



# enneagram monthly

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## Research Enneagroup

**A**lthough the enneagram is actively used by licensed therapists and certified coaches worldwide, it is still considered to be a pseudo-psychological and esoteric concept. Scientists and many practitioners of mainstream psychology criticize the lack of objective studies utilizing a credible and scientific research methodology, and hardly any publications in the academic literature make reference to this powerful analytical tool and model for personal development.

At the enneagram conference in Oakland last summer, an announcement was made by the IEA for the creation of EnneaGroups to bring together people with common interests. One of these groups connects people who are interested in research and innovation within the Enneagram community. Topics for discussion are the place of the enneagram in the academic literature; the roots of the academic distrust; the desirability (or needlessness thereof) of a scientific approach to the enneagram; the importance of credible research on the enneagram; challenges in applying the scientific method to the enneagram; creating an inventory/mapping of existing ennea-research and support measures; or discussion ongoing research projects or innovative thoughts in the world of the enneagram.

Ideally, this Enneagroup could, on the longer term, serve as an umbrella structure for setting guidelines or rules and giving guidance to research related to the enneagram, as well as undertaking efforts to enhance the credibility of the Enneagram outside the ennea-community, without attempting to fuse the

**Frederik Coene**

practices of science and spirituality.

During the first online zoom-meetings in September and November, discussions focused on getting a general overview of the state of play on enneagram-related research. Participants joined in from the US, Mexico, Ukraine, Egypt and Turkey. The next meeting, scheduled for 17 December, will look at the concepts of masculinity and femininity and how this relates to the different Enneatypes. It is obvious that our physical bodies can be male, female or in rare cases hermaphrodite, and that these differences (mainly through hormonal variations) have an impact on our thinking and behavioural patterns. Still, this cannot justify some of the highly controversial stereotypes about masculine or feminine behavior. Nevertheless, there are concepts of masculinity and femininity in cultures worldwide, which are more related to value sets than to biological gender. The discussion will merge the enneagram with these concepts and explore how the defense mechanism of the human ego can have 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics. The nine types have distinct qualities that should not be seen as binary 'masculine' or 'feminine' but rather as complex clusters of different parameters on a continuum. The sequencing of the enneatypes on this fluid scale hints at a deeper spiritual order, and a better understanding of this phenomenon sheds light on an innovative angle in the study of the enneagram.

People who are interested in joining the Enneagroup should contact Frederik Coene by email: [coenefr@gmail.com](mailto:coenefr@gmail.com) •

## Enneagram Subtypes & Connections

**Y**our primary subtype is determined by whether you are unconsciously preoccupied with personal survival (self-preservation), whether you incline towards one-to-one relationships (intimate), or whether your style of relating is focused on groups of people (social).

We all have portions of our attention and energy focused on each of these three realms, but may habitually favor one more than the others. If your primary desire is for material security you might be continuously, if subtly, focused on the essentials of life – food, shelter, physical safety and your home.

If your primary desire is for intimacy in one-to-one relationships you might be especially focused on whether you are desirable to others, or be interested in finding or being with your mate, or relate to your friends one at a time in a tightly focused way. Your inner thoughts will tend to be occupied with individual people.

**Tom Condon**

If your primary desire is for community, you might seek safety and security in numbers. You could gravitate towards groups of people and be interested in outer recognition, popularity, status and social acceptance. Your inner thoughts will tend to be filled with groups of people.

As with wings and connecting points, your subtype can be either a resource or a limitation depending on how healthy or defensive you are within it. The high side of being preoccupied with self-preservation is that you can be especially good with details and capable at life-management skills. The low side is that you could be overfocused on mere survival and miss life's other dimensions. You could overrate material security, equating it with having a full life – a substitute for love, community and culture. Or you could make survival more complicated or difficult than necessary out of a conviction that life is hard and your well-being is somehow always at stake.

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

### In This Issue

Essence & Thinking  
**Michael Damian**  
page 4

Sacred E.Workbook  
**Chris Heuertz**  
page 5

3x Research: Graphology and Enneagram  
**Claudio Garibaldi/Vimala Rodgers  
& Usha Mullen** pages 7-14

E. & Aggressive Driving  
**Antonio Barbato**  
page 15

If there ever was a good time to encourage paying special attention to research that supports certain enneagram theories or debunks others it is now. We are well into the second or third generation of authors, students and teachers since the Enneagram of Personality first came to the public attention. The body of work produced the last 30 years can fill a small library and we are still just at the beginning of discoveries.

