

Enneagram Global Summit™

The Enneagram: The Mandala That Won't Stay On The Page

Cynthia Bourgeault

Jessica: Welcome, everyone, to the Enneagram Global Summit: Nine Essential Pathways for Transformation. This session is entitled, The Enneagram: The Mandala That Won't Stay On The Page. Our guest speaker is Cynthia Bourgeault who is an Episcopal priest, teacher, internationally-acclaimed retreat leader and author of seven books including *The Wisdom Way of Knowing*, *The Wisdom Jesus*, *The Holy Trinity* and *The Law of Three*. Her latest book, *The Heart Of Centering Prayer: Nondual Christianity in Theory and Practice*, was released in December of 2016. Cynthia, thank you so much for being with us today.

Cynthia: It's a pleasure always, Jessica, to have these wonderful conversations with you. It's the highlight of the year.

Jessica: I feel the same way, Cynthia. In those adventurous conversations and I think innovative where we both get stretched and sparked to think even a little outside of our own boxes that we don't even know were boxes, we have both discovered that we're dedicated and passionate about revealing the esoteric and deeper understandings and wisdom of the Enneagram for true awakening for people that is beyond the binary way of thinking that the human being usually does, and that we both are very interested in creative, emergent evolutions or people that ourselves and people that we love and people that we come in contact with. Let's explore a little bit about what we mean by a non-binary approach to the Enneagram, and we've actually used the word asymmetry. Why don't you start, Cynthia? Can you speak to that?

Cynthia: The way that most people are used to looking at the Enneagram, and this is really a function of what we have at our disposal to display it is as a two-dimensional symbol, a little Three triangle in the middle and a wiggly Seven line on the side of it, crisscrossing in a couple of places, all nicely wrapped up in a circle. The way it looks on the page, it's a closed thing that the point Seven comes back to the point One. It becomes a constantly repeating pattern within a plane. But point in fact, that's a trick and deception of the two-dimensional and binary way we've been used to presenting it and working with it. It's the very thing that I think that actually gives people a little bit of an initial challenge when they're working with it that actually proves to be the connecting link to the ancient and far more universal and transformational understandings of the Enneagram. When you look at the thing, it is basically an intersection of the Three and the Seven, and both of these are odd numbers. What's often known, just as we talk about numbers and whether we're talking about odd numbers in

quantum physics, cosmology or whatever, they're symmetry-breaking. They don't let things stay put. There's a kind of built-in restless energy in them that pushes things out of the need to just come back to a level-steady symmetry and breaks new ground. The very Threeness and Sevenness and what you might call dynamic asymmetry that's contained in the mandala is really a clue to the fact that it's going to push into new directions and that no matter what it looks like on a paper, it doesn't quite close.

My experience and my initial introduction to the Enneagram years before the Enneagram of Personality ever took shape was in the Gurdjieff work. I shared this with Russ Hudson. We both had a similar path that has affected our own approach to the Enneagram in similar ways. The Enneagram was essentially a symbol that was brought to the West by G. I. Gurdjieff, that Armenian, enigmatic spiritual master and teacher. It first hung in his study house in Fontainebleau in 1924, and to those who could read it, the whole prospect of personality typing had not yet been deduced from it. It was, straight up, a cosmic symbol which demonstrated the interactions of the Law of Three and the Law of Seven. The whole map in chemistry around the whole thing was complex, but the bottom line is that the Enneagram, properly understood, is not a two-dimensional symbol and can't be. It jumps off the page and as the whole tradition worked on it in the classic esoteric way, it inevitably spawns off new spirals of possibility and new whole octaves that are never closed symbols. It keeps creating and creating and creating and breaking new ground. I think that that's the way and the nature connecting link and the challenge as we move into what you might call a new level of understanding in Enneagram studies, is how to come to terms with Threeness and Sevenness and how this fits within the greater tradition of dynamic transformation.

Jessica: Wonderful. My sense is, Cynthia, that even for the normal binary mind, when we explain the Law of Three, people can understand this, that there's an affirming force, the Nine force or One force that's moving one way and another force that's moving another way. Carl Jung talked about the tension of the opposites. Rather than reject one of those, you sit with both of the energies. Then something that you couldn't have imagined that has more wisdom than either of those alone can arise. That's the Law of Three, a reconciling force, and is also an emergent force. I think it's more difficult for people to understand the Law of Seven. I think it might be useful, before we go any further, if you could actually explain the Law of Seven to people and including how that is represented in the diagram.

