



"A deep, wide range of insights to help both Enneagram students and newcomers discover the depth of the system and its many meaningful applications."

*- Tom Condon*

# Somebody? Nobody?

*The Enneagram, Mindfulness and Life's Unfolding*



*written by*

**Mary Bast, Ph.D. and CJ Fitzsimons, Ph.D**

*foreword by*

Jerome P. Wagner, Ph.D.

## Praise for *Somebody? Nobody?*

“Excellent. This book offers a deep, wide range of insights to help both Enneagram students and newcomers discover the depth of the system and its many meaningful applications.

By letting individuals speak through and about their personality styles, the book reveals their struggles and solutions. Plus, it guides readers down their own road to growing and changing and living a more complete life.”

— **Tom Condon**, Enneagram teacher and author

“Readers looking for insights on their own very human journey will find in this book a valuable resource for further examining their lives. Through the voices of individuals who have found the Enneagram to be an important part of their transformational journey, Mary Bast and CJ Fitzsimons illuminate the intriguing and paradoxical dynamic of experiencing oneself as “somebody” and “nobody.””

— **Roxanne Howe-Murphy, Ed.D.**, Author, *Deep Coaching: Using the Enneagram As a Catalyst for Profound Change*, and *Deep Living: Transforming Your Relationship to Everything That Matters through the Enneagram*

“There are now many books available on the Enneagram, describing different elements of the nine personality types or styles. Some of these books use first hand reports from people of the nine different Enneagram types to help explain what the experience of that type is like. But just describing the types, while valuable, will only take us so far when we are actually interested in genuine psychological and spiritual development. In *Somebody? Nobody? The Enneagram, Mindfulness, and Life’s Unfolding*, CJ and Mary have done something unique and important by focusing on each type’s first-hand reports of what brought real development. The stories they present are highly resonant, relevant, and make clear how key elements of the transformational journey of each type unfold in specific and personal ways. This book is a great contribution and resource for those using the Enneagram on the path of awakening.”

— Russ Hudson, **Co-author of *The Wisdom of the Enneagram***

“The Somebody / Nobody thread in this book is mirrored by the process people typically use to explore the Enneagram. When first introduced people pour over lists of characteristics of type to find out where they sit on the Enneagram. We need to be a Somebody first. It is only in workshop settings seeing and hearing exemplars of type that we can really get the dynamics of each point. Mary and CJ have made this leap in book form through the rich intelligent reporting of 18 awake and aware individuals who share the stories of their journeys through the lens of the Enneagram. The Enneagram is made human and whole and we can recognize ourselves. Having a practice or being on a path is not formulaic: it is alchemical, and these wonderful stories and rich commentary shine a light on the process of transformation.”

— **Sandy McMullen**, Artist / Author of “Inner Landscapes” and Coach

“Much like old friends catching up on a cozy couch, after a long time of not seeing one another, Mary and CJ hold a space for you to share the journey of self-reflection with a gentle tug. So, pull up a chair, tuck in your feet, and bring yourself to this book with the presence of mind it implores. Inside, each human exemplar speaks with a candor that lends an utterly truthful tone to the telling of “type.” In turn, our authors weave their own authentic voices, through an application of the Enneagram, which leaves us knowing – without a doubt – that the struggle of being human is more than okay, it is necessary. If you are a lover of people, as I am, you will appreciate the gamut we run on the map of human experience, laid out on the pages within. And if, like me, you are also one who seeks to catch the subtle ways in which we each deftly avoid our true selves, you will find this a compelling avenue to bring you back inside yourself.”

— **Susan Olesek**, Founder, Enneagram Prison Project

“Mary and CJ did a beautiful job of telling and interpreting inspirational stories of transformation. I especially like that they have mostly been lived in ordinary contexts, by people who are candidates to “be in the world without being of the world”, following Gurdjieff’s concept. The result is an engaging and easy-reading book that brings to surface many subtleties of the inner work, while showing why there are at least as many paths as

people on Earth. Provided that they help us become both somebody and nobody.”

— **Uranio Paes**, Director of UP9

“The old song and Zen parable tell us, “First there is a mountain, then there is no mountain, then there is.” The personal narratives in this book—stories from the heart rather than the textbook—show people on the trip up the mountain, people wrestling with the ongoing journey of finding yourself so you can lose yourself and ultimately find yourself again. These are stories of real people speaking about themselves with authenticity, not narratives based on theory or speculation about what goes on in the minds of others. Ironically, it is the naturalness of these stories that validate the theory. There is much to learn about the Enneagram in these pages.”

— **Mario Sikora**, *Co-Author of Awareness to Action*

“I applaud the approach Mary and CJ have taken. Instead of imposing abstract Enneagram theory on the person, let the person tell you from their own lived experience. I found each contributor’s reflections and testaments both honest and humble – including the authors’. Thanks Mary and CJ for collecting, editing, and commenting on these essays; and thank you, participants, for writing them. You enrich our understanding and empathy for each type and give us direction and hope for transforming our own lives from somebody to nobody.”

