

The Enneagram & Labor Support

What does your enneagram type say about the birth support you need?

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WHAT IS THE ENNEAGRAM?

The Enneagram is a great tool to get to know yourself better. Here's a fun guide about how your enneagram type can help you in preparing for your labor. If you don't know your enneagram type, there are a lot of tests online to find out, including through the [Enneagram Institute](#). It's also helpful to read about the 9 different types in the Enneagram to see if the type that showed up in your test lines up with who you *actually* are and what your needs are for birth.

Each Enneagram type has a basic proposition made up of key points. These include a gift with which they're born into the world with, a core belief they form about the world, a core fear based on that belief about the world, a core strategy to get what they need, and an idealized self-image. Ok, let's get into it!

TYPE 1: THE REFORMER/PERFECTIONIST AKA "THE MACKENZIE"

Core Fear: Being corrupt/evil, defective

Strengths:

- Disciplined
- Organized
- Strong sense of purpose and principles
- Wants to change and challenge if there's something wrong

Challenges:

- Flexibility
- Forgiving themselves
- Being messy, spicy, and sexy

Needs:

- Space and compassion to be their full, messy selves
- Help not holding it all together (ex. swearing, cursing)
- Help being open and forgiving themselves in plan changes

As a 1, you may have an idealistic view of birth and like discipline and structure. Something that might be helpful for an Enneagram Type 1 to prepare for labor is to create a labor practice routine which incorporates breathing, yoga, and pelvic stretches, so that it can come naturally to you in labor. Maybe you can create a routine in labor too, for example do one thing for 3 surges, then something else for 3 surges, etc.

1s love [Birth Story Academy](#) because of the birth plans, labor position guides, and birth circuits.

Since you are so good at imagining an ideal or perfect situation, something that might be a little difficult for a Type 1 is pivoting and being flexible when something goes wrong or maybe it's not what you expected or doesn't go as planned. Give yourself permission in your birth to be your full primal self. You need support to yell, be angry, roar, lose your modesty, and let go!

TYPE 1: THE REFORMER/PERFECTIONIST AKA "THE MACKENZIE"

Core Fear: Being corrupt/evil, defective

(Continued)

The people around you should reassure you that everything that's happening and everything that you are doing is all OK. You have an innate alignment that you know what is right. Your birth team will need to help you feel respected for what you know is true during your birthing time. They need to encourage you to get messy, let your roar out, and to say a few curse words!

TYPE 2: THE HELPER/GIVER AKA "THE HAILEY"

Core Fear: Being unwanted, unworthy of being loved

Strengths:

- Caring
- Generous
- In touch with the needs of others
- Draws others in

Challenges:

- Expressing their own needs
- Over-involved in others' lives
- Tend toward resentment
- Easily succumb to provider's choices

Needs:

- Wants to know they are loved without earning it
- Assurance that there is relational safety
- Help to know what they themselves want

As an Enneagram 2, your gift is tenderness and sensitivity, but your core fear is that you are unlovable. Type 2s like to be helpful and appreciated. Let your doula and partner know that you would appreciate affirmation and praise. You should try to visualize your labor and let your body do what it is created to do. This is you helping and showing love to your baby who loves you unconditionally. 2s find great value in being loved by a baby!

2s love [Birth Story Academy](#) because of the prenatal and parenting affirmations that are included, the birth plans and the birth scripts that can be used for communication!

In order to have the birth you want, 2s have to pick the right provider and the right birth team. You are highly susceptible to succumbing to the hospital's policies and procedures over your true choices. It may be hard for you to say, "No" when something is bothering you or if there is an unwanted intervention. This is because you don't want to offend anyone or risk the relationship with them. Be careful. Try to understand that being clear about the things you want for your birth is only going to help your support team.

TYPE 2: THE HELPER/GIVER AKA "THE HAILEY"

Core Fear: Being unwanted, unworthy of being loved

(Continued)

It is safe for you to express your needs in labor when you have chosen the right provider. Your provider will still like you even if you have a different opinion about your body and birth than they have.

Your birth team needs to love you abundantly and reassure you how much you are loved and what a great job you are doing. Let them help you express your needs and do not be afraid to challenge your providers if something isn't aligning with you.

During your birthing time, you will need to dig into your primal state and let everyone else's needs go.

TYPE 3: THE PERFORMER/ACHIEVER AKA "THE LAUREN"

Core Fear: Being worthless, failing

Strengths:

- Can get things done and bring value to everything they do
- Charming
- Usually successful because of a strong achievement mindset
- Results oriented
- Radiant and beautiful individuals who make other people shine

Challenges:

- Disconnected from their emotions
- Believe how people respond to them indicates their value and purpose
- Has difficulty when there are no clear results
- Cares a lot about image and what others think of them
- Lets others define their success

Needs:

- Recognizing the moment/process is valuable or inspiring
- Allowing themselves to be messy and vulnerable
- Needs to be given permission to not be able to do everything themselves

Type 3s are the achievers! This can totally play to your advantage during labor because you can see it as a goal you want to accomplish. You can lock in and focus: You can do it! You also know from the birth classes you've taken that there is a start and a finish, and you like that clear result.