Cynthia: Happy to do so but first, can I make just one little nuancing on the Law of Three?

Jessica: Yes.

Cynthia: It's in the sitting in the tension of the opposites, you're actually bringing a third force that is the reconciling. That's the quality of your conscious accepting, non-polarized attention. That becomes the kind of quicksilver that then allows the new arising to emerge out of it. For Gurdjieff, what it meant was that it wasn't just a straight up Hegelian thesis, antithesis and synthesis, but it was thesis, antithesis X which is this quality of conscious presence that then allows something new, that miraculous and wonderful to emerge as a whole new arising. It's a very, very intricate nuanced Threeness. Now the Seven is a much more difficult law, admittedly. Basically what it suggests is that energy and that in contrast to the Law of Inertia that says once something gets kicked in motion, it's continuing in basically a straight line and a steady rhythm until it gets to its end. The Law of Seven says that a process, once set in motion, will move in what you might call quantum leaps and quantum hesitations. There are two very, very clear places where these hesitations occur. Unless a different kind of energy is brought, unless those places are recognized, the whole thing goes wandering off. It begins to skew in a different direction. If a process runs automatically and just according to the way things simply go on automatic pilot in most of the world, you'll wind up in fairly quick order with what you're doing in your process or your institution or whatever it is you're running with, being the exact opposite of what you thought you were doing and it will all seem continuous. You'll cover around 180 degrees, and you won't even notice you have done it because you think you're still moving in a straight line but the energy gets deflected. The whole inner esoteric meaning of this, the Law of Seven, taken by itself, tells you where there are a couple of places, and if you want to pair it up with piano scales, those places are where the half notes are. These are the places where a different kind and quality of energy has to be brought to a process, a different kind of attention. In the original cosmic Enneagram of the Gurdjieff movements, those places were depicted right at the points where the triangle and the Seven line cross each other. For those that could read the cosmic map which was admittedly complicated, it suggested and it showed you where and how a different energy had to be brought in order to reengage that generative and formative energy in the Threeness with a very linear and task-oriented energy of the Sevenness. That was how it was understood as a cosmic symbol.

Jessica: One thing that's coming to me to explore a little bit, Cynthia, is that the Law of Seven, as you said, is going to unfold whether we're consciously collaborating with it or not. I think this is one of the features of understanding how much we have learned to become present or not, is that if we understand or, in a sense, have embodied the principles of the Law of Seven, Gurdjieff used to talk about what would be needed at these points of change is like a shock point. There has to be something that entered into our awareness, something new, an understanding or an insight or a movement or a something that would actually make this non-polarizing energy also open to something emergent and then a different octave can enter. But there is such a difference, isn't there, when we

are willing to be present to that energy of the Law of Seven or when we're resisting it. It produces very different results, don't you think?

Cynthia: Definitely, definitely! I notice that over and over again in the life of institutions. One of those shock points comes fairly early on, in what they call, putting it on the scale, the B Fa passage, the first half note. In the life of an institution, this generally happens when the institution has just gotten started. It's getting born, it's rolling, and at this point there's this huge groundswell that wells up in any institution to say, let's get solid, let's establish process, let's establish protocols, let's tank up our structure, let's get bigger and let's get heavier. It's always exactly the wrong energy. There's a point right at that where something very, very light and delicate is needed to return to the original vision, rethink with it and move on in a way that is almost always subtler. When you're just doing things on autopilot, you overstep there. It's the point where institutions wind up becoming more interested in institutional self-preservation than they are in being vehicles of a dynamic dream.

Jessica: This is so beautiful. I think that when something emerges, obviously it can emerge with different qualities of flow and force, but there is the sense of something bursting forth. There's an original kind of wildness that something has come into being. You can see it in the life of Christ or the Buddha where I will often say Christ wasn't really a Christian exactly and Buddha wasn't a Buddhist. They were members of the community of awakened beings.

Cynthia: Exactly.

Jessica: They had a genuine realization that was emergent in a very unique way completely through them. Then we come along and try to institutionalize that and, in a sense, copy. But what you're talking about would be, that's what can happen to organizations. They can have this initial wildness and potency and then in a very well-intentioned movement towards trying to stabilize it for others to use, the wildness can actually be clipped. You're saying that it would be possible with a different level of attention to have a more subtle, nuanced shock point come in, in a way that maintains the wildness but brings it to the next level of actualization order. Is that right?