— **Jerome P. Wagner, Ph.D.**, Author of *Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles and Nine Lenses on the World: the Enneagram Perspective*

# **Somebody? Nobody?**

*The Enneagram, Mindfulness and Life's Unfolding*

**Mary Bast, Ph.D.**

**and**

**CJ Fitzsimons, Ph.D.**

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## Foreword

I appreciate the approach Mary and CJ have taken – no doubt because it's the way I went about learning the Enneagram styles. Back in the early 1970's in Chicago, Bob Ochs, S.J. taught a two-semester class called *Religious Experience*. The spine of the course was the Enneagram, which he had just learned from Claudio Naranjo in Berkeley. We received the theory from Ochs along with some wonderful examples from his and Claudio's experience. I then had the opportunity to informally interview my fellow classmates about how these Enneagram dynamics showed up in their own lives. Because the Enneagram basically “spilled the beans” about all of us, I found people wonderfully honest and forthcoming about themselves. We knew a lot about each other anyway, and the Enneagram gave us the occasion to talk about ourselves in a very open manner.

Some theorists have focused on the Enneagram map, making it more elaborate and detailed. But they haven't connected the map to the territory of people's lived experience, demonstrating that it's possible to come up with a very sophisticated map that bears little relevance to the territory itself.

Mary and CJ have gone back to the territory. They've asked style exemplars to talk about their lived experience. I found each contributor's reflections and testaments both honest and humble – including the authors'. It's similar to the experience I had 40 years ago (it seems only yesterday). The phenomenologists advise us to go back to the data itself to let our theory come out of the experience. Do *exegesis*, reading out of the text, rather than *eisegesis*, reading your theory into the data.

CJ's comments on participants' reflections derive from their writing. He's not putting words in their mouths but honoring the words coming out of their mouths.

Hearing from individuals themselves is much more satisfying and illuminating than studying pure theory. I hope I haven't endangered my membership in the “Five” club by saying this.

I believe this is why presenters teach using panels of style exemplars rather than relying on lecture alone. The lecturer can speak authoritatively about one style – their own. They are relying on hearsay when they describe the eight other styles. Better to hear from the horse's mouth than the horse's... (mouthpiece).

*Transformation* can be a very abstract concept. I often find descriptions of trans-personal and pre-personal experiences rather tenuous. I do better in the personal range. The “farther reaches of human nature” (Maslow’s phrase) and the psychoses are hard to grasp unless you’ve been there. Fortunately and unfortunately we all have the potential to tap into either extreme.

Reading about people who have been there is a great help in understanding personal transformations. In contrast to infants who leave the womb but don’t come back to the womb to say what it’s like out there or individuals who have died who don’t come back to tell us what it’s like over there, we have some folks here who can tell us about their journey to a different state. We owe them our thanks for doing so.

We also owe our thanks to Oscar Ichazo for writing about the “divine ideas,” the psychocatalyzers that transform our thoughts into authentic apprehensions and appraisals of reality. Once we get those “ideas” we grasp reality as it is. My understanding is that these “ideas” align us with our true nature. On a less exalted plane, I’ve described the “divine ideas” as adaptive cognitive schemas and the “virtues” as adaptive emotional schemas, residing in our higher self, that are more useful because they are more accurate than the distorting lenses (maladaptive cognitive schemas) and vices (maladaptive emotional schemas) of our compensating personality. See what happens when you get too abstract! You’ll have a better sense of this when you read the testimonies of the people in the following chapters.

The process of transforming is like personality itself: our transformation is like everyone else’s (we share a common human nature); it is like some others’ transformations (we share a similar style); and it is like no one else’s (we are each unique).

Going from *somebody to nobody* is a process we eventually all share whether we want to or not. I suppose you could also say we go from *somebody to everybody* when our sense of self expands to include all of reality, when we realize we are all interwoven into the fabric of life.

I do agree we need to have formed a self before we can transform or get past our self. I recall someone observing – as he reflected on the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience – that we shouldn’t give up possessions until we’ve actually been able to earn possessions. We shouldn’t give up sex until we’ve fully experienced our sexuality. And we shouldn’t give up our

will to another until we've developed our will and established our independence. You can't give up something you've never had.

It does seem like a waste of the first half of our lives to go to all the trouble of creating a self only to relinquish that self in the second half of our lives. Nevertheless we do need that vehicle to get us down the road of life. Then we can trade in the antiquated form of transportation. The individuals gathered here tell us it's not so scary or awful to be transformed and move on. Actually it is *awe-ful* if we take the risk, or when destiny pushes us into the unfamiliar.

Enjoy the trip. And may you be blessed with good companions like these who are along for the ride.

*Jerome P. Wagner, Ph.D.*

*Chicago, September 2017*

## Chapter Zero - Introduction

Over the years, Mary interviewed people of all nine Enneagram styles about their everyday experience of the transformation process. In the beginning, she thought the path would be somewhat linear, even expected there might be a point of arrival. From our experience and reflections by our clients, however, we've found that observing and letting go of habitual patterns is a complex and continuing journey.

