



# enneagram monthly

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Issue 189

## Awareness to Action Leadership An Enneagram-Based Leadership Framework

Used appropriately, the Enneagram can be a powerful aid in the work of leadership development. It helps people understand their patterns of habitual behaviors better than any other model available. Understanding one's habitual behaviors, and how to change them when necessary, can help a leader overcome obstacles to his or her growth. Understanding the people one leads also has great benefit, so the Enneagram helps leaders on many levels.

I use the Enneagram in my work with leaders, making it a central tool in my executive coaching engagements. I introduce each my clients to the system and find that it provides a nice touchstone as we do our work. That is, once they understand the fundamentals of their Ennea-type, as we continue through the engagement we can return to the Enneagram when they are facing an obstacle to their growth. It serves as a good reminder of how a variety of obstacles can have the root in a common place and by focusing on some simple ideas they can change in a variety of areas. For example, a Type Three's habitual patterns are rooted in a strategy of "striving to be Outstanding." Remembering this and reframing the strategy in an

**Mario Sikora**

adaptive way can help the Three client overcome a variety of obstacles.

There is a danger to using the Enneagram in leadership development, as well. A coach can become too reliant on it because the Enneagram is such a powerful tool. It is tempting to think that just because you know someone's Ennea-type you *know* what they have to do to excel as a leader—Threes should do *x*, Nines should do *y*; problem solved, next client please...

The real world is not so simple. Yes, there are developmental needs that are highly probable for each Enneagram type, but any leadership-development activity (especially executive coaching engagements) should be focused on the specific needs of the individual and should be the result of a careful assessment of the individual and the individual's circumstances. Granted, Threes may generally need to do *x*, but given *these* circumstances, *this* Three may need to do *y*.

Another temptation is to develop an Enneagram-based leadership-process model. The leader should do *x* because it corresponds to Point One of the Enneagram, then do *y* because it corresponds to Point Two.... ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

## Hiding in Plain Sight - A Hidden Dynamic of the Enneagram

Some years ago Don Riso and Russ Hudson gifted us with their classic *The Wisdom of the Enneagram*. The word Wisdom has a long history; from the Wisdom of Solomon to a Book in the Hebrew Scriptures titled Wisdom. Scrates probed it and played with it. For Socrates, "wisdom begins in wonder". In his questioning the local experts, the sage of Athens demonstrates that frequently, self-proclaimed experts don't really know what they think they know. His pupil Plato and Plato's pupil Aristotle gave us frameworks and questions that we've been wrestling with for more than two thousand years.

**Jim Jennings Ph.D**

comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us." Or as Ben Franklin put it, "The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is knowledge of our own ignorance."

Let me share with you an "Aha!" moment that I had about myself and others that was triggered by an insight into a dimension of the Enneagram that had escaped me. Ever since I was introduced to the Enneagram, I've been fascinated by it. At first it seemed to me to be so simple: a roadmap for uncovering our gut or will, our emotions or feelings and our thoughts or ability to reason. It didn't take me long to discover that the roadmap was more like Mapquest, the narrower the focus, the more roads appear.

I've spent my life listening to people who have somehow gotten lost on the back roads of life or who are seeking new paths to explore. Here is one puzzle that I've struggled with for ever so long.

There is a woman that I've known for many years. She is a mostly sexual, social Three with scarcely a smidgen of self-pres. She has a strong Two wing and is a warm, caring and loving person who has given of herself to many all her life. She has also spent her life struggling to grow both spiritually ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

**Don Richard Riso**  
1946 – 2012  
Friend, Guide, and Fellow Human  
on this Journey  
See page 11

An encyclopedia is filled with facts and figures, but wisdom is "the ability to discern inner qualities and relationships;" "to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting insight." For Socrates, "True wisdom

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**Don Richard Riso's death on August 30** came as a shock and way too soon — a huge loss for the enneagram community (See obituary on page 11).

Who among us was not in some way influenced by his fruitful life and brilliance? I would only like to add a little story about how Don affected me personally and by extension the *Enneagram Monthly* (EM). My first introduction to the enneagram was reading Don's *Personality Types: Using the Enneagram for Self-Discovery*. It captured my imagination and left a mark that inspired this publication.

It all started with the first International Enneagram Conference at Stanford University CA in 1994 when Don Riso agreed to give up the name "International Enneagram Association" to the soon to be forming IEA. During that same conference people were buzzing with plans for the future including publishing a newspaper dedicated to the enneagram — it was to be a collective effort by a committee.

I thought that a project created by a committee of amateurs had a slim chance of succeeding (as indeed it turned out to be a difficult start that fizzled after a few attempts). Apparently consensus is not a natural consequence when nine different personalities with conflicting core motivations try to come to a decision.

