



ENNEAGRAM TERMS: DEFINITIONS

STRENGTH:

Our core beneficial quality or attribute. The particular giftedness that emerges when awareness reveals the compulsions of the personality. Not the opposite of our 'challenge' but its complement along the continuum of our personality.

CHALLENGE:

The attribute that emerges when the personality is fixated in its compulsion; classically called the 'passion.' A quality or attribute present when experiencing difficulty. It can also be a beneficial quality or attribute. Rather than the opposite of our strength, it is the other end of our personality continuum.

AVOIDANCE:

Mentally and/or physically avoiding something that causes distress or threat. The personality has been conditioned to find this characteristic unacceptable and finds it a threat to identity.

TRAP:

That which keeps us in our personality "trance" and it's limited take on reality. The passion arises when we get hooked into our trap and it isn't working.

TRANSFORMATIONAL IDEA:

A transcendent thought, concept, sensation, or image which represents a path that leads one out of patterned and/or unconscious habits.

OBJECT OF ATTENTION:

That which claims our energy, fuels the Enneagram Challenge, and causes a narrowing of focus which drives our behaviors, feelings, and thoughts.

CHIEF FEATURE:

An inner obstacle around which everything else forms. It becomes a protective shield behind which we chose our way of being in the world. This feature advises us, reassures us, rationalizing and making us comfortable. It is invisible and allows us to live in delusion.

IDEALIZATION:

The over-estimation of the desirable qualities and the underestimation of the limitations of that desire. The personality tends to idealize those qualities that we have chosen and/or acquired and then have become habit.

TALKING STYLE:

The narrowed approach to verbal communication influenced by the "lens" of our shadow.

DEFENSE MECHANISM:

A strategy that the ego develops at the level of the unconscious when it is repulsed by reality and finds it impossible to admit its weaknesses. The defense mechanisms are forces which try to keep painful or undesirable thoughts/behaviors/feelings out of the conscious mind. When active, it is a signal that the ego is in jeopardy.

DICHOTOMY:

The division of our “whole” self into 2 divided parts— which blinds us from the wholeness that contains the “both/and” of our being. The dichotomy allows us to control and/or manage the “shadow”.

ESSENCE:

An intelligent living force that is our individuality, grown up and mature. It is what we are born with— our body, our innate capacities, our talents. It is what is our own beneath the level of our conditioning by exterior impressions.

