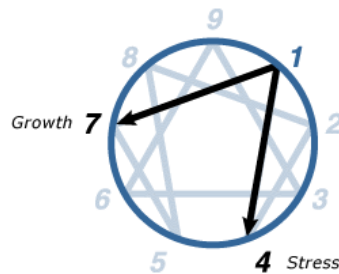


Personality Type ONE: The Reformer

The Rational, Idealistic Type:

Principled, Purposeful, Self-Controlled, and Perfectionistic



Generally, Ones are conscientious, sensible, responsible, idealistic, ethical, serious, self-disciplined, orderly, and feel personally obligated to improve themselves and their world.

Ones get into conflicts by being opinionated, impatient, irritable, rigid, perfectionistic, critical (and self-critical), sarcastic, and judgmental.

At their best, Ones are tolerant, accepting, discerning, wise, humane, prudent, principled, fair, and able to delay rewards for a higher good.

Recognizing Ones

Type One exemplifies the desire to be good, to live up to the highest ethical standards, and to effect positive changes in the world. While a number of types care about achieving goals, Ones are particularly aware of how they achieve their goals. Were they honorable? Did they use their resources wisely? Were they fair and truthful? Ones are people of high standards and they expect themselves and others to live by those standards as much as possible. They tend to see things in terms of long-range objectives, and they can be aware of how current actions might affect future situations. For example, Ones are often in the forefront of battles to improve environmental standards or to make people aware of healthier lifestyle choices.

Most Ones report feeling a powerful *sense of mission*, a deep feeling of purpose that they remember from their early childhood. They sense that they are here for a reason and, unlike some other types, they have a fairly clear idea of what that reason is. This sense of mission impels Ones to rise to their highest standards, to make personal sacrifices, and to evaluate themselves regularly to see if they are falling short of their ideals. They feel that they must live a balanced, sensible life in order to have the clarity and inner resources necessary to fulfill their purpose.

Ones also have deep convictions about right and wrong, what is just and unjust. They are often dedicated to reform and social causes since they feel personally obligated to improve the world and leave it a better place. They put themselves on the line for their values and ethical convictions—if it means risking their jobs, their fortunes, or even their lives. Ones are convinced that there are indeed some truths—some values—that are worth both living and dying for. To accomplish their missions, Ones maintain self-discipline and do their best to practice "moderation in all things."

While Ones focus their attention on serious life issues, their high standards can also be directed to less significant matters—although they may seem equally important to Ones at the time. They can become extremely upset, for instance, if their spouse or one of their children fails to clean up after themselves adequately after using the bathroom sink. Ones are nothing if not thorough and well organized. Some Ones express this as an extraordinary concern with "neatness," the kind of people whose socks and underwear are folded neatly, whose file folders are labeled and filed alphabetically, and whose pencils are all sharpened. Other Ones focus their perfectionism in other areas, such as punctuality, ethical standards, political or religious ideals, office protocols, or uncovering misdeeds and untruths.

While Ones tend to see themselves as people of logic and reason, they are often driven by strong feelings and impulses—usually experienced as personal convictions. Because they so strongly feel that they must accomplish their life mission, they conclude that they must be serious and determined and must not waste time. They can become very strict with themselves, feeling they must always be working toward their ideals, "making progress," and pointing out how things could be improved. They are extremely conscientious about how they use their time and resources. Under pressure, time becomes a major interpersonal issue for Ones—they insist that they and others be punctual, efficient, and particular about details. They make lists, organize things, and constantly prioritize their activities. Their sense of obligation, however, can make them feel heavier and more burdened. Consequently, they begin to be afraid of making a mistake because they want everything to be consistent with their strict standards. At such times, others can perceive them as overly rigid and perfectionistic.

In brief, Ones want to be right, to strive higher and improve everything, to be consistent with their ideals, to justify themselves, and to be beyond criticism so as not to be condemned by anyone. **Ones do not want** to be proven wrong, to make mistakes, to allow sloppiness, to be with people they perceive as lazy or not serious, to be in chaos or in situations that seem out of control, or to be embarrassed by emotional display.

