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The Evolutive Enneagram A Model for Integrating the Human Psyche (Part 1)

Translated from French
by **Steven Hopkins**

On the one hand, there is the personality enneagram, a powerful and subtle approach to knowledge of oneself and others, which is currently the source of increasing and much deserved interest.

On the other hand, less familiar to the general public, there is the process enneagram, which was taught by Gurdjieff and his disciples at the turn of the last century. It is a remarkable tool for understanding the intelligent processes which structure the Universe.

We all agree upon the fact that the enneagram is, above all, a geometric symbol of unity. Keeping this in mind makes it awkward thinking that there may be two separated approaches of the enneagram, one being the renowned personality types approach, the other being the almost unknown process approach.

By drawing our attention to how these two ways of using the “Enneagram” complement each other, this series of articles allows us to discover new depths in the model, showing how the nine profiles of the personality enneagram correspond to points

Jean-Philippe Vidal



of resistance and friction in the progressive development of consciousness, and defining, in the process, nine ways of constructing a false sense of identity.

A telecommunications engineer by training, Jean-Philippe Vidal is the creator of the “evolutive enneagram” school. A qualified master practitioner in NLP and Ericksonian hypnosis, he works as a trainer, coach and therapist.

The school offers a curricular integrating expertise from proven approaches (NLP, Hypnosis, Systemic, Transactional Analysis, Gestalt, ...) in the unifying framework provided by the traditional enneagram, with deep use of the process enneagram and links drawn with other approaches but most of all self-development, therapy and coaching protocols based on the enneagram.

Bringing Together Diverse Maps of the Human Soul

In Plutarch’s version of the story of Isis and Osiris, Peri Isidas Kai Osirides, we are told that ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Nine Lenses on the World: Why and How We Hold Onto Our Old Enneagram Prescriptions

Unless we are blessed with a direct apprehension of reality, we look at the world through rose-colored, blue-colored, yellow-colored – a whole spectrum of tinted glasses. The world comes into us filtered through our lenses or schemas or paradigms (our worldviews.)

Schemas are core beliefs and ideas about ourselves, other people, and the world. They are developed during childhood and then serve as templates for processing all later experiences. To the extent that our schemas accurately represent reality, they clarify our vision, are adaptive, useful, and self-serving. If our schemas are out of date, they distort reality and are maladaptive, not so useful, and self-defeating.

Because our schemas have been around a long time, we hold them as self-evident, *a priori* truths—this is just the way things are. Since we accept these schemas without question, they be-

Jerry Wagner, Ph.D.



come self-perpetuating and are very resistant to change. We created them, though, so we can change them.

Once we establish our personality styles with their schemas and paradigms which help us apprehend and navigate around the world, we can either keep them pliant, flexible, accommodating, and up to date; or we can rigidly maintain them, assimilating everything into them, and suffer what Joel Barker (1992) calls *paradigm paralysis* and George Kelly (1963) labeled *hardening of the categories*.

There are many reasons why we might not want to change our personality paradigms once we have formed them. They’ve worked for us and we’ve become successful *experts* within their existing range. Outside the range of our paradigm, we’re back to average. The more adept we become within our style and the more we become invested in it, the more we have to lose by changing it. ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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In the course of gathering, editing and discussing articles on material for the *Enneagram Monthly*, new and innovative ideas come up frequently, but in this issue we have a particularly rich selection. A small price to pay is that it often causes our timing to lag, but waiting for good material to come together is well worth it.

I suppose you all know that this publication has always been the forum for creative thinkers working with all aspects of personality. Some authors published books and shared their material with our readers, others submitted articles as their creative ideas made it to the keyboard. All in all quite a remarkable body of work over 17 years, chronicles the development of the enneagram as we know it today, and we have just scratched the surface, as illustrated by some of the innovative and original concepts in this issue.

