



Guided
Self Healing

A Letter to the Enneagram Community

Dear Friends and Colleagues in the Enneagram Community:

This article, the first in a series of four, describes a simple yet elegant process of becoming aware of, allowing, accepting, and transforming anxiety which arises with shame associated with our deepest fears about ourselves. Entitled *Essence and the Enneagram: Rediscovering Who We Truly Are*, it describes the deepest fear from which our personality structures arise and a simple psychospiritual practice for transforming these.

The second article describes how to apply this Essence Process to Centers, our deepest way of experiencing the world, to Subtypes, our deepest instinctual drives and to emptiness and the existential anxiety of non-existence itself.

The third piece describes the Energetics of the Enneagram and how we can understand and transform our relationships. In it, I suggest that we lose our beloved/essential selves in very particular, automatic, and compulsive ways. These ways of losing ourselves can be described simply when we understand the loss of self can occur in three directions: forward and out in longing, back and in in fear and up and diffuse in overwhelm. These ways can operate on the level of our Subtypes, Centers and Points of View. Our very awareness of these can, by itself and in conjunction with the Essence Process, begin to lead to transformation.

The fourth piece describes a sevenfold path of our soul's journey which can be mapped as the seven directions or the Star of David with its center point, suggesting seven variations of the Essence Process. Out of this map, we can extrapolate the entire Enneagram of Points of View, Centers and Subtypes, which allows us to nuance and more deeply understand our path.

I hope to have the opportunity to share each of these pieces with you, so you can choose, if you like, to use them as tools on your journey to wholeness.

With gratitude and love,
Andy Hahn

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Essence and the Enneagram: Rediscovering Who We Really Are

Part I

Andrew H. Hahn, Psy.D. with Joan T. Beckett, M.B.A.

Falling Into Grace

by Andrew H. Hahn

*What I want to know is
When you fall down
How do you respond?
Do you pretend
You have not fallen?
And if you do
Do you deny the grace
That is your place
When you fall?
Do you experience just how small
You really are?
Or deny the very essence of
That truth
And in that act
Deny yourself
And not tend to your garden?*

*What I want to know is
When you fall down
How do you respond?
Do you frown
Not knowing that you've grown?
Do you groan at the naked pain
And curse the Gods as a refrain?
Or do you refrain
From wallowing in the pain
Experiencing exquisite pain
A labor
Leading
To creative
Birth?*

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In the fall of 1994, twenty people came to study the Enneagram with me. I asked each person to bring something that was important or sacred to them and we used this object, photograph, piece of writing, or story as a doorway to discover the mysteries of the soul of each Enneagram point. The sharing was very rich and deep. At the tenth and final session, I asked the group if they would like to continue.

One of the participants, not surprisingly a woman who was a three, said that while she had loved our ten sessions, she knew the Enneagram stories well enough and was inclined to stop. If, however, I could teach the group to use the Enneagram as a “spiritually transformative tool,” she would be happy to come back for another series of ten sessions. In a moment of naiveté and hubris, I said, “Fine, come back in two weeks and together we’ll learn to use the Enneagram as a spiritually transformative tool.”

At that point, I have to admit, I had no idea about how to do this...I did, however, remember a cryptic phrase my teachers had shared with me – “The way to Essence is through the Personality.” Unfortunately, however, I was never able to get a satisfactory answer as to what this meant. I had studied the Enneagram intensely for four years, as well as Depth Psychology, Consciousness, and the Mysteries, so I believed I would be able to figure something out.

It got to be the Sunday before the Tuesday our group was to meet, and though I had wracked my brain and studied, nothing had come to me. I thought about how well I could “think on my feet” although this didn’t seem like it would work in this instance. As I was lying on my couch in a semi-dreamlike state, I asked, “Source, please help me,” and I fell into a somewhat deeper state.

In this state, four ideas came to me that formed the basis of the Essence Process....

First, Essence, which is the one consciousness, demands the truth; if we could bring the fear we were most ashamed to admit about ourselves to awareness and then allow and accept it, we could allow anything—be everything.

Second, no particular truth could be the whole truth of who we are. It is just a truth, not the whole picture. We have given the fear we are most ashamed to admit about ourselves too much power; we believed we are that fear and spend our lives compulsively trying to compensate for it. A deeper truth might be that we have the fear, it is not who we truly are.

If we have this fear and are not the fear itself, then we could witness it. The witness could know that the fear is just one of an infinite number of perspectives in all of consciousness. The witness could externalize the fear using its own consciousness; that is, it could use its consciousness to bring the fear we are most ashamed to admit about ourselves outside the self enabling us to experience and imagine it there. It would then have as much charge as the shirt we were wearing.

