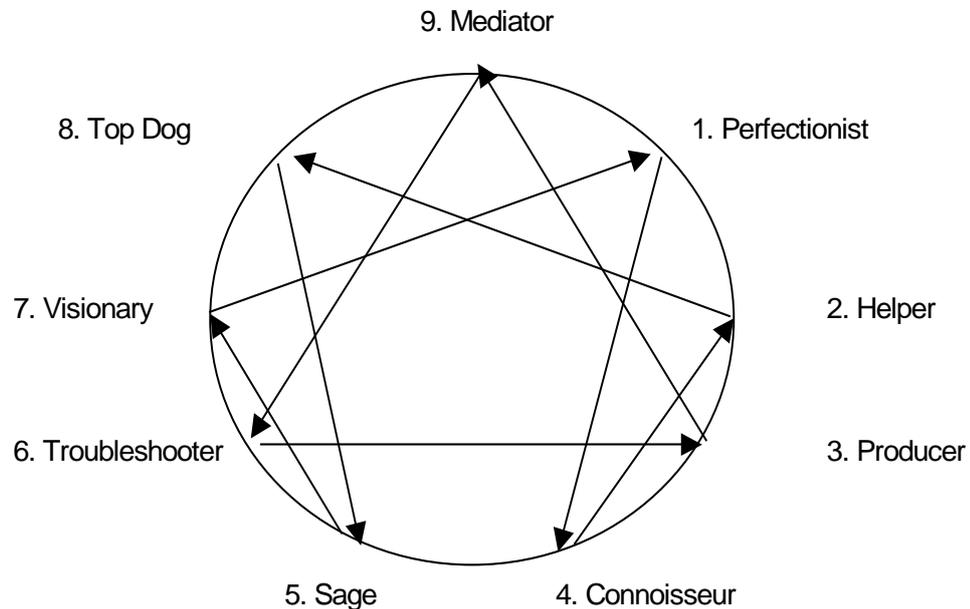


THE ENNEAGRAM



THE ENNEAGRAM – Part 1

(A quick guide to understanding and getting on with people)

Introduction

The Enneagram, outlined in the diagram above, is an ancient psychological tool developed to try and help us understand people and how they act in the world.

It presents nine basic “types” of personality, or world overviews if you prefer, and how they each react in different circumstances and with each other.

It describes how each type will react when they are under stress, and when they are in their most productive flow-state.

It also shows what each type is running or moving from (this is what Carl Jung would have deemed the Shadow personality), as well as what each type is running towards (what inspires us, motivates us, excites us...what we really want to be).

By being aware of this, we can understand how better to relate to each person we come into contact with. We can learn that we are dealing with how that person sees the world and the current situation, as opposed to taking it personally.

THE ENNEAGRAM

It is CRITICAL that you understand that there is no good or bad type...no right or wrong type. Each type has its own rights, wrongs, goods and bads!

In many respects, the real key to this model of life is for each reader to understand himself or herself. If you can understand your own reactions and motivation and fears, it makes it so much easier for you to understand others.

The Enneagram model can be applied to anyone in any situation. Let's say that you are entering into a negotiation with another person. Imagine that going in to the meeting you are fully aware of:

- 1. Your own Enneagram type**
- 2. How you react to all the other types**
- 3. How you react when you feel under pressure**
- 4. How you react when you are in the flow-state**
- 5. How to quickly understand what type the other person is**
- 6. How they react to your type**
- 7. How they react when under pressure or when relaxed**

Armed with this information you can continuously adjust your own reactions during the meeting, as well as be sure that you are communicating to the other person in a way that will make the whole process flow so much smoother i.e. that you will communicate in a way that suits his / her type.

Although this will become clearer in subsequent dispatches, it is important to understand that there is no suggestion within the Enneagram of tricking or forcing anyone against their will. The tool points out in an elegant, understandable and applicable way how best to understand people and what makes them "tick". It points out how they like to do business and what annoys them. It shows the types that each is drawn to, and the types that really do not get on together.

It can also be used as a tool to turn to when communication has already broken down. If a relationship is under strain, perhaps the dynamics of the Enneagram can point out where communication has broken down, by understanding how each person is reacting to the current life situation.

Organisations and departments will also tend to adopt a certain "personality" over time. This personality may or may not match what the company states that its actual "culture" is. It is said that a company or department will adopt the personality of its top person, and slowly fill itself with those who match that personality. Therefore, using the model to ascertain the "type" of an organisation or department can be a useful tool, and can be applied in many ways from Customer Service to Sales to Internal Communications.

THE ENNEAGRAM

The Types in Brief

Over the next few despatches I will give more and more insight into this model, but here follows some basic breakdowns of each type. In general, the types are referred to by their number as opposed to their description (which I have seen differ from book to book). The quick explanations below are from the work of Michael Goldberg from his excellent book titled *Insiders Guide to the 9 Personality Types*:

1. Ones tend to want to get things right
2. Twos want to help others
3. Threes want to work hard and succeed
4. Fours want to explore their true feelings
5. Fives want objective information
6. Sixes worry about problems
7. Sevens want exciting, positive possibilities and a dizzying array of experiences
8. Eights want to exercise full domination
9. Nines want to empathise with all the player and get the whole picture

It is critical to note that these descriptions are just the tip of the iceberg – they are the most overriding characteristic of a person. The way to think about this is to remember a time when you commented on someone by thinking or saying something like: “That person is a born worrier – they need to just let go a bit.” Well, that person is a six (6).

Or maybe: “She just can’t handle it if she is not in charge.” She is an eight (8).

Beginning to apply it:

Have a think about each of the brief descriptions above and decide which number each of the following might be (where applicable to you). Remember, this is just the briefest of descriptions

- a. Yourself
- b. Your Boss
- c. Your Partner
- d. Your Biggest Customer
- e. A Workmate
- f. Your Best Friend
- g. Your Mother
- h. Your Father
- i. Your Sister
- j. Your Brother

THE ENNEAGRAM

Over the coming weeks I will expand on all of the above descriptions, so that you will understand the subtleties of each type.

I will also outline how each interacts with each other, and how they react under stress, and when operating to their highest potential.

I will also give tips on how best to manage each type.

For now, just open up your awareness so that you begin to see the overriding type that each person displays. Remember that all of us are a total personality, so that we all have some of the traits of all the others.

However, as you begin to see the overriding trait of each person, you will see where things can get stuck. How will an Eight and a Nine get on together within a team? The Eight has a need to be the boss and will feel insecure otherwise, while the Nine has a need to have democracy!

A One will want to refer again and again to the standards, while a Three will just want to get on with it – a recipe for argument and misunderstanding. And yet, neither is right or wrong.

Remember as well, that it is important to understand your own type, but to not get stuck on it. Once you understand your own motivations and how you react to the other types, you will have a tool for more flexibility.

For a starting point for use in work, here is a brief description:

- 1. Ones measure against an objective ideal standard and want to do the right thing**
- 2. Twos focus on interpersonal and emotional issues and want to be helpful and depended upon**
- 3. Threes focus on hard work and achievement so that they can be successful and admired**
- 4. Fours centre on their own creativity and soulful feelings and want to be the quality producers or providers**
- 5. Fives seek understanding and information, with as few entanglements as possible, and want to be wisdom keepers or masters of the game**
- 6. Sixes worry about hidden agendas and any possible downside risks so that they can prepare**
- 7. Sevens want to keep their options open and focus on exciting upside ideas, possibilities and experiences**
- 8. Eights want to make sure that they take and keep power and control**
- 9. Nines want to bring all sides together so that the workplace can be intermeshed and free from conflict**