

Origin and Differentiation

The instinctual variants/subtypes are an addition Claudio Naranjo made to the theory, inspired by Ichazo's enneagons of Social Relationships, Conservation, and Syntony and Gurdjieff's moving center of the Sex, Instinctive, and Motor functions, as explained by Frederic and Bernadette Schmitt:

In 1970, Naranjo attended 10 months of the one year spiritual retreat under the guidance of Oscar Ichazo in the desert near Arica, Chile. During that retreat Ichazo taught three enneagons respectively named the enneagon of conservation, the enneagon of relation and the enneagon of syntony (later modified to adaptation). There are nine key words specific to each of these three enneagons. Lately, Ichazo gave up these three enneagons and they are no longer used in Arica School. At that time (1970), neither Ichazo, nor Naranjo spoke about subtypes.

What's most interesting is that before knowing Ichazo, Naranjo followed Gurdjieff's Fourth Way teaching. According to this teaching, there are three main centers: intellectual, emotional, and moving. (...) Naranjo had, at that point, a brilliant idea: he put the three original Ichazo enneagons (conservation, relation and adaptation) in the three functions (sex, instinctive, and motor) of Gurdjieff's moving center. The subtypes were born.

- Gurdjieff's Sex function was merged with the Syntony/Adaptation subtype, and renamed by Naranjo as sexual subtype ,
- Gurdjieff's Instinctive function was merged with the Conservation subtype, renamed as self preservation subtype and
- Gurdjieff's motor function was merged with the Relation subtype, renamed as social subtype.

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It's thus important to notice Ichazo didn't consider his enneagons as "subtypes" or "variants", but rather described as "definite patterns depending on his fixation"^[2] that show distortions in how a type will act in terms of social relationships, syntony, and conservation of the being. Furthermore, what Ichazo called "instincts" (Conservation, Relations and Adaptation) are not equivalent to the variants but the triads of the enneagram, in which Conservation is Gut, Relations is Heart, and Adaptation is Mind. It is imperative to note that the instinctual types of Clinical Enneagram (Naranjo) and those of Protoanalysis (Ichazo) are not the same. The SO instinct does not correlate to the head triad, nor the SX instinct to the heart, and so on. Clinical Enneagram has an entirely separate instinctual system.

How Do They Work?

The variant is the area neuroses are focused at; they warp the mechanical manifestation of a fixation in which the most vulnerable and sensitive will cause the passion to distort itself into a subtype. The subtype represents the passion twisted into a neurotic problem that makes the person behave in a certain pattern. For example, the passion of Gluttony of Type 7 is distorted into "Suggestibility" when directed to the sexual area and "Family" when directed to the preservation area.

Just like everything else in the Enneagram, the instincts are double-edged swords which were ultimately forged out of a feeling of being threatened. The conservation instinct felt like their safety was threatened early on, either materially or psychologically (such as someone close to them dying abruptly), the sexual instinct felt a threat in the syntony with one of their parents, and the social instinct felt like their sense of belonging was threatened. Although externally they may appear "strong" in these areas, they are internally very sensitive and vulnerable to them.