So, if the first step is to become aware, allow and accept the truth we are most ashamed to admit about ourselves, the second is to say we have this fear and attendant shame, and it is not who we

truly are. We could use our consciousness to externalize it so that it is merely a truth/perspective in a universe of truths/perspectives; it is not THE TRUTH.

Third, once we allow the fear we are most ashamed to admit about ourselves, we could then allow anything and everything, we could be anything and everything. Therefore, we could use our consciousness to expand forward and back, left and right, up and down and become the one—Unity Consciousness. Our deepest fear could become the doorway to our more essential Self. Thus, a deeper appreciation of the phrase, the “keys to the kingdom” lie within.

Fourth, from this expanded place, we could re-dialogue with our erstwhile shame/fear. We could treat this aspect of ourselves with acceptance, honor and respect. We could ask it “What is your greatest hope for me? What would you most like me to learn in this lifetime? Will you help me on the path?” We could find that the aspect of ourselves which we were most ashamed to admit could, in fact, be our greatest friend and guide.

So it is a very simple process that we teach - 1. *Allow* - Become aware, allow and accept the fear we are most ashamed to admit about ourselves; 2. *Realize and Externalize* - Realize that while we have this shame about the fear, it is not who we are. Use our consciousness to bring the fear outside ourselves, to externalize it. Realize it is Energy just like us and everything else in the universe; 3. *Expand* - Expand in all seven directions and be the one consciousness which, in fact, we already are; 4. *Reintegrate* - Reintegrate the Energy we called the fear we were most ashamed to admit about ourselves by treating it not as something which we hate, but as a guide to which we give gratitude, respect and love.

In the past ten years, the process has evolved as has its applications. The foundation, however, remains intact.

The Process

I. Allowance and Awareness

Become aware, allow and accept the fear we are most ashamed to admit about ourselves. Experience all of the beliefs, feelings and concomitant sensations that arise in conjunction with them.

1. **Beliefs** - Our beliefs tend to focus on limitation and the painful consequences of that limitation. There may be several categories of beliefs:
 - a. The first is beliefs about ourselves. These are our “Core Fears.”
 - i. I am bad. I have done something so wrong.
 - ii. I am unworthy or existing unless I am taking care of you.
 - iii. I am failure; I create/do nothing.
 - iv. I am ordinary and in that ordinariness, I am defective; there is something fundamentally wrong with me.
 - v. I am insufficient (energetically and mentally).
 - vi. I am a nobody.
 - vii. I am unfulfillability.

- viii. I am out of control, impotent.
 - ix. I am unlovability and chaos.
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- b. The second is beliefs about how we came into this unacceptable situation.
 - c. The third is beliefs about Source as either non-existent or cruel.
 - d. The fourth is our negative beliefs about Gaia, the Universe, life itself.
2. **Feelings** – When we allow the shame associated with our fears, four types of difficult feelings tend to arise. We feel anxiety when we allow that the fear about ourselves is the truth. We feel despair when we open to the possibility that our circumstances will never change. We feel anger at Source for putting us into the situation, and we feel frustration that we will never truly get to share our gifts because they are filtered through our shame. Being unable to share our gifts and make our contribution, we can never truly reconnect and belong.
3. **Sensations** - Each of our limiting beliefs and shocked feelings are associated with sensation. We experience this sensation as *discomfort, pain, queasiness, numbness...* When we fully allow these sensations, bring all of our awareness to them, and drop our consciousness into them, they will share with us even deeper beliefs and feeling states.

II. Compensations

There are five ways in which we try not to experience the anxiety which accompanies the shame associated with our deepest fears about ourselves.

1. **What We Tell Ourselves** - The things we tell ourselves so that we don't experience the anxiety associated with our fears have an automatic, compulsive, arrogant quality. Every Core Fear has an associated Counterbalancing Identity:
- i. I am good
 - ii. I am worthy
 - iii. I am success.
 - iv. I am special.
 - v. I am (self) sufficient.
 - vi. I am a somebody.
 - vii. I am fulfilled.
 - viii. I am in control/potent.
 - ix. I am love.

We substitute a quality of being for being itself. Point One in their fixation would say, "I am good, therefore I am," rather than, "I am, and one of my qualities is that I have goodness (as well as badness)."

Because we use this quality as a way not to experience the anxiety which accompanies the shame associated with a fear about ourselves, we never really get to experience the quality in its own right. For example, an Enneagram Point Three, to the degree they can

experience failure and all that goes with it, they are able to experience success and all that goes with that.