Their Hidden Side

Ones appear well balanced and sure of themselves, but they can suffer from extreme self-criticism, feeling that they are never able to measure up to their Olympian standards. Similarly, they can feel lonely and alienated from others, seeing themselves as the only responsible adult around. At such times they feel burdened by their responsibilities and by the sense that others will not do as thorough a job as they will. If these feelings intensify, Ones can become harsh with themselves and others, and prey to hidden depression. They may attempt to maintain an outer attitude of self-control and reserve while inwardly feeling anguished and alienated. As they become more isolated, their self-criticism can become more cruel and irrational. Few casual observers would suspect how much they are suffering from the relentless attacks of their Inner Critic (superego).

Relationship Issues

Ones take their relationships and all of their responsibilities in relationships very seriously. They are firmly committed to the people whom they love, and they are willing to make great personal sacrifices for the well-being of their intimates. As with other areas of life, Ones are idealistic and hold high standards for their relationships—it is important to them to have a partnership that is based on shared values and beliefs.

When Ones get more stuck in their fixation, the following areas can create problems:

- Holding the partner to strict standards that the partner does not wholeheartedly share.
- Having difficulty finding a partner because of unrealistic standards—finding that no one "measures up."
- Becoming moody, depressed, and uncommunicative because of repressed anger.

- Not allowing enough "play time" in the relationship—feeling that all spare time must be used for serious purposes (yard work, checking finances, reading "educational" or "meaningful" books, attending meetings or lectures, discussing political issues, etc.).
- Having issues with criticism: fearing criticism from their partner and also becoming critical of the partner—nitpicking, scolding, and correcting.

Type Compatibility

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

The Passion: Anger or Resentment

Feelings of obligation and of having higher standards than those around them leave Ones in a state of constant irritation with themselves, others, and the world. Nothing ever quite attains the ideal; nothing comes up to their exacting standards, leaving them feeling disappointed, frustrated, and resentful. But because such feelings conflict with their self-image of being rational and in control of themselves, they attempt to suppress their anger, unwittingly perpetuating it in the process. They become very inhibited, feeling that they must constantly hold their angry feelings and impulses in check. Ones may also hold their anger in their bodies, and they can become extremely tense and rigid with the effort to control themselves.

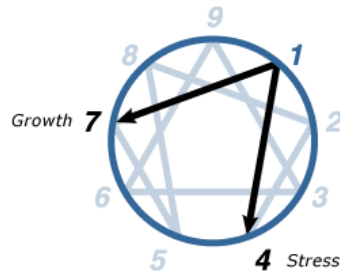
At Their Best

Healthy Ones are guided by their consciences and concerned with maintaining ethical standards, but they are also flexible and gentle about applying their principles—both with themselves and with others. They are truthful and reasonable—the kind of person others turn to for direction and clear feedback. They have a strong sense of morality, but they temper this with a deep love and respect for the dignity of their fellow human beings. They strive to be impartial, fair, and objective, and they are willing to sublimate their desires and immediate gratification for "the greater good," or a higher principle.

Healthy Ones are motivated to "do the right thing" themselves and are not necessarily trying to fix anyone else. Even so, their personal integrity allows them to teach others by example. They can be quite eloquent and effective at conveying the truth and wisdom of their perspective. They stand for quality and desire excellence in all things. Their commitment to the highest principles can be profoundly moving to others, reminding others of the values they most deeply cherish.

At their very best, high-functioning Ones embody true wisdom, especially in being able to discern appropriate and compassionate action. They radiate nobility and inspire others to remember to live according to the highest values. At the same time, they are gentle and humane: average Ones often feel disappointed with their fellow human beings, but healthy Ones feel a profound connection and kinship with everyone they encounter, giving them an abiding patience and affection for all humanity.

