

Instincts Questionnaire

Russ Hudson, 2021

The Enneagram is the study of what keeps us from being present – the goal is to find the energy that we project onto others. The Enneagram was originally to help us become conscious of what is unconscious so we can open to behaviors that have eluded us or that we've misunderstood – all of which are in service to a life that works for us and for the development of our soul. When we come into balance in our Centers (Body, Heart and Mind) and our 3 Instincts (SP, SX and SO), we're creating a vehicle that can start to receive spiritual nourishment. We can be fed from the inside out – which transforms us. We become conscious of our old patterns so our Instincts can do what they're supposed to do and so we can make choices in particular situations about which energy may be required. When we're not present, our Instincts serve the personality of our ego structure instead of our actual physical being.

Instincts dwell in our Body Center, below the waistline. All humans have all 3 Instincts, which are always working together (never independently). **SX** is our reproductive organs. Our SX energy says, "I've got to strike out for and explore unknown horizons." **SO** is our solar plexus, and says, "I need to find and connect with my true tribe." **SP** is our undercarriage, at the base of the spine, and says, "No, that's too dangerous. Stay safe."

Instincts are areas we can actively work on. "How have I been imprinted? What is my map? What is my relationship to each of these Instincts individually and as a whole? What needs attention? Where am I out of integrity and alignment? Where am I leaking energy? What's on the back burner? Where am I sabotaging myself and just repeating old patterns?" We're not judging if we're good at something or not. We're judging **how much of my waking hours do I actually spend in this area?**

3 points – our dominant instinct; I think about it and actually do it; it can also be obsessive or can be against; it's definitely "*Wow! That's me!*"

2 points – I sometimes think about it and do it; sometimes "Yes" and sometimes "No."

1 point – I don't think about it much; it gets neglected; I don't understand it or what it even means.

You can have a low zone and still be dominant in an Instinct. Also, the same activity can fall under different instincts. SP people can go to the gym to be healthy. SX people can go to strut and broadcast their attractiveness.

Our weakest Instinct is the **blind spot** – which is the key to growth. We usually avoid 2 of the 3 zones in our blind spot. All three of the blind spots come with forms of negative self-talk that keep old patterns in place. None of the negative voices are true, and they don't always show up as voices. They can manifest as losing energy, shutting down, feeling anxious, etc. These can be signs that we're getting close to our ego defenses in order to scare and shame us out of trying new behaviors. Feeling shame around our Instincts is normal – it means you've hit pay dirt. When we can act on our blind spot, we end up feeling more free and better about ourselves. When we tamp down our energy due to shame, it has to go somewhere, so where can I focus it intentionally? When we see someone else's blind spot, we can be triggered by it and react to it.

When we get triggered and provoked, it's about an Instinct and it's often when a person whose dominant instinct is our blind spot because our blind spot is our shadow. If SP is our blind spot, seeing people fuss about **SP** issues drives us nuts. If SX is our blind spot, we see SX dominant people as too much, show-offs, tacky. If **SO** is our blind spot, we see SO dominant people as shallow and wasting time socializing. The middle Instinct supports the dominant Instinct and can help unstuck or activate the blind spot. For example, doing the laundry (SP) can loosen and free up creativity (SX). The dominant and second instincts can change positions; the blind spot never changes.

The **relationship between** the strongest/dominant Instinct and the blind spot is more important than deciding which Instinct I am. Our dominant Instinct is the fuel for our type pattern. What are the implications of these patterns in my life? Activating our Instincts is a sign that we're in the higher level of our Type. Our dominant Instinct is the fuel of our Type. It's what we habitually do when we're in the lower level of our Type and stress. None of them is my identity. We can start to restore balance and feel better about ourselves by giving our blind spot compassionate attention. This helps take pressure off our dominant Instinct and to stay present. When we go to our connecting lines, we take our dominant Instinct with us (eg, SX8 → SX2 and SX5). Labeling [typing] is lazy – we need to do the work!

