

Passions and counterpassions

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Is Type Six different from the others? Or do other types portray similar dualistic characteristics?

When learning the Enneagram, many people are surprised to discover that, unlike other types, point Six has two expressions of personality: phobic and counterphobic. This phenomenon is often perceived as an anomaly. It is difficult to understand why only point Six has two distinct versions. One begins to wonder whether this dualistic approach may be applied to other types. Some existing Enneagram literature does suggest a two entity approach to all the types, not just Six.

In the May 1996 issue of *Enneagram Monthly*, Claudio Naranjo attributed the difference between the two forms of Six to its subtypes. He affirmed that it was possible to generalize this approach to all the types. For example, the sexual subtype of Four, Competition, he described as "competitive and hateful," the social Four was "shy and melodramatic;" and the Self Preservation Four looked very much like a One and was more self-contained or "counter-dependent" and didn't look like a Four at all. [1]

Admittedly, people of the same type can appear extremely different due to their subtype. For example, there is a strong connection between the phobic-counterphobic duality and the Six subtypes: the Self-preserving (warmth) and the Social (duty) Six are more often phobic and the Sexual (strength-beauty) Six is usually counterphobic. However, the duality of the Six seems to have another aspect: the subtypes are different ways of living the emotional passion. Whereas the Six's phobic and counterphobic duality centers on the awareness or the denial of fear. Similarly, the sexual Four cited by Naranjo doesn't deny his passion of envy; he knows he wants to have something that someone else has and is competitive in order to acquire it.

Another approach consists of remembering that the difference between phobic and counterphobic Sixes is only a different way to name what Oscar Ichazo called the dichotomy of the Six: pushy-surrender. Ichazo assigned a dichotomy to each type. Thus, in theory, the Six duality echoes Ichazo's standard. By using dichotomies, we could consider two distinct versions in each type. [2]

However, here again, the phobic-counterphobic duality of the Six differs from other points. Ichazo's dichotomies define each type's two ways of living in what he calls one of the nine domains of consciousness (Feelings; Health and security; Creativity; Intellect; Social; Work, activities and leisure; Power, hierarchy and rank; Law and moral; Spirituality). These domains are indirectly connected to each type's passion.

To further illustrate this train of thought, we'll analyze with more precision the phobic and counterphobic duality of Six.

Phobic and Counterphobic Sixes

Three concepts are central to understanding the phobic-counterphobic duality of the Six:

1. The duality of the Six is in direct relationship to its passion: fear. In both cases, fear (like the other characteristics of the type) is present. Phobic Sixes know that they're afraid and show

it. Counterphobic Sixes also are afraid; however, they deny their fear and seek to prove to others, and themselves, that they are not afraid.

2. Counterphobic Sixes often believe that they're practicing the virtue of their type: courage. However, counterphobia is a caricature of courage.

Some Sixes, and even other types, may find this difficult to admit because the passions in the triangle (3-6-9) are universal emotions. Many people tend to believe that courage is needed to control fear. In fact, fear is the passion of Sixes, the chief feature of the emotional center of their egos; whereas, courage is the virtue of the type, the function of the higher emotional center of their essence. Thus, as long as there is the passion of fear, there is ego. This is sometimes easier to understand in relation to other types. For example, Ones can easily admit that patience does not consist of feeling the anger, then repressing it, and behaving patiently. This is not virtue, it is reaction-formation, the Ones' principal defense mechanism. True patience is immediate, not preceded by anger. [3]

The majority of Sixes' fears are unrealistic and do not have to be felt (phobic) or be denied (counterphobic). An integrated Six can occasionally feel fear if:

1. the fear corresponds to a real danger;
2. the fear is not the principal focus of attention;
3. the fear is accepted, but not prolonged, amplified, extended to other circumstances, or projected on other people.

In that case, fear is a normal emotion, a positive signal pointing out the reality of the environment. The Six's relationship with fear is summarized below:

	The Six is conscious of fear	The Six is not conscious of fear
The situation is objectively dangerous	The fear is a normal emotion and is not a manifestation of the passion The virtue of courage is lived or not	Counterphobia
There is no objective danger	Phobia	Counterphobia

3. In fact, there is nothing like a phobic Six or a counterphobic Six. Regarding the dichotomies, Ichazo writes: "The dichotomies are not opposed as in dialectics but rather circulate as in trialectics. That is, they become polarities. They are not contradictory." [2] All Sixes alternate between phobic moments and counterphobic moments according to the circumstances of their lives. For any Six, phobia or counterphobia is a majority tendency; the other side is always present, even if some Sixes with dominant counterphobic qualities hardly like to admit it.