Cynthia: Yes. That would be the ideal and the dream. Somehow you get across that and realize that what's needed at that point is not to just let the institution replace the original founder, which is what essentially happens, but to refine the attention so that a connection is still made to that original impulse of the original founder which is still there. It's not going to go away. But in our very attempt to try and solidify it and stabilize it, we wind up just quashing it.

Jessica: Yes. I want to say a little bit more about that just because in the mystical journey, which I think you and I are trying to, in our own humble way, see if we can reveal a little bit something about that deeper mystical journey for each beautiful creature of God that is on this planet, I think people have a fear of their full actualization because we did nail Christ to a cross and we did shoot Gandhi. There is this impulse to actually, when you say crush or smash, to kill the leader, in a way, to kill the initial impulse to make it somehow more palatable. I wonder if we might just have a little bit of discussion of what needs to happen inside of ourselves so that we don't have that impulse to crush parts of ourselves or parts of the leader or anything, and something else can happen?

Cynthia: Yes. There's a question, isn't it? If we could have solved that one, the planet would be a way happier place.

Jessica: Yes.

Cynthia: I think it takes excruciating, painful, honest and slowly growing self-knowledge. This is one of the points where I want to circle back to the Enneagram again. Certainly for Gurdjieff, for the original cosmic Enneagram, the understanding of cosmic process that's being conveyed here is extraordinarily subtle. One of Gurdjieff's early colleagues Peter Ouspensky used to say that the Enneagram contains more knowledge than a whole library and if you know how to read it, you have every tool you need in moving in beautiful, flourishing ways in the planet. That's a pretty powerful method. But in point of time and looking at how things worked, the Gurdjieff movement had at least a 40-year head start on the Enneagram of Personality movement. People were beginning to study and work with this thing. I suppose I ought be washing out my mouth with soap, because I'm going to say some things that are admittedly pretty opinionated here, but the way it tended to materialize was just in more and more abstruse and mathematical and theoretical ways. There were maps of what the work calls the molecular chains looking at the chemical transformations at each point, and it was like nerd heaven. People just simply couldn't figure out how to get any traction with this in their life and then they couldn't figure out beyond that, how to promulgate it outward so it could actually be a teaching that had any heft for changing the world. People would tend to sunder in these closed little groups and ponder this, understand it very deeply and spend their whole life on more and more refined understandings of the octaves upon octaves but meanwhile the world was going to hell in a handbasket.

What happened with the emergence of the Enneagram of Personality, and I think this is really a cosmic re-impulsing, is that finally there was a tool available that had simplicity, elegance and clout. People could get in and start working with the Enneagram in a way that's actually changing lives. The step to be able to see that, oh, well my type nests on one of these Enneagram points, and to go

through the kind of self-study that allows you to see it beginning is already the first step toward that self-knowledge that we were talking about earlier. Then to begin to develop a stable understanding that I'm not my type, my type is who I'm not, my type is just the person, the persona I become when I start acting out in a mechanical way. That opens the floodgates. I think that the wild success of the Enneagram of Personality speaks to the exact place where the Gurdjieffian cosmic Enneagram was also weak. How do you get some initial traction? The next step in the move is to acknowledge deeply what a powerful tool we already have here with the Enneagram of Personality and how it has allowed people to begin to take great steps towards the self-knowledge which is exactly what you're yearning for in your comments. But at this point, I think that there's a need to really raise the question of that knowledge of how type works and how type moves really relates to the larger context of how the Law of Three and the Law of Seven are playing in the background as the kind of cosmological and cosmic dimensions of all this transformation.

Jessica: Of course, it has been my experience, I just felt blessed in my life to have many, both spontaneous and cultivated through spiritual practice, deep, boundless kinds of mystical experiences, completely nothing I could have planned for, unprecedented. I knew all that was possible, this practicing at that level. Yet even with that, when the Enneagram entered my life, I can say that it accelerated the rate at which those things could not only happen but that they could be stabilized in action. That has been also my experience with students and fellow travelers. It's been totally my experience too that this Enneagram has an infinite capacity to keep supporting from a place of both wisdom and spontaneity, wisdom and emergence each moment of our lives like in the way that they talk about the Laws of the Torah getting applied each day to the new way that life is evolving. I experienced that about the Enneagram. I'm very struck by what you're saying, Cynthia, about the symbol and how Gurdjieff used it. I'm thinking about we assume from the way he manifested, although we can't know for sure, he said he was though, that type Eight and the body center. There's this symbol was actually honored as just a physical transmission of the knowledge.

