

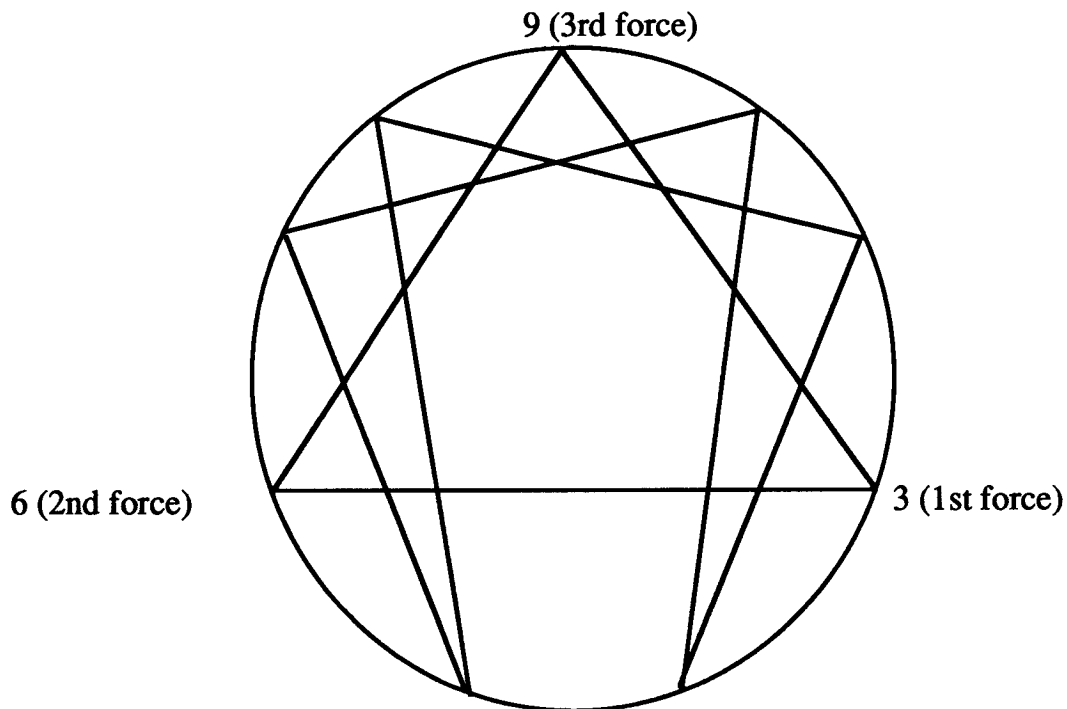
"Know Thyself"

Aim

Student "H"

1995

Mentally walk the circumference of the Enneagram, meeting each type and seeing the Tao, the light and the dark. What qualities within each type will assist and/or oppose me; slow my progress, where are the fallacies? If one knows the enemy, one can defeat them. Realize the impersonal nature of the resistances I will face, tap into anger when necessary like a mythological bag of talismans or tricks that were always provided to help the heroes meet their challenges. Also realize that I will need super effort for Four, Five and Six. Put this aim in my own body, realizing that all types exist within me and if I am able to surmount second force in each of these types as I meet them without, I will also be able to do the same within when I am faced with them in life.



Point One - The Perfectionist

As a One, categorized as the Perfectionist, I have an innate love of accomplishment; completing projects, done to perfection. I'm not quite sure of where to locate the legal and acceptable standard of international perfection, but my ego feels certain that my own standard is pretty darn accurate. My entire being resonates and rejoices when some task is completed and all elements are in their place. I may experience a magic carpet surge of psychically soaring above our profane bonds; all is right with the world, if only for the moment.

Invariably, because this is life after all, I am sometimes required to sacrifice my standards of perfection due to time constraints, other people's desires or financial limitations. Over the years, I have developed the capability of letting go and accepting the notion that my own level of [glorious] perfection is not always attainable nor required. This had to occur because I would become catatonic on December first, frozen like little Nell tied to the tracks, watching the oncoming Christmas locomotive, and all of the tasks I had mentally set before myself to complete before the due date. I became a Christmas statistic for the criminally depressed and I knew that if I didn't let go and get realistic about the holidays, I'd be a certifiable Christmas fruitcake by mid life.

