

## ABSTRACT

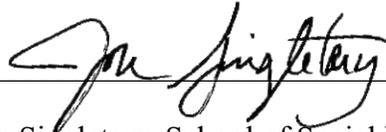
### The Enneagram and Communication Styles

Alexandria M. Francis

Director: Jon Singletary, Ph.D.

This thesis seeks to find the relationship between the Enneagram and communication styles. Background data on the Enneagram and its Triads was first presented to provide ample background knowledge on the material. Then, a case study was conducted of three individuals, a Type Nine, Type Six, and Type Three. Each individual had a similar background and profile. This case study was conducted by asking a series of questions, which pertained to the different communication preferences and styles of each respective individual. Once the data was collected, it was analyzed in the context of the qualities of each individual's Enneagram type and Triad. Based on the research findings, there appears to be a strong connection between an individual's Enneagram type and their communication preferences and styles.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jon Singletary", is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Jon Singletary, School of Social Work

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM:

A solid horizontal line intended for a signature.

Dr. Elizabeth Corey, Director

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

THE ENNEAGRAM AND COMMUNICATION STYLES

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Baylor University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Honors Program

By

Alexandria M. Francis

Waco, Texas

May 2022

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Enneagram Case Study	14
Chapter Three: Case Study Analysis	27
Chapter Four: Conclusion	35
Bibliography	46

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

I still remember the first time that I saw a bidet. It was in college, and it completely blew me away. I saw the futuristic electronic buttons next to the toilet and thought “wow, lavatories have finally been innovated.” The pandemic only increased my awareness of this invention as more and more Americans had time to begin installing washing basins in their home. It was not until recently that I learned that bidets were not the invention of the future but had been created in 1600s France. Much like the wave of this invention becoming popularized once again in modern culture, the Enneagram has recently gained public traction on social media as thousands of college students begin to study and take interest in this set of nine numbers once again.

In this thesis, I aim to give the reader a basic understanding of the Enneagram of personality types, its symbol, and its history. Once this understanding has been obtained, I will explain a case study that I conducted to examine how the types in the different Triads of the Enneagram communicate. I will then tie it back to how it can be used to break down communication barriers and allow individuals of different personalities to communicate more effectively. In the end, the reader should have the tools to not only strengthen his communication but to better understand the communication of those around him as well.

In this chapter, I will introduce the Enneagram, its symbol, and the nine personality types associated with it. For each, I will present their distinct communication styles. I conclude by introducing the case study approach used in the remainder of the

thesis, which includes interviews with three specific types to learn more about their Enneagram type and how it shapes their communication.

### *Introducing the Enneagram*

Contrary to common assumption, the Enneagram of personality as it is known today is believed to be created by Oscar Ichazo in the early 1900s. Oscar Ichazo was an internationally recognized Bolivian philosopher and founder of the Arica School, an institute that teaches philosophy as it relates to the human ego structure (“The Arica School”). It is here that he taught his devoted students the Enneagram personality types in conjunction with the symbol. Though many individuals reference these nine types simply by their respective number, for clarity they can be labeled using the names created by Riso and Hudson, leaders in Enneagram research, as follows: One, The Reformer; Two, The Helper; Three, The Achiever; Four, The Individualist; Five, The Investigator; Six, The Loyalist; Seven, The Enthusiast; Eight, The Challenger; Nine, The Peacemaker.

These types are commonly displayed on a nine-pointed symbol composed of a triangle, a circle, and an irregular hexagon (“Enneagram Symbol”). The Enneagram symbol was originally introduced by George Gurdjieff, a Russian philosopher, but its roots stem back for centuries. Gurdjieff taught this symbol through dancing to present it as a living element. Although the symbol was introduced and popularized by Gurdjieff, the logic behind it can be traced back to ancient religions and philosophies from around the world. The symbol is beneficial in conjunction with the Enneagram personality types because it makes important connections between the numbers. To begin, the circle which encloses the intersecting shapes represents “the wholeness and unity of human life”

(Owens). This can be seen as a symbol of peace recognizing that all of humanity is composed of some variation of the nine differing types.

Within the shape, one may notice that the numbers, Three, Six, and Nine are connected by the equilateral triangle in the center. This helps to identify the Triads or different centers of intelligence. These “centers” are associated with the role heart, head, and gut play in our personality (Owens). Many disciplines from education to business to healthcare reference these three dimensions of human personality. These body parts are associated with our capacity for feeling, thinking, and doing, characteristics that are common to human experience, but that varies for each of us.

The first center of intelligence can be called the “Gut Numbers” and is composed of Types Eight, Nine, and One (Owens). This center is characterized by a desire to follow one’s instincts. They place less emphasis on thinking and more emphasis on doing. They are likely to make rash decisions without consulting others because they want to be in control (Doyle). Their weakness is their anger because it can spur upon them suddenly and can be overtaking. The second center can be called the “Heart Numbers” and is composed of Types Two, Three, and Four. As can be assumed by the name, these types are largely motivated by their feelings. They are not only aware of their own feelings but are often very perceptive of the feelings of those around them as well. Additionally, it is common for these numbers to struggle with shame, and it can be a big factor when they are making large decisions. Finally, the “Head Numbers” are Types Five, Six, and Seven. This center of intelligence places a large emphasis on thought and logic. It is common for them to extensively think through their choices before acting upon them to minimize risk. This center struggles with fear, which often spurs from a lack of confidence in their

abilities and judgments. Understanding the Centers of Intelligence is the first step to obtaining a better understanding of each personality type, but one thing that makes the Enneagram so beautiful is being able to go even more in-depth in the differentiation of each personality type.

### *Communication Styles*

Communication is an essential part of life and leadership. In fact, according to a study done at the University of Missouri, the average person spends 70 to 80 percent of their day in some form of communication. This is not just talking to people throughout our daily routine. Emailing, texting, calling people on the phone, commenting on social media, and Snapchatting are all forms of communication. Communication is so important because it is the only way we can translate the private thoughts, ideas, and feelings in our heads to the real world. However, this is also why it can be such an issue. Bad communication can lead to misunderstandings, which can cause failed relationships, bad business deals, and even hatred. To limit misunderstandings and enhance communication between individuals, it is imperative that society not only understands how they individually communicate but how others communicate as well. Learning the nine different Enneagram types and how they communicate is one tool that can help accomplish this goal.

### *Introducing the Nine Types*

Type One, or the reformer, is marked by a strong desire to do good and set things right. They want to improve their social sphere, themselves, and the world, and once they do work to improve them, they never feel that they are good enough. It is by this logic that they make sense of their “sense of purpose” in the world (Riso and Hudson 110).

Though it may seem like they would be in the Head Triad, seeing as they make a conscious effort to do good, it is actually grouped into the Gut Triad. This is because they have an intuition or “gut” feeling of the right thing to do first, and then they seek to mentally justify their actions after. For example, a Type One may tell on their best friend for cheating on a test. They would do this because they feel that it is the right thing to do, but afterward, they would further justify this action to ensure that betraying their friend was the right thing to do. In this way, One’s are in the Gut Triad because act on instincts to improve the world around them.

In communication, Ones are typically very straightforward. They do not shy away from sharing what they think, especially when it comes to voicing the right course of action. They can sound judgmental at times, but this is not their intent. They simply have an unwavering moral compass and want to help others do the right thing. While this is something to keep in mind when conversing with a One, this is also what One’s themselves should be aware of and keep in mind when communicating with others. They should discern giving advice with condemning others’ actions. Outside of identifying right from wrong, Ones are also good at critical thinking (O’Hanrahan). They are fair-minded and can typically come up with a logical solution to the problem at hand. This enables them to be great problem solvers, which is also something they enjoy doing because it makes them feel useful.

