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# explorations of the enneagram

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### 9 Pennies for Your Thoughts

At this turning point between 2008 and 2009, many of us, worldwide, are facing unexpected changes in our financial status. What help does the Enneagram offer as we try to stay afloat?

**Enneagram studies have developed helpful language for us.** Coming to understand that we exist as both a *Personality* and a broader, *Essential Self*, provides a way to speak about our circumstances with some perspective. It is possible to acknowledge that there is a part of us that gets “freaked out” and worries in the night – the *Personality self*. And there is a part of us that occasionally remembers, in spite of those circumstances, that all is well, and can still feel joy at the beauty of sunlight sparkling on snowy trees – the *Essential Self*. When this bi-focal vision of ourselves is in place, it is not so easy to be swept away by the tides of public fear and the endless reporting of loss, collapse and grim probabilities for the future. Somewhere in the center of our being, we have a knowing that this, too, will pass, and that change has also brought us surprising good.

**The Enneagram suggests that we can establish a Habit-Watch.** The Nine World Views represented by the Enneagram hold clues to the mental, emotional and instinctual habits of our *Personalities*. Most of us know, for instance, whether we are more likely to react to a financial loss with anger or fear or sadness...or even shame. And we may even be aware whether the change in our money story results in our wanting to pull in, hole up and withdraw from the craziness, or heightens our motivation to become even more competent, get out there and get on top of things. Or perhaps we find a new sense of clarity and strength to stand against the current and endure until the direction of it changes. It is possible, but not necessary, to attach an Enneagram “number” to these attitudes that arise in us. **What is very useful is to notice how we are affected and what we do in reaction to that.** Just a moment of noticing, breathing, and counting to 10 (like our grandmothers told us) relieves some of the tension. Seeing what our habits of reaction are gives us choice – to continue, or to do a new thing. More importantly, the understanding that we can “catch” that reaction, and possibly re-choose it or change it, restores a sense of personal power. In any situation of considerable loss, stepping forward, out of the powerless place we may believe we are in, feels like freedom.

**In Enneagram work three Centers of Intelligence are identified. They are resources we can tap.** More creative options are available to us when we are using the wisdom of all three: our **Intellect, Emotion, and Body**. The body knows – gut-knowing—when something is OK, lined up, distressing or comfortable. The heart knows what and who matters, what is desired and what is of value. The intellect - the mind, and its organ, the brain - supplies analysis of the situation, detects the patterns that are present and emerging, and finds ways to say what is true for us. Moving forward in unusual times seems less precarious when we have consulted our own Three Wisdoms, and can act with ease, keep our minds clear, and stay in touch with what matters to us most.

**The Enneagram calls us to Be Present.** All of the identified patterns that comprise the system of the Enneagram are a bit like weather maps or topographical road and trail maps. They provide indicators that tell where we are, or might be, and where we can go. In order to use any map, we need to know where “here” is. Said another way, we need to establish, “I am Here, Now.” Then we can look toward being There, Tomorrow. For most of us, in most situations, the absolute present moment is fine. The scary thing that might happen is not Here, not yet. There may be a feeling of grief present, but sorrow and longing, regret and guilt, are not about what is Here. Our anger, which always signals something that matters is wanted or needed, is a wide-awake, vivid awareness of Now, Here, in this moment. Most of us do get glimpses of ourselves as *Present*. And we usually feel much more like ourselves in those moments. When we are in that state, we have become conscious of being our *Essential Self*. We feel above the fray, momentarily at peace, able to receive inspiration and move with grace and good will.

**The study of the Enneagram is most helpful when it serves as a reminder of who we are and of how vast the resources are within us.** The practice of being present in the now-moment, consulting our three ways of knowing, making choices consciously, and noticing the view from both our *Personality* and our *Essential Self*, is a practice that returns us to our own freedom and power in the midst of any circumstance. Whenever we can manage that return to who we really are, we will find others there, in the same mode, to support and accompany us. It’s nice to know help is so readily at hand within, here, now!

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