

Fixations are often described as vague and get mixed up with the Passions, and both end up sounding like bad habits. But the **Passions are the suffering in the heart** that drives the ego, and the **Fixations are mental**. The enneagram fixations represent egoic ways of looking at reality. They are not exactly wrong, but they are very limited. They arise out of a need to protect the self from the full impact of the heart-suffering of the passion – they help us manage overwhelming feeling. They create problems: 1. They delay the healing of the passion, 2. They limit our experience of reality. 3. Our identity gets caught up in them so we stay alienated from a deeper experience of ourselves as soul/presence.

Over the years I've developed these name for the **Fixations**.

8	Objectification	*Holy Truth of unity
9	Ruminating	Holy Love
1	Opining	Holy Perfection
2	Ingratiation/grovel/relational	thinking Holy Will
3	Self-Deception	Holy Law
4	Fantasizing	Holy Origin
5	Retention	Holy Omniscience
6	Worrying	Holy Faith
7	Anticipating	Holy Plan

[*holy ideas by Sandra Maitri]

Each fixation is a core pattern for each particular type, AND is also something that everyone does. They are habits of mind that run fairly constantly in our consciousness – not something we do once in a while.

The whole purpose of the enneagram was to show certain fundamental ways that human awareness operates, and to provide things to be aware of in spiritual practice. The passions and fixations can be seen as what captures our attention and distracts us from presence. We cannot exactly “get rid” of our fixations, but we CAN track them – become more and more aware of them. My experience is that whenever I am more aware of these tendencies in my consciousness, the more the patterns relax and open up to deeper capacities. Tracking them does not mean “thinking” about them. We gradually learn how to bring 3-centered awareness to the patterns, and this starts a process of transformation and growth that can continue the rest of our lives. In this way the enneagram becomes a tool for our awakening.

While the names of the **passions** are traditional and draw from the ancient teachings of the Desert Fathers, the first Christian monastics in the world, the names of the **fixations** were created by Oscar Ichazo (1931-2020). I'm grateful for his pioneering work, and I have spent years finding what I hope are clearer names for the fixations.

Type 1 – Ichazo gave the name Anger to the passion for 1 and the name Resentment for the fixation of 1. I feel **Resentment** is a better name for the passion than anger because anger in itself is not a problem. We NEED our anger at various stages of our journey. What 1s do in their minds much of the time that keeps them distracted from their presence, and also what everyone else does in the same way, is judging, but more subtly it is simply the constant ego activity of taking positions – **Opining** and having opinions about pretty much everything. We may notice that opinions are a normal thing for human

beings and that we can't decide not to have them – that is having an opinion about opinions! But when we are more conscious of forming them, it tends to reawaken our curiosity and our capacity to arrive at deeper and more relevant truths.

Type 2 – Ichazo called the fixation of 2 Flattery. For me the term is not quite general enough. A fixation is something everyone does much of the time but that is the “specialty” of a particular type. I haven't found one single word but so far I've come up with **Relational Thinking**. 2s think about relationships. They think about other people and their agendas with and for other people. All egos do this but when 2 is our primary type, we do this more than most. [Passion of **pride** – denial of our suffering and neediness, to be an angel with underlying feeling of unloveableness.]

Type 3 – Ichazo named the fixation Vanity and the passion Deceit. But I feel these are reversed. Passions have to do with the heart and fixations the head. Deceit is a mental operation. The heart does not deceive, although it can be deceived. Also the original material from the Desert Fathers of Egypt described vanity and **vainglory** [desperate need of the ego to be what is important] as one of the sins, the forms of “hamartia” or “missing the mark” – passions of the enneagram. I would suggest Deceit is the correct fixation for 3 – which does NOT mean going around fibbing to people, although that can happen in the lower levels of ALL types. It is more about **Self-Deception**. To really live identified with ego and thus our enneagram type, we need to believe a lot of things that are not quite true. We need to believe that we ARE the ego and what the ego values is what is most important. We need to convince EACH OTHER that it is necessary to keep believing many things that on a deeper level we know are not true, or at least not what we truly care about. So if we believe the ego is who we are, we are going to work very hard to make the ego feel valuable, lovable, and authentic. And this is the fixation of the 3 in *all* of us. The ego then seeks credit for all the good things that happen in our lives. We stop seeking credit when we realize we are already beloved – we are intrinsically valuable on a soul level. Our life IS meaningful. We ARE blessed.

Type 4 – Ichazo called the fixation melancholy. In the original teachings, 4 was “defined” by melancholy so I have always been baffled by people who describe themselves as “happy 4s.” There seem to be a large number of people in the US who see themselves as 4s because the descriptions have become a little loose. Some think they are 4s because they have had difficult childhood issues, or because they experience strong emotions or because they feel people do not understand them. But that is not a type – it just means you are human. Remember, the fixation is a mental habit. I call the fixation of 4 **Fantasizing**. 4s tend to dwell on fantasies, memories and self-talk that keep them in certain moods and feelings that feel familiar and authentic. And these moods tend to be melancholic as Ichazo suggested. 4's feelings tend to be around long and sweet sorrow. There's a tendency to expect disappointment, and much of 4's identity revolves around these feelings and the sense of disappointment. 4s generally are unapologetic about these feelings, seeing them as honest. It is true that inner work helps 4s move beyond the potentially destructive parts of this, but even healthy 4s still “like” darker, melancholic feelings but

find more creative and helpful ways of using them to support others. [Passion of **envy** – suffering the belief that others are always doing better.]