3s will often attach to their "due date." Remember the median gestation for a first-time birthing person is 41 weeks and 1 day and that means you will likely still be pregnant beyond this guess date. 3s have a tendency to think something is wrong the longer they are pregnant and need to be assured their body will do what it needs to do.

3s love [Birth Story Academy](#) because of the in-depth explanation of the stage of labor and being able to understand where they are in the labor process as well as the recorded birth affirmations.

TYPE 3: THE PERFORMER/ACHIEVER AKA "THE LAUREN"

Core Fear: Being worthless, failing

(Continued)

Your support team may help you by affirming how well you're doing, how strong and impressive you are, and that changes in plans are not failures. However, labor is unpredictable and sometimes your baby has an opinion on how they need to be born that has nothing to do with you. In these situations, where your birth plans need to change, it helps for you to be reminded that your body and your baby have innate wisdom and are guiding you to safe birthing and healing.

It's important to note that this is not you failing! What you are doing at the moment is still valuable and inspiring. If there is a lull in the labor or it is not progressing as quickly as you may think it is supposed to progress, then your birth team should remind you that your body is not failing you. Your body is actually taking care of you and that you are doing a fantastic job.

Your birth partners should help to give you permission to let go and not have to make everything happen yourself. You can rely on your birth team and loved ones to help you! Your birth partners may also want to get that lip gloss on you right before birth and French braid your hair because many 3s care about the way they look when they are in public, like in a hospital setting, and when they meet their baby for the first time. Your support team's main job is to keep you in the present moment and less focused on the result in the future.

TYPE 4: THE ROMANTIC/INDIVIDUALIST AKA "THE LINDSEY"

Core Fear: Being ordinary, no personal significance

Strengths:

- Ability to see beauty and attuned to others' emotions
- Emotionally expressive
- Self-aware

Challenges:

- Envious
- Feeling misunderstood
- Focusing on what is missing

Needs:

- Creating an expressive ambiance with twinkle lights etc.
- Deep connection to all things
- Recognizing they have all they need
- Reminders of the significance of what they're doing: bringing life into the world

Type 4s are expressive and can have very elaborate emotional worlds. This may help you to be free in expressing yourself and surrendering to your primal state in labor. Some challenges in birth can be feeling misunderstood by your providers and birth team and finding significance in mundane things. You will want all of the twinkly lights and the Instagram worthy birth environment down to the special song and will be preparing busily for how things will look and feel than how you will perform.

4s love [Birth Story Academy](#) because of the birth visioning workshop, the guides for creating a special birth environment, and the recorded birth affirmations.

Your support team will try to help you know that all your experiences are significant even though they may not measure up to your fantasy world. You may be struggling with the details and the mundane parts of birth that take a long time and are not pretty. Your birth team needs to remind you that this very moment is important, that what you are doing is impressive.

TYPE 4: THE ROMANTIC/INDIVIDUALIST AKA "THE LINDSEY"

Core Fear: Being ordinary, no personal significance

(Continued)

Your inclination may be to focus on what isn't going on in that moment or what didn't happen or who wasn't there, so your birth team will help you by reminding you how special it is and how meaningful it is that you brought life into this world. Let your birth team know how important the labor environment is to you and that creating a beautiful atmosphere with twinkly lights, candles, birth affirmations and giving you and your birth a lot of attention may really help you feel safe.

You are bringing life into this world and there is nothing ordinary about that! You are extraordinary!

TYPE 5: THE OBSERVER/INVESTIGATOR AKA "THE KAYE"

Core Fear: Being incapable of functioning in the world, overwhelmed

Strengths:

- Clarity, can take in facts and synthesize them into something clear and simple
- Fully focused
- Deep intellectual understanding
- Always learning and asking questions

Challenges:

- Following intrusions
- Being in touch with emotions/social connection
- Being present in their body
- May become overstimulated or overly sensitive

Needs:

- Help to make birth plans and backup plans they are comfortable with
- May prefer more evidence-based care
- Wants to know concrete information, start and end times

Type 5s can be very intense and focused. You can try to obtain skillful mastery of different labor and birth concepts and deep dive into possible advantages and disadvantages of different interventions. But you need help with being in the moment and being okay feeling what you are feeling in your body. You are sensitive and so is your nervous system, so birth is where 5s have to learn to just let go and surrender to these feelings. Birth and being touched can be a very intense experience for you.