Many people have recalled a strengthening of their self-esteem as they first matured emotionally, which could be seen paradoxically as deepening their Enneagram trance. But they were clearly shifting to a new and necessary self-awareness and self-acceptance.

In *Paths Beyond Ego* John Engler wrote, "You have to be somebody before you can be nobody," suggesting we can't surrender our ego-patterns until we've developed a sense of self and can begin to see how that self operates. This strikes us as a great truth and explains what we've found in these interviews. Respondents typically grow into their personalities before they can begin to surrender. And having surrendered, these personalities mutiny again at some point. Indeed, people seem to go in and out of *somebody* and *nobody*, depending upon the particular aspect of self under scrutiny and the nature of their worldview and life experience.

An Enneagram Two said, for example, "My parents had been critical, and my husband cut me down all the time. I was miserable, even thinking about taking my life. But I realized, *Hey, I've got four children. I have to find a shrink!* Until therapy, nobody in my lifetime had ever told me I was good, sensitive, caring. That was transforming." She was clearly becoming *somebody*.

Another Two said, "My worldview has become far more expansive. I've let go of a lot of control needs. I'm in a relationship predicated on health and respect for individuality." This sounds more like becoming *nobody*, but for all we know that could have been simply a peak in his lifelong trek.

An additional complexity we've found is that Enneagram worldviews are so deeply rooted they may trick us into thinking our witness is the *nobody* essence when, actually, *somebody* is still in charge. A Nine said, for example, "For me the quest has involved figuring out where and how I begin to negate myself. To my horror, I discovered the voice I thought was a built-in Buddhist spiritual director (*What's the compassionate thing to do here?*) was

only another way to lose my self in being a ‘good’ Nine, a rationale to erase myself and merge with others’ needs.”

*How do you know when it’s your essence calling and not ego?* In answer to this question an Enneagram Five said, “Trying to make this distinction is metaphysical balderdash. I trust that whatever is happening is all I have to work with, no less, no more. I don’t believe it’s possible to be off the path.”

As you read the stories to follow, decide for yourself:

- Is it possible to be off the path?
- Does it make sense that some of our transformational experiences prepare us to have a self before we can begin transforming to no-self?
- Is the path straightforward?

In keeping with the subject matter, we have opted for a simple format. Each of the nine chapters contains two stories of how representatives of that Enneagram style are seeking and finding their own answers to the *Somebody? Nobody?* conundrum. Rounding out each chapter, CJ has added a brief commentary that underlines the major shifts in the stories from an Enneagram perspective and provides a few questions to ponder. We close by reflecting on our own journeys and how development of the book has impacted us.

For a project like this to come together many helping hands and minds are required. First and foremost we thank those who shared their inspiring stories with us, anonymously renamed Alan, Alison, Bill, Bryan, Claire, David, Foster, Grant, Jeff, Jessica, Jim, Kathryn, Kevin, Peter, Ralph, Ursula, and Valerie. Without your journey and generosity there would be no book. We also thank Mario Sikora, who has encouraged this project and our collaboration since its early days; Peter McNab, for encouraging the serialization of excerpts from the book in *Nine Points Magazine*; and Jerry Wagner for his gracious foreword.

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# Chapter One – Style One

## Evolution of Consciousness – Alison’s story

My notion of goodness or rightness has shifted over the years, so in that sense there’s been some transformation. But I’m nervous about a word that to my mind sounds a bit pretentious. For me there’s been an evolution of consciousness. In my earlier years I spent more time at my Four stress point, and in recent years more time in the direction of my security point, Seven. I also think there’s been some movement from being more in the Nine wing to being in a much stronger Two wing. So there has been a shift within the One worldview that it’s important to be impeccable. My notion of impeccability has shifted over the years, become a little deeper, a little less nit-picky in terms of, *Oh, we’ve got to look perfect. We’ve got to have every hair in place. We have to give perfect dinner parties.* Now, it’s more, *What is the perfect way of helping this person? Or maybe not helping, of just getting out of the way.*

I’m interested in Gurdjieff’s concept of shock points. There certainly have been some in my life. My divorce from my first husband was a big leap into the abyss, as in Castaneda’s image of jumping off a cliff. Another shock point was dealing with a serious accident my partner had, taking care of him over a long period of recovery. Another was learning about the Enneagram, becoming aware of its implications for my own life. Prior to that I’d assumed everybody thought the way I did and was aware of right and wrong, that people couldn’t be good if they didn’t do what was clearly right. It never occurred to me that others might have a different focus of attention than I do. That opened up the question, *If I could be so mistaken about the way the world is, could I not be mistaken about a great many other things?*

The transition in my career, although more gradual, was also something of a shock – from earning a living as an actress to a middle-age career as an editor and a writer. It was a transition, certainly, into seeing myself quite differently, into a sense of security about having mastered certain skills, which are a little more difficult to pin down when you’re an actress. There are certainly skills and techniques I learned, but my security as an editor and as a writer is a lot firmer. If I have something to say, I have a fair

amount of confidence in my ability to say it with clarity and a certain amount of eloquence.

