

Keys to the Enneagram – notes & definitions
by AH Almaas

Forward by Russ Hudson

These type patterns *do not reflect our true type*. Awareness of the type patterns can potentially awaken us to the more profound realizations of who or what we are beyond all of these patterns. But this cannot happen simply by intellectually studying the type or by endlessly telling ourselves and others stories about being our type. Discussions of our type can be useful, but they are meant to be **in service to inner work**. ... Central to all these historical teachings was *the necessity of practice*. Enneagram teachings about the types were meant to accompany psychological and spiritual practices for the development of consciousness. And central to these traditions was the necessity of cultivating **presence** – which is at the core of mystical teachings. (P.x-xii)

Enneagram symbol – taught by Gurdjieff. He didn't teach it in conjunction with the types. He described the circle, the triangle, and the hexad, which are the basis of the

Law of One, the circle – unity of existence

Law of Three, the triangle + Grace

Law of Seven, the hexad; change and process (P.xii, xiii)

Centers - (P.xx)

Instinctual knowledge of the body – grounded presence;
Instincts

Emotional & spiritual* knowledge of the heart – openhearted;
Passions & Virtues [*from Cynthia Bourgeault]

Cognitive knowledge of the head/mind – receptivity; Fixations
& Holy Ideas

This book explains the specific inner relationships between

1. Essence – **essential qualities** of the soul,
2. their loss during childhood, and
3. the psychological defenses and difficulties that arise to cover over the apparent loss of essence (P.xx, xxi)

Editor's Preface by Byron Brown

Ego – attempts to control our experience
– defend our vulnerability
– compensate for deficiencies (P.xxv)

Ego lacks beingness of presence so it must (i) construct responses from what it already knows from the past, and (ii) it cannot create anything new because it's never in the present.

Essential qualities – are from the Diamond Approach (P.xxv)
are characterized by a sense of presence.

Introduction (Almaas)

This book is about freeing you from your type's **fixation**. P,11

We are all born with an innate **basic trust** in reality which becomes diminished and sometimes seriously broken. This results in the **core** of our type, consisting of three interconnected elements. P,13

• **Specific difficulty** of each type is the painful, difficult, unconscious emotional state resulting from the lack or *loss* of

physical and emotional holding and connection during childhood.

• **Specific reaction** is the reaction to our *specific difficulty* by attempting to veil, deny or repress it. P.13. The reaction is an expression of the disruption or limitation of our innate **basic trust** which is camouflaged by a network of attitudes, beliefs, relational tendencies, and traits. The reaction covers up the *specific difficulty* in order to regain the desired loving holding of reality or of the people in our life. It does so in relation to the **specific delusion**, the principle that governs the core. P.16.

• **Specific delusion** is the different idea of reality and distorted belief that we are forced to develop as children. It colors the *specific difficulty* and *specific reaction* of each type, which results in nine core **complexes**. ... The nine *delusions* are a particularization of the primary barriers to nondual experience and realization. P.13-14, 15.

The way to work with the type's **core** is to first identify the *specific reaction* in our life and experience. Recognizing the *specific delusion* and understanding it as a delusion and not reality brings us closer to the type's **holy idea**, for the delusion functions as a specific barrier to accessing its understanding. P.14.

When we learn the Enneagram, the type is the outer **shell** of the *fixation*; not the inner **core** of the *specific difficulty* and the *specific reaction*. The *specific delusion* is harder to discern because it is obscured by the obvious, noticeable shell seen to all. P.15-16.

Ego Ideal, p.16-18; ideals are listed in Appendix 3, p.163.

The ego is our sense of self and is guided by the *ego ideal*. The ego wants to be some particular way which we idealize in order to regain our childhood love, safety, and being held that we never had. Shift 12/21. The way we feel or know the *specific reaction* is through our *ego ideal*. The *ego ideal* is at best an approximation of something real and authentic that is beyond the ego. P.18-19.

The **avoidances** are the ways in which the type avoids **fear** of exposing vulnerability and undermining the *ego ideal*. The *ego ideal* shapes the patterns of the **shell** of each type. P.17. The *specific reaction* expresses itself in the type's **shell** through the *ego ideal*. Ego avoidances are listed in Appendix 3, p.164.

True nature is the inner spiritual truth inherent to all beings. 'Spirit' is an old term for what is the true nature of our consciousness that makes experience possible. **True nature** is the presence of Being of our consciousness. We are each born with one quality of true nature or **essential presence**. This quality of authentic spiritual presence is related to the **holy idea**. The connection expresses how the spirituality of nonduality relates to the spirituality of the ordinary dual world. This feeling - whether intuitive or unconscious - combined with our appreciation of the quality's characteristics becomes the nucleus of our *ego ideal*. Thus the *ego ideal imitates the essential quality*. P.19. The **shell** develops around the idealization, which is a shadow of the quality, not the true quality. We develop a shell around our core instead of realizing that the quality can help us penetrate the core and dissolve it.

Our Work: Recognize we have an ego ideal and how its patterning impacts and directs our life, and that we will never attain it because it is just an approximation and distortion of the *essential quality* that is deeper within us. We want to know the uncomfortable truths about ourselves but without trying to ‘get’ to the *quality*. The truth will manifest as a result of our inner work. Shift 12/21. [eg, 8’s *ego ideal* is strength; *ego avoidance* is weakness. I don’t have to *try* to be strong. I just observe my weakness, and strength will manifest, because my essential quality is already present. *I am* strong. *I am* vital and alive.]

Essential qualities that are the easiest to access are from 8, 6, 2, 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 5 – the last are the more subtle. P.22.

Every ego-self and personality contains *all* the types and *all* nine fixations and delusions. By exploring each fixation as it appears in our sense of self, we may access its idealized aspect, which will make penetrating the inner core easier, because the essential qualities can help. The more of the nine essential qualities we each integrate, the easier it is to open up the core of our type and access its holy idea, and possibly all nine holy ideas. P.23.

Our journey from ego to essence, through the practice of presence and process. sb

Short synopsis, p.20, of the inner core *fixation: 3’s specific difficulty* is helplessness and it’s *specific reaction* is striving. When 3s believe the *delusion* that they are separate doers, the *specific difficulty* that is most intolerable is feeling helpless and incapable of doing, and the only remedy seems to be the *specific reaction* of constant striving to avoid exposing or feeling the difficulty. Understanding what the striving is defending against reveals the *specific difficulty* of helplessness, a painful inner state of incapacity. P.13-14. The *ego ideal* of 3 is giving inordinate importance to efficiency, success and achievement; constantly striving to be efficient in order to be successful. The *deficiency* that 3 *avoids* is failure and helplessness. P.16-17. 3s are always striving to be efficient because true efficiency is associated with 3’s true *essential quality*. This quality gives us the opportunity to be a true human being, instead of the idealized version. Truth dominates instead of the self-deception that results from pursuing the ego ideal.