

The Sacred Enneagram

Finding Your Unique Path to Spiritual Growth

By Christopher L. Heuertz

PART I

WHAT IS *the* ENNEAGRAM?

1 The Question of Identity

Exploring Who We Are, How We Got Lost, and how We Might Find Our Way Back Home to our True Identity

IDENTITY AND DIGNITY

Dignity
LB: Value?

“Every unrealistic expectation is a resentment waiting to happen.” -- Father Richard Rohr

The gist was simple: Nouwen suggested we all find ourselves bouncing around three very human lies that we believe about our identity: *I am what I have, I am what I do, and I am what other people say or think about me.*

2 What Is The Enneagram?

When we can find the courage to be honest with ourselves, we're ready for the Enneagram, for the Enneagram exposes the illusions that have defined our sense of self.

THE ENNEAGRAM IS A SACRED MAP

As the most devout believers of any faith tradition mature, they find themselves quietly and undramatically allowing the fruit of their lives to speak for itself more than relying on conversionist tactics. That's truly the fruit of real conversion, when our lives (not our words) validate authentic transformation.

The movement from *basic knowledge* to *principled understanding* to *embodied integration* is the idealized essence of mastery in any growth process -- including the Enneagram.

! After all, truth is meant to be lived -- in our everyday, embodied lives. But truth can be hard to find when it has been hidden from us for so long behind our personality.

Let's examine this for a moment. The English word *personality* is derived from the Latin word for "mask." Simply put, our personality is the mask we wear. Taking off that mask, trying to get behind the mask, is the work of the spiritual journey.

A CONTESTED HISTORY OF THE ENNEAGRAM:

George Gurdjieff, Óscar Ichazo, and Claudia Naranjo

From Gurdjieff's provocations and Naranjo's own initial mistyping, we see the humanity in the modern founders of the Enneagram -- men not meant to be canonized or venerated but teachers whose flawed humanity drew them deeper into the gifts of the Enneagram.

NATURE OR NURTURE?

The Enneagram's nine ways or nine types describe the raw material of humanity's integral fears and desires. It's widely agreed upon that every one of us possesses bits of all nine types, but a dominant type emerges in each of us. What's less widely agreed upon is *how* type comes to be part of our human experience. Is Enneagram type a product of nurture or nature?

Our shadow -- and we all have one -- is the part of our ego we are unable to consciously recognize. Though it is neither good nor bad, it is where we unconsciously “park” some of the worst of ourselves -- destructive patterns, addictions, or other seemingly unpresentable parts.

This biblical account helps shed light on the mystery of type and shows how the very effects and limitations of our Childhood Wound are invitations to wholeness, not tragic flaws that can't be overcome.

My first Enneagram teacher and mentor, Father Richard, has suggested that Enneagram type is one-third nature, one-third nurture, and one-third the decision we make as children to fill a role needed to survive or thrive in our families and environments/

I personally believe we are born into our type and there's nothing our environment can do to change that. Rather, every experience we translate through our type consolidates its impression on us. It's as if when we're born, our soul lands on an arbitrary place on the circle of the Enneagram, and from that perspective of the world we develop attitudes we embrace as a way of framing context for every experience we'll ever have.

3 Paths of Integration, Disintegration, and Grace for the Journey

Honestly and Compassionately Confronting our Patterns in Growth and Stress

In fact, I believe that when we spend time trying to move toward integration, we are not focusing on the real inner work of facing our dominant type. So while it is helpful to see the full picture of the type we borrow from in health the key for all of us is to focus on health and growth in our dominant type.

A newer theory that I happen to agree with is that our path of disintegration is that *innate self-survival reflex* that stops our fall by reaching out to the lower-level manipulation techniques of another type as a way of getting our attention -- letting us know we are falling and if we don't catch ourselves we'll “break our arm” or worse.

The path of disintegration can be understood as a subconscious self-preservation instinct to prevent an unhealthy person from falling farther down the hole they feel stuck in.

[Seth Haine's] example shows each of us a simple lesson that is available to everyone in disintegration: If we can't self-observe, then we can't self-correct.

