

Personal Development

Relationships are a wonderful source of love, fun and companionship; they give us the opportunity to look at ourselves and to grow as human beings. Without them, we would not have the variety and richness we need. **Veronica Croft** uncovers an ancient teaching that maps out a brighter future for humanity through a deeper understanding of ourselves, and the way we relate to each other

Relationships have the potential to bring us great fulfilment and joy and yet they also bring us confusion, frustration, difficulties and pain. Some relationships seem to work for a while and then they seem to fall apart. Even our permanent relationships can appear to be going along quite happily when, suddenly, they can blow up in our faces, with the result that we experience conflict, turmoil and hurtful emotions where a moment before there was only happiness and harmony. And what about the relationship you have with yourself? Most of us wish we were different in some ways, or we see qualities in others that we wish we had. Why do we have these problems? How can we have got to this point in our lives and still not got the hang of it? For one very basic reason – we have been trying to deal with our relationships without being fully equipped with some very essential knowledge and understanding about ourselves and other people.

enneagram

our blueprint for life

Many thousands of years ago, in Atlantis and Ancient Egypt, young people who were about to embark on adulthood were given the knowledge and understanding that would equip them to have peaceful and harmonious interactions with other people. As they gained deep understanding about their own personalities, and that of others, they learned what their gifts were and what their potential was; what their deep unconscious needs were and how those needs could drive their negative patterns; even more, they learned how to let go of their negative traits and how to live through their positivity. This knowledge was the knowledge of what we now call The Enneagram. This great knowledge disappeared into obscurity and was all but lost to humanity. Now it has once more been made available to us from the world of spirit, because it is needed at this time of human evolution to help us lift ourselves up to a higher level of vibration.

The Enneagram is a body of knowledge through which we learn that there are 9 core personality types, each with their own way of looking at the world. Each of these types has different unconscious beliefs that drive their attitudes, their negative emotions and behaviour patterns, and as a result each has their own way of dealing with the challenges they experience. None of these ways of dealing with life is better than another. They are just different, and through the Enneagram we discover greater joy in the richness of life as we begin to embrace the differences between people.

When we learn about the personality types and come to understand that the inner world of the person with whom we are interrelating is, in fact, very different from ours, we are able to stop expecting them to be like us. We stop pointing the finger of blame and begin to understand how their inner world might cause them to think and act the way they do. When we are armed with this wisdom – for knowledge becomes wisdom when we put it into practice and use it positively – we come out of judgment, criticism and blame (of ourselves as well as others) and move into compassion, acceptance and tolerance. Emotions such as pain, anger and guilt are emotions with a low frequency that lower our level of vibration (which is why we can feel physically bad when experiencing them) whereas emotions like compassion, love and peace are high frequency emotions that take our level of vibration up to higher levels.

The Enneagram has been used in modern times for many purposes, including within the workplace, but its most important use is in the arena of relationships. Its higher purpose is to increase peace and harmony and perhaps one day it might be used to facilitate more peace between nations. Many who have taught or written about The Enneagram have described it as a personality typing 'system' or a 'model', which implies that it has been constructed by man in order to make sense of the human psyche. This is not how it is. It is about the unfoldment and the development of all life, on all worlds, in all dimensions. It has not been invented; it just is.

Soul choice

Before you embarked upon this life, your Soul (or higher self, higher consciousness, or whatever you call the eternal part of you) made many choices which determined the overall pattern of this life. First it was decided what would be worked upon in this life and then what experiences would be needed to give the opportunity for the growth that your soul wished for this time. In order to create these opportunities, the environment into which you were born was chosen, and also the position of the planets at the time of your birth. You chose the major relationships that would form the foundation of this life – your parents, your siblings, your lovers, your friends, even your enemies, for it is through relationships that humans achieve most of their growth. It is your close relationships that 'press your buttons' and reveal to you where you are not whole and healthy – emotionally, mentally and spiritually (have you noticed how it is those closest to you that 'make you feel' your worst, most painful feelings? Well, actually it's their job, and you both signed up for this!).