Definition of the notion of Counterpassion

Once this analysis is made, it becomes relatively easy to identify an analogous phenomenon in the other eight types. One of our students, Bénédicte Gasnier, suggested the term "**counterpassion**" to describe the same emotional quality expressed in two different ways.

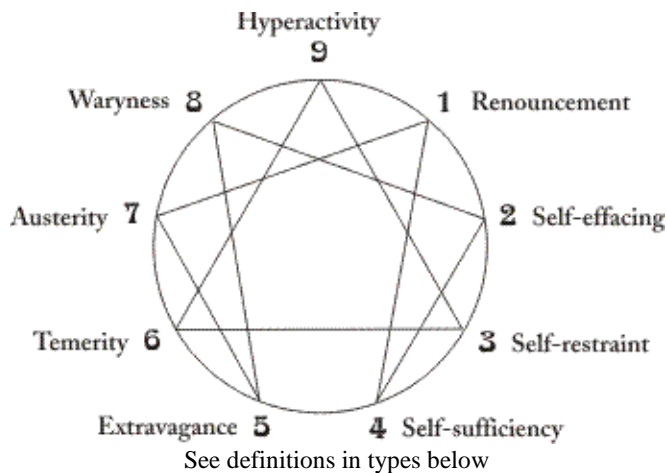
People are expressing their counterpassion if they are:

- 1 ...living in their passion;
- 2 ...not conscious of their passion and denying it openly;
- 3 ...behaving in a manner contrary to the attitude which would be induced by their passion;
- 4 ...attaching a positive value to these behaviors. They may confuse counterpassion and integration, especially if they know the Enneagram and assume these behaviors resemble the virtue aspect of their type.

At the same time, this concept does not change the structure of the type: its preferred center, passion or fixation. As with point Six, these structures remain the same whether the person behaves from passion or counterpassion.

The Counterpassions of Each Type

Some brief examples of the counterpassions of the nine Enneagram types.



One: Renoucement

The passion of Ones is anger. The counterpassion of Ones is a caricature of the virtue of patience; in these moments, Ones want to be tolerant, neutral, and objective. They let others get away with errors. They think they are indulgent, magnanimous and understanding of others. Nevertheless, Ones notice errors, which shows that they are still being judgmental. Anger bubbles up inside them even if they are not aware of it. Ones' counterpassion is close to, if not equivalent to, its principal defense mechanism, reaction-formation, and consequently is one of the most thoroughly discussed counterpassions in classic type descriptions.

Two: Self-effacing

The passion of Twos is pride. The counterpassion is a caricature of the virtue of humility. In these moments, Twos want to keep themselves in the background and say that they are nothing much. For example, they might affirm that their assistance was only a small act of helpfulness among many others. They can also insist that what others bring to them is richer than their

contribution, or that the love they give does not come from them, that they are merely a channel for love. Pride is there, of course, and the Twos did nothing but refocus the attention: it is not about being proud of the assistance that they bring, but of their false humility.

Three: Self-restraint

The passion of Threes is deceit. The counterpassion is a caricature of the virtue of truth in which Threes try to appear reserved and discrete. When in counterpassion, Threes do not exhibit their achievements or they down-play them; they center their attention and their interest on the other. Threes may consider themselves shy, or others may perceive them as shy. In reality, this reserved approach regarding success and competence is an unconscious action to lower expectations and thereby avoid failure, or minimize its possible effects.

Four: Self-sufficiency

The passion of Fours is envy. The counterpassion is a caricature of the virtue of contentment. At that time, Fours want to appear self-sufficient. They claim to be satisfied with who they are and what they have. What others have that they lack is hence useless, devoid of interest and they are happy to do without. In French literature, there is a famous fable, by Jean de La Fontaine, that describes the counterpassion of the Four and reveals a transparent haughtiness and the persistence of envy.

The Fox and the Grapes

(Book III, fable 11)

Translated by Norman B. Spector

*A certain Gascon Fox, a Norman one others say,
Famished, saw on a trellis, up high to his chagrin,
Grapes, clearly ripe that day,
And all covered with purple skin.
The rogue would have had a meal for the gods,
But, having tried to reach them in vain,
"They're too green," he said, "and just suitable for clods."*

Didn't he do better than to complain?

