

# THE ENNEAGRAM FOUNDATION

The Enneagram is a system that can assist us in our healing and achieving a sense of wholeness by orienting us toward our fundamental nature as a spirit (or essence), soul, and personality. Essence may be thought of as pure potential when at rest and as the soul when operating under a particular form of dynamic expression. Similarly, personality may be thought of as dynamic expression of the soul. Fundamentally, the relationship of personality to soul is the same as soul to spirit. This is only realized to the degree personality reflects soul intentions through its expression in the world of being and doing.

However, the reality is that as our sense of self or personality develops from infancy onward, we often acquire coping mechanisms or adaptive styles to address our challenges resulting from maturing in a less-than-optimal inter-relating environment. Additionally, as we go through life, we encounter various disappointments, hardships, and unloving interactions with others, which in turn solidify or augment our defensive strategies and add to our ability to feel whole.

According to many interpretations, the Enneagram operates through what is considered to be a series of sacred numbers. At the core, the Enneagram seeks to provide us with insight through the sacred laws of 3s and 7s. Though fundamentally the Divine is Unity, often it is expressed in esoteric teachings as being manifest in three aspects. One trinity relationship can be thought of as consisting of essence, soul, and personality, in which soul is a creative extension of essence or spirit, and personality is a creative extension or expression of the soul.

Similarly, from the perspective of the not-so-ideal world we live in, the law of three can be said to manifest as The Law of Choosing. This law consists of the elements of the soul or the higher mind, the decision maker, and the distorted image of the higher mind or ego (this is not the Freudian or psychological ego). The Enneagram assists us in sifting through the fear-based distortions created by the ego to receive communication from our soul and glean our essence.

In other terms, as the spirit (or essence) takes on the dynamic form we call the soul, so too does the soul take on a dynamic form in its various manifest expressions. One of these expressions is what we refer to as personality. What we think of as our personality in most instances is in fact a composite of soul expression and adaptive style. The soul portion of our expression reflects divine will and intention, while our adaptive style, which is fundamentally generated out of fear, causes distortion in the expression of divine will and intent. The result is what we experience moment to moment; i.e., contradiction and conflict of mood and mind, and of our intent and action.

As a rough analogy, think of essence as water. It is pure potential, limitless, and unbounded by either form or desire. Accordingly, think of soul as a pond. Its shape, various subtle undercurrent motions, and changes in depth are the form or expression of a particular aspect of that soul, the soul's personality. Finally, the waves or ripples on the pond – produced by external forces – with their varying amplitudes and frequencies can be considered to be our coping strategies. When we exclusively identify with defenses or see them as commensurate with true personality characteristics, we are misidentifying with the false self or personality instead of with our true essence. In summary, essence or spirit expresses itself through our soul as our soul *attempts* to express itself through that aspect of ego referred to as our personality.

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