My most difficult trial is not in the sacrificing of details, embellishments and comforts, but in the awesome task of fielding my inner Nazi, *the critic*. This is where the real battle begins; nowhere to run, nowhere to hide. If I'm in the kitchen, preparing breakfast, the critic will insist that I perform ten other things before I leave for work. ".....and don't forget to empty the catbox, send that birthday card, do a load of laundry, call your accountant, pay the phone bill and pick up dried cranberries on your way." Or if I'm writing that thank you note, I will hear, "You know, you really should be putting up the Christmas lights; you're wasting time writing when you need to be doing the lights."

My one and only salvation has been to focus directly on the present moment and strong-arm the Nazi back and away from my consciousness. This is about as easy as climbing Mt. Everest in stilettos, but if I am able to bring my awareness to the texture, shape and color of the lettuce as I'm washing it, the reflection of light on the running water and the temperature and sensation of the water

on my hands, I can sometimes halt the barrage of demands that my own psyche imposes upon me. I will pretend I live in a monastery, with no other aim but to see the sacred in every aspect of life, making each task the only reason for human existence; to become God's sensory contact.

Another objective for me to comprehend is that true perfection in life means the integration and acceptance of what my ego would term imperfection. The symbol of the Tao is the image I try to always remember; light inside the dark and dark inside the light. One is the reason for the other. Real perfection is the balancing of each and the understanding that life will never exist without ongoing change. My only responsibility is to alter my perceptions of so-called good and evil and to "know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em." For a One to realize the truth of the Tao, having to sometimes blunder to gain a measure of consciousness, is a difficult maneuver indeed, but one that needs to be assimilated and accepted.

The biggest gift for me has been making friends with my shadow; to observe my anger and resentment without judgment and decipher the inner wisdom from ego. Just acknowledging the fact that I *owned* a shadow, was a shock that took me four years to come to terms with. She has become not only an ally to me, but the conscious enlistment of my shadow when I know I'm about to have a confrontational experience or deal with an adversary and/or a formidable presence has been quite exhilarating; something I've never had the pleasure of experiencing before. Acknowledging my shadow's wisdom has given me the asset of being able to think on my feet when challenged, whereas in the past, I would crumble into dust or go into avoidance at the mere *inference* of discord. I pushed my shadow away from my consciousness, unaware that I was cutting off a lifeline of energy and support in favor of being a "good" person who never got angry. Thankfully I've grown and matured and if one could imagine the merger of Little Mary Sunshine with Leona Helmsley, perhaps then one might perceive the dichotomy and wisdom of the multiple facets of our human structure.

Point Two - The Giver

As I throw a rope out to the Two, I am met with an abundance of help, sharing, friendliness, flattery, empathy, familiarity; a "strength in numbers" attitude that buoys my spirits. Since I am flavored by Two, I possess an understanding of this nature that also permeates my being.

Unlike the past, however, when I would be moved to "pedestalize" this Two individual, my inclination is now to *proceed with a modicum of caution*, knowing that the compulsion to give and to flatter stems from unconscious and manipulative motives as well as a loving spirit. Crossing a Two can prove to be a shock if one is not prepared. It is imperative to remind my ego that second force exists by law, and that this particular type of flattery may lead to disaster if I am drawn in and seduced by it without keeping a steadfast awareness of both sides of the Two (and the Tao).

The Two's insecurities and resultant helpfulness originates from an anxiety of being rejected or abandoned. Twos meld with others and assist to the point of self-forgetfulness until they feel that they have not been recognized properly or have not received thorough reciprocation. Angry that they have sold themselves short while giving to another without sufficient recognition, they may lash out with surprising venom, stunning the recipient who has probably become accustomed to a rather seductive and friendly giver.

One of the best things a Two can do to break the pattern of compulsive giving is to do kind works in secret for a period of time and observe just how much their giving is attached to the desire for recognition and for accolades.

Point Three - The Performer

Hooowee! Here we are in first force. Let's talk potential!! As I cast the rope toward the Three, I am always in awe of the apparent education and/or the wide range of talent that Three's seem to possess; intelligence, art, language, music, dance, charm, skill and aplomb. Ability and knowledge seem to flow from every pore and the list of credentials and experience appears to go on forever, but there is truth to the saying, "All that glitters. . ."

