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Personality Patterns – A Quantitative and Descriptive Study of Distinct and Self-Consistent Attentional Styles and their Relation to Enneagram Typology

Throughout history people have observed human differences and similarities and have attempted to classify them. The task of organizing and classifying these observations has challenged human science in every era and in every civilization. These challenges have led to the development of typologies, which are schemes or processes of classifying various aspects of making up an individual's personality. There are typologies of human traits (characteristic ways of behaving, thinking, feeling, reaction), social and pathological behavior, physical characteristics, biological temperaments, motivational syndromes, value systems, as well as physical and mental disorders. Typologies may describe either *types*, which are concerned with qualities that are common among individuals and distinguish them as an identifiable class, or *traits*, which represent enduring physical or psychological characteristics that differentiate one class from another (Reber, 1985).

Most typologies have been created by philosophers, writ-

Belinda Price Brent Ph.D.



ers, psychiatrists, and psychologists who have had a strong interest in understanding and theorizing about human behavior, human development, and personality structure and development. In the service of gaining insight and understanding, these personality theorists have applied their constructs and principles to areas of interest which range from the dynamics of psychopathology to education, from the interpretation of dreams to organizational development, and from psychotherapy to religion and spirituality. Typologies are created as a way of organizing the personality variables represented in both type theories and trait theories, and serve as a point of reference when attempting to describe and measure these variables.

Currently, there is a surge of interest among Western psychologists to create typologies for the purpose of measuring underlying dimensions of personality. These take the form of personality ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Nine Types and the Emotional Habits

It's time to revise the nine passions or vices which are assigned to the nine enneagram types. Our enneagram shorthand has been to use the seven deadly sins of the Christian tradition (plus two). After all, these have a long history with the enneagram and they do fit with the nine types. But what we are really talking about is the pervasive emotional habit of each personality type, and "vice" or "sin" does not do this justice. Also the term "passion" can be understood in different ways; for example, being passionate about something is seen as a positive thing.

I find in teaching the enneagram that there is much more to say about the emotional states, and that starting with Christian sins is not always useful. For one thing, many people are learning the enneagram not in a religious context but rather a psychological one. For another, there are many places where Christianity is not a big part of the culture (e.g. China). And in business we usually stay away from any kind of religious language.

Peter O'Hanrahan

But the main thing is that the one-word labels are not accurate enough to describe such an important part of the type structures. Is gluttony (type 7) really an emotion, or more a behavior that arises from an underlying emotional habit? How about sloth (type 9) and lust (type 8)? There are better ways to talk about this.

We begin our enneagram work in our intellectual center, learning about the system and increasing our self awareness. But deep work on ourselves and our type structure means opening up in our heart center. Our emotional habit provides the fuel and motivation for our point of view and our defenses of idealization and avoidance. When the emotional habit is expressed through the activity of our instinctual subtype, it distorts the life affirming energy of our instincts. If we are to bring our best self to our projects and relationships, and if we want to develop the capacity of our hearts for love and connection, we must face the emotional habit (passion) of our type. ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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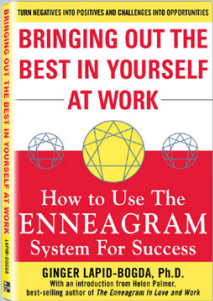
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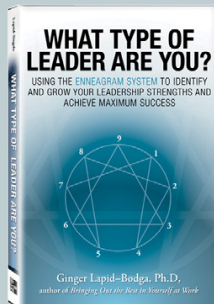


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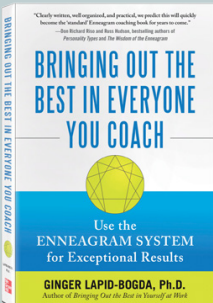
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From the Editor

From personal experience, supported by history and research, I know how difficult to impossible it is to be meaningfully described "as a type." To find a typology that fits like a glove, one is forced to see oneself as defined by a set of aspects that's called *true me*, while ignoring or minimizing some or most other characteristics that we consider to be "equally me" although to a lesser degree (or even opposed to the image of *true me*). This can put one in the position of a parent, who may struggle against or give in to, favoring one of their children over the other.

Only two ways to rationally see this situation come to mind.

A. One way is to introduce — aside from, or along with the enneagram — additional measuring systems to address aspects of our personality that were left out. For example, we may reach into time-tested traditions: Yin/Yang; elements; temperament; subtypes, as in body, mind & energy etc. (see the work and research by Frederic and Bernadette Schmitt in recent issues), or, by going into deeper layers and subtle aspects of the passions (see recent articles by Susan Rhodes or Antonio Barbatto).

B. Revisit the characteristics attributed to each type, and re-test them for consistency and then make a synthesis of discoveries recorded in traditions with recent findings made by empirical research.

It helps to seek validation whenever possible that is supported by experience, history and science (see articles by Mario Sikora, Jack Killen and Eric Meyer)...

In This Issue

Belinda Price Brent in her dissertation "Personality Patterns — A Quantitative and Descriptive Study of Distinct and Self-Consistent Attentional Styles and their Relation to Enneagram Typology" describes the results of more than ten years of rigorous development she led with the help of a team of clinical psychologists. A monumental effort that was based on 9 enneagram types, but goes beyond in several ways, for example, it identifies six attentional patterns underlying our personality. Patterns that developed out of our heredity, temperament, talents, life situations and relationships.

To objectively understand our Personality Patterns, makes us have a better take on our potential and innermost working; it is freeing and necessary if we want to live up to our fullness. An accurate self-image and how we

present ourselves to the world will help in any of life's situations and allows us to live a more comfortable and authentic life.

