



# enneagram monthly

December 2011

Issue 183

## The Path With No Goal: *Simple but not Easy*

*“Peace. It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart.”*

Author Unknown

Seven years ago, this quote arrived in my mail on a greeting card from a dear friend. It spoke to me then and still occupies a prominent place on my desk. It’s a constant reminder to me that “success” in the world of psycho-spiritual development isn’t defined as getting rid of all the problems, but finding a way to be at peace with whatever shows up.

When I first started down my spiritual path, I longed to “arrive” as soon as possible and be finished with the “work” of transformation. Grace put the Enneagram in my path in 1989, and I was enchanted. The Rosetta Stone had arrived! I quickly identified as a Loyal Skeptic (Type 6), and the reasons behind some baffling past decisions suddenly seemed so much clearer.

One striking example related to a heart-breaking decision I made while in college. I had desperately wanted to be a dorm counselor my senior year. That

**Terry Saracino**



year, however, the college instituted a new requirement. Those selected had to attend an Outward Bound course. The outdoors terrified me! I wasn’t athletic! I didn’t have the kind of stamina required! All I could see was how hard it would be. I was devastated. I didn’t apply and missed an opportunity of a lifetime.

Looking back at this decision through the lens of the Enneagram, the reasons were apparent. A deeply ingrained pattern of reacting to challenge with fear was at the root. Had I been able to see this pattern at the time, I might have approached the decision from a more realistic position. Waves of compassion for my young self swept through me.

But now I had insight and understanding, and things could be different. I read every book I could find. I attended many seminars, near and far. Vallombrosa became my second home. I enrolled in the certification program, took every new class Helen Palmer and David Daniels offered and started teaching the Enneagram with a passion I’d never known before.

In 1993, I also joined the Diamond Heart work founded by Hameed Ali, which provided another container for me to further ex- ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

## Personality, Process & Levels of Development

The fixations are all negatives. The worldview I have described is all “positives.” Putting the two sets of terms side by side is mutually illuminating.

— A.G. E. Blake, *The Intelligent Enneagram*, p. 287.

More and more, I see the enneagram both in terms of process and personality, as reflected in my commentary last month on Mary Bast’s article on alchemy and the enneagram (in which I further explored her initial exploration of alchemy as a process associated with the enneagram, whereby each step can be equated with one of the nine enneagram points). *On the process enneagram*, we are tracing the transformation of something from the “raw” state at Point 1 to the “cooked” state at Point 8, with Point 0/9 being the point of (a) origination and (b) integration. *On the personality enneagram*, we are looking at nine points of view that can also be seen as nine core motivations, energy signatures, or personality types.

Of course, it is traditional to think of these points of view as point of fixation:

**Susan Rhodes**

places where the energy gets stuck. And while I take exception to that interpretation, it makes sense in that our point of view is linked to a particular spot on the circle, a spot that is most

definitely *fixed* rather than moving. It’s easy to see what is “fixed” as “fixated”; the only difference is that the former refers to the limits imposed by our point of view while the latter refers to *the potentially negative reaction we have to those limits*. To the extent that we believe this negative reaction to be inevitable, a fixed location becomes equivalent to a fixated perspective. Change the belief and we change our situation.

At any rate, comparing the types with the steps is indeed (see Blake’s quote above) mutually illuminating. Because from the personality perspective, it helps us see our type as fixed (innate), rather than fixated. And from a transformational perspective, it helps us see how our path in life is profoundly shaped by the core motivation associated with our type.

This is the same point made in the film *Pleasantville*, where modern teens are magically transported back in time to a 1950s ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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**A** New Year is a time to give in to the temptation of making resolutions — some keep them more than others— can't brag that my record is worthy of mentioning...But what's the harm in taking stock of where we're at in life and if we can tweak some areas towards more wisdom.

Every positive change in one area can be seen as negative at some other level. Well, that's my excuse anyway for slacking on resolutions such as losing weight, exercising, being less grumpy, working harder, doing more spiritual practice, yada, yada, yada...

Doesn't each positive resolution comes at a cost to something else? Are our actions not like loose particles in a circle of mirrors in a kaleidoscope — move one and the entire picture changes? Interconnectedness is a permanent condition everywhere in nature; human, animal or plant. And, being alive means engaging in action with all the risks and consequences that come with it. Act we must, but the degree of skill, attention or understanding we bring is largely up to us.

#### **In This Issue:**

The main theme is centered around examining common questions about what our purpose is, who we are and if needed, what we can do about it. A few specific and some more abstract perspectives are mixed together to address a range of questions.

**Terry Saracino** took to the enneagram like a duck to water and has been teaching it for more than 20 years. With that much experience comes refinement that usually results in a simplification right down to the most essential core elements of what really matters. Terry has gone through numbers or such refining processes and her you have “The Path with no Goal: Simple but not Easy.” Clear and to the point is her brief description of a few dilemmas most of us can relate to, and her specific suggestions of how to deal with them.

In “Personality, Process and Levels of Development” **Susan Rhodes** explores Ken Wilber's description of nine stages of transformation in *Transformations of Consciousness* (1986), a seminal book (co-authored with Jack Engler and Daniel P. Brown) that opens with Jack Engler's superb description of the aims of psychotherapy and meditation...but I digress. Wilber lists pathologies that can occur at each of nine levels

## From the Editor

ranging from undifferentiated consciousness to totally integrated consciousness. Wilber's approach is that any level can be either normal or pathological, from the lowest to the highest. As best we know, Wilber did not draw the nine levels from anything related to the enneagram, and yet, most of them seem to have an uncanny resonance.

