

Out of the Box Coaching Newsletter

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The Power of Metaphor

Clean Up Your Act!

by Clarence Thomson

Northeast Kansas, my home, is surfing on adrenaline after the local Kansas University won the basketball championship. An outsider, say from Mars, would have some difficulty understanding why conservative Midwestern folk would go into a frenzy watching tall young men racing up and down 96 feet of hardwood. That is, the Martian would have difficulty until he understood ritual and symbol. The ritual: sacred space and time, detailed rubrics (rules), color, music, and masters of ceremonies wearing striped shirts. The community involvement is orchestrated brilliantly. Emotions run high and lives are changed forever.

Especially when I coach the withdrawn types, 4's, 5's and 9's, I try to help them make use of symbolic behavior. Mary and I have as an axiom that it is often easier to behave our way into new feelings than to try to feel our way into new behaviors. A lot of coaching and inspirational books tell us just to think differently and everything will change. That is correct, but usually impossible. For example, just try to think of one thing you are fairly certain is true and then attempt to think that it is not. A rush of evidence convinces you that you were right all along! If this doesn't convince you, get into a political argument with someone of an opposite conviction and notice that your information is eerily ineffective.

But symbols get through. A symbol is how we connect an outward action with an inward understanding which includes thought patterns and an emotional charge. That's why, when we do something that seems strange or bizarre to others, they say, "What do you think you're doing?" They know our actions symbolize something and they need to know what.

I am currently coaching three Nines, all of whom have a common component: their dwellings are a mess. Two have apartments and one a house and all dwellings are a disgrace to their mother's hopes. Nines erase themselves as active agents in their lives and their homes often reflect this inertia.

All three Nines confess to a problem of asserting themselves in important ways. One can't talk to her boss, another to his sister and one to her boyfriend. They wanted help to assert themselves. They thought they wanted some techniques, but the solution is not technical in the sense they wanted.

I borrowed some advice from the most successful spiritual program in the country, Alcoholics Anonymous. AA will not allow people with a drinking problem to enter bars. Their reason is perceptive: the bars have dozens of "triggers." Triggers are the sensory associations with drinking. Remember the basketball game? The triggers are colors, sounds, lights etc. Well, a chaotic room is replete with triggers that Nines cannot control the environment. The books are visual nags that they have to study, the clothes and shoes and dishes are triggers that they can't take care of themselves. These triggers keep telling them they cannot assert themselves, even over their own habitat.

Want an example of the power of triggers? Even drug habits can be broken by removing triggers. A huge number of American GI's came back from Viet Nam with nasty cocaine habits they developed to cope with the horrors of combat. The military was expecting serious problems with the drug addiction when they came home. The problem didn't materialize. Why not? Because when they came home, the triggers of

place, time, smells, sights etc were missing and when they were, the habit fell away. When addicts from ghettos are taken to a non-toxic location, much of the problem disappears.

We minimize triggers because we dwell with the background of a split between our inner life and outer life, the Cartesian heritage that body and mind go their separate ways. Most of the self-help books assume you can change your mind by focus and will power. Just do it! The tell tale phrase, “All you have to do is believe...” When you read that phrase, you are in the presence of fantasy. You simply can't maintain a believe system in opposition to your sensory input. That's why we use the phrase “come to your senses” as a metaphor for sanity.

So I'm having all the Nines clean up their act –literally. This is a symbolic way of asserting themselves. In graduate school I did my MA thesis on Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian media guru of the late 60's. His operative phrase was “First you create an environment and then the environment creates you.” He was referring primarily to mass media, but the principle is portable. You can change your environment in small moves. You can do it by the two great coordinates of life: space and time. You can clean so many minutes a day or you can clean the debris from a small, deliberately chosen area. When you assert yourself, take effective action, over a symbolic area, you change your self-image.

Besides coaching Nines in personal areas, I also coach a social worker in Virginia whose office is a mess and whose computer reflects and repeats the office. The attractiveness of the intervention is that it can be done in small increments and is external. Many coaches recommend journaling, and I think it is effective as a tool for self-observation. But after you observe, then you need to act. The old scholastic axiom works: *solvitur ambulando* – it is solved by walking. The understanding was that some things are solved not by thinking or willing, but by taking whatever action you thought you needed to take.

Symbols are quite arbitrary until you add your own intention. Red, white and blue are just colors until you associate them with patriotism and history. Just cleaning up your room is not going to do anything for you unless you intend to make it a symbolic act. That's why the old story about the two bricklayers persists. One said he was just mixing mud and the other said he was building a Cathedral. Same bricks, different symbolic content.

So it turns out that “clean up your act” is a tell-tale metaphor.

Follow Your Nose

by Mary Bast

I once told a friend “I’m like a mole, I have to smell my way along.” I might have added “*swim* my way along” - an interesting parallel to Clarence’s note that Nines learn by *immersion*. Moles have small eyes and lack external ears. To compensate, their long snouts and paddle-like forefeet allow them to “swim” through the soil.

Case in point that Nines often prefer kinesthetic to auditory or visual channels for learning: I’m determined to learn Adobe InDesign so I can self-publish e-books. I have the software. I have the InDesign book. I have a video tutorial. I am NOT swimming along.

In contrast, Clarence – a visual Seven – says “Give me a book and I can learn anything.”

An excerpt from *Dimensions of Music Teaching Style* beautifully conveys the importance of coaching to someone’s learning style using auditory, visual, and/or kinesthetic metaphors:

“Musical notation represents how the music is to sound only to the extent of certain objective attributes, such as pitch, rhythm, dynamics, phrase, articulation, and tempo. Between the black notes and symbols lies an expressiveness that is subjectively interpreted and individually understood. For instance, rice being spilled in a stream on the floor creates both a visual and auditory image of a quiet yet intensely constant musical line. A kinesthetic metaphor that conveys a swift *marcato* section is ‘perform this as if on a horse at full gallop.’”

When I wanted to create my own web site ten years ago, I bought a package deal, for the consultant to spend a few hours with me setting up the web site and showing me the basics, then to be available to answer my questions. Don’t take “showing” literally. He quickly saw how important it was for me to put my fingers on the keyboard and try things out myself. A whole variety of kinesthetic metaphors would fit here. I paced. I tore out my hair. I stumbled. But bit by bit I got the “feel” for it. I nosed my way into it.

Surely somewhere in the city of Gainesville, there’s an InDesign coach. Maybe I’ll let my fingers do the walking.

The Creative Edge

by Mary Bast

In our chapter on Fours in *Out of the Box: Coaching with the Enneagram*, Clarence and I wrote “You’ll establish more rapport when you witness their pain, show your empathy, honor their unique way of seeing things, and focus your questions on how they feel.” We also suggested that “Twos respond better to *feedback* than to *feelback*.”

Nonetheless, when concrete results aren’t obvious while coaching someone with heightened emotions, I sometimes wonder if I’ve been helpful by simply listening deeply, though my clients have assured me such listening *feels* right.

I try not to be too pushy about moving to solutions (otherwise I can become very Three-ish, wanting both results and evidence of *my* success), but I have often used *Focusing* as a way to help clients move through their kinesthetic experience of emotional pain and into imagery that has the potential to heal symbolically.

So I’m especially pleased to be in contact with Dr. Kathy McGuire and to learn more about her *Creative Edge Focusing*. Dr. McGuire completed her doctoral dissertation under Eugene Gendlin, creator of *Focusing*, and uses the term *Intuitive Focusing* for her application of Gendlin’s approach (where the client is encouraged to focus on “the ‘felt sense,’ the murky, unclear, intuitively– or bodily-sensed ‘feel’ of ‘the whole issue’” and then to move through body sensations to a “felt shift”).

Among the many free articles at The Creative Edge web site, those on grieving have been especially helpful to me when coaching Fours, Twos, and other clients experiencing strong feelings.

In “Active Grieving” Dr. McGuire writes, “Your body knows how to grieve and will direct the process to a healing conclusion, *if you can stop suppressing it.*” In her “Five Minute Grieving” process, she suggests we:

1. invite the client to cry (“...let’s make room for your tears...”),
2. empathize without trying to “fix” or take away the grief (“It seems bleak right now...”),
3. help the client find words or images for the tears (“It helps to get a handle on the feeling...”),
4. empathize again, often by paraphrasing the client’s words (“So it’s your fear you’ll never be a parent that’s hard...”).
5. continue steps (1) through (4) as long as makes sense, then establish closure and orient the client, if necessary, by doing a “present time” exercise (“You’re welcome to sit here for a minute... let’s make sure you’re back in the world...”),
6. or you may want to continue with other aspects of the session (“Let’s see if we can look for solutions to your situation...”).