Surely our *path of disintegration* is an indication that we are unwell, but recognizing when we are moving in this direction helps us wake up to the destructive tendencies that keep us at our

lower levels of mental and emotional health. Think of it as a warning sign or flare signal, designed not to condemn a person but to guide them back home. Being able to recognize when we're moving in a disintegrative direction implies we have already given ourselves to the hard inner work of learning to observe our patterns, even when we're not doing well. Because when we're falling, the last thing we're usually capable of is noticing the fall. That inner work is ultimately what keeps guiding us home to our True Self.

THE FIXATIONS AND PASSIONS OF THE ENNEAGRAM

Clearly too much of anything often leads to destructive patterns of addictions, where sin can be found. Certainly our Passions can distort into sin. This is especially true when the consequences of our addictive behaviors catch up to us. I imagine this is what the nineteenth-century American philosopher Elbert Hubbard was suggesting when he wrote, "We are punished by our sins not for them."

Part II

EXPLORING TRIADS *and* TYPES

4 Head, Heart, Body *And* the Whole Self

Introducing the Intelligence Centers

Discernment is our ability to judge what is good, true, and beautiful. Discernment is also the inner knowledge of how to act on that which we perceive. Our use of discernment relies on the clarity of our centered minds, the objectivity of peace-filled hearts, and the unobstructed impulses or instincts of our bodies.

Discernment also assists us in simpler decision making -- for example, learning to say no to social invitations when we're tired and just need some time alone. But when it really seems to count is when we seek to discover our created purpose and how to live into it each moment of each day.

I prefer to introduce the Enneagram through the Intelligence Centers rather than through the types because when we learn to trust our primary center, we learn to discern.

The Intelligence Centers are the basis for how we perceive ourselves in relationship to our understanding of how the world works and how we work in the world. These centers are activated through our involuntarily physiological reactions and responses to every experience. GRowing in familiarity with our primary Intelligence Center is key to helping us develop discernment. Furthermore, matching up an appropriate contemplative prayer posture with our Intelligence Center allows for spiritual alignment and growth.

One of Basil's adorable quirks is the way he shakes things off. That funny phrase "shake it off" actually speaks to the body's way of balancing the nervous system. Somehow Basil doesn't need to be reminded of it. He instinctively shakes it off before getting out of bed and starting his day, after being scolded for not following a command, after undergoing a stressful experience on a walk or in the car, or sometimes after spending time with someone he's not so sure about. Basil quietly and quickly gives his little body a rigorous shake to discharge whatever negative energy may have been absorbed.

If only we could learn these simple tricks to return to presence by following our own centers. Just think of all the ways we would be better aligned, better centered, and better able to discern.

THE THINKING TYPES OF THE HEAD CENTER

Head people, those in the intellectual center, have highly developed mental faculties they use to assess and address everything in life that is experienced as a threat or an assault on their inner state. Head people believe in competency as the cure for instability. Through mastering their environment, head people think they're able to secure their own self-preservation.

THE FEELING TYPES OF THE HEART CENTER

...this emotional presence is also an unconscious coping technique; though heart people can be highly emotionally intelligent, it's not uncommon for them to be out of touch with their *own* feelings or emotional needs. Thus they seek out connection with others as a way to experience their own feelings through the mirroring of other's feelings.

Discernment for heart types is rooted in their fluency in accessing and trusting their emotional impulses.

THERE'S ALWAYS AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

Because these Anchor Points sit in the middle of their Intelligence Centers, neither of their wings reach outside their center. Because their wings don't reach outside their center, they ironically are the most disconnected from their center.

5 A Curated Color Wheel Summary of the Nine Types

Finding Yourself within the Enneagram's Nine Types

Our personality is the mask we wear -- it is part of us but not the whole. Some of the masks we wear are formed for us by our environment and upbringing, some we forge through the mythology of our own ego projections, and some are unfairly put on us by society as caricatures. Regardless of where they come from, it's up to us to determine how long we'll wear them.

UNFOLDING THE MAP

I deliberately emphasize Virtue because when we do return to our essence, the impression of the Virtue is what is most evident to ourselves and others. Our Virtue is the lingering fragrance of our essential purity; it is what makes each of us beautiful.

