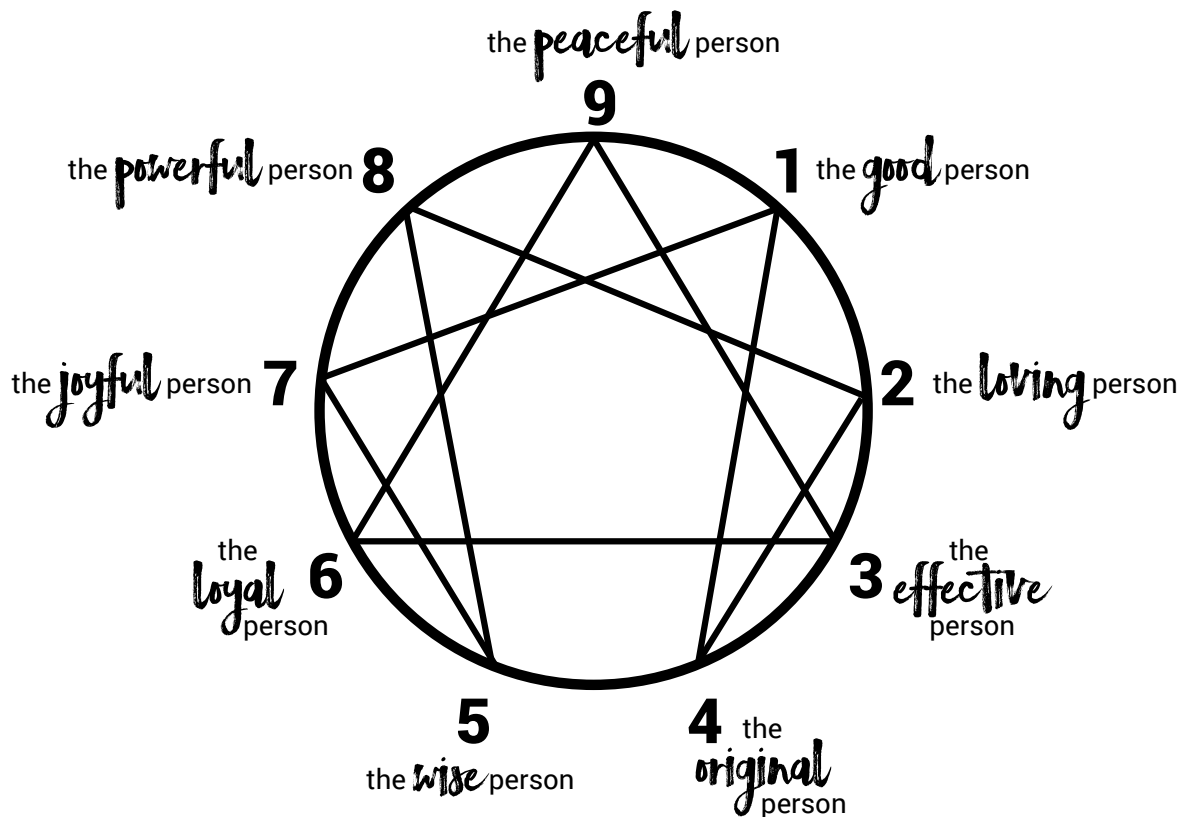


THE ENNEAGRAM

MOVING
FROM
FALSE
SELF
TO
DEEP
CONNECTION



“...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:16-19)

In the early hours of April 15, 1912, on its maiden voyage from South Hampton to New York City, the Titanic sank when it collided with an iceberg in the cold waters of the North Atlantic Ocean. Tragically, more than 1,500 people lost their lives. At the time, the Titanic was the largest, most well-built and luxurious ship ever conceived. It was thought to be unsinkable. As one crew member reportedly said, “Not even God himself could sink this ship.” But what those aboard the Titanic didn’t know was that hidden beneath the surface of the water something was waiting to sabotage the life of the great ship (and the lives of everyone on board). Ultimately the Titanic sank because people failed to acknowledge and deal with what was going on beneath the surface.