When I was in my Four period, most of my really bad sufferings had to do with romantic fixations. As a teenager, as a college student, even in my adult life until my late thirties, there were episodes of being left by or being rejected by, or not having interest from a person I was fixated on. It was obsessional, not being able to let go of hurt and really flogging my own sufferings. And a fair amount of the poetry I wrote at this time was celebrating that kind of suffering. I look back at it now and I think, *Boy, that person was really in a bad way!* I'm not there anymore, yet I remember and sympathize.

I think the One at Four is very different from the Four at Four. The One at Four is combining the obsessive-compulsive aspect with the self-pity, the self-dramatization, a habit of melancholy, mentally playing with the idea of suicide. I never seriously considered suicide, but there were a few times when I thought, *Oh, if it gets too bad I can always do that.* I never made any kind of plan, let alone an attempt, but I was wretchedly unhappy for years at a time. I think the fairly healthy One is focused very much on tasks, on meaningful work, and I'd lost my grip in terms of focus on my career. I coasted, did auditions, did jobs, but didn't have any intelligent plan or a very intelligent attitude about it. I was just fixated on all this stuff that was going round and round in my mind. It finally got worn out. It's like playing a record over and over again; eventually you wear out the grooves. Psychologists would call it an extinction procedure. You eventually extinguish the thing by going over and over it so many times, it wears itself out on some level that's psychological but feels physiological, too.

A number of factors have led to my growing up. The first was to meet my partner – far and away the most important factor in my evolution, partly because I was terribly insecure about myself, about my value, my attractiveness, all of it. We're all changed by love. And the fact that this absolutely wonderful man could not only love me but keep on loving me unconditionally had to change me. It's been a very rich relationship, and he's changed a lot, too. Not that I've had any program to change him, but I've seen a shift in him from being much more suspicious and negative about romance, to really blossoming and becoming far more creative. We've not done any program of working on the relationship. It's just having a really loving friend whom you know has your interests at heart and is truly on



your side. We have wonderful conversations. He's in favor of my becoming my best self as I conceive that and I want him to be the best self he can conceive of being. And I want to help him be that.

Becoming involved with regular meditation has been a huge factor in terms of getting a picture of my own monkey mind, the way it races around and goes in 15 directions. I was beginning to have symptoms of an ulcer and I'd read well-founded scientific evidence that meditation had effects on certain physiological patterns, and I thought, *My God! I am really going in a bad direction here. I've got to find a way out of it and here's a technique. I'm going to do it!* So I took a Transcendental Meditation course and have been doing regular meditation ever since. Not that I feel I've gotten good at meditation, but it's given me moments of clarity where I can *see* myself. And it's also given me a strong sense that there's not an end to life with death – that there is a consciousness that is fixed and goes on beyond the body – because I've had a real sense of separate consciousness. As a result of my experience with meditation, the personality also seems to me a garment that we put on, like the body. I came to that belief before I ever knew the Enneagram. And the Enneagram seems to reinforce that our personality, our fixations, our preoccupations are also garments.

Body work has been another really important factor in making me aware of my own process, a fabulous way of coming to look at the anger Ones tend to deny – neo-Reichian work, bio-energetics, any exercises that involve bringing up anger; something as simple as pounding a pillow that brings up a lot of rage, and then pain and sadness. I used to think, pre-meditation, that if I ever let my anger escape, it would be this volcano that would devastate the countryside for miles around! Especially through the body work, I learned there are ways to release it and you don't devastate the countryside, no one dies, and no tragedy occurs. So you come to allow the lid to rest a little more lightly on the pot. You're not pushing it down so hard for fear the contents will explode. It's not quite such a pressure cooker. I'm more in touch with my anger than I was when I was younger. I'm aware when it comes up, I don't always squash it; I sometimes at least let it be expressed one way or another.

A vivid insight for me was the pattern created by imbalance of centers as conceived by Riso and Hudson for the One – that the moving center is inadequate, so one flogs it with feelings, using the feeling center to enhance, to hype, to add wattage to the moving center. The thinking center is off to

the side uninvolved in this little drama. It made me suddenly aware of this pattern in my work life, where I'd done nothing to avoid situations in which I'd have a grievance with someone, thus have an excuse to get angry, and the anger would allow me to separate from them and go off to do creative projects on my own. I thought, *Oh, my God, this is appalling!* I'd never doubted that I have passionate feelings; but the fact that I'd used them to get myself into motion – to enhance what I perceived as inadequate will power – shocked me.

