

## ENNEAGRAM REFLECTIONS

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### Month Three

#### FACING OUR SHADOW: ENNEAGRAM OF LIES

*“There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn’t true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true.” — Søren Kierkegaard*

I would like to begin by telling a story about an Enneagram One and the way she developed a Big Lie that she formulated herself and which ended up causing her all kinds of trouble and suffering. She was born into a world that she believed would be joyful, full of pleasure and adventure and unity. She liked her family! Before long, she found out about a couple of difficult things. Her parents had really wanted a boy! In order to get any attention, she would have to be a perfect little girl, cause no trouble in the house, and really be accommodating so that she could fit what she was experiencing into a reality that was not full of pleasure, adventure and unity. She resented reality where no one seemed to care about her and her insides. She hid her dissatisfactions and did her best to pretend, burying the passion and anger, under her chief feature of resentment. After years of this belief and behavior, the overarching tone of her life was resentment for the disappointing human condition and the state of reality. If left to her, she could certainly do better than this! And, WOW! ...does she try to fix the flawed state of reality. This is how our Lie is born and nurtured. And how this E1 created a story in order to remove herself from the disappointment in her interior landscape and eventually got separated from her Divine Origin.

Please look at your Chart of Traits and consider the relationship between your Chief Feature and your Passion.

Many of us are familiar with these couple of teachings from R. Rohr:

-God is a dynamic creator, a verb as well as a noun.

-We all need to know that this wonderful thing called life is going somewhere and somewhere good. It *is* going someplace good because it came from goodness—a beginning of “original blessing” instead of “original sin.”

-The great mystics of all humankind *did not come to change the mind of our Creator about humanity*. It didn’t need changing. Our Creator has organically, inherently loved Creation from the moment it was created. Our prayerful discernment is *to change the mind of humanity about the Creator*.

-When we manage our lives from the Origin of Original Goodness, we have no need to defend ourselves with a “made-up” story that protects us from our experience rooted in a belief of not

enough, of being flawed, of us manufacturing goodness instead of receiving our innate goodness.

A WHOLE Incarnate World holds together the human and the divine. This becomes our mission, to express/manifest the Beloved in conscious human form. When we believe that we are inherently flawed, or weak, or spiritually disabled in any way, we are being fooled by our Enneagram Lies in both of Kierkegaard's viewpoints, both by believing what isn't true and refusing to believe what is true.

Enneagram Wisdom can act as an instrument to lead us to uncover the Lies we tell ourselves which are based on what we developed as survival techniques when we were kids. A Universal Lie that we all will be invited to deal with is a belief that we are not created whole and first need to improve ourselves. This is similar for all of us because these lies formed in response to experiences that *did* feel bad and unacceptable. When we're very young and experience a lack of support, connection, or safety (as all babies and young children experience at some points), it feels horrible and we are too young and undeveloped to do anything but create a survival strategy. These bad feelings are so strong that they compel us to form beliefs about ourselves, about others and about the world based on them. **That does not mean that they are accurate in a broader sense.**

This is where we begin to build the character trait of our avoidance. Even if 95% of the time our caregivers and environments were supportive, this typically fades into the background because our focus of attention goes to preventing ourselves from touching those terrible feelings again. And many of us are still doing this in our 40's and 50's and, unfortunately, beyond! Of course, the more severe the deficits in our caregiver and in our environment, the more dearly we will feel the need to cling to the beliefs we formed. When will we free ourselves to say "thank you" and move into a more mature and self-regulated maturity. We not only survived but we are together today curious about our Spirituality. We did pretty darn well!

An example of this development for E4 could be in feeling a lack of attunement and mirroring from a parent. At E4 when we feel "not seen," we feel profoundly untethered and disconnected. This traumatizes the sensitive nervous system and we become organized around how to never feel this disconnection again, while at the same time installing the belief that the nature of life is disconnection and abandonment. I thus set out to live the lie that I am intrinsically disconnected from others and/or from a spiritual source. I set my life in service of trying to find "the missing elements of happiness" believing that I never will.

*"Of all the liars in the world, sometimes the worst are our own fears." —Rudyard Kipling*

We want to know these Enneagram Lies of strategic survival so we can become free of the obscurations that are deluding the deep truths about who we are and how the Divine plan was

formed. We carry fear of people, fear of God, and much raw, free flowing anxiety. Fear is possibly our main obstacle to both Spiritual freedom and Sincere prayer.

The Lies are delusions, distortions, contractions of a Jewel of Revelation that appears as YOU and which you have lost track of because of your avoidance of chaos, pain, rejection, (look at the Traits again and step even closer to your avoidance)

Our ego's viewpoint is suited to assessing life on a particular level- that of ego functioning- how we show up in daily life going about our ordinary business. Our egos aren't built to accurately perceive what we sense as "Big Truth." Our ego is meant to help us adapt to the human world around us to meet what we see as its demands/requirements.

**On the egoic level, type-beliefs are lenses that predispose us to interpret things in a certain way.**

**On a vaster level, type-beliefs keep us from seeing the complex and deeper nature of life and what it's inviting us into.**

Nine Points: It's exciting to know that there is, without fail, an aspect of us that can see beyond our type structure and get a taste of how the world looks when we can soften our particular filters. We can feel into this aspect of our being through our Inner Observer, our compassionate and witnessing consciousness, which can both acknowledge our type's perspective, and see through, past and beyond it.