A Three gentleman hotly pursued me several years ago and was relentless for six months until I eventually turned around and told him that I felt ready to commit. He disappeared almost instantly in a Bugs Bunny cloud of cartoon dust, without a coherent explanation, except to say he was frightened that perhaps he was going to be subsumed by my world and personality, although he admitted that the area I live in and my circle of friends felt quite comfortable and even idyllic to him. He said that he was greatly intimidated by my involvement and dedication to a particular spiritual/psychological discipline, something that his soul was longing to do, but his ego refused to submit to. He had convinced himself of his own evolved spiritual superiority and that because he had read a stack of books relating to the spirit and/or psychology, that this alone qualified and armed him for substantial wisdom and intelligent conversation in this realm. When the knowledge stays primarily in the head and never brought down into the body, it provides grand intellectualism, but prevents actual feeling, which suited this Three's to a "T". This man is still running, mostly from himself, like a dog who has been sprayed by a skunk and dashes about to escape the smell.

I asked him to read the Enneagram, eager to share the wealth of information and to encourage him to look at his reluctances. He was aware that the book had great significance for me, and in an attempt to assert his independence, he exerted great effort to *avoid* the effort of reading the book, stating that he was "all of the above"; aloof and incensed that he might be typecast into any sort of mold. He was determined not to be emasculated by complying with my requests and continually dug his heels in when I urged him to follow through on some of the unfinished symphonies of his life.

His potentiality was wrapped tightly around him like a cloak, protecting his 'soft white underbelly' from the threat of exposure and possible emotional danger. His tendencies were to come rushing

forward with articulate and detailed letters filled with promises of friendship and adventure (although annoyingly, he would pad his letters with lengthy and boring recounts of his recent dreams to fill up space) and then he would cut off all ties and communication for weeks on end, disappearing into his own labyrinth to hide whatever it was that had attached itself to his being like the hunchback of Notre Dame. When he finally reemerged, weeks or months later, he would cheerily reach out again, expecting to be received as if nothing had ever happened, hoping his awkward disappearance had gone unnoticed.

This is a very unhappy, unfulfilled and rather unpopular gentleman. As he continues to race from woman to woman, hoping to find relief, each successive relationship provides him with greater emptiness in the way of lasting comfort. Sex, he feels, is his only mode of successful communication with a woman and he uses it like a carpenter would pick up a tape measurer and pencil.

The blessing of a Three is that they can be tremendously supportive, encouraging family, friends and co-workers, like a coach with his favored team. They possess the brilliant ability to promote with supreme conviction when a project shines with promise, avoiding failure at all costs. In this area of the country, one is apt to see an itinerant fellow by the side of the road with a hand lettered sign that says, "Will Work For Food". A Three's characterization of that would be, "Will Work For Material Rewards (and look good doing it)".

Still, a valuable trait that would help me to surmount the depths of languishing and self pity is the amazing aptitude that Threes possess, of suspending all feelings while a project is in full swing. No matter what the outside circumstances, a Three will plow ahead with such determination and a spirit of competition, reveling in the activity which serves several purposes, high and low, for a Three; a beneficial tunnel vision which gets the job done and completed with style, optimism and perfection. Moving center is a fabulous way to break a depressed state of anarchy and shake those paralyzing moods out of their lethargy.

Like a Five, Three's can withhold both themselves and material giving and must attempt to learn to give without the all-consuming fear of emptiness. Acts of kindness in secret would be most beneficial, as would reaching out toward trusted friends. Stay with therapy through second force, break through to the other side of the

ego's fear. Make aims to touch essence, the child, whether the experience provides a painful memory or a joyous one. Learn to play, alone and with others. Work with others in a group; soup kitchen, orphanage, nursing home.

Point Four - The Tragic Romantic

As I throw my rope out to the Four, they are usually in tears and/or in the middle of a sigh. The bittersweetness of a mood and the romance novel icing of longing has temporarily distracted the Four as they wistfully gaze out toward the horizon in the opposite direction; a self-generated daze that takes monumental effort to pull out of.

Bursting through a Four's reverie may not be met with immediate warmth, after all, there's a lot of juice and a certain pleasure in all that exaggerated emotion. "Help you??? Can't you see the pain I'm in?" Interrupting a good soap opera with real life and/or a sense of logic and assistance could be dangerous. If the Three and the Four would cross breed and exchange some of their qualities, who knows the glory that might emerge? Extract that overload of emotion from the Four and give it to the Three who is terrified to feel.