Publishing involves many details and with 10+ years in the field, I knew what it takes and how much planning is involved. Good will is no substitute for expertise when rapid problem-solving of technicalities is required. At the same time it was also clear that the enneagram community desperately needed a means of staying in touch. In the pre-Internet days the only alternatives were expensive long-distance phone calls, snail mail or newsletters/papers. It had to be a newspaper or else the Stanford experience would eventually be forgotten and we couldn't have an open forum that would serve all the schools.

With my partner Andrea Isaacs, we decided to take a chance at publishing a paper ourselves and started gathering information by sending out letters to as many Stanford Conference attendees as we could. Don Riso of course was one of them and since he was located only 160 miles south of us in NY City, we solicited his and Russ's advice and mailing list. Their list was the biggest one we got and it helped us launch the EM...In the first crucial years when we were running into problems, we consulted Don often on matters political or enneagrammatic that required a deeper understanding.

During our first 20 issues or so we weathered several storms. Don's help was very welcome and it may have saved us once or twice from the cliff's edge. We owe a heartfelt thanks to Don and of course all other "old timers" and new contributors who wrote and advertised in the EM so that we can be here today still plugging along with issue #189 and no intentions whatsoever of quitting any time soon.

Last Thursday, when the news came, a refrain from Mozart's and Verdi's Requiem (I have several versions of each) was going through my head...*Requiem aeternam dona Domine et lux perpetua luceat ei. Requiescat in pace.* (eternal rest give Don oh Lord and let the perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace.)

## From the Editor

### ERRATUM

Last month's issue (#188) front page article "General Considerations About Subtypes" by Antonio Barbato was missing the author's byline.

#### In This Issue:

In "Awareness to Action Leadership: *An Enneagram-Based Leadership Framework*," **Mario Sikora** encourages us not to become overly-reliant on the Enneagram in our role as Enneagram coaches. Because the Enneagram is such a powerful tool, it is tempting to think that, just because you know someone's Ennea-type, you know what they have to do to excel as a leader. A coach must be careful to not become too reliant on it. As he notes, successful leadership is the act of influencing others to effectively achieve a desired result consistently and over time. To be effective leaders and coaches, we have to engage them, to lead in a way that makes them want to follow. And this means not only adapting our approach to the needs of each individual client, but looking at the varying contexts and goals that makes their situation unique and not reducible to a type description.

Mario goes on to speak of the traits common to the best leaders: a love for the job of leading, putting countless hours into doing it well, a hunger for learning and the desire to improve, and motivating others but not at the cost of neglecting the cold, hard facts of life as a leader. In business, the bottom line is what you achieve: if you do not get results you fail. Finally, he discusses key traits in four key arenas (self-mastery, leadership relationships, leadership training and leadership thinking) that leaders need to cultivate in order to be effective.

Mario put together an effective blueprint for what it takes to be a good leader regardless of the field.

**Jim Jennings** had an "Aha!" moment about himself and others that was triggered by an insight into a dimension of the Enneagram that had escaped him "Hiding in Plain Sight — A Hidden Dynamic of the Enneagram." This insight came during a discussion between him and a female client who talked about saying things to others that seared through the person to whom she was speaking like a hot knife, causing pain and embarrassment, and leading to a communication breakdown, and how she was unfortunately unaware of what she had said and done to create an awkward situation. How could this be? In her mind, Jim's client was trying to offer constructive feedback. But she was unaware of how her sharp words were affecting the person who was hearing them. After some self-examination, Jim noticed similar traits in himself: how his feelings and thoughts sometimes coalesced into an intense urge to act, but to act in a way that would be far worse than the perceived unjust absurdity which triggered the power burst. A type Eight, he would then become

an even worse angry avenger than the "perpetrator" whom he was judging.

This helped him to realize that his personal point of view (his "story") is not the ultimate truth but simply an attempt to express his experience in the world—and that he needs to remember that this is what everyone else is doing, too, and to give them both space and respect.

**Michael Peterson** was moved to write "An Open Letter to Susan Rhodes," about her previous month's EM article, "*An Enneagram-based Model of Integral Transformation*," in which he praised her efforts to champion the idea that we transform ourselves not only via ascent, but also descent, and in which she pointed out the cultural biases against descent-based transformation.

Michael remembers with fondness the 1960's, when a more soulful and open vision was possible and says that in the decades since that time, we have somehow lost that collective vision, such that the members of his generation find themselves the keepers of a treasure of knowledge threatened to be lost. He believes that many of us may have lost this vision because we so wish to be admired by others that it is hard for us to speak from our hearts and to be who we truly are, especially when we have made mistakes. So while speaking from the heart may be a source of great fulfillment, it can be hard to do when it requires us to descend (and risk losing respect) instead of ascend (and pretend that everything is fine). One of the problems, he feels, is that we are largely unaware of our unspoken social bias against descent, such that our belief that "descent is too scary" slips into the background, becoming the unacknowledged context in which all of our relationships occur.

