

## Instincts ~ Russ Hudson

**The Enneagram Instincts** are the foundation of our survival structures that support our body. They can and have been studied for decades separate and apart from the Enneagram. They represent needs; and they represent our relationships to objects and people which grow out of our needs. Our sense of self – and thus our needs – do not exist in a vacuum but in relationship with others. This relationship of self and other, of which there are many, is characterized by particular emotions. [See also, the Object Relations Triad of rejection, frustration and attachment.]

The Enneagram is the study of what keeps us from being present to our needs, our emotions, our Self, and our world. It's not about labeling personalities. It's to help us become conscious of what is unconscious, as Hudson says, so we can open ourselves to the behaviors that elude us or that we misunderstand – all of which is in service to a life that works for us and for the development of our soul. Our purpose is to make our soul the priority in our life, instead of our personality. It's the realization that my very presence is the gift that I bring to the world. My personality, my ego structure, my Type is about habits and emotionally-charged, fear-based reactions. Instincts are fluid, and thus changeable, and **relate to our emotions** from the past, often from our **childhood wounds**.

Instincts are areas we can **actively work on**. They reside in our **Body Center**, below the waistline. Bodily physical sensations only happen in the present, in the now (think of the immediacy of touching a hot stove). As we soften and become grounded in our body, our heart (**Heart Center**) feels safer and becomes more available to our emotions. Oftentimes during a grounding practice, our vulnerable emotions start bubbling up, wanting to share valuable information with us – it's a time of deep listening. Then, our mind (**Head Center**) naturally quiets down because there is less for it to do in trying to figure everything out. When we're grounded and present in our Centers, we can become aware of our body's three instinctual energies at the same time. When we're not present, our Instincts end up serving our ego and the fixation of our Type, instead of our physical being.

There are actually **7 Centers** – The body center, heart center and head center; but the body center is 3 centers in itself: SP, SO and SX; that's heart+head+SP+SX+SO = 5 Centers. The other 2 centers are the **Higher Emotional Center**, which is the source of compassion and real love; not instinctual love. It's the source of the **Virtues** (the expressions of our soul). The **Higher Intellectual Center** is the source of the **Holy Ideas**, which has nothing to do with our day-to-day thinking and chatter. That's 2 more, for a total of 7 Centers. (The Virtues and Holy Ideas manifest as a result of awareness and inner work.)

**SP** (self-preservation) is located in our undercarriage, at the base of the spine, and tells us where danger is in order to stay safe. **SX** (sexual) is in and around our reproductive organs. It's about longing and aliveness. SX energy tells to strike out and explore unknown horizons. It's the drive to evolve and grow, to leave our tribe and go beyond ourselves. **SO** (social) is our solar plexus, and tells us to find and connect with our true tribe. SO is not about intimacy. It's about actual connection. It's the feeling and experience outside oneself of noticing what is going on with others and then connecting (or choosing not to connect, as the

situation calls for). Being aware that other people's inner work is helping me is our SO energy of connection.

All humans have **all three Instincts**, which are **always working together**, colluding to keep us stuck in the status quo. They can also be in conflict with each other, but they are *always* all working at the same time. They are never working independently, whether we are aware of them or not.

Our **dominant** Instinct is the fuel of our Type and what we habitually do when we're in the *lower* level of our Type and in stress. Activating *all* of our Instincts is a sign that we're in the *higher* level of our Type. As we become less fixated through inner work, our instinctual intelligence increases. Our blind spot becomes conscious to us, and our overworked dominant Instinct can relax and soften, bringing us more into balance; or alternatively, when needed, we can consciously choose one of the Instincts that may be more crucial to utilize in a given situation. It's not always about balance – it's about awareness and having choices to respond (instead of unconsciously reacting).

When we say that we're SP or SX or SO 'dominant,' that means that the passion of our type is messing the most with our dominant Instinct. For example, if a person is SP2, that means that the passion of 2, which is pride, is messing the most with their SP Instinct, and that person may be very arrogant about their time management even though it's not effective.