Cynthia: Oh, yes.

Jessica: Yes. That seems to me like a very powerful beginning is the body center right there. Then there is the head center and you said it got skewed for a while where people are just in these little bubbles, looking at these different, in a kind of Fivey wave, these little pieces which might have been useful but were somewhat isolated from the whole and yet that does bring in the head center. Then you used the words, I thought very beautifully, that really in the end, how we would resolve some of these impulses to either kill off our own Law of Seven emergence and wildness or the leaders or the organizations would be, through a painful, slow, honest, authentic self-growing which seems very much to me, in

some sense, the appreciation from the heart center of what it's going to take to be a full human being. I think this is where the Enneagram, as you're saying, just excels. It gives us a way to both understand, as we've talked about in our description today for the workshop, why you butter your bread the way you do, why you react to a person the way you do, and what your cosmological gift is, that's all in a logos that's understandable based on these both steady but also dynamic principles of the unfolding of reality.

Cynthia: Yes. Basically, that's exactly the case, and it's fascinating. One of the statements or one of those maxims that grew out of the Gurdjieff work was he used to say that behind personality stands essence, and behind essence stands real I, and behind real I stands God. It's wonderful, that little aphorism gets more and more profound to me as I go on in life. One of the things that, when we come back to that kind of two-dimensional, closed circle initial aspect of the Enneagram of Personality, that as long as you're in some sense stuck in the squirrel cage of running around from personality type to personality type and identifying yourself with your personality, you're at a certain entry level in the use of this esoteric tool. Granted, it's really important to understand one's personality and to be responsible for its management. But as you begin to move onto that journey of saying, well what stands behind it, if I'm not my personality, who am I? That begins to take us back into the cosmic Enneagram, of the deeper depths where the asymmetry and the symmetry breaking begins to open up. Then to move even further in that into something that has no definitions and boundaries, the real I, and that really, in a deep sense, comprehends all the types and represents all of them within a being but transcends them all. Then behind that is the formless heart of the universe. The journey of how you move beyond the Enneagram of Personality into Enneagram of Essence and then in the Enneagram of Real I and finally into that mystical convergence, I think is the journey still to be walked.

Jessica: The journey still to be walked, what a wonderful gift you've just given us, that teaching about behind the personality lies real essence, behind real essence lies the real I, behind the real I lies real God. Then you call that God the formless heart of the universe and the cosmic convergence. One thing that I know you and I have talked about is some people, of course, because of particular religious ways of teaching God or because of even harmful experiences that people have had where the word God was used, experience God is somehow a limitation. They would even say that the real I was better than God, if you will. Here, the way you're describing it and some conversations that you and I have had about our feeling that the Enneagram could be an incredibly powerful tool for reclaiming and understanding what God actually is and that most people's understanding of God is actually limited by their temperament and personality. They're only seeing certain aspects of that great formless heart of that cosmic convergence and that to look at these nine aspects or expressions, if you will, of

that cosmic convergence is to take us out of this poverty-stricken experience of God.

Cynthia: Exactly.

Jessica: You feel like you have actually explicitly worked with that, not only with yourself, but your students, these different nine dimensions, if you will, of the Absolute.

Cynthia: I think some of the most important work that's going on, and again Russ Hudson is taking the lead in this. Beyond the what type am I, I'm an Eight so I have this take on God, but to ask every one of us to go around the Enneagram and try and imaginatively understand, both in others and in ourselves, what the Nine understanding would be of, for example, God, or the Eight understanding, or of a virtue, of mercy. What is mercy for a Nine, what is mercy for an Eight, what is mercy for a Seven? As we play around these and we see them as shacks by which our own little slice of perception is connected to a greater whole, knowing that whatever I think of God, somebody else is going to be feeling it in a whole different way and that the whole thing, collectively, creates the prism through which the unnameable is somehow captured. That becomes really, really important work so that we're no longer isolating in the Enneagram into separated or limitedly intersecting personality groups, but we're really trying to feel how each position is a station that's seamlessly connected to all the others in a manifesting whole.

