

enneagram monthly

August 2014

Issue 209

Conversation with Michael Damian

In the Enneagram community we have been talking of seeking a state of freedom from neurotic traits and finding balance by getting in touch with “essence.” Although essence is often mentioned, it’s never described by those fortunate few who have experienced it first hand, or are actually living it. Most of our focus was on personality type, how it affects us and how it either limits us (via negativa) or how it enhances us (via positiva). Mostly, personality type has been seen as a fixation, an affliction that is not really who we are, a cluster of quirks that cover our true essence. But, rarely if ever have we gone deeper into what life actually might be like—should we be so fortunate or successful to encounter this elusive essence. Is it closer or further than we think? Would we recognize and embrace it, or mistake it for something unwelcome and flee?

We asked Michael Damian who had such an awakening to essence about eight years ago and his life has permanently changed since. Michael is a spiritual teacher who holds meetings in North America and Europe, a practicing clinical psychologist (Ph.D), and a graduate of the *Institute of Transpersonal Psychology* (ITP). Sueann McKean who was teaching Aikido at ITP for the last 20 years, remembers him as one of

Jack Labanauskas & Sueann McKean



the most impressive and balanced students ever. And that was then, about 10 years ago, before the transformation took place. Michael at the time was also familiar with the enneagram and as a good type Five with a Ph.D in psychology, he’s the perfect candidate to speak from personal experience and in a language familiar to enneagram aficionados.

Jack Labanauskas: Let me start with a thumbnail sketch, a generalization of some of the prevalent thinking among enneagrammers we know.

Everyone agrees that your type is not the real you. There is some debate about what to do about it. Should one live with it happily or try to shed it. How? Nobody knows, but everyone has some suggestion, although no clear answers to that happens after getting rid of it.

One thing seems clear, you don’t become an amorphous glob of nothing. Hardly. We assume that type will always be maintained, along with the characteristics of personality. The issue is obviously to recognize that in essence we are not our type but that type is certainly with us as long as we have a body... ..CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Working with Enneagram Harmony Triads

A Key to Development and Integration

What do I mean by the “Harmony Triads” being a key to development and integration?

What is integration and what is its relationship to transformation?

How might these triads provide keys to much of what is needed for our development?

I start with the questions of how we can provide the Epicure Type 7 with a Heart Center connection and the Giver Type 2 with a Head Center connection? The lines of connection in the “Process Enneagram,” our familiar Enneagram, simply doesn’t designate this. Yet, we all know that we each have “some” of all three centers of intelligence operating. When we draw the line between Types 4 and 7, we have a new equilateral triangle comprised of Types 1-4-7 and our Epicure 7 now has a point in the Heart Center. Simi-

David Daniels M.D.



larly, when we draw the line between Types 2 and 5, our Giver Type 2s now have a point in the Head Center. We now have three equilateral triangles, each of which have all three centers of intelligence represented – types 3-6-9, 1-4-7, and 2-5-8. These are oftentimes referred to as the Harmony Triads (Figure 1). These three triangles are also the result of ancient astronomical observations of the planetary cycles of Jupiter and Saturn over time.



Figure 1: The Three Centers of Intelligence rooted in the Harmony Triads

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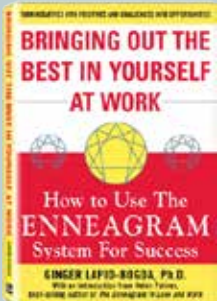
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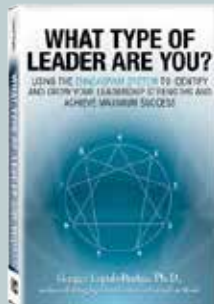


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From the Editor

The EM is well into its 20th year, and rummaging through old issues this excerpt in issue #11, celebrating our first year caught my eye:

Last year at this time we were concerned about finding enough interesting material to fill the paper. However, our doubts were put to shame. The last 11 issues are filled with creative and original material—a powerful testament to the vitality and richness of the Enneagram community.

Our Mission Statement of a year ago remains in place: "Given a choice, our policy will be truth over politeness, growth over political correctness, and bold ideas over boring ones. We are neither beholden to nor antagonistic towards any authors or teachers. We believe in the truism that long term success is more likely when offering quality; in the case of a scholarly newspaper it means unbiased reporting, remaining open to all points of view, and allowing for controversy or conflicting opinions, including those critical of us."

That was a little precocious claim then, but in retrospect, we now can say we were prescient about our original mission statement.

In this Issue:

It is not often that we get a chance to speak with someone who instead of speculating on what it might be like to live in essence, not only experiences it, but is able (and willing) to describe it. We (**Jack Labanauskas and Sueann McKean**) have the pleasure of a "Conversation with **Michael Damian**" who eight years ago had a dramatic turning point in life – a fundamental awakening into a state of realization that most of us only read or dream about.

It's a rare privilege to encounter or study with a realized person, or to hear their story. What and how it happened, and the ways this new-found state of mind differs from what we call "regular" state of consciousness.

Michael has been familiar with the enneagram as well as fully engaged with all the trappings of modernity before he became a spiritual teacher and practicing clinical psychologist, graduate of the *Institute of Transpersonal Psychology* (ITP). He understands, can relate to and is very articulate about today's issues. We took this opportunity to clear up some vague or contradictory perspectives found in literature, and to ask questions. Hearing his personal account of what "actually" happened as he came in touch with essence, and in what ways it was different from "marinating in an ego trance," may lead us to adjust our perspective and expectations.

