



Considering the Enneagram

Renée Siegel



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“Considering the Enneagram”

By
Renée Siegel

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Introduction

This book is written for coaches, counselors and spiritual directors. If you work in one of these professions, perhaps you have heard of the Enneagram? A client or colleague may have told you about the Enneagram of personality and you vaguely recall the word. It is an odd word and is pronounced Any e gram. The Enneagram is spreading in popularity. Books, webinars, podcasts and u-tube videos are plentiful describing the Enneagram and its varied applications.

The word Enneagram actually refers to a diagram with nine points and is derived from the Greek word “ennea” meaning nine. Studying the Enneagram has been one of the most beneficial studies, if not the most beneficial I’ve undertaken in the forty plus years I’ve been in practice. The study continues to lead me to a deeper compassion for myself and others. It has opened a gateway for self-awareness, tolerance and appreciation for myself and others that continues to unfold with my ongoing study and willingness.

That’s where this book holds value. This book addresses questions coaches, counselors and spiritual directors may have after being introduced to the Enneagram. The questions posed and answered are but a few of many. The questions were collected from colleagues that are both beginners and experienced in Enneagram study.

I am both a counselor and coach. When I met the Enneagram about 20 years ago, I immediately wanted to know more. My interest continued to grow, not knowing at the time what it would take to bring this study in a full-bodied way to my practice with my clients. I was privileged to study with many fine dedicated teachers who impressed on all their students that the Enneagram can be more than a topical conversation about personality and that the learning holds the greatest promise if the practitioner does their own work too.

Anyone can learn about each of the nine types and find themselves

in one or more than one of the types. The diagram and history are fascinating, but this again is merely academic. This is where you may begin, but change occurs with continued study, finding a community of others using the Enneagram, growing your “inner observer” and curiosity, coupled with self-compassion. We all have opportunities to mend ourselves and address our inner critic.

It occurs to me that this is a time in history where study, methods and tools can and must be shared. The intention in writing this book is to address what it takes to bring the Enneagram into your lives and practice in a responsible way.

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Forward

I've been a seeker as long as I can remember. Even in early childhood, watching people suffer was unbearable to me. After observing discomfort in others, I'd go off by myself, oftentimes outside in nature. My focus of attention was on coming up with a solution to resolve their discomfort and suffering. I just knew there must be a way to help and make it better. Though naïve and a child, I knew in my core that people did not have to live day to day in the state of suffering.

I was raised in a first-generation American family that did not believe in getting outside help or even going to our religious leaders for support when things were tough. Many first-generation European families held this perspective. My parents and relatives kept secrets about family maladies within the family. And I think they thought medical causes were likely to blame for any odd or out of the ordinary thoughts, feelings or behaviors.

Today, I am aware that many of my fantasies to help others involved helping them to be comfortable with all of themselves – their thoughts, feelings and reactivity. There was little judgment or assessment that they were making it up or it was a cry for help as my relatives would suggest. I did not know it at the time, but as someone who identifies as a type two, I just wanted to help and make it better.

This is the foundation of what propelled me into getting various licenses and certifications to get the answer to the question, “Why do people think, feel and act the way they do?”

Fast forward many years....I was attending an addictions conference and a gentleman asked me if I was familiar with the Enneagram. I was unfamiliar yet fascinated by the word and went to Barnes and Noble to find books about the Enneagram. I sat down at a table with my best friend and read about a third of a book about the Enneagram and bought not only that book but another. I returned home and finished both books and bought two more.

After the conference, I looked for local events about the Enneagram and attended as many as I could. I think the first year after being introduced to the Enneagram, I accumulated 90 hours of continuing education credits that were just Enneagram-related.

Never in all of my continuing education as a therapist and coach have I been drawn to learn more and more about a topic. You see, learning about the Enneagram helped me to see the interrelatedness of all the assets and challenges we have. More than a personality system, the Enneagram with its spiritual roots in most ancient wisdom traditions addresses the wholeness of each of us. What I mean by that is each of the nine Enneatypes develops thinking patterns, emotional patterns, neurobiological patterns and patterns of reactivity. In addition, each type has the gift of Essential Qualities (spiritual qualities), which must recede after we begin to grow to accommodate the need for life strategies or personality to develop so we can adequately function as human beings. Yes, I do believe we are spiritual beings in human form.

I've written this e-book because I believe the Enneagram is a very underutilized tool for health practitioners, including counselors and coaches.

I've asked several colleagues that have brought the Enneagram into their practices to share some of the concerns they had about learning and using the Enneagram. Many of those questions have been answered briefly in this e-book.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information. You may also schedule a discovery conversation on my website.

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My deep gratitude goes out to all the healthcare service providers. I hope you've all found some nugget to take away!

Remember: U R Pure Potential
Renée



A Note to Business and Executive Coaches Considering the Enneagram

Although the questions collected were from counselors, coaches and spiritual directors, most answers apply to business and executive coaching too.

Here is a BRIEF list of ways the Enneagram can be helpful with business and executive coaching:

- 1. Developing an appreciation for the way your type engages in business. Examples of how types differ are:**

Some types are focused on just getting the job done, some on getting the job done well, some responding to deadlines and others making sure all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed. Each Enneatype has a specific worldview that impacts both professional relationship business transactions as well as personal relationship transactions. As your understanding of the differences between types grows, you may also gain tolerance and respect for those whom you work with.

- 2. Building and sustaining meaningful relationships on the job by understanding your type and those you work with**

This applies whether you are the boss, dealing with a colleague or managing those who work for you. Each type has different strengths and opportunities. Learning the Enneagram helps to see the strengths and challenges of your type and others of differing types. Other types may have strengths you do not and can be called on to intervene in areas that are not your strong suit.

3. **Managing conflict effectively is influenced by type**

We all encounter conflict even if we don't particularly like it. Some types jump into conflict, avoid conflict, or would prefer to mediate conflict for others. Knowing your style and how to become more effective with conflict resolution is a great benefit.

4. **Leading in your work life**

It is common to have greater ease with either assuming a leadership role professionally or personally. In other words, just because one is confident or competent as a leader at work does not mean they are confident or competent as a leader outside of the workplace. There are several styles of leadership. Some work well in smaller organizations and some do not. Understanding your Enneagram type and how you lead illuminates both assets and opportunities for growth.

5. **Conducting performance evaluations**

Most employees want to perform well. Each of the Enneatypes responds to feedback differently. By learning how each type communicates and is best communicated with, you can learn how your type hears feedback and how to provide feedback to get the best from others.

***Most important**

The Enneagram answers these concerns with both information about each type but more importantly **WHY** someone thinks, feels and reacts the way they do. Understanding the core motivation for each Enneatype's thoughts, feelings and reactions provides a stronger gateway into self-awareness. When we understand the **WHY**, we meet and engage with others in a way that allows for greater change.

I've heard about the Enneagram and am curious how it would help me with difficult clients?

Understanding the Enneatype of a person is like being given a clue about their neurobiological circuitry, emotions, thoughts, reactions, positive personality characteristics, challenges, and their personal sense of spirituality or connectedness to something greater than themselves.

Assuming that the client wants to change and understanding the patterns in each of these areas may provide information about where the client is stuck and why.

Let's start with the neurobiology. Dr. Dan Siegel, a scientist and someone quite familiar with the Enneagram, has described various neurobiological patterns of each type. This means that there is actual differentiated brain circuitry for each of the nine enneagram types. This relatively new understanding helps us to see that the Enneagram is more comprehensive than other personality systems because we are addressing bio-physiology.