I asked myself, *Do I really need to follow this pattern? Is there some other way? Could some fuel other than anger get me in motion?* And I answered, *Yes, there's love! And I love what I'm doing. Is it not possible simply to allow that love to carry the day?*

Finding life work for myself has been a tremendous help in focusing my energies. It's so lovely to find the work you were born to do. All the disparate experiences that seemed so unconnected suddenly all fit together. My work as a writer, a teacher of English, an actress, even things I loathed doing at the time to make a living – like telemarketing – turned out to have an integral part in this combination of skills, abilities, and sensitivities I need to do the work I want to do. I'm doing it for love, and it feels very freeing.

As a child I felt extremely inept socially, feeling that nobody liked me. I read about the Social Four feeling like an outsider, and that Four-ish aspect was there. Although I did have a few good friends, I didn't have many friends, didn't really know how to play the game. As an adult it's a skill I've cultivated. I have a good network of friends and I've made a strong effort to help them meet each other and support each other. I organized a women's group that meets once a month or so. I've learned how to *be* a friend and so, not surprisingly, I *have* friends. Ones can be very much in their fixation, rigid with themselves and rigid in their expectations of others. I'm a Sexual One and one-to-one relationship is particularly important for me, but I think friendships are important for any One, where you are accepted not because you're perfect but just because you're a valuable person, and you come to accept other people not just because they're perfect but because they are whoever they are.

For me learning how to be a friend has come partly out of watching the amazing man I live with, his skills with people, his empathy, and his easy connection with people, getting a sense of his mind set, his heart set that

allows him to make that connection, and seeing him make that connection with me.

These changes have not been so much an idea of “working” on myself as having been blessed with situations where there was insight about the patterns, usually through a fair amount of pain. I think of a workshop where I went through all the rejection and the insecurity, re-living all I had dealt with in my childhood and my youth. It all came back, and I was just wretched, and then there was a wonderful sense of clarity about that pattern. But it’s not been *Oh, I’m going to fix X in my personality*. I don’t see it as a program of work, a schedule of something I’m going to accomplish by date X. I’ve never worked on myself in that way. It’s more, *If I can just remain aware, if I can allow the insights to come in when they’re available and then act on them*.

“Impeccability” is a word that means a lot to me. I remember my mother saying, “If a thing is worth doing it’s worth doing well,” and that always seemed to me to be true. It drives me crazy if my partner just throws together making his bed and it’s all messy. I take the time and the care to do it right. He’ll wash the dishes and there will be grease all over the dishes. When I wash the dishes, they’re washed. I try not to get on his case, to let him be who he is. But then I sneak in and do the bed right. I figure I need to take care of things that trouble me and not expect him to take care of them, because he doesn’t value them.

That’s an interesting vignette of the way things have shifted. As a child my sister and I were expected after dinner to wash the dishes. My mother had cooked dinner and it was not an unreasonable thing to expect, but I absolutely hated it and felt oppressed. I did it all right, I suppose, but I wasn’t particularly conscious of taking care with it. Now I almost enjoy washing the dishes. There’s a meditative quality of doing the task in an efficient way and a simple way.

I think of Feldenkrais *awareness through movement*, which is another experience that has given me insight into exactly the right amount of energy for a task. It’s a great aesthetic pleasure to know when you open a door you don’t need to turn the knob so hard, but to have confidence of exactly the right amount of effort.

The Feldenkrais work was important in coming to understand my physical capabilities. As a child I was given lessons in ballet and tap dancing and acrobatics because I was fairly awkward. I don’t mean to suggest I was

disabled, just a bit awkward. When you do this work, you become aware of effortfulness in spheres that aren't even physical. In writing, for example, it doesn't work when you try. A relationship, in some way, doesn't work when you try; it works when you clear things away and allow the goodness in both of you to be there. My partner and I have had fights, God knows, but the *trying* thing has been a real bane of my life. To stop effortfulness stops flogging the will with emotion, stops the overkill – which was only taking place because of insecurity.

A very good experience for me was Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way*, a twelve-week program exploring your own pleasure and joy in creativity – not just in art, but an artist's view of the world. With the One's discipline and follow-through, I did all twelve weeks, all she said to do, and it was a wonderful exploration of my own joy in creativity, a melding of the Four and Seven barriers.

So all these pieces have said, *See, there is a different way to do this.* And I've allowed myself to experience the different ways and see they are indeed more impeccable. At the end of a workshop I once attended, we talked about a mantra for the One to improve the possibility of illumination or growth. There's a sense in Ones that if we don't work really hard at it, it won't be enough; trusting the *enoughness* of our own gifts and respecting them is very difficult. So I came up with, "Let it be." Just *let it be, let the process work through you, don't try to work it but let its possibilities inhabit you.*

I was in a point group in a Palmer workshop on defense mechanisms, and we talked about exercises we might devise for Ones to help us become aware when we're in our fixation. I devised one that if someone asks a question and you know the answer, to not say anything, to sit with your own rightness without needing to advertise it. At the end of one of Naranjo's workshops he asked us what exercise we could set for ourselves that would be in the direction of virtue, in the One's case *serenity*. I devised for myself to take one day a week, and on that day to give no one any unsolicited advice.