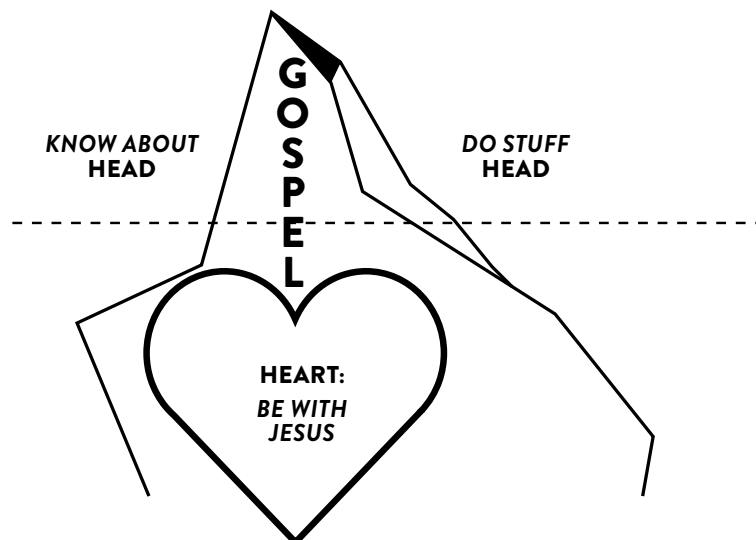
“... THAT ACCORDING TO THE RICHES
OF HIS GLORY HE MAY GRANT
YOU TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH
POWER THROUGH HIS SPIRIT IN
YOUR INNER BEING ... TO KNOW THE
LOVE OF CHRIST THAT SURPASSES
KNOWLEDGE ... ”

EPHESIANS 3:14-19

In the same way, our spiritual life—our relationships with God and others—is in danger of sinking if we don’t become aware of and deal with what’s going on beneath the surface in our lives.

GOING BENEATH THE SURFACE

Human beings are like icebergs—what you see on the surface is only a fraction of the truth. Only about 10% of an iceberg is visible to the human eye, but there is typically a whole lot more going on beneath the surface. Similarly, there are mass layers in our soul that are hidden and remain untouched and unaffected by the gospel of Jesus: mistrust, unrepentant sin, false narratives, guilt, fear, shame, emotional wounds, misplaced worship. To paraphrase Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19, we desperately need the gospel to make its way from our heads to our hearts—into the core of our inner being—to the places that need to be healed and transformed by the love of Christ. In a culture obsessed with information and busyness, it’s easy for Christians to drift into a surface-level relationship with Jesus in which we know about Jesus (head) and do stuff for Jesus (hands), but at our core we remain functionally disconnected from relationship with Jesus (heart). Paul essentially prays that we would go beneath the surface, where the real us meets the real Jesus, and we come to know and trust the love of Christ intimately for our redemption and true identity. This is why many have emphasized



that the most difficult and significant journey we could ever take is only eighteen inches long, from our head to our heart.

HOW DO WE GO BENEATH THE SURFACE?

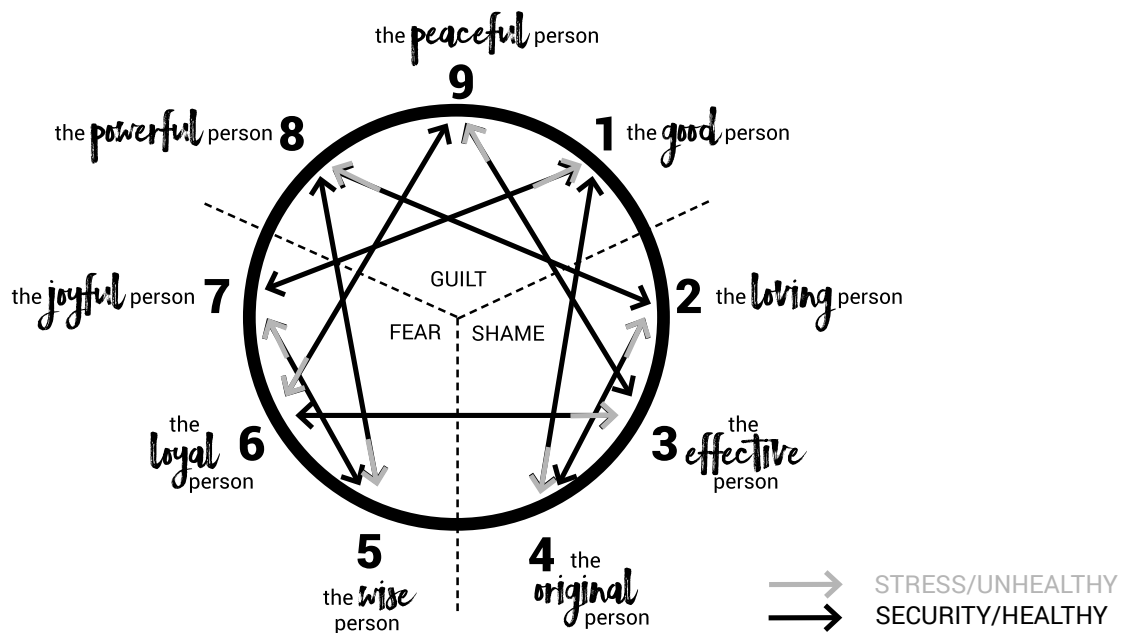
But how do we follow Jesus on this inward journey? How do we drive the gospel beneath the surface to strengthen our hearts in such a way that we can experience deep relationships with God and others?

