



A LIFE LIVED IN FULL COLOUR

**The Lenses of The
Enneagram**

By Cecilia Louw

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A Life Lived in Full Colour: The Lenses of Enneagram

Introduction

“In the kaleidoscope of life, the Enneagram reveals each colour of our soul, turning our complexities into a masterpiece of self-awareness and harmony – A Life Lived in Full Colour”.

Cecilia Louw

Growing up, I always felt a deep sense of duty to be the best version of myself. Reflecting on my childhood, it's clear how those early experiences shaped my lifelong quest for order, morality, and perfection.

I remember the high expectations about being responsible, mature, or just getting things right. These values were imprinted in me from a very young age. It often felt like I had to grow up faster than my peers, taking on responsibilities that seemed beyond my years.

Feedback was a constant in my life, often focusing on how to improve or correct my mistakes. This instilled in me the belief that making errors was not okay. It turned me into my biggest critic, constantly pushing myself to achieve more and improve in every aspect of my life.

Of course, this pursuit of perfection brought its own set of challenges, and so I started my career path as a Social Worker not by choice but because this was the right thing to do. I had no passion for this path and would instead have become an archaeologist and moved to Egypt. As I pursued my degree, a shadow companion of depression often walked beside me, whispering doubts and nurturing an inner void that I couldn't fill.

With this in hand, I completed my degree and was haunted by a pervasive sense of incompleteness. Anxiety became a constant undercurrent, a silent predator that fed on my fears of inadequacy. Was I smart enough, doing enough, perfect enough? These questions were relentless taskmasters, driving me to an endless quest for perfection that always seemed just beyond reach. The collapse of two marriages stood as monuments to my unspoken failures, each a painful echo of my search for wholeness. But the only echo that sounded as an unstoppable reminder was the one that shouted, I am not good, good enough, or I could have done this better.

During my thirty-something years, an opportunity arose—a bursary to study the Enneagram in the Narrative Tradition. It was as if life had handed me a key to a door I didn't know existed. I embarked on this journey with a cautious hope, not realising it would lead me to the core of my being.

As I delved into the Enneagram, I met myself—the raw, unvarnished self. I saw the One in me, the Reformer, with an unsettling and liberating clarity. I understood the internal critic that had driven me to the brink, the relentless pursuit of an impossible ideal.

But with understanding came acceptance. I accepted that I am a Type One, with all its strengths and pitfalls. This knowledge became a compass, helping me navigate life with newfound grace. I learned to invite people who complemented and challenged me into my life, and I found the courage to let go of relationships that no longer served my journey.

The Enneagram didn't just offer me a mirror; it provided me with a map. It showed me the paths of growth and the trails that led to dead ends. I learned the art of self-compassion, the practice of patience, and the joy of living in a state of 'good enough.'

The Enneagram was my mentor, teaching me that before I could be a healer, I needed to experience healing. Through its wisdom, I transformed my inner critic into an inner guide and found the completeness I had sought for so long in embracing my imperfect yet whole being.

In this profound metamorphosis, I discovered that the most significant journey we can embark on is the journey within. It is there, in the quiet places of our hearts, where true healing and transformation begin.

The Power of the Enneagram



In a world brimming with self-help directives and personality assessments, the Enneagram stands as a beacon of transformative understanding, a compass leading to the core of our being. Why, you may ask, is it essential to turn the pages of a guide that unravels the Enneagram's wisdom? The answer lies in the profound journey it promises—a journey to the original, unblemished self, a path to liberation from the invisible shackles we unknowingly forge throughout our lives.

The Enneagram is not just another personality system; it is a dynamic map of the human psyche. It delineates nine distinct patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour, each arising from a fundamental belief about what is necessary for survival and satisfaction. These patterns are not random; they result from an explicit perceptual filter, finely honed by our evolutionary need to coexist with various personality types—relationship-oriented, analytic, aggressive, amiable, and more.

To read this guide is to embark on a quest for self-discovery. It is to understand that each of us, in our formative years, crafted a psychological armour to protect an essential aspect of ourselves that felt threatened. The Enneagram reveals this armour, helping us to comprehend the unconscious motivations that drive our lives. It does not stop at identification; it guides us toward positive change, reshaping how we interact with ourselves and others and offering clarity on our life issues.

The Enneagram transcends the barriers of race, religion, and culture. It speaks a universal language, much like mathematics, facilitating understanding of everyday human experiences and patterns and fostering empathy and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, the Enneagram does not simply categorise but connects the psychological to the spiritual, offering a holistic approach to personal development. It recognises the three centres of intelligence—the mind, heart, and body—and proposes a balance, crafting a more harmonious existence.