To access this capacity, it of course helps to *want* to see beyond our filters. And when we want to, it helps to know what to watch for. The Enneagram maps out common themes and stories we tell

These enneatype beliefs/lies are true in the sense that we've built our house-of-self on them, and it's a real enough house as far as houses go. These ideas give us principles to base our worldview on.

Over time, though, through life experience, we come to find that they don't hold up with the same sense of security that we originally relied on them for. Since our lens has been out of focus most of our lives, we have come to believe that our distorted perception is how things are. We usually adhere to the egoic point of view of reality because that is the way we formed the habit of surviving our circumstances. The ego goes so far as to attempt to force reality to fit how things are supposed to be according to the individual ego. (Almaas)

This makes our work obvious: to find out what our obscurations are and where our perceptions are deluded. We grow to see that working on ourselves is not a matter of getting someplace where our Creator will find us more acceptable but to reconnect with the Original Goodness we were created with.

While sometimes it can feel devastating to lose our old habitual reactions as our pillars, what if this is how it's meant to be? What if our ego-structure was meant to be scaffolding that allows us to mature? What if we could use this structure to allow us to build a dwelling based on sound materials and on a more solid foundation?

Here are a couple of quotations that might help...

*I have spoken at times of a light in the soul, a light that is uncreated and uncreatable... to the extent that we can deny ourselves and turn away from created things, we shall find our unity and blessing in that little spark in the soul, which neither space nor time touches.* Meister Eckhard, 13 c mystic

Ekhnath Easwaran (a 20<sup>th</sup> c. Indian-born spiritual teacher, author and translator and interpreter of Indian religious texts) claims that "if we could grasp the mystery of Eckhart's 'uncreated light in the soul' - surely no more abstruse than nuclear physics - the transformation in our thinking would set our world right side up. "Consider the Perennial Philosophy, having been taught from age to age in culture after culture. These principles are that 1) there is a "divine core of personality which cannot be separated from God, 2) "this divine essence can be *realized*, 3) "this discovery is life's real and highest goal, and 4) "when we realize this goal, we discover simultaneously that the divine within ourselves is one and the same in all - all individuals, all creatures, all of life.

Though many people refer to the Enneagram as a personality test, this phrase is limiting and therefore inaccurate. Personality tests often box in rather than *liberate*; they often encourage people to explain or excuse rather than *get curious*.

By contrast, the Enneagram is a framework that reveals ways we unwittingly box ourselves in with patterns that are often unconscious. Learning the Enneagram can support us in turning blind spots into opportunities to grow and develop; the map sheds light on our habits of thought, attention, and behavior—and reminds us we have choices.

As part of the human condition, we all have blind spots: things we cannot see about ourselves, things we *don't know* we don't know. How we grew up informed which blind spots we developed. As humans, we are wired to avoid pain, so we figured out ways to "make it" through whatever was difficult in our childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. Those "make it" strategies shaped what we pay attention to in the world and how we make sense of it. They are connected to what we learned about how to survive and thrive.

Learning the map of the Enneagram provides a vast amount of information about our habits and "make it" strategies; it makes the unconscious, *conscious*. With the shift to consciousness, we can act with greater wisdom and compassion. So, knowing one's type is just the opposite of

being boxed in or leaning on “this is just how I am.” **Learning to see with greater clarity how our egos operate empowers us to move beyond the confines of them.**

Dutch spiritual writer Henri Nouwen identified “three human lies” we believe about our identity—what he referred to as our *False Self*:

- I am what I do.
- I am what I have.
- I am what other people say or think about me.
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These lies strengthen our *ego* and mask our *essence*. We need our ego. It protects us, and we developed it over time for that reason...because we can't live in *essence* all the time. So, if these lies, or patterns of thought sound familiar...well then, you must be human.

Though each one of us travels a unique path, we share a common human pursuit to develop our character. And one way we do this is by investigating our essence—who we are beyond the three lies. Nouwen called this the pursuit of our *True Self*. At some point in life, most people become less interested in “polishing their mask” and more interested in the quality of their character. This is a marker of spiritual growth.

And here is a final reflection from Adi Da Samraj:

True change and advanced human adaptation are not made on the basis of any self-conscious resistance to old, degenerative, and sub-human habits. Change is not a matter of not doing something. It is a matter of doing something else, something that is inherently free, right, and pleasurable. We seek to enjoy the freedom to feel and participate in ways of functioning that are Right and New. The tendencies and patterns of your earlier adaptations are not wrong. They were appropriate enough in their own moment of creation, and there is no need to feel or despair about them. Efforts to oppose and change them are fruitless. These attempts are forms of conflict and they only reinforce the modes of ego possession. What is not used becomes obsolete whereas what is resisted attracts more energy. The creative principle of change is the relaxed introspection and awareness of existing tendencies, and the persistent, full orientation to regenerative functional patterns.

Reflect on the implications of God as dynamic creator, a verb as well as a noun. How might this concepts liberate you?

Day ends, and before sleep  
when the sky dies down, consider  
your altered state: has this day  
changed you? Are the corners  
sharper or rounded off? Did you  
live with death? Make decisions  
that quieted? Find one clear word  
that fit? At the sun's midpoint  
did you notice a pitch of absence,  
bewilderment that invites  
the possible? What did you learn  
from things you dropped and picked up  
and dropped again? Did you set a straw  
parallel to the river, let the flow  
carry you downstream?

-Jeanne Lohmann