When I'm steeped in my Four and feeling sorry so for myself, I am perhaps at my most miserable ebb. When I am able to identify the dynamics of my state of woe, I treat my Four as an adult would a petulant child and I have found great success in the following:

- Eating half a pint of Ben and Jerry's Chunky Monkey (just kidding).
- Going into moving center, cleaning out closets, a vigorous walk, a project that involves physical effort.
- Call a non-Four friend, distract the mood, make a plan, go out, soak up nature, visit a toy store.
- Break the Sarah Bernhard posture and make a conscious effort to extend help to someone who *really* has viable problems. Put that empathy and compassion to work where it can thrive and be absolutely useful.
- Plunge into the present moment. Observe all aspects of the here and now. Take in as many impressions of the day as possible; list at length. Realize that a perceived pain is emotional and that everything else about life is generally copacetic. Find the abundance; the good.

that phone call, get in the car, go out; drive up a mountain road, visit a waterfall with someone. Understand that "lone wolf" is only attractive in detective novels and doesn't work effectively if one is to have a fulfilled life.

Locating a viable spiritual discipline will actualize those fantasies of attainment, but in a realistic fashion, rather than bolstering the ego with imagined spiritual superiority. Also, joining a group with other like-minded souls will help the Five begin to interact in a productive and healthy manner, aware of a support system when fear begins to clutch the ego. Aims which produce a "where is that in me?" sense of connection with others will help to dissolve a sense of false superiority.

Point Five - The Observer

Forget throwing a rope to a Five, you may wind up dangling for a very long time; you're on your own here. Some Fives may appear to be quite affable upon first meetings, but like the old Colegate television ads, there is a protective invisible shield, a hard-shell casing that protects them from invasion. A potential friend or lover will go "thunk!" many times before the Five will ever allow true intimacy. The world seems a dangerous thing to a Five and one may have to prove oneself before one is allowed into the outer courtyard of a Five's world, never mind the inner sanctuary. I have a relative who's a Five and she will get down on her hands and knees to avoid detection if the Jehovah's Witnesses unexpectedly come to the door. If I need to reach her for any reason, I have to phone her number, ring twice, hang up and dial again. "Who goes there; friend or foe?"

A smidgen of contact with another individual will be enough fuel to transport a Five miles down the road of perceived relationships. I tend to share the unenlightened Buddha complex with the point Five and at times (when I'm not overwrought with panic about not measuring up to the Work's standards) I may backslide into thinking that my involvement on the path has set me apart and above from the rest of the world which appears to be the adversary.

Like the Three, Fives are able to laser beam their attention on decisions or a project, no matter what's going on around them, because of their innate ability to detach from their innermost feelings. Thinking clearly under pressure is a coveted attribute. Great battle planners.

When I occasionally wander into my Fiveness, I may observe myself intellectualizing an idea to avoid true feeling. Vulnerability will sometimes feel like an impending execution at dawn. I have to remind myself that emotions will not kill, they will, in fact, purge and cleanse. Test this out until the fear is broken. Go to a profoundly moving film with friends. Bring Kleenex. The masses will not attack me for having feelings and/or emotions and generally the expression of these feelings is a relief, not only to me, but those around me who may benefit as well.

The cultivation of several trusted friends is of immense value when Fiveness takes over and one wants to retreat. Serve dinner to others. Going against isolation will help free someone who feels alone; make

shadow is tamed and used consciously, an individual will then possess a universe of intuition and protection from unexpected psychological attacks. If you know your own shadow, you will understand others as well. A person who learns karate because they want to protect themselves, develops such a strong serenity within from simply having the discipline infused into their being, that another's shadow will intuit a respectful distance where they might previously have had an aggressive tendency toward intimidation. Lower selves are cognitive.