Attack on Virtue = Childhood Wound

Our Childhood Wound jolted us into the pain of humanity and forced us to fall asleep, because sleeping became easier and seemingly safer than facing reality. In our slumber we lost ourselves, forgot who we really were -- just like in Oz where Scarecrow forgot he had a brain, Tin Man forgot he had a heart, and Lion forgot he had courage. Whatever this wound was, it was a full-out attack on our essence, a theft of our True Self.

Virtue Intention = Basic Desire

The attack on our essence created within each of us is what I call Virtue Intention, which is simply our Basic Desire or drive to wake up, to get back home.

Virtue Addictions = Passion + Fixation

What's important to remember is that the judgement Ones levy on the outside world has already been levied inwardly, so the sense of judgement isn't hypocritical.

*1 The resentment that Ones direct at themselves keeps them in the anger-resentment loop, always mad at themselves for not measuring up, always resentful that they could have done better. This resentment is what happens the One's social tendencies, rooted in their sense of duty. Their dutiful compliance isn't so much a social style in relationships as it is compliance to their superego or inner critic (which for Ones is the toughest of all Enneagram type inner critics).

*2 Getting Twos to be honest about what they really need can cause them tremendous stress. Twos ache, their hearts always breaking for the needs they intuitively recognize in those around them. This ache, however, can be a distraction that keeps them from looking inward at what they want and need. When they do recognize their own needs, their ache is replaced with a new kind of pain as they question whether they really are loved. Frequently Twos will ask those with whom they're in relationships, "Do you *really* love me?" Such a question inevitably comes as a surprise since Twos are often the most lovable of all Enneagram types.

The flattery of Twos convinces them that diminishing themselves through self-abnegation is a legitimate form of love.

*4 Fours are a natural source of significance. But of all the types, Fours may be the most misunderstood, as evidenced in the way they are frequently depicted in much of the Enneagram literature.

*5 Type Five is perhaps the most withdrawn of all the Enneagram types, their withdrawal a means of finding the mental and cerebral room to understand and master reality.

*6 [Six] are thought to be the most disconnected from their thoughts and can be the most irrational of all the Enneagram types.

*7 Sevens, the most energetic of all Enneagram types, are a source of imagination and freedom in the world.

*8 The most driving dynamism of all Enneagram types is found in the energy of eights.

In integration Eights reach toward the Two. They levy their need to be against at such things as injustice and poverty, and show up as generous and loving. Mother Teresa, with whom I spent

quite a bit of time, is probably the most commonly mistyped Two. She clearly was an integrated Eight.

*9 When Nines are present to their bodies, their own need for inner harmony, and their innate ability to project their strength into the world, no one is more capable of exemplifying the tremendous power of love to renew all things.

6 Relationists, Pragmatists, *And Idealists*

Introducing the Harmony Triads

HOW THE HARMONY TRIADS RELATE TO THE WORLD

*2 Twos make the deepest relational connections in the world.

*3 Pragmatists relate to the world through what works and type Three brings this energy more than any other Enneagram type. Threes, rooted in the heart, are the quintessential get-it-done people, demonstrated in their litany of accomplishments.

*4 Idealists relate to the world through their dreams for a better world. And there's no greater dreamer in the Enneagram than the Four.

Part III

FINDING *Your* UNIQUE PATH *to SPIRITUAL* *GROWTH*

7 The Unexpected Gifts of Solitude, Silence, and Stillness

Returning to Our True Identity through Contemplative Practice

! The sixteenth-century Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross wrote, “Silence is God’s first language.”

When I come out of the sit, the love I’ve tapped into allows me to breathe more deeply and more slowly, my eyes to move across the room more gently, and my words to be fewer. When I come out of silence in our community prayer sits, everyone around me looks a little more beautiful, perhaps a wee bit angelic.

!!! Fundamentally, love is at the heart of our Christian faith tradition. God *is* love, and in consenting to silence, we allow Love to wash over us, inviting us into a “new we,” a new kind of community that affirms the divine imprint within all humanity and contributes to building the kind of world we all want to live in.

LB: =O evolutionary leadership

In silence, we experience the gentleness of love despite all our attempts to resist it.

In silence, we discover a transcendent union of body, mind, soul, and spirit -- the integration of our whole selves.

In silence, our union with God and within ourselves allows for surprising unity with others.

Indeed, unity in silence has become an unexpected gift.

