

A VERY BRIEF TOUR OF THE TYPES

Each type has both a number and a name. The name describes the primary characteristic of the type, but doesn't really begin to explain the complexity that is contained within a type. The names are merely shortcuts that provide a language for us as well as a tool for understanding.

Type ONE is the Reformer or the Perfectionist. This type is principled and ethical. They see the world in terms of right and wrong and they strive to be right. They have a strong sense of "mission" and a deep need to fight for what is right. They are idealistic, organized and fastidious. They have high standards and they demand high standards of others. This type knows that they are in "trance" (a trance is the lie each type tells itself to perpetuate the unique distortions of the fixation) when they feel personally obligated to fix everything themselves. They manipulate others by correcting them. Their "red flag" fear is that their ideals are wrong and counterproductive. The spiritual goal of the One is develop and maintain integrity.

Type TWO is the Helper. Helpers are warm and affectionate. They are driven by relationship and connection. Twos are generous and friendly and extremely open-hearted. Their primary focus is on giving to others, yet they often have difficulty giving to self and acknowledging their own needs. Twos know they are in trance when they pursue others to "win them over." They manipulate by discovering other's needs and desires to create dependency. Their red flag fear is that they are driving friends and loved ones away, especially through neediness and vulnerability. The spiritual goal of the Two is to develop healthy boundaries and humility.

Type THREE is the Achiever or the Performer. This type is focused on achievement, image and "product." Threes are ambitious and success oriented and they tend toward competitiveness. They are energetic and charming. Threes are "going somewhere" and they are anxious to get there. Threes know they are in trance when they find themselves driving relentlessly towards status and attention. They manipulate by charming others and adopting, chameleon-like, whatever image works in a given situation. The red flag fear of the Three is

that they are failing; that their claims are empty and fraudulent. The spiritual goal of the Three is to relinquish the "mask" of success and to develop authenticity.

Type FOUR is the Tragic Romantic or the Individualist. Fours are creative, often introspective and full of a variety of moods. Fours often feel different or special and express this through withholding and withdrawal. Fours have a unique flourish and style and express their deep inner world through beauty. Fours know they are in trance when they notice that they are holding onto an intensifying their feelings via their imagination. They manipulate others by acting temperamental and making others "walk on eggshells." Their red flag fear is that they are ruining their lives and wasting opportunities. The spiritual goal of the Four is to engage their creativity with meaningful action and to transcend the illusion of a separate and "special" self.

Type FIVE is the Investigator or the Observer. Fives are generally withdrawn and introverted. They have rich inner lives that they often do not enjoy sharing with others. They are intense and curious. They live inside their heads and their imaginations. Fives can be eccentric and innovative. Fives know that they are in trance when they find themselves withdrawing from reality into concepts and mental worlds. They manipulate others by staying preoccupied and detaching emotionally from others. Their red flag fear is that they are never going to find their place in the world or with people. The spiritual goal of the Five is to learn to leave their heads and to more deeply embody their physical selves.

Type SIX is the Loyalist. The Loyalist is focused on safety at all times. Sixes offer loyalty to others, but only after sufficient testing has been done. They are cautious, even anxious and work hard to ensure safety at all times. Sixes focus on "worst case scenarios" and then work hard to make sure that everyone is safe. Sixes know they are in trance when they become dependent on something or someone outside of themselves for guidance. They manipulate others by complaining and testing others' commitment to them. Their red flag fear is that their actions have harmed their security. The spiritual goal of the Six is to overcome pessimism and to become grounded and courageous.

Type SEVEN is the Enthusiast or the Epicure. This type is a study in motion. Sevens seek out the best of everything and move forward relentlessly to pursue the new and different. They struggle with routine. Sevens love the novel and retain a childlike quality into adulthood. They often sacrifice depth and connectedness for impulsiveness and fascination. Sevens know they are in trance when they believe that something “better” is available somewhere else. They manipulate others by distracting them and by insisting that others meet their demands. Their red flag fear is that their activities are bringing them pain and unhappiness. The spiritual goal of the Seven is to become focused and to deepen their connections with both people and pursuits.

Type EIGHT is the Boss or the Challenger. Eights are powerful, domineering and protective. Eights are fierce and assertive. They prefer to be both in control and “right.” They are sensual and earthy and often very family-oriented. Eights know they are in trance when they feel they must push and struggle to make things happen. They manipulate others by dominating them and by demanding that others do what they say. Their red flag fear is that others will turn against them and retaliate. The spiritual goal of the Eight is to open their heart and re-connect with the experience of innocence and interconnectedness.

Type NINE is the Peacemaker or the Mediator. Nines are mellow and non-confrontational. They avoid conflict and focus on group harmony. They easily forget their own needs and “fall asleep” to what is important for them. Peace is valued above all else. A Nine knows they are in trance when they begin outwardly accommodating themselves to others. They manipulate others by “checking out” and by passive-aggressively resisting others. Their red flag fear is that they will be forced to deal with their problems head-on. The spiritual goal of the Nine is to learn to stay present and to deeply experience the interconnection that is possible with others.

MOVEMENT BETWEEN NUMBERS

Each number has a movement pattern during times of stress or times of greater health. This is often referred to as “moving within a triad.” This concept refers to the idea that numbers

do not function in isolation from one another. Each type moves one specific direction during times of health and another direction during times of stress. This movement to demonstrating the qualities of another Enneagram number can be diagnostic, both for clinicians and individuals. For example, when Twos are stressed, they act like Eights. This “Eight like” behavior can be a doorway into personal growth. As we become healthier, we demonstrate fewer behaviors of our stress point and more of the behaviors and attitudes of our health point. If we again use Two as an example, a healthy Two embodies more of the attitude of a Four, with a greater focus on self care and introspection. Triads provide concrete tools for self awareness and personal growth.

