

Get their number

Your boss, your client, your mother-in-law. All of them have a button.

Find out what it is.

One of the easiest ways to find a button is to check out their Enneagram type. The Enneagram is a people-typing tool which has been used for centuries to counsel people all across the world. It identifies 9 types of people, driven by avoiding or seeking particular emotions: the emotions are fear, anxiety and anger. The types are numbered 1 to 9 (no, one number is not better than another!).

The table below outlines one “button” for each type.

This is an immensely complex model, and I feel a bit of a charlatan for reducing it to less than 30 words. There is a little more detail on the next few pages.

Enneagram Number	To get me onside tell me	To get under my skin tell me:
1	I'm right	I'm wrong
2	I'm helpful	I'm selfish
3	I'm successful	I'm a fake
4	I'm unique and special	I'm just like everybody else
5	I'm wise and informed	I don't know my stuff
6	I'm in danger	I'm safe
7	I'm fun	I'm boring
8	I'm strong	I'm weak
9	I'm fair	I'm biased

Google the Enneagram and you will find plenty of resources online. Or try [Enneagram Made Easy](#).

The Enneagram has been applied to a lot of different contexts, many of which are quite esoteric.

For clearly corporate application, I like [Nine Ways Of Working: How To Use The Enneagram To Discover Your Natural Strengths And Work More Effectively](#). Michael Goldberg who wrote that book also has a [useful site](#).

Enneagram type

*Who you know
with this type*

1



Judge, Reformer, Purist, Perfectionist, Paragon, Resent;
Communicates by: Preaching, Lecturing, Teaching;
Makes you feel you have a clear and higher purpose,
You are dealt with fairly

Under pressure: self-obsessed, melancholic, self-pitying (-4)

When all is well: Fun-loving, easy-going, silly (+7)

2



Helper, Needy Giver, Martyr; Communicates with
Compliments, Cajoles, Personal Questions, Seductive
charm. Makes you feel appreciated, fully heard, taken
care of

Under pressure: Bossy, outraged (-8)

When all is well: Look after themselves and you too (+4)

3

Performer, Achiever, Marketer, Motivator, Manager, Fake



Communicates with pitches, propaganda, and
advertising. Makes you feel inspired, capable of your
best, part of the team

Under pressure: Slothful, lazy, inactive (-9)

When all is well, One of the team, loyal, strategic(+6)

Red: The anger centre: they either express or suppress anger. Gut-centred.

Blue: anxiety centre: they either express or suppress anxiety. Heart-centred.

Green: The Fear Centre: they either express or suppress fear. Head-centred

Enneagram type

*Who you know
with this type*

4



Tastemaker artist, auteur, individualist, creator, romantic, melancholic

Communicates with poetry, soulful dramatic lamentations, meaningful silences, strong feeling-toned words. Makes you feel deep, special;

Under pressure: Martyr, complainer (-2)

When all is well: Do what's right (+1)

5



Thinker, Guru, Idea-Smith, Wise one, Sage, Observer, Stinger; Communicates with email, treatises, lengthy briefs

Makes you feel dazzled by their intellectual tour-de-force, awed by their cool objectivity.

Under pressure: Dilettante, unfocused (-7);

When all is well: Strong, clear, focused (+8)

6



Faithful Skeptic, Loyalist, True Believer, Devil's Advocate, Troubleshooter, Dragon Slayer; Communicates with caveats, complaints, constraints, concerns; Makes you feel trusted, warm, part of the team;

Under pressure: Ambitious, workaholic (-3)

When all is well: Just, fair, relaxed (+9)

Red: The anger centre: they either express or suppress anger. Gut-centred.

Blue: anxiety centre: they either express or suppress anxiety. Heart-centred.

Green: The Fear Centre: they either express or suppress fear. Head-centred

Enneagram type

*Who you know
with this type*

7



Epicure, Imagineer, Visionary, Planner, Optimist, Glutton; Communicates by Brain-storming, Tripping on ideas, Tall stories, Hypothesising; Makes you feel Entertained, Dazzled, Inspired

Under pressure: Righteous, by-the-book, rule bound (-1)

When all is well: Seeing and observing wisely (+5)

8



Potentate, Champion, Boss, Chief, Leader, Top Dog, Challenger, King pin, Venge; Communicates by diatribes, harangues, threats, Unmediated & uncensored, blunt; Makes you feel Well-protected, Part of the action

Under pressure: Retreats into a cave and observes (-8)

When all is well: Helpful, strong, protective (+2)

9



Mediator, Negotiator, Peacemaker, Sloth, Natural; communicates by Sagas, Epics, Rambling discourse; Makes you feel Accepted, Understood, Calmed, Warmly held

Under pressure: paranoid, doubting, worried about catastrophe (-6)

When all is well: does what it takes for success (+3)

Red: The anger centre: they either express or suppress anger. Gut-centred.

Blue: anxiety centre: they either express or suppress anxiety. Heart-centred.

Green: The Fear Centre: they either express or suppress fear. Head-centred