If we know ourselves, we can also know when we are projecting our own content onto others. This is a very valuable aspect for all types, but particularly Sixes to learn. Therapy, meditation; a dedication to a spiritual cause, path, discipline, will enable us to know ourselves. Knowledge is definitely power in this case. Learning to work with others without suspicion and fear will enable the Sixes in us to experience a much more productive life and bring out those positive characteristics that a Six possesses:

- Excellent problem solvers
- Constructive advisors
- Loyalty beyond the pale
- Empathetic, unselfish, willing to be an unsung hero

Point Six - The Devil's Advocate

If Six is considered second force on the Enneagram, then the appropriate plan would be to fight fire with fire. Like befriending the archetypal New Englander, I may have to prove myself and my motives to a phobic Six before they'll grab my rope, but at least I won't have to storm the Five's castle walls just to be heard. To gain a Six's confidence and trust I must first determine the Six in me and then proceed from there, illustrating how we share similarities, sincerities and reservations. Consistent action speaks louder than words and this may prove to reassure a Six who may need time to develop a level of trust.

Sixes are as hard on themselves as they might be on others, cutting themselves very little slack, in spite of their various accomplishments and attributes. I can definitely relate! Going against judgment, again and again, will produce great tension, but will eventually help bring a Six into a more user friendly world, both inside themselves and dealing with others.

The Six's doubt and fear of punishment may lead to procrastination. I can relate again! My own level of perfection can sometimes keep me frozen and inactive because I fear that I may make an incorrect move. Meditate, ponder, feel the body's response. What feels comfortably responsive inside the body? Gut feelings one way or the other. How about a couple of baby steps in one direction? Nothing's written in stone. Couldn't hurt; worlds will not collapse!

Develop aims to go against fear and loathing of humanity and aims which will cultivate sharp intuitive senses. If one is going to be suspicious of another's motives, one might as well learn to detect insincerity and discern lower motives from higher ones by thoroughly studying human behavior; psychology. Reality test with others, again and again. Develop a heightened sense of higher and lower. Work one on one with children, tap into essence; accentuate the positive in life. Fight to free the imprisoned child trapped within the core of one's own being first and foremost, if one is going to fight for a worthy cause.

Utmost security lies within oneself if one chooses to face the jaws of the dragon and transform their fears into counterphobic attitudes. Befriend one's own shadow. See how the shadow within is far more fearsome than one could ever imagine in the outside world. If one's

Point Seven - The Epicure "

"Whistle a happy tune. . . and no one will suspect I'm afraid.", are befitting lyrics from the musical, "The King and I". The Seven modus is to "reach out and move toward" no matter how timid, reluctant or fearful they feel. A Seven is not only likely to grab onto my rope with great vigor, but they will most likely have a picnic blanket laid out, baked brie and a bottle of Dom Perignon ready and waiting after the trek. "Let's Party!!" "You're a Pisces?? Hey me too!"

As a One, I truly enjoy my Seven wing and curiously, after partaking of a particularly heartfelt and lovely event; a fabulous wedding, front row seats at a concert, a Christmas Eve tour through an historical mansion, complete with a hundred decorated Christmas trees, chamber music, archival treasures from every corner of the world and good cheer from floor to ceiling, I will awaken the next morning, fully in my Four, sad and longing for the sensation to continue or lamenting that I don't do enough socializing or take more time out to enjoy life. Well, at least we now know I've had a good time. "How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm, after they've seen Parreeeee???"

This is where I am required to apply all the present-moment aims I can possibly think of. "I am H.....I'm in the Work, I'm brushing my teeth. Well thank God I've got teeth to brush, eyes to see, legs to walk, thank God for running water, electricity, and all the comforts of home. I'm in good health, I have a wonderfully abundant life; nothing is wrong.

Inner stop is a very effective way for me to plug directly into the moment and derive a vivid and positive boost of energy. Fantasy was my ally when I was a child and my fantasy world helped to buffer the disappointments and dynamics of a family life blown to bits by alcohol-related events. Today, however, fantasy, unless I use it to enhance my artwork, serves no purpose but to siphon away valuable time and make the present moment seem flat and boring. My quest has become the conscious halting of fantasy whenever I catch myself cruising at high emotional altitudes. Stay in the present, find the joy in life and within myself. Remember that second force exists in every aspect of life; it's unavoidable. Stay in second force, stay with perceived boredom, feel the tension of wanting to bolt, find a thread of interest and hope within that second force. Look for the fear that promotes the flurry of activity and

makes a Seven start to run; to want to escape. Once the fear has been tapped, third force or resolution is not far away.