We have found the Enneagram to be one of the most effective tools we can use to follow Jesus on the inward journey into our hearts. To be clear, there is no power in the Enneagram. The Enneagram is just a tool. All the power for salvation and transformation lies in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16). The Enneagram is helpful because it has the ability to serve the gospel. The Enneagram is a vehicle the Holy Spirit can use to drive the gospel into the uncharted terrains of the soul, so that we can be strengthened with power in our inner being— to know and grow in the love of Jesus.

“THE MOST DIFFICULT AND SIGNIFICANT JOURNEY WE COULD EVER TAKE IS ONLY EIGHTEEN INCHES LONG, FROM OUR HEAD TO OUR HEART.”

WHAT IS THE ENNEAGRAM?

Unlike other personality theories that measure how you do tasks, the Enneagram is an ancient tool that describes your personality in terms of who you are and how you relate to God, to others, and to yourself. Enneagram is a Greek word—*ennea* meaning “nine” and *gram* meaning “diagram.” So, as you can see below, the Enneagram is a diagram that represents nine different yet interconnected personalities or ways of relating.



TRIADS

As the diagram also reflects, the nine personality styles are divided into three triads. The Gut triad consists of 8's, 9's and 1's; these are people who process the world and relate intuitively. The Head triad is made up of 5's, 6's and 7's; these are people who process the world and relate cognitively. In the Heart triad we have 2's, 3's and 4's; these are people who process the world and relate emotionally.

MOTIVATING EMOTION

As you can see, each triad shares the same core emotional struggle: Gut people battle guilt and a sense that they are not good enough, Head people battle fear and a sense that they are not safe, and Heart people battle shame and a sense that they are not accepted. These three primary emotions—guilt, fear, and shame—and the defenses we develop to manage and overcome them form the primary barriers in our relationships with God, others and ourselves. We see this for the first time after the fall in Genesis 3:

- Genesis 3:7 — underlying emotion: shame; defense strategy: I cover
- Genesis 3:8-10 — underlying emotion: fear; defense strategy: I hide
- Genesis 3:11-13 — underlying emotion: guilt; defense strategy: I blame

John Starke writes, *“The Enneagram helps us see how fear might be controlling us, how shame might be motivating us, how guilt might be crippling us. Like a tracer chemical in the blood stream that helps identify the disease, the Enneagram brings to the surface indicators of what might be motivating sinful or harmful actions and patterns. With those resources, we can press into Christ, seeking healing and transformation in the gospel.”*

HEALTHY & UNHEALTHY ARROWS

The above diagram also shows that each personality has stress and security arrows. These arrows indicate the direction of growth or integration and the direction of unhealth and disintegration. In other words, there's a number you slide to when you are growing in health and functioning out of your God-given identity in Christ and there's a number you slide to when you are not healthy and operating out of the flesh. As you grow, you tend to slide over and borrow from the blessings of that type. When you fail to grow, you tend to slide over and borrow from the brokenness of that type.