Personality Dynamics & Variations



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

Under Stress (One goes to average Four)

Ones begin to feel alienated and moody when they sense that others do not take them or their values seriously. They feel obligated to do the work they believe others will not do—or will not do *as well*—and they become more resentful. They feel misunderstood by their peers and often withdraw from others to sort out their feelings, much like average-to-unhealthy Fours. Similarly, Ones under prolonged stress can become disillusioned with themselves and their lot in life. Over time, they can become depressed and isolated, often turning to self-indulgent behavior in an attempt to feel better. They allow themselves various "escape hatches"—indulgences that go against their expressed values in some way. For instance, a One who is scrupulously observing rigorous health regimens and diets might start treating herself to ice cream sodas or chocolate bars. Guilt usually follows, leaving her more depressed and critical of herself.

Security (One goes to average Seven)

Ones become more playful and uninhibited in the company of people with whom they feel safe. It is as though a secure environment gives Ones permission to let their "silly side" out, along with the ability to express a more complete range of their emotions.. They can be funny, talkative, tell jokes and long stories and can lead others into adventures of various kinds. They can also be boldly outspoken, impulsive, and "naughty" when they feel they can get away with it. They can also allow some of their needs to surface and become demanding, selfish, and greedy after the manner of a low-average Seven. Under stress, they may inadvertently look for distractions and begin to scatter their focus and their energies, as if to prevent becoming overwhelmed by the pressures they feel both from the obligations they have taken on and from their superego.

Integration (One goes to healthy Seven)

As Ones work through the basic issues of their type, they become less strict with themselves and begin to enjoy a greater freedom, lightness, and spontaneity, like healthy Sevens. Instead of feeling that everything is a personal obligation, they begin to experience choice, freedom, abundance, and joy. Whatever they do will be good and worthwhile, and they begin to live by the maxim, "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing badly." They let themselves off the hook of their strident superegos and begin to recognize what they want rather than what they "must" or "should" do. Integrating Ones can more easily access their curiosity and intelligence—their minds are open to many new possibilities. Their lighter approach helps other people hear their views and allows Ones to feel much closer to their fellow human beings. Rather than feeling resentful and obligated, they are filled with gratitude and a deep acceptance of themselves and others.

The Levels of Development

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

Healthy Levels

Level 1 (At Their Best): Become extraordinarily wise and discerning. By accepting what is, they become transcendently realistic, knowing the best action to take in each moment. Humane, inspiring, and hopeful: the truth will be heard.

Level 2: Conscientious with strong personal convictions: they have an intense sense of right and wrong, personal religious and moral values. Wish to be rational, reasonable, self-disciplined, mature, moderate in all things.

Level 3: Extremely principled, always want to be fair, objective, and ethical: truth and justice primary values. Sense of responsibility, personal integrity, and of having a higher purpose often make them teachers and witnesses to the truth.

Average Levels

Level 4: Dissatisfied with reality, they become high-minded idealists, feeling that it is up to them to improve everything: crusaders, advocates, critics. Into "causes" and explaining to others how things "ought" to be.

Level 5: Afraid of making a mistake: everything must be consistent with their ideals. Become orderly and well-organized, but impersonal, puritanical, emotionally constricted, rigidly keeping their feelings and impulses in check. Often workaholics—"anal-compulsive," punctual, pedantic, and fastidious.

Level 6: Highly critical both of self and others: picky, judgmental, perfectionistic. Very opinionated about everything: correcting people and badgering them to "do the right thing"—as they see it. Impatient, never satisfied with anything unless it is done according to their prescriptions. Moralizing, scolding, abrasive, and indignantly angry.

Unhealthy Levels

Level 7: Can be highly dogmatic, self-righteous, intolerant, and inflexible. Begin dealing in absolutes: they alone know "The Truth." Everyone else is wrong: very severe in judgments, while rationalizing own actions.

Level 8: Become obsessive about imperfection and the wrongdoing of others, although they may fall into contradictory actions, hypocritically doing the opposite of what they preach.