Each of the Enneatypes has a particular set of emotional habits and patterns, both when under stress and when more relaxed. When dealing with difficult clients, the patterns that are most resistant to change are those that arise during the stress response. These predictable stress responses are variations of coping with fear, anger and distress and are a result of unmet childhood needs. Each of us has unmet childhood needs. Through educating the client about how these patterns develop and cultivating insight through practices, the emotional stress response can relax, and the client can learn to move **through** the emotional discomfort. The same is true for cognitive or thought patterning in each of the Enneatypes. When the stress response is addressed, thoughts can be reframed to view life and

circumstances with a more realistic or optimistic outlook.

Reactions are responses that happen so quickly that we call them “knee-jerk.” Various practices can be used while one develops a deeper understanding of their Enneagram type that allow timing to slow down and create a space or pause. This space or pause slows things down and it’s less likely that a “knee-jerk” reaction will happen. This process allows reactivity to transform into responsiveness.

Like many other personality systems, each of the nine Enneatypes have both predictable positive traits and opportunities for change and improvement. Understanding that all personality traits have developed in order to cope with something, usually at a very early point in our life, is helpful. Many times, these early coping mechanisms are no longer needed and may even be detrimental as we grow older, but they can be stubborn and difficult to change.

The Enneagram roots are steeped in ancient wisdom and spiritual traditions. Each of the Enneatypes is thought to have an aspect of divinity. When all nine Enneatypes are put together, we have a strong representation of a wholeness in spirit. With practice and personal growth, each of the Enneatypes lessens the contraction they hold on each type. As this contraction softens, access to all the higher aspects of all the other types is accessible.

It is important to note that the counselor or coach may have access to this information much earlier than the client. Introducing concepts to the client is helpful. Just as important is the clinician’s patience as the client integrates these insights.

Finally, and most important, when a clinician has worked with the Enneagram and understands their type, they grow in understanding of their own patterns and reactivity. As each practitioner does their own personal work with the Enneagram, their own reactivity softens and they begin to grow tolerance, appreciation, respect and authentic compassion for their clients. Sometimes the best one can do is to find a better match for a client as it is the greatest expression of both self-compassion and doing what is best for the client.

What are the immediate benefits for a coach or therapist to learn the Enneagram?

There are several immediate benefits for therapists studying the Enneagram. And there are some longer-term benefits too. Here are two major immediate benefits – raising awareness of self and others and self-compassion as well as compassion for others.

As each coach or therapist gathers experience and years in the practice of working with others, it becomes obvious that one size does not fit all. Templates for coaching and cookie-cutter treatment plans may be available, yet quickly the practitioner recognizes that one strategy or plan does not work for everyone. Everyone is a little different and has collected early childhood experiences and ongoing individual life experiences. Each of these has some impact on ongoing life strategies.

Clients who come for coaching and counseling place a lot of trust in the provider they are working with to assist them in exploring options and resolving their problems. Studying the Enneagram provides practitioners information about their own personal patterns and information about others who do not share the same Enneagram type. Although counselors and coaches are taught that others have different personalities, studying the Enneagram types provides information about the specific differences for each type regarding their perceptions, thoughts, emotions and even how their central nervous system is wired.

A subtle impact of listening to others of different types is a growing respect for self and others, our similarities and differences. There are many long-term benefits that come from utilizing ongoing practices offered to deepen Enneagram work.

There are several personality profiling systems like the MBTI and DISC. I've heard that the Enneagram is more than a personality profiling system and is in fact a spiritual tool. What place does a spiritual tool have in psychotherapy and coaching?

The MBTI and the DISC are two of many personality profiling systems. Although the exact origin of the Enneagram is unclear, we do know that the Enneagram has been around much longer than MBTI or the DISC and has a history longer than the study of psychology, which dates back to the late nineteenth century. It is likely that the roots of the Enneagram have both mathematical and spiritual underpinnings. In researching its history, we find information connecting the Enneagram to many “ancient” wisdom traditions. Many years ago, when describing a person’s inclinations or what we might refer to as mental, emotional or behavioral health concerns, the descriptions were often justified by their family background or being “touched” by good or evil.

In the words of Jerome Wagner, a Ph.D. psychologist and long-time student of Enneagram studies, “In its current formulations, the Enneagram brings together insights of perennial wisdom and findings of modern psychology. The Enneagram figure is derived from arithmology [the science of numbers] while the nine personality styles are validated by experiential observations.”

As a mathematical and spiritual diagram, each of the nine types has unique characteristics and patterns of thinking, feeling, sensing and doing. There is no other personality system that describes the intricacy and integration of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and most recently the neurobiological wiring of the brain associated with personality. Each Enneagram type or number has a distinct essential quality, sometimes referenced in religious traditions as a “divine quality” or an

aspect of God. Through increased awareness, mindfulness practices, meditation and other practices, these qualities emerge more often in our day-to-day lives.

Perhaps most importantly, the Enneagram describes the motivation for why someone thinks, feels and does what they do. The other systems do not address motivation.

Finally, derived from a spiritual principle that each of the nine types has aspects of the whole (both assets and opportunities for growth), the study of the Enneagram provides us a path to see both our similarities and differences to subtly move us toward compassion for self and for one another.

There are no other personality typing systems that address thoughts, feelings, sensations, spirituality and individual motivations. A personality system that offers a window into motivation, purpose and meaning—in other words, a spiritual tool without any religious dogma attached—holds great value as coaches and counselors work with clients from a more “holistic” perspective. The Enneagram is a forerunner as we venture into a greater understanding of whole-body systems and mind-body connections.

I know a little bit about the Enneagram, and it seems simple on the surface and more complicated as you begin to learn about it. How much time will I have to devote to learning it well enough to be of assistance to my clients?

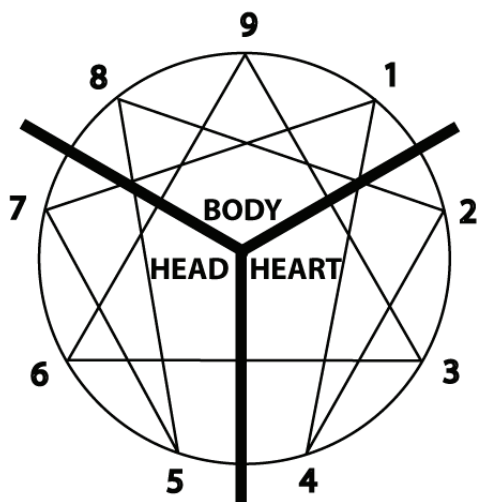
When introducing the Enneagram as a system of nine personality types, the Enneagram can appear somewhat simple. Most find that it is more complicated as they learn more. As someone devoted to spreading the Enneagram study and making it available to people globally, I've watched glazed eyes or seen the look of "this is too much." Some will say they want to go to another introduction, and I support that. Often it takes a few times to see that the Enneagram is far more than a personality system and can be used in many ways. It can also be set on the shelf and returned to as one sees fit.

It's helpful to have a thorough introduction to the nine types so people can experience the vitality of each of the types. I encourage lay people or those perhaps overwhelmed or intimidated by the ongoing learning to continue with simple lessons or easy literature or books about the Enneagram. For those committed to the deep dive or wanting to use it with others, I might make the following suggestions: take a foundational class, read a new book or a variety of literature in your interest area, or work with a coach or counselor that understands the Enneagram or specializes with providing practices and guidance or direction about its use.

