

# Navigating Career Transitions with the Enneagram

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## Your Type-Specific Guide to Thriving Through Change

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*By Enneagram Solutions — New Zealand & Australia*

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### Introduction

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Being made redundant is one of life's most challenging transitions. It can shake your sense of identity, purpose, and security. But within this challenge lies an opportunity—an opportunity to reconnect with what truly matters to you and to design a career that aligns with your authentic self.

The Enneagram offers a unique lens for navigating this transition. Unlike generic career advice, this guide recognises that each of us processes change differently. Your Enneagram type shapes how you respond to uncertainty, where you find resilience, and what strategies will serve you best.

### The Power of Your Lines

Within you, you have both helpful and unhelpful patterns in the way you think, feel, and act. Being aware of the patterns that will support you best during your transition allows you to choose more productive behaviours, thoughts, and feelings.

The great news is that because the Enneagram is a dynamic system, you can also access the helpful behaviours of the types connected to you through your integration and stress lines. By bringing radically different energies into your experience, you gain strategies that might not be available from the viewpoint of your core type alone. You may surprise yourself with how resourceful you are when you lean on these strategies.

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# Type 1: The Strict Perfectionist

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## Your Lines: 4 and 7

**Accessing your 4-line** will help you connect with your authenticity and vulnerability. There is a high cost to the tendency to want to be right and do the right thing. And chances are, you will feel like you are not doing something right in the coming weeks. By accepting your flaws and how they make you a balanced person, you can reframe getting things wrong as learning opportunities rather than failures.

Another benefit of authentically connecting with your deepest wants and needs is asking yourself: *What kind of career or environment would make me truly happy?*

**Moving to your 7-line** is the gateway to seeing options and possibilities. Your ability to be pragmatic and practical will be helpful when you start implementing your next steps. But before you plan, use the 7 energy already within you to ideate freely. Consider: *What would be possible if I couldn't fail? What would I do in a world of no constraints?*

Once you've explored your deeper emotions in the 4-space and brainstormed possibilities in the 7-space, return to your core Type 1 energy to plan the next steps and set timelines.

## Claire's Story: A Type 1 Journey

Claire was a Sustainability Officer in a large manufacturing company, leading her region's sustainability initiatives. She excelled in her role and took pride in the rigour and discipline she brought to her work.

When Claire was made redundant, her initial reaction was a sense of injustice and an unusually strong anger. She felt that her previous efforts were not good enough—that perhaps *she* was not good enough. While having received a good redundancy package following her long tenure, Claire struggled to reconcile how she could have done everything right and still been made redundant. She started questioning her purpose and whether she genuinely enjoyed anything she'd done up to this moment.

**Working with her Core Type:** The first step was to understand that being made redundant was not a result of her actions or inactions, and to appreciate the improved state of all sustainability initiatives she left as her legacy.

**Working with her 4-line:** Learning about Type 1's movement to 4, Claire wondered what valuable resources she could gain in that space. While accepting intense emotions can be difficult for Type 1, Claire embraced her emotionality and used it to connect to her core purpose: *If there wasn't a "should," what would I do?* Claire knew the best part of her corporate role was a deep connection to environmental causes, which hadn't changed—meaning she was in the right industry. Claire felt hopeful but still stuck.

**Working with her 7-line:** This is when she explored her connection to the 7-line, where she gained access to positive energy, entrepreneurship, and creativity. Claire realised how many valuable connections she had through networking opportunities in her previous roles. She recalled how many people had commented that they would love for her to handle their sustainability compliance. Claire saw the opportunity to do what she loved most, what she was good at, and to do it her way: ethical and transparent.

**The Result:** For the first time in her working life, Claire started considering how she could set up her own small sustainability consultancy.

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## Type 2: The Considerate Helper

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### Your Lines: 4 and 8

**Accessing your 4-line** will help you connect with your needs authentically and vulnerably. There is a significant cost to the tendency to want to be dependable, helpful, and reliable. And chances are, you will feel the conflict between tending to your own urgent needs and those of other people who, by now, might be expecting you to be there for them.

By accepting your flaws and less positive emotions—and how they make you a balanced person—you can shift from feeling like you are not enough to understanding that you are going through a lot right now, and doing the best you can is an accomplishment. Ask yourself: *What kind of career or environment would make me truly happy?*

**Accessing your 8-line** will help you set the strong boundaries you need during this time. The truth is that most tasks you will be doing in the coming weeks are important

but not urgent—there is no clear deadline. That means you might be tempted to use this time to support others by giving them your time and energy.

In the 8-space, you can clearly articulate what you need and when you need it. You also gain access to the simplest but mightiest word: *No*. As we sometimes say, “No is a full sentence.” You will need to focus on yourself, your next steps, and your plan execution.

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## Type 3: The Competitive Achiever

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### Your Lines: 6 and 9

**Accessing your 6-line** will help you connect with your doubts and uncertainty authentically and vulnerably. There is a significant cost to the tendency to always appear like you’ve got it together and can confidently navigate any challenge. And chances are, you will feel some uncertainty in the coming weeks.

By accepting your doubts and less “productive” emotions—and how they make you a balanced person—you can shift from feeling like you are not enough to understanding that you are going through a lot right now, and showing up daily is already an accomplishment. Another benefit of accessing the 6-space is acknowledging the value of community. You can ask for help. And you will be surprised at how many people will help you.

