes become self-confident and self-affirming. They trust themselves and have learned self-reliance and independence because they know that they are deeply grounded in the limitless support of Being. Faith in this inner support and sense of guidance leads to a positive, life-affirming attitude, often manifesting itself as outstanding courage and leadership. High-functioning Sixes combine a commitment being guided by their own inner knowing with a commitment to allowing themselves to be led wherever the truth takes them. As a result, they can become powerful influences for the greater good.

Personality Dynamics & Variations



Learn more about the [Directions of Integration \(Security\) and Disintegration \(Stress\)](#).

Under Stress (Six Goes to Average Three)

Sixes are often visibly nervous, reacting with self-doubt to situations and getting caught in over-thinking a problem. When stress escalates beyond the normal level, however, they jump into action—and stay in action, trying to deal with their anxieties by working harder. If, for example, they feel pressured at work, Sixes may spend their weekend frantically doing yard chores or obsessively reorganizing the closets as a way of discharging or avoiding feelings of inadequacy. They also fear letting others know how overwhelmed they are, so they may take on a false persona of competency and efficiency, like average Threes. ("Don't worry about anything. I've got this handled.") They focus increasingly on tasks and on being efficient while cutting off from their feelings so that they can stay functional, but this can lead to major emotional problems for them and for their relationships.

Security (Six Goes to Average Nine)

In situations where Sixes feel secure, they begin to deal with stress by simply shutting down and becoming indifferent to their surroundings, like average Nines. They do not want to be disturbed or bothered by loved ones—they feel that they have been working hard and they experience virtually any kind of interaction as another source of pressure. They will be pleasant one moment, but can suddenly become stubbornly resistant and shut down in the next if they feel that others are demanding something of them. At such times, Sixes become unavailable and passive-aggressive, not wanting to respond to others or to move out of comforting but numbing routines.

Integration (Six Goes to Healthy Nine)

As Sixes learn to trust themselves more, they also become more open to life and to other people. They gradually learn to relax their hypervigilance and simply be with themselves or with whatever life is presenting in the moment. They gain a deeper acceptance of life's ups and downs such that they are not riddled with dread and anxiety. They are inclusive and supportive of others—and much more at peace.

Integrating Sixes are able to let their minds rest in their natural, pristine state of clarity and inner quiet. They are able to stop second-guessing everything and let their own inner wisdom arise. The result is that they are more serene, grounded, and joyous—light and stable.

The Levels of Development

[*Learn more about the nine Levels of Development.*](#)

Healthy Levels

Level 1 (At Their Best): Become self-affirming, trusting of self and others, independent yet symbiotically interdependent and cooperative as an equal. Belief in self leads to true courage, positive thinking, leadership, and rich self-expression.

Level 2: Able to elicit strong emotional responses from others: very appealing, endearing, lovable, affectionate. Trust important: bonding with others, forming permanent relationships and alliances.

Level 3: Dedicated to individuals and movements in which they deeply believe. Community builders: responsible, reliable, trustworthy. Hard-working and persevering, sacrificing for others, they create stability and security in their world, bringing a cooperative spirit.

Average Levels

Level 4: Start investing their time and energy into whatever they believe will be safe and stable. Organizing and structuring, they look to alliances and authorities for security and continuity. Constantly vigilant, anticipating problems.

Level 5: To resist having more demands made on them, they react against others passive-aggressively. Become evasive, indecisive, cautious, procrastinating, and ambivalent. Are highly reactive, anxious, and negative, giving contradictory, "mixed signals." Internal confusion makes them react unpredictably.

Level 6: To compensate for insecurities, they become sarcastic and belligerent, blaming others for their problems, taking a tough stance toward "outsiders." Highly reactive and defensive, dividing people into friends and enemies, while looking for threats to their own security. Authoritarian while fearful of authority, highly suspicious, yet, conspiratorial, and fear-instilling to silence their own fears.