CHILDHOOD WOUND

The Enneagram resonates with most people as it aids our understanding of how the gospel story intersects with our personal story. The truth is, our present is shaped by our past; who we are is shaped by where we come from. No matter how healthy and godly your family of origin or childhood experience was, on some level every family is dysfunctional, and in a fallen world nobody gets out of childhood unscathed. We all carry emotional wounds from our earliest relationships and experiences. These wounds, if we do not name them and process them, will infect our relationships with God and others. The Enneagram helps us go back so that we can go

forward— identifying the childhood wounds we carry and the false scripts and defensive strategies we learned to help us survive, so that we can bring those to Jesus and begin to heal and re-learn to trust him completely.

Each personality has particular gifts and weaknesses they bring into their relationships. In essence, the Enneagram is trying to introduce you to your false self and the unique ways you bear the effects of the fall, and your true self and the unique ways you bear God's image in your relationships. The false self is an image we create in self-defense to help us feel safe, loved, and accepted apart from trusting in the love of Christ. In this way, the design of the Enneagram helps you take off the mask, so the real you can meet the real Jesus and you can experience the life you were made for in deep relationship with God and others.

4

TYPE FOUR

THE ORIGINAL PERSON

IMAGE OF GOD

Fours reflect the creativity and depth of God.

IN GENERAL

Original, Dramatic, Expressive, Melancholic

CORE DESIRE

To be special

FOCUS OF ATTENTION

What's missing

AVOIDANCE

Being ordinary and blending in

DRIVING EMOTION

Shame

BESSETTING SIN

Envy

CHILDHOOD WOUND

A sense of loss, abandonment, felt unnoticed, left out, singled out for being different.

LIES FOURS BELIEVE (FALSE NARRATIVE)

Something is wrong with me. I'm not special enough to be wanted and loved. I'm a nobody.

SURVIVAL STRATEGY/DEFENSE MECHANISM

I must be unique and different so I can be noticed and loved.

HEALTHY - THEIR BEST

Authentic
Empathetic
Introspective
Expressive
Creative
Sensitive
Elegant
Compassionate
Caring
Sentimental
Romantic

UNHEALTHY - THEIR WORST

Cynical
Self-absorbed
Depressed
Moody
Isolated
Overwhelmed
Elitist
High strung
Feel misunderstood
Debbie Downer
Self-loathing

Fours are sometimes called “the romantics of the Enneagram.”²¹ They see the world in terms of beauty, the arts, and authentic expression. They value being original and unique. Fours are also very aware of their emotional states. “This does not mean they always have musical instruments, microphones, or paint brushes in hand, but they often do. They often express their feelings in dance, music, painting, acting, and literature.” Many Fours report growing up with a sense of loss, and therefore they carry a deep sense that something is always missing. There might have been some form of abandonment or neglect, emotional and/or physical, from their childhood or the loss of someone really important to them. They may have interpreted their experience to mean that something was wrong with them, that they weren't wanted or weren't special enough to be noticed. To compensate, Fours learned to present themselves as unique and extra special, so that others would notice them and affirm their worth.

WEAKNESSES: For Fours, the besetting sin is **envy**. At some level, Fours believe they are missing something that other people seem to have. Naturally, this can lead to be envious of others. The driving emotion beneath the surface is **shame** and a low view of self. Unhealthy Fours are known to give themselves to a sort of a critical, melancholy, depressed, self-loathing spirit. While they don't like it, they can easily get comfortable in a dark place and sort of wear that for their identity. Their own darkness becomes another means of being different and trying to overcome shame. This is a self-destructive pattern.

STRENGTHS: For all their desire to be unique, Fours can take heart knowing that God has uniquely gifted them to bear His image to the world. Fours express the beauty, creativity, and emotional honesty of God. God is an emotionally expressive God—He tells us how He feels, which is expressed in his word story, song, and poetry. When emotionally and spiritually healthy, Fours are not only in touch with their own emotions but with the emotional state of others; they are compassionate, empathetic, great listeners, sensitive, impressionable, passionate, romantic, elegant, witty, imaginative, self-expressive, creative, inspired, not self-absorbed or self-pitying, and emotionally strong for themselves and others.²²

The lies Fours believe: *“It is not ok to be too functional or too happy.”*²³

The truth Fours need: *“You are seen and valued for who you are.”*²⁴

SPECIFIC PRACTICES FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Fours are prone toward envy and an underlying shame. The Spirit of Christ wants to transform the fruit of envy and shame into the fruit of love, joy, and kindness (Gal. 5:22-23). Spiritual disciplines should be selected with this trajectory in mind. **Downstream practices** are those that come naturally for this type. **Upstream practices** are those that are more challenging for this type because they confront the false self or flesh.²⁵

