The Wagner Enneagram Personality Style Scales (WEPSS) is a self-report inventory designed to measure the nine personality styles described by the Enneagram (pronounced “any-a-gram”). In Greek, ennea means nine and gramma means point. The Enneagram is a circle inscribed by nine points. Each point represents a separate style that has its own way of viewing, construing, and responding to people and events. Each style has both adaptive or resourceful and nonadaptive or non-resourceful cognitive, emotional, and behavioral strategies for self-maintenance and enhancement, for interpersonal relating, and for problem solving. In other words, each of these styles has an “upside” range and a “downside” range. The WEPSS measures the resourceful and non-resourceful characteristics of each style and gives an overall score used for determining one’s Enneagram style.

In business settings, the WEPSS can be used to explore and understand the diverse decision-making and conflict resolution methods, communication patterns, and preferred operating procedures that are associated with a variety of leadership and management styles. The WEPSS is a helpful tool for team building and for understanding group and interpersonal dynamics, offering insights into how individuals of each personality style tend to interact with colleagues and authority figures who have the same or differing styles. Vocational and personnel counselors will find the WEPSS useful in considering career decisions, work preferences, and congenial work environments for their clients. An individual’s WEPSS results offer insight regarding what will be stressful and nonstressful for his or her personality style in work settings.

The WEPSS may be used in counseling and therapeutic environments for determining the range of adaptive and maladaptive strategies associated with an individual’s style. Using the WEPSS as a “before and after” measure, counselors can chart the progress of clients along a healthy-unhealthy continuum. They can also observe how clients respond under stressful and relaxed conditions. The WEPSS indicates the strategies clients most identify with and rely on, and also the viewpoints and behaviors that are less available to them and might need to be developed. In clinical settings, the WEPSS can be used for individual, couple, family, and group counseling because the nine styles comprise both intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics. The WEPSS may also be employed in spiritual and personal growth settings to assess the presence of those healthy essential characteristics found in the real self, as well as the presence of distorting, inauthentic characteristics found in the false self. The Enneagram is helpful in discerning and clarifying values.

In schools and educational milieux, the WEPSS can be used for understanding both teaching and learning styles. Knowing the preferred learning modes and environments for each of the nine styles can help maximize learning potential. It also helps teachers understand why they are on the same wavelength with some students while seemingly speaking a foreign language to other students. Their teaching style may not match the latter students’ learning style.

**General Description**

The WEPSS is a 200-item inventory composed of nine scales measuring the characteristics of the nine Enneagram personality styles. Each of the nine scales contains 11 items describing the resourceful characteristics of that style and 11 items that describe the style’s non-resourceful characteristics. The remaining two items on the WEPSS are unscored, but serve as general indicators of unhappiness or happiness.

The first and last 50 items of the inventory have positive, adaptive, or resourceful connotations, and the middle 100 items have negative, nonadaptive, or non-resourceful connotations. By grouping positive items with positive items, and negative items with negative items, the WEPSS inventory was designed to reduce the social desirability effect of trying to appear good. No positive item looks any better than the other positive items, and no negative item looks any worse than the other negative items. With this arrangement, the test-taking experience begins and ends on a positive note. It also reflects typical developmental vicissitudes whereby we begin life in a potentially natural, healthy state. Then, depending on our circumstances, from a lesser to a greater degree, we lose touch with our genuine self and its adaptive capacities, and we develop a personality or false self with potentially maladaptive strategies that we utilize to
protect our true self and facilitate our engagement in the world. Finally, as we mature, we return to our real self by becoming more evolved and enlightened. In mythology, this has been called the “Hero’s Journey” or the “Search for the Holy Grail.”

Each WEPSS item is a descriptive word or phrase that is rated by the respondent along a 5-point Likert scale: (1) almost never fits me, (2) rarely or seldom fits me, (3) occasionally fits me, (4) frequently or often fits me, and (5) almost always fits me. The results are expressed as a Total score, a Resourceful Characteristics score, and a Non-Resourceful Characteristics score for each of the nine Enneagram personality styles. The inventory takes between 20 and 40 minutes to administer. It can be scored by hand or by computer; with either method, raw scores are converted into standardized scores.