From an Essence perspective, the Core Fear and the Counterbalancing Identity are a pair of opposites which, in conjunction, serve life. (See Ragini Michaels—Facticity). Let's, for example, again consider Point Three from its own evolving perspective. *Doing* certainly has its benefits--perhaps creation, accomplishment, enlivening. Yet, it also can have its costs—perhaps burnout, a hardening of the heart. *Being (non-doing)* has its costs--perhaps nothing happens, laziness, boredom; yet it also can have its benefits—perhaps a deepening of the creative process, the softening and opening of the heart, the hope inherent in allowing who we are.

2. **How We Use Others** - When we are trying to bind the anxiety which accompanies our shame associated with our fear, we are not in an I-thou relationship with the other. We are in an I-it relationship. There are two ways we can do this. First, we can seduce others or let them seduce us so that we feel less anxious. We can get them to tell us we are good, worthy, successful, etc. Second, we can use them by association; we can partner with them to prove our goodness, worthiness, success, etc.
3. **Avoidances** - In this category are all the ways we bind the anxiety which accompanies our shame associated with our fears. They can be actions we take, illness and addictions, compulsions, stories we tell ourselves, etc. As with all the other compensations, they try to serve us by protecting us from experiencing anxiety while simultaneously inviting us into that very anxiety.

To give one example, I was working with a high-powered executive who had been in alcohol detox several times when he came to see me. We discovered that his statement, "I am an alcoholic," was primarily a compensation—a story he was telling himself as a way not to have to experience the anxiety around the shame of a fear. I invited him to experience "I am an alcoholic," and notice what he was feeling in his body. He felt a deep tightening in his chest. I invited him to bring all his awareness, to drop his consciousness into the tightening and be it and to let it use his mouth to answer our questions. I asked, "Deep tightening in the heart, how are you trying to serve this being?" Over the next twenty minutes, it told us the ways it was trying to help him be a success, both professionally and personally; how it tried to help him relax, get more done, be more social and, yet, it was ashamed because it was failing. It caused the man to become too relaxed and to pass out. He could turn out more work but the quality of it was questionable. It became clear that the executive was a Three and that the "I am an alcoholic" identity was trying to protect him from failure while inviting him into it. Our work with this avoidant identity became the foundation for this executive to allow his fear of failure. In this particular case, as he was able to allow this fear, disidentify from it and then realize his truer self, his drinking normalized, and he did not have to go back to rehabilitation.

4. **The Subtype Word** - Our subtype word is the most automatic way of making sure we do not have to experience (binding) the anxiety associated with shame about a fear. While, as we shall see in our next paper, this applies to subtype fears and center fears, let us right now focus on the fears of our point.

I am a person who is a Sexual Four. The subtype word is competition-hate (not a particularly pleasant experience for me or those around me). How does experiencing competition-hate allow me not to experience the anxiety associated with my point of view as a Four? It does this by externalizing the problem so that I can focus outside of myself. Each of the twenty-seven subtype experiences does this.

Suppose I am a teacher (which I am) and some other teacher comes along who I and other students perceive to be better than I am, and they all gravitate toward her. If I compete with her and hate them, I do not have to experience my own inner sense of ordinariness with its concomitant feelings of defectiveness and wrongness.

5. **Movement to the Stress Point**

There is a fifth way that we bind the anxiety of the shame regarding our deepest fears.

It is the movement to the lower aspect of our stress point. As a Sexual Four, when all else fails I move the lower aspect of Two. I may, for an example, become an obsequious Giver, sending the message that I will do anything in order to get you back. Once again, I do this so that I won't have to experience my ordinariness and defectiveness, my lack of a head center with its perspective and my inner sense of disconnection. And once again, this move, while protecting me on the surface will on a deeper level invite me into my deepest fears.

III. Transformation

Once we have fully allowed all the fears and compensations and have experienced them in our body, we can transform them either by externalizing them with our consciousness and expanding to become the everything and/or by channeling the everything, typically in the form of light, into our body, particularly where we experienced the dense energy we associated with our fear. This step is really about saying I have an issue and it is not who I am.

IV. Reintegration of Fears and Compensations

We reintegrate the Energy we called the fear we were most ashamed to admit about ourselves by treating it not as a pariah which we hate but as a guide to which we give gratitude, respect and love. We ask, "What is your greatest hope for me?" We notice that we are experiencing this hope right now as the infinite space. We ask, "What do you wish me to learn about the hope, purpose in this lifetime?" In our experience, when we listen actively and receptively, the guidance can be extraordinary. We ask, "Will you help me?" Invariably the answer is yes, and we are filled with a sense of peace, hope and faith. Sometimes the energy that used to be our deepest fear alchemically transforms into a gift that will guide us on our journey. As we deepen into this process, we come to realize a truth – that even those aspects of life to which we have the greatest aversion serve life, and this enhances our capacity to be the manifestation of unconditional love.

