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PSYCHOTHERAPY

The Enneagram: Nail Down Your Number

1. **Understand Why It's so Hard to Find Your Type:** The purpose of the Enneagram is to uncover your hidden drives. It helps us to understand WHY we do what we do. Our internal motivation is often a mystery to us. Taking an assessment is a great start but is not always definitive because trying to determine our subconscious drives is tricky business.
2. **Take a Test.** Taking a test online is a great way to point you in the direction of your type but it may not be your final answer. Take an assessment that will give you break-down of your results and not just the number you scored the highest on. The RHETI, available on the Enneagram Institute website, is a wonderful resource.
3. **Take a Peek at ALL of the Types.** When we get our results, we can be tempted to just read our top scored number and call it a day. One problem with that is that we truly have some parts of all the numbers within us. The other problem has to do with the following...
4. **Make Sure You Didn't Get Your Stress Point.** This has happened to myself and a few others I know. The Enneagram is useful because it shows us our typical way of being (Your Type), our way of being under stress (Disintegration Point), and our way of being when we're functioning at our best (Integration Point). For example, Type 2 is normally a person who will "go along to get along." However, under stress, they can become domineering like a Type 8. When they are healthier, they will become more authentic about their desires like a Type 4. If we take the assessment when we're under stress, it makes sense that our score might reflect that. When you get your results, find your top number and then read the brief descriptions of the Disintegration Point and Integration Point.
5. **You May Not Fit the Caricature.** The Types are often described in a somewhat exaggerated way. However, we are complex and the Types are like colors- think of how many shades of blue there are! You may have a difficult time finding your number because you don't fit the typical description. There are three subtypes for each number that illustrate this nuance. See the work of Beatrice Chestnut for more information about this.
6. **Share With People You Trust.** Spouses are usually a great sounding board for this! See if others who have been in your life for a long time see this as your number.
7. **This is Meant to Be a Journey.** The Enneagram is meant to show us our False Self. Our Type is a description of the game that we've been playing throughout life in an attempt to protect ourselves from our Basic Fear. For example, the Basic Fear of Type 3 is of failure. Type 3's will go throughout their whole lives striving to achieve more and more. The point of the Enneagram is to show us that we no longer need to play that game. We can discover new ways of living that aren't driven by fear. However, if we're not fully ready to stop playing this game, discovering our number can just be like any other personality typing system. We can just see ourselves as part of the "Type 7 Club" for example and choose not to take it any further. This is a choice for each of us to make. However, if we don't take the time to seek-out our number, we may mistype ourselves.
8. **Try it On.** You may mistype yourself and that's ok! Hold your number loosely and just try it on for a while. Read-up, listen to podcasts, talk to others with that type. See if it sticks. If it does, you've found your number!
9. **Contact a Coach.** If you're feeling really stuck but want to experience the transforming power of the Enneagram, contact a coach or a therapist who is knowledgeable. It's worth it!