It's also important to let people know that they can spend as much or as little time as they'd like in studying the Enneagram. There is no requirement about the amount of time one needs to invest. However, as one devotes time to studying the Enneagram, their own growth will be assisted by setting aside reflection time and developing an

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ongoing practice to cultivate their inner observer. They may know these practices as mindfulness practices. Inner growth happens as self-awareness and self-compassion increases and our acceptance of reactivity arises.



How would knowing myself through the Enneagram help me to work with my clients more effectively?

Each Enneagram type has distinct patterns of thinking, feeling, reacting and holding themselves as part of a greater reality (spiritual or religious beliefs). Because there are nine types, there are nine distinct pattern differences in these areas.

It is unlikely that a coach or counselor will have clients that share their Ennea-type and therefore share similar thoughts, feelings, behaviors or spiritual beliefs as their coaches or counselors. Each type perception also has a bias based on their patterns and worldview. It is easy and normal to think that the way we see things is either the only way or the best way. Each type often assumes their perception or worldview is shared by everyone. Even when educated to know this is not the case through training and education, personality patterning is strong and is riddled with blind spots and triggers. Though self-awareness, self-compassion, and connection with other colleagues or support groups, the blind spots and triggers are softened.

There are also some types that enjoy conflict or have a comfort with the direct expression of anger or painting worst-case scenarios. Some coaches and counselors may either be uncomfortable or intimidated

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by one or both these styles. It might even lead to an unconscious unwillingness or inability to serve these clients. Knowing one's own type and the judgments and reactivity that arise allows practitioners to attune to a client's differing expression of reality. The practitioner may need to make adjustments to their approach and even refer out when it's called for.

In summary, knowing about the differences in the types allows coaches and counselors to grow tolerance, acceptance and respect for the differences in those they serve.

How can I use the Enneagram to bolster a client's self-compassion?

Wikipedia defines self-compassion as “extending compassion to one’s self in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, or general suffering.” Generally, clients seek assistance when they need help in resolving a problem or when life is not going well. It is likely that when a client seeks help, the ability to be kind and mindful with oneself is challenged by a sense of inadequacy, perceived failure or general suffering.

Each of the nine types has a specific pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving. Working with clients to become acquainted with their unique patterns is an important first step. Depending on client resistance and capacity for insight, this may take some time. It’s helpful to teach clients that Enneatyped patterns are merely strategies to cope with life and are neither good nor bad. Once a client becomes better acquainted with their specific patterns and learns that these patterns are, in fact, strategies or “personality” and **not** who they are, practitioners can introduce self-observation practices, or what is often referred to in Enneagram practice as “cultivating the inner observer.”

These practices include methods of teaching clients to watch their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Self-awareness coupled with inner observation is critical to deepening the understanding that personality is not who we are. When observing thoughts, feelings and behaviors, reactivity can transform into response, allowing different choices in those thoughts, emotions and behaviors.

Letting clients know that the ego will probably not like this strategy is important. The ego may bring up new or varied thoughts, feelings and reactions. Encouraging clients to continue with the inner observation practice tends to assist the ego in softening. With continued practice, the ego tends to relax. The more a client practices

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self-observation and the ego relaxes, the more self-compassion has an opportunity to surface as an option.

How can knowing the Enneagram help me with some of the clients I'm most frustrated by?

In our work with clients, the feeling of frustration may arise for several reasons. In general, frustration arises due to being upset or annoyed because of the inability to effect change or assist clients in achieving something or perhaps resolving their problems, or perhaps they are not changing at a pace we believe is appropriate.

One of the many benefits of our Enneagram study is we learn that each of the nine types has a different strategy for managing life. This is true for both the helper and the client. Often, we don't share the same type with those we serve. Therefore, we don't share the same thoughts, feelings and responses. This can be a cause for frustration to arise.

What frustrates one type differs from another. Some types become more easily frustrated. This is why it is so important to do our own Enneagram work and have our own practices in addition to teaching those practices to those we serve. If we are aware of our Enneagram type, what causes us to become frustrated, and how easily we become frustrated, we begin to notice ourselves. We notice ourselves as an aspect of the helping relationship. We can begin to see our biases. We notice our emotional responses, our thoughts, and a desire to act or move a client in a particular direction. It is only then that we can relax our type and hold a space for clients to move forward at their own pace or not.

Is there a danger that the Enneagram would make me view my clients and their type in a cookie-cutter fashion?

There is always a possibility that once you know your client's Enneagram type you might begin to make assumptions about them based on their type.

The upside is that as a helping professional, assumptions about type allow us to speak the client's language and to have some clues about their life strategies. Knowing the Enneagram type a client identifies with provides helpful information while working together. Sometimes, clients are still unclear about their Enneagram type. If that happens, discussing the types they are considering and why they are considering a particular type provides valuable information, too.

Even when a client is certain about their type, there are many differences and variables within each type. Other aspects of each client's life influence the expression of their type. Some aspects are culture, age, gender, life experiences and level of development within each type.

Another variable is the expression of their type influenced by what is called *subtype* or *instinct*. I will use these terms "subtype" and "instinct" interchangeably for the purpose of this discussion. Each type has three instincts that refer to our biological survival drives—self-preservation, social and one-to-one. Although all types have all three of these biological survival drives, one or two seem to be most prevalent at any given time. The expression of subtype can change throughout the life cycle.

Finally, it is important to note that the study of the Enneagram and identification with a type does NOT support rationalization or justification of behavior because of type. Identification of type is meant to identify the box one has placed themselves in and finding ways to get out of that box.

If I know the Enneagram and my clients don't, how is this an advantage?

Knowing the Enneagram independent of your client's knowledge of the Enneagram is important in two ways. First, we have some clues of what to expect of ourselves. Secondly, we have some clues of what to expect of our clients.

When we are familiar with our own Enneagram type, we have access to a clearer understanding of our own life strategies. Some aspects of our type's life strategy include communication style, what motivates us, what we are protecting, what we avoid, what our responses and reactivity look like, and our triggers and blind spots. These are but a few of the many aspects of self-awareness that grow as we understand our type. We call these our type biases. These are biases because each of the Enneatypes have distinct characteristics in each of these areas. Knowing that each type has specific biases permits us to see our uniqueness. Each of us also has essential qualities that are inherent gifts of each type. For the purpose of discussion here, these are distinct type-driven ways we can assist others as a helping professional.

When we meet our clients, we may or may not know their type. However, if we know the Enneagram, we are not just looking for aspects of personality. We look for underlying core motivations. Rather than making assumptions about a diagnosis or personality deficits, we are able to look for unmet needs and patterned thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Meeting clients with this lens allows for non-personalization, acceptance, tolerance and compassion.

Finally, knowing our type deepens our understanding of how other types may have some reactivity to our type. As we see this dynamic unfold, we can assess if we are able to work with the client or if they are able to work with us. This can save lots of time and effort for both the client and the helping professional.

How can I introduce the Enneagram to my clients when I see them only once a week?

The Enneagram is a more complicated tool than other personality systems used by coaches and counselors. Therefore, breaking Enneagram study into manageable pieces for clients to understand is helpful. Many clients report they benefit from hearing the same information over and over and that this provides a better understanding and answers questions that arise.