Jessica: Exactly, and you described, for instance, this work that we're beginning to do, of understanding how a Nine would experience mercy and how a One would experience it, that's one way of doing it. Then there's the other part of that the Nine is representing the unitive part of God, the Two is representing the responsive part of God, and the Four is representing the mystery. We could just keep going around. There are all these different ways that we could keep playing with this. It seems like, in a way, that's a conscious practice of both the Law of Three and the Law of Seven. We're not staying in the binaryness of it. We're playing with different formulations of it and it's opening up, as you say, this prism through which the unnameable is something we can have access to.

[30:37]

Cynthia: Yes. Imagine the Enneagram as a sort of sparkling diamond in which all the faces, through the types, the faces of the whole are revealed. But only as they stay in touch and that, in some sense, they're owned in each one of us.

Jessica: Absolutely. It reminds me of how, in some of the Eastern traditions, for instance Tibetan Buddhism, they talk about the bardo where you meet all your different faces and they're cosmic faces. They're faces you didn't even know that you had. That's in a sense, how you begin to understand that you're not who you thought you were. You're going to understand that, yes, there's this really powerful one,

to make it simplistic. We could say that's the Eight in us and there's this really gentle one in us and not, we could say that's the Two or the Four. By understanding that we're neither, we actually come into contact with the pure form of each of those that is the great I Am and not the separate I. It just seems like the Enneagram is this imminently useful way, a guide on this journey of multi-dimensional proportions.

Cynthia: Exactly, and it will take you exactly along this path that Gurdjieff has specified if you stay with it long enough, from personality to essence, from essence to real I and then from real I into that formless heart. Gurdjieff had no problem with the God word. He just didn't want to throw it on people too early because, as you said, they would immediately go into their private, conditioned reactivities around the word and all conversation and all observation would cease. It has to be experienced just by touching it lightly and seeing where it connects. But the whole journey, I've always found it really amusing that the Enneagram of Personality should nest so beautifully on the back of these cosmic laws. Certainly, Gurdjieff never used the Enneagram the way it was used in the Enneagram of Personality. It was never used in the classic work as a tool of typing, but it's amazing how well the typing just fits in those points and illuminates them which suggests to me that the whole Enneagram of Personality is living congruently and unfolding congruently according to these great cosmic laws. That gives me even more confidence that the movement does have a cosmological grounding, not just a sociological one and that it's intended to keep on unfolding in that dynamic and asymmetrical way, breaking the symmetry of our, I think I've got it, I know my type, I know my high side, I know my low side, moving from that into the deeper mystery of selfhood and then where even selfhood gives up the ghost.

Jessica: Yes. It's sort of, in a simplistic way but nevertheless poignant, we could say, it very much brings to life the truism of as above, so below, or that the microcosm exists within the macrocosm and the macrocosm encompasses all the microcosm. Again, this inherent logos that nothing is separate from anything. The atom and the psychic structure that we have from our temperament and God all have an inherent unitive experience even within their differentiations. You've brought forth now this idea of an intended way that is asymmetrical and emergent. You've talked about how you feel like this is the road that we need to travel more deeply on at this point. I'm wondering, Cynthia, if we could even just have a brainstorming session here. What are some things that we as individuals, we as an Enneagram community and consciousness communities, what can we do to more consciously participate in this unfolding of this deeper aspect of the Enneagram?

Cynthia: That's a really interesting question. I wish I could go just to the practicalities of it but where my mind is resting up first is that I know that one of the things that

Gurdjieff said was that the idea about the third force, the holy reconciling, essentially the Law of Three was carried in Christianity in the idea of the Trinity. In a really powerful way, the Trinity is Christianity's Law of Three and the cosmic law that essentially says that the cosmos is a relational field which is by nature symmetry-breaking which means it has got an evolutionary impetus that pushes us forward into the future and into new creation. I think that's the best basic cosmic message that has percolated down certainly through the Christian stream and through the esoteric traditions of the West which basically says, roll up your sleeves and get on with it. This universe, this old map that we've been using to process reality, which is so much an old, perennial philosophy map that individually we come down into growth form and then go up into spiritual realization, isn't really the map that is going to serve us well in a planet that's hurtling, some would say, out of control towards either chaos or new emergence. We have to learn how to take the asymmetrical, dynamic, evolving nature of our universe, take that seriously. Take seriously the fact that evolution, as it moves on, has always moved in the direction of pushing us towards more and more complex forms of embodiment and of collectivity. Understand that if we're going to be in our planet now, we've got to essentially grow up beyond the stasis, binary, come to rest, up the spiritual ladder kinds of models that have guided us and find some ways to actually dig into life as it's being lifted off the ground and as things are changing and moving. I think that for me, the really exciting prospect is that where these two Enneagrams converge, the Enneagram of Personality and then the cosmic Enneagram where it has interwoven Laws of Three and Laws of Seven, is exactly the place where those of us that have worked in the Enneagram School can take the skills and subtleties that we've learned in working with the personality and begin to apply them to the greater cosmic and collective processes of the world.

