

Effective Communication between People According to EnneagramAbdullah Demir¹**Abstract**

In this study on the communication styles of Enneagram types, firstly, the importance of personality identification was emphasized. Then, information about Enneagram as a personality identification system was discussed. General characteristics of each Enneagram type, the mind-emotion-physique zones, the wings, stress and relaxation modes of all the Enneagram types were summarized. In the last part of the study, the dynamics of how all 9 Enneagram types communicate with each other was explained. Enneagram types get along especially well with other types found within their own group, and with the types they emulate when they are most comfortable. On the other hand, there is usually a communication problem with the types in different groups and with the types they emulate when they are most stressed. In addition, each type has its own unique style of communication.

Keywords: communication, Enneagram, character, stress, relaxation

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Introduction

Nowadays, a significant part of the problems existing amongst people can be traced back to miscommunication. In order to be able to communicate correctly, one must know himself/herself well and must understand the type of person he is communicating with. Otherwise, communication problems are bound to easily arise.

In this study, we will first focus on identifying human characters within the realm of Enneagram and then try to understand how to communicate effectively amongst these characters. Indeed, the character of a person, like the cosmos, can be quite complex. Throughout history, various methods have been developed to examine this mixed and complex character of man (Clark, 506). Although there are different systems used to determine the character of people, Enneagram stands out because it provides clearer results. For this reason, we will determine the human characters according to the Enneagram and then we will examine the possibility of establishing effective communication methods/techniques between these characters. (Goodwin & Jamison, 1990; Atkinson et al., 1999).

Aside identifying human characters, Enneagram can be used in team building, motivation, leadership, empowerment, training, education etc. (Kale & Shrivastava, 2003). In addition, Enneagram has been used as a tool for self-awareness, self-observation, and self-remembering (Stocker, 1994, A.17).

History of Enneagram

Enneagram, which is the main subject of our article, is a personality identification and examination method. Enneagram is an ancient esoteric teaching and a personality examination method which is based on a 9-types system (Daniels and Price, 2004: 13). Each type is named differently according to its characteristics and usually identified by use of numbers (Fiely, 2002; Murali, 2003).

The history of Enneagram, dates to ancient religions and civilizations, as far back as the Epic of Gilgamesh some 4500 years ago. Born in Kars, George Ivanovich Gurdjief (1877-1949) is an Orthodox Ottoman citizen whose mother was a Greek and father an Armenian. Gurdjief, who devoted his life to the search for human truth, has conducted a lot of research in Central Asia, Bukhara and Tashkent spanning many years (Palmer, 1988).

In his book, *Meeting with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff states that he lived in Central Asia for 20-25 years and met with Sufi elders. Gurdjieff explains that he learned his Enneagram knowledge from the Order of Saourmoni, a secret sect in ancient Babylon. Afterwards, Gurdjief came back to Istanbul with his students and established an institute called *The Harmonic Development of Spirit*. However, due to turmoil in the late Ottoman period, he could not stay long in Istanbul and later moved and settled in France (Riso and Hudson, 2000, 23-24).

Enneagram, as it is today, has developed through a lot of contributions from various researchers, and attempts have been made in applying it to various fields. One of the researchers, a Bolivian psychologist Oscar Ichazo, categorized Enneagram according to different personality types. Ichazo talked about the characteristics of the 9-person type system and placed them correctly on the

Enneagram symbol. Ichazo later moved to America where he founded The Arica Institute (Randall, 18).

Claudio Naranjo, who worked with Ichazo in Chile, applied Enneagram to psychology. Many researchers such as Don Riso, Russ Hudson, Helen Palmer, Richard Rohr and Elizabeth Wagele continued to develop Enneagram in various fields. Enneagram's development-friendly structure facilitates the work of these researchers and encourages them to work in this field (Almaas, 1998).

Enneagram types

The Enneagram has 9 basic types that they are numbered by number from 1 to 9 accordingly (Daniels and Price, 117) and are also named according to their predominant characteristics (Riso and Hudson, 2000, 32): 1- The Perfectionist, 2- The Helper, 3- The Achiever, 4- The Individualist, 5- The Researcher, 6- The Loyalist, 7- The Enthusiast, 8- The Challenger, 9- The Peacemaker.

The Enneagram is demonstrated with circle as a symbol that has the nine different points, and the lines. The circle represents wholeness, the lines signify the energy movement within the whole of the Enneagram framework (Rhodes, 2009, 12).

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1. The Perfectionist: The aim in life of this type is to achieve perfection in every subject. He makes a lot of effort to obey laid down rules and make up to others. This type works like a bee and actually enjoys working. He is usually found doing the hardest work with pleasure and in the most perfect way.