I’m also intrigued with her *Focused Listening*, which combines Gendlin’s *Focusing* with Carl Roger’s *Reflective Listening*. In previous newsletters I’ve written about Symbolic Modeling, a right-brain technique where the coach stays within a client’s metaphor landscape without leading the client, by using “clean language”—responses that elicit the client’s own resources to generate healing at a symbolic level.

Now that I’ve had almost a full year of practice with Symbolic Modeling, however, I find the methodology somewhat difficult in contrast to the clarity and simplicity of the four basic responses in *Focused Listening*:

1. **Pure Reflection** of the client's words, gestures, and metaphorical responses (“So there’s an image... two triangles intersecting, red and white intertwining...”),
2. **Asking for More** (“Can you say more about ‘the pressure’... exactly what is that like?”),
3. **The Focusing Invitation** (“Would it be okay to ‘sit’ at the Edge of that anger for a moment and see what comes?”),
4. **The Personal Sharing** — for which Dr. McGuire provides the caveat, “It’s hard to even mention the possibility of personal sharings, because they can include all the typical responses outlawed when the listener sets aside personal assumptions,” but sometimes you may have a strong intuition, to be offered only if the client gives the go-ahead and only to return immediately to pure reflection.

Finally, I am touched by her discussion of “The Focusing Attitude.” After summarizing this attitude as one of empathy, respect, and non-judgmental acceptance, she shares the metaphor used by Fathers Pete Campbell and Ed McMahon, creators of Bio-Spiritual Focusing, to convey the “Caring, Feeling Presence”:

Imagine you have found an abandoned infant on the steps of your hospital. Imagine how you would, through your bodily attention, convey complete acceptance and love and safety to this infant: “You are totally wanted in this world and safe with me.” Now, turn this same kind of loving attention toward your inner experiencing.

I’m convinced the creative edge of change involves working with metaphors and—lovingly and with trust in our clients’ innate healing capacity—following the trail through kinesthetic, auditory, and visual imagery to those metaphors.

Coaching With Style

“You Are Getting Very Sleepy...”

by Clarence Thomson

Every Enneagram style is supported by a trance. *Trance* seems like a clinical word, but you all have an experience of saying, “Oh, I can’t tell her that; she’ll never hear it.” All in-the-box Enneagram styles have certain things they can’t/won’t hear, but it’s not as simple as being hard of hearing. Each style has a way of actively searching out what vindicates its trance and all styles have a series of strategies to keep that trance from leaking in information they don’t want to hear/see/feel.

I’ll show how all entranced Enneagram styles protect themselves from unwanted truth and in the process can frustrate you, break your heart, and lead you to consider them as deliberately perverse.

Ones do it right.

Style Ones will irritate you by so identifying with some set of rules, laws, customs, or a tradition that there’s no personal identity. “I’m a loyal Celtics fan.” “I’m a committed Christian.” The immediate consequence of this is a rigid “going by the book.” Sometimes the book is visible (law or the bible), but sometimes it’s “the right way to do things.” It’s the rigidity that tells you the person is missing: what you have is an embodiment of the rules.

Twos love and expect.

Style Twos will not only irritate you but make you feel guilty about your irritation because everything they do is “out of love.” Yes, they meet all your needs, and—in one way or another—they will expect and engineer you to respond with your love. At first you’ll feel honored, then a bit embarrassed, and finally smothered. After all s/he has done for you, what should you do in return? Ah, there’s the rub. When you received all that “love,” there was an embedded expectation. Your move, friend.

Threes work.

Style Three will cause you grief if you want to be the most important or even very important person in his or her life. Threes like to be loved, of course, but the preferred form of affection is often applause. Threes are worker bees and the task comes first. If there is time left over after the work is done, then maybe they’ll find time for emotional relationships.

Fours wallow in emotion.

Style Fours will possibly annoy you because they won’t believe you really like them. When in their trance, they’re convinced they’re defective, so if you like them you’re a fool. You could do better with someone else. “Our moods are crucially important and if you really want to relate to us, you should be more sensitive to how we’re suffering.” What really gets outsiders is their anger if we try to cheer them up. Those moods are proof of how deeply sensitive Fours are, so we’re trying to take away their authentic, emotionally rich inner life.

Fives withdraw into their heads.

Style Fives may irritate us by their superior knowledge. They are so laden with information. They’re also living their ideas instead of a consensual reality you share; so they’re not given to social niceties. As

emotionally intense as style Fours are, Fives are that emotionally disconnected. You may experience them as aloof and distant, with just a touch of condescension.

Sixes worry.

Style Sixes will worry you to death if they're in their trance. Everything you want them to do is dangerous, difficult, and doomed to failure. They're socially charming and warm—until you go to do something. Then they can't because that restaurant was investigated last year for violations, the road you chose is really dangerous, they can't eat half the things on the menu, and besides, allergies are really bad around this neighborhood. They control you by their fears.

Sevens frolic.

Style Sevens are particularly irritating because you want to like them. They're fun, energetic, and they promise you the moon. They have champagne in their blood. Sevens in trance see only possibilities; you get to discover the liabilities on your own. They don't deal with situations as much as change interpretations, which if it involves the brakes on your car can be fatal. Sevens don't really lie, they just tell the truth attractively.

Eights fight.

Style Eights are particularly irritating when they're standing on you. They attack you just to find out who you are and what you think. You're not supposed to take offense or bleed. If you do, you're consigned to the recycle bin as a wimp. Eights in trance divide the world into us and them; then it's your job to see if you can be with "us" or one of "them." The lack of middle ground can make every stroll precarious.

Nines sit.

Style Nines specialize in not. Yes, I meant that sentence. Nines in trance will agree with everything you say but what they choose to do or not do as a result of that agreement is what computer geeks call "random." They nod their heads yes while they are planning no such thing. They share their agreement but act out of their disagreements, often obliquely—what clinical types call *passive-aggressive*. They forget, lose things, come late, and misinterpret, all while seeming to cooperate.

Since Strangling Isn't An Option

by Mary Bast

Sandra Crowe refers to nine different “animal” personalities in *Since Strangling Isn't an Option*. They're not the same animals typically used to symbolize the nine Enneagram styles, and I'm loathe to promote more stereotypes. But I have to admit, when we're deeply in trance we do seem to lose some of our higher-functioning capabilities.

Dealing with difficult people is a recent theme with my clients, so I've been exploring resources. I'm happy to report my all-time favorite has been updated: Manuel J. Smith's *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty: Vol. II for Managers and Executives*. For this column, however, I'm going to explore Crowe's nine different types of difficult people. The words are hers, the sequence mine.

Sarcastic Bees can sting.

Someone who's upset falls into patterned responses. We have to find ways of relating that change their reactions to us. We must give ourselves dignity and respect. When someone is sarcastic, your job is to let them know, directly or indirectly, “This is not how I want you to address me.” If they respond by saying you're too sensitive, counteract with: “I might be, but I thought you would want to know how your words affect other people.”

Prickly Porcupines are backstabbers.

They sabotage, speak negatively of someone in others' presence, and often say one thing and do another. Their outward smiles are cover for their inner fire and vengeance. The only way they know to move forward is to move someone else back. You can either ignore them and let others make their own assessment of you, or you can approach them directly: “I know you said this about me and I'd rather you tell me in person if you have issues with me.” Don't be surprised if they deny it.

Know-It-All Owls know everything.

They're making up for insecurity. They rely on external approval to feel validated. When challenging them, you touch a part that feels inadequate and they're diligently trying to cover up. So instead of saying, “I disagree with you,” validate them by saying what you like about their ideas, then introduce your own. Get rid of the word *but*—allow the possibility to exist that they're right.

Rambling Hyenas use a flood of words.

The tactic usually works against them. Instead of listening, you tune them out and wait for them to run out of steam. Are they giving you too much information? Are they telling you something you aren't interested in? How can you get them to the point? If you nod and say “uh-huh” they'll continue talking. But taking the offensive and telling them to hurry up and get to the point isn't effective either. Instead, direct and redirect the conversation: “I'm not with you right now.” or “You've lost me.” Then, “What specifically do you want me to know?”

