

ENNEAGRAM- REFLECTION



I ask for what I desire as we begin this topic



I pray that my entire being become open to God's grace



I imagine these texts being addressed to me, and note my response

Grace: to look at myself with compassion and acceptance

“As I turned my head and looked out the window, I saw that everything around me was glowing from within. The sunlight on the trees, the swaying of the leaves in the wind, the slight rattle of the panes of glass in the old window frame, were too beautiful for words. I was enthralled at how miraculous everything was. Absolutely everything was beautiful. . . .

I saw clearly that everyone is made of light—that we are like forms of light—but that a crust has formed over it. The crust is black and rubbery like tar and has obscured the inner light that is everyone’s real, inner self. Some blotches of tar are very thick; other areas are thinner and more transparent. Those who have worked on themselves for longer have less tar and they radiate more of their inner light. Because of their personal history, others are covered with more tar and need a great deal of work to get free of it. . . .

If we observe ourselves truthfully and non-judgmentally, seeing the mechanisms of our personality in action, we can wake up, and our lives can be a miraculous unfolding of beauty and joy.”

Don Richard Riso - *The Wisdom of the Enneagram*

“One of the greatest dangers in the spiritual life is self-rejection. When we say, "If people really knew me, they wouldn't love me," we choose the road toward darkness. Often we are made to believe that self-deprecation is a virtue, called humility. But humility is in reality the opposite of self-deprecation. It is the grateful recognition that we are precious in God's eyes and that all we are is pure gift. To grow beyond self-rejection we must have the courage to listen to the voice calling us God's beloved sons and daughters, and the determination always to live our lives according to this truth.”

Henri Nouwen

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

ENNEAGRAM - EXERCISE

CONNECTING WITH OUR EARLY MODELS

Think about your adolescence or youth age.

- Do you remember how you were?
- How would you describe your behaviour with your friends?
- How did you cope with challenges? What was your way of dealing with problems?
- Do you remember if there was a predominant feeling in your life, an emotional energy that was very common in your life?
- Do you recall if you had a way of seeing reality, others and yourself, like a mental model to understand reality that was your own? How would you define it?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What feeling do you recognise as the predominant in your life?
- What do you think, in general, about the world, life, others and yourself?
- What's your inner strategy for getting your needs met? Do you make demands and go after what you want? Do you strive to earn? Do you withdraw and disengage?
- Where do you believe your intelligence center lies? (your head, your heart, your gut and intuition)

ENNEAGRAM - INPUT

INTRODUCTION

The Enneagram is an instrument that dates back to the IV century. It is rooted in the experience of hermits, concretely the Desert Fathers. It describes in a simple way 9 types of behaviour, in their balanced (healthy) and unbalanced dimensions.. It is grounded in the essential goodness of each person from birth. We all have received the gift of Life, the generous call from God to exist. That goodness is disoriented in our childhood when we are forced to cope with the challenges of our world. From a very young age we develop a defense strategy (building a persona) that determines our way of living as adults, and that often hurts us and others as well. If we had taken the direction of our original gift, without deviating, we would not have lost the way towards happiness. The Enneagram helps us identify those 9 ways towards happiness and those 9 disorientations in which we live in our day to day.

MAIN IDEAS

Three perceptions of reality

The nine Enneagram types are grouped into three centres (or perceptions of reality): Heart (Feeling), Head (Thinking), and Gut (Willpower/Instinct) with three Enneagram types in each centre.

In the world of emotions, our **heart** orients our lives towards where we feel attached and sometimes even trapped. Our thoughts (the **head**) try to discern about the elections we have to make. And the willpower (what we could call the **guts**), is what keeps us alive fighting for what we need and desire. We all have these three centers but we do not use them in a coordinated manner. Often, we face the problem of living only using one of these three perspectives (having a tendency towards one or the other) and this direction determines our way of being adults.

When we live only using our heads we tend to move around without stopping (this center is usually formed as a response to fear or anxiety). When our center is our heart, we let it guide us where it wants (this center is usually formed as a response to shame). When our center is the gut, we are generally driven by impulses and sensations (this center is usually formed as a response to anger).

Knowing which centre we are operating from is a key step toward self-awareness and leading a more integrated and fulfilling life.

Three wounds in us

As children we experiment three wounds in our early childhood that force us to develop defense strategies.

The First: the question on the meaning of existence, the big “why”, the logic behind what happens. This wound hurts us, and despite the questions we ask ourselves and others, we do not have any response: Why live? Why die? We find ourselves doubting, struggling with fear and angst.

The Second: the question about value and esteem. Do people love me? Do I have any value? Do I mean something to others? The second wound is the wound of self-esteem and here as well, there isn't a clear response: sometimes it looks like it, but sometimes we are abandoned. We struggle with sadness and deception.

The Third: the question over action, over survival, over what is required to continue to be alive. Sometimes it feels like others do not count on us, they leave us alone for us to manage life by ourselves. We experience annoyance and rage. It is a chaotic world in which we feel stepped over, where we need to defend our place or find a strategy that allows us to survive.

All these questions and reflections initially appear in our subconscious, which is activated much earlier than our consciousness starts to work. The first conclusions and decisions are not conscious but unconscious and they stay in that profound layer of our being. The first wound corresponds to those who think, the head; the second for those who feel, the heart; and the third for those who are visceral, the guts.

Three ways of responding or protecting ourselves

The Enneagram highlights three different ways of responding to life, that we predominantly use and that become automatic in us, something "natural". We may have experimented one of these trends before:

- a) there are those who distance themselves from life or from others, those who hide from responsibilities and from problems, those who try to put space in order to be in a stable position,
- b) there are those who confront and fight, those who prefer to compete and even lose before letting the moment pass, those who dream of conquering the world,
- c) those that want to understand well the rules, that are concerned about what is missing, about what needs to be solved... and so they get involved in this task.

