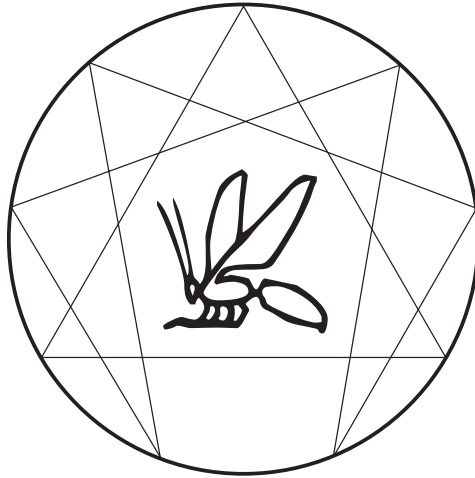


# Understanding the Enneagram of Process



The enneagram in its present form was introduced to the west by G. I. Gurdjieff at the beginning of the 20th century. Mr. Gurdjieff's enneagram teaching did not touch on personality personality, but rather it was viewed as a sort of pre-electronic computer for calculating process. The enneagram is constructed through an understanding of two "laws", that we now call the law of three, and the law of seven.

## **The Law of Three.**

The Law of Three states that at the base level there are three forces in the universe, contained within the One. The affirming (active) moves toward, the denying (receptive) moves away from, and the reconciling (neutral) moves against. We take for granted the notions of cause and effect, action and reaction. We could call these pairs affirm and deny, or adhesionrepulsion and still mean the same thing. What is often overlooked is the third force, which always binds these opposites together: the reconciling force, or cohesion. This force links the other two together. We typically don't recognize it as such because we usually have our attention on the cause or the effect, rarely on the link that binds them. These three forces have correspondences to the three lower centers: head\reconciling, heart\affirming, and moving \denying.

## **The Law of Seven or The Octave.**

The Law of Seven or the Octave describes the movement and pattern of all processes in the universe. Processes work in cycles, and the octave is a repeating cycle that describes how and why actions are completed or not completed. This can be most easily represented by the musical octave. In every major octave, there are five whole-steps and two half-steps (DO-REMI / FA-SO-LA-SI / DO), seven notes plus the first note repeated at the end to mathematically complete the octave. If you play a major scale on a piano or guitar, you will hear the suspension of the scale when you reach the half-steps; it sounds incomplete, asks to be resolved which can only be done by continuing with the scale. Those half-steps are shock points that call for resolution yet require an extra push of momentum to continue. (For example, in the key of C, the shock points occur between E and F, and B and C, on the scale). The Law of Seven says that there is a process cycle to all action in the universe, and that in every process there are two shock points or obstacles, or places where extra energy is needed, in order to complete the process. Furthermore, it is easier to start over in the process than to continue. Completing an octave is an act of power, not only for yourself, but for the entire web of the universe.

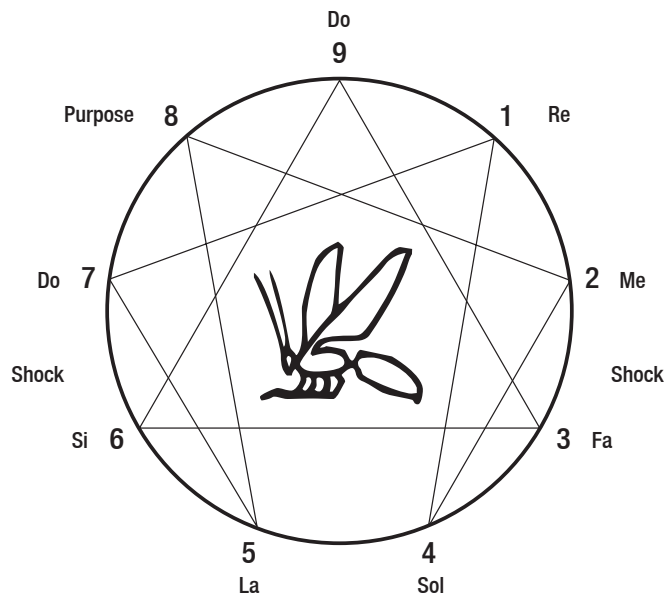
# The Enneagram Map

The Octave and the Law of Three can be put together on a map called an enneagram. Oral teachings of the enneagram, the octave, and the Law of Three, are said to date to at least 2,500 B.C. Be that as it may, the material can stand on its own.