David Daniels has been "Working with the

Harmony Triads – *A Key to Development and Integration*" for a very long time. A "founding pillar" of the Enneagram Community since its very beginnings, David also authored many insightful articles in our pages whenever his busy world-wide teaching career permitted. Recently he had to take care of some health issues (which were resolved splendidly) and found some time to write about several subjects that will be appearing in the next few issues.

David's first installment, the Harmony Triads give each of us: (1) a type that leads with a different one of the three centers of intelligence – head, heart, and body; (2) a type that leads with a different one of the three great life energies – active, receptive, and balancing, and; (3) a type that leads with a different one of the three basic forms of emotional regulation and conflict resolution – refraining into positives, containing through logical analysis, and expressing deep concerns to get to the root of conflict. Thus the Harmony Triads provide all that is necessary for a satisfactory life and the understanding of self and others. This article is the first comprehensive paper that deals with and explores all three of these vital functions in depth.

In recent issues there was quite a stir generated by **Frederic and Bernadette Schmitt**, after they released their findings. Findings that were thoroughly researched and tested on a large number of people. For about two decades, in their homeopathic medical practice they combined and compared homeopathy and the enneagram with traditional medicine as it was practiced for millenia by our ancestors in the East and West. During this process they noticed several aspects of the various enneagram theories that were not consistent or misunderstood. One of them was the concept of how the "Constitution and Enneagram" are related. The descriptions varied a lot. Because *words mean things*, and to have a foundation for future discussions, several words need to be defined better, and *Constitution* is one such word that means different things to different people. Unless we first agree what we mean by it, we are likely to have misunderstandings where there should be none.

Because the enneagram is such a "young" field, it had no time yet to "settle." Moreover, for reasons of avoiding accusations of plagiarism, or driven by enthusiasm, enneagram authors would often put their individual *imprimatur* on opinions and interpretations of terminology. Authors and teachers came from

Enneagram Monthly
748 Wayside Rd.
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Phone: 650-851-4806 Fax: 650-851-3113
Email: em@guna.us

Editor and Publisher Jack Labanauskas

Staff Writer Susan Rhodes

Assistant Editor Sue Ann McKean

Consulting Editor Andrea Isaacs

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.

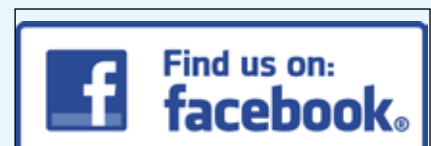
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different fields (counseling, psychology, philosophy, business, mathematics, engineering, clergy, etc.) that did not share the same vocabulary or language allowing for some confusing contradictions. Today we have a situation where a lot of good information can be made better if it is sorted and correctly named/classified.

Frederic and Bernadette managed to “break the ice” where others before them tried, but did not yet have enough critical mass supporting them to tip the balance. To facilitate this process, we invite the enneagram community to participate in this project. Facebook is an excellent place for that and in the next week or so, we will set up the “EM Page,” post this article, and have a free-for-all discussion on this issue. Will report on the gist of it in the next EM (as we already started with the discussions on “EM Group,” which is open to a broader range of subjects).

Tom Condon knows what the Six Trance is like and how best to deal with it: “The Six Trance: *Chunking Down*.” In other words, Sixes who are trying to lessen their fears often find it helpful to define those fears more closely; to render them down into their most immediate and tangible form. Often when you precisely specify the details of a fear, it dissipates, or turns into something you can feasibly cope with.

Tom works with people during his teaching sessions and rather than always or mostly just theorizing from his own experience, he let’s the participants express

issues that are close to the bone for them. For example, after some discussion with a woman of the possible function of her phobia about going to parties, Tom asked her to go inside, take some deep breaths, send her attention down into her belly and tell what her belly is saying through her phobia.

After a few moments she visibly relaxed, nodded and said, “I know what it is.” “The truth is that I *hate* these parties. I *hate* them. Everyone is fraudulent, has a hidden agenda; they scrutinize and criticize how you look, especially as a woman. I’m just afraid to admit it because then I won’t go to the parties and then I’ll lose my job.” Seeing the real reason why she was afraid of parties, made it easier for her to cope with going, now that it was about her job and no longer required a variety of efforts to impression manage a multitude of side issues.

“The Romantic-Observer (Four-Five) Couple” according to **Jennifer Schneider** and **Ron Corn** may seem to be like oil and water, the Romantics focus on the heart and emotions, whereas Observers approach the world from an intellectual and mental stance. But put them together, and it can bring zest to a salad; and as with a salad, the point is to see separate ingredients remaining so rather than blending into and amorphous substance.

Fives are notorious for their difficulty in expressing emotions and withdrawing into their own space. Fours fear abandonment and seek reassurance by

intensifying their emotional expressions, or even engaging in pursuit of the Five causing a further withdrawal by the Five, who now feels invaded.

They may blame each other for the problems they’re experiencing (Fives too much in their head, Fours overly emotional, etc) and need to tone down their expectations or demands of the other to reach a balance. They need to set boundaries that allow each of them to get their needs met while respecting the other’s needs (need for solitude, versus need for emotional connection).

It’s an art to reconcile such opposite needs, across the “abyss” of the enneagram to boot, but astute observation skills and the romantic intensity can overcome differences if both can bend just a little.

“What’s on EM’s Facebook” continues with just a few brief excerpts, a real hard choice given how much material was available... We pursue the conversation started last month about the roots of the enneagram, bringing possible origins into focus and to attention. As a symbol that can claim to have roots in multiple traditions, it invites us to dig deeper into the possible anatomy of its components that are currently used together... enhancing each other, or depending on the level of understanding, contradicting. **Thomas Garret Isham, Mark Sumner, Jack Labanauskas, Bernadette Schmitt, Laleh Bakhtiar and Frederic Schmitt** make a brief appearance. •