5s love [Birth Story Academy](#) for the way it easily lays out the stages of birth and how to navigate them in 20 short modules.

Your birth team needs to focus on how to keep you comfortable and give informed consent. 5s like structure and want to know when things begin and when things end but birth is unpredictable. So, making birth plans and backup plans with your birth team in advance is essential. If birth becomes too overwhelming for you, your birth team needs to know how to move you through those feelings and sensations.

TYPE 5: THE OBSERVER/INVESTIGATOR AKA "THE KAYE"

Core Fear: Being incapable of functioning in the world, overwhelmed

(Continued)

5s can also have trouble trusting people and feel safer with evidence-based care and empirical data. Make sure you are open to hearing their input and don't try to speak over them. Also, meditation, hypnobirthing, yoga, exercise, and dancing can be really helpful for you. You need reassurance that you are doing okay and could use some extra time to think if plans change or decisions need to be made for medical interventions you had not prepared for.

TYPE 6: THE LOYALIST/SKEPTIC AKA "THE HALIE"

Core Fear: Being without support, being alone

Strengths:

- Planner; highly prepared
- Able to see risks and hazards ahead of time
- Aware of their possible weaknesses

Challenges:

- Trusting their own ability and ideas
- Trusting the loyalty of their team, but also leaning heavily on them
- Seeing the positives rather than the negatives

Needs:

- Reassurance that they are capable
- Reminded that they are safe and secure with their team
- Help in building a birth plan that includes all possible pivots

Type 6s are great because they can be very well prepared. You will need lots of time to prepare and will want to hire your doula who will be loyal to you very early on in your pregnancy. You and your birth team will need all of this time to think through your birth journey ahead. You will have played out all the scenarios, have everything you may need in your hospital bag packed months in advance, and extra prenatal visits for good measure.

It is helpful for 6s to walk through all of the paths of what could or could not happen and know that there are fail stops and plans in place for it all. I recommend that 6s pick one provider they really trust and stick with that provider through every single appointment. Rotating providers in a big practice is likely not a great idea for a 6.

6s love [Birth Story Academy](#) because of the 3 birth plans for spontaneous labor, induction, and cesareans.

While you have left no detail unexamined, you still don't trust how smart you are and you may feel like you aren't thinking of something. Type 6s will need help focusing on their own innate ability and ideals and reminding them they will not be alone.

TYPE 6: THE LOYALIST/SKEPTIC **AKA "THE HALIE"**

Core Fear: Being without support, being alone

(Continued)

You are very strong, but are easily intimidated, especially by authority figures. You will need reassurance that you are safe and secure with your birth team who will advocate for you. You need to know that you can trust your birth team and that everyone is wholeheartedly on your team.

Birth partners should be vulnerable and self-effacing with 6s, and gentle with their recommendations.

TYPE 7: THE ENTHUSIAST AKA "THE RACHEL"

Core Fear: Being deprived, being in pain

Strengths:

- Seeing the potential in what is possible
- Loves experiences and spontaneity
- Highly adaptable
- Curious and able to learn quickly

Challenges:

- Gets overwhelmed with the possibility of many options
- Doesn't like to feel trapped
- Tries to run away from pain by constant distraction

Needs:

- Help releasing anxiety
- Help making structured lists
- Help processing things verbally
- Help to stop running away from their pain

Type 7s want to experience life and birth to its fullest and feel everything while also having a real aversion to pain. You are not afraid of the pain of labor per se, but that the pain could inhibit you in some way. You tend to be afraid of the pain, but also afraid that the epidural or opioid narcotics would take something away from your experience. So, you may tend to not prepare.

Many 7s will sign up for a childbirth class and buy the books but then never read them. Sound familiar? You prefer to just be in and labor in the moment. You have a quick mind and are 12 steps ahead of everyone else in the room. In the birth room, you are looking for what could get in your way. You need to know your birth environment has everything you want and need so you can just let go and fly!

7s are also verbal processors and need to be able to think aloud. If you are a 7 you may want to have a special codeword that means you have a change of birth plans. You will need to be able to say out loud, "I can't do this anymore."

TYPE 7: THE ENTHUSIAST

AKA "THE RACHEL"

Core Fear: Being deprived, being in pain

(Continued)

But you may not mean you want an epidural or pain medication; you may just want to tell everyone in the room how you are feeling to cue for more support. If you use your codeword you mean business! You can be frustrated by limitations or being held back so epidurals might make you feel trapped. You may want to feel like you have a lot of options and escape routes, though have a hard time choosing when faced with many options.

7s love [Birth Story Academy](#) because it was written by a 7 :), they love the visioning workshop and the modules that outline the flexibility for their birth choices while letting them see the possibility of whatever birth they are envisioning. Birth Story Academy lets you feel free to dream and doesn't hold you down to any one particular birth method.