Type Two, or the helper, is characterized by a desire to be of assistance to others. This allows them to feel needed in their spheres of influence which is where they derive their purpose. As is a characteristic of all the heart numbers, Two’s have a fear of being worthless. They crave validation, so in turn, they like to be verbally recognized and

appreciated for their selflessness and servant-heart. However, this recognition doesn't come without due cause because Twos are by nature extremely helpful and seek to assist others in reaching their full potential. More so than sharing a common fear with Threes and Fours, Twos can be found in the Heart Triad because their actions are largely directed from the heart. They strongly desire to feel needed, so rather than acting on logic or intuition, their actions are directed to fulfill this internal need. They build others up and help them because it makes them feel good inside.

Listening makes up almost half of the communication that individuals engage in daily, but it is also the skill that needs improvement in most individuals, that is except for Twos. Since Twos have a deep desire to be of use to others, they are extremely skilled at intentionally listening to others and providing sound advice and feedback. This is One of the many ways that they feel that can help others. They are very patient in their communication and ask questions to ensure that they fully understand what others are saying ("Enneagram in Business"). They often put their concerns and thoughts on the backburner to allow them to devote their time and attention to the needs of others. Although they are skillful listeners, they have to be careful not to offer unasked advice to their peers. At their heart, Twos just want to be helpful, but people that do not understand this may think they are out of place in inputting their opinion.

Type Three is coined "The Achiever," and no other name could be more accurate. Though it may sound superficial, Threes derive their value from their accomplishments, which often leads them to be a well-known leader in their social circles. Threes showcase the strength and skill of humanity. They strive to be set apart from others and recognized for their achievements. They will push themselves to their mental and

physical limitations to get the task at hand accomplished to a level deemed satisfactory to them. They thrive when they can be productive and cross things off of their to-do list. They find their worth in their abilities, whether it be academic, professional, athletic, superficial, or all of the above. Just like Twos crave to be appreciated for their helpfulness, Threes crave recognition for their accomplishments (Riso and Hudson 153). They are found in the Heart Triad because they crave affirmation from others to feel that their accomplishments are worthwhile. However, if they do not get this affirmation leaving them to feel worthless, they cover their emotions by throwing themselves into their work.

Threes are often very eloquent communicators both socially and academically. Since Threes are often very aware of their surroundings and image, they are extremely skillful in tailoring their communication to fit the settings they are in and the people they are with. This allows them to be able to communicate and relate to a wide range of audiences and do so with confidence. However, this multi-faceted communication skill can come with downfalls as well. In changing their communication styles to fit their audience, threes can come off as inauthentic. They also have problems with impatience in exchanges, especially Ones that are highly emotional or unusually long. This can inhibit their productivity and can be viewed to be a waste of time. When overwhelmed by a long to-do list, Threes communication can also become short and succinct as they focus on the tasks at hand, rather than on their communication with others. To grow in their communication, it is recommended that Threes practice patience when they are communicating and actively listen to others' needs and concerns ("Enneagram in Business").

The Type Four is known as The Individualist because they derive value from their unique identity. Fours have a distinct sense of self. They want to be unique and set apart from their social circles. They don't think that anyone will ever fully be able to relate to or understand them because they are so different from everyone else. Consequently, one can imagine their aversion to the study of the Enneagram. They don't believe that they fit in with any certain number because they see themselves as being so distinctly different (Riso and Hudson 180). Ironically, this trait is what makes them a perfect fit for this personality type. This type is in the Heart Triad because this type is also overcome by the emotion of shame and worthlessness. Fours crave empathy and another's full understanding of them, but they feel like they can never truly achieve this because they are so distinctly different. They can also feel like outcasts not being able to truly relate to anyone. This can cause them to become an unhealthy Four and recoil into their sense of shame.

In keeping with their label of "Individualists," Fours are not afraid to dive into the deep conversation as this is usually where people are most likely to reveal their unique thoughts and opinions, which is where Fours thrive. They are extremely genuine as they strive to maintain their truest self-identity. They aren't ones to hide from sharing things about themselves, but this can also cause them to fall into one of their weak spots as they forget to direct the conversation to the other person. They can also be very intense in their communication as they try to form deep connections with the individuals with which they communicate. To grow in their communication, Fours should learn to be at peace with the fact that they will not form deeper connections with everyone whom they communicate. Sometimes communication is simply to fill the time or to be cordial, and

there is nothing wrong with that. They should also be mindful of allowing the space for other people's thoughts and experiences to enter the conversation. This can not only provide a gateway for a deeper connection but can allow the other person to feel heard and cared for.

The Investigator, or type Five, is unique for his use of logic, reason, and critical thinking. They greatly desired to be viewed by their peers as knowledgeable and capable to do the tasks before them. However, rather than acting on impulses, Fives are very methodical, strategizing their moves. Their worst fear would be to do something that made them seem incompetent or useless, so they will devote time and thought to ensure this is not the outcome of their actions. More than just actions though, Fives want to understand life and its processes. They want to seek out secrets and gain knowledge where it lies to make themselves fully aware of their surroundings. As is not surprising by their description, Fives can be found in the Head Triad. The Head Triad is marked by a desire to analyze a situation before acting upon it and a fear triggered by a lack of confidence in their abilities, and nothing describes a Five better. Fives observe situations before jumping into them because they want to fully understand them before becoming part of them. This can be attributed to a lack of confidence in their abilities and intuition to allow them to act on a whim (Riso and Hudson 208).

Fives are extremely logical and observant. Rather than being the life of the party, Fives are much more content by sitting back and watching the action unfold before them. They are very intentional communicators and are unlikely to mindlessly share their thoughts and opinions. This causes them to oftentimes be seen as wise and interesting since they are very articulate. However, Fives can have issues with communication for

these same reasons. Since their communication is seemingly very calculated and careful, it can cause others to feel distant from them as they refrain to share personal matters and act in a very controlled manner. To improve their communication, Fives can focus on opening up to individuals and letting people in on the more personal aspects of their lives (“Enneagram in Business”). This will allow others to not only feel more comfortable around them but also to feel closer to them.

The Sixth type brings a whole new meaning to the phrase “loyal to a fault” so they are labeled the loyalist. Sixes can be the most loyal friend a person can have, but they can also be quick to feel insecure. Sixes are fueled by a need for security and support from their circle, whether it be friends, family, or coworkers. This circle of reassurance allows them to feel confident in themselves and their life decisions. While everyone likes to have friends, Sixes need this circle to function and move forward (Riso and Hudson 235). However, this will not be a one-sided friendship because since Sixes subconsciously need these friends, they will be top-quality friends themselves to sustain this circle that they rely on. They will support, defend, and connect with their friends regardless of the circumstance and will go above and beyond for their friends. Like Fives, they are also marked by a sense of insecurity in themselves and their actions, which is why they also fall into the Head Triad. They think through their decisions as well, but with a different lens than that of Fives. While Fives make their decisions through the lens of what is the most logical, Sixes think through the lens of what their own beliefs and values are. Once they figure those out, they will not care who opposes them, they will stay loyal to these values and not change their stance.

Sixes are oftentimes great fun to talk to in social settings. They are warm, witty, and charismatic. They have a good balance between sharing their thoughts and opinions and allowing others to do so as well. They are also typically great listeners and ask questions to further their understanding of what others are saying. Though they are great communicators, Sixes can still improve by trusting others' motives behind their actions more ("Enneagram in Business"). While they can be inquisitive to get to understand others, they also ask questions to understand the person themselves and the motives behind what they do. They thrive on analyzing others and finding what they truly feel; however, this mindset can make them distrust and too analytical of their communication with others. Sixes should keep in mind that sometimes their communication with others has no underlying message and should be taken at face value.

