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Destiny, Karma and Freedom

Destiny, as captured by natal horoscope [planetary positions at birth time and location], captures the sum total of one's actions in previous lives [opponent of the idea of reincarnation? Call it genetic influences, DNA or hereditary]. It shows the momentum coming from one's previous actions. [Comments in square brackets are editorial, not by the author]

Though that momentum does constrain/limit one's current actions, it does NOT pre-determine them. One's free will has several options for current action.

So horoscope only shows under which circumstances one has to perform one's current actions. It does not show which actions one performs. That is up to one's free will.

The Cosmic Force that maintains this cosmos is fair and enforces some cosmic laws. Each of one's actions will reap equal and opposite reactions at a later time. It is just that there is a variable delay.

Why a variable delay?

P.V.R. Narasimha Rao

It is simple. This Force needs to balance the reactions to the actions of zillions of beings. For each reaction, it also needs to find the deliverer (instrument). But whether and how it is delivered is left to the free will of the deliverer. Thus, Cosmic Force constantly adapts and re-arranges the action-reaction pipelines of all beings and the assigned deliverers of various reactions.

Actions already performed will eventually give their results/reactions. They are water under the bridge. One can at most delay their results by performing significant actions now that re-arrange the action-reaction pipeline.

The best strategy with respect to actions already performed is to *accept* their fruits and not perform new detrimental actions while resisting those fruits!

But the most important thing is to not perform detrimental actions going forward. If one performs good actions from now onwards, eventually all of one's previous actions will give results and one will start to reap the results of good karmas one is performing now.

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Instincts, Centers & Subtypes Revisited

The conversations about Instincts, Centers and Subtypes has been going on in the *Enneagram Monthly* since issue #7 (September 1995). Many opinions were voiced, each with their own take. Only partial consensus was ever reached. Well, that's probably how it is in every field dealing with human nature, psychology or philosophy.

In our pages, we had thoughts on this subject by Oscar Ichazo, Claudio Naranjo, extensive articles by Peter O'Hanrahan, Gloria Davenport, the possible existence of a "Fourth" instinct from Paula Raines, and recently a fascinating paradigm shift by Frederic and Bernadette Schmitt, and an alternative Sufi view by Laleh Bakhtiar... These were just some ways of shedding light on the relationship between Instincts, Centers of Intelligence and Subtypes. I hope that the considerations in this article can add to this understanding.

The Instincts

The discourse about the Subtypes (or Instinctual Variants) has reached a deep enough level of sophistication in the *Enneagram Monthly* to warrant a recapitulation of what exactly an instinct is. Biolo-

Antonio Barbato



gists who have always been interested in this subject had a clear definition of instinct and have taken great care to explain the differences between instinctual drives and reflexes, be they free or conditioned. The broad definition since the 19th century defined the instincts as "an innate disposition which tends through a set of behaviors to respond to certain necessities of survival, even though the creature may not be conscious of this purpose."

We could therefore state that an instinct, to be called that, has to be present and to respond to the same purpose in all living creatures, regardless of their level of consciousness or development on the ladder of evolution.

From this point of view, it is clear that we can distinguish only three fundamental drives which comply to the characteristics of an instinct: a drive to reproduce, a drive to adapt or relate to the environment, and the third one which is connected to the survival of the being.

Within this classic interpretation, the conservation instinct was considered pre-eminent, given that the other two instincts were designed to insure the survival of the species.

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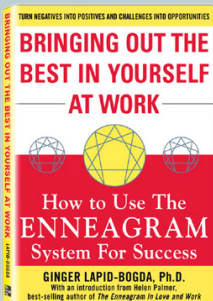
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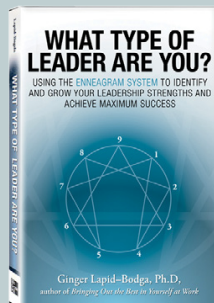


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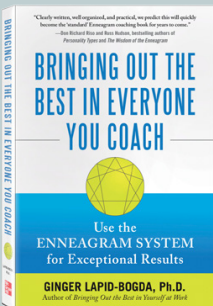
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From the Editor

Why do bad things happen to good people and why do bad people get away with so much? These are questions that remain unanswered in spite of what we learned since childhood. Over time as we mature, get distracted by life, it does not get clearer. One by one, we either put wondering about life's great questions on a back burner settling for temporary answers, or we dig deeper at the expense of some material or practical "shoulds." Unless of course we are fortunate enough to be balanced and can pursue the practical as well as the philosophical successfully.

Most of us, even if successful in the material world, may have a hard time being happy with the choices made and often feel nostalgia for something deeper and lasting. There seems to always be an inkling in the back of the mind, a vague sense of awareness of our inner "witness," that stable and unchanging voice; a soft whisper of numinous moments where we felt connected and at peace.

If this memory is strong, we will be inclined to dedicate time and attention seeking to experience it again. If it's weak or long forgotten, we may become like Scrooge thinking "bah humbug," dismissing its importance and choose to pay attention to concrete practicalities.

Enneagrammers are probably more inclined to be Seekers-After-Truth, and willing to be open to the possibility that even our deepest held assumptions need periodically be questioned. It would mean that our certainties are also relative and as such provisory and valid only under certain circumstances and times.

How does that proverb go about "certainty" closing a mind?

In this Issue:

Speaking of great questions **P.V.R. Narasimha Rao** addresses "Destiny, Karma and Freedom" from the perspective of Vedic Astrology, - and Vedanta — probably the oldest philosophy on earth— orally transmitted, for thousands of years until the era of written scriptures.