Who knows whether this is true, but my hypothesis is that we're put here to learn certain lessons. We undergo a number of lifetimes, life experiences, and in the course of these lives we get to be different Enneagram styles, different genders, and probably a lot of other things that are different: the physical bodies we get to live in, different kinds of vocations. And we're put here to learn whatever it is we're meant to learn in that cycle. I'm not sure

we even necessarily need to know what it is, or know that we've learned it. If we don't learn it this time around we'll be brought back in at least as challenging a situation that will force us to learn the same thing. And we'll have to keep going around until we learn it. Then there gets to be some peace, some serenity. You are the drop in the ocean and you dissolve and become the ocean.

So for each of us there is a path. The Enneagram is an amazing tool for coming to understand the terrain. You have to go out and struggle against your circumstances, your environment, everything you come into this world to be in the middle of, and having this map of the terrain can make it a little bit easier to fight the battles you have to fight. I wouldn't be able to lay out my own path for you. It's extremely complex. In a sense the task for all of us is learning to love unconditionally, in our different ways and with our different barriers to that.

The One says *Unless I'm right and good I cannot either love or be loved*, and this is not true, of course. The One says *I'm going to perfect the world*, and the little voice inside says *Wait a minute, maybe it's perfect as it is*. If I do put out a program for myself, it is to be able to be more kind to people. And *kindness*, maybe, means something different than it would have meant to me in the past. It doesn't necessarily mean helping them persist in their follies. It may just mean backing away and offering love without trying to get in their way.

But we don't exactly know where our paths lead until we get there, and I think trying to lay out a program for one's own path is arrogant, pretentious, and self-important. Basically, I don't think we have a clue until maybe the end when we get there. Or don't. There are moments, perhaps, of awareness. I've been given many gifts to help me learn things I'm glad to have learned. Whether any of those was *the* thing, I don't know.

## Everything Has Sanctity – Kevin’s Story

To me, transformation is part of my growth process as a person, not modifying what’s there but giving up what was and putting the pieces together in a completely different fashion. It means surrendering, giving up what I felt was important before. And it’s a journey in fits and starts. I can get bogged down. Usually, I’m already down the road before I realize, *Oh, that’s what that was all about!* And that’s one of the beauties of it: if you function in the here-and-now you aren’t cognizant of change. We don’t have to know and we really *don’t* know, because if we spend all our time thinking, *Gee, what does this mean? What will happen if I do this?* then we thwart ourselves from actually doing something.

Coming into this openness was a revelation for me. I wasn’t even aware of it until my children said, “Hey, Dad, you’re different!” Then I reflected on it and realized, *Yeah, I am different.* I frame these changes in terms of being an Enneagram One, the acceptance of less than my vision of perfection. I’m more open about myself and more open to listening vs. pontificating. And with that, and probably more pertinent to showing myself and being available, is to acknowledge the worth of people.

This goes back to my upbringing, because to excel was expected. That was not because of superior background as far as family position or wealth. My father was a tailor and my mother a cook. I spent the first six years of my life – besides at home – living with my mother in the house where she was a domestic. I saw the fruits of success. They were mine to enjoy to some extent, because the people my mother worked for thought I was a nice little boy. At the same time I’d be helping my mother polish furniture. When I was nine to ten years old we spent two summers in Vermont, where my Mom and Dad were the summer help for a couple of spinster sisters who ran a boarding school and whose relatives would occasionally visit. Some of their grandkids were my age. They wanted to play and I wanted to play, but I was supposed to be cutting grass. I was a little bit ticked off at that, that I couldn’t play with the other kids, but at the same time I remember an off-hand comment from one of the members of the family, “What the hell is he doing here?” So that was a wake-up call: *Oh, you really are different.* That’s been pertinent throughout my life.

I was an only child and the community around me was mostly Slavic. Hungarian domestics. We lived in New Jersey and worked in a town of

wealthy people. So we'd have a big crowd at the house on Thursdays and Sundays, which was the day off for my relatives. The family environment was very rich, very European. We had lots of extended family and it was wonderful, except that my father died when I was 12. By the time I was 14 years old my mother was deferring to me. I was the "man," which made me grow up quickly. Fortunately a new kid moved into the area when I was 16 or 17 and I latched onto his father. My friend would be off with other guys and I'd hang around with his dad, who in retrospect was a surrogate father. It was very helpful for me, and my mother supported it, so there wasn't any conflict.

Looking back over my life, the most significant change has been allowing myself to come out of my shell and, consequently, letting other people in. I was very much a child of the fifties in my marriage. I was duty-bound and decided I'd made my bed and was going to sleep in it. In that way I was a good father and a good husband. But in other ways I was probably a bad father and especially a bad husband, because I was very anxious to change my wife into what I thought the business person's wife should be. I had no idea what I was talking about, but there were examples that appealed to me. My wife wasn't that, and she still isn't. The way she dressed, and her value system is so right and it's never changed, but it wasn't the value system I saw in the wives of my business associates, the ones who were getting ahead. From where I can see now, it was superficial nonsense, and my wife didn't want any part of it. She hung in, she outlasted me! Our favorite saying now is, "Divorce, never; murder, yes!"