As the Enneagram is observationally based and self-verifiable through the narrative inquiry method, it stands up to the rigours of scientific psychology. Through self-observation, you validate the Enneagram's patterns within yourself, making it a powerful tool for personal insight.

The Enneagram is not static; it is as dynamic as the lives we lead, accounting for changes under various circumstances and explaining our unique differences. By understanding the Enneagram, we learn the limits of our personality "box" and, more importantly, how to step out of it—or at least expand it. This knowledge is crucial in cultivating deep relationships and leading a life of greater fulfilment.

This guide, therefore, is not merely a read; it is an experience, a mirror, a mentor. It is an invitation to break free from the cycles that bind us, to enlarge the confines of our self-imposed limits, and to embrace the totality of our existence. In its pages lies information and a transformation waiting to happen—a transformation that begins with you.

Brief History and Origins of the Enneagram

The Enneagram's roots are deeply embedded in the spiritual practices of many world religions, serving as a reflective tool to identify and overcome obstacles to spiritual development. These ancient systems encouraged introspection, raising awareness of ingrained mental patterns.

In recent history, the Enneagram was reintroduced by George Gurdjieff, who claimed it drew from age-old spiritual sources. He presented the Enneagram as a model for understanding the dynamics of change and consciousness, focusing on the predominant personality traits.

Oscar Ichazo, in the 1970s, expanded on this spiritual framework, linking medieval spiritual concepts of sin and redemption to the Enneagram's structure, framing it as a journey of spiritual evolution. Ichazo detailed the personality types and connected them with various instinctual drives.

Claudio Naranjo adapted Ichazo's teachings, merging them with modern psychological thought and identifying fundamental defence mechanisms for each Enneagram type.

The spread of the Enneagram into the realm of spirituality was significantly influenced by Helen Palmer and David Daniels, who advanced the Narrative Tradition of the Enneagram, emphasising personal narrative as a means of education. Since the late 1980s, their work has shaped contemporary Enneagram teachings.

In the following decade, we have witnessed a surge in Enneagram publications, with significant contributions from authors like Maria Beesing, Patrick O'Leary, Robert Nogosek, Barbara Metz, John Burchill, Don Riso, Russ Hudson, Helen Palmer, David Daniels, Beatrice Chestnut and Uranio Paes.

My initial encounter with the Enneagram began under the guidance of Sister Mary, a Roman Catholic nun, while I was engaged in a course on Spiritual Direction. Fortuitously, I later earned my certification in the Enneagram in Narrative Tradition. This certification journey unfolded under the careful and wise supervision of David Daniels, Helen Palmer, Peter O'Hanrahan and Joan Rosenberg Ryan. The first segment of my formal education in this field occurred in the picturesque town of Los Molinos in Madrid, Spain. Subsequently, the final phase of my certification was accomplished in San Francisco.

This guide extends that profound lineage, offering readers a pathway to self-discovery and linking them to a venerable heritage that intertwines spiritual understanding with psychological inquiry.