We encourage you to submit the fruits of your experience and insights...it's easy, just email an article, comment or letter and don't worry about following a particular format, style or word count. We can discuss all of that later, should the need arise. The same goes for editing or foreign language translation that may be required. If the material is worth the effort, we'll find a way.

In this issue:

“The Evolutive Enneagram: *A Model for Integrating the Human Psyche*” is the first installment by **Jean-Philippe Vidal** of bringing together diverse maps of the human soul. Jean-Philippe's expertise, aside from an engineering degree in telecommunications, includes the creation of the *Evolutive Enneagram* which is based on his work as a master practitioner in NLP, Ericksonian Hypnosis, Transactional Analysis, Gestalt Therapy, and a deep understanding of the Process Enneagram as well as the Personality Enneagram. Bringing together various fields reveals commonalities and opens new ways of seeing human nature. And broadening our vision is what we all strive for.

“Nine Lenses on the World: *Why and How we Hold Onto Our Old Enneagram Prescriptions*” by **Jerry Wagner** is adapted from his book by the same title that is just beginning to make its way onto the market. As long as I can remember, there has been the discussion about the exact origin and nature of types — nature or nurture. Most of us split the difference and assume that we are born with a predisposition which “readily” gets enhanced in early childhood because we lean on our natural inclinations heavier than on alternative strategies for coping with life. At some point this habit becomes our second nature and we cling to it even after it may have outlived its usefulness. Jerry has mapped out our little tricks we play on ourselves whether we call them strategies, schemas, paradigms or world views; and points at what they do for us or how they interfere with us.

With “Personality, Process and Levels of Development *Part 2*” **Susan Rhodes** concludes this study of Ken Wilber's nine stages of transformation

From the Editor

and the typical shortcomings that accompany each level. It's a testament to the validity of the idea that we are “flawed humans” as long as we live in an environment we need to respond to. Our responses are dictated by the quality of our consciousness and understanding of the bigger picture. It goes without saying that every action and every decision we take, will affect different situations differently. I suppose that whoever came up with the saying “no good deed goes unpunished” was onto something. Take the extreme case of Jains in India who are so horrified at the possibility of taking a life, even that of the puniest bug, they have been known to sweep the path clear of ants and such before stepping on it. Hmm, if the broom covers a much larger surface than the footprint, I wonder how many more invisibly small creatures get cruelly swept aside by the harsh bristles of a broom...

My point is that as long as we are engaged in a causal universe and have a body, we will be either stepping, sweeping or sitting on something or other. We can never “develop” ourselves beyond touching our environment. So the issue or rather the question here becomes one where we accept the fact that every action has a ripple effect and these ripple effects change with every stage of transformation but never disappear.

“The Enneagram and Spiritual Transformation” has been at the center of the 35 year quest (including the enneagram) for **Carol Ann Gotch** and **David Walsh**. Just as a historic aside, they were the first (*EM* June 1996 issue) to point out in their *Three In One* article how we always operate with all three centers, Head, Heart and Gut. What they observed was that we not just use all three centers, but that we tend to use each center in one of the three styles of its triad. Three or four months later, in September I believe, we were interviewing Oscar Ichazo in Maui (Hawaii) for three days, and we spent a lot of time on his “Trifix” theory, which basically says the same thing.

The new release of *Heart and Soul of the Enneagram* seems to be a manual for thoughtful seekers after truth to ponder.

