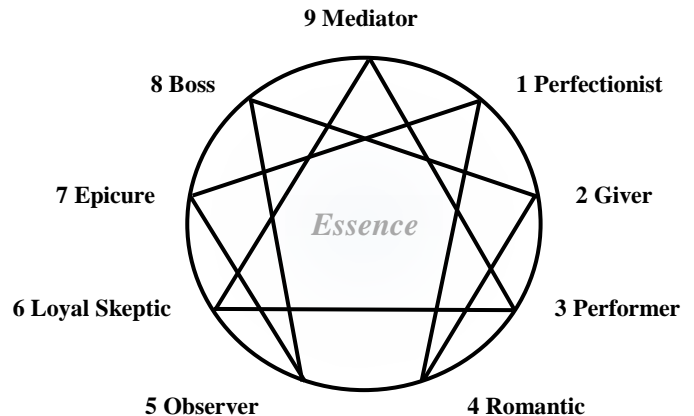




The Enneagram – A Brief Overview

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Have you ever...?

**Argued passionately to be ‘right’,
 only in retrospect to feel it was
 a hollow victory?**

**Felt happy to be ‘behind the scenes,
 making things happen’,
 only later to feel unappreciated?**

**Achieved outrageous success
 and still felt a bit like a failure?**

**Acted extraordinary and
 felt incurably ordinary?**

**Believed the answer to all problems
 lies in information?**

**Focused more on the difficulties
 than opportunities at hand?**

**Brainstormed brilliantly
 and gotten bored
 with the follow-through that gets results?**

**Moved mountains for someone
 and alienated them in the process?**

**Facilitated ‘peace’ at the expense of
 your own point of view?**

Clearly, we appear to have inexplicable differences. Typically our understanding is limited by our own frame of reference. The Enneagram, an ancient system of understanding personalities and their core motivations, is a tool that helps us release our limited points of view, in turn broadening our understanding and appreciation of our differences. As we create more receptive environments, we more fully access the gifts and abilities of each of us.

The word Enneagram is derived from the Greek words enneas meaning nine and grammas meaning points – literally nine points. The system describes nine fundamental personality types, their core motivations and ways of relating in the world, each with its own gifts, natural limitations and blind spots.

The Enneagram focuses our attention on self-learning and, through the development of self-awareness, the release of limiting habits and beliefs. It acknowledges difference and incorporates a multi-dimensional aspect to building new partnerships and perspectives. It mixes philosophic traditions with deep psychological wisdom which is consistent and compatible with modern personality theory.

Knowing a person's Enneagram point of view helps us understand how they are likely to relate to the world. We gain more awareness of their attention style, leadership style, and how they might approach a task, why they would do particularly well or have difficulty in certain jobs, and even typical patterns that would arise in intimate relationships.

The Enneagram model is based on the observation that human beings experience the world in three significant ways; through thinking, feeling and sensing - and that these correspond to three physical centers of perception and intelligence that mediate these experiences – the head, the heart and the belly. And while people use all three centers, each type preferentially uses one of them for perceiving and responding to life.

The Enneagram is a fluid model that accommodates our human differences as well as the non-static nature of human personality: each point on the diagram is only a partial representation of a person's type as an individual's personality is actually a unique combination of his type along with particular aspects of adjacent types on the diagram, which are termed 'wings'. The points on the diagram are also connected in a specific sequence indicating the likely behaviors we will exhibit when experiencing stress or security, e.g., the Perfectionist exhibits aspects of the Epicure when secure and of the Romantic when stressed.

Emotional maturity increases peoples' access to their gifts and strengths while a more limited emotional development tends to increase reactivity and produce destructive rather than constructive behaviors.

As a system of self-understanding, the Enneagram goes beyond other personality typologies, such as Myers-Briggs, in that it suggests our likely pathway of development. Its focus is on core motivations and fundamental ways of paying attention, highlighting 'why' we do 'what' we do versus simply addressing 'how' we perceive the world. It uses a common vocabulary to describe each type, making it all the easier for us to remember and have an immediate sense of behavior and potential motivations when we say 'Boss, Perfectionist, Performer...'

The Enneagram, more than any tool we have encountered, helps us learn to be truly empathic towards others and their way in the world, while keeping our own perspective. We believe the development of this ability is essential to creating both personally rewarding and highly effective business and personal relationships. Collaboratively, through relationship, we can create powerfully in the world, whatever our focus.