Unresponsive Snails lurk in the corners.

They hang in the shadows, and call as little attention to themselves as they can. You ask “How are you?” and they whisper, “Fine.” To get along with snails, build rapport, align your tone with theirs, mimic their body posture, speak softly. Ask open-ended questions, ones that can't be answered with a simple yes or no. Give them time to think about their answers.

Complaining Lizards revel in the problem.

They love to complain. It's fun for them. The cup is always half empty and it's usually dirty, too. Whatever you propose, they find fault. They can infect morale or force others to waste time dealing with their gripes. Don't nod your head, apologize, agree, or sympathize. Get them away from problems and into solutions. Use directed questions. "What would you like to see happen here?" "What do you see yourself doing to settle this issue?"

Over-committing Snakes wiggle into your heart.

They promise you the world, then disappoint you because they're overextended or distracted by something else. If you know they're legendary for breaking promises you can ride them along the way, reminding them how high a priority what they've promised is for you. Another option recognizes that people are motivated by reward and move away from pain. So you could let them fail and feel the full weight of consequences from their inaction.

Hostile Apes are loud, explosive, and rude.

Responding in a similar apelike way is a waste of time. Force or submission on your part only play into their game. Be assertive, not passive or aggressive. If you say "No way am I doing that!" you're being aggressive. But if you say, "Let's discuss our options," you're being assertive. Look them in the eye. If they interrupt while you're talking, say "Hang on; let me finish" or hold up your hand. Set boundaries.

Dumbfounded Donkeys don't initiate.

They'll stay rooted in one place unless forcibly led away. They expect you to make the decisions, set direction, take the risks. Then they can blame you when things go awry. To get along with them, give them choices. Point out the likely outcomes, offer your opinion, guide them toward a path, explain your reasons. Show that missteps can alter their lives, give them clarity of vision, and lead to wisdom. And when they make tough decisions that lead to positive outcomes, recognize them for their achievements.

Nine Ways to Not Do Anything

by Clarence Thomson

The Enneagram enhances coaching when you use it as a template. Take any place you're stuck and see why your Enneagram style contributes to the problem.

Procrastination is a typical problem. The Enneagram illustrates nine ways or nine reasons people procrastinate. You've probably read the usual exhortations: organize, prioritize, focus on your goals and get proactive. I am a coach and I approve those strategies.

Now, how long do you say you've been methodically not doing those?

Once you're aware of an Enneagram style, the usual blocks become visible. For example, I coached a sophisticated Two who was distressed because she couldn't seem to focus on her work. She was writing a book and never quite got to it. A usual generic explanation, one embraced by the Harvard Business Review, by the way, is that when people don't do what they want to do, they want what they're doing more. The conscious stated value conflicts with a stronger unconscious, unstated value. In the case of the Two, her conscious goal—to write her book—conflicted with her unconscious goal, which was to earn approval by caretaking (self-preservation subtype).

I asked her what she did instead of writing her book. Once we knew what she did instead of what she said she wanted to do, we'd know what her unconscious value-conflict was.

Not surprising, she was spending 20 to 30 hours a week doing free therapy for neighbors, old friends and some troubled adolescents. Her need for personal interaction and her need to be approved and loved for caretaking prevented her from doing the hard, impersonal work of writing her book. She really wanted to write the book, but she had a usual Two's problem of wanting personal interaction more. She had to learn to protect her boundaries so she could get her work done.

I suggested three categories of boundary protection to monitor how she protected her time, her space and her energy: to allocate so many hours to writing, to write in a place where she would not meet people, and to make a list of people who energize and those who deplete her energy. Once she was aware of those boundaries, she could decide how to protect them and her goals.

Because she's a Two, I also recommended that she find someone to write with. Twos usually don't like to work alone. They get their juice from people. Without personal contact they find work dull and uninspiring. She found a good editor and their interpersonal contact helped her find the motivation to finish the book.

Sometimes the conflict is more conscious. We have a long term goal and a short term, quick reward goal and they're in conflict. General Motors is acting this out for us. They've had information for a number of years that gas-gulping cars probably had a limited life-span. They kept on producing them and now they're looking dinosaurish. When journalists asked the leaders why they didn't plan for what so many saw coming, their answer was to bleat "We gave the people what they wanted." Immediate profit, their short term goal, jeopardized their long term goal: viability. We can cluck righteously, but we all do the same. The long term goal of weight management conflicts with the short-term goal of satisfying one's sweet tooth.

I've found that when people want to lose weight, if their long term goal—losing weight—reinforces their Enneagram desires, they're more apt to be successful than if weight loss conflicts with their Enneagram desires. For example, if a Two wants to lose weight so she can have more energy to work with her grade school class, her conscious desire to lose weight and her Enneagram desire to help people align and she has a good chance of being successful.

But if her long term goal is to lose weight but her Enneagram desire is to bring sweets to work to make friends and influence people at work, she will probably not be successful. Her desire for personal relationships is stronger than her desire for health and attractiveness. When the desire for health and attractiveness merge with their desire to maintain their weight, young women are often successful.

So when you find yourself procrastinating, realize it is not just “putting things off.” We put off whatever conflicts with what we want on our Enneagram level. What we really want will depend on our Enneagram style. We procrastinate quite specifically—nine different ways.

Stress and Security

by Clarence Thomson

“Now what do I do? Now that I know my Enneagram style, what do I do about it?” Phase two for many Enneagram students, and the implicit request for help from an Enneagram coach, reveals itself in that question.

The question usually rises if the presentation of an Enneagram style on paper or in a seminar seems a bit negative. A narrow focus of attention is in a certain sense, negative, but it also has positive characteristics. A laser-like attention can be understood as focus or tunnel vision. So the coach has the implicit assignment of enabling people to see what they've not seen because when they do, they'll see resources they didn't know they have.

Wonderfully, you have the map that shows you where those resources are buried. Every Enneagram style has two connecting lines we call stress and security points. These are energies available to us but we don't always activate them or use them well.

Let's look at style Four. Here's the way a style Four presented her problem to me:

“I'm barely even able to do the homework assigned, yet I maintain A's and I actively participate in class discussions... it's just when I go home, I lose it... the motivation... I don't know what it is... I'm lacking. I think I need a mate in order to do anything; I'm so lonely without one, and life just doesn't seem to make sense... I look out the window right now and it's cold and snowy, and I don't even want to move... I just want to curl up in a ball and disappear. I feel like I need to be "out" there, but I can't... SOME thing is holding me back. I just feel so alone... and I'm scared of not succeeding with my dreams, ideas, goals, and aspirations. I don't want to waste away, yet I can't, as I've said SO many times, find the motivation... to get out there....”

This style Four saw herself as abused and noble. There is some nobility lurking at style Two. Style Twos are natural nurturers, giving to whomever they love. So I made some style Two suggestions to this young woman. She saw herself (an “A” student in an expensive college, very attractive and with friends) as a wretched lost soul. So I asked her to go to Wal-Mart (a foreign land to college girl 4's) and see if she could compare her state in life to half a dozen of the fat mothers pushing carts and pulling children. Fours usually project their inner resources on to someone else and then envy the qualities in that person that they have disowned in themselves. So I took that proclivity to project and gave it a quarter turn. I know she can do that because her connection to Two is an ability to deeply sense the needs of others. The compassion she will feel for them will partially soothe her own self-pity.

If she can get in touch with the pain and needs of others, as a Two would, it will break some of the isolation she was experiencing. Notice what I did not do. I did not discuss and especially did not evaluate how real her situation in life was. It was as real as yours or mine, whether you think she should hurt that much or not.

Now, this frustrated her a little because what she (and a lot of Fours) really wanted to do was explore her feelings. She has a belief that if she really, really, really explored her feelings, somehow she would feel better. Some contemporary psychology tends to follow this pattern. The premise is often acted out thus: If you “get in touch” with your feelings, then you can change your behavior. That is, by and large, often helpful. However, the other direction works better for style Fours. If you change the way you behave, it will

modify your feelings.

I had her look specifically at people she would not envy, because for a Four the most powerful leverage is usually their inner imagery. So I had her (without her awareness) install images of people she could feel compassion for. I chose fat people for her to look at because she has a Three wing (note she had to mention she got "A"s) and would be image-conscious.