You can reject authority and feel like the healthcare provider is trying to hold you back or clip your wings. You can also be pain avoidant, rushing to distraction and performing like you are not in pain. You may need help from your birth team to acknowledge the sensations you are feeling and surrender to them. 7s will need a lot of flexibility by their birth team as they navigate all of the options and escape routes they have created for themselves.

Support Team: If you are given the chance to labor with a 7, take lots of notes because they will also want a play-by-play from your perspective at the end of it all on what happened! They will absolutely reject authority and while they may want to give birth in a hospital, they will not want anyone to tell them what to do and may want to say, "No" to something just to feel like they are in control.

TYPE 8: THE CHALLENGER

AKA "THE ABBY"

Core Fear: Being controlled by others, vulnerability

Strengths:

- Self-confident
- Strong willpower
- Charismatic
- Strong advocate for themselves

Challenges:

- Easily feeling misunderstood or disrespected
- Receiving help
- Being vulnerable or admitting they are in pain
- Pushing themselves beyond their limits

Needs:

- Assurance that having needs is normal
- Help releasing control or surrendering
- Understanding of their confrontational nature
- May need a stronger, more forthright communication

8s are the strongest advocates for themselves especially in birth, but they don't want to be. Your strength and willpower will get you through a lot of it. But since birth is unpredictable, you need a birth team that allows you to feel safe in your vulnerability. You are going to want to be in control as much as possible, but birth is the one place where you have very little if any control. However, you can influence much of your labor and birth.

If you are an 8, you may need to be gifted a doula or encouraged into working with a doula. A doula will significantly help an 8, but an 8 will at first reject the notion of needing that kind of help. Once you feel safe and open up with your birth team, they will see, you are like big marshmallows inside. While it is so hard for 8s to ask for help and to be vulnerable, it is okay and necessary to ask for help when you need it during birth. Because surrender is such a big part of labor and birth, it may be hard for you to release control.

TYPE 8: THE CHALLENGER

AKA "THE ABBY"

Core Fear: Being controlled by others, vulnerability

(Continued)

Your birth team can help you come up with mantras, visualizations or affirmations that work for you amid pain. If you become angry that you have needs and vulnerabilities during labor, you may snap and become confrontational as your energy expands. Yes, my Queen 8, you know that about yourself!

Your birth team needs to help you feel protected and not like you must constantly protect yourself. Labor, pushing, and birth is also something that 8s will want to inherently fight because it is the ultimate lack of control. You may deny early labor symptoms, your needs, and any pain you might actually be feeling. The birth team must support an 8 when they are showing their strength and when they are showing their weakness and fatigue equally.

8s love [Birth Story Academy](https://www.birthstory.com) because it helps them understand and prepare for the release of control during each stage of labor, especially Transition.

TYPE 9: THE MEDIATOR/PEACEMAKER AKA "THE ABIGAIL"

Core Fear: Loss/separation; being not important

Strengths:

- Can see many different perspectives
- Harmonious and easy going
- Can be optimistic and see the good sides of life

Challenges:

- Trying to numb and detach in the face of intensity or pain
- Not in touch with their own voice and values
- Disengaging from the moment instead of being embodied

Needs:

- Help expressing themselves and their needs
- Reassurance that their needs/priorities will not cause a rift with others

Type 9s are calm and easy going. It's pretty easy to get along with a Type 9, but 9s may need help trying to figure out what they really want and also help using their voice to advocate for those things.

9s love [Birth Story Academy](#) because it helps them with just that. BSA focuses on how your needs are a priority and how to communicate those needs with tools like amazing birth plans.

If you are a 9 you may be leaning toward a birth center birth or a homebirth because you don't like tension. If you don't want to adhere to all the hospital policies and procedures, you will seek out a doula who is happy to confront and advocate for you or you will detach all the way and start planning your birth away from a hospital.

Since 9's desire peace and harmony in the world, they also want it in their body. 9s tend to surrender a little more easily to the labor sensations and don't tend to fight what they can't control at all. It is easy for you to see the positives in each situation but when things get difficult, it will be hard for you not to detach and numb out.

TYPE 9: THE MEDIATOR/PEACEMAKER AKA "THE ABIGAIL"

Core Fear: Loss/separation; being not important

(Continued)

It can be hard as the birth partner to understand if you are detaching or surrendering, so they need to keep asking you about your needs. Your birth team should help you to connect to yourself and the moment, to try to not just go along and be accommodating to the wishes of others but to enjoy the birth *you* desire no matter what that looks like. 9s will really want to numb out and not feel everything during the experience, so encouraging a 9 to stay in the present moment and reminding them that they are important, and that giving birth is important will help them get through it.