**Exploring your 9-line** is an opportunity to slow down and consider how you could bring more balance to your life. It might be about moving from being a “human doing” to simply “being.” It might be scheduling time for rest and mindfulness—and seeing those activities as important as the things you can tick off your list.

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## Type 4: The Intense Creative

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### Your Lines: 1 and 2

**Your connection to Type 1** will be incredibly useful over the coming weeks. As someone deeply connected with your emotional world, you might be “feeling your

way” through the next weeks rather than taking action. You might even create very detailed plans, and then, if you miss one step, tell yourself that you never were able to see it through in the first place.

In the 1-space, think: *What is the next right step?* And do it immediately. As you may long for the past and reflect on how good things were, being present and available to what’s happening right now—in small and big ways—will be a massive support for you.

**Your connection to Type 2** will encourage you to think about how you could be of service to other people while being deeply authentically yourself. You will likely need to lean on your connections over the coming weeks. Doing so from a space of genuine optimism—and noticing what’s going right for you instead of what’s going wrong—is a powerful mental model.

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## Type 5: The Quiet Specialist

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### Your Lines: 7 and 8

**Accessing your 8-line** will benefit you enormously over the coming weeks. It will support you in stepping into your authority and showing up with energy, charisma, and purpose that others can get excited about. It will also remind you about the value of presence and being in your body. Have you been eating well? How is your sleep? For your brain to be at its best, your body must be looked after too.

A great mental model you can borrow from your 8-line is that you have an unlimited flow of energy to draw from. You will not run out of energy even if you network, spend time with people, and engage in public speaking activities on the same day.

**Moving to your 7-line** is the gateway to seeing options and possibilities. Your ability to be analytical and resource-aware will be helpful when you start implementing your next steps. But before you start, use the 7 energy already within you to ideate. Consider: *What would be possible if I didn’t worry about looking foolish? What would I do in a world of no constraints?*

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## Type 6: The Loyal Sceptic

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### Your Lines: 3 and 9

**Accessing your 9-line** will allow you to release your vigilance and access a more balanced view: if things can go wrong, they can also go right. And just as you can't predict every risk, you might also be surprised when things work out better than you expected. When in this space, practise presence. Most of your worst-case scenarios will not materialise.

**Moving to your 3-line** might feel uncomfortable, but it's where you can find an essential ability for you right now—one you might not like in your 6-space: self-presentation. How you present yourself and your experiences will make a massive difference over the coming weeks.

While you might have an aversion to “marketing yourself,” in the 3-space, you can start feeling comfortable sharing your strengths and accomplishments. You've done a lot; your future employers should know about it. Presentation of your skills, abilities, and experiences is a must.

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## Type 7: The Enthusiastic Visionary

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### Your Lines: 1 and 5

**In the 5-space**, you will gain the ability to focus on one thing at a time and deeply explore it. You will see that less is more, and an accurate evaluation of your resources, time, and energy will support you in engaging in the activities that truly matter. Here, you can create a quiet space to connect with what is most important for you to focus on right now.

**Your connection to Type 1** will be incredibly useful over the coming weeks. You have a dozen ideas floating in your head right now, and they all look so good! Where do you start, and how do you convert those ideas into action?

This is where the freedom of 7 meets the follow-through ability of 1. Here, you will find the discipline to move from plans to actions—and it will be a powerful space. Think:

*What is the next right step?* And do it immediately, before you get distracted with another idea, networking opportunity, or start-up.

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## **Type 8: The Active Controller**

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### **Your Lines: 2 and 5**

**In the 5-space**, you can allow yourself to retreat and conserve your energy. You will see that less is more, and an accurate evaluation of your time and energy—factoring in time to rest—will support you in engaging in the activities that truly matter. Here, you can create a quiet space to connect with what is most important for you to focus on right now.

**Moving to your 2-line** will help you see people in a more positive light and trust yourself to be vulnerable with others. Being reliable and relying on others is a natural flow, and you can allow yourself to be helped and looked after.

Lean on those deep personal connections you've created, and fight the urge to retreat and "fight through this alone." Think about the people you've worked with over the years, the people you impacted, and who impacted you. How can these connections support you over the coming weeks?

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## **Type 9: The Adaptive Peacemaker**

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### **Your Lines: 3 and 6**

**Leaning towards your 3-line** will give you access to goal-setting, energy, and permission to do things important to you—regardless of other people's agendas. You will enjoy ticking tasks off your list and might even be able to answer the dreaded question: *Where do you see yourself in five years?*

**Your 6-line** will support you in trusting your insights. It will also help you plan ahead, calculate possible risks, and consider how you can mitigate them. In a time of uncertainty, having alternative plans and options is helpful, and having those clearly outlined will be an excellent support for you over the coming weeks.

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## Your Next Steps

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This guide is just the beginning. If you would like personalised support navigating your career transition, Enneagram Solutions offers one-on-one coaching tailored to your type, your circumstances, and your goals.

### **Get in touch:**

- Email: [yuliya.schamrel@enneagramolutions.co.nz](mailto:yuliya.schamrel@enneagramolutions.co.nz)
- Website: [enneagramolutions.co.nz](https://enneagramolutions.co.nz)

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