The enthusiasm that greeted the enneagram took off in the mid 90's with the first enneagram conference in California at the Stanford University in the Summer of 1994. About 1500 people attended the conference, shared their experiences and offered ideas for creating ways to stay in touch and regularly share information. The plan of forming an *International Enneagram Association* (IEA) was born during that conference. At the same time in New York, plans to publish a journal to keep the community informed gave birth to the *Enneagram Monthly* (EM). Both the IEA and the EM started independently as autonomous corporations and became fully operational since the Spring of 1995.

The IEA's main focus was on organizing yearly conferences and the EM's focus was to be a free forum for all schools of thought dealing with the enneagram, personality typing and exploring related subjects.

In the past 2-3 decades a lot of aspects and applications using enneagram concepts were debated and proposed along with various avenues of research attempted, but as of yet without breaking through the glass ceiling into the psychological, academic/scientific fields.

Frederik Coene appropriately describes the current situation perfectly: "Scientists and many practitioners of mainstream psychology criticize the lack of objective studies about the enneagram that utilizes a credible and scientific research methodology and hardly any publications in the academic literature make reference to this powerful analytical tool and model for personal development."

One of the stumbling blocks, as far as the EM is concerned may have come about when articles about research appeared only "sporadic" and were done on a relatively small scale. That, and getting "lost" among articles not related to research.

It would make more sense to group several related subjects on a theme into a bigger "bundle" to boost the "critical mass" and thereby make the paper more substantive and interesting enough to catch the attention of researchers who are in related fields.

To this effect, we could delve into the archives of the EM (of about 2500 articles) collected over the past 25 years and to select the best research that correlates on a specific subject, group them together in a single issue instead of quoting too many references that point at articles published years apart or in out of print publications.

Encouraged by the newly formed "Research Enneagram" we will contribute our best to this effort.

## From the Editor

### In this Issue:

**Frederik Coene** has coordinated (as announced by the IEA conference in Oakland) and started the "Research Enneagram" for the purpose of exploring themes about the placement of the enneagram in the academic literature; addressing the academy's distrust; evaluating the desirability (or undesirability) of a scientific approach to the enneagram and being mindful of the importance of credible research; dealing with challenges in applying the scientific method; creating an inventory/mapping of existing ennea-research, projects or innovative thoughts in the world of the enneagram.

Great job Frederik for the promising structure you have set up, we were long overdue in this department for lack of your expertise and dynamic energy.

**Michael Damian** comments on "Essence, Personality, Seeking and Thinking." We can imagine or recall from our own experience how easy it is to end up lost on some sidetrack or other about important issues of life.

Michael is clear when he says: "I do not say that our human personality is our real self. Conscious presence is our real self. We know it as the observer, but it is also deeper than that. It is the pure spirit that survives death of the body. It is a metaphysical reality." The human personality is more so a temporary expression or vehicle of the spirit. And although it's not ultimate, it has to be acknowledged as our relative, social self. In that sense it is "real enough."

Michael touches on themes where we could use a fresh perspective; like what is the nature of "seeking," the unconscious and the super-conscious and a deeper view about how or if we are or not our thoughts.

**Chris Heuertz** just published a companion volume to his book, the "Sacred Enneagram Workbook" It is a practical guide we can use to stimulate or challenge our areas where we are stuck with questions designed to shake loose misconceptions and/or to awaken unresolved doubts that have become comfortably numb but still exercise a restraining function that blocks a deeper understanding leading to constructive and spontaneous change.

Chris is acutely aware of how often we simply don't know who we are, or worse yet, the certitude we may have developed to believe to be what we are not. A large part of such misconceptions comes from or begins with being muddled about the nature of essence, God, spirit, soul, personality, identity and our view of what constitutes success or failure in life. A little guidance from a fellow traveler who has come a

long way will be very welcome.

**Michelle Joy** looks at common patterns with type Nine in "Couples' Relationships and the Enneagram." Nines are usually considered and appreciated as easy-going promoters of peace, harmony and able to convey a feeling of emotional safety. This is usually true and works in the short term, but less so in the long run. Self forgetting and having trouble being specific about what may be troubling them, may give rise to a tendency to not express their feelings and thoughts when they arise. It's a way to avoid conflict. It's not easy for 9's to identify what's true for them and express their thoughts, feelings & desires to their partner in real time fearing they will cause a conflict.

