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### Integration of Enneagram with J Krishnamurti's Thoughts: An Effective Tool for Personal Growth – A Case Study

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#### Abstract:

Enneagram is a powerful and intense system for personal transformation. It classifies personalities into nine types and provides vivid descriptions of the types with pin-point depth and accuracy. It describes movements in personalities also. It has helped millions of people around the world to improve their relationship, leadership and to touch their spirituality. The first publication of the Enneagram came up a hundred years ago. The personality Enneagram came up in the 1960s. Since then there has been a lot of research to evolve the model further. I have studied the Enneagram and J Krishnamurti's thoughts for decades and integrated them to create a very interesting and profound tool to assess the psycho-spiritual aspect of any individual and assist them in their personal growth.

**Keywords:** Enneagram, Psycho-spirituality, Personal Growth, Psychological Injury, Conditioning

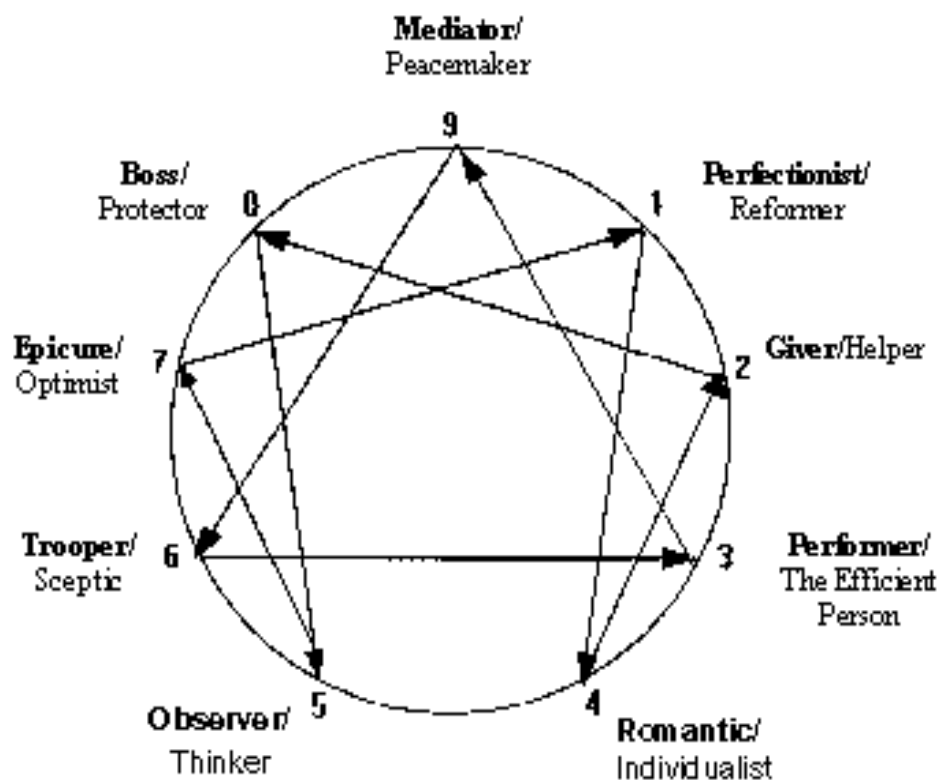
#### INTRODUCTION

The Enneagram is a psycho-spiritual system offering help to millions of people worldwide. Its origins are obscure though Gurdjieff is said to have found it in the Middle East, near Afghanistan, in the early 1900s [1]. The personality Enneagram was developed by Oscar Ichazo in Bolivia in the 1960s [2]. Claudio Naranjo taught the Enneagram secretly to a few students in San Francisco in the 70s [2]. Since then there has been a lot of research, primarily in the United States of America, to evolve the model further.

