

VOX VALUES AND THE ENNEAGRAM

The following resource is a collection of reflections from members in the Vox community who represent each of the different enneagram types. Each person reflected on how the Vox values are experienced or even present challenges in their lives based on their enneagram type.

ONE: REFORMER / PERFECTIONIST

- **Artistry.** It can be challenging to let myself be free to make mistakes. When I'm really enjoying being creative, my mantra is "done is better than perfect."
- **Posture.** It is not difficult for me to see my faults, or the darkness all around me, the real challenge for me is to see my light alongside that darkness and to see the way God works through those dark areas in my life to bring more light into the world.
- **Empathy.** I have a strong drive for justice and it comes naturally for me to side with the poor and the disinherited. It's much harder for me to sit with people who are more like me, but who have come to very different conclusions or decisions, and to be present without judgement.
- **Participation.** As a One, the idea that we each must care for our plot in the garden and do the work required to cultivate it makes perfect sense. Where I have seen myself grow as a part of Vox's garden is in collaboration and continuing to work my plot, even when I'm disappointed.
- **Peculiarity.** As a One, I value rules and order, so it can be difficult to let myself and others off the hook and practice radical forgiveness. It helps me to think of God's bigger picture of love and justice in the world, so that I can move beyond the small rights and wrongs.
- **Mystery.** As a One, the idea of a mysterious God runs counter to the way I view most other areas of my life (with control, order, and consistency), so I think the mystery of faith has always been appealing to me. I have seen growth in my faith as I have learned to embrace doubt and the things I don't understand about God.

TWO: HELPER

- **Artistry.** As a Two, I integrate into a "Four" which is the "artist." I don't consider myself an "artistic" person, but I'm learning to be more expansive and give grace to myself with that definition. When I am in a good place, this might look like trying a new recipe, and not feeling frustrated when it didn't turn out as I hoped, but enjoying the process of it.
- **Posture/Participation.** A question I often come back to is "What can I freely give?" That used to mean to me, I needed to be able to give everything and felt ashamed to say no. What I've learned instead is, when I find myself volunteering for something, or jumping into help, I'm asking myself the question, "Am I expecting something in return?" "Am I doing this to feel validated?" "Would I believe this person loved me if I didn't do this for them?" This allows me to check in with myself, and notice my thoughts, feelings, and needs, and either proceed with caution, or decline.
- **Empathy.** As a Two, I think I've always assumed I was good at empathizing. However, something I've needed to learn was the difference between sympathizing and empathizing and what was the appropriate amount of burden to share. I'm prone to try to take someone's burden away and "help them" even though, most of the time, it's not helpful for either of us.
- **Peculiarity.** In a culture that is often encouraging us to "do more," saying no can be difficult, and feel really selfish. I have to remind myself in those moments, that I am worthy of God's love, not because what I can do, but He has ALREADY made me worthy.
- **Mystery.** The older I get, and I'm not that old, the fewer things I know for certain. Rather than pushing myself harder to achieve more, instead I'm leaning into being curious about myself and others to learn and grow.

THREE: ACHIEVER

- **Artistry.** With artistry, process and presence are just as valuable as the outcome. To a Three, that can feel slow, inefficient, and frustrating. Three's have an abundance of drive. If we can visualize a possibility, the pull to achieve it feels almost irresistible. That may lead to success, but at what cost? Spiritually-grounded creativity requires presence—being awake to the here and now. Artistry invites three's to a slower, gentler, less polished, more vulnerable path.
- **Posture.** Shame makes three's want to either brightly shine or hide in the shadows. Three's hold others in high regard, but we suspect there's something secretly wrong with us. So we strive to show only our impressive qualities. But a humble posture requires deep acceptance of our messiness—light and shadow—and grace. The value of posture helps threes' take a more realistic, authentic, honest inventory of ourselves, and recognize our common humanity. Then grace allows us to feel compassion—for ourselves and others—and our relationships become more genuine.
- **Empathy.** Three's are masters at thinking and doing, but we often ignore our emotions. Three's live in the heart center of the Enneagram; we feel emotions so strongly they're almost overpowering. In order to think clearly and “get things done”, we learn to switch off our feelings, believing they slow us down and prevent us from achieving our goals. But empathy involves learning to feel the full range of our emotions, so that we can empathize with the emotions of others. The value of empathy invites the Three to stop avoiding unpleasant emotions and experiences, but practice feeling and welcoming them as they lead to healing, wholeness, and empathic connection with others.
- **Participation.** Three's light up when we're trusted with a meaningful task and we can “get to work”. If there's a complex goal to be accomplished, three's want to make it happen. But Three's overestimate our ability, time, and resources, and we have difficulty turning down a glittering opportunity. The challenge of participation for a three is learning how to discern what truly is our small plot of the garden, and learning when to say “no”, so we can be present to the work that's truly meant for us.
- **Peculiarity.** Three's may like legalism/fundamentalism because it makes holiness feel “achievable”. As three's, we tend to conform to expectations; so being different or peculiar can feel awkward. But what makes Christian community peculiar is grace and forgiveness. The value of peculiarity invites a Three to focus less on our “grade” in the school of life, and more on how gentle, kind, and forgiving we're being with ourselves and others when we mess up. That may feel awkward and unpolished to a three, but it's a more loving, radical way to live in community.

