

Part Four

**Moving Toward
Full
Realization**

Chapter 14

The Penetration of Personality & the Initial Experiences of Spirit

As you read the descriptions of the nine personality types in chapters 11, 12, and 13, you may find that you identify with several of the nine types. This is not a sign of confusion. To some degree each of us may participate in all nine ways of escaping from our essence. All nine of the personality fixations are human potentials, and each of us may participate in all forms of human perversion.

Furthermore, each of us can access all nine aspects of Spirit Being. Essentially and potentially, each of us are the whole of our profound humanity, our Spirit Being, the Holy Spirit. We are all three aspects of Trust, all three aspects of Love, all three aspects of Freedom. This is our essential Being. This is the essential Being of every human being. This is who we are. This is our Spirit Home. Humanity has departed from this Home in nine characteristic ways. One of those ways of departure characterizes the fundamental pattern of each of our lives

Even though it may seem at first that we might be several of the personality types, when we know ourselves well and understand the enneagram model well, we discover that one of these nine types is the foundational pattern in our life. Our early childhood was what it was, and we cannot change that. Our basic personality type was set in the first few years of our life. So it is important to discern what personality type is our basic fixation.

We start home from wherever we are. Typically we start our Spirit Journey in a deep identification with our particular personality, our particular default pattern for living. The enneagram is a chart of the nine major types of personality fixation. Each of us can find ourselves primarily located in one of these nine fixations. Each of us begins our journey home by dealing with our primary personality fixation.

If we are not yet clear which personality type is foundational for us, this can have two causes: (1) it may be that we do not yet understand this model of personality types clearly enough; and (2) it may be that we do not yet understand our self well enough to be sure how to place our self accurately within this array of types.

Understanding this model of personality types takes some time and deep inward attention. Also, we need to keep in mind that the enneagram is only a model, a rational model created by human minds. This model is only a lens to look through at our real life experiences. This lens (and my description of it) is not perfect. Even with its imperfections, it may take time to get this lens adjusted so we can look through it to see the actual processes it was created to call to our attention.

More important than learning the enneagram model is seeing the real life experiences that we are looking at through this lens. We typically think we know ourselves better than we do. An irrefutable bit of evidence against our claim to self knowledge is our own memory. We understand ourselves more clearly than we once did. Like those earlier understandings of our self, our current understanding of our self will, if we live long enough, also be transcended.

Each of us began our life as an infant with enormous and unique genetic endowments. These genetic endowments, our earliest environments, and our own responses combine to produce the first layers of our personality. While each

personality development is unique, it takes one of the nine patterns described in Part Three. Upon these earliest layers of personality development, the later layers are built. Each layer of personality begins with the genetic endowments and the earlier layers and builds additional habits on top of the earlier layers of habits. These later layers are also influenced by environments and chosen through specific responses.

A personality is somewhat like a very complex computer program. Its many layers of code make complex functioning possible, but this established program also limits what the computer can do as long as it operates within this set program. Our program of personality has enabled our survival and provides functionality for our current living. At the same time our personality is a program that limits us. This personality program hides and overrides our full potential, the potential that is being pointed to with such words as Spirit Being, personal essence, true nature, Holy Spirit, Trust, Love, and Freedom. Each personality type was built under the primary influence of one of the nine aspects of Spirit, but as the personality became a program it masked Spirit, hid Spirit, and became a substitute for Spirit.

As adults we each have a long history of personality development and a very complex personality pattern. We typically identify with that complex personality pattern and act it out more or less unconsciously. To the extent that this is so, we are like robots programed to perform in predictable ways. To a large extent human life is the unconscious interaction of a vast group of such robots acting out their set patterns. This leads to the familiar tragedies that we see portrayed in ancient Greek plays, Shakespearian plays, and other great dramas.

Some connection with our Spirit Being may persist through childhood development and moderate our adult robothood, but let us assume that we have on our hands an adult who is almost entirely unconscious with regard to his or her Spirit Being. How does this person's Spirit awakening begin?

It begins with a penetration of that persons personality habits. Many of the stories of Jesus have to do with Jesus uttering teachings aimed at particular personality patterns. The personality pattern that Jesus' teachings engage the most appears to be the type-one personality who thinks he knows what is good and what is evil. The scribes and Pharisees typically embody this type. They come to Jesus complaining about what he does on the Sabbath day. Jesus penetrates their personality with sayings like, "The Sabbath was made for human beings not human beings for the Sabbath." Or they express their shock and revulsion that Jesus is eating meals with tax collectors, riffraff, and other Jewish law breakers. Jesus says to them, "It is the sick, not the well, who have need of a doctor." Perhaps the most classic story about penetrating a type one personality is the following one in which Jesus is having a meal and discussion with a Pharisee who has apparently invited him for a visit and has a modicum of interest in him and his wisdom.

