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Beyond Chance Trance Formations

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In the study of the Enneagram we encounter an intriguing pattern that repeats in cycles or circulations described by Gurdjieff as “perpetual motion.” This notion of recurrence as observed in the Enneagram is particularly relevant in a therapeutic context as we see the repetition of the passions and fixations played out. The Jungian principle of Synchronicity is important here as it is related to thematic repetitions. In this writing we are concerned with these repetitive thematic issues of the personality and how this may come about, and more importantly how they are experienced at very specific points in time in the life of the individual. Such experiences can promote personal growth and eventually help facilitate transformation.

In the Enneagram literature it is commonly accepted that the acquired personality or persona is not the True Self and can be referred to as a False Self. We live our lives oblivious to this as if we were in a trance state. In this trance state we are blind or not aware of the broader dimensions or possibilities of the personality. The trance is our personal story line or narrative. Many Enneagram authors have discussed the trance-like aspects of the Enneagram personality types (Condon¹, Wolinski²). Condon provides a clear depiction of the notion that the personality is basically a trance construct

Martin Meyer, Ph.D.



as he states, “each of us is in a trance within our Enneagram style.” The goal is that we can awaken from the trance, which liberates other aspects of ourselves, which in turn enhances the ability to fulfill our potential.

As the story/drama unfolds, meaningful apparent coincidences occur as challenges that directly relate to the unfinished issues and compulsions of each Enneatype. The title of this article implies that the trance of the personality is an inherent set of personality traits that comprise the Enneatype and timely and meaningful/thematic related coincidental events occur at specific times that relates to the developmental issues of the personality. The fact that this trance of the personality unfolds in a mathematical timely precision implies that it is **BEYOND CHANCE**. Carl Jung³ referred to meaningful coincidences as Synchronicity.

Jung was the first to use the term Synchronicity to describe highly meaningful coincidences, although it should be noted that this concept does not originate with Jung as it is predated to early Chinese philosophy of Taoism and Confucianism. In Chinese thinking, the idea is that the apparently “coincidental event” is a comment on the immediate situation experienced by the person as a coincidence, and particularly as to how it relates ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Understanding the Body Center

I read with great interest Susan Rhodes’s astute article “The Missing Body Center (or Making the Invisible Visible).” The problems involved with our culture’s “blindness” to the particular kind of intelligence we see in the “body” or “gut” types (Eight, Nine and One) seem to me real and important, and her analysis is penetrating and useful. Since she especially requested comments on her article from body types, I am offering here my perspective as a One on some of the vital issues she has addressed.

In the January 1997 issue of *Enneagram Monthly* I suggested in my article “Jottings from a One’s Journal” that calling the Eight-Nine-One triad the “Instinctual” triad was likely to be more confusing than helpful. I pointed out that consistency of style demanded parallelism with the labels commonly used to describe the other two triads as “Feeling” (Two-Three-Four) and “Thinking” (Five-

Judith Searle



Six-Seven). While feeling and thinking are basic human faculties, instinct is not. The basic faculty that I believe characterizes the Eight-Nine-One center is *will*. The “Body” or “Gut” types specialize in “Will,” and the imbalances of this faculty among these three types directly parallel the imbalances of “Feeling” and “Thinking” within the centers with those labels.

In the Two-Three-Four triad, for example, we see defects of the Feeling faculty: in Two, feeling is directed excessively outward (empathy toward others, with inadequate awareness of the Two’s own feelings); in Three, feeling is deficient in both outward and inward applications (denial of feelings in the service of achieving visible goals); and in Four, feeling is directed excessively inward (self-absorption). We see the same basic pattern in the Five-Six-Seven triad in relation to Think- ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

In This Issue

On Typing
Mario Sikora
page 4

Dear Lyssa, a Reply to Article
Susan Rhodes
page 7

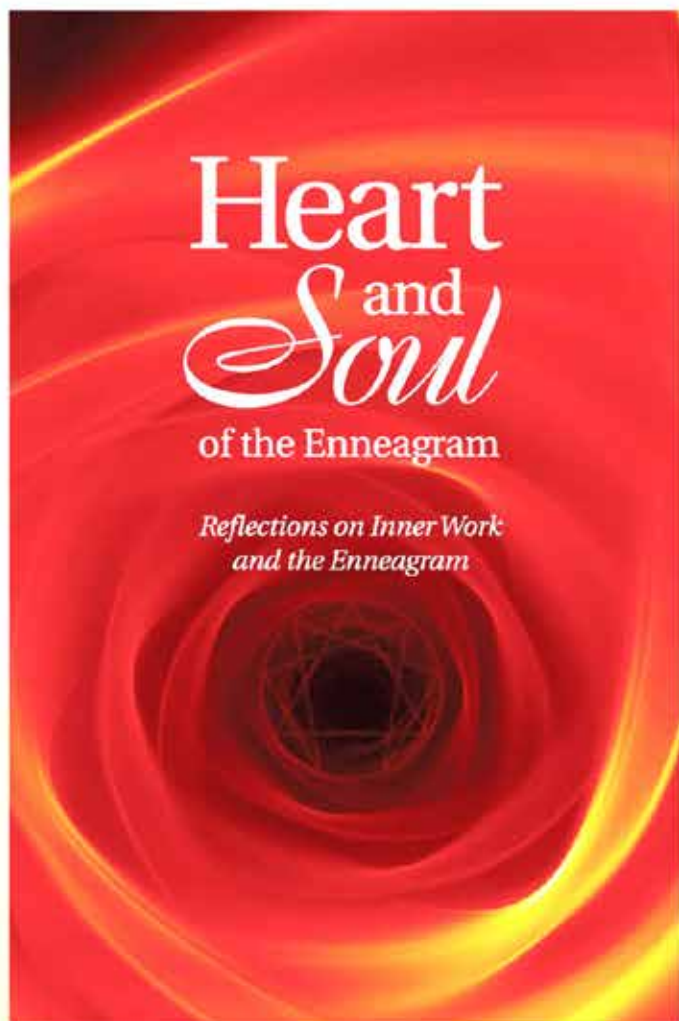
Evolutionary Enneagram part 3
Jean-Philippe Vidal
page 9