- **Mystery.** Three's tend to believe we're loved because of what we “do”, not for who we “are”. So the idea that Christ loves me unconditionally is a profound mystery to a Three. It makes no sense; it's baffling. Mystery introduces possibilities that wouldn't occur to a Three otherwise. Could it be I'm loved just as I am? Could God be more generous and caring than we ever imagined? In most situations, three's feel the need to influence or control, to get a good outcome. Mystery then is a gift; it invites the Three to let go and be surprised by God's trustworthiness.

FOUR: INDIVIDUALIST

- **Artistry.** I want to create something beautiful and to have art that stands out and is unique to others, but do I do that at the expense of inviting people into my process of creation?
- **Posture.** I find that I have to remind myself as a Four that it's okay to not be at the front of everything. It is ok for others to be the center of attention and to celebrate other's successes versus being envious of them.
- **Empathy.** As a parent and as a Four, I can easily find myself consumed by my own needs and thoughts and to have that reflect on my mood around family, when I should rather focus more on how my daughter must feel or think when I am upset or frustrated.
- **Participation.** Related to artistry and as a Four with a Five wing, I honestly believe it is far more beautiful and rewarding to create something together, but I naturally want to do things on my own to receive more recognition. There is a constant tension in that for me at times.
- **Peculiarity.** As a four, I can understand the desire to be different and to stand apart from others. However, do I do so in vanity/pride and at the expense of bringing peace to a situation?
- **Mystery.** My feelings can often betray and lead to my false self, so I need reminders that God's love and faithfulness to me is itself, a mystery. That not everything is as they may appear, especially in my thoughts.

FOUR: INDIVIDUALIST (continued)

• Artistry.

- Disintegration - When I use my creativity as a way to heal my wound of feeling unseen, or don't create due to envy of others' work or get caught up in whether it's really good work that will be received well.
- Integration - Making room for mystical experience, creating from the place of being seen and known deeply in God's care, from this place my making is just a simple faithfulness, no big deal. I want to create something beautiful and to have art that stands out and is unique to others, but do I do that at the expense of inviting people into my process of creation?

• Posture.

- Disintegration - I tend to see myself as unworthy and a burden to others.
- Integration - I am a mixture of light and dark, I welcome feedback, basically I'm open to mirrors that are clean and reflect my beauty as well as darkness, that help me to live more honestly and generously because I find myself more and more living in the gift.

• Empathy.

- Disintegration - Perhaps start with reading emotions and feeling what others feel, but then move into problem solving and suggestions.
- Integration - Starting to really consider how the privilege I have as a white, straight male limits what I can understand. So in some ways my empathy is becoming more active in giving space and power back to those it's been taken from, rather than trying to say "I know what you feel . . ." cause I don't on some levels.

• Participation.

- Disintegration - Getting caught up on being impressive.
- Integration - I've never really been that impressive, no need to start today, or especially not on a Sunday morning - smile. simple faithfulness is a joy and more than enough.

• Peculiarity.

- Disintegration - Lord have mercy! Four are the reason for all the Keep _____ weird stuff. Of course they didn't come up with it but there are probably more 4's in Austin and Portland than many places. This is being unique in order to be visible, not really in service of the whole

and greater good though.

- Integration - There is a shift to our vision of holiness as wholeness. The unique and sad parts of life are not more of who I am than the light, joyous and ordinary. Thus our peculiarity is to embrace a deeper fullness of humanity in ourselves and others and bring healing through that profound acceptance. Creates more spaciousness for the other, rather than needing to overextend and fill it all the time. But also a willingness to take up a good amount of space if our tendency is to play small.