The fun ones, the enthusiasts, Type Sevens are all party and play. If you ever need someone for a spontaneous road trip, wild night out, or just to go to dinner with then type Sevens are your people. Sevens love to stay busy but unlike Threes who stay busy being productive, Sevens stay busy by filling their social calendars. Driven by a fear of missing out, Sevens are spontaneous, curious, and upbeat. They can think quickly and although the word "smart" may not be at the forefront of people's minds to describe them, they do have a remarkably quick wit. Somewhat surprisingly, this type is also found in the Head Triad though they do not seem to fully think through their decisions at all with their marked spontaneity. Their strategy just comes at about five times the pace of everyone else. They also share the same uncertainty in themselves and their abilities that is common in the thinking center. To keep these negative thoughts and anxious feelings at bay, they constantly look to the future for events and activities.

Sevens are not only the life of the party in their actions but also in their communication. Sevens are bubbly, charismatic, and interesting. They love to tell exciting stories that keep others engaged and awestruck. They are dazzling socialites that can talk for hours to almost anyone and never run out of things to say. On the same end of the stick, Seven can run into trouble because they are easily distracted so oftentimes their stories can go off track and be confusing to follow (“Enneagram in Business”). They also talk very fast and tell long-winded stories, which can make it hard to actively listen to them for the duration of the conversation. They also oftentimes take what others are saying and tie it back into one of their stories or experiences, which can make them seem self-centered or disinterested in what the other person has to say. To work on this, Sevens should work on actively listening to others and including their experiences in the conversation. They should also slow down and think more about what they are saying while they are saying it to lessen confusion.

Nearing the end of the types, type Eights are known as the challenger. Eights make sense of the world by putting themselves in charge of it (Riso and Hudson 290). They want to be in control of their futures, their relationships, and their environment. As is common with individuals that are in control, they are not afraid to confront others and can oftentimes be intimidating. They want to be seen as leaders and looked up to by others for their dominance and self-discipline. They also want to bring others up and improve them in any way possible. Though they have a concern for the betterment of others, they are extremely independent. This independence spurs from a strong fear of being controlled by others or their environments. They want to be strong and free, so when they feel that they are being controlled they will use their mental and physical

strength to avoid this. Although this quality can prevent them from having deeply emotional relationships, it is also what makes them such great leaders because they will stick to their beliefs regardless of others' opinions. Eights are in the Gut Triad, which should come as no surprise considering they act largely on instinct. They are extremely action-driven and authoritative, which are both defining qualities of this Triad. They trust their instincts and will not hesitate to act on them, even if on a whim.

The same qualities that make Eights great leaders can ironically make them inordinately hard to communicate with, especially in close relationships. Eights are very direct and action-oriented. They are not afraid to do what is right and speak for what they believe in. They also are great leaders in delegating tasks and protecting others. However, they are so focused on being independent and strong, that they have an extremely hard time letting others know how they are feeling or being vulnerable with them because they see this as signs of weakness. They also constantly challenge others in conversations. While this is their way of trying to help others to better themselves, it can come across as argumentative and can be exhausting. To enhance their communication skills, Eights should do self-reflection on their thoughts and feelings to analyze why they act and feel how they do. When they can better explain their instincts, they should be patient and explain them to others to allow for mutual understanding and respect.

It is fitting that the final type is the Type Nine because this type truly does bring harmony to the bunch, which is why they are coined "the peacemaker" (cite). Nine's desire peace in every aspect of their lives and will go to great lengths to obtain it. Contrary to Eights, Nines will not strongly voice their opinions if it is in contradiction to the group to maintain peace. They are also oftentimes very spiritual, which is another

way that they can attain this inner peace that they seek. In addition to peacemakers, Nines are also referred to as the Crown of the Enneagram, not only because they are on top in the diagram but because they often comprise qualities of all of the other types. Although this can enable them to get along well with individuals of differing personalities from their own, it can cause them to lose their sense of self in the process. This can oftentimes cause Nines to misidentify themselves as another type. They are central in the Gut Triad because they more than any other type, can succumb to their emotion of anger. They strive to focus on the happy, pleasant parts of life and avoid the negative parts (Riso and Hudson 316). However, it is not possible to live a life completely free of turmoil. Whenever the bad things build up and start to outweigh the positives, nines can feel overwhelmed and fall into an angry meltdown, as they try to make sense of the world.

In communication, Nines are extremely well-rounded. Since they seek peace in their relationships, they can easily see all sides to a decision or disagreement which allows them to relate and level with others. They do not often say “no” to others; however, if they do not want to do something, they will make an excuse or work a way around it (O’Hanrahan). For example, if a Nine is asked to go pick up something from the store, they would probably say “yes,” but if they did not actually want to, they would put it off for a few days. Even when confronted with information that angers them, nines can still appear mellow and at peace, which is another attribute that allows them to be such remarkable peacemakers.

Having an ample understanding of the nine types and how they respectively communicate allows for enhanced communication between different kinds of individuals. Once these communication barriers are recognized and gradually broken down, it opens

the doors for stronger relationships. However, this brief introduction has just scraped the surface of the complex ways in which the different types communicate. To further delve into the key difference in communication, I have conducted a case study to investigate three different types, representing the three different Triads first-hand.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Enneagram Case Study

#### *Introduction to Case Study*

A case study is an exploration of a topic or subject in a real-world setting to further one's understanding or prove hypotheses. Case studies are useful because they provide researchers with a low-cost solution to discovering more first-hand information on their topics. While in research, more data points are typically better, case studies allow for the researcher to use their discretion in deciding the number of data points to collect. In fact, the entire methodology of case studies is largely left up to the researcher. However, there are a few broad guidelines that should be followed (Crowe et al.).

First, one must define the case. This step involves creating a research question that the case study seeks to answer and doing the background research to ensure that the research question is sound. The research question should not be too broad, which can be difficult considering the topics being studied are often multi-faceted. If there are questions to be answered at once, then the researcher should conduct different studies tailored to answer each question most accurately. Next, one should decide the cases to study and collect data. These steps are the bulk of the case study because it is where the researcher will collect all of the evidence, they will use to answer their research question. This data and research can take a variety of forms and come from many different sources. Some of these include interviews, lab research, past findings, and third-party data. Finally, the researcher will use this evidence to form conclusions and answer their

research question. By combining these steps to build a case study, researchers not only will obtain deeper insight into their topic of interest, but they will be able to contribute first-hand to the scientific discussion about that topic with their findings.

### *Enneagram and Communication Case Study*

The purpose of this case study is to analyze the relationship between individuals' Enneagram numbers with their communication skills and preferences. As previously specified, an individual's Enneagram number can tell a lot about their personality and how their brain works. The Enneagram has become popularized in modern-day society, not only causing many individuals to know their numbers already but pathing the way for it to be brought up in casual conversation. With so much information carried in a person's respective Enneagram number, it is such a great tool that is at our fingertips to use to better our communication with each other. This can aid in dating, excel business dealings, and strengthen friendships. However, a case study was needed to confirm my hypotheses on the relationships between the Enneagram and communication.

Following the research methodology steps above, the case study was first started with a research question. To narrow down the scope of my inquiries, I focused on verbal communication, rather than nonverbals and mannerisms because they are harder to measure. Next, I wanted to focus on individual's personal communication preferences, rather than attempting to analyze their communication with others because this is not only difficult to measure, but it is also can bring in a lot of outside factors, such as the individuals' relationship with one another, physical attraction to each other, and so on. Finally, nine Enneagram numbers are great for separating the details of every aspect of an individual's personality, but for analyzing a broader topic such as communication

preferences, they simply bring too much information to the table. Therefore, I used the Triad groupings of “head,” “heart,” and “gut” numbers to conduct my research and form my hypotheses. The research question that I ended with became—Do the characteristics of an individual’s Enneagram Triad directly correlate with their preferences in communication styles?