I changed to her side of the fence, and some of that is taking the time to look at this woman I was living with and realizing, *She's right!* Her journey started probably 25 years before mine did, so I'm playing real catch-up ball. Something in me finally surrendered. But there was an interim period where it was really rough for her, because my reaction was, *If you won't change, to hell with you.* I was always a sales person, and I inherited a job from a guy who was retiring. Wanting to change my wife had its genesis before then, but really came into focus at that point. There was a period of time when I seriously considered moving to the wealthier part of town, but it never came about because the kids were all in school and when we thought about it even slightly seriously, we said, "Let's wait until the kids are out of grammar school. Let's wait until..." So it never came about.

If we had made the move, I would have had to associate with the movers and shakers but work on a day-to-day basis with the guys in the mill. By keeping my distance geographically I could manage both ends very well. But this was a time when my wife chose not to change and I excluded her from most of my activities. I took great pains, from a business point of view, to look at *Where could she fit? Where could she be helpful?* And then slowly, over time, *Where would she enjoy being?* I was starting to consider her.

Like most changes, I've looked over my shoulder and said, *Oh, is that what that was all about?* I don't remember consciously making that effort at the time. Being purposeful is not something I've done except in the past ten years. That was triggered when I became president of the company I'd joined in 1979. Then in 1989 the company we primarily represented canceled our contract and hired our two best salesmen to work for them. So I quickly lost 75% of my income, which gave me food for thought. I assumed the *biblical sparrow* approach to life. *They're clothed and they're fed, we'll make it.* I ceased to be concerned about our financial future.

My wife probably helped save my sanity and also got me onto a whole different track, put a different purpose into my life: to consciously be about my own spiritual development, my own journey. There were fits and starts, and I don't know when the real transformation began. I know the groundwork was being laid for a long period of time, but it took me a hell of a long time to get into a posture of surrender instead of, "Yes, but..."

The area that comes to mind, especially, is the conscious effort to be open with my wife and my kids, an active emotional participant. That meant my expression of gratitude, of happiness, of joy in them. That was foreign to them, I'm sure, because I'd never done it. There was a little voice inside saying, *Quit screwing around, playing games and withholding yourself. Be real!*

I don't think you can organize a primer and say, "These are the steps to accepting yourself and others as you are and this is how it will happen." Because you have to surrender to your life experiences, and that takes patience, so that they'll fit into the new jigsaw puzzle you're putting together. Not having to fix everything means it will happen in its own good time if you give it a chance.

It's a paradox that the only way for me to transform is to be in the here-and-now, to not have to fix myself or anyone else. And that's the fun of it, to listen, to absorb, to give up, to have the patience to wait until a thing



matures, and then to have the pleasure of looking over your shoulder and saying, *Oh!* And there's no end to it, it's constantly changing. What I thought was an *Oh!* six months ago I may or may not think is an *Oh!* anymore. To offer a formula for change is abhorrent to me. To offer a how-to-do book might be fine in business practices, but it's no way to live a life, because peoples' experiences are different. Every view is a point of view, and if I don't have a landing field to accept what you're saying, you may as well not have said it. Or if you've said it and it lands on the wrong landing field, I have a completely different response from what was intended.

Joseph Campbell influenced my more universal thinking, my openness, the importance of myth and metaphor in our lives. It's really freeing because I can accept the universality of all life and the sanctity of all life. It put a big exclamation point, beyond what I had already come to conclude, that my religion or my faith doesn't have a corner on truth at all. Other influences on me were generally associated with religiosity – workshops, retreats, and so forth. I functioned for about 25 years in the Lutheran church at the state level, with responsibilities on the executive board of the Lutheran Church of America. I've been privy to seven or eight national conventions, and have seen the feet of clay and the good stuff simultaneously. That gave me perspective.

Recently I had an atrial fibrillation and was in the hospital for cardiac conversion, which is electric shock with paddles, to get *re-booted*, like a computer. Fibrillation is when the top part of the heart is not in synch with the bottom part of the heart. During the cardiac conversion, the cardiologist zapped me three times with the maximum dosage. When I woke up and heard the monitor, the first words out of my mouth were, "Oh, shit!" Because I was still fibrillating. They took me back to my room and when I was alone I prayed. The extent of my prayer was, *What do You want me to do with this now?* Then, believe it or not, in about 2½ hours my doctors came shouting into the room saying, "You've converted!" I was back to sinus rhythm, which happens sometimes but, in retrospect, what came out of that for me was knowing it wasn't a prayer of pissing and moaning, of *Oh, isn't this awful! You didn't do right by me.* It wasn't bargaining; it was a sincere question: *What am I supposed to do with this now? How do You want me to use this?*

One of the authors I enjoy is Andrew Greeley, who chats on a daily basis with God. For Lutherans, prayer is a relationship with God, who loves you

regardless. There's no condition in which you're not loved. Period. You can't do anything to stop that except to turn your back on Him. If you walk away, you walk away. But as long as you're there, we believe there is a relationship, and the *work*, anything you do, is not out of a sense of *should*, but to say, *Thank you*.