While they are there at the table, a woman comes in and begins washing Jesus' feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. The Pharisee recognizes her as a woman of the streets who has probably made her living providing bodily comforts to the male population. He is repulsed that Jesus is permitting such a woman to touch him. Jesus recognizes the Pharisee's feelings and asks to speak to him. The Pharisee consents, and Jesus tells a story about two men who owe another man a debt. One of them owes a big debt and the other a small debt. The lender forgives them both. Jesus asks the Pharisee, "Which one do you suppose will love the lender the most?" The Pharisee

gives the obvious answer that it is the one who owes the most. Then Jesus points out that this woman whose sins are very great is showing great love. He also points out that nothing comparable is being shown him by the Pharisee. Jesus concludes this encounter with this penetrating remark, "Those who are forgiven little, love little, and those who are forgiven much, love much." The Pharisee is left to ponder whether his harshness toward the woman and his lack of love for Jesus indicates layers in his own life that need forgiveness.

Here is some other examples of New Testament stories in which Jesus penetrates someone's personality with a challenge to that person to access their Spirit Being:

[Jesus] said to another man, "Follow me." And he replied, "Let me go and bury my father first." But Jesus told him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. You must come away and preach the Kingdom of God."
(Luke 9:59-60; J. B. Phillips translation)

Jesus sees that this man's personality box includes an attachment to family obligations. For this man to enter the "Kingdom of Spirit" he must turn lose of that old pattern. Jesus' words penetrated his box, his sense of Reality.

Another man said to him, "I am going to follow you, Lord, but first let me bid farewell to my people at home." But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts his hand to the plow and then looks behind him is useless for the kingdom of God."
(Luke 9:61-62; J. B. Phillips translation)

In this case, the man wants to make everybody he loves feel good about his decision to be a Spirit person. This is a violation of the wholeheartedness required for living the Spirit Life. Jesus penetrates his sense of Reality

And while he was still saying this, a woman in the crowd called out and said, "Oh what a blessing for a woman to have brought you into the world and nursed you." But Jesus replied, "Yes, but a far greater blessing to hear the word of God and obey it."
(Luke 11:27-28; J. B. Phillips translation)

Jesus does not deny the truth of what the woman says about him, nor does he reject her enthusiasm. But he cuts through this woman's images of subservience and challenges her to be a Spirit woman herself and not simply an enabler of someone else. Her flight from Spirit is not her vision of the greatness of Jesus, but her reluctance to see herself as **the very same greatness** waiting to be enacted. If she saw for herself what Jesus was pointing to, left behind her old images, and received her welcome into the clan of Great Spirit Beings, then Spirit would be penetrating her personality cocoon. We can only guess from this short story what this woman's personality type was. But here is my guess. This women was probably a personality type two. She sounds like a helper, an aggressive outgoing person who says what she feels to encourage others but does not appreciate fully the dynamics of her own inner being.

In all these and other stores, individuals in Jesus' presence are being provoked to look beyond their habituated patterns and see the hidden Kingdom, the Spirit Being, the personal essence, the Awesome Spirit that is our true human nature. In such initial experiences of Spirit, one is not asked to demolish personality or to be completely detached from personality or even to stop identifying with one's personality. One is asked to simply allow a bit of Spirit into one's consciousness. This is the way the Spirit

journey begins for each of us. We are identified with our personality, but some other human being, some life experience, some new awareness penetrates our personality pattern and enables us to breathe a whiff of fresh air from the boundless expanse of Spirit. From the viewpoint of the personality this boundless expanse may seem more like a bottomless void.

We may continue for many years of our life journey experiencing, from time to time, whiffs of Spirit interrupting our personality pattern. Perhaps one day per month we hear something that awakens a bit of Spirit. Perhaps one week in a year we attend a retreat that provides some rain for our Spirit desert. Perhaps over time our personality comes to have a number of holes punched in it. Perhaps some of these holes are big enough that we are not able to patch them or forget them. We become a personality with Spirit holes. We are still basically identified with our personality, but there are holes and the holes are getting larger and more numerous. Perhaps we wake up one day to realize that our personality is so ragged that it has more holes than cloth. On such a day we are ripe for a shift to phase two of our journey of Spirit.