Our **middle** Instinct is the most okay. It supports our dominant Instinct and can help unstuck and activate our blind spot. The dominant instinct and the middle instinct can change positions. The blind spot never changes its position, but it can be attended to and brought into consciousness, which helps take pressure off our dominant Instinct and be more present to all three Instincts.

We are the same Instinct in our wings and connection points as we are in our Type; for example, SX8 → wings SX9 and SX7 and connecting points SX5 and SX2.

We leak most of our energy in fear-based, compulsive habits involving our Instincts. Through presence, we want to find the energy that we unconsciously project onto others. We want to become aware of what our relationship is to each of the Instincts individually and as a whole, and what needs our attention. Where am I out of integrity and alignment and feeling defensive? Where am I unconsciously repeating old patterns?

In **scoring** the Questionnaire, it's not about whether you're good at something or not. It's about **how much of your waking hours do you actually spend in the zone**.

- 3 points – our dominant instinct; you think about it, and you actually do it; it's "*Wow! That's me!*"
- 2 points – you sometimes think about it and sometimes do it; sometimes "Yes," and sometimes "No."
- 1 point – you don't think about it much; it gets neglected; you don't understand it or what it even means.



You can have a low zone or two (1 point) and still be dominant in an Instinct. Also, a particular activity can fall under different instincts. SP people can cook to be healthy. SX people can cook to explore new tastes and get lost in aromas and tastes. SO people can cook to connect with others.

Our weakest Instinct is the **blind spot**. It's the **key to growth**, full of juicy insights. We usually avoid two of the three zones in our blind spot. The blind spots of all three Instincts come with inner critics, inner rebels, and negative self-talk that keep old patterns in place. They can show up as the loss of energy, shutting down, feeling anxious, or running away, and can be signs that we're getting close to our ego defenses that scare and shame us out of trying new behaviors. Consciously acting from our blind spot, on the other hand, can feel grounding, balancing and empowering.

**Shame** around an Instinct doesn't mean it's our blind spot. When we tamp down any energy due to shame, it just goes underground.

When we get triggered and provoked by someone, it's about our own emotional reactivity and our Instincts (not our Type). Remember, Instincts are the foundation of our Body Center which is always in the present moment. If SP is our blind spot, seeing people fuss about **SP** issues, such as diet, drives us crazy. If **SX** is our blind spot, we see **SX** dominant people as show-offs and tacky. If **SO** is our blind spot, we see **SO** dominant people as shallow and wasting time socializing with small talk. Our projections are the hidden, shadow part of ourselves that we're afraid to look at so we project them onto others. Doing inner work takes a lot of courage and resolve. A lot.

See also Hudson's Twitter posts from 2020.

It's not my job to do the transformation.  
**Pure presence is transformation –**

Body Center – anger and lostness → embodiment and action  
 Heart Center – shame and sadness → compassion and kindness  
 Head Center – fear and confusion → clarity and focus

<b>Self-Preservation Instinct</b>	
	Time, money and energy are our three SP resources. SP energy is the engine of survival and root of the other Instincts. It's about conserving energy and caring for my organism. It manifests in our body as the physical sensations of hunger, warmth, fatigue, etc. It's about stability, groundedness and softness, and requires the skill of discipline. When SP gets mixed up with our type, it tends to produce neurotic habits of rigidity, stuckness, fussiness and 'my way or the highway' attitudes. Too much SP degenerates into closing off our self. When entering a room, SP usually notices resources.
Zone 1	<b>Self-care and wellbeing</b> (this is not comfort)
	1. Diet; what I consume; (including over-eating, under-eating, workaholic, hoarding, etc.)
	2. Exercise
	3. Rest and sleep
	4. Relaxation; time in solitude, softening our nervous system; self-soothing
	5. Adequate stimulation; reading, music, healthy sex life, watching documentaries
Zone 2	<b>Maintenance of our foundation and resources</b>
	1. Money and finance habits; good stewardship 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; fixing things or finding people who can; managing the practical aspects of my life
	4. Work habits; persistence; ability to follow through and finish tasks; discipline; ways I am handy or finding others who are handy
	5. Energy management; how I use your energy and deal with stress; balancing solitude with activities
Zone 3	<b>Domesticity, home and security</b>
	1. Comfort and domesticity; cook and maintain my home as a sacred space
	2. Safety & security; includes what kind of car I buy and how I maintain it
	3. Domestic structure that supports life; home management; home as my launchpad; inviting guests into my home
	4. Beauty & holding; my home and work space enrich and support my creativity; I have supplies; I feel held by my space
	5. Recharging and restoration; my home supports my restoration and wellbeing
SP Blind	We're resistant and lack structure, discipline and regularity. We lack focus and hope others will handle things instead of us. We fear getting trapped by domestic life. We just get by. Life is random. We may not be horrible at handling practical matters; we just don't think about them. We tell ourselves that we don't know how the world works or how to establish ourself in life.