The tendency of Twos is to be proud they don't have any needs, so they meet their needs by projecting them into others. (I'm thirsty; I'll get you a drink...) The high side of that is a certain satisfaction and self-esteem in meeting those needs. So I also had this Four volunteer in a soup kitchen one night a week for six weeks. Later I'll ask her to write an essay on her experiences. When Fours create art, they find adequate expression for the intensity of their feelings. If they don't express their feelings into the world, they have a tendency to turn them on themselves. To help her see this in action, I did recommend that she watch a movie. If you'd like to see how a Four structures her life around her art, go watch *Joni Mitchell: Woman of Heart, Woman of Mind*.

You might object by saying she doesn't have any motivation. You'll notice she doesn't specify what she doesn't have motivation FOR. She does her homework; she's a good girl. So she will do what I tell her and it will make her feel better. What I asked her to do was congruent with what I knew she had some energy for because she'll have a connection to style Two.

This is a work in progress. She won't be Mary Poppins tomorrow. But when coached to tap into the resources of styles One and Two, little by little she can overcome

Change *and* Die

by Mary Bast

Alan Deutschman's *Change or Die* was drawn from his coverage of a conference where thought leaders from around the world explored solutions to major social problems. According to their statistics, the dice don't roll in our favor. The odds are nine to one against humans changing, even when remaining unchanged is life threatening.

From his ensuing research, Duetschman proposes three critical keys to change:

- relate,
- repeat,
- reframe.

This article's title puts a spin on Deutschman's because some part of us has to die for significant change to occur; the loss of ego feels (to the ego) like death. Of course, even when we say someone's "a new person," the loosening of habitual patterns doesn't mutate one style into another. A Four doesn't become a Seven, for example. But the process of transformation can lead to what stereotyping might label an oxymoron: a happy Four.

Interviews with all nine Enneagram styles about their change process have helped me understand each journey from the inside [search from my home page for Gathering Courage (Eights) and Dharma Combat (Fives)]. Lately, contact with a happy Four has inspired me to continue the series with Fours. I also want to see if Deutschman's catchy formula holds true: relate, repeat, reframe.

What is Transformational Change?

"To me, transformation is becoming something rather than uncovering something," said Gary. "It's a catalytic change into something new vs. building a piece of furniture where you start with a tree, slowly peel away pieces, make different shapes, and put them together. At the end you have a chair, not a hunk of wood. But it's happened over a long period of time with many small interventions, instead of being a St. Paul conversion. The changes I've experienced have been more of the kind where it's still wood when you've done. Mostly I'm a chair. Just a f—king chair."

Lest you imagine all Fours think alike, Leslie, a scientist, said "The word transformation gives me a bit of trouble, because it implies transforming from something to something, which is one-shot deal. To me it's more of an endless evolution of consciousness." In general Leslie seemed more optimistic than Gary about a Four's chances for transformation, but she also offered an evolutionary metaphor depicting the special/flawed dichotomy so fundamental to the worldview of Fours: "I think we have the lowest survival value. The genetic predisposition to become a Four may have remained in the gene pool because shamans were revered in certain cultures. But think about a tribal culture that leaves members alone to ruminate on their inner demons. How long would that tribe last, compared to one of predominantly Sixes, say, with a strong urge to work together and follow the rules to keep from being eaten by saber-toothed cats? But if this odd-ball could once in a while come up with a piece of 'divine' information, the tribe might see benefit in making sure the odd-ball survived. So here Fours are, carrying around baggage that may be the result of choices made by our ancestors during the last glaciation!"

Relate

Relationships helped both Gary and Leslie by providing love and support as well as a mirror to illuminate their ego patterns. “At one point,” said Gary, “I couldn’t move off my couch, and finally dragged myself to a therapist. I started to confront some childhood relationships, and realized my whole life I’d hit walls where I couldn’t contain the emotions. There were also people in my life who just cared—when you’re coming from that place of feeling like shit, it’s grace to have people who care. Now I understand the core issues and it goes quicker; depression doesn’t have the same hold it used to have on me.”

Leslie also attributed some of her changes to helpers and loving relationships. In a fascinating example of mirroring, she remembered when she had to leave the room where a workshop was being held: “I felt I was going crazy. I found a large, empty room and danced by myself free form, which I’d never done in my life, acting out all the things that were working on me. Then this guy came into the room and danced around me. I think he really understood something was happening to me. In the end we were mirroring each other. It was the most healing experience I’ve ever had.”

Repeat

Gary knew the importance of repetition—finding ways to stay focused on the desired change through “bodywork, group therapy, individual therapy, meditation, T’ai Chi, massage.” Perhaps because his experience of change had to be catalytic in order to count in his worldview, he added morosely, “These experiences didn’t fix me.” In spite of being “just a chair,” however, Gary did acknowledge some progress: “Putting it in Four terms, transformation would be living my life totally engaged, fully in the here and now as opposed to wanting to be somewhere else, or doing something different. I’ve dipped in and out of this experience at different times in my life.”

Leslie, on the other hand, had learned to appreciate the subtle, incremental changes repetition encourages: “I do a structured meditation at least once a day—this structure reinforces things I’m learning about myself. I go regularly to a retreat center called “The Ranch,” I have a New Year’s Reflection Day, and I journal daily. These are all course corrections, to stay conscious.”

Reframe

Gary would have benefited from a reframing that helped him see how his worldview framed his progress as mundane; he saw himself still as “wood.” He wanted something catalytic, something special. He intellectually understood the importance of reframing: “I’ve read if you can think about it differently you’ll have more of a handle on behaving differently. Shift your mental model and you can shift your perspective.” But he was still stuck in his Four-ish drama: “For me, the reverse is true. I don’t think about it differently and then feel differently about it. I have to feel differently; then I can experience and think and behave differently.”

In contrast, notice how Leslie’s reframing shifted something fundamental for a Four: “There’s a clear connection between being hooked on drama and the journey I’m on. The melodrama was a way for me to feel important, and I could sense a panic deep inside as I considered giving it up. I felt naked and vulnerable. No excuses, nothing to make me special. It was scary. One lesson for me here is to trust that where I am right now—without any exaggeration or drama—is enough. Another lesson is that life without drama isn’t mediocre or bland, it’s living from the center. It wasn’t the events or people in my life that were

the problem, it was the emotional energy I gave to them. I would lose my sense of self, and stop listening to my inner guidance. Drama pulled me away from my heart.”

“Today is a good day to let go of the baggage getting in the way of my being in my heart,” Leslie concluded. “For this, I will gladly leave the drama behind.”

Mosaic

by Mary Bast

There have been many books triggered by transforming experiences but I've not found any accounts of someone's life-long change process from an Enneagram perspective. So I've collected client histories as roadmaps for Enneagram transformation. What follows is the abbreviated version of an interview with a Seven.

What does the word "transformation" mean to you?

For me, transformation is about things becoming different, and I've used the metaphor of a mosaic, especially since my husband's death. My life as I knew it was shattered, and in the healing process the pieces of my life are being put back together in different combinations. Before his death, my first major change was when I went to Minnesota to college. I'd read some literature but had no clue what I was getting into. I just wanted to get the hell out of my parents' house. The college town was a good-sized community but I came from the L.A. metro area and thought I knew everything about the world. In college I met all sorts of people I knew nothing about. I felt so self-conscious, like I didn't get the script. That was my first real recognition of differences, and it was also the beginning of being out of my parents' home and trying to figure out who I was.

Say a few words about why you wanted to "get the hell out" of your parents' home.

I grew up in the family of *Ordinary People* where everything looked good on the outside. My parents were upper-middle-class, church-going people who provided for all our needs, but emotionally there was chaos and conflict. My mother was an active alcoholic and my dad worked all the time. I couldn't understand what was going on but I did know I was incredibly lonely in my family. I created family with friends from church and high school. The same friends would say, "I wish I had your parents" and I thought "How could that be?" I thought it was about me, that I didn't appreciate my parents. My sister had an eating disorder, and my brother had a lot of anger issues. I was that middle kid who tried to just get along.

None of this was discussable. "Am I really seeing this stuff or not?" You questioned your view of reality.

And there were definitely similarities in the college experience: "Gosh, how is it that everyone else seems to know what's going on and says it's OK, but it doesn't feel OK to me?" Looking back I see how I used my outgoing, friendly, humorous piece to try to make up for all the discord inside. I stayed until May. Then I said I'd take some time off and figure out what I wanted to do with my life. But to my parents there was no question about going to college; it was just a matter of where you went to college, so I ended up going to a small Lutheran school.

