

Typology and Enantiodromia

Many of us have found studying the enneagram types as formulated by Claudio Naranjo a fascinating exercise in getting to know our own personalities better. As we try on the different types for size we usually discover our own by the telling shock of recognition we receive; something hazily perceived coming suddenly into focus. We begin to see how we have always used our predominant type strategically as a buffer or defence system. Unconsciously we orientate our egos by it to provide containment in an unpredictable world.

While we understand that we are not describing 'real I' here we are nevertheless making a step towards purifying our minds of its more neurotic characteristics simply by making them conscious. Also, in an 'energetic' sense, we learn to use the knowledge gained as a launch pad for further progress in realizing our true origin or authenticity.

Recently while discussing '9's, Gregg reminded us how close opposites sit in proximity to each other; how anything pushed to its limits will, sooner or later, fall into its opposite. Examples of this natural law (*enantiodromia*) surround us: night follows day; good presupposes evil; ignorance gives way to knowledge; birth sets the scene for death and so on. Our psychology can be seen to enact the same law: our most 'deadly sins' anticipate, by virtue of their existence, resolution in 'divine' qualities, the hidden opposite with which every 'sin' is twinned. Anyone familiar with the lives of Saints, east or west, will know how often a dramatic conversion takes place at a crucial point in their lives. St Paul is an obvious example. Valmiki, author of the Hindu epic of 'ethical' conduct, the *Ramayana*, started out as a thief and murderer. We may take some comfort from this!

Naranjo has made it easy for us to name our 'chief feature'. His frank discussion of the less savoury characteristics of the nine types may already have evoked for you individually some idea of how such features may look when fully known and worked upon. Below is a list of just a few features of each type (not always using Naranjo's terminology) together with a suggestion of how they may look when their 'hidden' possibilities are realized. The words chosen are not of course exclusive to the type chosen. Any type can (and will) find themselves envious quite often, but for a '4', 'envy' will have a particular potency for work on self.

The Fourth Way emphasizes the importance of learning to convert negative emotion into positive emotion on the principal that there is much needed energy locked up in our negative reactions and attitudes to the world which, if released, would greatly benefit us.

For homework please make up your own mind about your predominant type (no prevaricating!)

Choose from the list (overleaf) a pair of qualities which have particular relevance to your own life and come prepared to discuss them. Alternatively, make a coherent case for your own choice of qualities instead.

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Demonic Quality

- 1 Impatience; resentment
- 2 Need to be special
- 3 Evasion
- 4 Envy; not accepting one's lot
- 5 Hoarding
- 6 Lack of trust in OneSelf
- 7 Seduction; obfuscation
- 8 Selfishness
- 9 Head in the sand; won't look

Divine Quality

- Patience; forbearance to all
- Humility; Self- acceptance
- Facing up to the Truth. Voicing true feeling
- Equanimity to both pleasure and pain. Gratitude for one's lot.
- Giving Oneself; love for the world
- The courage of One's own convictions
- Discovering the Truth (mukti)
- Compassion; dispassion
- Guidance of others through Self Knowledge