<b>Sexual Instinct</b>	
	<p>SX energy is the engine of evolution. It's the desire to grow and go beyond ourselves so we can eventually connect (SO). It's the recognition that no one is responsible for me but me. SX is about spending energy; the energy of creation and transformation; giving oneself wholeheartedly. It activates, enlivens and charges our battery. It feels like tingling and electricity in our body, which we can be tuned into. When entering a room, SX usually notices energy and intensity. When SP energy relaxes and SX energy activates, they meet and help each other out – it's sensuality. When SX is mixed with SO, it's bonding. SX by itself is <i>not</i> bonding or connecting.</p> <p>SX zones are the most difficult to understand because they are mostly in the subconscious and we have a lot of shame around it. Gurdjieff said the blockage and misuse of our sexual energy is the greatest detriment to our soul's development. Compulsions can take over our SX energy and lead to self-destructive behaviors. SX is <i>not</i> 'one-on-one' (which has no basis of being able to work on oneself). SX is <i>not</i> thinking we're deeper or sexier than other people – that's narcissism. SX means 'this is the thing that grabs me and gets me.'</p>
Zone 1	<b>Attraction and attracting others</b>
	1. Broadcasting and charisma/magnetism of energy that commands attention. I am reading the energy and noticing who I am attracted to, who repels me, and also who is attracted to me. When our personality takes over and we're not aware, we stop listening, and we're unconsciously attracted by old patterns. When we're present, our attention attracts us to things and people who are evolutionary and developmental for us. Charisma is a skill that can be cultivated.
	2. Display – actually doing things to get noticed, large or small (which we often have shame about admitting). An SX t-shirt says, "check me out!" An SO t-shirt wants someone who relates to it.
	3. Being attracted to someone/something and actually following the energy; SX finds it very difficult to pay attention when there is no attraction present; following SX energy too much can lead to an erratic lifestyle. SP people go for stability and continuity.
	4. Choosing, evaluating and discriminating the fitness of my choice; does the person or friend 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.
	5. Competition and winning; this is why SX can be more aggressive.
Zone 2	<b>Exploration and Edge</b> – it gets us out of our lethargy and into the present; when we're not present, it makes us restless and in search of stimulation
	1. Activation, arousal, turned on by anything or anyone. People low on SX need to do new things; things they haven't done before in order to feel more energized.
	2. Taking risks, having adventures, drawn to the edge; impulsive; the sense of security is out the window for the moment, but there has to be balance too – there's sensible risk and reckless risk.
	3. Getting out of old habits and leaving my comfort zone. Life changes because we step out of our comfort zones. This is not about taking risks. It's about doing things we actually like but haven't tried, and then noticing when we do, it gives us energy and the feeling of aliveness.
	4. Stimulation and new experiences – intentionally seeking out what feeds my soul and recharges my batteries. In order to be able to follow our SX stimulation and impulses, we need our SP stimulation for wellbeing and balance.
	5. Following and honoring impulses and inspirations; I find a way to do it. People who are not SX dominant do not follow their impulses.
Zone 3	<b>Merging</b> – this is <i>not</i> one-on-one or connecting. We fuse and lose ourselves in someone or something, and we like the sensation because it feels like a break from our ego self. Consequently, it can feel restorative. We focus and are engulfed with another's energy; or we become preoccupied and have difficulties holding a middle ground.
	1. Focus and intense involvement; only one thing at a time! No distractions! No background music!
	2. Losing my boundaries and my sense of self; surrendering; being engrossed in a movie, instead of thinking about something else while watching the movie.
	3. Concentration versus distraction. It's all or nothing; no in-between or middle ground. I need to be locked in on something; otherwise I don't know what to do, and I end up distracted and restless.
	4. Pouring and spending my energy into someone or something, rather than conserving it; no yielding until the job is done, and not even being concerned when it will be done. Creativity is about spending energy. "In the flow."
	5. Seeking fusion and at-oneness; relaxing and feeling outside my boundaries; for example, the feelings during sexual activity, religious rituals, or with pets. It can be a feeling of spirituality or energetic union. It is <i>not</i> actual connection.