Was there anything else life-changing between college and your husband's death?

I spent my last semester of college in Mexico and Nicaragua as part of a Global Justice and Peace program. This experience heightened my sense of a greater global community and gave me different eyes to see more of the things we have in common, to be open to new experiences. It's continued to be a reminder for me: when I feel I'm out of my element, instead of running away or becoming defensive, to embrace it and say, "Well, if I were in Mexico, what would I do?" So I went to seminary from a very different

place. Also during my four years in seminary, I got into therapy and into recovery around being the adult child of an alcoholic. One of my professors confronted me and said, "I think you've grown up in an alcoholic family and I think you need some outside help." I was devastated, in the sense that I felt found out, but also afraid if my pretending everything's OK fell apart, what would I do?

What indicated to your professor you'd come from an alcoholic family?

He told me "You're making up stories." I didn't know the difference between what was true and what I imagined. We'd been doing pastoral visits to hospitals that were about being fully present; and I was incapable of that. The therapist's first assignment was to spend half an hour by myself every day, not watching TV, not talking to people, not exercising. Just being there. I went back the next week and said, "I couldn't do it." She suggested spending 15 minutes by myself, and I was able, over time, to be with me.

At a relatively young age you had support and resources that turned you upside down.

At the end of seminary I decided I would take a year off. There was an experimental program with people from different backgrounds – medicine, religion, social work, education – doing a part-time family therapy immersion experience. But it was an expensive program, and in a spur-of-the-moment decision I thought, "Fine, I'm just going to get a congregation and I don't care where I go" and became an associate pastor where I was very quickly in over my head, difficulties with the pastor, people needing a lot of help, and I wasn't always capable of saying no. I was doing the 12-step program, working harder in therapy trying to explore myself, and that's when I met my husband. He'd served an internship there and I found refuge in talking on the phone with this man I assumed was married. When I met him it was as if I'd known him for a long time, he wasn't married, and he was very different from anyone I'd ever dated. Six weeks after that we were engaged. We sought a pastor colleague to do pre-marital counseling and I was still seeing a therapist who had gotten me out of the pattern of choosing people like my Mom. So my husband – a Nine – was someone who, years before, I wouldn't have noticed. He was so calm, a great complement to my personality, and he loved movies like "You've Got Mail!" Especially early on, that kind of direct expression of emotion was still very uncomfortable for me.

You were open enough to be drawn to someone different from the old pattern, but it still wasn't comfortable.

Because we lived 300 miles apart he agreed to leave the congregation he'd served for seven years, during which time he'd been diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma and told he had less than six months to live. That had been when he was 26, and I met him when he was 31. Two friends who'd gone through seminary with him both had Hodgkin's and both died, which had confirmed for him he'd been given a second chance. I was 30 years old and had a big church where I was televised every week, yet I felt trapped. I told a friend, "I can't figure this out. It seems whatever job I've had, the same irritating people keep showing up!" Fortunately, this friend had the audacity to ask, "Have you ever thought the common factor might be you?" I heard it, and thought, "I'm the one who has to change."

Was there a common theme to what was so irritating?

They were always so demanding! So picky. So serious about things! That same year I read *Love, Medicine, and Miracles*, and told my husband, "I'm quitting my job so I don't get cancer!" I was pretty much the income earner but he said "Absolutely. We'll figure it out." I went to get a master's in counseling and he

took a church nearby. The biggest transformation for me then was my son's birth, because so many of my family issues were right there for me. He was a very colicky, challenging baby and wasn't diagnosed as bipolar until he was eight years old, so from his birth to age eight, I was pretty clear he was the way he was because I was an incompetent parent. He was very bright and also emotionally volatile. My husband had always been the go-to person if something was too much for me. But he was in the middle of being trained to be a pastor inside prison walls, so he was gone. That was one of the toughest times of my life.

So far this trashes the happy-go-lucky stereotype of the Seven. To stay afloat with all this is quite amazing.

It's the good news/bad news about Sevens, because part of how we stay afloat is to not let some of it in. By the time my son was seven, I'd go in by myself to the school office, to see the principal, to have conferences with the school social worker, and they'd say, "How much other violence is there in your home?" I realized, "Gosh, they think I abuse this kid." So at this point – and this is now the key for me that my compulsion is going to kick in – I felt I was in over my head. I told my husband, "I can't do this anymore." He arranged his calendar so he could go to the parent-teacher conferences, to the principal's office, and they'd say, "You are the best dad!" He was a pastor in the community and had that quiet presence and confidence.

You reached a point when you said "I just can't do this," but you didn't walk away.

There were parts of me that wanted to walk out. I imagined telling my husband I was going for a long drive and changing my identity. But fortunately there'd been a woman at the Alanon meetings who'd walked out when her son was four years old. Now she was back, he was an addict, and it was so much work! I thought "She's my future. If I walk out, it will be work one way or the other."

With your husband's death you were now a single parent.

Right. He had a stroke and when he died, people said "Oh my God, what's going to happen?" I didn't ask "Why did God do this to me?" I knew God didn't *do* this to me. I thought, "All this work I've done on my life; here it is!" That was my most transformational moment.

A deeply felt insight.

And incredible gratitude for knowing the Enneagram. My husband's death would have been the perfect reason for "Let's just pretend it's all OK" but instead I thought, "This is a matter of the heart, which hasn't been the strongest place for me as a Seven, so I'm going to get it on my radar." In the years since, the Enneagram has provided my cliff notes, because it highlights what's important. My life's transformational points have always been in heart-to-heart connections: healing with the family I grew up in, marriage, parenting, death. I'm now being intentional about using my feeling center, whereas before I'd have intellectual relationships with people, not intimate relationships.

Have other practices helped you stay present, build your awareness?

I have twenty years of written journals, a powerful practice that's helped with my questioning, "Is that real?" When I'd tell a story and then wonder "Did I just make that up?" I could go back and find it historically. It's also helped because sometimes I'd read back about something that had upset me and I wouldn't even remember the people who'd upset me so much! I have a poster quoting Simon Wiesenthal, who founded

the Museum of Tolerance: "Hope lives when people remember."

You've mentioned wanting to run and you did run from your parents' home. Are there other resistances you've been aware of?

The external make-over: "Let's just put on a new coat of paint and it will all be OK" instead of taking the time to dig deeper.

What is the process of transformation like for you now?

In 12-step recovery we say "we practice spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection." At this point I'm more often in the moment. I also own an organizing business with a partner, and I see how people try to solve core problems by rearranging things on the outside. It doesn't work. You can't just rearrange the furniture. You have to solve the core problem.

Your organizing business is itself a living metaphor of working through your issues as a Seven.

And our business card has a box on it with the logo, "We think *inside* the box!" (laughter) I also think, in conjunction with the mosaic metaphor, when my heart keeps breaking it gets to have more room. It's when hearts break that they start to expand.

That's beautiful. Thank you.

Switzerland

by Clarence Thomson

Sometimes I worry my suggestions are a little over the top, like last month when I suggested my California client make a pilgrimage to Switzerland. It all started with medieval piety, of course. Really. In the Middle Ages, when there was only one Christian church, people made pilgrimages. Muslims still do. A pilgrimage is not a vacation trip, any more than a retreat is a vacation. The physical journey was and is understood to be a metaphor for the inner journey. It's a time of exertion, of focus and of bodily expression of one's willingness to change. Pilgrimage is a metaphor for conversion.

My client is a Nine and Nines learn very well by immersion, by a kind of osmosis. As the center of the body types, they learn through and with their body. My Nine son gave as his reason for dropping out of college (where he was excelling) that he didn't need to read the books. He wanted to remodel homes and all he needed to know from books/school was the code specifications. He would "just do" the rest of it. And he did it and did it well. Typical Nine learning pattern.

So when my Nine client was having a hard time trying to decide what kind of livelihood he wanted to pursue, I suggested a number of places he could go. He was motivated and idealistic, so I mentioned several "green" companies near him. I knew his location in California and the places were within easy driving distance. I asked him to visit these companies, see the cutting edge approaches they were using and then pay close attention to how his body felt as he did this. Nines are usually physically sensitive. Their bodies record their intuition. Mr. Sony, the richest man in Japan, was asked why he was able to make such good deals for his company. His answer was standard Nine: "When I am offered a deal, I swallow it. If it is sweet in my stomach, I take the deal. If it is sour, I reject it." Lovely way of saying he operated intuitively.