Suggesting additional supports so clients stay engaged with the work between sessions is helpful. This can be done in many ways. In the past couple of years, Enneagram offerings online have increased substantially. There are online assessments helping clients to identify their type. Most clients are computer savvy these days and enjoy researching information about their type.

There are several online introductory courses on the basics of the Enneagram that many helping professionals suggest their clients use to lay a basic foundation. Once clients have identified their type, most like to find out more about their type and many even want to type and research the types of those they care about. Once clients have been introduced to the Enneagram and have identified goals or areas they want to concentrate on, they can often find Enneagram courses that speak to the particular area of focus they are seeking to improve. These courses can also complement weekly work done with a counselor or coach.

Most helping professionals using the Enneagram have books they recommend to clients. Assigning Enneagram exercises as homework between sessions can be quite helpful. As clients investigate their thoughts, feelings and reactions, they begin to see patterns and the repetition of these patterns. Seeing the repetition helps clients develop insight into their patterns and how some patterns are helpful while others are not. Watching the repetition works in concert with

inner observation. Inner observation can assist with self-awareness. Self-awareness assists many clients with an increase in motivation to make the changes they are seeking.

Should I ask clients directly if they've heard about the Enneagram (in the event that they have so that we have a common language)? (This question arises from my experience with a therapist with whom I didn't stumble on our shared Enneagram knowledge until I'd been in therapy for a while with her.)

If you plan to use the Enneagram as a staple in your practice, it is important to introduce the Enneagram as early as possible to clients. They may or may not know about the Enneagram.

If clients are not familiar with the Enneagram, I discuss the value of using it to address concerns that I specialize in. I find there is little if any resistance to using the Enneagram once clients understand how and why I use it. This has been true for me when introducing the Enneagram to all types. That being said, encouraging curiosity and asking clients what they think about it during various stages of treatment will inform you of what they think and how they feel.

If clients are familiar with the Enneagram, ask what they know and how useful it was. Address the answers including any resistance as it comes up.

Will the Enneagram tend to make me box clients into their type?

It is not the intention of using the Enneagram to put people in a box. It is the intention of using the Enneagram to identify the box each person has already placed themselves in and assist them in finding a way out of that box.

The Enneagram does provide helpful information about your client's personality patterns. Each of the nine types has distinct patterns of thinking, emotional feelings, somatic sensations and other characteristics.

The diagram of the Enneagram is one with arrows and points that sit on either side of each type called wings. This indicates that the Enneagram is a non-static system. Even though we each have only one type, we possess aspects of all types. When in a stressful state we move in the direction of one of our arrows and when relaxed we move in the direction of the other arrow. The wing type that sits on either side of our type also influences our type. Understanding the fluidity of movement of type can be helpful in understanding that each type is not boxed or fixed at that point.

If a practitioner has done their own work on deepening their understanding of their own character structure, it becomes apparent that even though each type has unique patterns, this is only the beginning of understanding the dynamism and variety of expression of each type. Through listening and being present to your clients as they share, practitioners are able to both understand and reflect back to their clients that there is a way out of the box they have placed themselves in.

How can I use the Enneagram as a tool to help my clients change?

Clients seek help at various stages in their lives and for various reasons. Asking clients what changes they are seeking to make is crucial. Assisting them in continuing to refine their goals helps too. It's important to let clients know that by merely identifying their Enneagram type, change is not likely. In fact, some use their type identification to justify or rationalize their life strategies.

If you merely educate your clients about the Enneagram and their type, change is unlikely. Making and sustaining change begins when clients develop techniques that promote self-awareness about self-defeating patterns. The process of change is supported by challenging limiting beliefs, developing self-compassion and softening the ego's resistance to change.

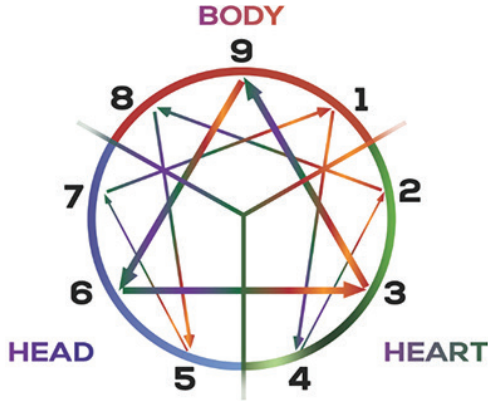
In fact, it is common for clients to focus on polarized aspects – negatives and challenges or positives and justified aspects of their type. This is a common occurrence because the ego is committed to holding the patterned thoughts, feelings and reactions as they are.

Educating clients about this phenomenon is often helpful.

Change occurs by developing and incorporating practices that first promote self-awareness. Self-awareness is the portal to examining the need for change from a more authentic and realistic perspective. Further, it informs the client that they are observing their patterns and are not their patterns. In Enneagram language, this is known as “cultivating the inner observer.” There are many practices available to develop self-awareness, including mindfulness, centering prayer and various types of meditation, amongst others. Each of these practices has in common a way to calm the central nervous system, move from reactivity to receptivity, and to soften or quiet the ego.

Finding one of these practices that works best and utilizing that practice will allow work with the ego. It takes ongoing and consistent

practice. The ego is strong and committed to seeing the individual thrive and strive only by returning to early and steadfast patterns even if they no longer work.



u r pure potential

Will you describe the most basic parts of the Enneagram diagram?

The Name Enneagram:

Ennea – Greek root word for nine

Gram – describing a diagram

A diagram with nine points

The Circle:

Inside the circle: prior to the formation of personality, we have access to all essential qualities, patterns are not in place

Outside the circle: strategies or ways to manage life as it evolves, commonly called personality

The Triads of Body, Heart and Head:

These are the **Centers of Intelligence**. The head, heart and body each provide us with valuable information we can access. When we are aware and accessing information from each of these centers, we are most alive and integrated in our knowing and synthesizing information.

The Numbers or Enneagram Types:

There are nine types. Each type has a unique basic pattern of thinking,

feeling, and felt sense (body presence). Each type also has a unique essential quality or divine gift, vice (less developed emoting), virtue (higher developed emotional response), fixation (less developed thinking), and holy idea (higher level thinking).

The Arrows:

The Enneagram is meant to be a fluid, moving diagram. The arrows point in two directions for each type. They indicate how each type is likely to take on characteristics of another type when feeling most relaxed or when feeling stressed.

Wings:

These are the numbers that sit on either side of a type and influence the expression of each type. For example, a type eight has both a type seven wing and a type nine wing. Each type has two wings, the points that lie on either side of the type.

After I learn the Enneagram, how feasible is it to work with a client whose type I suspect without actually having them tested or typed?

A counselor or coach may suspect someone's Enneagram type and may be correct, but asking clients to take an Enneagram assessment or conducting an Enneagram typing interview is very important. Enneagram assessments and typing interviews evaluate the underlying core motivations for why someone thinks, feels and does the things they do. Sometimes what we notice is not what it appears to be.

If you do not feel proficient in conducting a typing interview, there are many practitioners that will complete a typing interview as a stand-alone service. If a client is considering several types and narrowing their choices down in their sessions with you, the journey to landing on type requires a commitment to growing self-awareness.

Even if you are new to the Enneagram yourself, encourage clients to take an assessment. You can always learn together. Suspecting a client's type, especially when you are new to the Enneagram, might lead you to make assumptions that are not accurate.

If I work in a treatment facility, what's the best way to introduce the Enneagram to other staff members?