• Mystery.

- Disintegration - I can't know anything so why try.
- Integration - There's a deeper part of me that knows, it's the ego/false self that needs a little more doubt, just to loosen it's grip a little. practices like contemplative prayer/meditation allow me to be less fixated on emotions and over-identifying with them as my source of frail identity. spiritual knowing includes thoughts and emotions but is also something else

FIVE: THINKER / OBSERVER

- **Artistry.** Invited to garden again, living into our nature as Co-creators with God challenges me as a Five. Too easily I discount my contribution and negatively evaluate my “art” because I fear rejection. I am challenged to consider “artistry” in the fullest sense of the word and to step out in faith to make my unique offering.
- **Posture.** I appreciate the use of the term “posture” to convey the importance of humility. As a Five, I can be stuck in my head and ignore my body. This value underscores the bodily dimension of our being and the importance of embodying and incarnating the Christ life. My “posture” matters!
- **Empathy.** As a Five, “the Observer,” it is not difficult for me to appreciate the legitimacy of varying viewpoints and differing perspectives – cognitively. It is more difficult for me to access feelings – my own and others.
- **Participation.** As a Five, I am prone to spend lots of time alone pursuing my own interests. Fives love learning, but can also never feel adequately prepared. The Vox value of participation calls me to step out and offer what I have drawing out the eight arrow of integration in me. This value is probably the most challenging and the most important for me as a Five.
- **Peculiarity.** Being a peculiar people who offer grace to others and to ourselves, resonates with me as Fives are often drawn to the unusual and generally do not depend on social validation. What may be more difficult for me as a Five to appreciate is the community/communal dimension of this value. Not what kind of person am I, but what kind of people are we?
- **Mystery.** Fives are called the Investigator because they want to find out why things are the way they are and how the world works. The Vox value of mystery acknowledges the limits of knowledge and calls us to trust. At this point in my journey, I am more aware of human limits and transitory nature and more ready to embrace Mystery.

SIX: LOYALIST

- **Artistry.** It is more natural for me to fixate on my beliefs and scan the horizon for anything that may threaten my safety. Artistry is an invitation to receive beauty and also trust that I contribute beauty.
- **Posture.** Receiving grace in community requires vulnerability and deep trust in self and in others. It is challenging for a 6 to believe people are trustworthy and will do what they say they do. It can also be challenging to trust that what I have to offer in community will be well received – so it feels safe to not open up.
- **Empathy.** I am tempted to process the world through the mind alone – that way, it’s safe and theoretical. But it can be a barrier to connecting and holding space with others. Empathy requires paying attention and presence. To practice this, body awareness in meditation is very helpful. Once I ground my body, I can experience feelings (my own and those of others) in real time as the thinking, feeling and sensing become integrated.
- **Participation.** Deep down, I don’t trust myself, so it feels safe to hold back from engaging with others. As a consequence, what gifts am I currently withholding from the world? What opportunities am I missing to receive?
- **Peculiarity.** It does not come naturally to extend grace easily to self and others.
- **Mystery.** Faith involves doubt, uncertainty and learning to trust. Faith requires more than just belief in my head. It involves a more integrative faith that involves a vulnerable heart.

