

Session 5: The Terror of Challenges

This deadly estrangement is characterized by the delusion of the mind that **there is such a thing as final safety**. When trapped in this estrangement I don't put forward the strength of my full power for fear of doing something hurtful to myself or others, or perhaps hurting myself with the grief of failure or becoming the creator of even more challenging circumstances. This fear is so natural to me I am almost used to it. I just don't risk. I play it safe. Or I risk overmuch just to prove to myself that I am not afraid. Being afraid is also a shame that I want to avoid. Surely there is some way to feel safe. I can't stand to think there is not.

This deadly estrangement is characterized by the addiction of the heart that cries out that **I want to be cared for**. I seek groups of people who will assist me with my need for safety, and I can be an extremely loyal friend or co-worker in such circumstances. I like jobs and groups where loyalty buys the safety I crave.

This deadly estrangement is characterized by this trap of the will: **I retreat from bold actions & controversial statements**. Without even thinking about it, my automated will skips opportunities to push the boundaries that I really want to push or feel I should push. I come up regretting my weakness and caution. Sometime I get so disgusted with my weakness, that I do rash things. Perhaps I have even learned to hide my fear in rash actions that others would seldom do. The more I learn about myself the more this trap of will disgusts me, yet I fear to break out of it. Or at least I don't break out of it, and my impulses seem mysterious to me.

This deadly estrangement is the typical mode of Escape from Reality by Enneagram Personality Type 6

As a mode of escape, personality type 6 is an escape from the *Autonomous Strength* aspect of authenticity.. Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have an obsession for it. Personality type 6 persons are worried and fearful about being inadequate, not being successful, not being liked, not being accepted by their chosen peers. They are sensitive persons, sensitive to others and sensitive to their own gifts and failures. This sensitivity turns up more and more evidence that one is sub par. So persons of personality type 6 tend to make extra efforts toward being loyal and friendly and useful in order to compensate for this underlying panic about self-worth. Some 6 personalities risk dangerous things to prove to themselves and others that they are not fearful, not worthless, but rather bold, unusual, and worthy of attention. So the 6 personality may manifest as a compliant office worker or as a daring mountain climber, stunt driver, or other impulsive risk taker.

Having a personality that emphasizes sensitivity need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their sensitivities with compassion. Perhaps Princess Diana and Jack Lemmon show us the outgoing and compassionate 6. The escape is an identification with self-images of depreciation, weakness, unsureness, unlovableness, and so on. These perceptions of self are substituted for the autonomous strength that is the true nature of the profound human. What is lacking is allowing the invincible quality of this deep self to undergird the sensitivities about the inevitable weaknesses and foibles had by all of us finite creatures.

Panic is a quality that describes this estrangement, for type 6 personalities tend to believe they are flawed and limited, weak and poor, and thus not up to the challenges that come to them. What is missing is an enduring experience of that solitary strength for opposing all falseness and genuinely loving the essential, honest, and invincible authenticity with an affirmation that knows no limits.

The Authenticity of Autonomous Strength

Autonomous Strength is the core aspect of our deep solitude. By “*Autonomous*” we mean that we are realizing the solitary dimension of being who I am, and that we are moving beyond the need for other-directedness of any sort. We see that we have no need for approval from or status among other people. Further, we have no need to be judged in terms of our outward achievements, physical qualities, or mental capabilities. By the term “*Strength*” in this formula, we mean an inward quality of personal invincibility that no outward events can shake.

In the Hindu collection of goddesses, there is a deity named “Kali.” She is pictured with a two-edged sword and a belt of skulls. She is seen as a goddess of destruction, but when we access her meaning more fully, we understand her as the slayer of all falsehood. When we arrive at the deep places of our autonomous being, we experience the sword of Kali slicing away every self image, every habit of the personality, every identification with the temporal aspects of our being, every hope of avoiding the full impact of our finitude or escaping from it. As all these impediments are slain, we find our true strength. We are Kali. We are the invincible truth of our existence. Nothing whatsoever can touch us or oppose us. We are supported by the Ground of our Being – supported as an unstoppable fire of destruction toward everything that is false, illusory, partial, incomplete, weak, silly, sentimental, or foolish. Swinging the sword of Kali is what it means to have the *courageous heart* of loving our True Selves.

Too often we interpret “love of self” as an indulgence of our present set of understandings, desires, or patterns of living. Such love is the love of a false self. The true “No Self” is an enigma, a mystery, a vastness of potentialities that baffles us and challenges us and scalds us with the hot flames of overwhelming demand to be more than we are comfortable with being. We cannot claim to love ourselves if we flee from this inherent awesomeness of our being – if we flee to some comfortable self-construction of our own making.

This *Autonomous Strength* can break through our personality habits as a *state of being* that happens to us from time to time. And we can also come to realize this strength as a permanent *quality* of the “No Self” that we never need to leave.

Exercises:

1. With what descriptions of estangment do you identify in these readings?
2. What descriptions of authenticity most caught your attention.
3. Do with a partner (or by yourself) the following repeating-question exercise:
(One partner asks the question, listens to an answer, says thank you, and repeats the question. The exploring partner keeps answering this same question over and over. Do this for five minutes. Then switch questioner and answerer and repeat the process.)

How do you want to be cared for?

Repeat the process with this question:

When do you resist bold actions?

4. Share or write your reflections on this session.