Pure presence is transformation –

Head Center – fear and confusion → clarity and focus

Heart Center – shame → compassion and kindness

Body Center – anger and lostness → embodiment and action

	Self-Preservation Instinct	Score
	Time, money and energy are our big 3 resources. SP is the engine of survival. It's the root of the other Instincts. It requires the skill of discipline. It's about conserving energy. SP energy manifests in our body as the physical sensations of hunger, warmth, fatigue, etc. It's about stability, groundedness and softness, but can tilt into comfort, inertia, rigidity and soggy. When entering a room, SP notices resources.	
Zone 1	Self-care and wellbeing (not comfort)	
	1. Diet; what I consume; (including workaholic, over eating, hoarding, etc.)	
	2. Exercise	
	3. Rest and sleep	
	4. Relaxation; time in solitude, walks in nature, meditation, yoga, softening our nervous system; self-soothing	
	5. Adequate stimulation; reading, music, healthy sex life, watching documentaries	
Zone 2	Maintenance of our foundation and resources	
	1. Money and finance habits; good steward of my money	
	2. Time management, which is self-management; being on time; time with others	
	3. Practical applications and skills; being able to address practical needs; fix things or find people who can; manage life	
	4. Work habits, persistence; ability to follow through and finish tasks; discipline; ways you are handy	
	5. Energy management; how you use your energy and deal with stress; balancing silence with activities	
Zone 3	Domesticity, home and security	
	1. Comfort and domesticity; cook and maintain my home as a sacred space	
	2. Safety & security; includes what kind of car I buy	
	3. Domestic structure that supports life; home management; home as launchpad; inviting guests	
	4. Beauty & holding; I like my home; it enriches, fortifies and supports my creativity; I have supplies; comfortable and inviting home/work space; feeling held by my space	
	5. Recharging and restoration; my home supports restoration and my wellbeing	
SP Blind	We lack structure and regularity. We're resistant. We lack focus and hope others will handle things. We fear getting trapped by domestic life. We get by. Life is random. It's not that we're bad at handling practical matters; we just don't think about them. We tell ourselves, "I do not have it together, and I never will. I am not sure how to be an adult. I feel like an eternal kid. I don't know how the world works, and I am not sure how to establish myself in life."	
	The area(s) that I want to work on –	

	Sexual Instinct	Score
	SX is the engine of evolution; the desire to grow and go beyond ourselves so we can eventually connect; it's the recognition that no one is responsible for me but me. SX is about spending energy, the energy of creation, giving myself wholeheartedly, which is supposed to happen during sexual activity but also happens in other areas. It activates, enlivens and charges our battery. SX energy feels like tingling and electricity in the body; it is not mellow. When SP energy relaxes and SX energy activates and they meet, it's called sensuality. When entering a room, SX notices energy and intensity. SX is not about connecting, and "It is not cutesy, useless, false one-on-one nonsense."	
Zone 1	Attraction and attracting others	
	1. Broadcasting and charisma/magnetism of energy that commands attention; we're attracted by old patterns even when we're not aware, but when we're truly present, our attention	

	attracts us to things that are evolutionary/developmental because SX is the engine of evolution; this zone is also about how we attract others, which we have a lot of shame around (eg makeup, jewelry); charisma is a skill that can be cultivated	
	2. Display – actually doing things to get noticed, which we have shame about admitting	
	3. Being attracted to someone/something and actually following that energy; SX find it very difficult to pay attention when there is no attraction present; always following the energy can also lead to an erratic lifestyle	
	4. Choosing, evaluating and discriminating the fitness of my choice; does the person have the right stuff for me? This energy is running all the time. We can choose behaviors but we don't get to choose who we are attracted to – which can help with rejection issues – so I can stop taking it personally when someone else isn't attracted to me. They don't have a choice either.	
	5. Competition/Winning; going for it! This is why SX can be more aggressive; eg people trying to get out of a crowded airplane first.	
Zone 2	Exploration and Edge – when we are present, it gets us out of our lethargy and comfort zone and into the present; when we're not present, it makes us restless and in search of stimulation	
	1. Activation/Arousal/Turned On; SX can't have background music playing because they notice it too much, it's too distracting	
	2. Taking risks/Having adventures/Drawn to the edge; impulsive; the sense of security is out the window for the moment	
	3. Getting out of habits/Leaving my comfort zone; life changes because we step out of our comfort zones; it's not about taking risks, it's about doing things we actually like but haven't tried and noticing when we do, it gives us energy and aliveness	
	4. Stimulation/New experiences – intentionally seeking out what feeds my soul and recharges my batteries; we need SP 'stimulation' for wellbeing so we are able to following our SX stimulation and impulses	
	5. Following and honoring impulses and inspirations; you find a way to do it	
Zone 3	Merging (we fuse and loose ourselves in someone/something, and liking it because it feels like a break from our separate ego self; we can focus and be with another's energy; or we become preoccupied and have difficulties holding a middle ground; can't stand background music)	
	1. Focus/Intense involvement; only one thing at a time!	
	2. Losing boundaries and one's sense of self; surrendering; watching a play, instead of thinking about a meeting while watching the play	
	3. Concentration vs. Distraction; all or nothing; no in-between or middle ground; if I don't have anything to lock in on, I don't quite know what to do, and I end up distracted and restless	
	4. Pouring and spending energy into someone/something, rather than conserving it; no relenting until the job is done	
	5. Seeking fusion/At-oneness; relaxing and feeling outside my boundaries, eg during sexual activity, religious rituals or with pets; can be a feeling of spirituality or energetic union	
SX Blind	It doesn't mean a lack of intensity. We feel powerful energies but we procrastinate in taking action. We may feel a heightened sense of responsibility in order to keep things together and avoid taking risks. We tell ourselves, "I am hopelessly boring. I can't imagine anyone taking much interest in me, and if they do, I suspect there is something wrong with them. Thank God I can be useful because few would be interested in me otherwise." Or, sometimes we think we are more adventurous than we really are.	
	The area(s) I want to work on –	

