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Awakening & the Perennial Wisdom

At some time in our lives we have the intuition that reality is one whole, and that life is not senseless but rather, is driven by an immanent, intelligent consciousness which is somehow our true self or essence. We intuit that our suffering is caused not merely by events but essentially by our false beliefs and negative approach. We intuit that we can transform this situation by examining ourselves and our mind — thus opening to greater wisdom, love, and grace. These intuitions mark the very beginning of spiritual awakening.

The subject of spiritual awakening is surrounded by myth and confusion. The cure for this confusion is, of course, awakening. There are many other words for this noetic shift of identity: enlightenment, self-realization, liberation, revelation, or gnosis. As I use them, these words all connote the same recognition.

Human beings generally identify with a self-image constructed from mind patterns and the body-image. At its root, this identity and view is a belief in separation and duality. It is only upon awakening out of this view that we fully grasp how profound this distortion is.

Michael Damian

Our delusion, which is often called ego, is characterized by egoism (narrow self-interest), materialism (belief that reality is lifeless matter), and nihilism (belief or feeling that existence is intrinsically meaningless). When we imagine our self as an object in a world of objects, this view alienates us from happiness, love, peace, vitality, and connection. It then seems to us that these qualities depend on special, rare circumstances to be present.

Identifying with the constant flux of habitual thought and feeling, we are trapped in a web of spurious judgments and images of ourselves and others. This obstructs our capacity for empathy and insight. The emotional negativity and narrow-mindedness created by our mistaken identity is the cause of all misery on earth.

Inquiry, Understanding, and Grace

As our false view of life is lodged in our sense of self, the self is the target of spiritual inquiry, also known as self-inquiry. Inquiry is a tool that identifies the cause of suffering and removes it. It is true that gnosis ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Understanding the Subtypes: Some Sources of Contradiction and Mistyping

"First there is a mountain, then there is no mountain, then there is."

There is a Mountain, Donovan

Mario Sikora

The Zen parable paraphrased by the singer Donovan refers to the fact that something can seem deceptively simple when we first start studying it but gets much more complicated when we are on the journey of discovery.

Take the Enneagram, for example—it seems simple: Nine kinds of people—*Mary is clearly a Five, John clearly a Two, Todd is a Six...* But as we continue our study, things get more complex—we lose sight of the mountain when we are halfway up its side. With the Enneagram, we start to see things that don't seem to make sense. Mary is not so easily labeled and we may fall into the traps of either coming up with rationalizations for our initial assessments or abandoning the Enneagram as inaccurate or insufficient. If we persist in working to understand the system, however, we start to see its nuances and subtleties. In time, the

mountain becomes just a mountain again.

In an [article on my website](#)¹ I wrote about contradictions found within the Ennea-types; this article focuses on why behaviors seen in some of the subtypes can seem so contradictory and how a poor understanding of the subtypes can lead to mistyping.

People are contradictory and complicated by their nature, and it is easy to fall into the trap of stereotyping people with a tool like the Enneagram. [Confirmation bias](#) can make us think that Eights will always act like *this* and Sevens will always act like *that*, but in reality no one always does *this* or *that*. However, some of the contradictory behaviors we see in people are not simply random; they are due to the interplay of identifiable dynamics. Understanding this interplay can help us recognize our habitual, fixated patterns more easily, greatly enhancing our work on self.

There are two ways of looking at the Enneagram. ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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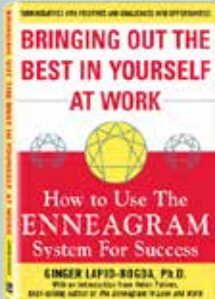
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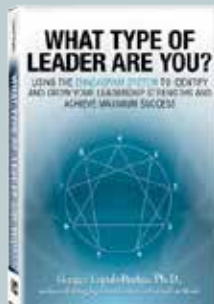


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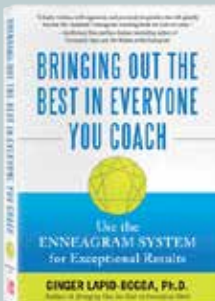
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From the Editor

Why would anyone study the enneagram unless it was for a deeper understanding of “who am I?” It worked so well for Ramana Maharshi about 120 years ago and for the rest of his life it was the central core of his teaching. Most saints before and since Ramana reported in essence that they too, in one form or another had awakened from the general state of ignorance we call “normal” life, only after realizing that what they had always thought of “I” was not really so...

As we may already, or not yet, have awakening as our main goal, we can work on “preliminary” things like nibbling at our misconceptions or refining our understanding of life and our own nature.

In this issue:

Michael Damian reminds us that “Awakening and Perennial Wisdom” are innate qualities. Most of us remember how at times we had the intuition that reality is one whole, and that life is not senseless but rather, is driven by an immanent, intelligent consciousness which is somehow our true self or essence—that *permanent* sense of being, every time we become aware of it, seems unchanged. Our ups and downs, suffering or joy are caused not merely by events, but largely by our false beliefs and negative approach. Examining ourselves and our mind can lead to an opening to greater wisdom, love, and grace. These intuitions mark the very beginning of spiritual awakening.

We are used to thinking of ourselves by identifying with a self-image constructed from mind patterns and the body-image—a view born of a belief that separation and duality is the natural state of being. Only upon awakening out of this view can we fully grasp how profound this distortion is.

Whatever our type may be, it is often called ego, and is characterized by egoism (narrow self-interest), materialism (belief that reality is lifeless matter), and nihilism (belief or feeling that existence is intrinsically meaningless). Any or all of these views alienate us from happiness, love, peace, vitality, and connection. We then remain trapped in spurious judgments and images of ourselves and others. Such narrow-mindedness created by our mistaken identity is the cause of all misery on earth.