To answer this research question, I conducted a study with three subjects—a Three, a Six, and a Nine. These numbers are significant because they are the central numbers in each Triad, so even if they have a wing the wing would still be in the same Triad as their primary number. I then conducted a 30-minute interview with each subject asking them a variety of questions about their Enneagram number and communication mediums and styles. While there was some free response, each multiple-choice question was articulated and structured in such a way that there was a corresponding answer choice that reflected the characteristics of their respective Triad. I then reviewed these answers, reflected on the interviews, and drew conclusions from my findings in collaboration with additional, third-party research.

### *Interview Findings*

Before discussing my findings, it is important to identify some characteristics of my sample. My sample consists of three 21-year-old women. All of them are seniors at Baylor University and are members of Zeta Tau Alpha. They all have similar socioeconomic backgrounds, family situations, and social circles. They are also all close friends of mine, which allows me to draw on my interview findings and my first-hand personal experiences with them. Not only did I choose these three individuals because they have the Enneagram numbers that were needed for my study, but I also chose them

because they are so similar. By choosing individuals with relatively similar backgrounds, social spheres, and interests, I hoped to limit any extraneous factors that could affect my findings. Since their Enneagram numbers are one place where each individual significantly differs from the other, it can be considered one of the main causes of the difference in their communication styles.

*Participant A Interview: Type Three*

Participant A is a Type Three. She is an only child, raised by her mother in Houston, TX. She is a business major and the treasurer of her sorority. In her free time, she loves posting on Instagram, taking photos, and spending time with her friends. When describing her communications style, she stated that she saw herself as being both confrontational and nonconfrontational depending on the situation. To expand, when she needs to get her point across or has a specific goal that she is trying to reach, then she will be confrontational to reach that goal as quickly as possible. However, if she is in a social setting where being confrontational may place her in a bad light, then she will not engage in the confrontation because she is highly concerned with her public image. When she does decide to confront someone, she tries to find common ground first. She explained that usually, both individuals want the same benefit or conclusion, they just have different ideas on how to attain it. When finding the common ground first, the other person is more willing to see your side of the situation and more sympathetic to your point. She noted that this was a change in her communication style because she used to be strictly opposed to confrontation, but as she has grown throughout college, she thinks that it is a more healthy and reasonable way to resolve issues.

When discussing her communication preferences, Participant A explained that she preferred in-person communication because it allows her to read the other person's mannerisms and body language. There are also fewer barriers to communication in person, rather than over the phone or via text. Her second preferred method is over the phone because it is faster than typing, which allows her to solve problems and get answers more efficiently. While written communication is often what is used most in our generation, she described that she was not very good at it. She takes a while to respond to texts and is often described as being more of a dry texter, meaning that she does not use any extra emojis or punctuation. However, this is not her intent, it is just a by-product of her goal to be an efficient communicator.

Regarding stressful social situations, this participant explained that someone betraying her trust would be the most stressful situation. This is because when someone has something personal to them, it is a big deal when they share it with someone else. This is letting someone else into a private part of your life and showing vulnerability. When this private information is made public, it not only is a betrayal of your trust, but it opens the information up to public judgments and opinions. This would make her extremely question her friendship with an individual that did this. Conversely, the COVID-19 lockdown brought her almost no stress. Although she did not like that her social calendar was momentarily put on pause, the new restrictions and regulations did not have any effect on her mental health. To compensate for this, she spent time updating her social media and Facetiming friends.

All in all, social acceptance and public opinion are a central part of her communication style. Although she has learned that not everyone will accept her because

they have their own problems, it is still something that heavily affects her communication decisions. For example, she is extremely unlikely to post anything controversial on her social media. Even when she posts something that is not controversial, she is very analytical of her posts in general. She usually gets multiple opinions about her picture and caption combinations before posting it online for the public to see. She also frequently changes her profile pictures to ensure that they are up to date with the latest trends and styles. Although this is not all verbal communication, it all affects how she communicates herself to the public, which she does with precision and care.

*Participant B Interview: Type Six*

Participant B is a type Six. She is an only child raised in the suburbs of Dallas, TX. She is less involved in the sorority but is heavily involved in a business fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi. She has served as Social Chair and T-Shirt Chair in this organization. She lives by herself but thoroughly enjoys it because she likes to separate her social time and alone time. She is very career-focused and looks forward to graduation where she plans to start a job at one of the top four accounting firms. Participant B describes herself as nonconfrontational, independent, and thoughtful.

This participant does not see herself as being confrontational because she is very much a people pleaser. She does not like making people upset and will strive to keep the peace in a social setting. When she does feel that people are upset with her, she wants to fix it to restore the peace but will hesitate if fixing things will bring about conflict. Although she does concede that sometimes conflict is good, it must be handled in a loving and caring way to avoid hurt feelings. She thinks that this quality of herself can be attributed to her independence because she believes that independent people tend to avoid

conflict since they work best alone. When she is faced with conflict, her first response is to apologize. This allows her to avoid feeling like someone is mad at her and hurriedly move on from the situation. If there is an open conflict in her life, that is the only thing she can think about, and she will fixate on it until it is resolved.

Being thoughtful in her words and actions is one of the main characteristics of her communication style. Going in line with this, she prefers written communication because she can think about what she is going to say before she says it and can ensure that she is conveying her thoughts accurately. She is not one to rashly react to others but will rather take time apart from the situation to process her thoughts and emotions. Since she prides herself on her articulate and thoughtful communication, it is no surprise that she found the compliment of being thoughtful to be the most meaningful.

It brings this participant social anxiety when she feels that people are upset with her but can find solace in her alone time. She said that social acceptance strongly affects her confidence. If she is in a social setting where she does not feel like she is accepted by everyone, she gets very anxious and will want to leave the setting immediately. This is because she is scared people won't accept her or will judge her. This is also why she feels that a friend's betrayal would be the most detrimental to her happiness because it would bring a whole new set of personal things for people to judge her on. Not being able to trust someone would be devastating to her and the friendship. Since she finds solace in her alone time, the COVID-19 lockdown was actually a positive for her. She liked staying home and not having any social or work responsibilities. She did not feel restless at all but spent most of her time watching television and taking up graphic design as a hobby. She did not socialize or post on social media very much because she enjoyed

being by herself and with her family. She strives to feel appreciated by those close to her, whether it be friends, family, or teachers. She seeks appreciation in the form of words or actions. For example, she just spent many weeks planning a social event for her business fraternity. Although there were many issues with planning it and it was a lot of work, the members gave her a bouquet of roses afterward, which made all of her hard work feel worthwhile. This makes her feel validated and cared for.

To wrap up her overall communication style, Participant B is a thoughtful communicator who feels others' emotions strongly. She finds it hard not to get too emotionally involved in conflicts or other people's struggles because she invests a lot of herself into her relationships. This is also why she cares so much about others' perceptions of her and values signs of appreciation so deeply. She is very intentional with her communication to ensure that she is giving others the same care and consideration that she feels that she deserves.

#### *Participant C Interview: Type Nine*

Participant C is a type nine. She is an only child, who was also raised in the suburbs of Dallas, TX. She is pre-med and spends her free time studying, hanging with friends, or scrolling through Tik Tok. She describes her communication style as nonconfrontational, indecisive, and empathetic. Participant C views confrontation as pointless. She views it as aggressive and unnecessary, so she tries to avoid it. Instead of confronting others, this participant seeks to understand other people's perspectives. If she is in a disagreement, she tries to step into the other person's shoes and see why they feel this way, rather than responding combatively. This allows her to keep the peace in most situations, which makes her feel happiest. However, she concedes that being

confrontational is sometimes necessary when there is an argument or big decision at hand. In these somewhat rare cases, she debates for a few hours or a day as to whether it is worth addressing the issue. If it is, then she will make herself confrontational, but will still keep the other person's viewpoint and feelings in mind throughout the exchange. On the other hand, when faced with confrontation, she will attempt to resolve it by logically explaining why she did what she did.