Looking at Belinda's work made me think of how rarely we get a glimpse at the immense amount of research, information, study and testing that are required to verify new findings. It's wishful thinking to assume that a typology like the enneagram could have been "simply transmitted" already pure, perfect and complete.

As with all scientific research, we are always adding and subtracting, modifying and correcting. This is a huge contribution towards a better understanding of the process required for distilling what's behind our personality patterns.

Peter O'Hanrahan takes a look at "Nine Types and the Emotional Habits" from the perspective of the nine passions or vices or seven deadly sins of the Christian tradition (plus two). Describing the pervasive emotional habits of each personality type as "vice" or "sin" does not cover the full spectrum, besides, people learning the enneagram not in a religious context but in a psychological one, may have a hard time to connect with that; as do those in business where any kind of religious language is avoided. And yet, passions do describe an important part of the type structures so we can find better ways to talk about this.

Another point is finding a better ways to engage all our centers. We are introduced to the enneagram in our intellectual center and increase our self awareness. But to go deeper, we need to engage our heart center to provide the fuel and motivation and to develop its capacity for love and connection.

Often, we become aware of our emotions when we have a big reaction to somebody or something. However we tend to remain oblivious of those same emotions when walking around with a more subtle and chronic contraction in our heart center. The enneagram can help us see more clearly by naming each of our habits. And as emotional habits are inherent to our biology, not simply a reflection of our personality type, the goal is not to eliminate them but to manage them well.

Michael Damian takes a broad view common to all types that, "Consciousness Is." In general, while we are aware of having a mind and a body, what's less obvious to us is the essential nature of the mind and its relationship to the body and physical world. We consider our mind to be — a flow of mostly automatic thoughts and feelings that can sometimes be channeled into creative purposes but quite often causes us a lot of trouble.

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For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

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We recognize individual things like confusion, dissatisfaction, resentments, or fear but are mostly not aware of the cause. We assume the surface noise and unchecked contents of the mind is our identity driven by our world view, the unconscious habits of the mind and our body-image. It has been said that no one is so hopelessly enslaved as one who falsely believes himself to be free. This is our human condition.

But it is also part of the human condition to want to open the window, peer outside the cramped little room of mind and see it’s a glorious spring day outside — even though it seems to come from somewhere far beyond oneself, it is your own presence.

This silent blessing speaks to us beyond our sophisticated defenses and rationalizations. It speaks of innocence, of pure knowing, and of freedom from every kind of narrowness. This is the opening to consciousness as it really is.

Thomas Garrett Isham has been troubled by the assignment of the sin of Pride to ennea type Two and has something to say “On Rightly Dividing Two Kinds of Pride.” This is not because the Two does not in fact embody a fair number of prideful characteristics, but because it is seen as *uniquely* prideful, while the other types are left to contend with other sins (passions, compulsions or fixations, if one prefers).

But if Pride is on a par with other types, it contradicts the traditional notion that Pride is the most serious of the sins. A solution to this difficulty, is allowing two kinds of Pride (for the Two) rather than one.

Oscar Ichazo coined “ego flattery” for type Two, while Claudio Naranjo called it “egocentric generosity,” asserting that Pride was no worse a failing than the other eight sins on the enneagram. In Christianity pride is not only regarded as one of the capital sins, but the first and most serious one—more fundamental than the others. Yet under Protoanalysis (Ichazo’s system), “all the passions are of an equivalent seriousness,” and there are no “degrees of sinfulness or a ranking according to prognosis.” Most writers have followed the lead established by Ichazo and echoed by Naranjo. So there is a Pride of type Two, and then we have all other types who boast about the merits stemming from their own passions.

I recall hearing someone boasting proudly about being the most modest...(go figure).

Jennifer Schneider and **Ron Corn** take on “The Romantic-Leader (Four-Eight) Couple,” both attracted to intensity, and their high-energy relationship is likely to be one of drama, lust, fights and a charged emotional climate. What they like less is when things calm down or get boring and one or the other will do something to ramp up the energy. Fours take the Eight’s bluntness and lack of pretentiousness as authenticity, which they strongly value in a partner. They also appreciate their exuberance, which helps to lift Fours out of their recurrent depressions. The Fours push-pull behaviors, pursuing and then withdrawing, will have Eights stay clear avoiding the drama. However, Eights can enjoy the Fours’ inten-

sity and their emotional depth and courage to stand up for their beliefs.

We hear of opposites attracting each other, but also that yin in its extreme becomes yang and yang in its extreme turns into yin....either way, these are relationships that get to explore the outer frontiers of their natures...

John R. Amos with part 2 of “Catholic Spiritual Tradition and Enneagram — The Author’s Own Reflections” take us through the spirit of all nine types albeit in a different wording with nine examples that are obviously consistent with Catholic, teaching even if some of the quotes are from non-Catholic sources. Most are direct quotations from various saints and all nine items show that one can teach the Enneagram while remaining solidly within Catholic tradition. The lineup of outstanding Catholic experts on spirituality—from early Church Fathers and saints to classical theologians, writers, and religious leaders of the High Middle Ages and the Post-Reformation and onto well-respected contemporary authors, not to mention an ecumenical council of all Catholic bishops in the world—clearly suggests the Enneagram can be understood and taught perfectly within the broad scope of Catholic spiritual tradition.

This is a view not always shared by all, but the preponderance of evidence is clearly indicating that the enneagram for many helped rediscover spirituality and reconnect with the traditions they once left. •