Michael awakened from this false view of life after years of spiritual inquiry or self-inquiry (see his story in *EM* #209 & 210). It is this type of inquiry that identifies the cause of suffering and removes it.

Mario Sikora brings light to “Understanding the Subtypes: Some Sources of Contradictions and Mistyping.” The focus is on why be-

haviors seen in some of the subtypes can seem so contradictory and how a poor understanding of the subtypes can lead to mistyping.

Given that people are contradictory and complicated by their nature, and it is easy to stereotype people with a tool like the Enneagram. For example, *Confirmation Bias* can make us think that Eights will always act like *this* and Sevens will always act like *that*, but in reality no one always does *this* or *that*. These are not simply random deviations from type, but are due to the interplay of identifiable dynamics. And if this interplay is understood it can help us recognize our habitual, fixated patterns more easily, greatly enhancing our work on self.

Mario makes a distinction between two ways of looking at the Enneagram. The essentialist perspective that assumes the Enneatypes are fixed upon some pre-existing or pre-determined archetypal force that exists outside of us; or, the more dynamic perspective that looks at Ennea-type as an artificial external construct that attempts to identify and label dynamics at work within us.

Clarence Thomson says “Science, Yes, Only Science, No” referring to recent articles in the *EM* (issues #211, 212, **213**, 214) that explore whether the Enneagram can embrace science as important both for its contributions and how this deals with the implicit bias in our culture. The bias for Clarence is “If it is scientific, then it is true;” he likes that, but does not like “if it is not scientific, it is not true.”

As an example, Clarence looks at the legislature in Kansas that publicly embarrasses itself in front of everyone. Two sides meet to discuss educational curriculum. On one side are educators, equipped with science: texts, history, numbers. On the other side are the “creationists,” protecting morality and the bible. T. S. Eliot has a wonderful line, “...united in the struggle that divides us.” What unites them is their unconscious bias: only science is true claim educators because they have science. But creationists claim science because they start from the position that the bible is true. And if it is true, it is scientific.

The Enneagram community can quite comfortably embrace science and knowledge gleaned from dialog and direct experience.

Susan Rhodes took us on “The Hero’s Journey through Life: Tarot, Transformation & the Enneagram *Part 3*.” She suggests that tarot decks created since about 1900 have 22 Major Keys due to the modern resurgence of interest in the tarot that started with the Society of the Golden Dawn, the work with the Qabala (Tree of Life), which has 22 connecting lines or paths between their ten emanations.

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For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

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tions of Divine energy known in Hebrew as Sephiroth. If we approach the tarot on a numerological basis, we start by assuming that (a) numbers have meaning and (b) paying attention to that meaning can have value in inner work. For us who are already working with the system based on a “nine archetype” foundation (i.e., the enneagram), it is advantageous to find natural parallels in other systems we can use to create added depth to our enneagram work.

For example the idea of *Tarot Constellations* (i.e. grEnneagram work arguably confers a more embodied understanding of the properties associated with the numbers 1 – 9, especially when approached from a depathologized perspective because it provides us with actual experience interacting with individuals who exemplify the qualities of enneagram types.

Gloria Davenport did years of research on what kind of “Understanding and Preparation for Change” is needed if we want to use the enneagram effectively. It includes understanding fully who we perceive ourselves to be. Going beyond the ego-personality is improbable if we do not consciously know the make-up of this false self that not only controls how we affect, interact, and respond to others, but how we live our life. Reform or conversion is unthinkable if we have no awareness of what we are dealing with and commitment to change alone is not enough. How can we transform anything if we don't know what it is?

Looking at early applications, prior to the Enneagram's Western modernization, the term *The Work* was the identifying framework for the teachings of Gurdjieff and his *SAT* (Seekers After Truth) groups known as *The Fourth Way Institute*. This term is also used in the work of Ichazo and his *Arica Institute*, Naranjo and his *SAT Institute*, Hameed Ali (Almaas) and his *Diamond Approach*, and Bennett's student Anthony Blake in his *Duversity*.

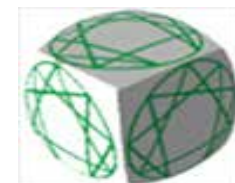
In essence we are speaking of learned methods and practices for releasing latent powers in the human psyche for personal transformation, a way of balancing all three centers.

Belinda Gore in “Moving Up the Levels of Development” sees how this model of development can also track stages of personality development from infancy (at Level Nine) through maturity, and ultimately to spiritual liberation (at Level One). Riso and Hudson called this model “Levels of Development,” but clarified that it in an adult human being it's more accurately called “Levels of Functioning.” By either name, this is meant to describe the ego's development as a necessary set of structures for building conscious awareness of Essence or Being.

Belinda describes how absent too many traumas and under healthy parenting we naturally come to Level Five or the so-called “normal” stage, the center of a bell curve, the anchor point (the level at which most people function most of the time). She included a correspondence with the developmental levels within cultures—that is, groups of people—using the language of Spiral Dynamics where each level can describe the psycho-social and organizational patterns in human systems as well as in individuals.

Just as in early infancy (Level Nine) there is no compassionate consideration or willingness to postpone the satisfaction of own needs in deference to others, after moving up the Levels of Development, we eventually ascend to Liberation at Level One.

Each movement up the developmental levels required additional intention and undertaking of a spiritual path or practice—and a corresponding letting go of our carefully constructed ego identification. The Levels can help us recognize the impact and eventually identification with Presence until we discover that it is truly what we are.



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