“Competing With Love” by **Somik Raha** is one of those articles you read, go “huh?” and do a double take. In my case I had to do a triple take and each time discovered new depth. Somik is a good friend and he graduated from Stanford University in the Department of Management Science and Engineering — one of the most open minded and cutting edge places of learning anywhere. Somik's Professor Ronald A. Howard is the director of the *Decisions and Ethics Center* which examines the efficacy and ethics of social arrangements. Howard was a founding director and chairman of Strategic Decisions Group. As the titles indicate, the studies here go way beyond efficiency or success in achieving precise goals and include a deep analysis of what effect various styles of ambitious

pursuits have on the doer. Here the ultimate goal, aside from high standards of ethics in choosing a goal and its pursuit, is the attention placed on the pursuer who must benefit by self actualizing (for want of a better word) in the process. To this end professor Howard (a type Five) opened his department to include regular presentations of ideas and systems that stretch our ability to give a fair hearing without passing a verdict to things that are difficult to prove. Somik participated enthusiastically in this “scheme” and I was invited to give several talks on the enneagram. Somik is also one of the organizers of the weekly Vedanta study group at Stanford that we have been attending for the past 4 or 5 years.

In this article, Somik describes a powerful and subtle shift we can make deep withing ourselves. A shift that is similar to a successful resolution (one that we actually keep). Anyone who used to smoke and stopped (or whatever other behavior) will remember that among many attempts that ended up being temporary, there was that one — the last one, usually — that worked. Why had other attempts not worked before? They probably did not have our full support, support that only true *r-e-s-o-l-u-t-i-o-n* can give. And yet, if we think of it, the resolution that worked for us did not really feel so different from the other resolutions that didn't. Do I know how to make the kind of resolution that works? I wish! Meanwhile, I'll make resolutions sparingly, hoping that it will increase the likelihood that once in a while one of them sticks.

And yet, not to discourage anyone, to learn to love something may be much easier than to battle resistance and continue to endure muddling through unloved chores. This could be one hell of a lesson coaches, counselors and therapists could try on their clients — after all, love should not seem a repulsive chore that elicits resistance.

While on the subject of love as a shift in attitude towards what we previously found less than lovable, why not apply the same resolution in our most intimate relationships. A wise young man (from India in case you wondered) once explained to me why his (arranged) marriage worked so well.

“My mother and father took care of me since I was born; they protected me, taught me stuff, knew all my tricks and flaws as well as my strengths and talents. They saw me grow up, deal with school and friends and knew what I liked and what annoyed me. I trusted them to use their judgment to guide me through the most crucial and difficult years of growing up. They had demonstrated time and again the benefits of experience and that they had my well-being in mind. In many ways they were my role models for understanding life. Why would I not trust them to evaluate what sort of life partner I should marry? They would observe the potential bride, her family, history and maybe even consult wise people for advice. All I could bring to the table

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For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

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was a flood of hormones and listen to my emotions. After my parents deliberated on all the cultural and temperamental aspects of our nature and found them to be compatible, all that my wife and I had to do was to learn to love each other. It turned out to be easier than you may think. At first my friends were scratching their heads at my willingness to allow my parent to "help" me choose a life partner. Years later, after they were married (following the lead of feelings mostly and their own judgment), at times ignoring the concerns of their elders, they would admit that maybe they should have listened and even followed their advice."

Most of us do not live in a culture that provides a system for effective parental input. Looking around I see so many parents in my age group that were "touched" by the wild 60's or 70's and the seismic shifts that took place in attitudes about relationships and family cohesion. The "new tradition" filling the gap (of old fashioned responsible family values and cohesion) is now taken up by professional counselors, how-to books, programs and workshops — some of them excellent, others encouraging non-solutions that are unlikely to bring happiness. In essence, it is generally up to the individual to decide which sources of information and styles of living may be most suitable. It's a tall order for a young person with limited life experience. Our

large divorce rates are not exactly a testament to the efficacy of this system. However, as best we can, we play the hand we were dealt by life. This is probably why psychotherapy, coaching and how-to books are so needed in the West.

Mona Coates and **Judith Searle** come to the rescue with their excellent manual full of practical examples of how best to cope with specific issues.

"Sex, Love & Your Personality: *Social Type Two and Type Seven in Love*" is this month's theme. A male and a female social subtype story for each type are real life examples of grappling with a characteristic dilemma of their type. *Sex, Love & Your Personality* is a precious resource that should not be missing in anyone's library.



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