

# enneagram monthly

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Issue 213

## How can the Enneagram Community Remain True to its Roots and Embrace Science?

These articles by **Jack Killen** and **Eric Meyer**, previously published in *Nine Points*, [www.ninepointsmagazine.org](http://www.ninepointsmagazine.org), are expanded versions of remarks we each made during a session at the 2014 IEA Conference. The goal of the session was to explore participants' perspectives on the proposition that science offers knowledge, tools, and methods that can advance progress toward a world in which the Enneagram is widely understood and constructively used. The session grew out of an essay in the 2013 issue of the *Enneagram Journal* by **Fitzsimons** and **Killen**\*. Our remarks were intended to set the stage for small group discussions using the [World Café method](#), facilitated by **CJ Fitzsimons**. In a third part we will present a distillation of the results of the World Café discussions, and offer some concluding thoughts of our own. We hope through these articles to expand discussion about nurturing a scientifically oriented sub-culture within the Enneagram community. We invite your feedback.

\* "How Science Can Help Solve the Enneagram's Credibility Problem". CJ Fitzsimons and Jack Killen. *Enneagram Journal*, 2013



### **PART 1** Perspectives of a Clinical Research Scientist

**Jack Killen, MD**

I suspect most readers of *Enneagram Monthly* share a belief that the Enneagram has a lot to offer the world, and that we should want to find more effective ways to share what we have. My beliefs reflect 18 years of enormous personal benefit from "working" the Enneagram, and witnessing similar experience by hundreds of others "working it" in both psycho-spiritual and business settings.

My perspective on how the enneagram community can stay true to its wisdom tradition roots and embrace science reflects my medical training and professional experience, and my 32 year career in biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health. Two things about that experience stand out. First, my career afforded me very unusual opportunities to work at the interface of scientific and non-scientific oriented communities. These included 16 years leading efforts to build bridges between AIDS activists and scientists involved in NIH-supported AIDS research programs, and 10 years leading NIH efforts to bring rigorous science to complementary and alternative medicine. Second, I have always found it necessary to translate some Enneagram teachings into language and concepts that I could reconcile with my scientific orientation. Happily I have yet to encounter any show stoppers. At the same time I understand ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



### **PART 2** Perspectives of a Historian and Philosopher of Science

**Eric Meyer PhD**

It seems entirely reasonable to envision a world in which the Enneagram is widely understood and constructively used. Given the central role of science in modern culture, we might like to see scientists in particular pay more attention to the Enneagram, even ultimately validate the effectiveness of its teachings. We might even be curious why that isn't already happening. In the first article developed from our session at IEA 2014, Jack Killen explored the prospect of scientific collaboration, drawing on his experience with research into alternative medicine. My own background is in the history and philosophy of science, so in this sequel I address what science is all about in general terms and how that's relevant to the Enneagram community. We believe these two themes are closely related, because the more we can embrace basic "scientific" habits of thinking and working ourselves, the more sense the Enneagram will make to scientists and scientifically-minded people, and the more likely it will be to attract their interest. (We also expect such attention to method to benefit Enneagram studies, directly and independently.)

Of course the spiritual wisdom tradition from which the Enneagram has emerged can seem to have a very different char- ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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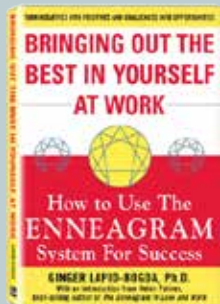
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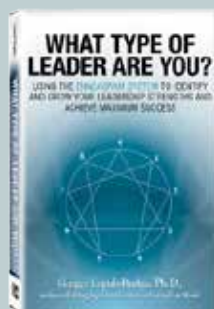


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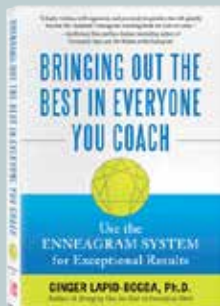
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# From the Editor

One of my desires that persisted over the years was to re-visit a number of questions about certain theories surrounding the enneagram that are widely accepted, but upon closer examination remain unresolved. For example, the historic origins of the enneagram, the role of arrows, lines, centers, subtypes, what is essence etc. We have had a lot of testimonials, theorizing and exploration of possibilities, but relatively little application of a scientific process to testing or verifying what actually works and what does not.

#### In this Issue:

"How can the Enneagram Community Remain True to its Roots and Embrace Science?" Is a 3 part study addressing, as the title states, a question that every system has to answer if it expects to make a good case for its validity. And any valid system of course welcomes critical examination, testing and challenge, as a means of purification. In the enthusiasm of new and exciting discovery, the possibilities and effectiveness in some aspects can be exaggerated and other aspects can be overlooked. A common sense approach examining, testing and making an inventory of the findings will be of great help to students and users of the system. In this issue we have part 1 and 2 and in next issue the summation, i.e. part 3. This series originated from remarks made during a session at the 2014 IEA Conference that were published in *Nine Points*. See also *Enneagram Journal*, 2013.