The WEPSS is intended for an audience ranging from late adolescence into late adulthood, as it takes some years for both the positive, healthy characteristics and the negative, defensive features of an individual’s personality to manifest themselves. It also takes time for people to develop enough reflective capacity to recognize and acknowledge these characteristics within themselves. The normative sample on which the WEPSS standardized scores are based ranged in age from 18 to 83 (N = 1,429). The results of the test are given in percentile scores that allow for comparison of the respondent’s scores with the scores obtained by this large group of people who have taken the WEPSS. More importantly, it also allows the scores for all nine styles to be compared according to a common metric.

**Brief Descriptions of the Nine Enneagram Styles**

**Style ONE, The Good Person**

Style ONE, the “Good Person” is the type of person who wants to be right and good. People with this style (referred to as ONEs) live by canons of excellence. They hold high expectations for themselves and others. Moving to an extreme, this type of person becomes a perfectionist, self-righteous, and a crusader against imperfection. The characteristic emotional state for this style is one of anger and resentment because nothing is as it should be. Yet this creates a dilemma for ONEs, because anger itself must be avoided by the “good boy” or “good girl.” Through the defensive maneuver of reaction formation, ONEs project their inner flaws outside, and their resentment is expressed as righteous indignation.

**Style TWO, The Loving Person**

The idealized self-image of Style TWO, the “Loving Person,” is one that says “I am helpful; I can give.” This highly empathic, generous life-style can cause a TWO to become rigidified into a compulsive helper and rescuer. The accompanying attitude is pride: others are needy while the giver is not. In fact, the TWO is out of touch with his or her own needs, having projected them onto others. Repression is employed by TWOs to keep their personal needs from surfacing.

**Style THREE, The Effective Person**

Style THREE, the “Effective Person,” is someone who sees himself or herself as successful and efficient. This is the ever-youthful, highly energized, organized, goal-oriented individual. A THREE is very concerned with how he or she appears to others; image is important. Deception is the habit this person is likely to assume. Because THREEs will take on whatever role is necessary for success, they often lose touch with their true natures. For a THREE, failure must be avoided at all costs, and this is accomplished through identification with his or her role or image, or with a group norm.

**Style FOUR, The Original Person**

The idealized self-image of Style FOUR, the “Original Person,” is one that says “I am special; I am sensitive; I conform to elite standards.” This person is highly attuned to the mood of his or her surroundings, so that life is experienced as a drama, most often as a tragedy. When exaggerated, this individual’s sensitivity to suffering makes him or her “special.” Ordinary experience is not enough for FOURs, who believe life is to be lived at the extremes. Envious of others for being more spontaneous and authentic, FOURs avoid simple sadness and joy by directing their experiences into various modalities of artistic expression.

**Style FIVE, The Wise Person**

The self-image accompanying Style FIVE, the “Wise Person,” is one that says “I am perceptive: I am wise.” The highly observant and reflective stance of these individuals can result in their feeling isolated and withdrawn, viewing life from the sidelines because they do not know how to enter the game. The passion that accompanies this posture is avarice: a desire to take everything in, and an unwillingness to let anything go. This incorporating strategy helps FIVEs to avoid inner feelings of emptiness. Utilizing the defense mechanism of compartmentalization, these individuals trick themselves into thinking that life is lived primarily in the head.

**Style SIX, The Loyal Person**

Style SIX, the “Loyal Person” is the type of person who thinks of himself or herself as loyal, dutiful, and doing what he or she ought to do. Ambivalent about authority, this person can be very responsible and conscientious about preserving traditions, or very wary and challenging of any authoritarian positions. When taken to extremes, distortion of this otherwise healthy disposition can lead SIXes to adopt the exaggerated orthodoxy of an authoritarian personality or the role of a devil’s advocate who must be courageous in the face of life’s challenges and threats. SIXes are tormented by fears and doubts. They resolve these doubts by aligning themselves with some body of authority in order to feel secure, or by always having some escape route to feel safe. To be loyal, a SIX must avoid experiencing his or her own fears and desires to break the rules. Through projection, rather
than being perceived in the self, this inner rebel is perceived in the “enemy”; that is, whoever does not side with the SIX’s position.