I was introduced to Enneagram and related concepts in 2001 through a book on Integral Psychology [3] by the American philosopher Ken Wilber. This was also the time I was studying J Krishnamurti's philosophy [4,5,6,7,8,9,10]. In the following years I integrated Krishnamurti's teachings and the Enneagram concepts to create a very interesting and profound

tool to assess the psycho-spiritual aspect of any individual and assist them in their personal growth. The Enneagram has helped people appreciate the viewpoints of other individuals and redeem their relationships. It has also helped businesses improve their performance and capabilities. Some people have found deep inner peace and others love and hope. You can find some examples of how I have used this integrated approach later in this paper.

## WHAT IS ENNEAGRAM?



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The Enneagram is a nine-pointed figure with arcs and lines. Ennea in Greek means nine and gram means something written or a figure. The Enneagram classifies the people in this world into nine personality types. They are *Type One*, *Type Two*, *Type Three* and so on. Each Type is represented by a point on a circle. The lines connecting the points denote integration and disintegration and the arrow denotes the direction of disintegration. The arcs denote transformation and conformation. For example, *Type One* disintegrates to *Type Four* under stress. *Type One* integrates to *Type Seven* under security. *Type One* may transform to *Type Two* or conform to *Type Nine* depending on the situation.

## SCOPE

Today we live in the times where the traditional systems of well-knit societies are continuously disappearing. As a result, the need for assistance and support from specialists for psychological growth and development is ever increasing. This is where the tools such as the Enneagram are immensely useful. A full description of the fundamental principles by which Enneagram addresses human problems is not the context of this paper. The reader is advised to refer to any book on this subject [2, 11]. This paper is also not about J Krishnamurthy's thoughts on choiceless awareness, psychological injury and freedom from religious, spiritual and cultural conditioning, however, a brief overview on him has been included in Annexure 1 for the benefit of the readers.

The focus of this paper is to introduce the nine personality types and to understand the application of the integrated tool of Enneagram with J Krishnamurti's thoughts in different scenarios and its broad relevance to modern living.

## PERSONALITY TYPES

**Type One:** *Ones* want to see themselves and the world as one perfect place. They have high degree of self-criticism and this often overflows into criticizing others. Some *Ones* control their sexual impulses and often have a high sense of morality. *Ones* are also good people because being bad is socially unacceptable. *Ones* correct others and have a high sense of right and wrong. Under stress their thinking tends to be black and white with no room for grey. *Ones* exercise excellent judgement and mature *Ones* set up and follow processes in everything. An outstanding quality with *Ones* is that they try to understand. Some of them are leaders and change agents. A very strong quality about *Ones* is that they use a lot of "what should be" in their talking. When they are very healthy they come close to "what is". Some *Ones* go on to become great reformers. Mahatma Gandhi is an example.

**Type Two:** The attention of the *Twos* goes on people. An outstanding feature of the *Type Two* personality is that they want to be associated with good quality people in nurturing relationships. Of all the types it is *Type Two* that gives most importance to relationships. They also give to get. Another feature of *Type Two* is that they are helpers. They deeply care for people they come across and are the embodiment of what we know as Human Resources in companies. Being feelers *Twos* have a poor mind. The social *Twos* are leaders. Some *Twos* like to be the power behind the throne. *Twos* are givers. They are conscious of the community and are drawn to humanitarian causes. Once again Social *Twos* are ambitious and go on to do well in life by attaching to the right people. Perhaps the greatest quality they have is that they are compassionate. Mother Teresa, the Nobel winner is an example of a *Type Two*.

**Type Three:** *Type Three* are the most attractive type in the Enneagram. The world beauty pageant winner Aishwarya Rai is an example. *Threes* are also the most hard-working type in

the Enneagram. Often industrious, they are found mostly in corporate companies. Many *Threes* are intelligent and like titles, positions and the money that comes with these accolades. *Threes* like leadership and the often unhealthy and heartless CEOs caricatured in videos are *Threes*. *Threes* are out of touch with their feelings and find it hard to relate well with people. They also don't know what their desires are and may play into the hands of authority figures. Of all the types it is the *Threes* that completely succumb to the expectations of the society and try to fit roles. One outstanding quality is that they become leaders of corporations, know exactly what each one is capable of and use their charisma to run successful organizations.