Type 5 – Ichazo called the fixation of 5 “stingy,” which has been garbled into “being stingy with knowledge and information.” I couldn’t disagree more with that statement, which, again, mixes up the fixation with the passion: **avarice**. I call the fixation of 5 **Retention**. When 5’s lose presence, they experience it as the loss of the ability to know things directly. The ancient Greeks called this Gnosis. The ego tries to recover this quality by replacing knowing with memorization – retaining information. It is not hard to see how much we are trained to think of knowing as memorizing things since most of our education system operates this way. But even when we have memorized a great deal, we still do not know how to use the knowledge. We lack wisdom, and this is what 5 is truly after. But when any of us truly reconnects with ourselves in the moment, our capacity for wisdom and direct knowing increases dramatically. This is a natural property of presence.

Type 6 – Ichazo called it cowardice, which is the tendency to keep oneself small – to negate the implications of the deeper truths we have come to realize. It is getting so mired in dealing with life that we never live. We never take the opening up to destiny that we are offered. While I think this is an important description of 6, I’m not sure it is the fixation. It’s hard to find a single word, but I think “**Doubt & Worry**” work well. Doubt & Worry arise when we lose touch with our true Mind – the place from which our creativity and wisdom flow. Most importantly, when we are present, we have an intuitive knowing of what to do. We intuitively know what to say, when to move forward, when to be still, when to speak and when to remain silent. The loss of presence here is experienced as the loss of this knowing, this inner guidance. So the ordinary mind goes crazy overthinking things. We worry about making mistakes and doubt our intuitions. This over-thinking is driven by a deep inner **anxiety** – the passion of 6, and the passion and fixation maintain one another. So much of the way out is learning to find the silence behind the inner chatter and to trust that knowing and inspiration will come from the silence. This also requires learning to breathe through our fear [6’s passion]. We can’t get rid of it, but we can learn how to transform it into a vivid awareness – the essential core of 6 as awakens and mindful presence.

Type 7 – Ichazo called it “planning,” but I would phrase it differently. 7s love spontaneity. They like surprises and discovering the unexpected bonuses of life. Thus careful planning is not really part of their survival strategy. I prefer the word **Anticipating**. 7s handle difficult feelings by anticipating future events and situations that promise to be better, more satisfying, more interesting, than the current or past troubles. I think that a lot of enneagram teachings overemphasizes the positivity of 7s as if they are immune to suffering. This is far from the truth. 7s get sad and depressed and frightened just like everyone else. But the coping strategy of 7s is to look forward and stay in motion. The 7 need for freedom cannot be overstated, and often the fixation is triggered by the fear of being trapped. It’s also not true that 7s avoid commitments. Many 7s in my life have stayed committed in relationships

even in very difficult circumstances. I think the issue here is more that 7s do not always communicate well the degree of commitment or interest they have in a particular relationship or situation and people then draw the wrong conclusions from their positive demeanor. The key thing for 7s to realize is that the coping pattern of anticipating “jams the signal” of painful feelings and also blocks out fully receiving the present moment. So then even positive experiences remain vaguely frustrating – as if they have not yet found what they are seeking. The anticipating maintains a certain kind of stimulation and excitement, but robs them of their most natural state – a profound satisfaction and gratitude for life. [Passion is **gluttony**, more.]

Type 8 – Ichazo called 8’s fixation “vengeance,” a tendency to respond to hurt with anger. I find this term to be too pathological. The 8s I know are not walking around thinking about revenge all the time. I came up with the term **Objectification** – the ego tendency to think of the world as solid things that are separate from each other. Like all fixations, that’s a valid but limited view. All people objectify but it creates a special problem for 8s. The problem is that objectifying the world and ourselves and others obscures the aliveness of the world. The more we objectify, the more everything feels dead. This is a kind of hell for 8s because their core is really about aliveness, life force and energy. We objectify to create separation, to create more of a sense of control and protection, but doing so cuts us off from experiencing the world as a living fabric from the soul of the world. The central power of 8s is to bring us back to that soulful aliveness – so the journey is about learning how to protect and be strong without sacrificing our full aliveness. How can we be both loving and strong at the same time? The ego has no answer but presence does. [Passion of **lust**, intensity.]

Type 9 – In my opinion 9s get grossly underestimated in many discussions and descriptions. Some teachers characterize 9s as lazy but most 9s I know are hard working and accomplished people. Some of this comes from misunderstanding 9’s passion of **slloth** [resignation, resistance, settling]. The issue here is more about resistance to being affected by life, as well as a tendency to shut down when confronted with conflicts or sometimes when pursuing self-interest. 9s are natural introverts and tend to protect themselves by withdrawing. For this reason, 9s often mistake themselves as 4s or 5s. partly this is because 9s really do share many qualities with those types – they have deep feelings, can be very creative and profound thinkers. Ichazo called the fixation indolence. I use the word **Ruminating**, by which I mean “chewing on my thoughts.” In short, it is talking to myself in my head – a way to keep myself company. Everyone does this, of course, but 9s are especially prone to losing themselves in their stream of inner thoughts, dialogues, and emotions – being swept along by them. Identifying with this inner content substitutes for feeling our being, our presence in a more direct way. When 9s find the right balance between their embodied presence and their rich inner life, their love of harmony and inner peace becomes a powerful capacity to bring outer harmony and peace to the world through their creativity, their vision and their fine example of, I am here!