Overview of the Enneagram System

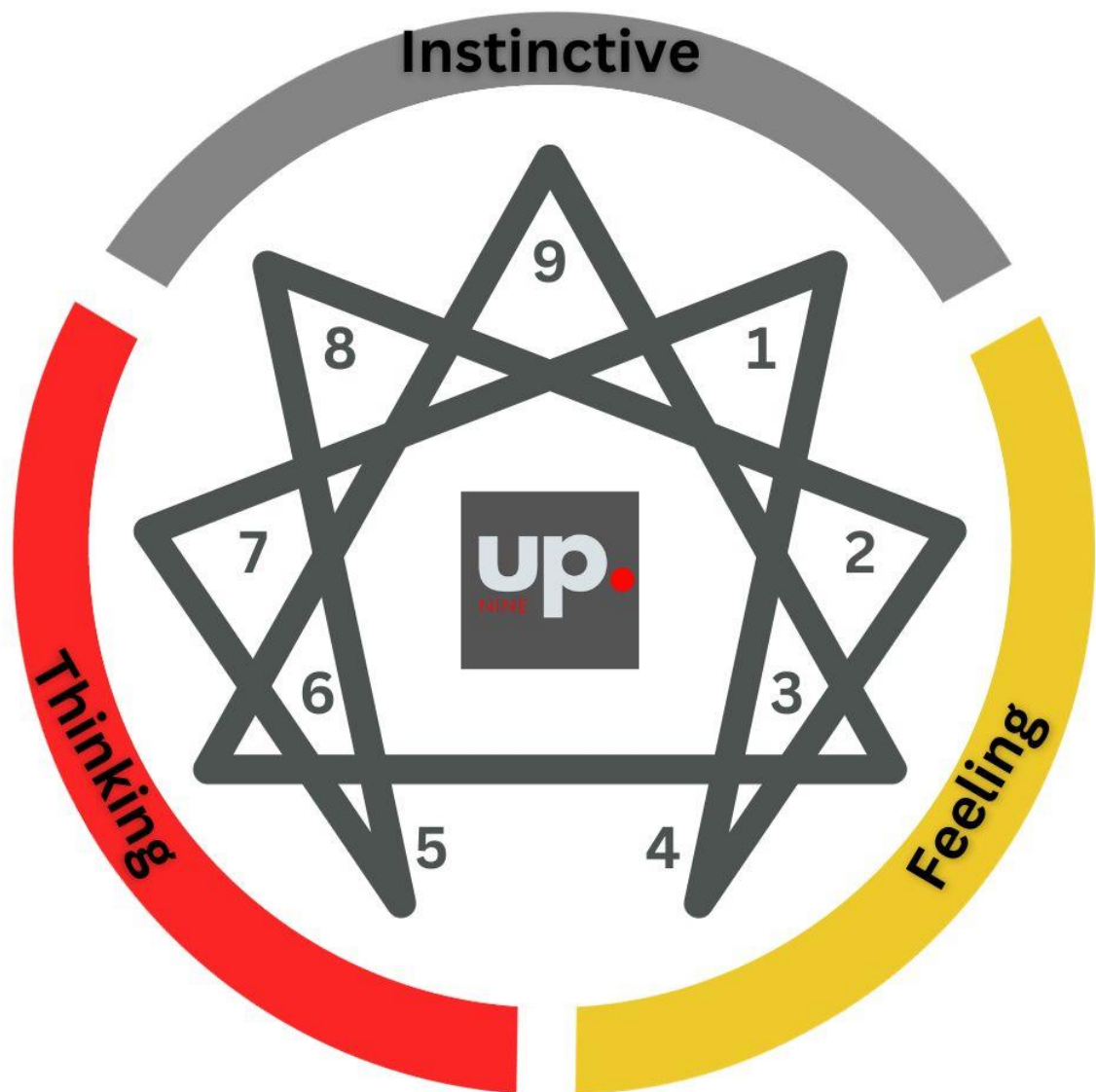
The Enneagram is a dynamic framework that outlines nine distinct personality types, each associated with one of three centres of intelligence: the Gut/Instinctive, the Heart/Feeling, and the Head/Thinking centres.

These centres influence how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them, serving as the foundation for various emotional responses, thought patterns, and instinctual behaviours.

The Gut/Instinctive Centre (Types 8, 9, 1): Types associated with the Instinctive centre are driven by their gut feelings and physical impulses, often advocating for justice and autonomy. They exhibit a strong sense of right and wrong and are motivated to react against or uphold specific structures or ideals. These types may struggle with underlying anger and a tendency to act impulsively. For personal growth, they must cultivate reflection and an awareness of their emotional landscape to temper their instinctual drives.

The Heart/Feeling Centre (Types 2, 3, 4): Types in the Feeling Centre are deeply attuned to their emotions and seek connection with others. They are often very aware of their image and how they are perceived, which can lead to a pursuit of attention and validation. Underneath lies an issue of shame, driving these types to sometimes focus excessively on how they present themselves. The growth path for these types involves integrating reason with their emotional intelligence and embracing authentic self-expression without the overlay of image management.

The Head/Thinking Centre (Types 5, 6, 7): Types falling under the Thinking Centre use their intellectual faculties to navigate life, heavily relying on analysis and foresight. These individuals seek security and guidance, with an underlying fear that can result in indecisiveness or excessive planning. They benefit from balancing their rich mental life with actionable steps and trusting their intuition to manage their concerns and anxieties. Each type, while predominantly influenced by its respective centre, also exhibits characteristics of the other two, creating a complex and interwoven personality structure. The Enneagram suggests that growth arises from recognising and cultivating all three intelligence centres. This balance allows for a harmonious integration of thought, emotion, and instinct, leading to a more adaptive and holistic approach to life's challenges and relationships.



The Enneagram image that outlines nine distinct personality types, each associated with one of three centres of intelligence: the Gut/Instinctive, the Heart/Feeling, and the Head/Thinking centres.

Description of the Nine Personality Types

The Reformer: Ones are conscientious, ethical individuals with a strong sense of right and wrong. They are driven to live the right way, improve the world, and avoid fault and blame.

The Helper: Twos are caring, interpersonal types who wish to be loved and appreciated. They are generous and people-pleasing but can also become possessive.