**Type Four:** Of all the types unhealthy *Fours* have the severest inferiority complex. Often very temperamental and dauntless they may try to coerce others into submission. *Fours* have the best emotional intelligence. They take time to process their feelings, are highly empathetic, show depth in their work and, when healthy, are evolved with great artistry and creativity. The ordinary *Four* is unfit to work in corporates and find comfort in non-profits. Often quite dramatic, they are the best actors amongst the nine types in the Enneagram. Hollywood actors Marlon Brando and Jonny Depp are examples. The common *Four* may not be very competent and commercial but healthy and evolved *Fours* display outstanding qualities of authenticity, vulnerability and sensitivity. *Fours* have a poor mind but, in some cases, may have perfect knowledge of their domain.

**Type Five:** Of all the types in the Enneagram *Type Five* is the most intelligent. They are highly intellectual and the true thought leaders in the industry. Many of them are imaginative and have deep knowledge in their expertise. They are also likely to know something about everything. *Type Fives* are also the most emotionally detached and withdrawn of all types and for this reason may run into problems in their marriage. Often inventive and innovative, they are the technocrats of the world. They have multiple degrees and are the bedrock of the education system and philosophies of the world. Many *Fives* are highly evolved and are difficult to understand. They may have wonderful ideas and deep insights in areas they choose to work on. The great Albert Einstein is an example. When healthy, *Type Fives* can open their heart and become highly social and offer themselves for service of the world.

**Type Six:** The thing about the *Six* is that they have multiple competencies. They are good at arts, science, sports, politics, family, everything. Like a *Five* and a *Seven* they are a mind type. They have a well-developed intellect and excellent analytical abilities. They go on to become scientists. They also believe in social cohesion and teamwork. More than anything they are workers. Wherever they go their immediate tendency is to work, only to find a problem with that. The typical *Six* is always looking for threats and dangers. The typical *Six* is highly anxious, worrying and mistrusting of people. They blame others and have self-doubt and deep feelings of inferiority. If they come out of these problems they can contribute a lot and be excellent family men and a glue to the community. Trust and security are most important for a *Six*. The Indian politicians Subramaniam Swamy and Arvind Kejriwal are perfect examples.

**Type Seven:** *Sevens* are the type that mostly want to live a good life. They respond to stimuli immediately, are often quite commercial and want enjoyment more than anything in life. Their life has to be fun and exciting. The infamous Indian businessman Vijay Mallya, King of Good Times, comes to mind. *Sevens* are a mind type. Some healthy *Sevens* are quite wonderfully imaginative visionaries. They get many ideas and can cross-fertilize ideas from different domains. They are thinkers and would like to work somewhat but are not doers at all. Like the *Six* and *Five* they have fear. They may fear that their ideas might fail and they will lose all the money. The uneducated *Seven* is unintelligent and full of conflict and anger. They speak what comes to mind which may be scattered sometimes. If they know how to overcome fear and get along with people they can become worthy contributors because of their instinct to plan and intense futuristic thinking.

**Type Eight:** *Eights* are the bosses of the Enneagram. They have natural leadership or at least it appears so. *Eights* know where the power is and how to use it. They also believe in authority. *Eights* may sometimes care for people and will fight for the justice of the underprivileged. They are based on their bodies and can be aggressive at times. They know how to use their anger and are always wary of people who try to control them. Ordinary *Eights* are very good at bringing resources and always have some projects and people lined up. Mature *Eights* may be found leading companies and departments and will usually do a good job of it. They are very good in converting ideas to action and sometimes be strong in their views of people and society. Very healthy *Eights* have qualities like magnanimity and compassion. Charlton Heston in the movie *Ben-Hur* is an excellent example of an *Eight*.