In silence, the fragmented parts of self come into greater wholeness. And over time, we experience, through silence, the wisdom of the Enneagram -- a gentle invitation to come home to our True Self.

THE BEST WAY OUT IS THROUGH

Though finding our way home may seem an exciting prospect at the outset, the ego continually resists attempts to wake up and move from illusion to truth. The tendency of the ego is to remain in its smug and content cave of unawareness, convincing itself of the illusion of personality. Fundamentally, the ego must undergo a series of conversions that lead to truth, but each of these conversions is simultaneously a small death of the ego that is viciously resisted by the defense mechanisms of our Enneagram types.

This, I believe, is the true nature of conversion: it happens not in a single moment or pivotal

event but in a lifelong series of minor deaths. It is what Jesus spoke plainly of: "If you wish to come after me, you must deny your very selves, take up the instrument of your own death and follow in my footsteps" (Matthew 16:24).

These small deaths are painful. They seem overwhelming. Most of us are too scared to face them. But just as when the scarecrow reminded Dorothy and their fellow traveling companions before entering the haunted forest, "It'll get darker before it gets lighter," so is the nature of inner work.

In his beautiful poem "A Servant to Servants," Robert Frost suggests that "the best way out is always through," and this wisdom is especially apt in connection with the Enneagram. The best way of our deceptive self-illusion is through hard inner work. As we work with the Enneagram, we can't avoid pressing through our ego's set of coping addictions. We can't help but face the ways we've kept ourselves asleep in our illusions. Waking up means telling ourselves the truth about those subconscious techniques fortifying the scaffolding around the lies we believe about our own ego mythologies. The Enneagram won't let us sidestep the interior work of separating the truth from the lies we've told ourselves over and over and over again.

The Enneagram forces us to wake up out of our illusion-of-self and break free from the shackles of our personality. Once we awaken, we can no longer continue to live in the dreamlike states of the deceptions that we have convinced ourselves are more real and more dramatic than the best of who we can become when freed from the prisons of our Fixations and Passions.

Not only do we have to traverse through the chaos and darkness of our fragmented identity, but we also have to die to who we thought we were. And nothing helps us embrace the death of our personality structure more than contemplative practice. Make no mistake, contemplative prayer does feel like death because it's a way to practice how to die. It's a one-way pilgrimage, a lot like Dorothy's quest to find her way home in *The Wizard of Oz*, once she realizes she can't get back to Kansas the way she came. And we know pilgrimages don't end; they merely facilitate new beginnings. This new way of finding our way home is the first of a series of minor deaths to which we must submit. And it can be scary.

Pastor Drew Jackson:

Life best lived is lived as a series of losses, a series of deaths. Death is not meant to be a one-time event at the end of life, rather, a daily experience by which we learn to continually embrace the unknown, step into mystery, and release the need to control.... The contemplative way is a practice in "death." If you have ever witnessed the moment of death, you know that death is ultimately silent, still, and alone. The practices of contemplative spirituality prepare us for this. The contemplative ways thrusts us into the beautiful struggle of embracing the unknown and losing the need to control.

"It is in dying that we are born into eternal life." -- prayer of Saint Francis

Drew went on to say, "As we learn to practice death by way of contemplation, death at the end of life is no longer a fear, but is received as the next logical step. Death is no longer an unknown for us because we already know that life comes through the process of death. We will have lived that reality each day.

There's no better way to live into our new life or original essence than with the help of contemplative practice. But we resist dying. It doesn't come easy for us. Everything in us fights to hold on to what we think is life.

TO step into the life that is truly life, we're invited to practice for our death. But voluntarily preparing to die seems counterintuitive, and contemplative prayer hardly seems the obvious first step on this journey. What's so difficult here is how undramatic the process is for such a dramatic hoped-for result. But as author Eckhart Tolle writes, "True happiness is found in seemingly unremarkable things. But to be aware of little, quiet things, you need to be quiet inside. A high degree of alertness is required. Be still. Look. listen. Be present."

WHAT IS CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRITUALITY?

In her book *Pilgrimage of a Soul*, Phileena says that contemplative spirituality carves the posture of surrender (letting go) into the fabric of our being, making us receptive to transformation.