Sex, Love & Personality 8
Mona Coates/Judith Searle
page 14

NEW RELEASE

The long awaited revised and expanded 2nd edition of the sold-out book *Soul Stuff*, by Canadian authors

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& David Walsh**



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Two themes this month are based on articles in last month's issue. One is in form of a letter by Susan Rhodes' commenting on "The Truth About Fixation and Beyond" by Lissa Friedman, the other is Judith Searle's response to "The Missing Body Center or Making the Invisible Visible" by Susan Rhodes. It's nice to have a dialogue between authors going on, so I'm taking the opportunity to add a point or two to the discussion about the Body Center and want to remind you that we have a permanent invitation to all who care to comment on articles that appear in our pages; do not feel you need to always come up with a brand new subject of your own.

Now back to the Body Center that is in the foreground these days. Last month Susan Rhodes made a case for the Body Center being the home of the mysterious "Third Force" that can potentially reconcile the traditional conflict between Head and Heart, and Judith Searle's response is that she believes it to be "Will" that is the driving force of the Body Center.

I agree with both and would like to add that in most enneagram literature the body/instinct/gut did not quite seem to have the gravitas or richness associated with the head/thinking or heart/feeling concepts that are more obvious to all.

If Judith's faculty of "Will" is still not enough, or seems more *proactive* compared to thinking or feeling that seem to flow freely, I would like you to consider adding the "other" quality associated with the Body Center, the "sense of beauty" as a counterbalance to the materialistic "body." The body is certainly of "matter" which is definitely a more gross substance than thinking or feeling, and as such needs a powerful polar opposite that can bring it to a par with thinking and feeling.

The "Sense of Beauty" contains both, a blend of thoughts and feelings, manifesting as if in a flash, and, it has a high enough level of refinement to compensate for the density of the Body or the murkiness of the Instincts.

Body Center types excel in immediate recognition of the beauty of strength/fairness (8), harmony/peace (9) or perfection/sensitivity (1). How does that relate to "will" and why does it remain relatively invisible?

Let's look at an example of a celebrity to illustrate how it might work. Dante Allighieri, Italy's most famous

From the Editor

poet/philosopher met Beatrice when he was nine years old and fell in love on the spot, without ever having spoken to her. Dante was promised to Gemma at age 12, married and had several children with her but did not see Beatrice again until he was 18. He never got to know Beatrice well and the occasional encounters as they would be passing on the street were heart-stopping moments. Beatrice inspired Dante throughout his life and she was the source of his creativity and immense drive.

Beatrice died when Dante was about 25 but remained his muse for 40 more years until his death. Dante never mentioned his wife Gemma in his writings and it was Beatrice that inspired him to create the *Sweet New Style* (Dolce Stil Novo) of exploring themes of love in ways that were never emphasized before.

Of course, the sense of beauty that so inspired Dante could have been just that, a momentary rapture. Instead it gave rise and meaning to the *will* he needed in order to implement and sustain his monumental life's work. Will requires a purpose to get activated, whereas thought and feeling do not; they seem to arise spontaneously and in abundance (although they can and often do adopt purpose eventually).

In this issue:

Martin Meyer noticed some "Beyond Chance Trance Formations" studying enneagram patterns. Such apparently meaningful coincidences occur as challenges directly related to the unfinished issues and compulsions of each Enneatype. Living in an intelligently organized universe it would stand to reason that our inner states will more often than not find corresponding external events that have special meaning as if they were tailored to our needs or show a higher than random incidence of synchronicity. Reading Martin Meyer's article an image kept coming up of Enneagram types expressing a particular quality — as for example, a magnet attracts ferrous metals and ignores brass, gold, copper, silver — so will not each type have a particular affinity to certain patterns of thinking, feeling and acting? Our job is to recognizing our nature, so we can choose to act in harmony, while nature's job is to provide an environment that contains what we need. We marvel and delight when it all actually works, or grumble and suffer when for one reason or another it does not.