**Type Nine:** *Nines* are calm, gentle, compliant and soft people. They are most averse to conflict among Enneagram types. They love peace and will create a harmonious environment wherever they go. Usually not leaders but followers, they are the ones that treat people the best if they do get to lead. Some *Nines* can be incompetent and have problems in the job. They don't work or think but are excellent doers. They can get quickly angry and generally tend to have a locus of control outside of themselves like an *Eight* or a *One*. *Nines* have an extremely simple mind. They are not feelers but brilliant in accepting people as they are. They easily get along with people and are strong collaborators in the workplace. They are the ones who have a long tenure in an organization. Some *Nines* can be creative and commercial. Walt Disney and JK Rowling are excellent examples of the *Nine* type.

## INTEGRATED ENNEAGRAM APPROACH IN PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Life conditions us so much. And it is a huge task to come out of this conditioning. When we were young we were exposed to so many things. There was academics. There was sport that we didn't watch but actually took part of. There were hours and hours of non-stop talking with friends and relatives. There was music and films. And of course, there were television programs and political discourses. There was even religious discourse. All this took place in the context of a family. While these seemed engrossing, enlightening and entertaining, they were also

conditioning some of us. People go abroad and encounter a new culture. There is also the pressure of having to understand advanced study material and then perform research. All this puts pressure on the individual. As the rubber meets the road the pieces come apart. The person may suffer mental disorders like clinical depression and bipolar disorder. Add to this an abusive advisor. Even staying alive becomes challenging. The conditioning takes a full grip on him. Performance is not as good as desired. Relationships are at the worst. Still the person is fighting. He is working fourteen hours a day, for six years, to complete his degree. At some point the wheels come apart. There are even murderous thoughts. All these come to an end with the obtainment of a degree certificate. And father's death.

At some point there is a bit of perception. There is this feeling that there is definitely a better way of living life than what was encountered. The person starts looking for some help. He does the only thing he knows. Go looking for books and libraries. Slowly the Enneagram finds him. And around the same time he encounters J Krishnamurthy's thoughts on choiceless awareness, psychological injury and freedom from religious, spiritual and cultural conditioning. He begins to devour reams and reams of psychological literature. His curiosity grows. He asks questions. He tries to understand. Only to realize that he is falling short each time. The work continues. He meets other people like himself. They are onto the search too. For something much bigger than his little self. Ironically, he realizes that it is the self that is at the root of the problem. Slowly he gathers strength. He knows his inner work has begun. He continues to show interest in understanding the world of relationship. Slowly he begins to understand what it is to live life actually. His intellect supports him. His intelligence is awakened. He is able to converse with people freely. He is also able to direct his activities. He finds a job. With that some money. There are recurring problems but this time he is not overwhelmed. His quest for something big continues. There are people to appreciate his journey. He realizes that because of all his inner work he is quite evolved. He continues to show interest in this kind of education. He meets new people. Or rather people want to meet him. He has assimilated a body of knowledge. He has made strides on wisdom too. He is quite healthy, psychologically speaking. He finds new modes of employment. People are easily able to appreciate his capability. He continues to stay engaged in learning new areas. It could be environment or economics or politics or science. His intelligence declines a bit but is still sharp. He helps a lot of people. Years or even decades pass. He has grown a heart. He is now a service leader, which very few people get to. He is even physically healthy. He knows his life has been a journey. But he has no time to call it the end. In fact, he makes plans for what to do with the remaining years of his life. He integrates his family, which he had once denounced because they were toxic. There is no old nemesis like anxiety, worry, intention, desire, conflict, enjoyment or fear. His life is free. (This section is nothing but the author's own experience).