2. The Helper: Helping people and expecting them to show appreciation is the most basic feature in this type. The need for gratitude and the desire to help is quite important for the type 2. They look everywhere for someone to help.

3. The Achiever: The most basic feature of this type is to be very successful in life. They want to be first in every field and to be seen as such is important to them. The type three usually works very hard to succeed.

4. The Individualist: The aim of the type four is to be an original person in life and to do original works. They hate mediocrity and being ordinary. Original artists usually come out from this type.

5. The Researcher: This type always aims to continue his life with knowledge. Type 5s are usually very curious and they can be seen always trying to learn more and more. This is because they feel more powerful as they learn. Thinkers, philosophers, scientists are usually from this type.

6. The Loyalist: This type always aim to have full security in all areas of life. They tailor thier life decisions in such a way as to avoid risk and danger. Therefore, they focus on hazards, errors and imperfections in a bid to easily recognize and avoid them.

7. The Enthusiast: The aim of type 7 in life is to constantly experience new things and to achieve happiness in this way. They are impatient, hyperactive, knowledgeable in every field.

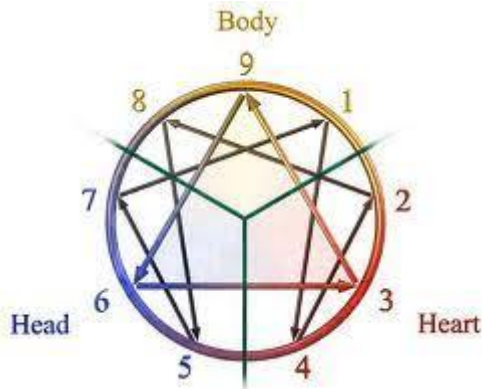
8. The Challenger: The type 8s usually posses strong leadership qualities. Being independent, physical and exhibiting good leadership abilities are their main characteristics. Great leaders usually emerge from this type.

9. The Peacemaker: type 9s are peacekeepers and mediators who work well with everyone in order to prevent any chaos or disharmony in their lives.

Regions in Enneagram

Enneagram types are grouped into three regions which are the centers of intelligence and perception. These are: The Body region (8-9-1), The Heart region (2-3-4) and The Head region (5-6-7) (Riso and Hudson, 2000, p. 47). Each region has three personality types. Everyone experiences all three, but each personality type has a particular strength or ‘home base’ in one of them. Thus, the home base of each type is the region it belongs to. These three regions (i.e. body, heart and head) influences our way of being in the world and is an important key in overcoming our weaknesses and developing our potential (Hampson, 2005, p 14).

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Balancing these 3 regions or centers is important in achieving a more balanced life. The Body-based types (8-9-1) lead with the body for movement, sensate awareness and gut-level knowing. Their focus is on personal security, control, social belonging and taking the right actions. Also known as the instinctual region.

The Heart-based types (2-3-4) emphasize the heart for positive and negative feelings, empathy and care for others, romance and devotion. Their focus is on success and relationship, performing up to expectation. Also known as the emotional region.

The Head-based types (5-6-7) are the thinking/rational types. They lead with ideas, information, figuring things out and rational decision making before acting. Their focus is on creating certainty and safety, or finding multiple options. Also known as the intellectual region.

If one of these three regions is too dominant, it neutralizes the others. In this case, the dominant feature is in the degree of unhealthiness in that person and if it is not balanced with education, diseased people will appear. For example, if anger, which is a Body-based feeling, is very dominant, cruel and dictatorial characters emerge in a person. The same applies where any of the other regions is too dominant in a person.

The Wings of Enneagram

Each Enneagram type has two wings. In the Enneagram symbol, the neighbors of a type are its wings. (Palmer, 1991). For example, the wings of a type 1 are 9 and 2.

The Levels of Development

In Enneagram, each character has three levels of development: the healthy, average and unhealthy levels. While a person shows the characteristics of his/her type in an average state, he/she behaves like other types in healthy and unhealthy states (Riso & Hudson, 2000). For example, the type 5 of the Head-based region show the characteristics of their own type on an average level. In contrast, the type 5, when in a happy and relaxed state, behave like a healthy level type 7. Again, type 5, when stressed, acts like an unhealthy type 8.