When I find that I have a reserve of energy, I must always be vigilant that I don't race my mental motor, listing a million chores, events and details to accomplish. Zoom, zoom, zoom....flying too high with too many imagined *faits accomplis* and the inevitable frozen lock on my psyche that always follows. Too many choices, options, tasks and where and how to start?? Aaahhhhh!!! Who needs enemies when I have the world's foremost hyperactive, driven social director living inside? I have to remember to stay with one thing at a time until each item has been dealt with, no matter what. It helps me to itemize all that has been done in a day to visibly illustrate that the hours were filled productively. Again, present moment aims are my only hope during these times and I have discovered that there is gold in the performing of each daily task.

Feeling special, superior, above the masses? Make an aim to become invisible, plain, mundane, a drop in the ocean of life, one among many. Sacrifice unique dress, food, music and art and/or an effervescent personality.

On the other hand....need a really effective antidote for a dubious event; funerals, a bogus wedding, a wicked group therapy session? Take two Sevens and call me in the morning. Sevens have a way of jump starting a playful momentum into a staid or even morose group of people, working congeniality like there was no tomorrow.

When feeling positively Sevenish, I seem to possess a natural inclination toward finding the connecting thread woven through life's tapestry, whether this thread links various spiritual disciplines and teachings, or whether I am observing opposing political party members, pummeling each other's integrity, somehow I can always manage to grab onto parallels and relatedness in the valley of the shadow of doubt. This attribute helps me to see and feel a sense of hope in what appears to be a disjointed world, full of conflicts, opposites, suspicious fears and accusatory hatreds.

I've discovered within the past two years that I'm terrified of being irretrievably trapped by a relationship or a commitment. If a man who I find unappealing as a romantic interest makes a concerted cast in my direction, my entire body will twinge with dread, as if I were a slave at auction. If past lives have any credence I'm sure I was part

of a harem in the Ottoman Empire days. If so, the sultan must have been a dweeb because my entire being goes on "red alert" when I'm shown a certain level of unwanted attention, mentally fleeing into a quiet state of revulsion, as if I had no say in the matter whatsoever. During the last year, I have become quite adept at stating my case for independence with calm and controlled conviction; an ability that is serving me well. Again, in a similar vein, a thoughtless neighbor decided to park her car behind me one evening because she knew that I was bedridden with the flu. She then left the house for several hours with friends, hemming my car into an immobile spot, assuming that I would not be going far (she rarely takes emergencies into consideration). I tore into her the next day, furious that she had been so inconsiderate. She was so shocked to finally meet up with my shadow anger that she fled, I slammed the door and we avoided each other like the plague for months after that. Ah, the joys of interacting! All's well that ends well and we patched things up in good time, but it allowed me to see my own fury at the idea of being trapped.

Point Eight - The Boss

Throwing my rope to an Eight generally means that they will expect a comparable favor in return and will let me know it up front. "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." For me personally, I have always been intimidated by Eights because of my inclination toward accommodation. In the past, I have felt consumed by Eights and had no idea of how to eventually break the grip of possession, obligation and/or domination. Also, the tough exterior had always put me off because I could perceive no substance with which to relate; the connection always seemed remote, aloof and superficial. Ironically, it was a conscious Eight who taught me how to think on my feet, create boundaries, approach an Eight/One relationship with a maturity and healthy balance of give and take. Even more ironic is the fact that my problematic neighbor is an Eight also, but totally unconscious of her attempts at manipulation with her blind and inflexible assumptions being absolutely correct.

Ones share the characteristic with Eights of seeing their opinion, decision or action as the perfect choice, but unlike Eights, we Ones don't always take that domination stance and we *always* question our opinions to the point of inaction.

Eights and Ones are anger types and share the aspects of justifiable, righteous indignation. A most appropriate aim to curb this momentum is the no-anger-right-or-wrong-aim, combined with the Thumper aim of "do (and say) unto others...".

Point Eight seemed to be the remotest tundra of experience for me until I began working on myself and developing a relationship and an understanding of the dynamics of my shadow. I can honestly say that this revelation has made a huge difference in my relationships and my life in general, all for the very best. Where I used to shy away from or totally avoid any confrontation whatsoever, I now am able to sit quietly and prepare a plan ahead of time. If a situation manifests unexpectedly, I am usually able to use logic as a way of moving through a situation, sometimes buying time to ponder an issue and getting back to someone the next day. My shadow has developed a refinement that has allowed me to become more fluid in a disagreement or challenging situation. These seemingly simple tools have broken a lifetime bondage for me that has changed my life profoundly.