## **INTEGRATED ENNEAGRAM APPROACH IN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**

When a new situation arises like people moving into an apartment community, several things can happen. Outwardly it may seem like a government employee, a banker, an engineer, a



scientist, a company worker and a housewife are all occupying their new homes. But deep down it is the psychological types at work!! A *Four* will be interested in pursuing his ideas. A *Six* will begin to work and quickly see who else is working. A *Three* will look to see who is recognizing him. Another *Three* will be scared that she has to work. The *Eight* will look at who to assign work. The *Nine* will try to get along while internally fuming. The *One* will find the whole environment utterly disgusting. The *Seven* will be angry that his needs are not met and that he is being restricted. Add to this a deficit rainfall and the problem of distributing water. There is utter chaos. There is practically no trust and understanding. There is only anger and aggression.

This is the reality of today's living in a city in India or for that matter elsewhere in the world. There are constant conflicts. People have huge egos to defend their frail, highly inferior selves. How do you live sanely in this situation? The first thing to realize is that these are all habitual patterns. They are not real. Really speaking, if you could just look at the situation there is no work. Work is there only in the mind. The habitual patterns, values and beliefs have been ingrained since childhood – that is one has to work. The only thing to do is to just distribute water. What will be insightful and important is to see whether work or learning or relationship is aggravating or reducing conflict. Very often work increases the disintegration and conflict. And learning, which is merely acquiring knowledge, breeds conformity. Relationships are stressful. So, once we identify the source of the conflict it can be removed.

Having said all this, a small bit of work like fixing the motor or the valves or studying the permeation to resolve the water issue, does happen. But the dominant force is one of conflict, disintegration and chaos. On a rare occasion people show a bit of gentleness. Since the dominant trait is one of broken relationships and fights, this has a way to affect in the long run. People don't see face to face and do anything productive. There are constant arguments. There is no competence. People are leaving the place. On rare times, there is abuse.

The Enneagram and J Krishnamurti's philosophy teaches us that these are nothing but patterns in thinking and acting. These are illusory, the reality is something else. One has to work on his blaming, anxiety, doubt and mistrust. Only then there will be normalcy and trust. One has to slowly develop some capability – to face the world. So, the next time you enter a situation, don't be blindly happy. The Enneagram teaches us to ask – is this stressful or securing? What are the habitual patterns? How old are the mental models and beliefs? What is dominant and how will that affect in the long run? Is the conflict aggravating or subsiding? And so on.

## **INTEGRATED ENNEAGRAM APPROACH IN THE WORKPLACE**

Take the case of a small biotechnology company in the backdrop of beautiful Pennsylvania in the US, in the late 1990s. They were trying to develop a DNA based vaccine. It may seem from the outside like the latest technology with lots of monetary incentives. But once you get inside the workplace you would notice the reality is completely different. There is a *Six* trying to work

and getting a few others to work. There is a *Three* CEO openly putting pressure on people. There is a *Seven* that supports creativity. There is a *Nine* wanting to develop himself. There is a *One* rookie. There is an *Eight* senior manager. And then a *Two* woman who partners with the *Six*. All of this may seem okay but the truth is there are bitter fights. No one seems to get along. The main conflict is between the *Six* and the *Nine*. They both want the other out of the company. The *Seven* doesn't like the *One* because he doesn't work. The *Two* is toxic and is merely loitering around. The *Three* doesn't have a clue what to do but wants everyone to work hard. To cut to the chase, the company didn't survive and got sold.

The Enneagram tells us that these are just old patterns of the Types. America is a *Three* country. There are also *Six* and *Seven* influences. All three types want to work. That is the dominant culture in the country and the company. But the reality is that work isn't helpful. It helped the company somewhat but then stopped. Because relationships were not developed. Research was not done. Proper knowledge was not available. There was undue aggression and intensity. Deep down the *One* who was from India knew this. He very well knew that work and intensity were increasing the rift between people. And that there is an absolute need for people to get along. There is very badly a need for leadership. No one was listening to anyone. They were only pushed by their egos. There was a real need to sit and talk. There was a need to develop trust. There was a dire need for understanding.