Many treatment centers are owned by corporations and may be more receptive to learning the about the Enneagram from a business perspective. There are wonderful business tools and trainings offered through the Enneagram in Business, www.enneagraminbusiness.com.

Unless someone of influence or a corporate leader has been exposed to the Enneagram, to date the DISC, MBTI and Gallop Strength Finders are the norm for personality assessment work. However, the Enneagram provides information that is much deeper and more holistic in nature than the previously mentioned assessments. It also requires a cross-pollination of information sharing—business and clinical—to afford all staff members the opportunity to speak the Enneagram language. The most useful way to bring the Enneagram into a treatment facility is through educating all staff, employees and volunteers. When everyone has been exposed to the Enneagram, there are several benefits. Respect, tolerance and acceptance for differences amongst all hierarchies of staff can organically unfold. Knowing each type's inherent gifts encourages interdependence. It also promotes collaboration.

Bringing the Enneagram to the clinical staff alone has been tried with some success for the clinical team members and clients, but the real buy-in comes from the corporate or business and clinical staff speaking the same language.

However, as a staff member, if you know the Enneagram and want to introduce the Enneagram to other staff members in a treatment facility, it is much easier than if you want to bring someone else in to train the staff or want everyone to learn together. As a staff member

“Considering the Enneagram”

in the facility, you are aware of staff meeting and training processes. Knowing the infrastructure and learning portals moves you through one step of potential resistance to bringing in a new methodology. You are in a position to speak with the decision makers and share first hand benefits you’ve experienced as a clinician.

Coaches and spiritual directors are generally more receptive to bringing the Enneagram into their practices and sharing with others. These disciplines are inherently more open to new ideas. Many in these disciplines have heard of the Enneagram from other sources too.

Counselors and coaches are busy people. How can I convince them that it's worth their time to learn about the Enneagram?

The reason I am so passionate about working with the Enneagram is my personal experience. After providing clinical services for over 20 years, which was almost 20 years ago, I chose to take a look at the Enneagram and my interest was immediately piqued. As most licensed and certified professionals, continuing education is required to maintain certifications and licenses. I usually explore topics and choose courses I think may be interesting. After taking a course, I'll try some of the practices and perhaps integrate them into my work or realize they are just not for me.

My experience was very different after my first Enneagram course. I left the course and went directly to Barnes and Noble and bought two Enneagram books and actually read them cover to cover within a few weeks. I found myself hungry for more information. I took classes all over the US. There were few if any online classes at that time. My passion for learning about the Enneagram grew stronger. There is no topic I've studied that has resonated as much with me.

Provide an honest testimonial about your own experience with the Enneagram. If you are in fact an Enneagram enthusiast, you will be drawn to the work and speaking about it will be contagious with your colleagues and those you serve.

The Enneagram is somewhat complicated. It is helpful to learn the Enneagram information in small bites, providing time to actually synthesize the information. Explaining the benefits is helpful to create curiosity. Most people's favorite topic is themselves. The Enneagram study provides information about the type and with continued study how the type may have both blind spots and triggers when working with others. Informing someone that the Enneagram is a way to

understand themselves better and grow self-awareness is the first step is growing self-awareness and then identification of type and the type patterns that have been running the show. These patterns have kept them from the happiness they are seeking because of the strength and pull of these patterns that may no longer be serving them. When exploring patterns or types, it might be hard to narrow it down to just one. Share that the journey to landing on type is quite worthwhile because the journey requires exploration of one's various patterned thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Exploration of one's patterns of thinking, feelings and behaviors will automatically raise self-awareness. And self-awareness is one of the key factors in change-making and transformation.

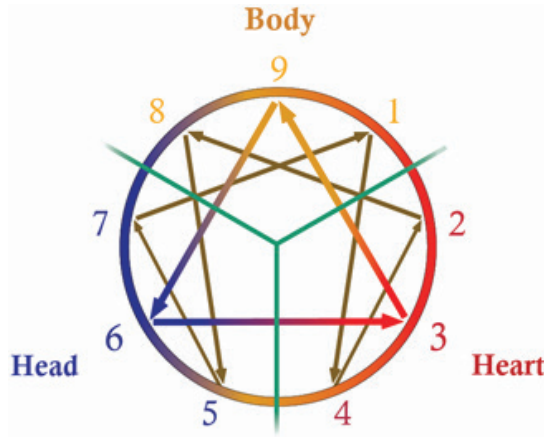
Finally, the Enneagram is something that usually fascinates people so much that they investigate the types of those they love and interact with, the results of which are more effective communication and better relationships.

If the Enneagram is such a useful tool for therapists, why isn't it being taught in university programs?

I'm not sure why the Enneagram is not being taught in most universities today. Enneagram courses are currently taught by Helen Palmer at Union Institute and University, an online university. David Daniels, M.D. and Helen Palmer, as well as other well-known Enneagram teachers, have taught classes at Stanford University. Jerome Wagner, PhD. teaches Enneagram classes at Loyola University. At the end of March 2019, Liberty University in VA announced it will officially launch an Enneagram degree program in the fall of 2019. This program was developed in response to pastor David Nasser expressing the need for students to better understand their personality types.

I am hopeful that the Enneagram will gain recognition as a valuable educational resource and be taught in more university programs as time goes on. The good news is currently there is a heightened interest in the Enneagram. Online webinars, podcasts, Instagram and Facebook posts are gaining in popularity. While university programs are slow to pick up the Enneagram, several coaching schools are teaching the foundations of understanding the Enneagram. Some coaching schools host an entire track of Enneagram coursework as a valuable coaching tool.

Many niches of coaching have adopted Enneagram study and created tools to implement the Enneagram in their disciplines.



I have a few clients with addictive personalities. How can the Enneagram benefit them?

There is a slight difference between being addicted to our patterns and having addictive personalities. Let's differentiate between the two first.

The Enneagram studies teach us that we are each addicted to our patterns. Our personalities develop to manage our life. Each Enneagram type has a character structure (personality) that develops to cope with what is perceived as maintaining and sustaining life. The character structure or personality consists of patterned thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Though these patterns develop early on and some may no longer be useful to us, these same patterns continue to influence how we manage life. We are in fact addicted to our patterns. Though continued practice of mindfulness and self-observation, we can loosen the grip these patterns have and access alternative or more effective ways of coping with life.

Substance use and process addictions are similar but not quite the same. Substance use is the use of mood-altering substances (alcohol, drugs) to change our mood and experience of life. Process addictions include gambling, sex, shopping and food, and they also change our mood and experience of life. Each of these types of addictions has

created an additional layer of keeping us from our essential self and has grown to be seen as a strategy to manage life.

Most of us can drink alcohol or gamble responsibly. But some cannot. Those that cannot engage responsibly are usually in denial of the problem. By the time substance and process addictions have become addictions and are no longer social activities, they are usually coveted by the individual and revered as essential. At this point, activities and preoccupations with the addiction are out of control.

Addictions like these mentioned above oftentimes hijack rational thinking. By the time a client seeks help, additional negative consequences such as loss of relationship, being impaired at work or legal problems appear before the addict is open or willing to see the addiction as **the** problem. At this stage of addiction, the body often has withdrawal symptoms when the addict attempts to stop. In addition, insight around the addiction is likely impaired.