In "Grounding Integral Descent in Real Life: A Reply to Michael Peterson," **Susan Rhodes** agrees with Michael that people are struggling to be admired and that virtually nobody wants to be scorned, ignored, or attacked, especially in public. But she asks herself, "Where does admiration begin?" The answer she gives is that it begins with self-admiration, noting that admiration from others means little if we are being admired for qualities we ourselves don't particularly respect or think we possess. While we all need validation, validation received based on superficial attributes (i.e., wealth, celebrity, or good looks) isn't all that nurturing, since it only validates non-essentials. Susan suspects that this kind of validation accounts for a lot of depression among successful people in modern culture, who start to feel as though they have no genuine substance, because they focus so much attention on things that are ephemeral.

Although it might be nice to think that admitting our mistakes would win the admiration of others, such an admission casts a negative reflection on those around us who colluded in some way with our wrong-headed attitudes or actions. For example, abused as children risk losing their family support system, whistle-blowers risk losing their livelihood, and ex-gang-members even risk to lose their lives. Such reasons often prevent us from admitting we were wrong. She notes that it's because not every-

**Enneagram Monthly**  
748 Wayside Rd.  
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Phone: 650-851-4806 Fax: 650-851-3113  
Email: em@guna.us

**Editor and Publisher** Jack Labanauskas

**Staff Writer** Susan Rhodes

**Assistant Editor** Sue Ann McKean

**Consulting Editor** Andrea Isaacs

**Webmaster** Gail Francisco

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For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

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body who descends into the darkness returns unscathed. We do have some control over our actions but very little over their effects. That’s another reason why spiritual teachers often advise people to be unattached to outcomes.

In response to Michael’s comment that descent is most strongly associated with the feminine, Susan agrees, but says that she does not think women are better than men or that feminine energy is the only antidote to everything that ails our society today. She believes that both men and women can benefit from integrating the masculine and feminine sides of themselves, just as Jung advocated.

**Tim Vreeland’s** “Architectural Styles and Enneagram Types” takes us into the Dark Ages and the Six mentality of seeking security and support by building networks of like-minded allies against enemies. In this feudal system the Catholic Church was seen as the intermediary between the people and God, and the structures they commissioned were reaching towards heaven. Centuries later it was the turn of the Seven-like impulse reflected in Renaissance architecture with its exuberance and return to the celebration of the human form and bold explorations into all forms of art and placing value on personal refinement. It was followed by the Three-like motivations of the Church that felt its hold on the people’s minds and hearts slipping during the Reformation. It sought to win back relevance and Protestant converts by dazzling the folks with the magnificent cathedrals and imagery in the Baroque style.

This is the second of three articles in which Tim Vreeland (who taught architecture for over forty years at the university level) classifies the great ages of Western architecture according to their Enneagram type. In the last issue, he covered Ancient Egyptian, Ancient Greek and Ancient Roman architecture. In this article, he continues the examination of the styles in chronological order.

**Elizabeth Wagele** has written a new book: “The Enneagram of Death — Helpful Insights by the 9 Types of People on Grief, Fear and Dying.” We all have our preferred mechanisms of dealing with the inevitable, and not always in the most soothing or inspiring way. Elizabeth believes that the key to becoming less frightened of death is to let ourselves feel deeply, so that we don’t get locked up in our fears. While this does not mean that every feeling needs to be expressed outwardly, it does mean that we need to become aware of feelings that otherwise would remain hidden in the unconscious. One tool for enhancing our awareness of these repressed feelings is to see how each of the nine personality types is likely to unconsciously conceal them. This book is available on Amazon.

During an interaction with a friend **Somik Raha** noticed how he was forming a condemnatory judgment based on his friend’s story without first having given him a chance to be understood. Dismayed at his own response where he let his inner auto-pilot jump to conclusions while missing the opportunity to actually try to really hear what his friend was saying or see the situation from his perspective. Somik had an insight of what it means to “Earning Your Right” to be critical of others. But I’m jumping ahead. Let’s just say that all of us come from our own experience of life, see things differently, respond to them in different ways, and express ideas based on those differences. We find it easy to express ourselves based on our own experiences, but much harder to really take into consideration the experiences of others. And, surprise, surprise, if and when we manage to walk in the others’ shoes, what started out as a need to give critical feedback may still happen, but

now it comes after having run through the filter of compassion, a filter that is designed to trap our own bias.

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- The Enneagram Intensive (also Part 1) of our *Enneagram Professional Training Program* (EPTP) comes to lovely Vallombrosa Center in Menlo Park close to the SF Airport in August 2012 and February 2013 and to the Montreat Center close to Asheville, NC in October–November, 2012
- Deepening Spiritual Awareness and the Typing process (Part 2) come to California in August 2012 and February 2013.
- Check our website for David’s radio shows and videos.

Call Tracy at 866-366-8973 for detailed information and registration or go to [www.enneagramworldwide.com](http://www.enneagramworldwide.com)

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