The true contemplative is any normal person who allows deep soul work to lead to a broad, outward-facing transformation. That's the beauty of contemplative practice: we enter it as individuals, yet emerge enriched and equipped, part of a larger community more capable of serving the needs of a hurting world. Likewise, true activists do not simply throw themselves at a cause for the sake of the cause without first allowing a passion or focus to provide some sort of anchor or grounding point. And so, bringing contemplation and activism together creates a fresh kind of accountability to both efforts, illuminating for us the truth that neither can be isolated from the other if we really want to have an impact.

The simple words [Mother Teresa] spoke were credible because of the life she lived.

I used to think that Mother's fecundity needed to be supported by her prayer life, but as I watched her simple commitment to nurturing her own spirituality, it dawned on me that she didn't pray to support her work, but in fact *the work was the fruit of her prayers*. She led with contemplative prayer, and goodness came forward.

WHY CONTEMPLATION?

Most of us who start down the contemplative path of spiritual formation quickly realize that we will always be beginners.

Sadly, with few exceptions, Christianity has resisted a return to its historic contemplative tradition and thus has lost an opportunity to lead beyond the worn-out culture wars we often seem to return to.

We hung on Father Thoma's every word, astonished by the embodied credibility of his message. As with any great teacher or mentor, we learned more from watching his example than from merely listening to his words.

Having struggled with my own tragic flaws for a few years, I knew it was time to move on. And looking back on those decades of service, I was finally able to admit to myself that though I had given my best and done my best, there were blind spots that held me back.

These painful moments of clarity came in the quietness of spiritual practice when I was no longer distracting myself from the harmful lies I had come to believe about my identity. When I actually took time to stop -- ceasing the fight for justice, which was frequently a proxy war for the inner work I was refusing to focus on -- I finally began to learn to be present, to listen, and to practice much-needed restraint.

First, like many people in social justice -- driven vocations, I was often guilty of doing a much better job taking care of others than caring for myself. Somehow I thought it was my Christian duty to sacrifice my own needs, even my own well-being, in order to serve others better. As you can imagine, this fueled a harmful martyr mentality that I would often rub some Bible on to justify. But I don't believe God is ever honored by our burnout, even on behalf of the worthiest of efforts.

LB: i was literally taught this via youth group leadership

There's no integrity in this approach to service. The Scriptures tell us, "Love your neighbor as yourself," but most of us never really learn to love ourselves, thinking we can make up for this deficit if we practice loving others. We have to practice what love is by making room for who we are -- the good and the bad. Otherwise, the love we offer others will always lack the depth of its potential.

!!! Since then I've done my best to protect rhythms that are healthy and sustainable. Today I know that Sabbath is for *rest*, retreats are for *reflection*, vacations are for *recreation*, and sabbatical is for *renewal*.

When we don't honor our rhythms and neglect caring for ourselves, then the luxury of sabbatical ends up being wasted on *recovery*.

When we're tired, it's tough to stay present.

We were perpetually teetering on the edge of burnout, and in fact quite a few of my coworkers did indeed burn out. Many gave up. Many left their serving communities. In the most tragic scenarios, some even walked away from their faith. Some of our belief systems simply weren't adequate to make sense of the suffering we witnessed. Our own doubts about the legitimacy of

the notion of a good God in a world of hurt were too much for some of our supporters, pastoral caregivers, and even each other. And the havoc these doubts wreaked in our personal lives and relationships was often devastating.

THE GIFTS OF SOLITUDE, SILENCE, AND STILLNESS

It's unfortunate that we tend to resist solitude, silence, and stillness, because some aspects of our awakening, growth, and development cannot be realized without them...

Gut people who are obsessed with *control*, heart people who are obsessed with *connections*, and head people who are obsessed with *competence* all need to find freedom from the ways they deal with the inner dread.

For those in the Body Center, the gut people (types Eight, Nine, and One), *stillness* is crucial.

In solitude, a heart person's essence emerges in painfully liberating ways. Solitude teaches us how to be present -- present to God, to ourselves, and to others with no strings attached. Presence in heart people allows for authentic connection to others, as well as to the past and the future, with a focus on the now.

CONTEMPLATION AND IDENTITY

At its heart, faith is making the option for the absurd.

