



Enneagram Glow

STAGES OF A RELATIONSHIP

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Understanding Your Relationship Through the Lens of the Enneagram Glow Stages

What is the Enneagram Glow? A new showy light show of all the types? Though neon is totally trending right now, no! Is it a 1980's slap fluorescent bracelet set? Also fun, but again, no!

The Enneagram Glow is a concept to describe how you and your partner's combined relationship gifts shine brightly together in the world. On the flip side, it also provides a framework to work through your unique "couple shadow".

At the beginning of a relationship, the glow we create together looks very different from the ways we shine after years and years of connecting and exchanging our gifts. Here is the 6 Step Enneagram Glow process most couples go through. I've included an example of how one 8-9 couple glows together as they walk through the stages.

Stage 1: Shine
<p>Stage 1 of Glow: Shine</p> <p>You find one another and decide you will pair up. Your instincts and types move in beautiful ways together and you love one another for who you are and who you will become. You are satisfied and blessed with the work your partner has done at an early point and decide your mutual gifts will carry you far into the next generation of healthy influence.</p> <p>Ex: Scott and Kara were an "opposites attract" double body 8 and 9 pairing who often felt their instincts right away and desired being good and protective of one another. Scott, the 8 began to feel permission to rest with Kara, the 9 instead of going at an all out 8 full sprint. Kara began to speak up and even asked for a raise at work due to her newfound confidence and encouragement from Scott. Instead of unhealthily colluding with power differentials from childhood, they found a partner who had gifts they did not possess and offered them each hope for healing.</p>

What did your relationship look like in this phase? Are you still in it? What did you first love about meeting your spouse or partner? How did they rub off on you?

Stage 2 of Glow: Heal

You realize that your partner or spouse has wounds that you can help to heal with your particular gifts. You reach out to one another in support through early trials and as you set boundaries with family, rise up at work, and in whatever ways you choose, build a family or community of your own with mutual gifts and safety together.

Ex: Scott learned that Kara, an oldest child, had been given the task of caring for all of her younger siblings and she was never encouraged to get her own education. Scott helped Kara to develop a voice for herself and at work, she asked about a scholarship even though she'd been passed over for it a few times. She began to really feel like she mattered. She in turn helped Scott to manage the smaller tasks in accounting at work that were holding him back from making his dreams for their company a reality and they rose to the top, financially and helped many people.

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What did your relationship look like in this phase? Are you still in it? What wounds do you believe your partner helped you to heal in this phase? What healing changes in your life did you see in this phase? What about in your spouse or partner's life?

Stage 3 of Glow: Shadows and Shade

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You realize that doing your work together is much harder the busier life gets with more life and family responsibilities. You each get stuck in deeper defense mechanisms since stress is greater with age (each type uses various defenses such as projection and rationalization but your clients may vary depending on life experience). Neither party wants to admit that the very things you once enjoyed, now annoy you - you feel they've been burned, not blessed. Sometimes couples have grown out of what they wanted their spouses to do for them in terms of "fixing" or balancing them on basic levels. One or both partners don't want to be codependent anymore and to collude (a marriage therapy term that means hoping our spouse will fix or stabilize something missing from our childhood (Nichols et al.). Now one of the spouses wants to work on the relationship and through traumas together but the other party remains distant. They are fairly comfortable in their deeply seated defenses. They prefer codependency/collusion, since they have learned to work with a sort of relationship limp. Perspective has shifted away from delighting in one another's differences and they are throwing shade!

Ex: Several years down the road, Scott felt like now that Kara found her voice, she no longer appreciated or needed him, which was partly true since she did enjoy her independence quite a bit and "awake" 9s are quite competent. Scott also found Kara increasingly passive aggressive when they argued and she felt in turn, like Scott's bold 8 attitude has disrupted the peace one too many times. In truth he had been very jealous of her distance. They were both retreating and contemplating divorce, hurt by the ways their spouse has not done their inner work and dismayed that the very traits that they had once admired, were now loathed.

What did your relationship look like in this phase? Are you still in it? Have you experienced a backfiring of your spouse or partner's gifts? Have you found out more about their struggles, vices, and temptations? How have you handled it personally? How have you handled it together? Take time to talk this out. See a counselor or coach if this phase isn't going well without added support.

Stage 3.5 *Darkness

***Darkness is a phase some couples experience in between shadows and immersion and is the absence of hope. This is where the coaching and counseling work often begins.**

What did your relationship look like in this phase? Are you still in it? Who can you reach out to for support if you are no longer sparking? What do you feel created such a chasm in the relationship, specifically? What would it take to heal?