Jessica: Well said. Isn't that what's so needed, is this collective functioning, collective wisdom and collective creativity? The Enneagram is this amazing training ground for having openness to all the different facets of the prism that would bring about such a collective movement.

Cynthia: Exactly, and to begin to see each one of them as a necessary strand in the collectivity. We could do our work together not by emphasizing how our type is different from some other type but understanding that all these types and aspects have to work together in any given circumstance for something of a higher formational nature to move forward. Of course, what the Law of Three is proclaiming, for those who can read the map, is that the Law of Seven which is really the Chronos line, it's how things operate in time, and the Three is really the law of eternal new creation and recreation. The whole map talks about how things can move forward in time or, in other words, in evolution, always touching base with that which is beyond time. I think that really gives us the tools to begin to learn how to work with that, to do process in more enlightened

ways, to do problem solving in more enlightened ways. I would love to see a practical workshop on how does a Seven do the Law of Three, how does an Eight do the Law of Three, how does a Nine do the Law of Three and how does a One do the Law of Three? In other words, we could go right around the Enneagram with the two Gurdjieff laws and see what the initial orientation point for each personality type is likely to be with it and how they could work toward it. That would at least get the two Enneagrams into specific intentional conversation with each other.

Jessica: And practice. I love the idea, and this may be the birth of something right in this moment. It would also be a practice community that would spawn a whole set of practices that would help embody the understanding.

Cynthia: Yes. It's just occurring to me. I love to sit and talk with you because we always cook up cool new things, but that could be so well that as we really segue way into how do each personality type tend to understand and orient towards these laws? What would be the gifts that each type would bring and the natural aptitudes towards jumping into these laws and what would be the natural resistance points?

Jessica: Right, the natural blind spots, yes.

Cynthia: Exactly, and as we started doing that, really looking at them, that would also encourage us to come back and take a look at the laws as actual tools for collective change.

Jessica: This feels like the Law of Seven happening right here on this call because here we've been, being with all these different pieces and facets and then this emergence just happened of even this practical idea of a workshop that opens us to a new emergence.

Cynthia: Yes, it's a shock point.

Jessica: It's a shock point.

Cynthia: We're the new octave and that's exactly how it's supposed to work. I saw a lot of work in my own teaching with the school, with Richard Rohr and other people, with the Law of Three as a principle for the proactive management of change and new arisings. You can use it as a really strategic problem-solving tool in political impasses, ecological crises and virtually anything to show people how, always, to see what happens when two things get an impasse and then to be able to bring something of that third force that busts it open in a whole new way. I've worked with that a little. I know that a lot of people in the Enneagram things have jumped into the Process Enneagram which is basically a good work

with the Law of Seven. To work with this still more strongly, I think, is really going in the right direction. It suggests that what we've got is collective tools for social transformation here.

Jessica: Absolutely beautiful and a wonderful conversation. We've just had an answer, at least a beginning answer to that question, what could we actually do to participate and cooperate with this evolutionary Law of Seven energy that's trying to move through everything? One of the things that has spawned in me is I know I've shared with you in the past that quantum physicists have discovered that the universe is actually expanding more greatly and also more rapidly than all of their models have predicted. Isn't that interesting? There's something happening there. The models were working and now there has been this shock point, this leap. Somehow everything is moving faster and wider or bigger or deeper and whenever you would say, than they had thought was even possible. Then we have this Enneagram where you understand your personality, you understand your blind spots, you work with the resistances in your soma, in your psyche, in your heart, the contractions that you have. I have been consistently surprised and heartened that even in the awakening of what seems like a vast new understanding, a vast new state or a vast new encounter with God, if you will, that's outside of what I even could have thought, still just working with the nuts and bolts of getting more and more nuanced understanding of my personality and my type, actually makes those realizations and emergences more real, more embodied, more coming into daily life. I'm wondering if you have experienced that too and want to say anything about that.