Judith Searle offers her perspective as a One for "Understanding the Body Center" inspired by last month's article, "The Missing Body Center" by Susan Rhodes. Judith had written (EM January 1997) about the inconsistency of style that demanded parallelism with the labels commonly used to describe the other two triads as "Feeling" (Two-Three-Four) and "Thinking" (Five-Six-Seven). While feeling and thinking are basic human faculties, instinct is not. Judith believes that what characterizes the Eight-

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| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----|
| Beyond Chance Trance Formation..... | Martin Meyer | 1 |
| Understanding the Body Center | Judith Searle | 1 |
| From the Editor..... | Jack Labanauskas | 2 |
| On Typing: <i>Steve Jobs, Heuristics and Other Observations</i> | Mario Sikora | 4 |
| Dear Lyssa: a reply to Lyssa Friedman's <i>The Truth About Fixation and Beyond</i> ... | Susan Rhodes | 7 |
| The Evolutive Enneagram (part 3) <i>Combining the Enneagram with other Approaches and Traditions</i> | Jean-Philippe Vidal | 9 |
| Sex, Love and Your Personality: <i>Type Eight, The Challenger in Love</i> | Mona Coates & Judith Searle | 14 |
| Subscription Forms and Ad Rates | | 24 |

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Nine-One center is will. The “Body” or “Gut” types specialize in “Will,” and the imbalances of this faculty among these three types directly parallel the imbalances of “Feeling” and “Thinking” within the centers with those labels. That’s an excellent observation and smacks of truth.

Mario Sikora “On Typing: Heuristics, Steve Jobs and Other Observations” takes a broad view of the entire spectrum of typing in general and public figures in particular. First of all, each of us is in a better position to type ourselves, simply because we know what is going on in our own mind, heart and body. Unless of course, we have a distorted views of over/under developed aspects of our personality or are blind to concealed or repressed zones that may be obvious to those closest to us. Typing public figures we only read or hear about or watch on a screen compounds the possibility of making wrong assumptions and tend to be rather speculative. Mario argues that there is no such thing as any one true way to assess type. The best we can do with whatever methodology is to have some rigor and consistency to it.

Human nature is tempted to make an intuitive guesses about someone’s type and then seek evidence to confirm that intuition. The nature of our mind is to seek patterns, which makes us prone to confirmation bias—seeing data that confirms an existing belief and non-consciously blocking out data that contradicts that belief. In the sciences (even the social sciences) it is important to try to disconfirm our hypothesis, not just seek to confirm it.

Typing celebrities like Steve Jobs is a good tool

for instructive examples when teaching since we can retain information better when associated with a storyline. That’s why we have fables, aphorisms, religious deities or role models (famous type examples too)...they serve the purpose to symbolizing complex concepts, ethical traits and multifaceted personalities.

Susan Rhodes writes “Dear Lyssa, a Reply to Lyssa Friedman’s Article, The Truth About Fixation and Beyond.” Susan is interested in making a precise distinction between type and fixation. In her view type and fixation are two entirely separate entities that all too often have been lumped together inappropriately or used interchangeably. Type is like the DNA of a personality that carries the characteristics of the energy motivating and nourishing the individual, while fixation is ignorance or distortion based akin to an ailment or disease that may afflict an individual in varying degrees of severity — we don’t expect a baby to walk or talk too soon after birth, we can cut grown-ups a little slack too and need not expect flawless functionality and wisdom. Susan agrees with much of Lyssa’s perspective but would emphasize that while obsessive “searching and fixing” seem unproductive, the impulse to seek—when it arises out of a deep and abiding need to discover who we are and why we are here—seems healthy, not sick.

Part three of “The Evolutive Enneagram: Combining the Enneagram With Other Approaches and Traditions” is an interesting exploration by **Jean-Philippe Vidal** into other models that either have

similarities with the enneagram or can be adapted to reflect or to supplement shared concepts. If we assume that there is such a thing as “truth” it must by necessity be far removed from the field of opposites (a.k.a. the field of diversity) that can be visualized as a V-shaped funnel; with the pairs of polar opposites at the top, narrowing towards the source at the bottom. Different systems, as they approach that meeting point, begin to share more and more resemblance with other systems that also approach that point, until all blend into oneness. Obviously we deal with much grosser levels of things and the unification is still theoretical as long as we discuss distinctions and commonalities.

Mona Coates and **Judith Searle’s** “Sex, Love & Your Personality, Type Eight: the Challenger in Love” open a window into the intimate lives of four couples. Featuring two with a Self-preservation Eights and two couples with Sexual Eights. Staying with the special emphasis on Body types in this issue, we picked the Eights for their “reputation” as champions or extreme representatives of the passion of Lust and/or inclination towards control. Healthy Eights on the other hand have a reputation of being extremely reliable and desirable protectors in intimate relationships.

Using case histories with real-life examples is a powerful way of conveying a message and imprinting complex concepts in an easy to remember fashion. Mona and Judith have done an immense service in compiling these authentic stories, protecting the identities of the protagonists without losing any of the relevant lessons.