Stress and Comfortable Situations

In Enneagram, when a person is stressed, he/she exhibits unhealthy attributes of another type and shows the negative characteristics of that other type. On the other hand, when a person is relaxed and comfortable, he/she exhibits the healthy attributes of another type and shows the positive

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characteristics of that type (Palmer, 1991). The interesting thing is that when a person is stressed, he/she turns into to the type he/she dislikes the most. In other words, when a person is stressed, he/she acts at the level of unhealthiness of the type which is the most distant or opposite to his/her original type. For example, when type 1 are comfortable, they move to and exhibits attributes of a type 7, and thus, they become an energetic and free-spirited type that experiences freely. On the other hand, when they are stressed, they get pulled into a shell like a type 4 experiencing depression.

Causes of Communication Problems

As stated above, communication problems generally arise from the fact that one does not know himself or herself. If each character can balance its basic personality traits, it can communicate effectively with other people. On the other hand, if he/she does not overcome the basic personality trait or does not take into consideration the personality trait of others, he/she is bound to encounter problems.

There is no limitation on the character traits of man. A person can use their basic character at the highest level, in balance, or at the lowest level. One can choose any of these levels using human will. When people use these characteristics in a balanced way, they make less mistakes in their lives. On the other hand, when these features are exaggerated or used at the lowest level, wrong behaviors usually manifest (Riso and Hudson, 2000). Religion, ethics, customary and legal rules exist to prevent the excessive use of these features.

Basic Principles in Communication of Characters

In general, each type communicates easily with the characters in its own region. In other words, each Enneagram type usually understands the other types in its region more easily. In addition, each type communicates well with the type he moves to when he is relaxed and comfortable. In contrast, each type finds it difficult to communicate with the type he moves to when he is stressed. In all other instances, the types usually experience some degree of difficulty in communicating.

(Type 1) The Perfectionist's Communication Styles

Type 1s can communicate effectively with people if they do not exaggerate their basic personality, i.e. perfectionism, and accept the fact that other characters are not as sensitive to perfectionism as they are. This is because other characters prioritize other features in their lives, not perfectionism. Type 1 must empathize in order to communicate correctly, i.e. to understand the priorities of other people.

If the type 1 exaggerates perfectionism, he/she becomes an overly meticulous, uncompromising person in his/her personal life and social environment. Because of the existence of a strong sense of anger, a type 1 can become extremely angry at the people he/she sees on the wrong and may exert various levels of pressure on them and may even use force.

Type 1s are known to be adherents of laid down rules and cherish order. Thus, a balanced type 1 at a healthy level will apply the rules correctly, meticulously and mercifully. While an unhealthy type

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1 will exaggerate excellence and may use those rules as an excuse for persecution. The lead character in Necip Fazıl's show/movie titled 'Reis Bey' the extreme and balanced states of a type 1 in a beautiful way.

Type 1 can also be balanced or extreme in their relationships with family members. A balanced person tolerates the mistakes of family members and treats them with affection, compassion and love. Those who exaggerate perfectionism in an extreme manner are meticulous, authoritarian and normative enough to make their family members sick.

For the type 1 to communicate at a balanced level, they must understand that God is the real owner of the everything, and that family members and other people in his charge are entrusted to him, that his responsibility is limited to this trust, and that Allah's power is absolute and above all, and that there is a perfect order even in cases of chaos.

Type 1 gets along very well with the other types in his own region i.e The Body region (8,9,1). He does not need to make an effort to communicate well with them. As they are in the same group, they naturally get along well. Type 8 and type 1 are especially complementary types and are highly compatible. Type 8's courage and confidence complement type 1's perfectionism and normality.

Since type 1 is Body-based i.e physically-centered and type 2 is Heart-based i.e emotionally centered, they may have difficulty in establishing a healthy communication. However, since each of these characters carries abilities that are not present in the other, they can actually complement each other. Type 2 can complete type 1's lack of emotion, type 1 can complete the lack of intelligence of type 2. To do this, both parties need to be aware of their needs and understand that the other can complement that need.

If a type 1 and type 3 have common goals, they can agree in business life. This is because they are both the types that care about business life. In order to maintain this communication, both sides need to soften their sharpness.

The individuality and originality of the type 4 are impulsive for traditionally prescriptive type 1. For this reason, type 4 and type 1 cannot easily negotiate under normal circumstances. However, they are actually complementary characters. Type 1 completes the lack of order and normality of the type 4. Type 4 complement type 1's lack of individuality and originality.

Since the center of physicality (Body region) has an extension of the mind (Head region), type 1 usually agree with the type 5. This is because both characters have a sound mental aspect. However, type 1's strict rules can be a little too impulsive for type 5. The freedom of a type 5 can disturb a type 1.