Cynthia: Yes, I think that's quite true. It may be snide to say it but I don't think anybody in the work got enlightened by studying the food chains. Somehow that wasn't the connecting point that would actually put traction into the cosmic laws. I think that you're exactly right that where we start, right practically in our, in taking the one simple thing we have at hand which is self-observation as Gurdjieff called it, to get to know this system, this vehicle that is our self. As we learn to do that, we begin to get subtler and subtler tools for understanding what's going on in those subtler and subtler dimensions of spiritual reality. One of the old work teachers, Maurice Nicoll, had a wonderful aphorism. He said that as your Being increases, your receptivity to higher meaning increases and as your Being diminishes, the old meanings return. What he meant by your Being increasing is that as you're running less and less out of just mechanical programs, out of reactivity, out of unexamined personality traits, as you're actually being able to see and hold the space of witnessing presence that embraces you, that you're actually growing your Being. I think what the Enneagram of Personality does so brilliantly is it begins to give people very accurate, authentic and useful tools for growing their Being so as they do that, it will stand to reason if Maurice Nicoll is right, that they're going to pick up subtleties from the subtler inner play of things that they would have missed before. You can't pick up anything beyond your type when

you're just completely identified with your type, beyond your agenda, beyond your issues. You don't even see that you're acting out. The more stuff we bring of real self-knowledge and subtle perception, the more we're able to participate in those more refined cosmic octaves, as Gurdjieff can call them, going inward and doing really some subtle work. We cross, in some ways, the boundary lines between life and death, between the form and the formless, between the physical realm and the subtle realm. We live there as citizens of two universes which is a very useful place for the cosmos to have people living.

Jessica: That is so beautiful and poetic how you just said that, Cynthia. What it brought to mind, strangely enough, for me is that it's a maturation process that we become more capable of seeing the subtlety and being present to it. That's capacity, but it's also to move out of the ordinary consciousness of the distracted mind and being willing to disciple ourselves to something that maybe isn't as, to the personality, isn't as exciting. But to the maturation, the matured soul and even we could use the word mastery, is like the quintessence of beauty, the quintessence of wisdom that we're learning to pay attention to without boredom.

Cynthia: Exactly. When you have in that teaching of the virtues, they're really the highest of the highest realization within a type. Already anyone who could stably live with and even touch on a regular basis and live out of that, what you might call the highest realization of their type, is, in one sense, already living in a much subtler level of consciousness. There you discover that the virtues are holographic. They're all in each other. You touch one and you've got all the others so they don't become different anymore. To bring yourself up, aspiring always to move out of the most mechanical and reactive attributes of your type into a much subtler realization of the thing is already that journey towards growing Being, towards essence, towards real I, towards God. I think that what happened in the Enneagram of Personality is that we've got a tool that powerfully connects and lets people actually begin the journey and continue it on with increasing confidence and subtlety.

Jessica: A deep bow to that and not just that powerful tool, however it came into being for all of us. I just want to thank you so much for the ways that this conversation has made the power of that more palpable, more real, more clear and more inspiring to everyone. This has been an incredible cosmic romp and exercise regimen here for the last 50 minutes, and a transmission of the most sublime dance of God, I think. I just thank you with all my being, as always, Cynthia, and wonder if there's anything else your heart would like to share as we conclude this romp.

Cynthia: I think that has been a pretty, pretty interesting romp. It just amazes me that as people do their spiritual work, as they get out of identified and reactive

positions, as they get out of their stuff, the possibility opens up for these luminous conversations which are really new beginnings and groundbreaking into whole new octaves. I think we've had a little demonstration but a very blessed one right now of how these two Enneagrams connect right up. The work that's done on self, beginning with working on personality, moving right on up the increasingly open, curious and subtle levels of being that can touch the face of that which is almost beyond expression. It gives me great hope that the Enneagram is really a soup-to-nuts kind of banquet, starting right there with your butter knives, as you said, and moving onto the celestial feast.

Jessica: Beautifully said, Cynthia, and a deep bow to you and to our relatedness and to our relatedness with all things, and may it serve.

Cynthia: Yes, indeed.

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