You can mathematically derive the structure of the enneagram from the numbers 1, 3, and 7. Mathematically, 3 and 7 are two numbers that divided into 1 give you repeating decimals. Expression of the Law of Three: 1 divided by 3 = .33333..... added to itself = .66666..... and again = .99999.....

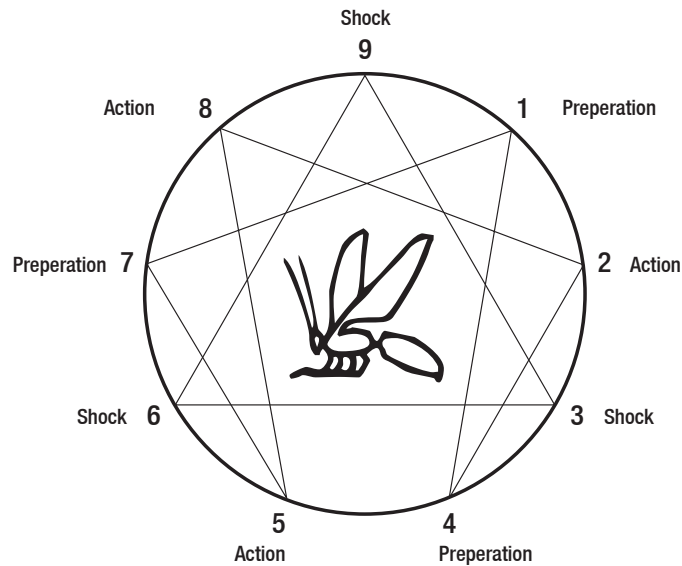
Expression of the Law of Seven: 1 divided by 7 = .1 4 2 8 5 7 1 4 2 8 5 7.....

On the enneagram map, the triangle represents the Law of Three and the interior lines represent the Law of Seven. The circle contains the whole nine-pointed figure. There are several ways to map the Octave on an enneagram. Here is one way:



One of the most useful aspects of the enneagram as a map is that it can show how virtually any process works. A process has preparation, action, and shock points within its movement. The points of preparation are where the information and tools are gathered that are necessary for the process to continue. The action points are where the information and tools are put to work and used. The shock points occur at those places in the process where the energy winds down, and threatens to end the forward movement of the process. The shock points need to be prepared for, and acted upon, in order to go through them. You will notice on the enneagram figure that there are two ways of moving on the diagram: one way is around the circumference of the circle (like a hoop), and the other way is to follow the interior lines marked 1-4-2-8-5-7.

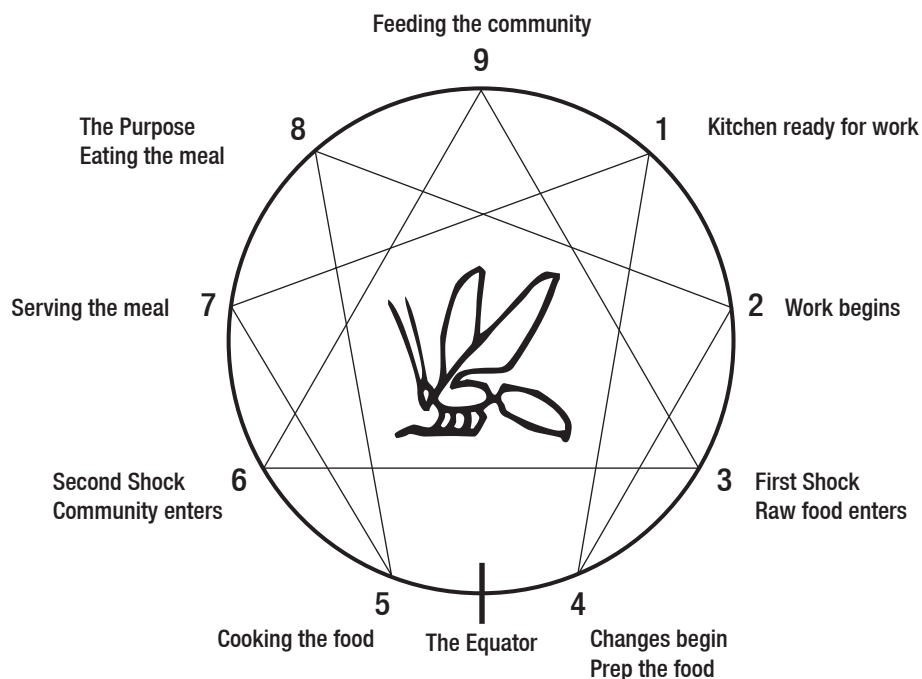
The following enneagram maps the movement of processes:



Any process will contain 3 shock points, or places where the process begins to slow down and requires extra energy to keep it going. The entering shock is, of course, getting the process going in the first place. This occurs at #9, the place where we enter into the process. Going around the enneagram, we have our first preparation point, the place where we gather information and tools for the process to go into action. Action, therefore, is next at #2. The first shock is at #3, where the energy or momentum for keeping the process going, whatever it may be, begins to slow down. Extra energy (more preparation and action) is necessary to go to the next level of preparation, at #4. The information and responses obtained from action at #2, now begins to be evaluated.