There is nothing wrong with introducing the Enneagram early in recovery, but there are challenges. The biggest challenge is the level of insight that one has in early recovery. Helping someone to identify type early in recovery is helpful because the patterns associated with type allow the client to see that there are other choices besides using that work for their type. In addition, looking at the underlying core motivation for a type can assist clients in understanding the differences between guilt and shame which will be described further below. In other words, the addicted person can begin to understand that others of their same type might also have made the same choices, and choices made are not because they are a bad person. It's important to note that if a client has been using since they were very young, they can be difficult to type because they cannot remember much of their personality development. Sometimes the only early childhood memories are of mood altered experiences.

Once someone identifies their type, they have access to examining how the addiction choices they have made were influenced by their perceptions. Type identification can assist one in examining a type-driven basic life strategy. Some may understand that a particular addiction is more likely to show up with one type than another. Knowing about one's type is a shame reducer too. It often helps those early in recovery to see that the addiction is a self-sabotaging method of life management and not a result of their not being loveable or

worthy or a good person.

Addictions impact the physical, mental-emotional and spiritual being. The Enneagram offers healing of the physical, mental-emotional, and spiritual aspects of self and is holistic in nature, so it is a natural fit.

While introducing the Enneagram, it is important to lay a foundation offering the following information. Type identification does not give one an excuse for their behavior. Type identification helps one see their patterns and is useful in recognizing the box they have placed themselves in. Further, the Enneagram study provides practices by type for mindfulness and being present. Both of these practices are hijacked while the addiction is active. The Enneagram is not the only recovery tool, nor is it to be used in place of finding a community of recovering people such as self-help group meetings or choosing and working with a sponsor.

Use of the Enneagram in recovery is extremely beneficial.

Healing character defects through step-work and growing self-compassion through ongoing Enneagram work is inevitable with continued participation and practices in both the recovery community and the Enneagram community.

Is the Enneagram compatible with the 12-step programs?

Yes, the Enneagram is compatible with the 12-step program. Both the Enneagram and the 12 Steps are founded in spiritual traditions. Each provides a method and practice for those wanting to address characterological change. The 12 steps names this “addressing defects of character,” and the Enneagram calls this “loosening our patterned thoughts, feelings and reactions.”

I’ve had many conversations with those in recovery who will attest to using both in their recovery. Most have done 12-step work and have come to the Enneagram after completing their 12-step work. They often share how the Enneagram work has deepened their self-awareness and helped with further transformation.

I often have sponsors of my clients in recovery programs ask me to work with them and their sponsee. How do I speak with them about the Enneagram types if they don't know of the Enneagram?

The easiest way is to work with a client and their sponsor is to offer to lay a foundational understanding of the Enneagram with both. The foundational education of the Enneagram should include how the 12 steps work in collaboration with the Enneagram. It is helpful to explain that the study of the Enneagram is not intended to replace meetings, 12-step work, or meeting with sponsors.

If the sponsor is open to identify their type, further work can be done including discussion of the different patterns of thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviors of each type.

An open inquiry about what they'd like to accomplish while working with the Enneagram will help you as a coach or counselor meet their needs and set appropriate goals. This is true for recovery coaches too.

How would the Enneagram help me to work with clients who are stuck?

Working with clients who are stuck is difficult. Sometimes as practitioners, we have some idea of why and where they are stuck, but at other times, we do not. Often, an aspect of being stuck is not being able to break the cycle of doing the same things, thinking the same thoughts or regulating one's emotions.

Each Enneagram type holds a character structure comprised by somewhat predictable and/or repetitive patterned thoughts, emotions and behaviors. It is not personal. Each type utilizes these repetitive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to manage life. It becomes the strategy of each type to do so.

If a client is aware of their type or their likely types, a practitioner can work to assist the client to understand that even though each type has these patterns, it does not mean they cannot be changed. Often learning about techniques and trying on practices that loosen the type structure is enough to begin the process of getting clients unstuck.

The Enneagram is an even larger holistic system than most personality modalities because it takes into account the motivation that drives thoughts, emotions and behaviors. It also includes the intelligence of the sensate experience (what our bodies are attempting to tell us). Each type also has a distinct essential quality (a spiritual aspect of us that preceded our personality and is never flawed). Because clients are encouraged to address their concerns from this holistic perspective, it is often easier for them to find ways of becoming unstuck.

What's the benefit of bringing the Enneagram into my counseling or coaching practice?

I've gathered the questions answered in this book from colleagues who use the Enneagram in their counseling, coaching and spiritual direction practices.

It is my intention to encourage all practitioners to consider the Enneagram. The Enneagram is a dynamic map and path of study. It's holistic, offering information about each type's body, mind (cognition and emotions), and spiritual beginnings (essential qualities). The study honors sources of intelligence through the centers of body, heart and head.

As a behavioral health professional for over 40 years, I was introduced to the Enneagram by a colleague almost 20 years ago. I call it my "game changer." After listening to what he shared about the Enneagram, I was intrigued and fascinated. As I learned more, I realized I was being gifted a framework to gather information about my clients that did not label them as pathological. There is no diagnosis for each type. We all have patterns that we repeat again and again even when we desperately want to stop. Although there are some correlations for psychopathology at the lower levels of each type's development, we are all doing the best we can.

I was drawn to continue my study of the Enneagram from my first introduction. Since that time, my professional continuing education and my personal growth studies are filled with Enneagram books, classes, webinars, speakers and other assorted trainings. These continually pave a path guiding me to a deeper knowing and being with myself. I'm more comfortable in my own skin.

I've met new colleagues and joined a community of friends and professionals I feel privileged to be with. Most of them have a strong

desire for continued self-improvement and have disciplined practices in their study demonstrating they walk their talk. We are a global group and turn to one another often.

Although my family members initially poked fun at me for my diehard commitment to studying the Enneagram, each has found it useful in their lives at various times. I believe the study of the Enneagram has been the greatest tool for how we as family members continue to support each other, honor our differences and move through conflict with grace and respect.

My client always wants to use the Enneagram to help them understand others and not work on themselves. Any suggestions?

Some Enneagram types are more likely to focus on others rather than themselves. The subtype of a particular type influences why this happens, too. *If you do not know about subtypes, please look for information about subtypes because this is an important aspect of Enneagram training. (Each of the nine types has three possible subtypes that may have them looking or acting like another type.)

Counselors or coaches might assume that focusing on others is a way to avoid looking inside. This is not always the case. Each Enneagram type has different patterned ways of being. Between type and the influence of subtype, some types are more likely to want to know about others before they begin to be curious about themselves.

Asking a client why it is important to know about another provides information to the counselor or coach. It also speaks to the motivation as to why one may be curious about another. If practitioners remain curious about the “why,” useful material will emerge.

If a client is persistent on focusing on others, you may want to let them know that their inquiry into other types will not be as effective until they begin self-inquiry. There are several practices to grow self-inquiry. A self-inquiry resource is available in this book entitled *Self-Inquiry Practice*. It is important to teach self-inquiry early in Enneagram training because the richest material comes from the narrative of the client and not from the practitioner’s assumptions.

Through self-inquiry, clients understand more about their unique patterns of type. Through Enneagram study, clients learn that each type has unique patterns or a type bias that influences our relationships. Without understanding type bias first, we limit our ability to truly be present to ourselves. Without being present to ourselves, we limit our ability to be present to others.

My client uses the Enneagram to justify his/her behavior. How can I intervene?