Level 9: Become condemnatory toward others, punitive and cruel to rid themselves of wrongdoers. Severe depressions, nervous breakdowns, and suicide attempts are likely. Generally corresponds to the Obsessive-Compulsive and Depressive personality disorders.

Personal Growth Recommendations for Type Ones

Ones grow by recognizing that others do take things seriously too, but that their approach to problems or tasks might be different. As they become more centered in themselves, they become not only respectful of others' views, but curious about them. They understand that their own wisdom can only be enriched by taking other perspectives into account. Ones also grow by playing—by finding areas of their lives that are lighter, freer, and that offer opportunities for spontaneous creativity. Most Ones have a great sense of

humor, and the more they allow themselves to entertain and enjoy others, the better for everyone involved. Basically, Ones grow proportionately to the extent that they can accept reality with all of its apparent "imperfections." This, of course, especially applies to themselves. By accepting what is, and working with reality rather than judging it, they become transcendently realistic, knowing the best action to take in each moment.

- Learn to relax. Take some time for yourself, without feeling that everything is up to you or that what you do not accomplish will result in chaos and disaster. Mercifully, the salvation of the world does not depend on you alone, even though you may sometimes feel it does.
- You have a lot to teach others and are probably a good teacher, but do not expect others to change immediately. What is obvious to you may not be as obvious to them, especially if they are not used to being as self-disciplined and objective about themselves as you are about yourself. Many people may also want to do what is right and may agree with you in principle but for various reasons simply cannot change right away. The fact that others do not change immediately according to your prescriptions does not mean that they will not change sometime in the future. Your words and above all, your example may do more good than you realize, although they may take longer than you expect. So have patience.
- It is easy for you to work yourself up into a lather about the wrongdoings of others. And it may sometimes be true that they are wrong. But what is it to you? Your irritation with them will do nothing to help them see another way of being. Similarly, beware of your constant irritation with your own "shortcomings." Does your own harsh self-criticism really help you to improve? Or does it simply make you tense, nervous, and self-doubting? Learn to recognize the attacks of your superego and how they undermine you rather than helping you.
- It is important for you to get in touch with your feelings, particularly your unconscious impulses. You may find that you are uneasy with your emotions and your sexual and aggressive impulses—in short, with the messy human things that make us human. It might be beneficial to keep a journal or to get into some kind of group therapy or other group work both to develop your emotions and to see that others will not condemn you for having human needs and limitations.
- Your Achilles' heel is your self-righteous anger. You get angry easily and are offended by what seems to you to be the perverse refusal of others to do the right thing—as you have defined it. Try to step back and see that your anger alienates people so that they cannot hear many of the good things you have to say. Further, your own repressed anger may well be giving you an ulcer or high blood pressure and is a harbinger of worse things to come.

From *Discovering Your Personality Type*, pp. 88-96. See also *Personality Types*, pp. 376-409, *Understanding the Enneagram*, pp. 63-65, 126-133, and 352-354, and *The Wisdom of the Enneagram*, pp. 97-124.

Examples

Confucius, Plato, Salahuddin Ayyubi, Joan of Arc, Sir Thomas More, Mahatma Gandhi, Pope John Paul II, Nelson Mandela, Margaret Thatcher, Prince Charles, Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge, Jimmy Carter, Michelle Obama, Al Gore, Hilary Clinton, Rudy Giuliani, Elliot Spitzer, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, George Bernard Shaw, Thoreau, Anita Roddick (The Body Shop), Martha Stewart, Chef Thomas Keller, Michio Kushi (macrobiotics), George Harrison, Joan Baez, Celine Dion, Ralph Nader, Noam Chomsky, Bill Moyers, George F. Will, William F. Buckley, Keith Olbermann, Jerry Seinfeld, Bill Maher, Tina Fey, Katherine Hepburn, Maggie Smith, Emma Thompson, Julie Andrews, Vanessa Redgrave, Jane Fonda, Meryl Streep, Harrison Ford, Helen Hunt, Captain "Sully" Sullenberger, "Mary Poppins," "Mr. Spock"