The **Enneagram of Personality**, or simply the **Enneagram** (from the Greek words ἑννέα [ennea, meaning "nine"] and γράμμα [gramma, meaning something "written" or "drawn"[1]]), is a model of human personality which is principally understood and taught as a typology of nine interconnected **personality types**. Although the origins and history of many of the ideas and theories associated with the Enneagram of Personality are a matter of dispute, contemporary Enneagram understandings are principally derived from the teachings of **Oscar Ichazo** and **Claudio Naranjo**. Naranjo's theories were partly influenced by some earlier teachings of **G. I. Gurdjieff**. As a typology the Enneagram defines nine **personality types** (sometimes referred to as "enneatypes"), which are represented by the points of a geometric figure called an **enneagram**[2] which also indicates some of the connections between the types. As there are different schools of thought among Enneagram theorists about some aspects of how it is understood, its interpretation is not always unified or consistent.[2]

The Enneagram of Personality is not a typology that is commonly taught or researched in academic **psychology**. It has been widely promoted in both business management and spiritual contexts through seminars, conferences, books, magazines, and DVDs. In business contexts it is generally used as a typology to gain insights into workplace dynamics; in spirituality it is more commonly presented as a path to higher states of **being**, **essence**, and **enlightenment**. It has been described as a method for self-understanding and self-development[3] but has been criticized as being subject to interpretation, making it difficult to test or validate scientifically.[5]

### History

The origins and historical development of the Enneagram of Personality are matters of dispute. Wiltse and Palmer[6] have suggested that similar ideas to the Enneagram of Personality are found in the work of **Evagrius Ponticus**, a Christian mystic who lived in 4th century Alexandria. Evagrius identified eight logismoi ("deadly thoughts") plus an overarching thought he called "love of self". Evagrius wrote, "The first thought of all is that of love of self (philaoutia); after this, [come] the eight."[7] In addition to identifying eight deadly thoughts, Evagrius also identified eight "remedies" to these thoughts.[6]

**G. I. Gurdjieff** is credited with making the enneagram figure commonly known[8] (see **Fourth Way enneagram**). He did not, however, develop the nine personality types associated with the Enneagram. **Oscar Ichazo** is generally recognized as the principal source[6] of the contemporary Enneagram of Personality. Ichazo's "Enneagon of Ego Fixations", together with a number of other dimensions of personality mapped on the enneagram figure, forms the basis of the Enneagram of Personality. The Bolivian-born Ichazo began teaching programs of self-development in the 1950s. His teaching, which he calls "**Protoanalysis**", uses the enneagram figure among many other symbols and ideas. Ichazo founded the **Arica Institute** which was originally based in Chile before moving to the United States[2] and coined the term "Enneagram of Personality".[3]

**Claudio Naranjo** is a Chilean-born psychiatrist who first learned about the Enneagram of Personality from Ichazo at a course in Arica, Chile. He then began developing and teaching his own understanding of the Enneagram in the United States in the early 1970s, influencing others,
including some Jesuit priests who adapted the Enneagram for use in Christian spirituality. Numerous other authors, including Helen Palmer, Don Richard Riso, Richard Rohr and Elizabeth Wagele, also began publishing widely read books on the Enneagram of Personality in the 1980s and 1990s. Ichazo disowned Naranjo and the other teachers on what he felt were misinterpretations and uses of the Enneagram. Among Naranjo's early students there are also differing understandings of Enneagram theory.\[2\]

### Enneagram figure

The enneagram figure is usually composed of three parts; a circle, an inner triangle (connecting 3-6-9) and an irregular hexagonal "periodic figure" (connecting 1-4-2-8-5-7). According to esoteric spiritual traditions,\[3\] the circle symbolizes unity, the inner triangle symbolizes the "law of three" and the hexagon represents the "law of seven" (because 1-4-2-8-5-7-1 is the repeating decimal created by dividing one by seven in base 10 arithmetic).\[10\] These three elements constitute the usual enneagram figure.\[11\]

### Nine types

The table below gives the principal characteristics of the nine types along with their basic relationships. This table is based on *Understanding the Enneagram: The Practical Guide to Personality Types* (revised edition) by Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson.\[12\] Other theorists may disagree on some aspects. The types are normally referred to by their numbers, but sometimes their "characteristic roles" (which refers to distinctive archetypal characteristics) are used instead.\[13\] The "stress" and "security" points (sometimes referred to as the "disintegration" and "integration" points) are the types, connected by the lines of the enneagram figure, that are believed to influence a person in more adverse or relaxed circumstances. According to this theory, someone classed as a One type, for example, may begin to think, feel and act more like a Four type when stressed, or more like a Seven type when relaxed.
Wings

Most, but not all, Enneagram of Personality theorists teach that a person's basic type is modified, at least to some extent, by the personality dynamics of the two adjacent types as indicated on the enneagram figure. These two types are often called "wings". A person of the Three personality type, for example, is understood to have points Two and Four as their wing types. The circle of the enneagram figure may indicate that the types or points exist on a spectrum rather than as distinct types or points unrelated to those adjacent to them. A person may be understood, therefore, to have a core type and one or two wing types that influence but do not change the core type.[14][15]