Another perspective the Enneagram offers is, what is the current model that the company is following? Being a technology company, the company was following a typical academic style of functioning led by senior researchers. But the thing to do was to look where the company was in its evolution. It raised money, it did some clinical trials and it tried some ideas, now what? Now it had to do some development. That required trying out certain things that look like research. This subtlety and nuance were completely overlooked by the company management. Had they only consulted the young *One* and *Nine* they would have gently suggested what needs to be done. But the *Three* CEO was calling the shots, so to speak. The thirty million dollars that was raised got wasted. No product was developed. At some point the *Six* threatened the *One* for insubordination. The *One* quickly left the company. He learns later that the *Six* was completely insecure, had severe fights later in his career, left a trail of mess and never contributed to the industry or the economy. (The author was the Type *One* in the story above and went on to gather more such experiences).

## INTEGRATED ENNEAGRAM APPROACH AND THE PLANET

If you take the Indian societal landscape, there is widespread violence, apathy and loneliness. Life in India is not how it was fifty years ago when there was trust, community and overall safety. If you take the United States, there are just any number of divisions. Arrogance and aggression. There is open racism and violence in Australia. So, it is in Western Europe. Take the Israel-Palestine conflict. So many innocent children are losing their lives while India and much of the West are supporting Israel. There is genocide. There is any degree of terrorism in



the world. Even countries like England have teething poverty problems. There is a strong nexus between the private sector companies and the government leadership. The rich are not taxed as much and the older generation has to pay the price. Consumerism is way too much. Just in the last six years the world has consumed more than what it did in the previous century says a LinkedIn post. The environment is at its worst. There is so much trash that goes into the oceans that affect the subtle ecology there reducing oxygen production that is so essential to human life. Elephants are being butchered in Nairobi for food. Just the city landfills are teeming with trash and stench. There are floods and forest fires almost regularly. The heat wave and cold waves are totally changing life on earth. What is the one reason for all this? Human activity and greed!!

I have been studying psycho-spirituality for the last twenty-six years. I have particularly spent over two decades on the Enneagram and J. Krishnamurti. From an aggressive, competitive man I changed into an intelligent and compassionate man. I am mostly not violent and intense. I live my life with a great deal of peace and harmony. I do research and some coaching. People like me and come to talk to me internationally. I consume very little food and other things. I live a simple life. More than anything I have unconditional love for children. I am also highly evolved. I attribute all this to the Enneagram and my patient work. My curiosity and the desire to understand the world have got me into this position. As I said earlier, millions worldwide are changing their lives as we speak with the help of teachings such as the Enneagram. It is my goal to take the Enneagram to the masses of India. It is not so much the knowledge but the transformation that comes with it that is important to notice here. Depending on the interest level an individual can spend five years or twenty years or a lifetime in psychology and spirituality. Depending on the level of involvement the teachings will have an impact on the person. One may wonder, how will a mere knowledge of types and movements will cause changes in the personality? Continual application of understanding will provide for deep psychological development in people. What will this do? It will change the worldview of the person. He won't choose the same tired relationships anymore. He won't make the same old career choices. He will change his eating and drinking habits. He will have time for his children. He will develop the community. All this means he is not consuming much in terms of planetary resources. He can do a lot more like science and arts with a lot less. He will get a chance to live a transformed life not just minimizing damage to the planet but actually regenerate the world with his thoughts and actions.

## CONCLUSION

Whether it is India or Europe or America, humanity is the ultimately the same nine types. And challenges exist in everyone's lives. At an individual level and at a collective level, we are all grappling with our issues. There are various paths to life and work. Every person has undergone a different journey and, hence, every person has a different perspective and worldview. A deeper understanding of the various personality types, using Enneagram as guide, and our inner

world, using J Krishnamurti's thoughts, can provide some direction on how to navigate or overcome these challenges.

Enneagram and other such models have paved the way for greater understanding of the psychology of individuals and provides a workable approach to resolve our issues and to regain our mental health. I was once a little student with thoughts of dying due to ultimate depression. From there I am at a point looking for opportunities to help the country's citizenry come out of their myriad problems and deficiencies. This journey continues in other people that I may have touched and those who have learnt from me.

