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Physics and the Enneagram

An Investigation into Psychology and The Law of Three

The Law of Three and classical physics: the Two-Force Hypothesis

Richard K. Moore

Active: asserting, initiating, leading, dominating, demanding, pushing, activating.

Responsive: following, complying, responding, aligning with, supporting, reacting.

Neutral: avoiding, turning away, ignoring, withdrawing, escaping, inert.

The currently popular Enneagram of Personality Types identifies nine primary personality types, or fixations¹. Personality typology is only one of many applications of the underlying enneagram system—the system has also been used effectively to model processes of various kinds^{2,3}. The question arises as to what, precisely, are the kinds of phenomena for which the enneagram is applicable.

One of the underlying principles, upon which the enneagram is purportedly based, is called the Law of Three³. This law states, roughly, that all events arise out of three kinds of forces: active, responsive, and neutral. “Responsive” is being used here instead of the more commonly quoted “passive,” because, in modern language usage, the former’s connotations seem more appropriate.

It is difficult to provide precise definitions for these three terms, since they exhibit themselves differently depending on what kind of phenomena are being considered. Here is a list of rough synonyms for each term, the intention being that the synonyms, considered collectively, provide a reasonable sense of each term’s meaning:

In classical physics, there are numerous cases of forces or energies which manifest themselves in three such discrete states. With electric charge and magnetism, for example, there is positive, negative, and neutral. But these tri-value “energy states” become interesting only when interaction occurs between objects, as when two atomic particles come into close proximity.

The Law of Three, and the enneagram itself, are purportedly applicable to a very wide range of phenomenon. If they are applicable to these phenomenon of classical physics, then the hypothesis suggests itself that the enneagram might be a map of the interaction-configurations of two interacting forces, each of which can have three energy states. This seems consonant with the Law of Three, and it would also account for the existence of exactly nine points on the enneagram. This hypothesis can be stated as follows:

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Love Triangle in the Heart Triad

I recently completed a therapy case that was a true brain-teaser and heart-twister: a love triangle that had endured for a dozen years. Armed with the tools and techniques of modern psychology as well as my Enneagram knowledge, I felt confident when the case began that I could help at least one of these three clients make healthier choices and end much of the misery and anger they reported suffering. Surely at least one, if not all three, would choose to change and grow after spending more than a decade in this stalemated relationship. Indeed, such growth eventually became a crystal-clear option for all three—but not an option they chose to pursue. Although I consider this case one of my most exasperating, I think it provides a valuable illustration not only of Enneagram dynamics in action, but of how knowledge of the Enneagram can be misused by those who aren’t yet ready for the growth and transformation opportunities it offers.

The two men and one woman involved in this triangle had been

Mona Coates, Ph.D

tested for Enneagram type, and each confirmed their type after reading several books on the Enneagram:

1. Bud: Type 3 (no wing), age 36
2. Kari: Type 4 (no wing), age 44
3. Roger: Type 2 (with a 3 wing), age 45.

Presenting Problem: Bud

Bud was the one who contacted me to set up an appointment. He was an independent financial writer/analyst and world traveler who had never been married and who made “very good money.” He had been deeply in love with Kari for nearly 12 years, and wanted her to finally make a full commitment to him, including marriage. Kari, however, was in love not only with Bud but with another man, Roger.

Bud wanted help to “break up this stupid triangle” and get Kari to see that “we’re bonded forever as soul mates.” He had

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Letters

Calling All Nines:

The virtue of the nine is Holy Love, the realization that everyone's essential nature is beautiful, loving, and precious.

When nines are present and engage the world, we bring this positive, loving energy to the people in our lives.

It is well known that inside a Cytokine Storm (our immune response overreacting to an infection) communications between cells may be disrupted to a degree where the cure becomes worse than the disease. This is supposed to be the reason why the elderly (those with *decreasing* immune system responses) are less able to cope with covid than the young. Whereas a century ago, the so called Spanish Flu, endangered the young as much as the old by triggering strong immune systems to overreact.

In the information business the spread of ideas can operate the same way. A new exciting discovery can claim attention away from other, even equally important ideas. Such was the year for the *EM* after the interview with Oscar Ichazo that made a big splash overshadowing other brilliant and novel ideas. As we examine the original formation of enneagrammatic concepts, we note and rescue some of those worthy ideas previously overlooked. The same can be said about highly forward thinking minds with visionary insights that were not yet recognized by the general public.

In this issue:

Richard K. Moore on "Physics and the Enneagram – *An Investigation into Psychology and the Law of Three*" begins with underlying principles upon which the enneagram is purportedly based, i.e. the Law of Three as the forces of Active, Responsive and Neutral and how they manifest in the formation of type. Richard looks at the early phases of development when the interaction between the child and the environment resulted in the development of the personality.

There have been many discussions about the origin of type. Is it inborn or acquired to match environmental requirements? In other words, nature or nurture. Richard does not leave it as vague as that and sees the enneagram type as forged in childhood through the interaction of two forces: that of the child and that of the primary caretaker. And, to be more specific the natures of these two protagonists, the child's and the caretaker's. Which combination of the three basic energy states (active, responsive or neutral) on both sides creates as it the dominant conditions favoring one of the nine types to be established.

Mona Coates' experience with a "Love Triangle in the Heart Triad" made me feel a sense of unease while reading, as if observing three hapless people used to expecting fulfillment of whatever they desire without having been tempered by deprivation and, consequently having to make hard choices. Then, I felt a sinking feeling in my stomach as it informed me that I could relate to all three of them. The Buddhist notion of "Con-

For this reason, people like to be around us as they feel compassion coming from us along with acceptance and understanding.