Learning that an Eight will often use a fight to promote intimacy was a revelation for me. Fight?? Who wants to fight? Are you crazy?? Well, I've had a handful of really good (and necessary) fights over the last couple of years that were positively exhilarating. Who knew? Yup, the worm has definitely turned. I no longer need or want a partner who is my warden, guard, protector, controller and father figure. I am learning to become my own defender, relying on the precepts of the Work to guide me through specific and sometimes deep and dangerous waters.

In the realm of vulnerability, I share the Eight's reluctance of touching their essence level for fear of feeling the fright and pain of childhood betrayal. Tying an aspect of personality behind one's back to flush essence out is an effective way of dealing with the hard shell of protection. Sacrificing our ego defense mechanisms will leave one feeling rather tender out in the world, but will create positive and strong changes that cannot be reversed.

The beauty of the Enneagram is that one is able to clearly see that we all have our scripts and we are all souls who have been encased in very specific body and personality type situations which we must all work within the boundaries of. It was reading about Eights and Fives that made me see and/or understand the importance of honoring the differences between the types and not expecting others to see, hear, feel and think (perfectly) as I do. The necessity of knowing oneself in order to be able to understand others is a supreme art form in an of itself. How do we balance compassion with self-preservation? With a great deal of study, aim and undaunted effort.

Point Nine - The Mediator

It is somewhat difficult for me to be objective about point Nine because my former husband is a Nine and we still have many unresolved issues. He is a Nine who exhibited many overt Eight characteristics in the realm of psychological manipulation and control. I was damned if I did, damned if I didn't. He was ten years older than me and couldn't decide if he wanted a daughter or a mother. He had a set of double standards that perpetually placed me between a rock and a hard place, week after week, in our marriage, and finally put enough stress at a very frayed point which eventually snapped the cord irreparably.

On the other hand, I've just made friends with a Nine woman who recently moved into our area this past year and I am more able to see what I share with a Nine as well as how I differ through my relationship with her. If Nine is third force, the aspect of resolution on the Enneagram, perhaps my involvement with this woman will enable me to make sense of the disparate parts of my marriage and finally let go of my righteous anger toward my former husband. This would be freedom and after all, a fitting resolution. Since Nines are flavored by Ones, we share many similarities that should help to bring about a sense of empathy if I can get beyond my own (perceived justifiable) resentment.

I know that when I am overloaded and overwhelmed by the apparent details of life itself, I freeze like a deer in the headlights, not quite knowing how to move in time to avoid the chrome bumper of life. This I share completely with Nines. In an effort to counteract his passivity, my ex would sometimes take any action at all, even if it was inappropriate, just to get off the dime. I think he felt positively terrified at the expected male role of provider and although he made a very bountiful living in a creative profession, he was always living in fear of failure, not knowing how to balance bread winning with living and simple enjoyment. We were both workaholics who just didn't know how to plan and savor recreation for the joy of the experience, where the vacation or the time off wasn't connected to or revolved around his work.

I have made it an aim for this new year to take time off once a week and go out into nature, walk, observe, smell, breathe in life. This has always been restorative for me in the past, but I have developed a

driven-ness during the last few months that has left me tired and worn. I wind up feeling guilty if I'm not working and/or producing all the time and it's up to me to break this genetic pattern.

Like Nines, I prefer peace at any price, but I also realize that life is always going to produce situations of change, discord, upheaval and adjustment. We are humans after all, and diverse in so many ways. The art of balancing change with resolution is attainable for us all.

- "God allows evil for good", may perhaps be a way to perceive change, whether it be overtly glorious or frighteningly ominous.
- Learn to value another's opinion without being controlled by them.
- Develop the ability to take action while discerning the appropriate reasons. Ask: "What is my aim, here?" "What are the principles involved in this situation?" Discern priorities from the extraneous.
- Go against the feeling of futility, the "Oh why bother, no one cares anyway" syndrome that produces that debilitating psychological paralysis.
- Go against verbal and physical habit.
- Apply present moment aims, plug into the here and now.
- Detect the cause for rage, go back to childhood essence, free the kid.
- Observe present rage, chart, no judging. Then sacrifice: no anger, right or wrong. Go against self-pity.
- Externally consider another and make a conscious aim to let go of the past. Break all identifications. "God allows evil for good."