

Enneagram Type 1 - The Reformer

The Rational, Idealistic Type:

Principled, Purposeful, Self-Controlled, and Perfectionistic

Type One in Brief

Ones are conscientious and ethical, with a strong sense of right and wrong. They are teachers, crusaders, and advocates for change: always striving to improve things, but afraid of making a mistake. Well-organized, orderly, and fastidious, they try to maintain high standards, but can slip into being critical and perfectionistic. They typically have problems with resentment and impatience. *At their Best:* wise, discerning, realistic, and noble. Can be morally heroic.

- **Basic Fear:** Of being corrupt/evil, defective
- **Basic Desire:** To be good, to have integrity, to be balanced
- **Enneagram One with a Nine-Wing:** "The Idealist"
- **Enneagram One with a Two-Wing:** "The Advocate"

Key Motivations: Want to be right, to strive higher and improve everything, to be consistent with their ideals, to justify themselves, to be beyond criticism so as not to be condemned by anyone.

The Meaning of the Arrows (in brief)

When moving in their Direction of Disintegration (stress), methodical Ones suddenly become moody and irrational at Four. However, when moving in their Direction of Integration (growth), angry, critical Ones become more spontaneous and joyful, like healthy Sevens. [Learn more about the arrows.](#)

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, Hillary Clinton, Rudy Giuliani, Elliot Spitzer, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Osama bin Laden, George Bernard Shaw, Thoreau, Dr. Jack Kevorkian, 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," SNL's "The Church Lady"

Type One Overview

We have named personality type One **The Reformer** because Ones have a "sense of mission" that leads them to want to improve the world in various ways, using whatever degree of influence they have. They strive to overcome adversity—particularly moral adversity—so that the human spirit can shine through and make a difference. They strive after "higher values," even at the cost of great personal sacrifice.

History is full of Ones who have left comfortable lives to do something extraordinary because they felt that something higher was calling them. During the Second World War, Raoul Wallenberg left a comfortable middle-class life to work for the protection of thousands of European Jews from invading Nazis. In India, Gandhi left behind his wife and family and life as a successful lawyer to become an itinerant advocate of Indian independence and non-violent social changes. Joan of Arc left her village in France to restore the throne to the Dauphin and to expel the English from the country. The idealism of each of these Ones has inspired millions.

Ones are people of practical action—they wish to be *useful* in the best sense of the word. On some level of consciousness, they feel that they "have a mission" to fulfill in life, if only to try their best to reduce the disorder they see in their environment.

Although Ones have a strong sense of purpose, they also typically feel that they have to justify their actions to themselves, and often to others as well. This orientation causes Ones to spend a lot of time thinking about the consequences of their actions, as well as about how to keep from acting contrary to their convictions. Because of this, Ones often persuade themselves that they are "head" types, rationalists who proceed only on logic

and objective truth. But, the real picture is somewhat different: *Ones are actually activists who are searching for an acceptable rationale for what they feel they must do.* They are people of instinct and passion who use convictions and judgments to control and direct themselves and their actions.

In the effort to stay true to their principles, Ones resist being affected by their instinctual drives, consciously not giving in to them or expressing them too freely. The result is a personality type that has problems with repression, resistance, and aggression. They are usually seen by others as highly self-controlled, even rigid, although this is not how Ones experience themselves. It seems to them that they are sitting on a cauldron of passions and desires, and they had better “keep the lid on” lest they and everyone else around them regret it.

Cassandra is a therapist in private practice who recalls the difficulty this caused her in her youth.

“I remember in high school getting feedback that I had no feelings. Inside, I felt my feelings intensely and yet I just couldn’t let them out as intensely as I felt them. Even now, if I have a conflict with a friend and need to address an issue, I rehearse ahead of time how to express clearly what I want, need, and observe, and yet not be harsh or blaming in my anger which is often scathing.”

Ones believe that being strict with themselves (and eventually becoming “perfect”) will justify them in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. But by attempting to create their own brand of perfection, they often create their own personal hell. Instead of agreeing with the statement in Genesis that God saw what He had created, “and it was good,” Ones intensely feel that “It wasn’t—there obviously have been some mistakes here!” This orientation makes it difficult for them to trust their inner guidance—indeed, to trust life—so Ones come to rely heavily on their superego, a learned voice from their childhood, to guide them toward “the greater good” which they so passionately seek. When Ones have gotten completely entranced in their personality, there is little distinction between them and this severe, unforgiving voice. Separating from it and seeing its genuine strengths and limitations is what growth for Ones is about.

Type One—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.

Addictions

Excessive use of diets, vitamins, and cleansing techniques (fasts, diet pills, enemas). Under-eating for self-control: in extreme cases anorexia and bulimia. Alcohol to relieve tension.

Personal Growth Recommendations for Enneagram Type Ones

- 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 rather than help 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.