Sages in all ages continue to grapple with these issues and regarding Karma (not so much about Destiny or Freedom) most cultures come to similar conclusions that can be summed up as: There is definitely a correlation between action and reaction, just as there is an immediate ripple effect when a stone is thrown into water. And ripples can travel far and if big as in a tsunami, they may continue for days or hours and cross oceans. Every new ripple starts in already turbulent waters of particular depth and shape, with its own shore-

lines, currents, wind conditions etc. How this ripple will progress will depend on all the influences that just like the ripple itself, also spread in a logarithmic growth...way beyond any capacity to imagine or calculate all the effects. However, within a limited context, just as technology allows us to send rockets into space and calculate where they will land, the same can be said about the effects of what we say or do. Always within narrow limits and especially in the short term, we can correlate consequences with our actions, but as they get diluted, mixed with other influences, they continue on while spawning new series of ripples on and on....

Narasimha gives a simple and beautiful clarification of how we can make sense of the relationship between what may or not may be predestined, what may "come due" as a result of our past actions, and when, what and how can be influenced by making the right choices.

Antonio Barbato lives in Naples, Italy, a city continually inhabited since the Bronze Age by Greeks, then Romans and in spite of the constant threat of some day ending up like Pompeii if Vesuvius erupts again, Naples has been a magnet always contested and besieged or occupied by a procession of historic figures — Hannibal, Ostgoths, Lombards, Spanish, French, Sicilian, Genovese, to mention just a few... — never mind the times when it was bought, bartered or sold in shady political machinations.

I wonder what effect a place so richly soaked in history may have on a resident growing up in a city constantly fermenting and influenced by countless cultures — a Petri dish for the study of commonalities (or differences) in human nature no doubt. A city that truly can say to have "seen it all."

Antonio wrote about "Instincts, Centers and Subtypes" some 15 years ago, maybe ahead of the times, and as we now are renewing the effort to separate the wheat from the chaff in enneagram and personality related studies, his observations are still on the cutting edge.

Michael Damian says that it is the lack of attention that prevents us to have "Intimacy" with reality. And that is the cause of psychological suffering. Without attention, insight, and awakening we are likely to indulge in habits of distraction, denial, and dissociation.

The fear of the unknown, i.e. the nature of reality, will exist until we realize that reality is benevolent. Until then, our response to this state of mind is creating a web of distractions that act as defenses.

We could say that our enneagram type

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For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

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describes the style of motivations and defenses we found most suitable for our nature. Nothing wrong with that, as we had to choose what seemed to work for us. And get “good at it.” But we never can get so good at it to fundamentally change our relationship to reality.

Only the deepest kind of knowing, as the sense of separation gradually is replaced by a sense of Intimacy with all things, will we open to the lucid awareness that manifests the joy of being.

Firmly ensconced on the cutting edge, **Belinda Price Brent** continues part 2 of “Personality Patterns — A Quantitative and Descriptive Study of Distinct and Self-Consistent Attentional Styles and their Relationship to Enneagram Typology.”

We may not know how sages in antiquity and thereafter reached conclusions about human nature, but we do have fairly good descriptions of what considerations, methods of research, amount and size of testing is required to get validation of theories. Enneagram aficionados should keep in mind how young this science is, how much detailed work has already gone into it and how much more there may be in future.

The complexity and vastness of factors that make up our nature makes it a very “delicate” enterprise to make sense of why we are the way we are. It can be as unsettling or surprising as seeing how (not to mention with what) the proverbial sausage is made...

Belinda happens to be an expert in this area and is offering us a guided tour through a “factory” where personality types and testing instruments are made... Today we look at Defense Mechanisms, Information-Processing Models, Placement of Attention Theory, a brief history of the Origins of the Enneagram System and how it relates to Developmental Theory.

In recent issues we have gone over historic claims about the origins of the enneagram and found new links and some old ones that needed replacing. For **Thomas Garrett Isham** “It’s the Sufi Thing...Again” he feels needed a better explanation. So instead of just choosing to accept a blanket statement such as: “the enneagram was or was not taken from the Sufis,” Thomas took the time to carefully tease out and compare parts of the teachings. Cross-fertilization between systems is best when understood and used without feeling a need to replace one system for another and letting each stay strong within the original context.

For example, there are marked differences of interpretation between the enneagram as it’s taught today by most schools inspired by Ichazo/Naranjo, or the way Laleh Bakhtiar or Frederic and Bernadette Schmitt see it. Tom’s article is a brief introduction into the Sufi perspective in general and goes in much greater detail than previous descriptions we had in the *EM*. Point by point, parallels are drawn between Sufi, Enneagram and Christian concepts and their

historic origins.

Jennifer Schneider and **Ron Corn** take on the comfortable and easy going pair, “The Double-Mediator (Nine-Nine) Couple.” The comfort comes at a price paid by giving up some of the fire that can be an attractive and stimulating spark that keeps the relationship exciting. If there is not much friction there will be little heat and Mediators may get bored in the long run. Conflicts will be avoided and left unaddressed. Self aware Nines may find ways of interacting where one of them assumes more characteristics of a wing or connecting point.

Nines are known for rare but quirky explosions of anger that seem inappropriate or caused by something irrelevant and come as much of a surprise to the one exploding as it is to the one on the receiving side of the explosion. If they are able to pick an impersonal subject, say politics, where they disagree, they may be able to let off steam that way sparing the relationship. This can only happen if they are careful to maintain their own individuality which is not easy for the accommodating Nine who prefers to merge rather than alienate or to “check out” emotionally from their partner.

Nines will have to work harder than other couples to overcome their innate conflict avoidance by digging deeper into what they really want and communicating it clearly; even if it seems too petty to bother...and a little dangerous, as it may disrupt the harmony briefly.