The world, however, does not always respond in the same manner. Even in our personal relationships, people can be harshly judgmental and quick to point out our shortcomings and mistakes both imagined and real. Often, we will see the truth in their criticisms. Who has not caused hurt and pain to others, including loved ones? It is part of being human therefore no one "has a leg up" on anyone else" and is in a

position to judge another.

At challenging moments like this, we must stand up for ourselves and take that Holy Love we so freely give to the world and dispense it generously to ourselves. Self-compassion, forgiveness, acceptance, and self-love are essential not at just moments like this but all the time. By the way, it is o.k. to tell that hurtful judger to take a hike.

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From the Editor

fluctuating Emotions" at the root of all suffering comes to mind: always confronted with the choice of painfully giving something up in order to attain something rewarding. Kari, Roger and Bud are in a classic struggle between conflicting emotions. And I hoping each of them will "win," for they all have a point.

Yet, any choice favoring one of the three would rob the other two of victory. If Roger or Bud gained Kari, the loser would be devastated, and Kari would be left feeling like half a woman, not a worthy prize to the victor. How can knowing our enneagram type help? **That did not remove the stumbling block for Kari, Roger, and Bud, who all learned plenty about the Enneagram but found that the knowledge brought them no freedom.**

Michael Damian has more "Uncommon Sense: *About Issues Shared by All Types*" among them how to be free of negative or false "conditioning" in our minds that is born of unconsciousness. This is just done by becoming conscious. How awareness of a person's particular psyche may not be responsive to general advice but require some skillful guidance by a qualified teacher. How to counteract beliefs we acquired that may have warped our understanding of life and given rise to projections and illusions? And, how to tell the difference between the revelatory power of awakening that goes way beyond a simple understanding? It involves a "turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness" and brings an extremely subtle air of conscious freedom as has never been known before.

Kenneth Ireland is looking back at the "Muddied Roots, Psychobabble, Inoculation" the enneagram as we know it had to go through a good part of the past century and still lingers on. A sober look at the work done by SAT, Berkeley CA 1971-1976, some facts or hearsay about the Enneagon/Enneagram's Sufi Origins, what Mr. Gurdjieff's use of the Enneagram looked like, the difference between Ichazo's Enneagon and the work with Enneagram of Naranjo... And, how some really far flung theories found their way in and the effect they may have had on encouraging effects of sloppy thinking. Questions about what this material can do with self-discovery, and in spite of it all, with so many unanswered questions leave Kenneth with the conclusion that he has felt its power in his own life as evidence that the Enneagram is a powerful tool

in the discipline of self-exploration.

Michelle Joy pins down salient characteristics of "Enneagram Type 1 in Relationships" with perfect clarity. As protectors of values and integrity Ones have their hands full in this day and age...No wonder it can lead to stress that brings out the desire and frustration that communicates parental type criticism to their partner who promptly will feel scolded and will either become submissively adaptive or rebellious, neither of which very healthy for the relationship. Meanwhile the One who has a particularly strong sense of responsibility (to themselves as well as expects it from their partners) will easily feel resentful or disappointed. That too is often due to misinterpretation of the partner's style and difference in approach to solving a problem. Ones need to develop flexibility in evaluating actions and motives while their partners need to appreciate the extra rigidity in discipline if, as it's often the case, more is needed.

Christopher Heuertz knows the value of "Moving from the hard work of self-observation to the compassionate work of self-remembering" It starts with the premise quoting Chris: 'this is harder than we realize because many of us suffer from a spiritual fear of heights. It's as if we only allow ourselves so much growth before we start doubting or before we roll out our inner critic's mental tapes calling out our subconscious impostor syndrome.

It's like this. Our physical bodies have a set point or a weight range that's biologically programmed for optimal functioning. The set point isn't always the ideal weight for our height and age, but it's where our bodies have learned is its comfortable normal.'

Our expectations that may or may not been informed well could allow us to be lulled into a comfort zone where we realize after some time that we are stuck...and if we respond by rationalizing that we only progress to the point we deserve we may stay stuck... Being connected to a community or friends may offer an opportunity to be reminded and encouraged to strive for more at the expense of staying in a familiar comfort zone.

Carolyn Bartlett gets deep into type "Twos in Psychotherapy." In general healthy Twos are in touch with their own feelings and can connect with others in an emotional way without losing sight of what they value or abandoning the support of others.

Less than healthy Twos can get caught in an unhealthy pattern of "give to get," where their giving is dictated by what they themselves want. Their expecta-

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tion thus remain concealed and their hope is that others will reciprocate as expected. If the other does not respond to the manipulative move, Twos can become controlling, angry and resentful towards those they have over-accommodated. The Two attention style is focused on relationships and engagement with others, they are adept at flattery, pleasing and supporting others for the purpose of being liked and looking good.

Twos represent the most feminine of types on the

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end of the spectrum with Eights on the other side. As such we can assume they own the best and the worst ends of the bell curve of their brand, keeping in mind that all nine types may be different, but are among equals regarding ability, value and competence.

Part 2 of "Tale of Two Enneagram Branches: *Claudio Naranjo's SAT vs. Oscar Ichazo's Arica School*" is continued from previous issue and the tail end of the

debate that followed the *EM* interview with Oscar Ichazo in 1996. Letters to the editor from advanced Enneagrammers and Aricans debated the merits and aspirations of their systems. It is important to understand the undercurrents, some ideological, some political and others metaphysically motivated that molded the Enneagram of Personality as we know it today.



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