The Achiever: Threes are success-oriented, adaptable, and excel-driven. They are very concerned with their image and what others think of them, often becoming workaholics.

The Romantic: Fours are sensitive, withdrawn, and expressive. They are motivated by a need to be unique and deeply experience their feelings.

The Observer: Fives are perceptive, innovative, and secretive. They are driven by a need to gain knowledge, conserve energy, and avoid relying on others.

The Loyalist: Sixes are reliable, hardworking, and responsible. However, they are also the most anxious type, driven by a need for security and fear of being without support.

The Epicure: Sevens are busy, fun-loving types who seek to fill their lives with excitement and adventures, often to avoid pain and discomfort.

The Protector: Eights are powerful, dominating types who seek to be self-reliant and avoid showing weakness. They can be aggressive but also protective.

The Mediator: Nines are easy-going, self-effacing types who desire peace and harmony. They are motivated by a need to avoid conflicts, which can lead to inertia in their lives.

The Enneagram and Transformation

The Enneagram is a system of personality that describes nine distinct types, each with its core motivation, fear, and desire. The Enneagram can help us understand ourselves and others better and provide guidance for personal growth and transformation.



**Type One:
The Perfectionist**



Type Ones are motivated by the need to be good, right, and perfect. They have high standards for themselves and others and strive to improve everything they encounter. They are ethical, responsible, and moral. When distressed, they may also become angry at the injustice and corruption in the world and feel powerless to change it. They may suppress their emotions and focus on their duties, becoming rigid, critical, and resentful.

The growth for Type One needs to learn to accept themselves and others as they are, without judgment or condemnation. They need to recognise that they are not responsible for everything that goes wrong and cannot control everything. They need to allow themselves to feel their emotions and express them in healthy ways. They need to cultivate compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude and appreciate the beauty and goodness in life.



**Type Two:
The Helper**



Type Twos are motivated by the need to be loved, appreciated, and needed. They are generous, caring, and supportive and enjoy helping others and making them happy. They are empathetic, warm, and friendly. When distressed, they may deny their pain and focus on the needs of others, hoping to earn their love and approval. They may also feel ashamed of their vulnerability and hide their true feelings and desires. They may become dependent, manipulative, possessive, and feel unappreciated and resentful.

Type Twos' growth is learning to love themselves and value their needs. They need to acknowledge their pain and seek help and support from others without expecting anything in return. They need to respect their boundaries and the boundaries of others and avoid interfering or imposing their will. They need to cultivate self-esteem, autonomy, and generosity and appreciate the love and kindness they receive.



Type Three: The Achiever



Type Threes are motivated by the need to be successful, admired, and respected. They are ambitious, confident, competent, and excel at whatever they do. They are adaptable, goal-oriented, and efficient. When they experience distress, they may try to overcome it by working harder and achieving more, hoping to prove their worth and gain recognition. They may also deny or minimise their emotions and present a false image of themselves to others. They may become competitive, arrogant, and deceitful, losing touch with their authentic selves.

Type Threes to grow, they need to learn to value themselves for who they are, not for what they do. They need to express their emotions honestly and accept their vulnerability and limitations. They need to align their goals with their values and passions and pursue them for their own sake, not external validation. They need to cultivate integrity, humility, and authenticity and appreciate the support and feedback they receive.



Type Four: The Romantic



Type Fours are motivated by the need to be unique, memorable, and authentic. They are creative, expressive, sensitive, and have a rich inner world. They know their feelings and emotions and seek to understand themselves and others. When they experience distress, they may feel isolated, misunderstood, and rejected by the world. They may also exaggerate their pain and suffering and dwell on their past and their fantasies. They may become moody, self-absorbed, envious, and feel hopeless and inferior.

For Type Four to grow, they need to learn to connect with others and appreciate their similarities and differences. They need to balance their emotions and thoughts and focus on the present and reality. They must channel their creativity and expression into positive and constructive outlets and find meaning and purpose. They need to cultivate gratitude, optimism, and resilience and appreciate the beauty and joy in life.



Type Five: The Observer



Type Fives are motivated by the need to be knowledgeable, competent, and independent. They are curious, analytical, and insightful and enjoy learning and exploring new ideas and concepts. They are detached, objective, and rational. When they experience distress, they may withdraw from the world and isolate themselves in their mind. They may also rationalise their emotions and avoid dealing with them. They may become secretive, stingy, cynical, incompetent and overwhelmed.

To grow, Type Five needs to learn to engage with the world and share their knowledge and insights with others. They need to acknowledge their emotions and feelings and express them in healthy ways. They must balance their time and energy between their interests and responsibilities and participate in life more fully. They need to cultivate generosity, trust, and confidence and appreciate the resources and opportunities they have.