That's why I appealed to my Nine client's intuition. He needed an environment that would teach him. But as we talked, he told me of his attraction to Rudolph Steiner's works (my client and I are both fierce gardeners) and his mysterious attraction to Switzerland where he'd been a number of times. The more I asked him about his experience there and the more we discussed Steiner the more excited he got about going to Switzerland.

When a Nine gets excited, the wise coach gets out of the way. He did go to Real Goods, a green manufacturing and distribution company and I think he's actually going to go to Switzerland. If he does, I've instructed him to study contrasts between the way Steiner's group does things and the American corporate model. He's to journal about and take pictures of things that strike him. I suggested pictures because Nines often have trouble seeing clearly. Thinking about one's livelihood is often called "having a vision." When we plan for the future, we use our visual capabilities.

Nobody talks about "hearing" or "feeling" the future. We "see" the future. So I want him to translate his bodily intuitions into pictures, to open his visual channel of learning a bit.

If you'd like to see how a Nine thinks kinesthetically, check out the documentary *Sketches of Frank Geary* – a world-class architect. Notice how he designs, not on paper but with physical models. Or watch Robert Hass at poets.org trying to feel his thoughts with his hands as he accepts a poetry prize.. He's articulate, but his speech is like a heavy plane taking off. It gets there, but you can sense the labor. The hand gestures are for him, not for us. He's not explaining, he's groping.

When you coach clients, learn as quickly as you can their preferred methods of learning. Learning styles are not entirely Enneagram-specific, but the general patterns hold up quite well. Nines learn by doing, by immersion, by physical activities and metaphors. They learn by reading or listening, too, of course, but for power and especially for change, their strongest suit will usually be doing.

The Art of Coaching

Completing the Circle

by Mary Bast

One of my colleagues is experimenting with using a questionnaire for data collection instead of personal interviews. A self-aware and curious Six, she works with emerging leaders and keeps current on HR and OD best practices. Her experience and research indicate a growing preference for the anonymity and objectivity of written questionnaires. Personal interviews can be subjective and unreliable, and it may be too easy for recipients to identify who said what. When line-level employees are interviewed, the rumor mill can create a perception that their boss is in trouble. Questionnaire results, in contrast, are typically seen as more objective and scientific. I trust my colleague's judgment. Furthermore, as a Six and a head type, she's comfortable with the statistical output of standardized questionnaires.

In my graduate years I co-authored a book on social research methods, so I understand the importance of reliability and validity in data collection. But I'm a Nine and a gut type. It's harder for me to interpret data not founded on my own senses. Years ago, I completed the Center for Creative Leadership's training for *Benchmarks*. After two consultations using *Benchmarks*, I went back to personal interviews. It's a splendid instrument. But I was at too much of a distance from the sources of data to feel confident discussing the summary tables and statistics. As an Enneagram Nine I missed my "gut" reading of people in the clients' sphere of interaction. I wanted context. I needed to connect with everyone involved.

Doing both a written 360 and an interview can seem cumbersome to busy executives. But even if the needs of a client organization required a written 360, I'd find a way to convince them follow-up conversations are necessary. Why? In addition to the reasons I've mentioned, interviews provide me the opportunity to quietly and implicitly sell the value of coaching. On more than one occasion, clients I've interviewed about someone else have come to me later for coaching or sent referrals. And again, this illustrates the importance of considering your Enneagram style. When you ask Nines to tell you what they do and why you should hire them instead of someone else, you might hear some stuttering and stammering. Our forté is getting someone else to talk. We might not have the immediate pizzazz of a Three or a Seven, but give us someone to interview and we're on our way!

Moreover, I want to intervene directly in the system (OK, OK, I admit gut types also have control issues). I can get a "read" on my client's co-workers and ask questions that plant the seeds for my client's success. "What exactly will you see that will convince you this person has changed? How will you reinforce that when you see it?"

As an aside, I have a sweet example of two railroad executives who couldn't stand each other. My client was an Eight, his peer I interviewed was a Three. These two can be natural enemies, in part because they're both aggressive types, and in part because the Three's competitiveness can threaten the Eight's fear of showing weakness and the Eight's need to be in charge can threaten the Three's perceived path to success. In this case, however, the Three knew I had some presence in the system and wanted my approval, so he promised to let the Eight know when he saw improvements. When I asked the Eight what happened the next time they met, he said, "Well, I asked for his input the way you and I practiced. He looked embarrassed, then patted my knee, and said 'Good work.' We didn't know what to say next!"

Twenty years ago I was convinced that the best profile for collecting data about my clients was one tailored to the organization. I would facilitate a focus group discussion to identify key factors for success in their organization and industry, help them set priorities, and create behavioral profiles that became the measures for development coaching. In some cases the same profiles became part of their performance management system, especially in companies where performance feedback had been informal. This was obviously a lot of work, but there was terrific ownership of the profiles and a positive striving toward behaviors mutually agreed upon as key to their organization's continued success. Note also that Nines value collaboration, so I was again operating from my Enneagram style.

Regardless of experience or Enneagram style, however, technological innovations and ease of Internet access may force all of us to rethink our strategies. Our clients now can respond to an online questionnaire with an iPhone while sitting in the airport. Many organizations have a sophisticated understanding of leadership development and talent management. And it's rare these days to hear, "You're a coach? What does that mean?"

In addition, a number of validated and reputable questionnaires on the market benchmark generic success factors—behavioral profiles and/or personality traits. The model that's intrigued me most recently in conversations with coach clients is The Leadership Circle (TLC), which connects "a well researched battery of competencies with deep motivations and underlying habits of thought" and "reveals the relationship between patterns of action and the internal assumptions that drive behavior." The profile allows an Enneagram interpretation of results, especially in the self-limiting Reactive Tendencies, which draw from the Hornebian categories of moving toward ("Complying" in TLC terminology), away from ("Protecting"), and against ("Controlling") others.

The bottom line—you can collect feedback for your clients through interviews, create your own questionnaire, draw from a variety of available questionnaires (either written or online), or use a combination of questionnaires and interviews, either generic or tailored to the organization. New models, questionnaires, and applications are appearing daily. Each has its benefits and potential problems. While it's most important to assess your client's culture, needs, and desired outcomes when choosing your approach to collecting feedback, it's also important to play to the strengths of your Enneagram style. No matter what the data, your own presence and confidence are the key components to a successful outcome.

Playing Both Ends Against the Middle

by Clarence Thomson

Every Enneagram style is technically called an “ego state,” which means it is a complex of defense mechanisms that we use to negotiate what we see as reality.

So our style is not “who we are,” it’s “how we see things and how we act accordingly.” One of the things we do is polarize. To polarize is to take any reality: attitude, task, conviction, belief, and divide it into two opposites. I know, that sounds complex, but here are some things you can watch to understand it better.

Start with politics. Karl Rove publicly and deliberately polarized the political scene. Why did he do that? To “energize the base.” When we polarize, we filter out all information that will make us unsure of our position. When we do that, we are free to act boldly. Hamlet was right, you know, “Too often the native hue of action is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought. Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all.” The more we see all sides of a situation, the harder it is to take bold action. But if “all I know is...” then you are sure of yourself and act accordingly.

So the pundits talk polarization: Can Hillary be aggressive without being a bitch? Not if she or the voters are polarized. With polarization there is no middle ground: lady or bitch. Commentators stop short of calling her a bitch, but McCain allows the term among his followers. We have no comparable derogatory term for an aggressive male. Some feminist writers are trying to co-opt the term with articles like “Getting in touch with my inner bitch.” And a fine little book on weight control, *Skinny Bitch*, is on the NY Times best seller list.

This gender issue around aggression is an example of an entire culture being polarized, and with the polarization comes anger, caricature, and—as with all ego-states—a restriction in choices. Women have a small voice on their shoulders whispering “Be careful, don’t be bitchy.” And if they find themselves irritable or wanting to be aggressive, “bitchy” is the term they even apply to themselves. Hillary shed a tear on her campaign and a million replays showed how concerned we were that she was “soft.” A middle ground of strength and compassion, always missing in this polarization, got little or no mention. A milder form of polarized helplessness/bitchiness shows up in the title, “Desperate Housewives.”