### Independent multi-year research by 3 experts correlating Graphology and Enneagram

**Claudio Garibaldi** had the longest series on "Handwriting and Enneagram" in the history of the EM (issues 114-133). And we tried to make it as concise as possible to still do justice to the subject. Look at it this way: Handwriting has been around for centuries, everyone used it to some extent or other long before photography, psychological testing, scientific medical data or statistical analysis existed, long before computers etc. Another advantage a sample of handwriting has over, say, getting to know the individual enough to type them; or being in the right frame of mind and objectivity for taking a test. Handwriting can be examined any time and anywhere and seen by many experts again and again.

It does not require tools, other than the skill of observation and familiarity with the subject matter itself (graphology, not the writer). We can even opine over writing samples of long dead historical figures... and the price is right, as it only takes a piece of paper with writing on it...

What could be a better and more efficient system to document the sum-total of who and what we are? Our signature is the quickest and simplest "unfalsifiable" marker of our individuality -- as unmistakable as our fingerprints. Of course, as in all subjects, expertise, talent, and knowledge are needed to unlock the information our writing reveals.

If memory serves me, Claudio was also working as a court/bank expert verifying the authentication of signatures....

**Vimala Rodgers** sees "The Enneagram and Handwriting Patterns" not just as a map of the personality of the writer but also as a tool to work on oneself. She uses the principle of assuming that our head heart and gut are like a three legged stool that can be moved by taking hold of any of the legs.... By this principle we should be able to affect the compulsive physiological and nerve impulses (as in reverse engineering) that made our handwriting as it is, by practicing (consistently and over time) different strokes that are associated with a more desir-

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The Enneagram Monthly, Inc. was founded by Jack Labanauskas and Andrea Isaacs as a not-for-profit corporation. Its purpose is to gather and disseminate information in the field of the Enneagram, that is most commonly known as a personality typing system.

For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

Research Enneagroup .....	Frederik Coene	1
Enneagram Subtypes and Connections .....	Tom Condon	1
From the Editor... special appeal for research .....	Jack Labanauskas	2
Essence, Personality, Seeking and Thinking .....	Michael Damian	4
Sacred Enneagram Workbook .....	Chris Heuertz	5
Couples' Relationships & the Enneagram .....	Michelle Joy	6
Handwriting and Enneagram Type .....	Claudio Garibaldi	7
The Enneagram and Handwriting Patterns .....	Vimala Rodgers	10
Why Graphology? and the Enneagram: <i>Personality in Light and Shadow</i> .....	Usha Mullan	12
Handwriting and Enneagram Type .....	Antonio Barbato	15
Teacher's Listing .....		23
Subscription Forms and Ad Rates .....		24

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full of useful information, introductory articles,  
Index by Author and Subject and lots more

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able writing.

Hmmm, you may think? But as in medicine we can restore damaged organs by stopping the actions that caused that damage and implementing the healing antidotes... it seems to work most of the time and to the degree it was skillfully applied.

**Usha Mullan**, sees "Graphology and Enneagram: *Personality in Light and Shadow*." The enneagram indicates the parameters within which a type exists, like a tether ties a grazing animal within one of nine particular zones whereas , graphology indicates the level of development, health and condition of the animal. Both realms of exploration are equally valid and there is a certain overlap between both systems that can offer precious verification of type or raise a warning flag if one may be off course.

**Antonio Barbato** sets us on course to have a deeper perspective on the "Enneagram and Aggressive Driving." A thorough article illustrating with real life stories the ins and outs how different type characteristics emerge during stressful situations while driving. . North Americans and Canadians have great roads and plenty of space compared to Europeans and most Asians and thus are less exposed to aggressive driving conditions unless they live in dense urban areas, and even there...it's comparatively civilized.

18 years ago when Sueann McKean and I went to Europe for a month we rented a car in Paris and drove to Naples to stay a week with Antonio. He offered his garage to park our car and he'd do all the driving while we stayed with him. And good advice it was, even though I too had learned driving in Italy, knew the rules (signals, hand gestures etc.) and in ten years there had plenty of practice criss-crossing Italy many times for work and pleasure.

Approaching Naples it became painfully obvious how driving a good dozen years in the USA had tamed and put to sleep my aggressive instincts and impulses. It took focus and effort to reach Antonio's garage in downtown Naples, narrowly escaping bumps, scratches or worse. For the week we were in Naples, Antonio did a superb job of vehicular maneuvering that demonstrated a level of artistry required to survive in Neapolitan traffic. •