As practitioners we have the opportunity to introduce the Enneagram to our clients as a helpful tool assisting in the counseling and coaching process. For some, recognition of Enneagram type is like coming home. It's natural to experience a sense of relief that one's thoughts, feelings and reactions are normal for a person of that type. If Enneagram study stops at the recognition of type, justification for thoughts, feelings and behaviors is a natural result.

People study the Enneagram at various times in their lives and for a variety of reasons. The Enneagram can be used as a means of examining patterns and nothing more. If insight into patterns is the only desired outcome for studying the Enneagram, it is likely that the client will use the Enneagram as a justification for their personality patterns.

New students to the Enneagram often learn about each of the nine types, their patterns, their defense mechanisms and the ways they manage stress. Initial instruction generally includes reviewing the diagram and perhaps learning the history of the Enneagram. Students are taught each type's unique pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving. Sometimes information about body sensations (sensate experience) is included. This initial teaching is often labeled the "The Enneagram of Personality." It's interesting that many clients believe that they are their personalities. Their identification with their thoughts, emotions and behaviors is who and what they think they are.

The way we introduce the Enneagram to our clients is foundational in setting the stage for how impactful it can be. The idea that we are more than our personalities can be daunting. In conjunction with learning about the nine types and their patterns, practitioners can include practices that engage self-inquiry and self-awareness. This is the introduction of "inner observation." Developing skills of inner observation lessens the grip our automatic patterns have. Inner obser-

vation requires more than understanding patterns and type identification. Through continued practice of inner observation, the central nervous system begins to relax, and knee-jerk responses diminish. With continued practice, the central nervous system is trained to relax more often, and options for alternative thoughts, feelings and behaviors emerge. Justification is less likely with continued practice of inner observation. Further practices of inquiry, becoming curious about what’s going on, opens a space to choose different thoughts, feelings and behaviors and softens reactivity, too. Practitioners might ask clients to share any insights from these practices, which reinforces options for change and growth. Organically, we become better acquainted with ourself and less likely to justify, rationalize or blame.

Can someone change their type during their life?

It is believed by most Enneagram schools of study that our type does not change.

However, we can change how we express our type. There are many factors to consider that influence how we express our type differently.

The following are just a few of the factors that may have you wondering if your type has changed as you have gotten older or wiser.

Our culture, gender, age and life experiences influence how we express our type. Oftentimes, during Enneagram meetings, people are grouped according to their type and asked to share or complete an exercise. People of the same type from different cultures, different age groups and different gender identification may gather together in their same-type group sharing many similarities. Those observing the group may not believe they are of the same type. They may look different to those outside the group. It is from their “narrative”—what the group members share about their unique internal experience—that we find these distinct similarities.

As we age and collect more and varied life experiences, we may notice that we respond to the same experience differently than we did before. Hopefully, what we notice reflects self-awareness and personal growth. The difference in response is not reflective of a change in type; rather, it reflects a higher level of development within type. Don Riso and Russ Hudson have developed a ten-part scale for each type describing low, moderate and higher levels of development within type. Other Enneagram teachers have done so as well.

The wings of our type (the type that sits on either side of our type on the Enneagram diagram) influence the expression of our type and may have us looking similar to another type.

Our subtypes also influence how we express our type. Bea Chestnut and Peter O’Hanrahan have particularly good information on subtypes.

Lookalike types may also have us considering a change in type at different times in our lives. A brief example of this is a counter-phobic six and an eight. Both may look courageous and fearless. The energy of both may appear large. Both are likely quite comfortable in leadership positions. Both place a great value on loyalty. Although they may look strong and energetic and larger than life, and their outward expression is big and perhaps intimidating, there are profound differences in these types. An example of one difference is the underlying core motivations for why they think, feel and behave as they do. An eight would be responding this way to avoid vulnerability, and a counter-phobic six would be acting in this manner to push through perceived fear.

If I am a new student to the Enneagram, should I use it with others immediately or wait until I am more familiar with it?

If you are new to the Enneagram, you can certainly share what you've learned with your clients. Sometimes, clients perceive their counselors and coaches as being further advanced or handling themselves and situations with little or no reactivity. As a new student of the Enneagram, you are able to share what it is like to bump up against your own patterns and reactivity, which can be quite helpful to your clients. Sharing your experiences normalizes your client's experiences and can motivate them to continue with their journey when they also become frustrated.

It's important to have your own Enneagram supports, community and resources as well as having those for your clients. Knowing and having relationships with other practitioners using the Enneagram is very helpful.

Also, a growing number of groups of practitioners are engaging in group supervision using the Enneagram. Supervision can be led by a facilitator or conducted as peer group supervision. When participating in peer group supervision as a new student, make sure some of the practitioners in the group are not new students and have more experience in using the Enneagram both personally and professionally.

Is it helpful to introduce the Enneagram in different ways to different types?

The word *Enneagram* is odd to many. It is derived from the Greek root “ennea,” meaning “nine.” The Enneagram is a diagram of nine types; hence the word *Enneagram*. Because of the lack of information about the Enneagram and the word being odd, many wanting to teach and discuss the Enneagram became frustrated with people’s reactions to the word itself. Some choose to refer to the Enneagram as a study of nine personality types or nine paths to understanding oneself better. During the last few years, and in great part due to the proliferation of information access on the Internet and social media, the Enneagram has gained popularity and is no longer a strange word.

When someone’s interest in the Enneagram is piqued, you might share that each Enneagram type has predictable type challenges. Often, those challenges are the impetus for continued conversation. Most people like to talk about themselves or someone they want to help, finding solutions to their dilemmas.

When a new student approaches a teacher or seeks help from a coach or counselor, it’s likely the practitioner doesn’t know the type of their potential client. The practitioner may have a strong hunch about the type, but the **client** needs to identify with the type. You might want to encourage your client to complete an assessment or typing interview, assuring them that it may take a while to land on a particular type and that the process of evaluation is a learning experience, too.

Each type has a distinct way of taking in new information, trusting information, synthesizing information and processing information. If you want to share information about the Enneagram with a particular person and you do know their type, you might adapt how you share with one type from the way you would with another. For instance, I

could share with a type three how the Enneagram could help them with the challenges they have at work and how this information will likely have the impact of helping to achieve greater efficiency and productivity at work and from their co-workers.

Regardless of someone's type, because of the complexity of the Enneagram, laying a foundation providing basic information about each type is useful. Understanding the Enneagram diagram and how each type differs reinforces that we are different from one another and have different worldviews.

What are some additional resources that will support me as I learn more about the Enneagram?

Several resources are available to support you as you learn more about the Enneagram. Because of the potential depth of Enneagram study, it is best if you have at least some supports that are live and local. You may want to meet with an Enneagram mentor who will work with you locally as you study.

The need to do Enneagram work in real time at live events has not only been my personal experience, but the feedback from many who have studied online or with a non-local group.

There are Enneagram groups in all fifty states and many countries worldwide.

Building a strong foundational understanding of the Enneagram is important. This includes, but is not limited to, understanding the Enneagram diagram, the typing process, learning specific information about each type, centers of intelligence, learning practices to cultivate inner observation and understanding how wings and arrows and subtypes influence type.

It is difficult to grow your self-awareness without laying a foundation that includes a clear understanding of the elements described in the previous paragraph.

Enneagram information is available in books, webinars and live trainings and podcasts. Although information is also available through various social media platforms, it's hard to get foundational information through social media alone.

Here are some additional resources with up-to-date information including trainings, speakers, webinars, professionals using the Enneagram, books, articles and music as well as other resources.