	Social Instinct	Score
	The parent/child bond is the origin of SO. It's not about relating to a group. It's the drive to reach out, relate, know each other, and stay engaged. SO is the link between the instinctual self and the	

	emotional self. The SX zones are the most difficult to understand because they are mostly energy and in the subconscious. They're not things that we're generally consciously focused on. In the social, it's a little easier to recognize that we do this stuff or we don't do this stuff. When entering a room, SO notices power and prestige.	
Zone 1	Reading People and Situations – instinctive, not learned	
	1. Reading Facial Expressions/Body Language/Tone of Voice/Moods	
	2. Reading Between the Lines – people almost never say what they are saying	
	3. Interest in others/Attunement/"Tuning in" – more than just manners	
	4. Empathy/Concern	
	5. Adapting to "Clues"/Adjusting Behavior – people low on SO have difficulty adapting	
Zone 2	Connecting – is not SX and about "hooking up"; <i>small talk</i> actually helps us communicate non-verbally; <i>small talk</i> is a narcissistic term used to judge a conversation that you're not interested in; it's the opportunity to read people in a harmless exchange that both parties can participate in which may lead to something deeper	
	1. Creating Relationships: Engaging others	
	2. Sustaining Relationships: maintaining connections AND discriminating/knowing when to end relationships	
	3. Communication—speaking and listening; both oral and written; Americans narcissistically talk about ourselves all the time	
	4. Cooperation/Reciprocity/give and take – if we don't look out for each other, we don't survive; the shadow of cooperation is owing debts to pay back and over-responding to the needs of only our own tribe	
	5. Play/Shared Enjoyment/Celebration – play relaxes and builds trust; the shadow is enjoyment of defeating the other person	
Zone 3	Participation – we are called to participate and get involved in Life	
	1. Getting involved or not: what do I participate in?	
	2. Need to Contribute: something beyond my own needs; suicides think they have nothing to contribute	
	3. Enrolling: getting others interested and involved in what I am passionate about; social media is not effective in this area	
	4. "Part of Something Bigger"/Sense of Place – evokes humility and heart that we are part of a living system; the shadow is cults	
	5. Belonging and Welcoming Belonging and Welcoming – deeper than #4; I feel safe, that I belong, and welcome others	
SO Blind	We think that being with people is going to be a drag and a drain. It has nothing to do with not liking groups and parties. It means we resist connecting. It associates connection with previous disappointments and humiliations. Our self-attack is, "There is something deeply defective and shameful about me – especially about my emotions. I feel like I should care about people, but to be honest, often I don't. I am scared people will see my shortcomings." It's easier to avoid contact than risk being humiliated. We justify ourselves by thinking others are boring, shallow and clueless. Japan is SO dom. US is SO blind. We are one of the worst in the world for community support. SO blind can be overly self-conscious so do what really interests you. SO blind is not the same as introversion. SO dominants can be introverts who need a lot of time to recharge.	
	The area(s) I want to work on –	