The most essential choice that was made was that of the personality type for this life. Each of the 9 types reacts differently to the world and so has different opportunities for growth. Each has different deep, often unconscious needs from which develop different core emotional issues that must be understood and truly let go of for that growth to be achieved. By understanding our personality as it is taught by the wisdom of the Enneagram, we get to understand the patterns in our own behaviour that have evaded our understanding all our lives. These patterns of behaviour are what cause almost all the conflict in relationships, including the relationship we have with our selves. You finally get to understand why you react like that when he/she says that, and why they behave in those ways that drive you crazy.

Let us look at some examples:

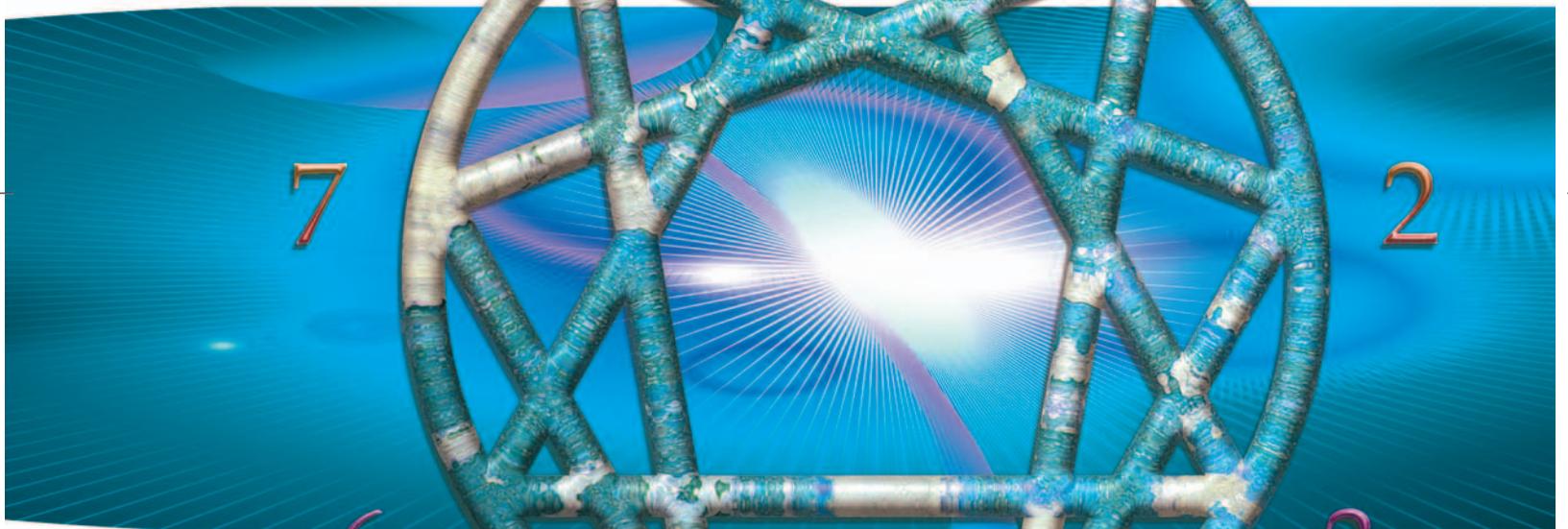
Eights have great difficulty allowing their vulnerability to show in relationships and consequently find it hard to allow others to be really close, even though that is what they truly desire. They can be very controlling and overbearing with other people because it makes them feel invulnerable if they can dominate others and have power over their environment. It is clear that these patterns have the potential to cause various problems in

relationships. This then enables them to be more accepting of their own 'imperfections' and they begin to be much more tolerant and easy-going with themselves and others, resulting in much more harmonious relationships.

A huge amount of problems in relationships come about because we fail to meet each other's needs. Of course, when we love someone we always want to give them what they need but, sadly, what happens most often is that we offer them what we need, because we do not understand the fundamental differences between them and us.

Deep needs

Each of the types has different, deeply held needs – yes, we all look for love and companionship from those we love but it is the often unspoken, frequently unconscious, needs that go unmet. When these needs are not acknowledged or addressed by our partner the outcome is usually destructive in some way – we experience feelings that can drive a wedge between us; this could perhaps be resentment or anger,



relationships. This type has come into life this time to learn about the true nature of power. When they succeed in understanding their patterns and can begin to let go of the need to protect their vulnerability, they can begin to use their great energy and strength with openness and gentleness. They are then able to connect properly with those they love and so finally get the closeness that they so desire.