Ultimately, faith is learning to rest in mystery. But that invitation is a difficult one. So many of us spend much of our time trying to defend our beliefs, to come up with better arguments to convince someone that the way we think, live, act, or worship is superior. In those efforts we tend to gravitate toward arrogance.

Gentle as it is, the contemplative path is also severe, a demanding journey toward humility as we move from belief to faith. Contemplative spirituality holds us accountable by awakening us to the subconscious and unconscious motivations for what we are attempting to do in the context of our beliefs. It allows us to stay in the pain of our human condition yet not be overcome by it, keeping that pain from pushing us over the edge and instead allowing it to transform us.

FRAGMENTS CLAIMING THE WHOLE

Who we think we are (in other words, our ideas about our identity) can be confused by the bits of our own narrative that we pick up and set down -- the parts of our lives we're able to be

truthful with ourselves about as well as those we continue to hide or refuse to face. These fragments of our unintegrated self compete for dominance, and often we allow one piece of another of our identity to lay claim to the whole of it.

We overidentify with the fragments we think are most attractive, the parts of our stories that seem most successful.

! A contemplative approach to the Enneagram invites us to resist the reductionism of inner fragmentation; to realize we aren't as bad as our worst moments or as good as our greatest successes -- but that we are far better than we can imagine and carry the potential to be far worse than we fear. Father Richard once told me, "To cast great light in the world also requires a long shadow." Both belong.

8 Mapping your Enneagram

Type *with* Your Unique Path to Spiritual Growth

Integrating Knowledge with Practice

The pilgrimage hope to God involves three phases: a *construction* phase of identity, followed by an earth-shattering *deconstruction* of who we thought we were, which finally brings us to the necessary *reconstruction* of something truer.

INTEGRATING SOLITUDE, SILENCE, AND STILLNESS WITH OUR CENTERS

! Contemplative practice confronts our resistance to being present, in the now.

Contemplative prayer is difficult; it requires practice. When Jesus reminds us to be like children, it is a clue that all of us will be lifelong beginners on the spiritual journey. Moving from practice to discipline is where we start to see the fruit of freedom from the lies, programs, and temptations. But listen to yourself: usually the way you judge yourself or "feel bad" about your practice is the very thing that begins to open your type to the graces of the practice.

ALIGNING CONTEMPLATIVE INTENTIONS WITH THE HARMONY TRIADS

spiritual formation

Consent as the Prayer Intention for the Harmony Triad's Relationists

Consent is more than acquiescence. Consent is active agreement, the agreement to give of yourself, though not at your expense or in a way that diminishes you, but rather as an offering of love. Consent is saying yes to more of everything that helps facilitate your coming home, your liberation.

9 The Way Home

Mapping the Nine Types with New Ways to Pray

THE WAY HOME FOR TYPE TWO:

Consent to Solitude

But after time, solitude will become their greatest companion, allowing them to listen to the voice within that has always been there, reminding them they have all the love they need because they are a source of love.

LB: i am the love of the universe

Vv: <3 <3 <3

Practicing solitude awakens their essence as the beloved.

THE WAY HOME FOR TYPE THREE:

Engage Solitude

But the invitation to *engage solitude* requires Threes to be really present in their solitude rather than checking out or getting lost in it.

THE WAY HOME FOR TYPE FOUR:

Rest in Solitude

Fours have a natural tendency to feel too much, causing them to think they *are* their feelings.

...and since their emotions can be so overwhelming, they tend to fall asleep in the illusion that what they feel is more real than reality itself. And so, the self-centered fantasy that Fours create is what shackles them to their False Self.

THE WAY HOME FOR TYPE FIVE:

Consent to Silence

Rather than merely checking out, when Fives make room for silence in true consent they permit divine interruptions and sacred answers to supersede their own ability to offer what they deem the most sensible solutions to life's greatest questions.

THE WAY HOME FOR TYPE SIX:

Engage Silence

Constant threat forecasting keeps Sixes distracted, unable to connect with the gift of the present moment and incapable of hearing the voice of God.

THE WAY FOR TYPE SEVEN:

Rest in Silence

Sevens are actually so disconnected from their heart that they imagine it to be a quicksand of pain from which they will never be free. To avoid stepping into the quicksand, they fill life with all manner of fun.