Five: Extravagance

The passion of Fives is avarice. The counterpassion is a caricature of the virtue of unselfishness. Then Fives want to appear generous. They will give an enormous amount of information about their subject of interest, holding mini-conferences about almost any situation. Avarice is there, however, because they manage to give this information to people who do not desire it and, thus, inevitably will not understand it or use it. Sometimes Fives unconsciously give subtly incomplete or veiled answers.

Six: Temerity

The passion of Sixes is fear. The counterpassion is a caricature of the virtue of courage. In these situations, Sixes are harsh; they aggressively face dangers that don't exist or don't need to be confronted. This is the counterphobic Six so often described in Enneagram literature.

Seven: Austerity

The passion of Sevens is gluttony. The counterpassion is a caricature of the virtue of sobriety or temperance. Sevens may then practice excessive self-control. They want to appear to be

serious. They don't allow themselves any joy or rest. They limit their mental capacities, by either underusing them or focalizing them too much. They are proud of this seriousness that gives them a sort of masochistic happiness. The passion of gluttony appears as an excess of control. More is better: the battle cry of Sevens is still present, only now its focus has changed.

Eight: Waryness

The passion of Eights is excess and the counterpassion is a caricature of the virtue of simplicity. In which case, Eights want to appear careful, measured and decent. They are reticent, hold back their anger; and may choose an ascetic way of life. However, even in these circumstances, Eights continue to go to extremes. An excess of simplicity is still excess. In Eights, the passion-counterpassion duality resembles Ichazo's term for the Eight's dichotomy, hedonist-puritan.

Nine: Hyperactivity

The passion of Nines is sloth and the counterpassion is a caricature of the virtue of activity. Nines are then hyperactive, perpetually agitated and overloaded with tasks. Although they often produce quantities of work effectively, idleness is still present: these activities are practical but have the effect that the more Nines do, the more they forget themselves. This counterpassion is one of the first we observed, and we interpreted it at the time that these Nines use work and activities as a means of narcotisation (their principal defense mechanism).

An even more subtle form of Nine's counterpassion is a hyperactive pursuit personal development. Such Nines devour books, workshops, therapists, and gurus. They profess to thirst after self-knowledge; however, they end up spinning their wheels, changing nothing.

Using the Concept of Counterpassion

The interest in using this counterpassion concept is two-fold and once again, we can apply what we have observed with the examples of phobic and counterphobic Six to all types.

The first application is educational. As teachers and impassioned lovers of the Enneagram, we want people to benefit from this extraordinary system and, of course, it all starts with identifying one's type.

Counterphobic Sixes typically have difficulty identifying their Enneagram type. This is normal since counterphobia encourages them to deny the principal characteristic of their type, fear. Sometimes this type is difficult to identify from the outside for the same reason. However, Sixes are not the only ones with this problem. In all other types, there are people who identify with the passion of their respective type or with its counterpassion. Being familiar with this distinction allows people who are more identified with counterpassion to more easily identify their types, and begin the Enneagram path of psycho-spiritual development.

Understanding the concept of counterpassion decreases the likelihood of misinterpreting our true motives and state of development. For example, counterphobic Sixes often believe they are practicing the virtue of courage when they are actually expressing the counterphobic qualities of foolhardiness. Therefore, **instead of letting go of their passion**, they fight it and try to master it. All the other types may make the same

mistake believing they are connected to the virtue of their type while they are actually living out their counterpassion. For example, one of our type Seven students described the way he used this mechanism: "By suppressing the wordplay and mental chatter of Seven, I have become a sinister and haughty individual, without any spontaneity." We know many people who have made the same error, and have not always escaped this tendency ourselves. The discovery of the concept of counterpassion has helped us and we hope it will also help others.

We gladly welcome all observations, remarks, and suggestions regarding this article.

Countless Sixes have complained about the absence of precise descriptions of their counterphobic tendency. This lack of information is even more blatant regarding the counterpassion of the other types. Enneagram texts primarily describe the types in their passion versions. We would like to compile examples of counterpassion and make them available to the Enneagram community. If you send us your personal stories, we will present a synthesis in the *Enneagram Monthly*. In addition, we will post the entire list on our Internet site at an address that we will announce at the time of publication.

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