The process now moves to a higher level of energy and commitment. This gets reflected in the second action point at #5. The second shock then arrives at #6, which demands some kind of surrender in order for the action from #5 to be successful. The next preparation (#7) and action (#8) points then complete the process and you are ready to begin again!

Here's an example of a process enneagram that comes from a long oral teaching tradition\*: The Enneagram of the Kitchen, or "how to get the food on the table and eat."

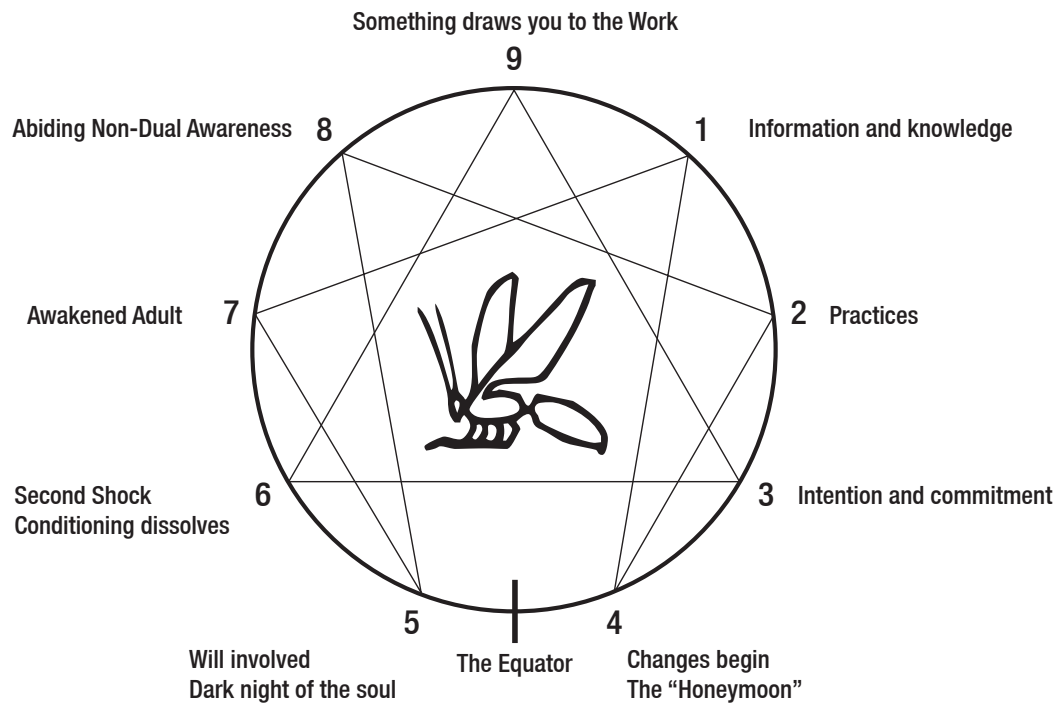


*[\*Derived from J.G. Bennett's book, Enneagram Studies.]*

Starting at 9, we have the “name” of this enneagram -- its essence, which in this example is feeding the community. That is because food supports life. Other enneagrams could map other processes which also support life. We have the potential for working on the food at 1: kitchen is ready to work, although nothing is happening yet. At 2 the kitchen begins to work, but the question arises: what are they supposed to do? There will be raw food entering in (#3), so how can we prepare for it? One way to find out is to follow the interior movement line from 1 to 4 which says prep all the food. This is how the chef looks at the process, looking ahead to see what needs to be done (and in what order) for the kitchen to operate efficiently. The kitchen help is on the circle's circumference waiting to get directions. If they proceed without the chef, the raw food could end up as anything but what the chef wants! The chef knows which tools to select to correctly prep the food, and the raw food enters in.

