

# Enneagram Theory: Enneagram Wings

Source: [theenneagraminbusiness.com](http://theenneagraminbusiness.com)

## *What is it?*

The wings are the Enneagram style numbers of either side of our core Enneagram style; in basic wing theory, 9 and 2 are wings for Ones; 1 and 3 are wings for Twos; 2 and 4 are wings for Threes; 3 and 5 are wings for Fours; 4 and 6 are wings for Fives; 5 and 7 are wings for Sixes; 6 and 8 are wings for Sevens; 7 and 9 are wings for Eights; and 8 and 1 are wings for Nines.

You can see this pattern on the Enneagram symbol, and this is one of many ways in which the Enneagram symbol becomes a map of self-understanding and growth. Most teachers of the Enneagram agree that wings exist and that wings add potential characteristics to our core Enneagram style. Wings do not change your core motivational or character structure, but they do explain why two individuals of the same style behave slightly differently. Some Enneagram teachers believe that a person has only one wing and very few teachers say there are no wings at all for anyone, but I am of the belief that people can have one wing, two wings, or no wings at all.

## *Is it practical and useful; does it help us do something we can't do as well without it?*

Understanding the wing or wings of an individual helps people understand why, for example, a Five with a Six wing demonstrates different behavior than a Five with a Four wing. A Five with a Six wing has double mental energy – both Fives and Sixes are Mental Center styles – and so they tend to be more cautious and cerebral than a Five with a Four wing. Because Fours are an Emotional Center or Heart Center style, Fives with Four wings tend to be more emotional and have, in a sense, a double sense of abandonment. Fives and Fours have a shared sense of existential abandonment, and I once heard someone describe Fours and Fives in this way (and I wish I could remember the source): Fours and Fives both feel abandoned, but Fours know they've been abandoned and cry about it (thus, they have “wet” abandonment). By contrast, Fives have learned to live in this state and no longer cry (thus, “dry” abandonment). A Five with both a Four and a Six would still be a Five, but he or she would be more deeply emotional and doubly analytical.

Wings are also useful for development and growth. Because all of us have the potential to access both Wings, if we are not accessing the positive qualities of these two other styles, we are missing some of our possibilities for growth.

Here is the basic information on the wings for each Enneagram style and how these wings augment our core Enneagram styles.

### **Wings for Ones**

*Nine Wing:* Ones with a Nine wing have a greater ability to relax and unwind without having to go on vacation, are less reactive when they disagree with someone, and are more likely to solicit the opinions of others rather than relying primarily on their own judgments or those of others whom they respect.

*Two Wing:* Ones with a Two wing are more consistently generous and people-focused, in addition to being more gregarious and displaying more consistent warmth to others.

### **Wings for Twos**

*One Wing:* When Twos have access to their One wing, they balance their focus on people with a dedication to task, are more discerning about situations and people, pay more attention to detail, and have an increased ability to be firm and to say no, with far less worry about how others will react to them when they assert themselves in this way.

*Three Wing:* Twos with a Three wing are far more comfortable being visible, such as holding a high-profile leadership position. In addition, these Twos feel more comfortable acknowledging their desire to be successful; in fact, they often pursue being respected as much as being liked.

### **Wings for Threes**

*Two Wing:* Threes with Two wings are far more sensitive to the feelings of others and more generous with their time and resources, and they often focus on helping others in their professional and/or personal lives.

*Four Wing:* Threes who have a Four wing are far more in contact with their own feelings, are willing to engage in emotional conversations with others, have a deeper personal presence, and may engage in some form of artistic expression or refined level of artistic appreciation.

### **Wings for Fours**

*Three Wing:* When Fours have a Three wing, they are more action oriented, have higher and more consistent energy levels, exhibit more poise and confidence, and are more comfortable with being highly visible rather than shying away from visibility or feeling ambivalent about it.

*Five Wing:* Fours with a Five wing are more objective and analytical, which provides a counterpoint to their more subjective emotional way of relating with others. In addition, they have an increased ability to perceive situations from a more considered and less reactive perspective and often demonstrate more self-restraint and self-containment.

### **Wings for Fives**

*Four Wing:* Fives with a Four wing are more emotionally sensitive and expressive and also have an aesthetic perspective, perhaps engaging in the arts themselves – for example, writing poetry, novels, or screenplays and/or being photographers or artists.

*Six Wing:* Fives with a Six wing emphasize and engage more readily with teams, tend to place greater value on loyalty, and may have enhanced intuitive insight. Although many other Fives can

also be quite insightful, their insights come more from putting facts together and engaging in extensive analysis. When Fives have a Six wing, the insights come more quickly as the product of instantaneous processing.

### **Wings for Sixes**

*Five Wing:* When Sixes have a Five wing, they are more internally than externally focused and are also more self-contained and restrained, thus tempering their tendency to be reactive. In addition, they have an increased passion for knowledge and use the pursuit of knowledge not only to gather information in order to feel prepared, but also for the pure enjoyment of learning.

*Seven Wing:* It is sometimes said that Sixes see the glass as half empty and Sevens see it as half full. Thus, when Sixes have a Seven wing, they see the whole glass and therefore tend to be more cheerful, less worried, more optimistic, and higher-energy.

### **Wings for Sevens**

*Six Wing:* Sevens with a Six wing add the capacity to understand situations as being both half-full and half-empty. Because these Sevens have an increased perceptiveness and an ability to anticipate potential problems, their actions become more deliberate and less based on their instantaneous reactions.

*Eight Wing:* Sevens with an Eight wing tend to be more direct, assertive, and powerful. They have a more grounded presence and an increased desire to put ideas into action.

### **Wings for Eights**

*Seven Wing:* Eights with a Seven wing add a lightheartedness to the usually more serious Eight outlook, are more high-spirited and independent, and tend to be far more adventurous, willing to try new things in their personal and professional lives for the sake of experimentation and enjoyment.

*Nine Wing:* Eights with a Nine wing are interpersonally warmer, more calm, and less reactive, and they solicit and listen to others' opinions because they are more consensually oriented.

### **Wings for Nines**

*Eight Wing:* Nines with an Eight wing have a more take-charge orientation, exhibiting a solidity and forcefulness while still maintaining a desire to hear others' opinions. With a very strong Eight wing, Nines assert their own points of view more readily and make fast and clear decisions, even in the face of strong opposition.

*One Wing:* When Nines have a One wing, they are more attentive – for example, they pay more attention to details and are more punctual and precise. Although Nines often diffuse their attention, a One wing increases their overall focus, acuity, clarity, and discernment.