

TYPE SIX



Sixes are insightful, prone to worry, and create anticipatory scenarios in order to feel prepared if something goes wrong; some engage in risk to prove their fearlessness.

Four Questions

If you answer Yes to three or four of these questions, your likely Enneagram is type Six.

1. Do you like to think through various contingencies before you take action?
2. Do you calculate risk on an ongoing basis, being risk-avoidant, risk-approaching or both?
3. Do you have a very active mind that is hard to keep still and calm?
4. Are you a loyal and responsible person, particularly with those close to you or teams to which you belong?

Strengths | loyal | collaborative | persevering | problem solving

Development areas | worrying | tolerance of ambiguity | analysis paralysis | martyring

Sixes search for meaning, certainty, and trust and avoid negative scenarios from occurring. Symbolized by the question mark inside the mind, Sixes question everything as a way to feel prepared for every contingency.

Sharp-minded, insightful, and loyal, Sixes are issue identifiers and problem solvers, with a mental-emotional antenna that is finely attuned to anticipate problems before they occur so that alternative paths and contingency plans can be created. This is done to ensure the best possible outcome and prevent the worst from happening. Although the above description applies to all Sixes, Sixes are complex individuals who run the gamut from phobic Sixes, who are overtly and palpably fearful, to counter-phobic. Sixes, who often mask their fear by taking dramatic risks – often, but not always, physical ones – that adrenalize them and prove to themselves and others, at least for the moment, that they are not fearful. Many Sixes display characteristics of the phobic and the counter-phobic Six.

All Sixes worry as a habit of mind, although some Sixes call it instantaneous anticipatory planning or problem solving, and other Sixes do this so naturally that they no longer notice it. There are also key differences among Sixes. Some Sixes deal with their concerns by becoming warm, inviting, and by developing strong and loyal social alliances as a way to feel safe; other Sixes become extraordinarily dutiful and try to know and adhere to the “rules” as a way to not get in trouble by going astray; and still other Sixes – the highly counter-phobic Sixes – unconsciously turn against their fear with demonstrations of strength as a way to convince themselves and others of their bravery. In reality, most phobic Sixes have some counter-phobic qualities – for example, they can become aggressive toward authority or authority figures – and most counter-phobic Sixes do share their fears and concerns to those they trust or through their non-verbal behavior.



Sixes have a variety of interpersonal styles, but most are warm, loyal, appear genuine, displaying a relative lack of pretentiousness, candid, agile in expressing concerns, and willing to talk truthfully about themselves.

While we can all worry, be insightful, and want to feel well-prepared for the various scenarios life offers, for Sixes, the search for meaning, certainty, and trust, and the avoidance of negative scenarios from occurring is their primary, persistent, and driving motivation.

Core development areas

- Learning to differentiate between an insight and a projection (something based on imagination)
- Trusting your own inner authority rather than looking to someone or something outside yourself for meaning and certainty
- Having faith in yourself and others to be able to handle whatever occurs

Three great development ideas

Shift your focus from half empty to half full.

Each morning, start your day with 15 minutes of thinking about everything that is going well and is problem-free. You can look at items in your home, objects you see on your way to work, and aspects of yourself. This practice will actually begin to change some of your brain's pathways.

Trust your own authority.

Make a list of all the times you have followed your own advice and found it to be advice well taken. Next to each item, write down all of the benefits that you have accrued from following your own advice. Think of this self-advice as the wisdom of your own inner authority. Each time you feel confused about what to do, ask yourself this question: If I were going to follow my own inner authority, what advice would it give me? Then follow that advice.

Differentiate between an insight and a pure projection.

Can you tell the difference between an insight and a pure projection? Do you know when you are being really perceptive (an insight) versus purely projecting (making something up entirely in your own mind so that instead of reflecting reality, this view instead reflects what you think, feel, or want to do)? Spend 15 minutes each morning making a list of your uncensored thoughts about what you believe will happen that day. At the end of the day, review your list. For each item on the list, answer these questions: Was this an insight, a pure projection, or a mixture of the two? How can I tell the difference? After you have practiced this activity for several weeks, answering the question How can I tell the difference? will give you useful information.