But that same dynamic operates within every Enneagram style. It’s one of the oversimplifying defense mechanisms we all employ. Now here’s where it gets sticky: when we polarize against something, that something still remains within us and comes out in unhealthy or unconscious ways.

Let’s start with Ones. Ones, when fixated, are often polarized against sensual pleasure. American Puritanism is an unwholesome suspicion of sex, sensual pleasure and things related. When a public figure is convicted of greed, we yawn. But when the pelvis is involved, outrage and sanctimony make the 6:00PM lead story. All the while pornography is doing a landslide business.

My favorite story takes place in the local athletic club. I knew the Pilates instructor. She was fierce about strengthening inner cores! She was the minister’s wife and noted for her zeal for Jesus. But my operational heterosexuality was piqued when at one class she wore a nice tight sweat suit with “Got Fun” written across her Pilates-toned gluteus maximus. If I had asked her (at way more peril than I would ever risk), what kind of fun she was considering because of the advertising venue, I would have probably

received a blank look. She probably thinks she bought it because it was on sale or she liked the color. But I knew. (Insert salacious smirk here).

Mary and I are nice. But when we probe to find out what you're really passionate about, we're looking at what you say and what you are very careful not to say. We know that behind many strong convictions is a balancing strong conviction that dwells in recessed oblivion and exercises a lot of influence, especially if we're stuck. One way of being stuck is to hold a noble conviction: "My goal is to earn \$100,000 this year," while having an equal and opposite conviction that "I already work too damn hard; there is NO WAY I'm going to rev up and work that hard." Having two equal convictions—one conscious and the other unconscious—is a fine way to stay stuck. It's the reason we can't stay on diets. Part of us says "I'm going to lose these pounds." Another polarized part says "I'm starving; you hate me, and I'm going to die." The Enneagram strategies we use in "You're Fat, Your Fault?" never rely on will power for that reason.

Even be careful of affirmations. "I am confident and wise and will earn lots of money." Yeah, right. There may be another part of you that is chanting with equal fervor, "I am scared to death of this economy and I just know I will be a bag lady by October."

That's why good advice is not transformational coaching. Your mother, boss, and bartender all have good advice. Coaching helps you see what you're carefully not seeing and helps you do what some part of you knows full well you can't and even must not do.

A Bitch on Wheels

by Mary Bast

I've been exploring my inner rage. This from a Nine who—when first introduced to radical feminism in graduate school—shied away from it. Well, naturally. I was polarized between being a nice girl and being a bitch. I knew “Nice Girl.” It played well with my professors and for me, too, as I received all the kudos, scholarships, and fellowships that reward students who play the game. Contrary to the aphorism, Nice Girls do finish first. At quite a cost, however, the price we all pay when our patterns of polarization are reinforced—an increasingly narrow worldview.

But slowly, slowly I began to bristle at the arbitrary power of academic faculty. My first effort could be described as passive-aggressive—a witty article for a sociology newsletter that subtly mocked the pervasive use of the phrase “seminal idea” in (male-dominated) academic circles, the promise implied by “generative ideas” and the “birth” of new ways of thinking.

From a friend doing research on assertiveness in women, I learned the difference between passivity (power-under), aggression (power-over), and assertion (mutuality). [This is still one of my most frequently used coaching tools with all personality styles—our whole society (world?) is polarized between passivity and aggression.]

The blinders of my polarized and unquestioned worldview began to open a bit. Then the two instructors leading my psychology practicum, both tenured faculty, both male, asked the twelve of us to rank each other on a variety of dimensions. They said the questionnaire results would be confidential, a learning tool for our personal growth. Instead, they used the data to rank order us and sent that ranking to our advisors. As the oldest (I entered graduate school at age 31) and, yes, the top-ranked, I felt it was my duty to fight this and sent a letter to those same advisors, signed by my classmates, protesting the misuse of the information and emphasizing that in a group of top performers even the lowest-ranked was still a top performer.

Did they take me (or us) seriously? No, they diminished my efforts by broadcasting my “problem with authority.” If you've experienced an “-ism” you'll recognize the tactic—you stand up to those who have demeaned or bullied you, and they say “You're too sensitive.”

That was 25 years ago. Not much has changed. My colleague Julie Mitchell recently completed a study of women who chose to leave successful, longtime careers for fulltime graduate study. She was interested in whether, why, and how they communicated proactively while adjusting to a new “work” environment (graduate school). Most (85%) participants were proactive, and many reported instances of intense emotion, including anger about what they perceived to be rigid, dysfunctional departmental hierarchies and “one size fits all” rules for graduate students.

The 20% who were satisfied with their adjustment to fulltime graduate study recognized they were “lucky” or “blessed” to be in unusually “wonderful” departments, and/or were able to count on respectful, peer-to-peer partnerships with faculty who recognized them as experienced professionals. In contrast, the unhappy respondents were the most proactive; they described their unpleasant—even hostile adjustment experiences as forcing them to speak up, in an environment where they felt out of place and not welcomed.

Another colleague gave me a recent example of her own proactive behavior. A former executive and successful executive coach, she's completing a Master's program in behavioral science, and described an evening class where students were assigned presentations but the professor then invited guest speakers who took up almost all the class time. As the last week of the course approached, only a few students had given their presentations, so he announced they'd have to stay late after the remaining classes. He even added an additional assignment. Her classmates seemed to accept this, but my friend, bless her, raised her hand and said, "You know, we've loved this class and every guest speaker you've brought in, but there's no way you can add an assignment and expect these people who work full-time jobs to stay so late. I propose that we not complete all the presentations because we've had other wonderful opportunities." The professor, bless him, responded "I couldn't have said it better." Then he and the class brainstormed about what they thought was reasonable.

Twenty-five years ago I didn't yet trust myself to make such a confident statement spontaneously, but I was smart enough to form a dissertation support group. When I met with my committee to review my completed dissertation, several of them said it needed to be rewritten. One more hoop to jump through? No. Having rehearsed this possibility with my support group, I asked for specific examples and when they had none said, with rising excitement at my own daring, "I'll be happy to consider specific suggestions; otherwise, what you have in front of you is my best effort." They accepted it.

You can help your clients make their way through graduate programs by coaching them on how to deal with the academic culture, how to be proactive and assertive, and—most of all—how to be realistic about the polarized worldviews that still exist among some faculty members.

The Lucifer Effect

by Clarence Thomson

Stanford professor Philip Zimbardo did a number of experiments on the influence of environment on prisoners and prison guards. What he learned is helpful to coaches.

The Lucifer Effect is the influence environment has on character. If you put good people in stressful situations they do really dastardly things. Perhaps this explains congress.

When you read coaching literature, or religious exhortation, or graduation speeches or remember your parents' and teachers' admonitions the message is usually similar: you can make a difference, you can be good regardless of the situation, you are the captain of your ship and in coaching we might tell our client, "you are the change agent."

Not always.

Mary and I teach that it is often easier to change behavior than attitudes. We're all in favor of attitudinal adjustment but the leverage is in behavior. If you want to experience less anger, then take notes when the other person is talking so you understand her position. Then understanding may replace outrage.

Zimbardo goes a step further. He talks funny because he is a professor. He makes the distinction between dispositional and situational motivation. *Situational motivation* comes from the outside: roles, rules, responsibility, expectations, location, duration and other group dynamics. *Dispositional motivation* comes from character, belief system, and interior, well, dispositions.

How do you get from there to coaching? Example: Jodi wants to lose weight. She can make resolutions, set rewards, allocate punishment and keep a picture of that new dress on her table. Or she can eat with skinny people. She will automatically adjust to their habits. She can move the candy dish off her desk to a file across the room.

The research shows that the more difficult it is to get at the food, the less we eat. She can use smaller plates because the research shows we put less on them than on big plates and we eat until our eyes tell us we've had enough, not our stomach.

You can even use this approach when dealing with an inner reality like fostering creativity or focus. The Chinese call it *Feng shui* – the art of arranging an environment for personal achievement.

A stock broker client who was a Seven worked in an office without windows. Of course he was restless; Sevens have a low tolerance for confinement, literal or metaphorical. He got out of his lease and moved into an office with windows. Worked like a charm, he reported later.

I asked a salesperson to call only from one location, wearing business clothing during only one hour. I did NOT tell her to do affirmations or change self-talk or visualize. I had her change her environment and the environment returned the favor: it changed her.

I never lecture Sixes on how unrealistic their fears are; I ask them to never watch the evening news because the nightly carnage reinforces their inner belief system.