**Style SEVEN, The Joyful Person**

The self-concept of Style SEVEN, the “Joyful Person,” is one that proclaims “I am OK, and everything is going to be fine!” This person is optimistic, highly imaginative, ever-hopeful, and oriented toward the future. If this personality style is distorted by exaggeration, the resulting caricature is of a compulsive optimist, a chronic dreamer. With the distortion comes gluttony, always wanting more and more good without ever thoroughly “digesting” anything. By constantly sublimating unhappiness and evil and insisting on seeing only good, SEVENs avoid inner suffering and pain. Additionally, their tendency toward overplanning and intellectualizing prevents them from fully experiencing life.

**Style EIGHT, The Powerful Person**

The self-concept of Style EIGHT, the “Powerful Person,” is one that says just that: “I am powerful; I can do.” EIGHTs have a tremendous fund of energy, and they seek to put this strength in the service of justice. When distorted, this sense of personal power becomes aggression and the motivation becomes vengeance. These individuals desire intensity and excess to compensate for a deadness they fear is inside them. They avoid weakness and tenderness. For an EIGHT, the best way to defend against feeling vulnerable is through denial of innocence and integrity in both oneself and the world, which results in a stance of debunking and seeking revenge.

**Style NINE, The Peaceful Person**

The idealized self-image for Style NINE, the “Peaceful Person,” is one that says “I am settled.” NINEs are even-tempered, harmonious, relaxed, unflappable, unpretentious. Taken to an extreme, this easygoing approach leads to indolence and an inattention to oneself and to what is important. The NINE’s energy is turned down, dissipated, or distracted, and conflict is avoided through the defense of narcotization, a numbing of oneself and a deadening of one’s energy.

**Guidelines for Use**

The WEPSS is intended for a general audience. The glossary sheet that accompanies the test makes possibly ambiguous items accessible to the general reader. The WEPSS is a nonrestricted test, meaning it can be taken, scored, and interpreted by anyone who is familiar with this Manual and the Enneagram typology, and who has a rudimentary knowledge of personality theory and personality inventories, coupled with common sense.

Common sense suggests that no personality typology perfectly describes all the characteristics and potentials of an individual. Types are usually presented as prototypes, and individual members of each type only approximate those prototypes. Furthermore, prototypes are not meant to be stereotypes. They provide a framework or structure that individuals can use in their efforts to organize pieces of information about themselves so as to better understand how the various parts of themselves fit together to form a whole style. Personality types are not intended to be viewed as cookie cutters whereby each person of one type is exactly like every other person in that mold. It is important to value the person who informs the type rather than to idolize the type that forms the person.

Common sense also suggests that the results of any test should be taken with a grain of salt. No instrument is 100% accurate, and that includes the WEPSS. There is always some error in the measurement and assessment of personality, because tests aren’t perfect and neither are personalities. Personality expressions vary over time and circumstances, and inventories are subject to statistical error.

When determining which style best fits an individual, it is best to consider that person’s own experience and assessment of himself or herself, take into account what other people who know that person well say about him or her, and confer with someone who really knows the Enneagram well, as well as to consult the results of this inventory. This “gold standard” combination of self, peer, expert, and instrument rating should come closest to determining which style is the best fit. A convergence of evidence from many sources is usually more reliable than data from a single source. The reflection questions found in the author’s *Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles* (Wagner, 1996) can also help mine this evidence more deeply.

Finally, common sense suggests that the information provided by the WEPSS and by the Enneagram system of personality styles should only be used in conjunction with other sources of knowledge in making decisions about careers, marriage partners, business associates, choice of therapists or teachers, and so forth. The more information you can acquire through various sources, the better chance you will have of coming to a good conclusion, choice, and course of action.

**Contents of the WEPSS Manual**

This Manual is divided into two main parts. The first part is the “Guide to Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation,” which contains practical information about the general features of the WEPSS (chapter 1), administration and scoring (chapter 2), and interpretation of WEPSS results (chapter 3). It is this part of the Manual that users will ordinarily consult in their routine use of the test.

The second part of the Manual, the “Technical Guide,” is devoted to background information and statistical data that are not needed in routine use. Chapter 4 addresses the development and standardization of the WEPSS, as well as its reliability and validity. That chapter is followed by Appendixes A and B, consisting of tables that present all WEPSS scores in terms of percentiles and standard T-scores, respectively. (Note that Appendix B is provided solely for researchers who wish to con-