

THE ENNEAGRAM OF ANTI-SELF ACTIONS

“...Ways in which each type undermines and turns against its own soul”

TYPE ONE: SELF-RESENTING

The anger of One is a standing against reality which causes them to pit themselves against and try to change what they encounter outwardly and inwardly. Since nothing is ever quite right, the One is never satisfied and feels responsible for fixing what they think is bad. This anger has many nuances including picky faultfinding and fussiness; others notice that such attitudes are justified by the One as ‘constructive criticism.’ But the perpetual hostility toward reality is at root a malice towards self. Consequently Ones remains resenting, dissatisfied with and indignant even towards their own soul.

TYPE TWO: SELF-FRUSTRATING

Giving to get is an inherently frustrating way to operate since a Two’s real needs go unacknowledged internally and ungratified externally. Using sexuality or seduction as a way of making contact and gaining acceptance is inevitably unsatisfying. In the quest for love, Twos thwart themselves and remain perpetually unfulfilled, which are strong threads running through their life and psyche. The root is their turning away from self and depending on others for connection, which is an inherent frustration of the soul’s personal unfoldment. In the process, Twos cannot only frustrate themselves but be profoundly frustrating to others. While endlessly complaining about how things are/are not, any effort on the part of others to offer solutions is usually met with a reason why your suggestion won’t work. A Two’s pride is often subtle which causes the soul to become confused about where it needs to focus.

TYPE THREE: SELF-IMAGING

The superficial self, what is seen and what is presented, becomes of utmost importance to the Three. The sense of self and self worth becomes more important than what lies beneath it [i.e. the form matters more than the substance]. Consequently, at a spiritual level, the Three can be so linked to image, that it is difficult to experience anything as separate from it. The mask-like quality which can result comes from a central preoccupation to master the perfect image. What results is an experience of soul that has also been shaped by the outer image. Such an image is not a personal one arising from deep, inner values but rather is based on the ideals of one’s family or culture.

TYPE FOUR: SELF-CONTROLLING

To avoid the disgrace and resulting loss of self-respect that they fear will come from exposing themselves, many Fours withdraw, becoming aloof and distant, holding themselves apart from others. Their movement away is usually blamed on those they are isolating themselves from, and perpetuates their sense of estrangement. Coming across as private, controlled and constrained, they become in a word, self-controlling, overly cautious about what they express and how they behave where every move is filtered through an inner censor with the result being a studied, restrained and often tilted manner. Like the horse, the animal associated with this type, they present as image of controlled elegance, restrained power. As a consequence, there is little room for real spontaneity in behavior and, more importantly, in the soul’s inner life.

TYPE FIVE: SELF-HIDING

By hiding from life, we find that Fives conceal themselves from others and ultimately hide from themselves as well. Becoming self-enclosed, Fives prefers to remain on the periphery of things, whether they be social gatherings, intimate relationships or any other kind of engagement with others. Thereby withdrawing, they tend to be difficult to reach on all levels, from being simply

elusive about not answering the phone to being evasive about what is really going on internally. The result is a sense of being disconnected from reality externally, not part of its dynamism, while an even deeper separation is occurring from the Five's own soul and experience. In the process of retreat from life, the Five then appears to be cynical and indifferent while holding inside a deep sense of longing, caring and wanting to be noticed

TYPE SIX: SELF-INHIBITING

While Sixes often act impulsively and reactively out of their fear, any spontaneous inner contents are suspect and picked apart by the mind and rendered lifeless. The result of this activity, which is at its heart self-protective, is to undercut the very ground a Six is standing on. It is a form of self-castration, which psychologically means rendering oneself impotent or depriving oneself of vitality. Not only does this self-castration manifest in all kinds of personality traits that are self-undermining, but it also sabotages a Six's contact with the spiritual dimension as well. Consequently, by undercutting spontaneous impulses, the soul's development is unable to unfold naturally.

TYPE SEVEN: SELF-SYMBOLIZING

For Sevens to experience anything as not all right feels dangerous since it threatens to reveal their buried, inner pain. The mind then becomes a defensive tool to remove themselves from a wounded heart and live instead through ideal pictures of the world. It is frightening to be anchored fully in the body since the Seven would have to experience a full range of emotions—not just positive, selected ones. Instead, a fantasy world is constructed of selected bits and the rest of reality is discarded. Consequently, rather than inhabiting the soul, Sevens relates to spiritual reality through abstractions of the mind or safe symbols in which the mental picture of themselves replaces their experience of soul.

TYPE EIGHT: SELF-PUNISHING

The Eights hold themselves fundamentally responsible for their fall into egoic reality. From one angle, the rest of their life can be seen as an attempt to grapple with this basic sense of culpability and the resulting feeling of guilt. But all of their self-chastisement and self-castigation—which far exceeds any that they lay on others—has its roots in the way that their soul interprets loss of contact with Being. If only they had been stronger and more powerful, they tell themselves, this would not have happened. If they had been more forceful and assertive, Eights could have made mommy perceive their depths and would have retained contact with Essence. If only they had been tougher, they could have stopped all the abuses, large and small, of which they were the recipients. Consequently, the toughness that the Eight develops is a deep denial of the source of all goodness: the realm of Being to which they are always intimately connected.

TYPE NINE: SELF-FORGETTING

Self-forgetting basically describes a Nine's relationship with self. With the depths forgotten, an underlying attitude of "What's the point of paying attention to myself—there's nothing to value here anyway," permeates behavior, thoughts and feelings. This self-forgetting is really a deafness of the soul or a loss of attunement to Essence. It manifests from the depths to the outermost surface of the personality: from losing a sense of the soul-self to simple forgetfulness in daily functioning.

The anti-self material was excerpted from The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram: Nine Faces of the Soul, by Sandra Maitri.