A Case

Now, let's return to ten years earlier. The Essence work came through to me on a Sunday and, as "luck" would have it, I was scheduled to see a new client on Monday. Rick, a professional artist, told me he was feeling very agitated and depressed. He had been in a relationship for many years, and his boyfriend had recently broken up with him, sighting Rick's criticality and obsessive need always to have everything be right. Rick was now experiencing extreme self judgment – even having some suicidal thoughts, although he quickly denied that he would ever consider acting on them.

I felt called to use the process which had come to me the prior day. I invited Rick to share what he was feeling most ashamed to admit about himself. He told me that he felt ashamed of how critical and righteous he was, that he believed he was fundamentally a bad person.

I asked him what he was experiencing in his body as he was allowing that sense of badness. He told me he was feeling very sick to his stomach. I invited him to bring all his attention to the "very sick to the stomach," to drop his consciousness into it, to be it. Then I addressed the sensation directly. "Very sick to the stomach' sensation, is there anything you are even more afraid to admit about yourself than you are critical, righteous and fundamentally bad?"

As Rick started to cry, he reported, "I am so bad that I ought to be in hell, except there are other people in hell, and I am not even worthy to be with them." With this, he broke down more, saying, "Nothing I ever do will be good enough; I will never get out of this. I hate myself." He seemed to have hit the bottom.

I invited Rick to be aware that while there appeared to be two "I's", the one who was hating and the one who was hated, there was something else also – the one who was the witness. The hater, the hated, and the badness could not be all of who he was; if they were, he would experience them everywhere in his body, and he could not witness them.

I then invited Rick to allow that while these were perspectives he had about himself, they could not be who he truly was. As Rick understood this, I invited him to take the witness point of view, and using his consciousness, bring the dense sensation he called "the sick to the stomach feeling" outside of himself so he could observe it.

While he looked at me quizzically at first, he gave me a slight nod which suggested he understood me, and then he brought the sensation outside of himself. He said it was like peeling off a layer that had appeared to be who he was – it now seemed more like a covering. He described it as a dark cloud that he could imagine in front of him.

I invited Rick to notice that the cloud was in a space which was in front of him, behind him, above and below him, to the left and to the right of him. It included him, the cloud, all matter, all energy, all space. I invited him to expand in all directions, to become the infinite space.

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He began to appear radiant and peaceful. He said he was feeling such a sense of serenity. Then his face took on what to me looked like an expression of wonder. Rick said, "I have felt this way once before in my life. It was when I was finishing the one painting with which I felt total satisfaction, my one masterpiece. I doubted that I would ever feel this way again." With this he started to cry, this time tears of joy.

We asked the energy that used to be his greatest fear what its greatest hope for Rick was. It shared with him that all it ever wanted to do was bring him to the experience of feeling so alive and creating from this place of passion. Rick noticed that he was feeling such aliveness and passion right in that very moment. He looked stunned and grateful that the part of himself that he had so shunned could be his deepest friend and guide.

I continued to see Rick for several months after this session. He reported that it had been life-changing for him. While he could still feel miserable and neurotic sometimes, he felt more nonattached. He could choose to return to the state of being which he rediscovered during the session whenever he thought to, although feelings may not have been so vivid. He told me that everyone noticed a difference in him, even his former boyfriend. He said that while it seemed subtle, he truly felt lighter.

Conclusion

I have now done this Essence Process with hundreds of people, individually and in groups. While not everyone has an experience as immediately and ongoingly as powerful as Rick's, most everyone experiences some benefit – a deepening sense of who they are with a concurrent lessening of attachment. Many of the clients and workshop participants do this Essence Process as an ongoing psychospiritual practice – moving into and disidentifying from deeper and deeper levels of fear. I know for me it has been a path for opening to deeper acceptance and being a more unconditionally loving person.

Thank you for joining us on this part of our journey. In the next part we will explore some of the ideas behind the Essence work. We will apply it to Centers and the fears associated with our fundamental modes of perception, to Subtypes and the fears associated with our deepest instinctual drives and finally, even to the deepest anxiety of all, the existential anxiety of non-existence itself.

I want to deeply acknowledge the contribution to this paper of my colleague, Joan Beckett, whose insight clarified the writing and structure, and thereby made it a much improved document.

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