Unhealthy Levels

Level 7: Fearing that they have ruined their security, they become panicky, volatile, and self-disparaging with acute inferiority feelings. Seeing themselves as defenseless, they seek out a stronger authority or belief to resolve all problems. Highly divisive, disparaging and berating others

Level 8: Feeling persecuted, that others are "out to get them," they lash-out and act irrationally, bringing about what they fear. Fanaticism, violence.

Level 9: Hysterical, and seeking to escape punishment, they become self-destructive and suicidal. Alcoholism, drug overdoses, "skid row," self-abasing behavior. Generally corresponds to the Passive-Aggressive and Paranoid personality disorders.

Personal Growth Recommendations for Type Sixes

Sixes grow by recognizing that the only real security in life comes from within. While we can work hard to build our finances, to find the right friends and the right partner, and to foresee every possible mishap, ultimately, none of the external structures that we use to give ourselves confidence will always work for us. Things can and do go wrong, and the supports that we rely on inevitably change. Therefore, growth for a Six entails finding the support of their own inner knowing. It involves finding the place inside themselves that is quiet, strong, and capable. But this cannot happen by itself. Discovering these inner resources takes time and work, although, fortunately, Sixes understand the usefulness of perseverance and dedication. Sixes will know firsthand the value of discovering their inner resources when they take time to relax their constant vigilance and find faith in themselves.

- Remember that there is nothing unusual about being anxious since everyone is anxious—and much more often than you might think. Learn to be more present to your anxiety, to explore it, and to come to terms with it. Work creatively with your tensions without turning to excessive amounts of alcohol (or other drugs) to allay them. In fact, if you are present and breathing fully, anxiety can be energizing, a kind of tonic that can help make you more productive and aware of what you are doing.
- You tend to get edgy and testy when you are upset or angry, and can even turn on others and blame them for things you have done or brought on yourself. Be aware of your pessimism: it causes you dark moods and negative thought patterns that you tend to project on reality. When you succumb to this self-doubt, you can become your own worst enemy and may harm yourself more than anyone else does.
- Sixes tend to overreact when they are under stress and feeling anxious. Learn to identify what makes you overreact. Also realize that almost none of the things you have feared so much has actually come true. Even if things *are* as bad as you think, your fearful thoughts weaken you and your ability to change things for the better. You cannot always manage external events, but you *can* manage your own thoughts.
- Work on becoming more trusting. There are doubtless several people in your life you can turn to who care about you and who are trustworthy. If not, go out of your way to find someone trustworthy, and allow yourself to get close to that person. This will mean risking rejection and stirring up some of your deepest fears, but the risk is worth taking. You have a gift for getting people to like you, but you are unsure of yourself and may be afraid of making a commitment to them. Therefore, come down clearly on one side or the other of the fence in your relationships. Let people know how you feel about them.
- Others probably think better of you than you realize, and few people are really out to get you. In fact, your fears tell you more about your attitudes toward others than they indicate about others' attitudes toward you.

From *Discovering Your Personality Type*, pp. 135-144. See also *Personality Types*, pp. 216-258, *Understanding the Enneagram*, pp. 52-54, 98-105, and 341-44, and *The Wisdom of the Enneagram*, pp. 233-259.

Examples

Krishnamurti, Johannes Brahms, Mark Twain, Sigmund Freud, J. Edgar Hoover, Richard Nixon, Robert F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, George H.W. Bush, Diana, Princess of Wales, Prince Harry, J.R.R. Tolkien, John Grisham, Mike Tyson, Bruce Springsteen, U2's Bono, Melissa Etheridge, Eminem, Oliver Stone, Michael Moore, Spike Lee, Marilyn Monroe, Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman, Mark Wahlberg, Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, Mel

Gibson, Sally Field, Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan, Julia Roberts, Jennifer Aniston, Elliot Page, Paul Rudd, Sarah Jessica Parker, Ben Affleck, Hugh Laurie, Katie Holmes, David Letterman, Jay Leno, Ellen Degeneres, Andy Rooney, Katie Couric, Newt Gingrich, Alex Jones (Infowars), Rush Limbaugh, Chris Rock, Lewis Black, Larry David, Seinfeld's "George Costanza," Lord of the Rings' "Frodo Baggins"