When asked about social anxiety, this participant said that she would feel the most anxious if someone that she confided in with her secrets betrayed her trust. This is because it takes a lot for her to open herself up to others and confide in them to tell the deeper aspects of her life. I have noticed this in my friendship with her as well. She is slow to trust people and very careful about who she confides in. However, once she opens up, she is very trusting of her close friends. Another situation that brought her anxiety was the COVID-19 lockdown because it made her feel out of control. She was able to overcome this feeling by getting into a daily routine. This routine consisted of a lot of sleeping, calling friends, spending time with her family, and listening to music. Eventually, she just accepted the change of environment and wanted it to be over with. Being one of the friends that she called daily, I can attest to the validity of this statement. She treated the entire pandemic rather passively with a calm acceptance of the new world that we lived in. Talking to her made me feel calmer about how everything was because she seemed to be so at peace despite all of the huge changes in our lives. Although she wanted everything to go back to normal, she was noticeably more accepting of the new restrictions placed on our lives than my other friends were.

Participant C views social acceptance as comparatively less important than who someone is as a person. When asked which compliment would be the most meaningful, this participant chose the compliment “you are a really good person” rather than “everyone really likes you” or “you are very thoughtful.” She chose this answer because she believes that being a genuinely good person is more important than what people think of you. Even if her actions went against what was considered to be the “right thing to do” by her peers, she would still do them if she believed that she was doing the right thing by her standards. This is also evident in the advice that she gives to others. As a friend that I confide in often for advice on school, life, and relationships, she never hesitates to advocate for the decision that she believes is morally right even if it is not the popular choice. However, as a whole social acceptance substantially affects her confidence. As is a common human trait, it makes her feel good if those in her social circle like her, and it allows her to feel at peace in her environment when everything is in harmony. Going in hand with this trait, when asked how likely she was to post something controversial on her social media channels, she answered not very likely at all, which I can personally attest to as I have never seen her post anything political or controversial. Her reasoning for this is that there is no reason to post things just for people to see them. If you believe it is right and act accordingly, that is enough. There is no reason to shove it in other people’s faces as well.

To wrap up her entire communication style, she would describe herself as a thoughtful communicator who tries to communicate with people based on how they feel. At times, this can lead her to be extremely indecisive because she does not want to make a decision that may upset someone else or be contrary to what they want. This can come

down to even small decisions like choosing where to get dinner or what time to start getting ready. However, this indecisiveness is one of her tools to keep out disharmony and others' disappointment. She finds that an indirect, empathetic approach is the most effective way to communicate, and this is also how she feels most comfortable communicating. She does her best to understand others' feelings and needs and responds accordingly, even when it means putting her thoughts and desires to the side. These traits allow her to be a great friend and peacemaker in her spheres of influence.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Case Study Analysis

By investigating the findings from the case study above, we can analyze the different ways in which the three participants communicate, whether it be how they converse with others, where their social anxieties stem from, or their preferred communication platforms. Analyzing these findings in the context of each individual's respective Enneagram numbers provide important relationships between how each participant communicates and their personality types. Once these relationships are connected and analyzed, general conclusions can be formed that will help individuals of all types communicate more effectively with each other.

#### *Participant A: Type Three as an Image-conscious Achiever*

Looking at the first case, Participant A is a type Three. As a reminder, Threes tend to be high achievers, focused on marking things off of their to-do lists and gathering accolades in their realms of influence. However, their seemingly impeccable list of accomplishments is not necessarily because they are more skilled than other types, but because they are extraordinarily driven to gain "attention and admiration" from their peers (Owens). This allows them to avoid their deepest fear of being seen as insignificant or a failure. Threes are found in the Heart Triad because they feel deeply, although their efficient, straightforward attitude may not seem like it at times. They let their emotions lead many of their decisions and are dominated by their core emotion of shame (Doyle). In analyzing Participant A's interview and focusing on the key areas of her strive for

achievement, her core fear of failure, and her heart-led decision-making, important explanations of her communication style can be realized.

A central part of this individual's communication style is her productivity. Type Three is labeled "The Achiever" because they thrive when being productive, and it is a factor in many things that they do, which is evidenced in this interview. For instance, she explains that she will be confrontational at times when she has a goal and being confrontational will help her reach this goal more quickly. This shows that her desire to be productive and efficient overpowers her desire to be unconfidential. Similarly, she prefers in-person and oral communication over written communication because of its efficiency. This trend even follows how she texts because she strives to get her point across as seamlessly as possible. This is a significant finding because it is a central aspect of her communication style and it can be directly linked back to a characteristic of Type Threes.

Type Threes have a fear of failure, which can be extremely broad. Failure can be seen as a failure to live up to a reputation or standard they set for themselves, or it can be a failure to accomplish a task or earn a job. This participant states that the most stressful social situation would be if someone shared private information about her that she disclosed in confidence because it would open that information and, by association, her to public judgment and opinion. This ties back to her core fear because reputation is a huge part of a Three's identity. If her reputation was tarnished, she would feel like a failure in this aspect of her life. This is a critical part of the interview because she expresses that the explanation for one aspect of her communication style is exactly what the Enneagram would predict it to be. As one can see from these various examples, Participant A's

public image plays a central role in how she communicates with others, which the Enneagram predicts perfectly.

Participant A also expresses a dimension of her Heart Triad, even if it is a twisted engagement of the heart's desire for connection and affection. Participant A loves to be social, whether it be through social media or in person. This is to be expected with this Enneagram type because Threes are status-conscious and are concerned with how they are perceived by others; they want to be loved and valued (Riso and Hudson). In college, especially within the Greek life circle, social media and one's presence at social gatherings are key determinants of one's public image, which also explains why it would bring this participant a substantial amount of stress to post on social media. This quality is a common thread throughout the entire interview. She explains that if she is faced with a situation where being confrontational will put her in a bad light, she will not do it. While she does not explicitly state why, and may not know why, it can be inferred that it attributes back to her concern with others' perceptions of her, her heart-oriented desire to be appreciated and loved. Lapid-Bogda states that Threes commonly have an idea of having an "effective image," meaning they constantly want to impress and please other people to nurture connections of the heart.

When applying one's knowledge of a Type Three to this interview, it allows the reasoning behind the participant's answers to come to light. This participant allows her feelings and image desires to guide many of her choices. This is neither a good nor bad thing, but something to note when attempting to communicate more effectively with this type. If a Three feels that failure is on their radar, they may act rashly or even illogically to protect themselves from this uncomfortable feeling. By applying the characteristics of

a Type Three to better understand this participant's interview answers, one can better understand not only how this individual may think or feel in certain social settings, but the reasoning behind these thoughts and actions as well.

*Participant B: Type Six as Loyal Questionner*

Participant B is a Type Six, which is also called the Loyalist because of their undying loyalty to their friends and family. This loyalty can come to the surface in many ways but primarily serves to create a secure environment for themselves. This secure environment is established through confidence in their relationships, which is achieved via their commitment to others. When they feel that they are in a setting where they may lose this sense of security, they get anxious and defensive, oftentimes questioning their actions. Since their core fear is not having anyone to guide or support them, they strive to be a great friend, in hopes that they will receive this gift in return. This also causes them to put a great deal of thought into their words and actions so that no false moves jeopardize their relationships. Understanding how a Type Six works allows us to better examine this participant's interview and analyze how they communicate in relation to their Enneagram.