Type 1 gets along well with one of the most common types, the type 6. The security conscious nature of the type 6 and the perfection of the type 1 allows the two characters to communicate in harmony. However, in the relationship, the goal of a type 1 is never to be accused him of doing a sloppy work, and the goal of a type 6 is never to face any risk.

Although the type 1 doesn't like chaos and disorder, they usually communicate well with the type 7 in order to relax and get rid of stress in the entertaining atmosphere created by the adventurous and spontaneous behaviors of the type 7.

(Type 2) The Helper's Communication Styles

The peculiarity of the type 2 is to help people and to gain their love and gratitude. The type 2 prioritizes helping others and acquiring peoples' love and appreciation in both their private and social lives. When the helper keeps this characteristics in balance, they communicate without expectation (i.e they only expect their reward from the Divine). In this case, type 2 do not overly depend on the persons they help, they do not restrict their freedom and they do not prevent their individual development. The balanced type 2 embraces everyone with love and affection, just like the sun.

The type 2 who abuses this trait will manipulate the people whom they help into depending on them, hinder their individual development, neglect their material and spiritual needs while helping them, and can become angry and disruptive because of the lack of love and gratitude from the people they help. They will accuse the persons they help of ingratitude and try to punish them (Riso and Hudson, 2000). When a type 2 achieves balance, he usually lends out a helping hand to all without being asked and without expecting any form of appreciation from them. However, they usually repress personal needs and feelings to avoid being needy and to maintain a helpful self-image. In doing so, they end up neglecting themselves and their needs, which will in turn lead to mental and/or physical consequences.

In order to communicate in an effective manner, the type 2s must understand that their need for unlimited love in their souls can only be filled with the love of Allah, they must believe and understand that the reward for helping others will be given by Allah, they must also understand that the helpless people they lend a hand to do not have the capacity to meet and fulfill their needs,

and that their material possessions are entrusted to them by Allah. In a nutshell, they must learn to expect absolutely nothing from the people they help.

Type 2s get along extremely well with the types in their own region of emotionally-centered (i.e Heart region 2-3-4). The types in this group prefer to communicate emotionally. Type 2s also get along well with the emotionally-extended type 9 of the physically-centered region. The ability of type 9 to be flexible in interpersonal relationships and to get along with everyone ensures that these two characters get along well.

The type 2 and type 5 usually have difficulty communicating with each other effectively. This is largely because type 2s are emotionally-based while type 5s are intellectually-based. And of course some emotions cannot be rationalised. Therefore, it is quite likely to have frequent miscommunication between them. However, a type 2 may complete a type 5 with his/her emotion and a type 5 can complete a type 2 with his/her reason. Therefore, if they can meet at a common point, they may be able to communicate effectively.

When a type 2 sees a type 6 as a person needing to be helped, and the type 6 perceives the type 2 as a place to seek shelter, they can get along very well. Otherwise, they may have difficulty negotiating.

Since the type 2 and the type 7 are at different frequencies, they almost always have problems understanding each other. The unobtrusive personality of the type 7 and the controlling nature of the type 2 makes it extremely difficult for these two types to see eye to eye. However, they may communicate superficially, although not very well.

The 2s and the 8s are both the dominant types in their fields, and thus, clashes between them is common. While the type 2 gives a lot of importance to emotions in a relationship, the type 8 gives

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importance to dependence and managing people. Given the desire of type 2 to also manage the people they help, it is very difficult for them to agree. However, they can communicate in a superficial way.

(Type 3) The Achiever's Communication Style

The type 3 is a character that aims to win the love and appreciation of people by succeeding in life. Therefore, success plays a key role in their communication style. The type 3 therefore agrees and communicates well with those who support and applaud their success. On the other hand, they cannot communicate well with any person who disrupts and does not appreciate their success (Riso and Hudson, 2000).

Like each type, type 3 communicate well with the other types within their region (i.e Heart region 2-3-4). The communication between 3s and 5s takes place only at the superficial level. However, where the goal is unity, they can get along better. The type 3 and type 6 can communicate well but with a catch. Because 3s are success-oriented they can be seen as a safe haven for the 6. The quality of the type 6 to do good work may also appeal to the type 3.

Type 3 and type 7 can communicate as two animated characters, but this communication does not last long. The impatience of type 7 and their openness to new alternatives and adventures can lead to a break down of relationship with a type 3 who prioritizes success. Type 3 and 8 can agree if they can meet certain common goals. The hard work and success of a type 3 may appeal to the leadership sides of an 8. The type 3 can also capitalize on the leadership skills of an 8 to achieve their goals.