SEVEN: ENTHUSIAST

- **Artistry.** As a seven, I love to experience beautiful art, and I love to create it. My tastes are eclectic and I can appreciate the art in just about any style. While I really enjoy drawing and painting and writing, I have a hard time slowing down to actually do it, let alone pursue mastery of anything—partially because I don't want to be boxed in to any one area. As one who dislikes pain, one part of this value that really resonates with me is the idea that we as co-creators can be part of God's redemptive plan to bring the world back to its original vision. However, in regards to seeing God's artistry in me, I'm often trying to bring cheer and energy even when I'm not feeling them, and that can lead to pretending and escapism and shame.
- **Posture.** Overall I'm very positive, and I easily see the good in people. I'm very aware of my downfalls, but I'm hoping that you aren't, and I spend too much energy distracting myself and others away from the harder elements of my story. Part of my work has been to really own the rough edges. As a seven, I don't much feel the need for control or power, but I can sometimes steamroll people with jokes and stories. If I'm not careful, I'll use humor to get out of an uncomfortable moment that may actually be very important, so my work is to be present and to really listen.
- **Empathy.** I'm a very empathetic person, which is not always true for sevens; however, when I really dig down, I wrestle with self-centered motivations for my empathy—how will their feelings affect me? How are they seeing me? Are they having fun, because if not, I won't get to have fun. Etc. (I think this might be true on some level for all the types, but especially sevens). Social sevens can help everyone have a good experience, but that futuristic pre-planning can sometimes get in the way of real empathy which must allow for deviation from the plan.
- **Participation.** As a seven, I generally want to Do All The Things!, as the meme says. In integration, I move toward five, which lends me some focus that is so so important as I live out this Vox value. My work is to contribute deeply in specific, intentional ways, recognizing my own boundaries and limitations (which are not a seven's favorite words lol). The danger for me is to constantly overcommit, and then let people down by being absent, late, or only partially invested.
- **Peculiarity.** My inner seven loves this take on holiness! I enjoy the idea of not having to compete and getting to be whoever God has created me to be, and I'm enjoying exploring that question. A legalistic view of holiness feels like a trap, instantly creating anxiety and fear of failure. I love how grace is part of our set-apartness here, and I'm generally on board because grace feels better than judgement on both sides; however, I struggle with grace when someone I love has been hurt or trapped in big

pain. I think I struggle at times with forgiveness because I so viscerally want to avoid the hurt that I can't walk through the process.

- **Mystery.** This value of mystery is so freeing for me as a seven—I don't have to know everything, which leads to dissonance because of course I don't and I have questions. And, I'm interested in finding the bits of truth in everything. All the things! Sevens are naturally curious. However, uncertainty already feeds our fear of missing out and the constant flipping of channels, so the danger is to lean too far into mystery and use it as an excuse to bail on the process of understanding and sharing my faith.

EIGHT: CHALLENGER

- **Artistry.**
- **Posture.**
- **Empathy.**
- **Participation.**
- **Peculiarity.**
- **Mystery.**

NINE: PEACEMAKER

- **Artistry.** Ringo Starr is a nine. He's the Beatle that probably gets the least amount of credit for their greatness. Yet, I would propose he's the one that holds the whole thing together. Nines' gift to artistry is a sense of union and wholeness. We love to be part of a broad vision, we're happy to play our small role within it, and we love to offer our unique creativity within that paradigm. Back to Ringo, take another listen, he's also got one of the most unique drumming styles of his time. However, he never lets his creativity come at the expense of overshadowing John, Paul, or George.
- **Posture.** Jesus says to "Love your neighbor as yourself," which carries an implication that it's necessary to love yourself to truly love your neighbor. For a nine, it's difficult to truly value someone else's thoughts and opinions when you've got a tendency to have such little value for your own. Nines have to learn this paradoxical dance of holding space for others without doing so at the complete expense of their own space and independence.
- **Empathy.** This comes very naturally as a nine, because I'm always concerned with how others feel in a given situation. However, there is a need for caution, because I have a natural inclination to attempt to fix problems or make peace when often the most important thing I can do is just quietly sit with a person in their struggle.
- **Participation.** Nines are all about participating when they feel invited. The struggle for a nine is to get started in taking part, because it's hard to believe that others want you to be a part of something and that you bring value to that effort. Once we do start, we struggle to avoid burnout, because we don't want to disappoint others. We often need an invitation to get going and a reminder that we'll be accepted and loved even if we need to pull back.
- **Peculiarity.** As a nine, I find a lot of strength in the Matthew 5:9 from the Beatitudes—"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they will be called children of God." I think by leaning into our desire to make peace in a healthy way, we're displaying the incredible peculiarity of the kingdom—a relentless offering of grace. The key is to stay healthy by offering yourself this same relentless grace.
- **Mystery.** Embracing mystery may be the most important factor for the health of a nine, in my opinion. When we're at our least healthy, we tend to tune out and disengage. We can't lean into the mystery of God, because it would force self-examination and a sense of self-worth. To believe that you're inherently lovable is very difficult for the unhealthy nine. However, if we do lean into that mystery and follow that pillar of light through our dark days, we can find a confidence in God's love. We don't have to prove ourselves or fear our limitations, because we are how God made us and

he made us in his image. As we feel this more deeply, we're able to extend that type of love to others. The biggest doubt we'll battle, I think, is the doubt we have in ourself, which makes it difficult to believe that there could be a powerful God who would bother to pay us any attention, let alone make himself one of us in order to bring us the wholeness we so desire.