Susan could see how this scheme can enrich the understanding of the enneagram and at the same time points out ways in which the enneagram can enrich Wilber's descriptions.

**Amy Zoll** has been wondering about what makes a person drawn to co-dependent relationships with those who suffer from a Borderline Personality Disorder. Has it something to do with the love/hate relationship we have with parts of ourselves or the degree to which we believe that we are an image, and lose contact with our real nature? Apparently “The Seed of Splitting in All of Us” and Amy takes us through a brief example of the conflicting narratives each type tends to favor. Her point is that if we accept the premise that finding “perfection” is not what life usually can offer, especially if we expect such perfection from another...it may encourage us to move towards seeing the humanness in ourselves and others.

**Mona Coates** and **Judith Searle** continue with “Sex, Love and your Personality: Type Seven, the Enthusiast in Love” filling the gap at the Enneagram Monthly of articles about how sexual antics of each enneagram type. Sevens are the “Jack of all trades and masters of (none/some)” by nature of ebullient curiosity and energy that makes it hard for them to stick to a few subjects. Voracious Sevens could not possibly engage in gluttony unless they had a sturdy digestive system. Psychologically, their digestive system is the ability to rationalize, and Sevens can be veeery good at that. Well, to be good at something does not mean that one must indulge in it. Sevens who overload their plate in youth, with age and wisdom must learn what to eat and what to leave...

While on the subject, **Judith Searle** wrote this

thoughtful article on “Sexuality, Gender Roles and the Enneagram” a while back, but human nature is fairly stable and does not changed from one decade to another. The question of male/female differences has puzzled humanity forever and even last week during Stephen Hawking's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration when he was asked what the greatest mystery is in the universe....he responded “women.”

Few argue over male/female physical differences compared to the debates over the extent of cultural imprinting. Those who credit cultural differences as more important tend to regard the hormonal and physical as irrelevant. Their opponents claim that it is precisely because of the irrefutable physical differences that all cultures have developed a set of cultural expectations to fit physically and hormonally set realities. The truth is somewhere in the middle, as usual. Judith sees the masculine energy most often typified by the type Eight, and the polar opposite female energy by types Four and Two.

**Joel M. Rothaizer** asks “What's the Point?” A question most of us grapple with, rarely seen put so clearly as in this superb article. I can relate to every phase of how ambitions and expectations drive us and no matter how successful or pleased we are with the results, sooner or later we realize that we don't get to keep (or own) any of it and that the only stable thing in life is the awareness of being. Yes, this elusive, yet omnipresent sense of being that is under the surface if we only cared to scratch... and yet, it feels that we can't get to it even if we scratched our skin off. Why? Joel invested a lot of time, effort and attention in these matters and found how the enneagram can be of great help and also saw how it can be abused and act as an additional layer of armor that keeps us from that part in us we try to get to.

**Tsivya R. Larson** looks at “Type Three and Anxiety.” The title is somewhat provocative since the Three is reputed to be a feeling, not a fear type, an aggressive type to boot, one that exudes confidence and competency. But anxiety is probably a cousin of the survival instinct and rather basic to all types. Actually, let's re-phrase that; anxiety is at the base of all types. It is part of the mechanism that motivates us to find a way — a suitable way for the type of energy we are gifted with or subscribe to — for dealing with the world.

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The Enneagram Monthly, Inc. was founded by Jack Labanauskas and Andrea Isaacs as a not-for-profit corporation. Its purpose is to gather and disseminate information in the field of the Enneagram, that is most commonly known as a personality typing system.

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Some say that type Three is the most inscrutable given their effectiveness at portraying themselves as they are willing to be seen. Such skill takes time and effort to develop. Tsivya's analysis and description of the phases of this process is particularly illuminating. At some point, mindfulness is needed to step outside ourselves if we want to cultivate our inner observer that will stand, as if separate and without judging, be a witness.

**John Howe** tells his story of "Missing the Point." Some of us (me included) have experienced a similar process in the search for our enneagram type, some more than once, others are still at it, suspended in doubt between two or more types. It can be the damndest thing to pin down your type if you happen to teeter on a cusp or if your life has been so turbulent as if you had multiple incarnations and were forced to bend and flex to adapt to changing circumstances.

There was a TV game show *What's My Line* a few decades ago where panelists were required to probe a contestant's occupation by asking only questions which could be answered "yes" or "no." (Every "yes" allowed the panelist to ask additional questions, with every "no" it was the next panelists turn... ) Sometimes the line of questioning started with a

lucky guess that made a short shrift out of the contestant's secret; other times if questioning started on the wrong foot, it would remain resistant.

Our mind likes to seek out patterns and we can always find a plausible alternative to our own type. John is a type Six, a type that has earned the reputation of being particularly adept at considering alternative realities but at the price of doubt.

**Connie Duckett** is "Exploring Type Nine, the Mediator" which happens to be her type. She does not have doubts about being a Nine, but her dilemma

is of a different nature — what it means to be a type Nine, really, and how much anger there was coiled under her façade of nineish congeniality. Where is the diplomatic sweet and tolerant side when stubbornness, passive aggression and withdrawing take over? How much of that sweetness, adaptability and tolerance was nothing more than a way to avoid conflict or prop up the image of being agreeable? This is a different way of "changing" our type, but this time it's from an idealized and little understood model to the adult version, the one that includes the dark side as well.

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