As the raw food is worked on, it changes form and these changes become irreversible. The food is cooked at 5. The timing of the cooking now becomes important, and this is one of the chef's greatest skills: the timing of various dishes so that they are all ready simultaneously. After all, the people will be arriving soon (the community) and they are hungry! Part of preparing this meal requires that the aesthetics are right, and this is taken into account while cooking the food (follow the interior movement line from 5 to 7), and the reason this preparation is being done: to eat the food (follow the interior movement line from 5 to 8). Also at 7, cleanup in the kitchen can begin (follow 7 to 1) so that the kitchen can be in readiness for the next meal. Finally, the meal is ready to be served and the chef must surrender authority of it and give it over to be eaten. It is well received by our hungry hordes, who take time to notice all the care and preparation that has gone into this meal, and who commence to eat: fulfilling the purpose of this enneagram!

The next enneagram is a map of transformational processes. This enneagram maps the path of transformation that we are on as we seek to encounter the Mystery. It is also a map of any learning process. Insofar as life is a series of learning lessons or processes, you will see that most people rarely go beyond the first shock. Instead, they bounce back and forth between 1 and 2 on the enneagram. This is because we mostly respond to situations through habit, through stimulus-response type of behavior which is the nature of 1 and 2 on the enneagram. It takes extra energy, intention, desire, to break habitual patterns and begin change. The Transformation of Human Beings. Or, “how to attend and graduate from the school of Life.”



Even at the first change, at 4, you can go backwards! This is often the place where you “know it all” and decide that further study is silly because of your new, enlightened state. Warning! You must cross the chasm between 4 and 5 and this involves your Will, not just your intention. Great challenges are offered here for your continued learning and transformation, and it requires the right use of your Will to continue. This is because at 6 you will encounter a symbolic death of some kind--hopefully the end of part of your habitual self. You will be required to “give up,” to surrender something that has been a part of you in order for something new to come in! This can be frightening unless you remember (self-remember) your purpose (8) and the view of the new (7).

Students go around the circumference of the enneagram: they are introduced to new information (knowledge), encounter practices that test and develop that knowledge, deal with their reasons for being there (intention), and begin to notice changes; if the student continues, major changes begin as they wrestle for mastery of themselves, undergo the process of death and rebirth (6 & 7), and then help heal life (8) and go on to another enneagram process. Also, one of the teachings of #7 on the enneagram is the giving back to the process of knowledge and experience (7 to 1), so that others may benefit from your completion.

Teachers use the interior movement lines to prepare their students for the challenges of the new learning and practices. Teachers know what the students will need for success at any point on the enneagram; by following the interior movement lines, the students' needs can be anticipated--although the students may not appreciate the help. Knowing, for example, what kinds of changes are needed at 4, the teacher can follow the interior lines up to 1 and provide the appropriate information, and to 2, giving the practices which will help the student with their intention and commitment (3). Even at 2, where the student is going through the drudgery of the practices, wondering when the fun will begin, and wavering in intention, the teacher will go to 8 and remind the student of the purpose of this work--the need and significance of “service to all life.” These are some of the ways that teachers assist students in transformation.

## Using the Enneagram

At the end of this document you will find a blank copy of an enneagram. Make copies. Use a process you wish to map, like “How the household chores get done” for example. Start with some relatively simple processes so that you can get familiar with using this tool before tackling more complicated processes like “Kathie and Mike’s relationship.” Work situations are usually fertile ground for mapping. You will probably want to map several processes. Name the process and place at 9. What is the goal? What do you wish this process to accomplish? Insert at 8. What are the initial blocks or obstacles? What will need to be moved to get this process going? There can be several items and they all go at 3. What will you need to sacrifice, to give up, in order for the process to be complete? This gets placed at 6. Now, start at 1 (information and preparation) and look ahead by following the internal movement line to 4 (which is a higher level of information). Notice that you have bypassed the first shock point at 3. What action will you need to get through these blocks? Write these down at 2 -- the practices. What information do you need for these practices? These get listed at 1. Notice that you have completed most of the mapping. If you forget why you’re doing this, follow the interior movement line from 2 to 8 for a reminder of your purpose.

The information that you acquire from completing 1,2, and 3 should be placed at 4. Now your energy must be “amped up” because you are moving into a higher level and you need more action to see you through. This happens as you cross the line of the Will between 4 and 5. You will want to remind yourself of your goal (8) and what the benefit will be from completion (7). This requires a sacrifice, at 6. This sacrifice gives you the experience, knowledge and practice necessary to complete this process.

Try it and apply it. Spend time with this tool; it is much like learning to use a computer.