9 different styles of being a person

These three inclinations together with the three perspectives (centers) define the personalities or ego-characters in each of us. The Enneagram works with these 9 ways of being adults, that correspond not to the original call of Life but to our own invention, to a false image of ourselves. The Enneagram types are 9 defenses or strategies (automatic responses) that we have adopted to stay alive and have developed since our infancy pretending they would constitute solutions to our problems. More often than we would like, these coping strategies lead us into painful situations of pain and disconnection following which we end up feeling empty, alone, and without a sense of purpose. Each of the nine types has its own kind of fear and all nine can be seen as different responses to survival anxiety. This is because whenever we are disconnected from our inner ground (the ground of being) we are insecure.

Once we recognise our deviation, the enneagram indicates our gift of origin, that corresponds to 9 ways of being essentially human. The call that the Enneagram carries to go back to our origins is complemented with the invitation to put our gifts and virtues to service in order to create a better world, the Kingdom of God to which we have been called.

The 9 ways of disorientation identified by the Enneagram are summarized below:

Guts	Heart	Head
Type 8 Intensity of reaction, impulsivity, excessiveness, bulldozer, centre of power, dominating, confrontational	Type 2 Focusing on the needs of others, creating emotional dependence, invasive, surrendering to the other abandoning him/herself, without own agenda, people-pleasing, possessive	Type 5 Secretive, isolated, low response to life, low implication, emotionally distant, priority to thought, relational difficulty, control of space and time
Type 9 Adaptability, flexibility, accommodating, indolent, slothful, without energy nor own decision, flight from conflict, self-effacing, complacent	Type 3 Lover of activity, competitiveness, successful, efficient, objectives first and people after, lying is accepted, pragmatic, driven, image-conscious	Type 6 Attention to risks and difficulties, anxiety, preoccupied, vigilant and foreseeing obstacles, trapped in doubts, anxious, suspicious
Type 1 Rhythm and order, structure and correction, good and evil, prejudice and constant critique, irritation and irony, self-controlled, perfectionistic	Type 4 Sensitive, withdrawn, mood swings, instability and strong emotional intensity, melancholy of the past, low self-esteem, expressive, dramatic, self-absorbed, temperamental	Type 7 Vital dispersion, constant activity, superficiality, running away from compromise, from boredom and demands, versatile, distractible, scattered

The 9 gifts and talents that are the fruit of the Spirit according to the enneagram are summarized as follows:

Guts	Heart	Head
Type 8 Living in the present - strength and power / Innocence - Collaboration / Control over oneself	Type 2 Service - attention to needs / humility - honesty / kindness	Type 5 Precision - mental transparency / generosity - compromise / benevolence
Type 9 Harmony - fitting / action - presence / peace	Type 3 Managing efficiency / authenticity - truth / love	Type 6 Attention to events - discernment / trust - courage / loyalty
Type 1 Moral orientation - meaning / serenity - patience	Type 4 Profoundness - intimacy / equanimity - balance / gentleness	Type 7 No limits - intellectual freedom / temperance - presence / joy

The Enneagram for Business, has gathered some recommendations for each leader depending on their own personality/egocharacter - For more details refer to the following [Link](#)

While it is helpful to recognize our Enneagram type, it is important to keep in mind that we are NOT limited to our type. We are human beings characterized by the tendencies of a given type. Our enneagram types describe us without defining us. Knowing our type helps us kickstart a personal journey of self-reflection and inner work and should not be a tool to use to label others or to force them to tackle their shadows when they are not ready to do so.

FINAL THOUGHT

“But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it”. - Luke 18, 16-17

EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Introduce the Enneagram as a tool for self-discovery.
2. Giving some hints about the anthropology and philosophy that support the tool.
3. Giving some insights about our troubled personality and some ways of solution.

ENNEAGRAM - RESOURCES

GENERAL RESOURCES

Title	Author	Publisher	Year	Link
The Essential Enneagram	Daniels, David & Price, Virginia A	Harper San Francisco	2000	Link
The wisdom of the Enneagram	Riso, Don Richard & Hudson, Russ.	Batam Books, New York	1999	Link
The Enneagram, a Christian perspective	Rohr, Richard & Ebert, Andreas	Crossroad Publishing Company	2001	Link
Explore the 9 Enneagram Types		Integrative Enneagram Solutions		Link
How the 9 Enneagram types perceive leadership		The Enneagram for Business		Link

QUOTES

- “When we are not present, that which is asleep in others will annoy that which is asleep in us.” - Russ Hudson
- “Every part we disown, there’s always some critical gift that it brings to us when we get it back online. Its original intent was always pure, always in service for you.” - Ben Saltzman
- “Life is a tremendous gift, but most of us are missing it because we are watching a mental movie of our lives instead.” - Don Riso
- “The Enneagram is this beautiful part of liberation where it’s really asking us to be less of a type and more of an expression of life.” - Robert Holden
- “The Sufis supposedly called the Enneagram ‘the face of God’ because they saw the nine energies manifested in the nine personality types as nine attributes of God (nine refractions of the divine light).” - Richard Rohr
- “Real power, the real strength, is always connected with love... with an open-heartedness... with a sensitivity... a willingness to be affected.” - Russ Hudson
- “It is important to stress the ways that people are different from each other because so much of the suffering that we experience in our relationships with other people is caused by the fact that we are blind to their point of view.” - Helen Palmer
- “The Enneagram tells it ‘like it is.’ And our healing and maturing always begin with our acknowledging what’s there. As a mirror for the confessional, it makes us aware of blocks and abysses that enslave us.” - Richard Rohr