Participant B expressed that she is a people pleaser, which causes her to avoid conflict and instead try to restore peace. This is tricky when analyzing it in the context of a Type Six because several factors must be considered. First, while this type has very strong beliefs and holds to their values, they also have a fierce loyalty to their friends and loved ones. This would lead one to assume that the participant would be highly confrontational if one challenged her beliefs, but less so if it was a close friend or family member; however, she does not specify this in her interview. She does concede that

conflict can be good at times if handled correctly, so this may have been an indirect reference to if someone challenges one's values or morals, but this was not directly mentioned.

This participant's fear of judgment and anxiety in a social setting is also a characterizing trait of a Type Six. Sixes are notorious for being anxious because they are unsure of themselves and need a great deal of security to feel at ease. Participant B expresses that she gets social anxiety when she thinks others are upset with her or when she does not feel accepted by everyone in a social setting. This is so upsetting to her that it makes her want to leave the function. This is a perfect example of how a Six's anxiety can elevate when they do not feel accepted by their peers. This can cause their sense of security and self-confidence in the environment to completely crumble and, in turn, make the entire outing miserable for them. This can cause them to especially value alone time as a space to reset and analyze their recent social experiences, which explains why the COVID-19 pandemic was a positive for her. This gave her the time she needed to reset and a break from the social anxiety that she often experienced.

A characteristic of this participant's communication style that does fall directly in line with the Type Six description is her desire for thoughtful communication. Referring back, one may recall that this type is in the Head Center meaning that they are very thoughtful and methodical with what they do and say. This participant explains just this. She expresses that she prefers written communication, so that she may have more time to think about what she is going to say. This allows her to have a more methodical approach in her communication with others. Furthermore, her distaste for rash actions exemplifies this quality as well because it is not the action per se, it is more that there was no

thoughtfulness behind the action that she looks down upon. Conversely, this explains why her favorite compliment is being thoughtful because this is a trait that she values.

Examining this participant's interview in the context of the Enneagram allows us to draw important conclusions about how they communicate. This participant makes it clear how Sixes worry about safety and security and wrestle with fear and anxiety. And, to help assure them of being supported, they value thoughtful, careful communication that suggests someone has taken the time to think through what they are saying. This helps us see how a type Six is a head-oriented type of personality.

*Participant C: Type Nine as Easy-going Peacemaker*

Participant C is a Type Nine, coined the "Peacemaker," and her interview is evidence of that. Type Nine's strive for peace and harmony in every aspect of their lives, sometimes manipulating their points of view or opinion to allow for this outcome. This can make them highly agreeable with a broad range of people. Nines are able to see both sides of a situation, which allows them to understand others' points of view more easily. While there are times that Nines will stick to their ground, they are oftentimes the ones to compromise and look for a quick solution because this is more appealing to them than an ongoing conflict. This approach to problem-solving is a defense mechanism to fight against their core fear which is disharmony or chaos (Riso and Hudson). This type can be found in the Gut Triad because they instinctually strive to make peace, rather than leading with their thoughts or feelings. Understanding these key components of a Type Nine will allow for a better understanding of how this participant communicates.

Participant C does not like confrontation because she does not see the point of it and thinks it is aggressive. This is not surprising because Nines strive to have inner

peace, and in doing so, actively avoids conflict. This can be a positive and negative trait because Nines are more likely to spend time trying to understand others' points of view, which can help resolve conflict. However, when it is necessary, this participant will still debate for a few days on whether something or someone is worth the confrontation. This can be an issue because when problems do need solving, she may not voice the issue, causing a detriment to her relationships. Nonetheless, this quality of her communication style is very common in a Type Nine.

This participant's core fear is of chaos or disharmony, so her reaction to the COVID-19 lockdown is also common for a Type Nine. Nines seek harmony and peace in their life, which is why the lockdown probably made this participant feel anxious and out of control. Her perfect peaceful world with her daily routine had been disrupted, causing her to come face-to-face with the fact that the world was full of chaos. This causes the protective barriers this type attempts to put in place, such as seeing the good in everything, to crumble down which can have very negative effects. However, by establishing a new daily routine with things that she liked to do, such as calling her friends, she was able to find the silver lining in life again and create an environment that she has more control over.

Another key aspect of her personality to note is that she follows her gut do the right thing by her standards. This is not surprising because she knows that if she does the right thing, it will allow her to keep a sense of internal peace. While she does care about the outcome, doing the right thing is a good first step because it will allow her to justify the action in her head and maintain her internal peace. If the outcome is negative, despite her doing what she thought was right, she will attempt to fix the issue because social

acceptance substantially affects her confidence. Her self-confidence can be seen as a part of her internal environment, so when this is out of balance, it is not surprising that she feels distressed. All in all, this participant's defining communication attribute is a desire to maintain peace, which is a central characteristic of a Type Nine.

In short, Nines actively seek out harmony in their environments and when it is disrupted, they will carefully seek to restore it so that they do not have to confront their core fear, chaos. When taking this participant's interview in the context of this information, one is able to better understand why the Nine would react negatively to the pandemic. Since it is a type that is dominated by the gut, they will not hesitate to do what they feel is right at the moment, even if it means going against social standards. Seeing how well this participant's interview answers match up with the characteristics of a type Nine will allow for important conclusions to be drawn.

These three participants help paint a picture of the diversity of Enneagram communication styles. While there are nine distinct styles, they can be organized into three groups that we see in these participants. Everyone has some fear shaping them as they think about their communication style. From these people, it is clear that some people communicate based on a fear of failure, others from a fear of judgment and anxiety, and others from a fear of conflict. We can also see the three Enneagram Triads in Participant A's desire for heartfelt connection, Participant B's desire to be mindful of security and to have thoughtfulness, and Participant C's desire for harmony and gut-level desire to do what is right. More insights on how these Triads shape communication will be provided at the conclusion of this research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusion

This thesis has sought to address the question, “Do the characteristics of an individual’s Enneagram Triad directly correlate with their preferences in communication styles?” After a brief introduction to the Enneagram Triads and the nine Enneagram types, I presented a case study that helped us learn about three specific types, one from each Triad. I interviewed a type Three in the Heart Triad, a type Six in the Head Triad, and a type Nine in the Gut Triad. I now provide a summary of lessons learned and their implications.

#### *Enneagram Triads and Communication Styles*

The Triads are an important component of the Enneagram because they group types based on what emotion motivates them. Though each type has different assets that make them unique, these groupings help to differentiate the instinctual reactions one may have. Examining the different Triads and why the Three, Six, and Nine are in their respective groups will allow us to better understand their motivations and thus, their communication styles.

To begin, types in the heart, or feeling, Triad are motivated by their fear of shame (Doyle). This means that much of what they do is to avoid this emotion. Likewise, they are dominated by their feelings. They are very in touch with how others feel, and rather than making choices through reason or gut reaction, they let their feelings lead them. They strive to have an intimate connection with others. This not only allows them to feel validated but allows them to increase their confidence and sense of security in their

relationships (Dr. Daniels). When these types feel that their connection is lost or not met equally, they feel shameful because they think they are unworthy of the other person's affection. To overcome this emotion, types in this Triad will attempt to reconnect with others to restore the bonds they have made and diminish their feelings of shame. Recognition of these feelings is critical for this Triad to healthily develop because it can allow them to rationalize their feelings and regain their self-worth despite their circumstances.

Type Three is in this Triad because they are dominated by shame; however, they seek to overcome it by being very accomplished. Therefore, the avoidance of this emotion becomes a strong driving factor, which is why Threes may seem like they have superhuman drive and energy. This has also led them to be called "The Achiever" because they can accomplish great things. They also seek validation through their social status. This is not surprising since being well known in one's respective social group is often associated with being well-liked. By establishing connections with people, Threes feel valued and appreciated. However, when there is a hit to their social status or one of their relationships is on the rocks, they can often feel overwhelmed by shame and unworthy of love. Though Threes may seem like they are strong and self-assured, they oftentimes lack self-confidence which makes these feelings all the more harmful to them. However, Threes can develop by learning to be more self-confident, allowing themselves to be vulnerable with others, and acknowledging their emotions (Doyle). In short, Threes are in this Triad because they are guided by their feelings and strive to avoid their core fear of shame through their accomplishment and status.