Ones can also be very controlling but the unconscious drive that causes their behaviour is different. They want to have control of themselves and their world so that they can bring about improvements, and make everything more perfect – you just happen to be part of their world. So the way they communicate with others is often experienced as critical and controlling, even overbearing. They have come to learn about the true nature of perfection and when they begin to understand about their Enneagram personality and what is driving their need for

perfection, they can be helped to do the growth work that they came to do. This then enables them to be more accepting of their own 'imperfections' and they begin to be much more tolerant and easy-going with themselves and others, resulting in much more harmonious relationships. Some types feel the need to protect themselves and therefore withdraw emotionally, and often physically, which just creates further alienation.

For some of us, the reason we don't get our needs met is that we don't ask. We expect that if the other person loves us, they will know our needs. And if she/he fails to meet our needs, then this must be evidence that something is really wrong with the relationship. For most of us though, the problem is that we ourselves are not clear about what our deep needs are. That seems a strange statement to make but, the truth is, most of us only become properly aware of what our deepest needs are, and what is driving those needs, when we begin to learn about our Enneagram personality. Ask yourself, which of these deep

needs is the most important to you – is it freedom, security or love? Could it be that you need success and the approval of others? Perhaps it is control or domination that you need, or is it to maintain some privacy and to not have your space invaded by others? Perhaps your greatest need is for peace, or for personal integrity or to know your place in the world? If you are not clear, how can you communicate what you need to those you love? One of the great joys of attending The Enneagram Programme course (see 'more info' below) is that you discover what other people's real needs are (even if they don't really know themselves) and you can let your loved ones know your own needs clearly, without complaining before any conflict starts.

Case Study

Josie is a Seven and she has two sons. The elder son is aged 13 years and is a type Three; the younger son is aged 11 years and is a Five.

Josie had a good, close relationship with her eldest, but her younger son was being very difficult, pulling further and further away from her. She had no idea why this was. It upset her a great deal and she felt that it contributed to the bouts of terrible depression that she sometimes experienced, especially in the winter. When she came on the Enneagram Programme, she had decided that she no longer wanted to take anti-depressants. She thought that if she could get to understand her own patterns of behaviour and what these emotional swings were about and understand her son better she might be able to take back proper control of her life.

Sevens are upbeat, high energy people who like to be doing lots of interesting and exciting things. They find it difficult to stop and just be. When they are forced to just be with themselves, no longer doing, doing, doing, they can become very low; some even experience depression. In order to overcome this, Josie needed to understand why she had this unconscious desire to be constantly on the go. Through the deep processing work undertaken on the Enneagram Programme, she faced and let go of what she was unconsciously running away from and was able to bring balance into her life at last. She is no longer on anti-depressants and is now much happier.

When Josie began to understand the inner world of her Five son she realised that the style of parenting that she, as a Seven, naturally employed, was counter-productive for him, even though it was perfect for her other son. Fives do not want to be intruded upon or pushed. They enjoy cerebral and solitary activities and few male Fives are very sporty. Sevens, by contrast, are very outgoing, love company and are usually

physically active. When Josie saw her young son spending so much time isolated in his bedroom, getting little fresh air or interaction with others, her natural instinct was to push him to get out more and join in with life. His natural inclination when pushed, was to withdraw further.