I don't admonish stellar Threes to be more communal in their business setting, but I might ask them to join a choir and not be the choir director. The choir assignment is a change of environment, but it is also highly symbolic. She may not be able to do much actual environment massage at the office, so the next best thing is a symbolic environment. If she needs an example, I might have her watch the old musical, *Music Man*. He changed a hostile environment through symbolic cooperation.

So when you want to weaken the hold your Enneagram dispositional style has on you, look to how you can change your external situation first. Marshall McLuhan, the media guru of the 60's was right. First you create an environment and then the environment creates you.

Sell From Your High Side

by Mary Bast

In her workshop “Building Your Business Using the Enneagram,” Valerie Atkin of Wells Street Consulting (www.wellsstreet.com) points out that selling has gotten a bad rap, as reflected in such clichés as “being sold down the river” or “selling out.” Actually, effective selling is improving things, helping people, accomplishing goals, creatively addressing what’s missing, sharing and synthesizing knowledge, anticipating what might go wrong, inspiring clients to accomplish their vision, helping them stay the course, and collaborating to meet their needs.

In case you didn’t detect the Enneagram thread, re-read the “Actually, effective selling” sentence and you’ll see how Val encourages all Enneagram styles to acknowledge and use their strengths when marketing their services. And given her 30 years of experience with companies of all sizes as a consultant, trainer, and coach, Val—an Enneagram Three—knows her territory.

In Val’s 2006 IEA conference workshop I discovered another stroke of marketing luck for me as a Nine, and for other introverted personalities, the subtle strength of so-called *passive* marketing: writing articles or books that attract clients and, especially, a web site that sells itself.

I say it was a stroke of luck because when I started my web site ten years ago, I thought of it only as educational, how to use the Enneagram in business, and as a venue for me to write online articles and case studies. But some of what I wrote there ended up in our book and, as I gradually moved into phone coaching, I found the site itself seemed to be attracting new clients.

Last Fall I hired someone with expertise in coaching, Internet technology, and marketing to help me fine-tune my web offering. Paul Della Maggiora has helped me *see* myself, what distinguishes me from other coaches, and how to make the most of my strengths.

Paul has published three highly successful books focused on pure technology for techies, and he’s taking the same “keep it simple” approach to show small business owners how to leverage today’s Internet to better market and sell themselves.

A Six, Paul is the ultimate partner. I feel absolutely safe in his hands because even though I’m confident he knows a hundred times more than I’ll ever know in his areas of expertise, he gives me practical information I can act on without feeling bogged down in technical details. Among the many ways his coaching helped me refresh my site, I learned how to search competitor’s pages for their “metatags;” where to get free or low-cost, high quality photos and graphics; how to use Google’s keyword tool; and how to upgrade with my server so I have instant site statistics at my fingertips. I now know my number of daily visitors, how long they typically stay, and on what pages.

The home page message to potential clients, I learned, needs to be short, clear, and simple: “What is it, why do I want it, and where do I get it?” Like many of you, it wasn’t easy for me to state concisely what I do and how that’s different from other coaches (part of the “why do I want it?” message). Paul provided the mirror.

And he knows how to gently guide me when I'm leaping off in the wrong direction. At www.slingshotconsult.com, Paul's article "Technology can distract—stick with the good stuff" describes how I wanted to add audio clips to my web site because I saw other coaches using video and audio clips, and I didn't want to be behind the times. Not a good enough reason. Paul questioned me until we discovered a good reason: in essence I'd been asking potential clients to hire a stranger. Now they can hear me, and if attracted by my voice and my message, will be more likely to make an appointment. (See my home page for this new feature.)

Many people still use their sites as "place holders," glorified business cards where people can look them up and get contact information. Or their home page consists of a treatise about everything they've ever known, with no quick highlights or easy-to-scan information.

Research on eye movement when reading web pages shows consistently that people don't read text thoroughly and they scan for subheadings that stand out. So if browsers don't know you already, you have only seconds to get their attention.

More than a home page helps—browsers will go where a heading of interest draws them. I'm not suggesting you need 500+ pages, as I have, but several people have hired me after finding a poem in my Poetry & Personality section or one of my articles on Buddhism, and following links to find out who I am.

Every one of my web pages puts my name and a tag line out into the Internet and is a potential attractor. Don't ask me *how* that works. I don't know and I don't have to know. What I do know is that I'm averaging 700 visitors a day and as many clients as I want. That's good enough for me.

Some Choice Material

by Clarence Thomson

When the director of a local half-way house I'm involved with explains why people get in trouble, she invariably says "They made some bad choices." Then, without really intending to make me more uneasy, she admonishes the personnel about their good and bad choices.

No way. Choice is not the place to address behavior that gets us into trouble. Tim Wilson (Harvard University Press, no less) has a slender volume of social experiments that illustrates repeatedly that we have a lot less clarity about our choices than we serenely assume. In *Strangers to Ourselves*, a number of examples illustrate this central thesis (and in doing so, inadvertently underscores the importance of the Enneagram if we want to make changes).

We assume we make choices, for example, on the basis of value. But in an experiment at Duke University, we learn that "value" is not as stable as one might assume. Duke raffles off tickets to their basketball games. (Their gym is small and their passions intense). So would people sell their tickets if they won one, and if so, how much would they charge? And if they had a chance to buy one because they didn't win one, how much would they be willing to pay?

It turns out the most other students would be willing to pay for a season ticket (rich kids, remember) was \$700. But if they won one, they would not sell it for less than \$2400 (average). Why such a discrepancy? This and other similar experiments show people value what they have much more than what they want to have. Ownership confers an emotional bond of some kind. If you're a realtor, this is valuable knowledge. If you're trying to change, you better have strong clear valued rewards for any changes you plan.

So what's the point? The larger point, throughout the book, is that while we are keenly aware of the conscious content of our minds, we are not aware at all of the *processes by which we make our choices*. The process by which we filter, alter, select, reject and respond to information is the link to the Enneagram. Two Enneagram styles may hold the same conscious opinion about something, but they arrived at that opinion in vividly different ways.

Consequently, when we coach people, we are polite about our suspicion of their motives, but we really focus on the processes by which their values are arrived at. We say strange things like "bringing a gift of flowers may mean nine things." When a One gives flowers it may be out of duty, a Two may be currying favor, a Three might be showing off etc. While teachers, preachers and cognitive coaches may encourage us to make good choices, an Enneagram coach will be more interested in the underlying dynamics that created the choice. These dynamisms are where the power for lasting change happens.

So when we talk about "pattern interrupting," we're talking about the patterns that underlie our conscious choices. And here's the good part. When we indulge in inappropriate behavior, it is because of these underlying dynamisms, it isn't "because we made a bad choice." We made a bad choice because our underlying processes made our bad choice seem like a good choice. I may be consciously on a diet. The process I use to evaluate food is based on pleasure, not virtue. Guess what I eat? Our experience is that if our eating changes mesh well with our Enneagram desires, we can be successful. If they don't, we're in trouble. If a Three wants to lose weight to look better, that's apt to work. If it is for a lower cholesterol level to please the doctor, lots of luck!

A certain amount of sophisticated cynicism combined with a dose of humility is called for. We do not know why we make many of our choices, and if our motives are pure and idealistic, they just might be suspect. And if our motives are simple and unexamined, they may be largely rationalization.

For example, a group of women were asked to evaluate what they thought were four different brands of hose. They made their evaluations on color, texture, predicted wear, comfort etc. They ranked them. The four samples were identical. The determining factor was which sample they experienced last. If you call them A, B, C and D, then sample D was picked as best more than half of the time.

Is this important? Yes. If your boss asks for opinions, and he is not too bright or ill-informed so he can't really distinguish among the ideas, there may be a 50% chance he might just go with the last one. When do you want to make your pitch? How disconcerting to know that all your preparation and persuasion was less powerful than when you gave it?

I tell stories. I know my listener will almost invariably identify with the first person I mention, regardless of the profiles or actions of the various *dramatic personae*.

Every Enneagram style is a synthesis of information filters, sorting patterns, preferred communication styles and energetic patterns of response. When you examine your conscious beliefs, values and behaviors, you can find out the means by which you arrived at and maintain these. If you would like to change any of those beliefs, values or behaviors, it would behoove you to learn these. That's where the power to really change resides. That's why we call it Transformational Coaching.