Stage 4 of Glow: Immerse

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<p>You take time to do your personal self care and relationship work. You look not just at your partner's shadows but finally, at your own too, especially as your once helpful coping strategies have all but ruined your life. You realize that while you must grieve who your partner is not, you also realize the best parts of them may still be activated. Work is slow and at times painful, but worth the refining process.</p>
<p>Doing their inner work with an E + M coach gave them time and perspective to grow. Scott realized that his 8 passions are relentless and learned that this felt overwhelming to Kara who retreats when she feels the angry energy of another since in the past her own voice had never seemed to matter to her already-stressed attachment figures (her parents). Kara realized that while she had found her voice at work, her deeper work involved insisting her voice at home have a place, even if it meant a fight or revisiting the painful memories of childhood first and grieving that loss. Both body types, Scott found his way back to working out at the gym intensely twice a day helped and Kara found a fun group workout with a coach who motivates her on a weekly basis. They also, depending on how deep they want to go, may work on various parts of their Tritype, healing various attachment wounds, and make sure they are further using their arrow work and balancing to connect with one another intimately in heart and mind, as well as to do their bodywork.</p>

What did your relationship look like in this phase? Are you still in it? What did you find out about yourself in terms of healing? How did you get there to this insight? Did you fall on your face or was it a

more gentle realization? What was something you had to grieve at this stage? What self-care saved you?

Stage 5: Glow 2.0

You realize that with inner growth, your gifts are shining brighter than ever, and your partner and family have often seen your example and boundaries you've set and done some of their work also. You adapt to life as the walking wounded together and trust God to carry you in areas where you or your partner are weaker, while committed to ongoing growth and balance together with your great & unique glow and gifts together.

Scott and Kara found their stride together by working on their passions directly and indirectly, as well as their fixations, and by doing various aspects of inner work. They have emerged shining brightly like at the beginning of their relationship, but they now have a new hue. Their combined work has created an even greater impact on others who have watched them soften into a bright glow together. Kara truly has some 8 vibrancy that is a part of her even without Scott (her own 8 wing is strong) while Scott truly has allowed the peace of his 9 wife to seep into even his passions. He now rests well, not in denial, but in true calm and he is a better diplomat in the home and at work. Kara is also activated continually and speaks up, rarely again to be silenced at home or work when it is time to be bold.

What did your relationship look like in this phase? Are you still in it? What are some of the ways you are now stronger from having been through relationship trials? What are some of your spouse or partner's emerging gifts? How is your self care going these days? Are you closer as a result of your struggles?

Stage 6: Afterglow

You do ongoing maintenance work as needed, celebrating your gifts, and continuing to sharpen your life together with ongoing self care (body, mind, spirit) and relationship time (date nights, intimacy, simple getaways occasionally). Often you speak into the lives of other couples and in your community with a vibrancy and a compassion not seen before.

Kara and Scott do maintenance work with their therapist twice a month and enjoy their weekly date nights, all the while supporting one another's dreams as the "Dream Big" pairing 8-9 pairing. Kara ended up going back to school in accounting and becoming the HR representative of their company part time as well as living her dream to be a stay at home parent, while Scott is able to run the organization smoothly and without volatility, with his bodywork, support, and stability at home. They care for each other's hearts compassionately and bring a lighter spark to most everything they do, when they're not actively working out conflict, giving each day's ultimate plans to God. This a great blessing and life for their active lifestyle. Kara and Scott also have a social media account where they help others with their finances.

If you're in this stage or just want some fun inspo on your learning journey, cue Taylor Swift's [Afterglow](#), [Imagine Dragons Walking the Wire](#) or Justin Timberlake's [Mirrors/Reflections](#) to remember all you can accomplish together and have already accomplished together!

What did your relationship look like in this phase? Are you still in it? What practices are now in place so the relationship will run as smoothly on course as possible? How do you plan for adventures? How do you keep the candle lit? Have you noticed you're becoming more like your spouse at this point? If you're not here yet, do a little more dreaming. What would it take for you to feel like you could get here? Be sure to write it down so you can take the needed action steps to get there.

To connect with Christa, visit www.EnneagramandMarriage.com, follow [@enneagramandmarriage@gmail.com](mailto:enneagramandmarriage@gmail.com) or listen to the Enneagram & Marriage Podcast on Apple, Spotify, Castbox, or wherever you listen. Don't forget to use your code "WHOLEHEARTED" for \$5 off your pairing's [Glow Guide](#)!

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