

Session 1: Introduction to the Enneagram

Nine Habits of Escape from Authenticity.

As we move from infantile immediacy and build our habits of personality, we begin to confuse the habits that we have built with the essence of our nature. Authenticity is not something we have built or can build or need to build. It is already built with our birth into humanness. Yet as an infant we are only a potential for realizing authenticity in a conscious and intentional way. The usual course of development is to confuse our potential to be an authenticity manifestation with the habits of living we have built to survive. We have learned to call these habits “ourselves.” These habits are what we also call our “personality.” Having a personality is not bad; it is indeed necessary for the practical living of our lives in the societies in which we dwell. The issue for our consciousness is identifying who we are. We are more than our personality. We are the being that built our personality. We are a mysterious, courageous, awe-filled being that an entire lifetime does not finish discovering.

So when we identify “who we are” with a part of our personality, we have thereby fallen away from our true being. It is this misidentification that is the core flaw we must overcome to be authentically human. This misidentification of who we are is the root of our despair, malice, and compulsions. It is an escape from our essential being, from our best-case scenario for living. We can call it “an escape” because we do indeed flee from our true greatness because we find it too demanding, too grim, or too mysterious.

Our functional and dysfunctional personality habits are the nearby “place” to which we escape. The enneagram heritage has depicted nine types of personality. One of the interesting aspects of this model of nine personality types is that they correspond with nine aspects of our authenticity. Each personality type of the enneagram heritage can be viewed as a mode of escape from an aspect of our authenticity. On the following chart you will see the personality numbers of the enneagram heritage and by each number is written a few words of poetic description of the way in which that personality type is a falling away from a home base in our authenticity.

For example, the escape prominent in persons of personality type 5 can be described as a falling away from **Transparent Attention** into **The Greed for Knowledge**. This greed for knowledge can also be described as a mental aloofness from the specifics and fullness of actual reality. “Transparent Attention” is poetry that points to how human consciousness can be conscious of how the reality of our lives is beyond the rational forms we use to circumscribe and thereby eclipse the fullness of Reality. In session 2, this greed for knowledge in order to escape Reality will be more fully described.

A similar description of an escape from Reality will be the content of sessions 3 through 10. Here is chart of all nine of those escapes:

conscious of being conscious and is conscious of the gift that such consciousness can be when fully accessed as a glorious part of life of this planet. This program is a means of making more personal our continuing exploration of this deep topic.

Exercises for this session:

Meditate carefully on each bit of poetry on the initial chart entitled **Nine Blocks to Human Authenticity**. Note on paper where you most resonate or identify with the patterns of escape described on that overall chart of **The Nine Deadly Estrangements**.

Then, list on paper your observations and questions raised by this introduction of the enneagram heritage and to this whole topic of **The Nine-O-gram of Escapes from Human Authenticity**.

Keep in mind that the enneagram is only one means of organizing this topic, that this topic can be organized in other ways. Also you are invited to see how this way of looking at these matters can be very helpful, in spite of the fact that any way of approaching this topic will never be more than an entry into a boundless field of evisioning the mystery of who we are.

For a more thorough examination of the enneagram personality types, I recommend *The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram: Nine Faces of the Soul* by Sandra Maitri. (New York, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam: 2000).