Renée Siegel

<https://www.enneagramworldwide.com/the-enneagram/>

<https://www.enneagraminstitute.com>

<https://www.enneagraminbusiness.com>

<https://www.internationalenneagram.org>

Please feel free to contact me with any questions and check out my website.

reenesiegel1204@gmail.com

<https://www.urpurepotential.com>

If you happen to live in Arizona, the Arizona Enneagram Association has meetups, classes and special events.

<https://arizonaenneagramassociation.org>

Can the Enneagram be used with groups, couples and families?

Yes. The Enneagram can be used with groups, couples and families. It is most helpful when each has a foundational understanding of the Enneagram and knows their type.

It's most effective when the facilitator/counselor/coach knows their own type and the facilitator/counselor/coach knows their type bias, too.

Do you think people from different cultures express their type differently?

Yes. For instance, if you were to compare a type three from the United States, this person might look different from a type three from France. Even groups of people within the same culture may express their type differently due to specific location and circumstances.

However, when a group of people of the same type from different cultures, countries, or locations within countries come together, they tend to share similar patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. Some of the similarities include, but are not limited to, the type's underlying core motivation, what the type is trying to avoid, defense mechanisms, relationship concerns, conflict management style, and patterns of communication.

It is fascinating to observe similarities of type independent of culture during gatherings of the international Enneagram community. At the International Enneagram Association Meetings, interpreters are available and assist those of the same types gathering from various cultures to connect. One may notice the excitement and constant nodding to one another in recognition of both the strengths and challenges of type.

Specific cultures or countries also have a tendency to look like particular types. Here are some examples:

The Personality Types (Styles) of Contemporary Countries

England	Types One or Five
United States	Types Three or Six
France	Types Four or Seven

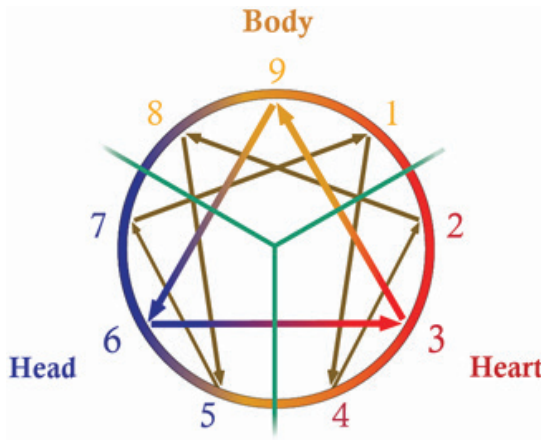
“Considering the Enneagram”

China	Types Three or Eight
Japan	Types Three or Five
Germany	Types Six or Five
Russia	Types Six or Eight

Bonus - Enneagram Practice

Meditation

Introduction to our Three Centers



In our Enneagram study we learn about the Three Centers of Intelligence. The Three Centers are the belly center, heart center and head center. Each of these Three Centers offer us valuable information and is a portal into our deep knowing more about ourselves, how we engage with others, and our experience of our environment.

Begin by finding a comfortable position to sit. If you can, uncross your arms and legs and allow your buttocks to feel supported by the chair you are seated in.

Turn your attention inward. Now begin to shift your attention to your breath. Follow your breath on the inhale, in and down, and on your exhale, up and out. Again, in and down and up and out. Continue to breathe this way and find a comfortable pace that works for you. Do this for at least 10 full breaths.

As you continue breathing in this way, consider an incident that you experienced in the last day. This incident can be anything you choose.

As you consider this incident or situation, with your attention

still turned inward, notice anything you are aware of in your belly or any part of your body. Sometimes it is helpful to place one or both hands on your belly. Your job is merely to notice. It is not to change anything, but merely notice it as it is. You are the observer or witness. Some of the samples of things you may notice are sensations, discomfort, color, shape or size. Whatever your experience is is okay.

You are now going to move your attention upwards in your body to your chest area. As you consider this incident or situation, with your attention still turned inward, notice anything you are aware of in your chest area or perhaps somewhere near or even behind your heart. Sometimes it is helpful to place one or both hands on your chest. Your job is merely to notice. It is not to change anything, but merely notice it as it is. You are the observer or witness. Some of the samples of things you may notice are emotions of sadness, hurt, feeling content or satisfied, happy, irritated. Whatever your experience is is okay.

You are now going to move your attention upwards and place your attention somewhere between your eyes or in your head, wherever you are most comfortable. As you consider this incident or situation, with your attention still turned inward, notice anything you are aware of in this area of your face or head. Your job is merely to notice. It is not to change anything, but merely notice it as it is. You are the observer or witness. Some of the samples of things you may notice are different categories of thought. Some may be related to the incident and some may not. Whatever thoughts occur to you are okay.

As you prepare to return to the room, take an inventory of what you have noticed. Consider what you noticed in each of these three centers of intelligence and perhaps how they may be integrated to bring you a fuller experience of the incident you chose.

Gently return your attention to your breathing and to yourself seated in the chair. When you are ready, soften your gaze as you open your eyes. Sit quietly, allowing yourself to integrate this experience, and notice whether you are able to sense one or more of your centers.

Conclusion

The quest to understand why people have such a difficult time making and sustaining change has intrigued me most of my life. Change is not easy, and sustaining change is even more difficult. Change is uncomfortable. In general, people don't like discomfort. They experience discomfort as pain. Our biological wiring doesn't assist us with making change because we are biologically wired to avoid pain and seek pleasure.

Research is constantly offering us new and updated information regarding the complexities of human neuro-biophysiology. The neuro-biophysical research confirms our aversion to perceived discomfort and pain.

Although each of us is unique, most want to move away from our experience of discomfort and pain. The methods we choose to deal with discomfort are many and varied and may include seeking distractions, spending money, helping others, watching TV, listening to music, drinking, gambling, or taking drugs and antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs. Some of these choices are less harmful than others. This biological imperative has us managing our discomfort in routine and patterned ways and regardless of how harmful they are, we tend to return to the same ones over and again.

Managing discomfort is accomplished through strategies first employed in early childhood. We employ these strategies and then describe them to others as who we are. We have forgotten who we really are. Our thoughts, emotions and reactions become patterned and predictable. In a large way, this is how personality is both developed and described. The essential qualities of humanity and who and what we are fade into the background as we deal with our day-to-day challenges.

I quickly realized that the Enneagram offered so many answers while at the same time piquing my curiosity with even more questions.

With its deep, ancient roots in spirituality and cosmic mathematics and explanations of our thinking, emoting and reacting patterns, the Enneagram was truly an integrative and holistic approach to understanding human beings. Through continued Enneagram study, I was able to connect the essential or divine stuff we are with the strategies we employ to manage our humanity (personality). Yet this is so much more than personality theory!

The Enneagram was a natural fit for my work with individuals, families and groups wanting to improve their relationships, heal addictions and develop wellness strategies.

Knowing the world needs all the tools and methods available to help those in need, I began to teach and train others to bring the Enneagram into their practice. Although gaining in popularity, the Enneagram is still underutilized. Therapists, spiritual directors and coaches have many questions about the Enneagram.

After reading through these questions and answers, it is clear that studying the Enneagram is not simple and to learn it and use it effectively takes time, effort and dedication.

It is my hope that your interest will be piqued as mine was, and that the Enneagram will be a mainstay and foundation for your work and those you serve.

With Sincere Thanks to All of You!
Renée Siegel