THEME BASED TRIADS

In addition to personal triads that are the natural flow of our personalities during times of stress or health, there are “themed triads” that help us to understand another level of understanding Enneagram temperaments.

The Instinctive Triad (types Eight, Nine and One) experience the world through anger or rage. They are often called “gut types” because they experience the world through their bodies first. These types focus on maintaining resistance to the world through boundaries and physical tension.

The Feeling Triad (types Two, Three and Four) experience the world through their hearts and their connection to others. They are “image” points, who see themselves as they believe others see them. Their primary issue is shame and they strive to create identities of connection and attachment that help them to feel safe. They see the world through the lens of feelings.

The Thinking Triad (types Five, Six and Seven) experience the world through a lens of fear and anxiety. This triad thinks first and then plans for ways to stay safe and secure.

In addition to these triads, there are triads that describe our social styles in the Enneagram

tradition. These triads are called Hornebian Groups. The three stances are: being compliant, being assertive or withdrawing. Types One, Two and Six are compliant. They earn acceptance through being easy to deal with. Types Seven, Eight and Three are assertive. They earn acceptance through going after what they want. Types Four, Five and Nine are withdrawn. They earn acceptance by pulling back from tension and attempting to disappear. The compliant group seeks attention and validation. The assertive group seeks autonomy and control. The withdrawal group seeks security and safety.

Yet another tool for studying the Enneagram involves triads that group positive outlook, competency and reactivity. The positive outlook group includes types Two, Seven and Nine. These types use a positive "spin" to defend against disappointment. By seeing "the bright side of things," these types avoid their inner feelings of sadness and despair. The competency group includes types Three, One and Five. These types deal with difficulties by detaching from feelings and focusing on logic, reason and competence. Efficiency and accomplishments help this group to feel stable and to separate themselves from possible disappointment. The reactive group is type Four, Six and Eight. These types vacillate between the need to parent and the need to rebel. They deal with negative feelings by acting – they move closer or away, depending on the situation.

CLINICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE ENNEAGRAM IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Just as no two snowflakes are alike, no two psychotherapists practice therapy in exactly the same way. Therapists are a unique mix of personal history, formal training and clinical experience. We are shaped and formed like metals – a distinct amalgam of disparate realities. Enneagram, as a tool, has the potential to filter out personal bias or outlook and to reach more deeply into the human psyche and its mysteries. Enneagram removes the traditional focus of identifying behaviors for the purpose of diagnosis and "treatment" and provides a holistic framework for understanding instinctual drives and needs. This study of the self includes an attitude of compassion and an awareness that our issues are perhaps not as personal as we once thought. This stance also extends beyond the consultation room as clients learn to understand the inner dynamics of their partners and family members and to

move from a position of unrealistic expectation to a stance of deeper understanding. The use of enneagram can be freeing to clinicians because it allows them to minimize the narrative or story of presenting complaints and to efficiently teach clients about the underlying dynamics that drive their type. By learning about and taking responsibility for their types, clients deepen their healing process and effectively bypass the outer, superficial layers of personality. Enneagram does not limit the basic tools of the psychotherapist; techniques and theoretical style are still needed in this intimate form of communication. Enneagram simply enhances the process of psychotherapy by providing a framework that assumes a basic human desire for growth and health and which provides tools for moving towards the healthiest part of our type range. Knowledge of the enneagram helps to explain why certain interventions work with some clients but not others. For example, a compliant type (1, 2 or 9) might respond well to homework outside of a session while a withdrawn type (4, 5 or 9) might avoid the homework for a variety of reasons related to their type. Knowing the tendencies of the types aids therapists in targeting interventions and support that is most likely to benefit each client. Enneagram is the ultimate argument for one size does not fit all. One client's motivation is another client's nightmare. And while enneagram is not the only answer to clinical dilemmas, it is certainly a shortcut in helping therapists to understand inner dynamics with a minimum of time.

Enneagram in the consultation room requires two basic things. First, therapists must learn the system and understand the complicated and intricate details of a theory that has evolved for over five thousand years. Enneagram requires years of study for functional mastery and it requires experiential as opposed to book-only learning. And while theoretical knowledge is vital, self knowledge is equally important. Therapists must learn their own enneagram profiles to understand their own biases in the therapeutic process. Second, therapists must continue to deepen their own knowledge on a continuing basis to avoid stereotyping. Any theoretical outlook that groups people into categories is at risk for missing important data due to "chunking" or generalizing. The ongoing study and practice of enneagram helps clinicians to avoid this common pitfall and to embody "beginner's eyes" with each and every client. The challenge for enneagram therapists is to find ever more streamlined and meaningful ways to teach clients a theory that is both complex and confusing. Fortunately, as the study of

enneagram grows on a worldwide basis, the base of teaching resources grows as well. Several years ago, a "Google" search on enneagram elicited a few books and a very few teaching programs. Today, a similar search provides pages of books, videos, websites and training programs. This wealth of current knowledge and understanding provides clients with a deep well from which to draw. Therapy now happens both inside and outside of the consultation room.

CONCLUSION

The study and practice of enneagram in psychotherapy allows therapists to shift their focus from problems to opportunities. As we step away from labels and diagnoses, we broaden our outlook on what it means to be human. Enneagram illuminates patterns that are at once personal and universal. By learning about who we are at our essence, we learn to transcend the stories we tell ourselves about who we really are. Enneagram provides the framework for understanding what it means to connect, both to ourselves and to others. And through this more vibrant connection, we discover what it means to be more fully alive.