SX Blind	SX blind doesn't mean a lack of intensity. The intensity is present but may be unground in our unconscious, in our shadow. We feel powerful energies but 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 that we're boring and can't imagine anyone taking much interest in us, and if they do, we suspect there is something wrong with them. Or, sometimes we think we are more adventurous than we really are.
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Social Instinct	
	The parent/child bond is the origin of SO. It's <i>not</i> about relating to a group. It's the drive to reach out to another, to relate, to know each other, and to stay <b>connected</b> and <b>engaged</b> . It's the link between the instinctual self and the emotional self. Emotions have to do with the social implications of bonding and connecting with others. SX energy has excitement but it's not necessarily emotional. In SO, it's easier to recognize what we do and don't do than in SX. When entering a room, SO usually notices power and prestige.
Zone 1	<b>Reading People and Situations</b> – instinctive; but can also be learned
	1. Reading facial expressions; body language; tone of voice; moods
	2. Reading between the lines – people almost never mean what they are saying
	3. Interest in others; attunement; “tuning in” – it's more than just manners
	4. Empathy and concern about others
	5. Adapting to “clues”; adjusting behavior – people low on SO have difficulty adapting to different situations
Zone 2	<b>Connecting</b> – it's not about SX energy or sexually “hooking up.” Social small talk helps us communicate non-verbally; the phrase ‘ <i>small talk</i> ’ is a narcissistic term used to judge a conversation that you're not interested in; small talk is the opportunity to read people in a harmless exchange that both parties can participate in, helping us to decide if we want something deeper during the exchange.
	1. Creating relationships; engaging others
	2. Sustaining relationships; maintaining connections, <i>and</i> discriminating and knowing when to end relationships
	3. Communication – speaking <i>and</i> 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 in order to pay back. It's also over-responding to the needs of only our own tribe members.
	5. Play; shared enjoyment; celebration – play relaxes and builds trust; the shadow of <i>play</i> is the enjoyment of defeating the other person.
Zone 3	<b>Participation</b> – we are called to participate and get involved in Life
	1. Getting involved or not: what do I participate in?
	2. The need to contribute something beyond my own needs; people who are suicidal 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.
	4. “Part of something bigger”; a sense of place – evokes humility and heart that we are part of a living system; the shadow is cults.
	5. Belonging and welcoming – deeper than #4. It's about feeling part of something bigger. I feel safe, I belong, and I welcome others.
SO Blind	It has nothing to do with not liking groups and parties, and it's not the same as introversion. SO dominants can be introverts who need a lot of time to recharge. SO blinds think that being with people is going to be a drag and a drain. We resist connecting and emotionally associate connection with previous disappointments and humiliations. We justify ourselves by thinking others are boring, shallow and clueless. 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 have a difficult time seeing our offering and contribution. SO blind creates self-absorption, so to activate the SO energy, we need to do things that we are genuinely interested in.