Communication between a type 3 and 9 can also take place at a superficial level. The mighty ambitions and solid character of the type 3 may not necessarily match the relaxed and mediating nature of type 9. Therefore, it is easy for the 3 and 9 to terminate communication.

(Type 4) The Individualist's Communication Styles

Seeking authenticity in every aspect of life, the type 4 communicates well with the characters in their region (2,3,4). Type 4 and 5 are able to relate at a superficial level because they are in different regions. It is common for a type 4 to experience confrontation because they prioritize originality while type 5s prioritize rationality.

Type 4 and type 6 can communicate well if originality and quality are common goals. They can both continue to communicate effectively without any conflict unless they exaggerate their characteristics.

Type 4 and 7 can communicate at a superficial level. They can meet at the point of individuality. Their point of difference is in specificity and hyperactivity, while the type 4 emphasize on the former, the type 7 lives for the latter.

Type 4 and 8 can only communicate superficially and on an official level. The individuality of the type 4 and the rigidity and the need for a dependent relationship of the type 8 will always lead to disagreements between the two types.

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Type 4 and 9 can communicate well. In the climate of tolerance of type 9, type 4s can find the opportunity to express their true selves. Thus, type 9 is one of the characters that a type 4 can communicate with quite easily and effectively.

(Type 5) The Researcher's Communication Styles

Like the all the others, type 5 communicate well with the other types in their intellectually-centered region (Head-based types 5-6-7). It is difficult for a type 5 to communicate well with a type 8. This is because the type 5 is rational and often antisocial while the type 8 is instinctive and often a social character. However, if they can rise above their basic instincts, they may be able to complement each other's shortcomings. A type 5 can complement an 8's lack of knowledge, and a type 8 can complement the lack of power and authority of a 5. In this respect, they can get along quite well as two types who need each other (Riso and Hudson, 2000).

The communication level of a type 5 and a type 9 is usually good. In the tolerating nature of a type 9, a type 5 may feel comfortable. The knowledge and expertise of a type 5 can also appeal to type 9.

(Type 6) The Loyalist's Communication Styles

Like the all the others, type 5 communicate well with the other types in their intellectually-centered region (Head-based types 5-6-7). The type 6 can see view type 8 as a focus of trust and thus,

communicate well and effectively with them. The type 6 also communicate well with type 9 given their tolerating nature which a 6 will find comforting. However, if the stability of a type 6 does not match the comfort level of a type 9, their communication may be impaired.

(Type 7) The Enthusiast's Communication Styles

Type 7 also get along well with the other types in their region (5,6,7). Type 7 and 8 usually need to make great efforts in order to establish a long-term communication. This is because of the high-handedness of type 8 which does not sit well with the hyperactivity and spontaneity of the type 7. Thus, communication between these two may be impaired. The free-spirit of a type 7 coupled with the high tolerance a type 9 produces a quality relationship with very good understanding and communication.

(Type 8) The Challenger's Communication Styles

Type 8 are body-based character and thus, they get along very well with other types within their region (8,9,1). However, a type 8 usually must put in a lot of effort in dealing with other individuals, as an 8 may find it difficult to agree with them. Their domineering nature ensures that they can only communicate well when they are obeyed. In other words, it not uncommon for a type 8 to show a degree of hostility towards individuals that they cannot control or subjugate. However, a healthy type 8 can learn tolerance and thus, lead a more balanced life.

(Type 9) Mediator's Communication Styles

Type 9 also get along well with the other types in their own region (8,9,1). As explained above, harmony, peace and tolerance being their main characteristics, type 9 can communicate well with all the other types of Enneagram characters.

Conclusions

Enneagram is a personality recognition system that helps people to establish a balance of the mind, soul and body. Those who achieve this balance in their lives communicate better with other individuals and are generally happier in the society. On the other hand, those who have a poor balance of the mind, soul and body will necessarily encounter problems in communication and in dealing with people in general.

Enneagram is an excellent tool in learning the right communication because it allows people to know and understand themselves, as well as other individuals. A person who is able to figure out his strengths and weaknesses can utilize that in all his interactions with people. Furthermore, understanding the people he interacts with will necessarily lead to a more effective communication.

According to the Enneagram system, people are considered equal and there is no superiority amongst people based on gender, race or color. Since everyone is equal in terms of being human, more accurate and more humane communication can be established between people.

Lastly, it must be noted that in Enneagram, everyone has the opportunity to develop the leadership ability of his character. Each character can develop a unique leadership style. And understanding the Leader-Follower dynamics within the framework of Enneagram will be invaluable in understanding achieving this goal.

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