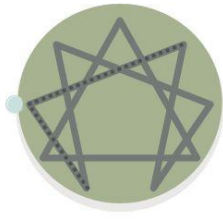


Type Six: The Loyal Skeptic



Type Sixes are motivated by the need to be secure, supported, and guided. They are loyal, reliable, committed and value stability and order. They are alert, cautious, and responsible. When they experience distress, they may become anxious, fearful, and doubtful of themselves and others. They may also seek reassurance and guidance from external authorities and conform to their expectations. They may become paranoid, defensive, rebellious, insecure and unsupported.

Type Sixes need to learn to trust themselves and their judgment to grow. They need to face their fears and anxieties and challenge their negative and irrational thoughts. They need to balance their loyalty and obedience with their independence and autonomy and follow their values and beliefs. They need to cultivate courage, faith, and self-reliance and appreciate the security and guidance they have.



Type Seven: The Epicure



Type Sevens are motivated by the need to be happy, satisfied, and free. They are enthusiastic, adventurous, optimistic, and enjoy variety and excitement. They are spontaneous, playful, and fun-loving. When they experience distress, they may escape from it by seeking more stimulation and pleasure, hoping to avoid pain and boredom. They may also rationalise or reframe their emotions and deny or minimise their problems. They may become restless, impulsive, irresponsible, dissatisfied, and unfulfilled.

Type Sevens need to learn to face their pain and problems and deal with them realistically and constructively to grow. They need to acknowledge their emotions and feelings and express them in healthy ways. They need to balance their freedom and exploration with their commitment and responsibility and focus on quality rather than quantity. They need to cultivate contentment, moderation, and discipline and appreciate the happiness and satisfaction they have.



Type Eight: The Protector



Type Eights are motivated by the need to be robust, strong, and in control. They are assertive, confident, and decisive and enjoy challenges and confrontations. They are protective, honest, and direct. When they experience distress, they may react to it by becoming more aggressive and dominant, hoping to protect themselves and others from harm. They may also deny or suppress their emotions and show no weakness or vulnerability. They may become confrontational, defiant, vengeful, and feel threatened and betrayed.

To grow, Type Eights need to learn to respect the power and strength of others and cooperate and collaborate with them. They need to face their emotions and feelings and express them in healthy ways. They need to balance their control and dominance with their surrender and vulnerability and show their softer and gentler side. They need to cultivate compassion, forgiveness, and humility and appreciate the power and strength they have.



Type Nine: The Mediator



Type Nines are motivated by the need to be peaceful, harmonious, and comfortable. They are calm, easy-going, agreeable, and enjoy peace and harmony. They are supportive, accepting, and inclusive. When they experience distress, they may cope with it by becoming more passive and compliant, hoping to avoid conflict and disruption. They may also dissociate from their emotions and feelings and numb themselves with distractions and routines. They may become apathetic, stubborn, indifferent, and feel neglected and unimportant.

To grow, Type Nines need to learn to assert themselves and their needs and stand up for themselves and others. They need to reconnect with their emotions and feelings and express them in healthy ways. They must balance their peace and harmony with their action and change and pursue their goals and dreams. They need to cultivate vitality, passion, and self-worth.

A Life Lived in Full Colour



The Enneagram is not just a tool; it's a companion on the lifelong path of healing and self-discovery. As we navigate through life's multicoloured experiences, the Enneagram serves as a map, guiding us through the intricate layers of our personality and soul. It shows us who we are and who we can become, revealing the brighter shades of our spirit that we may have never known existed. This journey is continuous, with each step forward offering deeper insight and greater healing.

Change is the only constant, and growth is the reward of embracing this change. The Enneagram invites us to dance with life's ebb and flow, understand our rhythms, and grow beyond our perceived limitations. It encourages us to paint our canvas with bold and vibrant strokes and to live authentically and courageously. The growth it fosters is not just personal; it radiates outwards, influencing our relationships, careers, and the essence of our being.

As you stand at the threshold of what's to come, let the Enneagram be your guide to a life lived in full colour. Let it empower you to make choices that resonate with your most authentic self, find joy in the spectrum of life's experiences, and embrace your journey's unique beauty. Remember, this guide is just the beginning. Your story, painted with the rich colours of your personality, experiences, and dreams, is yet to unfold in its most vibrant form.

As you continue to explore the depths of your Enneagram type, know that you are not alone on this journey. I invite you to share your stories, questions, and insights. We can continue this exploration together, fostering a community that thrives on understanding, support, and the shared joy of self-discovery. Let this not be the end but a beautiful continuation of your colourful journey.