Connecting lines

For some Enneagram theorists the lines connecting the points add further meaning to the information provided by the descriptions of the types. Sometimes called the "security" and "stress" points, or points of "integration" and "disintegration", some theorists believe that these connected points also contribute to a person's overall personality. From this viewpoint, therefore, there are at least four other points that can affect a person's overall personality; the two points connected by the lines to the core type and the two wing points.[16][17]

Instinctual subtypes

Each of the personality types is usually understood as having three "instinctual subtypes". These subtypes are believed to be formed according to which one of three instinctual energies of a person is dominantly developed and expressed. The instinctual energies are usually called "self-preservation", "sexual" (also called "intimacy" or "one-to-one") and "social". On the instinctual level, people may internally stress and externally express the need to protect themselves (self-preservation), to connect with important others or partners (sexual), or to get along or succeed in groups (social). From this perspective, there are 27 distinct personality patterns, because people of each of the nine types also express themselves as one of the three subtypes. An alternative approach to the subtypes looks at them as three domains or clusters of instincts that result in increased probability of survival (the "preserving" domain), increased skill in navigating the social environment (the "navigating" domain) and increased likelihood of reproductive success (the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristic role</th>
<th>Ego fixation</th>
<th>Holy idea</th>
<th>Basic fear</th>
<th>Basic desire</th>
<th>Temptation</th>
<th>Vice/Passion</th>
<th>Virtue</th>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reformer</td>
<td>Resentment</td>
<td>Perfection</td>
<td>Unworthiness, being bad</td>
<td>Goodness, integrity, balance</td>
<td>Hypocrisy, hypercriticality</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Serenity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Helper</td>
<td>Pity (Ingratitude)</td>
<td>Freedom, Will</td>
<td>Being unloved</td>
<td>To feel love</td>
<td>Deny own needs, manipulation</td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Achiever</td>
<td>Vanity</td>
<td>Hope, Law</td>
<td>Worthlessness</td>
<td>To feel valuable</td>
<td>Pushing self to always be &quot;the best&quot;</td>
<td>Deceit</td>
<td>Truthfulness, Authenticity</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Individualist</td>
<td>Melancholy (Fantasizing)</td>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Having no identity or significance</td>
<td>To be uniquely themselves</td>
<td>To overcome imagination in search of self</td>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>Equanimity (Emotional Balance)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Investigator</td>
<td>Sternness (Retention)</td>
<td>Omniscience, Transparency</td>
<td>Helplessness, Incapability, Incompetence</td>
<td>Mastery, Understanding</td>
<td>Replacing direct experience with concepts</td>
<td>Avarice</td>
<td>Non-Attachment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Loyalist</td>
<td>Cowardice (Worrying)</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Being without support or guidance</td>
<td>To be satisfied and content</td>
<td>Indecision, doubt, seeking reassurance</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Enthusiast</td>
<td>Planning (Anticipation)</td>
<td>Wisdom, Plan</td>
<td>Being trapped in pain and deprivation</td>
<td>To be satisfied and content</td>
<td>Thinking fulfillment is somewhere else</td>
<td>Gluttony</td>
<td>Sobriety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
<td>Vengeance (Objectification)</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Being harmed, controlled, violated</td>
<td>Self-protection</td>
<td>Thinking they are completely self-sufficient</td>
<td>Lust (Forbearfulness)</td>
<td>Innocence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Peacemaker</td>
<td>Indulgence (Daydreaming)</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Loss, fragmentation, separation</td>
<td>Wholeness, peace of mind</td>
<td>Avoiding conflict, avoiding self-assessment</td>
<td>Sloth</td>
<td>Disengagement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From this understanding the subtypes reflect individual differences in the presence of these three separate clusters of instincts.

It is generally believed that people function in all three forms of instinctual energies but that one usually dominates. According to some theorists another instinct may also be well-developed and the third often markedly less developed.\[^{20}\]

**Criticism**

In 2000, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine produced a draft report on the origins of the Enneagram to aid bishops in their evaluation of its use in their dioceses. The report identified aspects of the intersection between the Enneagram and Roman Catholicism which, in their opinion, warranted particular scrutiny and were seen as potential areas of concern, stating that "While the enneagram system shares little with traditional Christian doctrine or spirituality, it also shares little with the methods and criteria of modern science... The burden of proof is on proponents of the enneagram to furnish scientific evidence for their claims."\[^{21}\]

Partly in response to some Jesuits and members of other religious orders teaching a Christian understanding of the Enneagram of Personality, a 2003 Vatican document called *Jesus Christ, the Bearer of the Water of Life - A Christian Reflection on the 'New Age'* says that the Enneagram "when used as a means of spiritual growth introduces an ambiguity in the doctrine and the life of the Christian faith."\[^{22}\][^23][^24]

**See also**

- A. H. Almaas
- Personality psychology
- Riso-Hudson Enneagram Type Indicator
- Tritype

**References**

1. Jump up^ "Strong's Greek: 1121. γράμμα (gramma) -- that which is drawn or written, i.e. a letter", biblesuite.com.
11. Jump up^ Wagele, Enneagram Made Easy, pp. 1–11
Further reading

External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Enneagram (Personality).

- [Enneagram at DMOZ](http://dmoz.org)
- [International Enneagram Association website](http://www.ena.org)