The next Triad is the head, or thinking, Triad which is dominated by fear. More so than the other centers, this Triad is very methodical in its decision-making oftentimes taking longer to make choices. However, they pride themselves on this fact because they seek knowledge and thus want to be perceived as smart and logical. Thinking and analyzing situations also allows them to mitigate their fear and obtain a sense of security as they reason through each possibility (Dr. Daniels). Once they land on the best course of action, they can feel confident moving forward. Conversely, when making a rash decision or not having enough information to make a logical choice, types in this Triad can feel insecure and afraid, causing them to seek it wherever possible. However, this strong for security can hinder their development, acting as more of a cage than an aid.

As you may remember, **the** Type Six is in this Triad, as security is central to this type. Also known as “The Loyalist,” Sixes gain their sense of security, thereby minimizing their fear, through their friends. This is why they are such loyal friends, oftentimes giving much more than they take. Their friends give them the confidence they need to feel secure in environments, especially social settings. When alone, Sixes can fall into a trap of overthinking, which can lead them to feel fearful and anxious (Doyle). Furthermore, they oftentimes hold strong to their values and beliefs because these are things that they have thought a lot about and found to hold true. This gives them a sense of security in these beliefs and in voicing them to other people. This also explains why they are unlikely to change their beliefs because changing something they feel so strongly about can cause them to lose their security and feel fearful. The first step for Type Sixes to grow and develop is to learn to control their thoughts and stick with logic. They should also attempt to grow their self-confidence. All in all, Sixes are loyal to their friends and

their beliefs because they give them the security needed to be confident in their environments.

Finally, the gut or instinctive, Triad is driven by an emotion of anger. Contrary to the thinking center, this type will act on a whim doing whatever they feel is right at the moment. They are controlled by sheer willpower, but they value this about themselves because they like to be in control of their environment. However, when they feel that they have lost their control, they will lash out in anger, perhaps saying and doing things that they don't mean. This feeling of lost control can either be rooted in a lack of independence or physical weakness. Therefore, they strongly rely on their body and power to achieve the outcomes they want. Domineering, independent, and protective are all words that can be used to describe this Triad.

Although Nines may not possess the aforementioned qualities outright, they fall into this Triad because they also have a core emotion of anger and use their instincts to guide them. Nines can fall victim to anger when they feel a loss of control in their environments, creating chaos. Furthermore, since they desire harmony, they like positivity and happiness to surround them. When this is not the case, they can feel angry at the negativity or its cause. To develop in their type, Nines should learn to speak up and be confrontational when something is bothering them, rather than letting it quietly dwell inside (Doyle). This will allow them to fix the problems before they become bigger issues causing anger and rash decisions. Nines are peacemakers, which makes them great mediators and friends, but to grow and develop they should learn to confront others when it is needed to avoid getting angry and exacerbating issues.

Understanding each Enneagram Triad and what core emotion drives them allows for a better understanding of each type. With this enhanced understanding, one is better able to not only predict communication styles but understand the reasoning behind them. Using the interview information, each type's attributes, and the qualities of the Triads, we can now proceed into a discussion of the different types' communication styles and how all of these different attributes work together.

### *Communication styles*

Communications styles are important because it is how an individual conveys the thoughts and ideas in their head to the public. It is what builds stories, relationships, and empires. It is a powerful tool, but with such power comes great responsibility. However, with the rise of social media allowing for quick and easy communication, many have lost this sense of responsibility and care when communicating with others. This creates misunderstandings, which can lead to anger and even hatred. These misunderstandings can be attributed in part to individuals' different types of communication styles.

The Enneagram plays a central role in communication as each type has specific communication characteristics. Dr. Ginger Lapid-Bogda, an Enneagram teacher and author, describes this relationship as a progression. One's communication style develops from their Enneagram type. To elaborate, each individual has a personality type that is cultivated at a very young age. This personality type, which can be understood through the Enneagram, influences how one sees the world and themselves in it. As one may recall from previous discussion, this includes their core emotions, self-confidence, and values. This then translates into communication styles and how types interact to either protect themselves or get the validation/security that they seek. However, these

differences in communication and personality styles leave a window for misunderstanding. To elaborate, Dr. Lapid-Bogda details the specific characteristics of each Enneagram type's communications patterns. However, since this study has mainly focused on one participant from each respective Triad, the focus will be on these three types.

To begin, Threes are characterized as confident, heart-based communicators who seek to efficiently find solutions to problems. In daily communication, especially when trying to accomplish a task, healthy Threes can be described as directive communicators, which is not surprising since this tends to maximize efficiency. They are often very optimistic and have high energy that can be spread throughout the room. Never having known a stranger, Threes can also start a conversation with almost anyone, which makes them great socialites and businessmen. However, when stressed or threatened by a looming deadline, Threes may turn slightly aggressive in their communication. This can be rooted in frustration that the task has not gotten done or because someone is hindering their productivity. They also tend to not be great listeners because they grow impatient, especially when heavy emotions are involved. Often holding back part of their emotions or opinions, Threes may be perceived as ingenuine, uninterested, or impatient to those they are communicating with. However, this does not stop them from working well with a team and focusing their team efforts on targeted goals. Like any other number, Threes have areas to grow and ways they can work through these negative communication traits. Dr. Lapid-Bogda suggests focusing on intentional listening when in a conversation with another and staying true to one's self. Oftentimes, Threes are overly concerned with how they should feel rather than how they actually feel. Discerning the difference will allow

them to better understand themselves and their identity, making them more genuine people and communicators.

By examining these attributes in the context of Participant A's case study, one can further see the characteristics of a Type Three played out in real life as well as learn more about them. This participant explained that she strives to reach her goal as quickly as possible and will be confrontational when it will allow her to achieve this. This would be an example of a directive communication style that is common in Threes under these circumstances. She is also very socially aware, a characteristic that is common in one that would be deemed a "socialite". This is seen when she further explains that if confrontation would put her in a bad light, she would refrain from doing it. Another trait that is common in social individuals is that of reading other people's mannerisms to gauge their feelings in the conversation. Participant A explains that she prefers in-person communication for this exact reason. Finally, in the final part of her interview, she explains that social acceptance is a central part of how she communicates. This is common as Threes tend to tailor their communication and feelings to their audience, however, this is an area of growth that can be worked on. Threes are heart-lead communicators who strive for efficiency, and Participant A demonstrated just this.

In communication, Sixes are described as inviting listeners, who can be witty and complex. Since they strive to be great friends, Sixes are always willing to lend an ear and give advice at any time. They are often very warm communicators because their genuine care shines through. Since they are very thoughtful, their communication often represents this and is very articulate. They are also great team members. When working with others, they are likely to come up with backup plans. This gives them a sense of security and can

even help the whole group feel more confident in their plans. When they feel their needs are not being met or that they are rejected, they often turn to passive-aggressive communication styles. This is because they tend not to be confrontational due to anxiety and a fear of being disliked, which results in them turning to other ways to get what they need. This is very unhealthy and can be an area that Sixes can grow in. Another area in which Sixes can grow is that of overthinking. As is characteristic of someone in the Heart Triad, Sixes can overthink a situation and create a problem out of nothing. They can overcome this by focusing on the facts of a situation and thinking of optimistic outcomes, rather than the worst possible scenario.