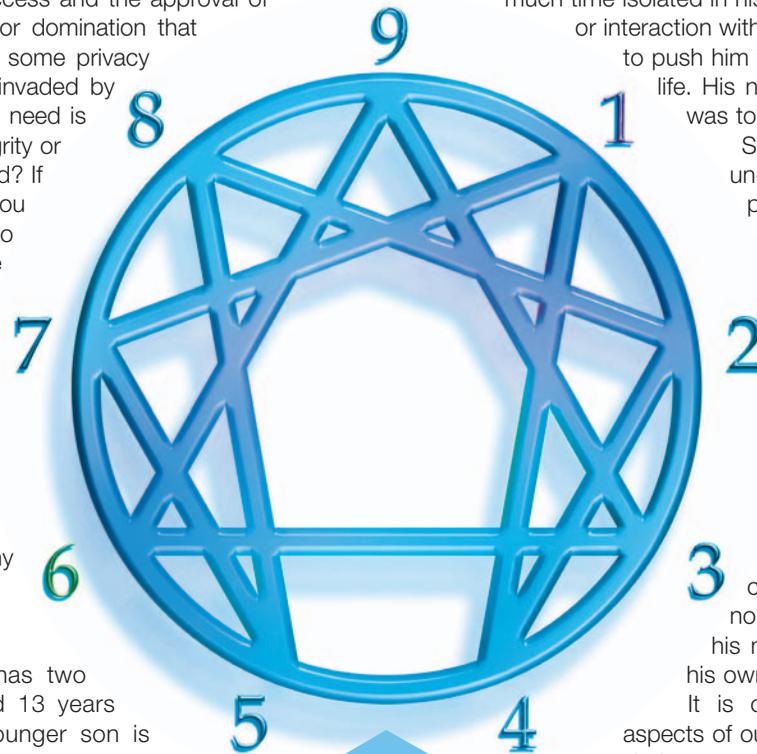
Since she gained some real understanding about his particular personality type, Josie has learned to let her son come out when he is ready, not when she thinks he should, and to then welcome him into family activities without criticism or judgment about his hiding away. The outcome is a happier mother with a son who feels acknowledged for himself within the family and who consequently has greater self-worth. Even better, he comes out and joins in more, he no longer feels intruded upon by his mother and is allowed to make his own decision.

It is only when we understand all aspects of ourselves and undertake our own growth that we can come to our relationships from a place of self-acceptance and peace. As we have seen, our relationships 'press our buttons' so that our deep issues come up and cause us problems and pain. If we finally clear our negative issues, happiness and fulfilment in relationships is so much more likely.

Most books and courses about personal and spiritual growth do not take into account the fact that there are different types of people. What works for some types does not work for others. And if it doesn't work for us, it is so easy to decide that there must be something wrong with us, or that we will never get things in our lives sorted out. We end up feeling dis-empowered and lacking in good feelings about ourselves. The wisdom of the Enneagram teaches you that there is nothing wrong with you, that you do not have to change, and become a different sort of person. The positive traits of your personality type are already within you – they are your gifts, the way that you have chosen to bring your light to the world this time. Your negative traits act like 'lampshades', dimming your light and overshadowing your life, so understanding and letting them go at last just has to let your light shine!! As you then begin to live life with a fresh, positive perspective, relationships that once seemed complex and difficult become easier and more flowing, bringing at last the happiness and peace you deserve. **ks**

more information

- The Enneagram Programme is a 4-day course during which the participants learn in depth about all 9 types. The course brings about: Increase in peace and harmony in all areas of life; Clarity in dealing with difficult and painful relationship patterns; Improved relationship with self and others; Increased personal confidence and self-esteem; Real understanding of own gifts and potential; and Renewed sense of purpose and focus. Contact: enquiries@enneagram-uk.com



Ones are self-disciplined, conscientious, and principled. They can be judgmental, controlling, critical and perfectionist.

Twos are emotionally demonstrative and giving, being sensitive to other people's needs. They can also be needy, exaggerating, martyr-ish, insincere and pushy.

Threes are highly motivated, focused and goal oriented. They can also be competitive, cold, narcissistic and false.

Fours are intuitive and perceptive; many are artistic, creative or expressive. They can also be temperamental, self-absorbed and negative.

Fives are observant, knowledgeable and analytical. They may be wise and open-minded or emotionally detached, abstract and anti-social.

Sixes are responsible, trustworthy hard-working and reliable but they can also be anxious, indecisive, over cautious and reactive.

Sevens are energetic, lively, adventurous and optimistic and can also be superficial, unreliable, escapist and self-centred.

Eights are direct, self-confident, powerful, and protective but may also be domineering, arrogant, aggressive and explosive.

Nines are accommodating, good-natured, and supportive and yet can also be hazy, stubborn, non-responsive, lazy and overly complacent.