Part 1 by **Jack Killen MD** "Perspectives of a Clinical Research Scientist" points out how the Enneagram has a lot to offer the world, and that we should want to find more effective ways to share what we have. Jack's beliefs reflect his medical training and professional experience over a 32 year career in biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health. Jack always found it necessary and possible to translate Enneagram teachings into language and concepts that can be reconciled with a scientific orientation. It's also understandable why there are scientific reservations about the Enneagram that contribute to its place on the fringes of contemporary mainstream psychological science. Conversely, it's equally dismaying to have misunderstandings or mistrust of science in the Enneagram community. Jack lays out a clear path how Enneagram applications can be scientifically investigated and how *in science hypotheses and models are strengthened most by failed attempts to break them, because it is relatively easy to find evidence to support what you believe or hope to be true.*

Part 2 by **Eric Meyer PhD** "Perspectives of a Historian and Philosopher of Science" envisions a world in which the enneagram is widely understood and constructively used. Given that science has such a central role in modern culture, the Enneagram would benefit by having its effectiveness validated. Eric's background is in history and philosophy of science, and he's addressing what science is all about in general terms, and

how that's relevant to the Enneagram community. The more we can embrace basic "scientific" habits of thinking and working ourselves, the more sense the Enneagram will make and attract interest of scientists and scientifically-minded people. Obviously such attention to method will benefit Enneagram studies of the not-so scientifically minded as well.

Our culture has a long and unfortunate history of difficulty between science and religion. Yet the special strength of the Enneagram to help heal this cultural division lies precisely in its synthesis of psychology and spiritual practice. Eric takes on three crucial aspects: Fallibility, Testing and Progress.

**Mary Bast** and **CJ Fitzsimons** in "Somebody? Nobody?" apply Jack Engler's famous statement *You have to be Somebody before you can be Nobody*. A phrase that has been inspirational to spiritual seekers, a reminder to avoid spiritual bypass; i.e. wasting time by deluding oneself that to become spiritual you have to let go of responsibilities and just go straight for the prize. It's not as simple as that, and just as a bird needs two wings to fly, we can't develop either our character, personality or spiritually by skipping important stages in our development. This fits in well as a balance to the two lead articles on the need for integrating a scientific mindset along with intuition and personal experience.

From Mary's and CJ's book by the same title (Somebody? Nobody?), they selected a lively self portrait *Foster's Story: The Richness of being Real* by a type Four.

**Jerry Wagner** not only has an uncanny eye for seeing life's ironies and recognizing patterns, but also a rambunctious sense of humor describing the connections. "Enneagram Styles and Cyclical Psychodynamics" is one such area (after reading Paul Wachtel's books) where Jerry felt a kinship with the Jourdain character in Molière's play *The Bourgeois Gentleman* – Jourdain discovered he was 'speaking prose all his life.'

Jerry's book *Nine Lenses on the World* (2010) is about how our Enneagram styles are over-compensations for the maladaptive beliefs we may have about ourselves and others and how these strategies actually bring about the very condition we are trying to avoid. So Jerry recognized: Voila! Cyclical Psychodynamics.

And true to character, Jerry found no kinship whatsoever with another character in a Molière's play, Tartuffe, and happily gives Wachtel credit for his excellent cyclical idea... Great minds think alike.

With so much focus on our internal dynamics we must not neglect the alchemy of how different types tend to affect each other in intimate relationships. **Jennifer P. Schneider** and **Ron Corn** look at "The Perfectionist – Mediator (1-9) Couple" whose strengths lie in the fact that Perfectionists list Mediators as among the personality types with which they are most comfortable. The

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For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

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correcting and fixing that Ones forever do, is in the service of serenity, and Nines can embody that serenity. Nines can make Ones feel loved for who they are and not for what they do. For Ones, hanging out with Nines can feel like a refreshing break from both the inner and outer critic. Nines value Ones for their high energy and ability to stay focused. Both are in the Anger (“gut”) triad but also good at repressing it, albeit for different reasons.

**David Banner** reminds us of feelings we may recall if we dig deep enough into our memory banks for those quiet peaceful times in our life. We may have to reach as far back as childhood, before life’s obligations and pursuits put layers upon layers of more egoic pursuits over the glimpses of “The Awakened Heart.” Such layers, ultimately speaking, are the components of our separate ego and they too are nothing but a state of consciousness...no more, no less.

If this was understood, we wouldn’t be chained to the ego and see ourselves as separate entities among others who also see themselves as separate. To find a way out of suffering we will have to reconnect with the idea or rather memory, that the Cosmos is made of the energy of love. If you are living with an awakened heart, you automatically have an attitude of sacred service, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

**Clarence Thomson** has only good things to say about Elizabeth Wagele’s latest book “The Enneagram for Teens,” and deservedly so, since many teens rely for their education on electronic media, schools or peers. I remember how fascinated I was in my teens to find “alternative” explanations about the deeper questions of life. Enneagram was not available in those days and other than books on psychology or philosophy there was little to be found aside from Graphology, Numerology, Tarot or Astrology. It would have been wonderful to be introduced to something so clear, deep and easily available as the enneagram.

This book is available as a kindle edition or on paper, it’s full of amusing cartoons and in a language teenagers can connect with. A must! If you are a responsible parent or a good friend to some teen...

**Mario Sikora** has “A Response to Thomas Isham on Science, Spirituality and the Enneagram.” It’s actually a response to a response that Thomas had in last issue (#212) to the Mario’s article in issue (#211). It’s related to the unfortunate difficulty that existed historically between science and religion. As with most disagreements, they tend to shrink a lot when both sides clarify their positions a little better. And we see this happening in this exchange where Mario offers clarifications on four broad epistemic categories—science, philosophy, subjective experience, and belief—to help us ensure that we use the right tool for the right *thinking* or *intellectual task*. He does not view spirituality as a “way of knowing,” but as how we live based on what we know. Makes sense to me.

## David’s New Site:

[www.drdauidaniels.com](http://www.drdauidaniels.com)



The purpose of my site is to bring you vital, life changing, and enlightening information on the Enneagram system. This site complements the Enneagram Worldwide site by bringing you my own material on this most powerful system much of which is based on my now almost 50 years of experience as a therapist, behavioral scientist, and now over 25 years experience with the Enneagram.

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