A vignette comes to me about this *patience* thing. There was a college reunion about 20 years ago. I didn't go, but filled out a five-page questionnaire. On the first run-through my answers were automatic, and there was one question very near the end, "What is the most important thing you have learned since leaving the university?" When I re-read it I got to this question at the end and thought, *Well, I'll be damned*. There were a lot of lines to fill in, but I had put one word: *patience*. That was it. I think that was a wake-up call. That was the first time I consciously gave it any thought. I was in my fifties.

I had spent forty years driving at least 30,000 miles and I was an aggressive driver. By that I mean if I was going to turn into the next lane, instead of falling behind somebody I'd speed up and go in front of them. And if there was someone driving like a yahoo in front of me, I'd get in front of them instead of having to worry about what they were going to do. And I didn't like people who are self-pitying, who are phony, who enlist sympathy when there's nothing sympathetic about their position. That would cause me anger. When my kids said I'd changed, that change was away from being critical and not expressing gratitude for something well done. And I guess part of that change is also the freedom of emotion, open emotion – showing my love, and exposing myself as well.

Yes, it's definitely being in the here-and-now, it's definitely overcoming ego, realizing *I am not the most important thing in the world*. Everything, the total creation, has sanctity in its own place.

## Commentary

The overused gift of Style One is to be perfect. It's the Ego's way of attracting attention. And theirs is a great gift: who is perfect is really somebody! The two stories in this chapter illustrate what can happen when people of Style One move beyond the story Ego is telling. When they transform the need to be perfect into something much more.

In these stories, transformation is part of one's growth process as a person or an evolution of consciousness. There's a shift not only in the person, but also in the understanding of the idea of transformation. Each of these shifts helps relax the Ego's control, so more of the innate can emerge in their lives. For Alison, the Enneagram reinforces the idea that our personality, fixations and preoccupations are like garments we can put on – or take off.

A common trait of people of Style One is the need to fix themselves and others. This is part of Ego's story of trying to be perfect. Alison's experience of relaxing Ego came through a series of what Gurdjieff labels as shock points. One of these was learning about the Enneagram and a dawning awareness of its implications for her own life. Before this she had assumed everyone had the same perception as she did of right and wrong, of what it takes to be good. It hadn't occurred to her that others might have a different focus of attention. This opened her to the question, "If I could be so mistaken about the way the world is, could I not be mistaken about a great many other things?"

In moments when the Ego relaxes, people of Style One can experience the virtue of *Serenity*, which Jerry Wagner describes as a "felt sense of integrity and completeness, a felt sense of ourselves as being good. Serenity exists when we trust others and their process, and when we trust the uninterrupted, uninterfered with unfolding of the universe." Kevin sees this as allowing himself to come out of his shell and, consequently, letting other people in. For Alison, it is to give no one any unsolicited advice.

Kevin describes his Ego armor in terms of wanting to fix others, of being judgmental. His story charts the profound moments that helped to rob this need of its strength. It provides beautiful examples of how, when Ego is relaxed, a person of Style One can experience the higher quality of *Acceptance*, an "acceptance of less than my vision of perfection. I'm more open about myself and more open to listening vs pontificating. And with

that, and probably more pertinent to showing myself and being available, is to acknowledge the worth of people.”

The gradual acceptance of his wife as she is, rather than the Stepford automaton he tried to make her, helped to save his sanity and injected a different purpose into his life, namely to be about his own spiritual development, his own journey.

Today, Alison and Kevin describe in similar ways how they move beyond the story their Egos are telling, illustrating a healthy sense of perspective of their role in the grand scheme of things. When in the here-and-now, Kevin realizes he’s not the most important thing in the world. Everything has sanctity in its own place. Out of this springs the importance of developing and deepening the experience of patience in his life – the most important thing he learned since university.

When Alison transcends her Ego’s need to perfect the world, a little voice says, *Wait a minute, maybe it’s perfect as it is*. Out of this comes an ability to be more kind to others. Sometimes this kindness just means backing away and offering love without trying to get in the other person’s way. “We don’t exactly know where our paths will lead until we get there, and I think trying to lay out a program for one’s own path is arrogant, pretentious and self-important. Basically, I don’t think we have a clue until maybe the end when we get there. Or don’t. There are moments, perhaps, of awareness. I’ve been given many gifts to help me learn things I’m glad to have learned. Whether any of these was *the* thing, I don’t know.”

Both Kevin and Alison illustrate the power of transformation in a person of Style One.

Three questions to ponder:

- How do I experience the need to fix others and from where does this spring forth?
- What is my life’s work?
- When did I last accept myself as I am?

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