These communication characteristics are seen in Participant B, the Type Six, various times in her interview and can aid in our understanding of a Sixes communication style. First, she states that she is not a confrontational person because she is a people-pleaser. This is a perfect example of the data above. Being a people-pleaser allows her to maintain a sense of security in her relationships by always doing what she thinks will make people happy. This way, there is an unlikely chance that others will be mad at her. However, when conflict does arise, she states that she wants to fix it and that it should be handled lovingly. This is another example of how Sixes strive to maintain security. By lovingly handling conflict, there is less risk of hurting the relationship and losing a secure friend. Interestingly, she notes that she will fixate on a conflict until it resolves and that she describes herself as a thoughtful communicator because these are both indicative of a communicator in the Head Triad, who leads with their thoughts. Fixating on a conflict will cause one to overthink and come up with ideas and situations that are illogical, all the while raising their anxiety. This is directly supported in the next paragraph when she

claims to have social anxiety when people are upset with her. This is an area that this participant can develop. By developing this area, she can obtain healthier, more productive communication habits. In short, Participant B is a thoughtful communicator that at times has social anxiety and overthinks, which are all common characteristics of communication in Type Sixes.

Finally, Nines often have a very relaxed tone to their communication with a tendency to support and affirm others with their head-based communication. Since Nines strive for a peaceful environment, they are often more passive communicators to avoid creating animosity. They constantly put others' needs before their own, making them great listeners, friends, and teammates. They are also able to facilitate conversations between individuals since they have a solution-oriented mentality and are great listeners. Being a great listener can help them truly understand both points of view and come to the fairest solution. However, with their compromising, passive communication comes the inability to have their needs met by those close to them, which can leave them unsatisfied in relationships. This can lead to unresolved anger and anxiety, which is unhealthy for anyone to foster. To grow, Nines should express their thoughts and feelings, even when it could compromise their peaceful relationships to further their relationships.

Participant C exemplifies these communication characteristics through her peace-oriented and indecisive communication style. She claims that she sees confrontation as aggressive and pointless. This is very interesting since there are many peaceful ways that one can confront another, and it is a central way to resolve conflict amongst individuals. This can be attributed to the fact that any confrontation with a Nine will disturb their peaceful environment and will not be worth the trouble in most cases. In the rare cases

when confrontation is absolutely necessary, she states that she will keep the other individual's viewpoint in mind throughout the interaction. This is a central characteristic that makes herself, and most Nines, great communicators because they are able to see and understand both sides of an argument. Finally, she views her indecisiveness as another way to avoid conflict because it allows her to avoid upsetting someone else by not choosing what they want. Going on, she claims that an indirect and empathetic approach is the best way to communicate and is what she frequently uses. This directly points to a passive communication style, which is what is predicted of Type Nines from the data. Participant C is a peaceful communicator who strives to avoid conflict and is at times indecisive which are all qualities of a Type Nine.

In answering my research question, I have learned that an individual's Enneagram type and their Triad do correlate with their communication style. There are heart-based approaches to communication, there are head-based styles, and there are gut-based communication preferences. Enneagram types directly correlate these styles of communication because it is how an individual relates to the world and thus communicates with it.

### *Implications*

This research is only the tip of the iceberg in the Enneagram's application to enhancing communication between different types of individuals, but it is an important starting place. In today's world more than ever before, communication is a central aspect of people's lives. In the past, individuals went home and had a space to limit communication. Now with the popularity of social media and cell phones, this alone time has been turned into a social time for many. This technology allows individuals to

communicate with each other directly and with their entire community indirectly day in and day out. While one may hypothesize that this type of communication gateway would lead to more unity amongst individuals, it has done quite the opposite. Division runs rampant between groups and individuals. Hate comments and bullying are at an all-time high. With one scroll of the thumb, a social media user can assuredly find some form of hate speech in reply to another's comment. This is a prolific problem not just in American society, but across the world, and the root of it is not that individuals have differing opinions and viewpoints. It is a lack of understanding of different types of individuals.

This thesis is important because it shows the cases of three different types of individuals and their different communication styles. As was evidenced, there are heart-led, head-lead, and gut-lead communicators. Heart-led communicators, Types Two, Three, and Four, use their feelings to guide their decisions. They are productive and direct in their communication. They use an idealized version of themselves to decide the best course of action, often moving toward a goal of social or academic notoriety. They need others to express gratitude and praise to feel validated and worthy. In a real-world context, as was exemplified by Participant A, this can be seen as a hesitation to engage in confrontation, succinct texts to increase efficiency and heightened diligence in maintaining social media accounts.

Head-Lead communicators, Types Five, Six, and Seven, analyze and reason through situations. They strive to logically find the best decision and often have backup plans readily available. They are great listeners, although they may take a more logical approach to problem-solving rather than an emotional approach. By using logic, they are

able to stick to ideas that feel concrete and stay away from their dreaded feeling of fear. They crave security in their decisions, their friend groups, and their overall lifestyle. As was seen in the case study of Participant B, they actively avoid conflict, strive to be a great friend and listener, and want people to be happy with them.

Finally, gut-lead communicators, Types Eight, Nine, and One, are led by their instincts and have a core emotion of anger. While each type has a different mechanism to keep their anger at bay, it is a driving force for communication in all of them. In a Type Nine, it is taken charge of by having a harmonious environment that has little conflict. When conflict does arise, this type is skilled at mediating and finding a resolution. Being a great listener can also aid in this at times troublesome task. Participant C exemplified a more personal element of how a Type Nine communicates by claiming that she is often indecisive, strives to avoid conflict, and looks for commonalities in individuals' viewpoints.

Each Triad has different qualities that make its communication style unique, which can at times make conversations between different types of people difficult. For example, as a Three, I may disagree with a Six when their desire for security interferes with my efficiency. Likewise, a Nine may get upset with an Eight if their sometimes-brash demeanor disrupts their harmonic environment. However, the key in these situations is to understand the motives behind the other's actions. For instance, in the above scenario the Three should recognize that while they want to get a task done efficiently, they need to respect the Six's need for safety because it is a great need for them. Likewise, the Nine should recognize that the Eight does not mean to be overpowering, they are just trying to gain control of a situation to make themselves feel

secure. The Enneagram allows for this kind of understanding as my research found it to directly impact individuals' communication styles. If the entire world slowed and learned how to understand each other better, this blessing of communication could be used to raise others up, solve conflicts, promote peace, and unite communities. 

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “The Arica School.” *The Arica School of Knowledge*, <https://www.arica.org/school>.
- “Communication.” *The Enneagram in Business*, The Enneagram in Business, 30 Aug. 2019, <https://theenneagraminbusiness.com/businessapplications/communication/>.
- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A. *et al.* “The Case Study Approach.” *BMC Med Res Methodol* 11, 100 (2011). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-100>
- Daniels, David N. “The Enneagram Triads.” *David N. Daniels, M.D.*, 14 June 2020, <https://drdaviddaniels.com/articles/Triads/>.
- Doyle, Evan. “The 3 Enneagram Triads + Helpful Responses to Emotions.” *Enneagram Gifts*, 26 Aug. 2021, <https://enneagramgift.com/enneagram-Triads/>.
- “Enneagram Symbol—Meaning and Significance.” *Symbol Sage*. Symbol Sage.
- Lapid-Bogda, Ginger. *The Enneagram in Business*, 30 Nov. 2021, <https://theenneagraminbusiness.com/>.
- "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." *The Purdue OWL*, Purdue U Writing Lab. Accessed 20 Apr. 2022.
- O'Hanrahan, Peter. “Effective Communication.” *The Enneagram at Work*, <https://theenneagramatwork.com/effective-communication>.
- Owens, Molly. “What Is the Enneagram of Personality?” *Truity*, 4 May 2021, <https://www.truity.com/enneagram/what-is-enneagram>.
- Riso, Don Richard, and Russ Hudson. *The Wisdom of the Enneagram: The Complete Guide to Psychological and Spiritual Growth for the Nine Personality Types*. Bantam Books, 1999.