In conclusion, the Enneagram is an enticing way to enrich oneself with profound psychological knowledge and it offers a key to understanding self, others and the world. Integrating this psychological knowledge with insights from J Krishnamurti, on how to navigate psychological injury and how to free oneself from various conditionings, will give individuals a chance to live a life which is fulfilling in every respect.

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#### **Brief Profile of the Author:**

**V. Vijaykumar** started his career in science with an undergraduate degree from BITS, Pilani. He then moved to the US to do research in drug delivery and get a Ph.D. degree from the University of Kansas. Unhappy with life in the States, he returned to India and started to study psychology and spirituality. He came across Enneagram in June 2001 and went on to learn the system and add knowledge to the ancient model through his observations, experiences, thinking and reading. In the process he integrated J Krishnamurti's teachings into the Enneagram thus shaping his mind with profound psycho-spiritual thinking and knowledge.

Vijaykumar has made several attempts at working in the industry which only reinforced his unsuitability to live the corporate life. Over a period of time Vijay studied various other systems and developed a capability to transform organizations. In the last five years he spent time on LinkedIn learning about various problems in the world and adapting his knowledge to address those issues in a fundamental manner. This led to his interest in large scale societal transformation using psycho-spirituality as a tool. He is currently the Chief Development Officer for Apna Vikas, a Bangalore based start-up focused on bringing self-development to the Indian public.

**Statements and Declaration:** I declare that I have no conflict of interest with my places of employment or anybody else in publishing this article. No financial support was received for the work within this article.

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## Annexure 1

J Krishnamurti was born in Madanapalli in India in 1895. He started giving talks on various topics including life, love, spirituality, society, philosophy and religion since the age of twenty-five and went on almost till his death in 1986. When he gave talks, it didn't just come from his knowledge or intellect but from his being. One of the outstanding things about his talks was his razor-sharp intellect and the ability to cut through any topic of his interest with precision and depth. He is still remembered for his intense discussions with David Bohm, the physicist.

J Krishnamurti produced a huge body of work and wrote over a hundred books. His work has given strength and has awakened the intelligence of millions of people in the world and, in my experience, whatever he has said was so profound that it could never be challenged. Krishnamurti was not only a philosopher but a spiritualist and a social transformer too. He started numerous schools and has foundations in India, America, England and Switzerland.

In today's world, where there is so much fragmentation, his teachings bear the torch for what he would say the society was doing – going towards a self-destructive path and ruin. "It is not a measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society" said Krishnamurti.

In all his teachings he has talked about how society conditions man and how man should dedicate his life to come out of this conditioning, as he himself did. Just what are the things that the society throws at man? Comparison and competition. Desire. Greed. Pleasure. Arrogance. And the like. Krishnamurti would dissect each one these qualities and point out how deleterious it is to live a life of such qualities and how man is limiting himself and others around him by following such a life. For example, "Effort is an abomination" said Krishnaji (as he was affectionately called). This went against what people commonly knew – that effort brings prosperity. He was not against making money. "Do what you love and money will follow" he said. And actually went on to do the same in his life. Krishnamurti made thought the cornerstone of his teachings. He said that it was thought that was at the root of all suffering. It is one thing to actually suffer in a situation but quite another to keep thinking about it all the time. In this sense he was much like the Buddha. Knowledge too is a huge problem in life. In fact, Krishnaji said, "Knowledge is the enemy of love". Love to him was not just sexual or romantic love. Love was intelligence. In such a love there was no other. It transcended many of the dualities and the self.

Krishnamurti developed ideas of psychological living, psychological evolution, psychological time, psychological memory and so on. He said humans should come out of such psychological living and live a truly liberated life. Krishnamurti experienced the highest spirituality such as thoughtlessness, wholeness, emptiness and perception.

Krishnamurti is now considered one of the greatest philosophers of all time.