THE DOWNSTREAM PRACTICES

- **Solitude:**²⁶ Fours tend to be more introverted and imaginative. Solitude provides them the space to be alone with God and with themselves. Fours need a daily rhythm of getting alone with God to be still, listen, pray, read the Bible, and/or journal. In addition, Fours would be well-served by personal spiritual retreats—maybe a half day or full day every month, a few days or a week every year to go away and be alone with God, to recharge and be released back into the life God has called them to live.
- **Journaling:**²⁷ Journaling comes naturally to a Four because it offers them the ability to explore their imagination and process what they’re feeling. Fours should avoid focusing only on the negative and practice journaling about what they have to be thankful for.

THE UPSTREAM PRACTICES

- **Fellowship:** Practicing fellowship is a necessary rhythm for us all, but especially for Fours, who are prone toward introversion and isolation. Fours need to be with others in order to be drawn out of themselves and toward people. They should schedule regular times of eating, drinking, and fellowshiping with their closest friends and missional community. Being in the loving presence of others will help to fill the sense of void that Fours carry and remind them that they are loved for who they are in community.
- **Thanksgiving:** Because Fours tend to drift toward melancholy, the practice of Thanksgiving is a must. When Fours are experiencing a critical spirit, anger, frustration, dissatisfaction, or depression, they must learn to interpret these emotions as invitations to press into the Spirit of Jesus and offer thanksgiving to God. Speaking out what one is thankful for forces Fours away from extreme melancholy and opens the soul to experience the joy of God’s presence. When unhealthy negative feelings emerge, Fours need to stop and ask, “What do I have to be thankful for in this situation?”

KEY BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

The Scripture Fours should commit to memory is John 15:11, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” The “these things” that Jesus is referring to are unpacked in John 15:1-10, the essence of which is summed up when He says, “Abide in me, and I in you” (15:4). Jesus is describing the glorious reality of the mutual indwelling of God and man through faith in the gospel. This is uniquely meaningful for a Four in that it reassures them that nothing is missing. Their identity and sense of self is complete in Christ. Their joy is full, for it is the very joy of Jesus Himself. This reassures the Four that in the end melancholy will not win, for joy comes in the morning.

THE GOSPEL FOURS NEED FOR HEALING & GROWTH

I am uniquely and particularly loved by Jesus. In love Jesus has noticed me and graciously called me into relationship with himself. I can surrender my sense that something is missing or broken beyond repair—I have all that I need and long for in Christ and he is making me new!

²¹ Riso & Hudson, 119.

²² Ibid., 116.

²³ Sherrill, 33.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The language of upstream and downstream comes from Sherrill, chapter 5, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*.

²⁶ Sherrill, 96.

²⁷ Ibid.

HOW TO LOVE ME WELL

- Appreciate my creativity, depth, perspective and intensity of feelings.
- Showing and telling me that I am loved and appreciated.
- Acknowledge my feelings and changing moods (you can be honest about how these are affecting you).
- Please don't try to fix my emotions. Just listen to me and try to empathize.
- Keep in mind that criticism easily activates my feelings of shame (so go carefully).
- Not being controlled by my moods (stand your ground in an honest, caring way, especially when I become unrealistic).
- Help me see my unique value and to love myself.
- Encourage me to be creative and to make my creative work publicly available to others.
- Don't tell me that I'm being too sensitive or overreacting (I got it already)!

HOW I CAN LOVE OTHERS WELL

- Be aware that I can have significant mood swings and this can make it hard for others to be close to me. I must remain attentive to others even when my emotions are swinging within me and trying to draw me in on myself.
- Realizing that not everybody feels things as deeply as I do and that's okay.
- Knowing I have tendencies to make others feel they are somewhat inadequate and I need something more of them.
- Offering my creativity as a way to bless others.
- Bringing my appreciation for beauty (aesthetics) as a way to enrich others.
- Realizing that one of my gifts is making the "small" things special and beautiful (e.g., a special napkin instead of a paper towel!).
- By slowing down and processing what I'm feeling, then sharing that with someone I trust.

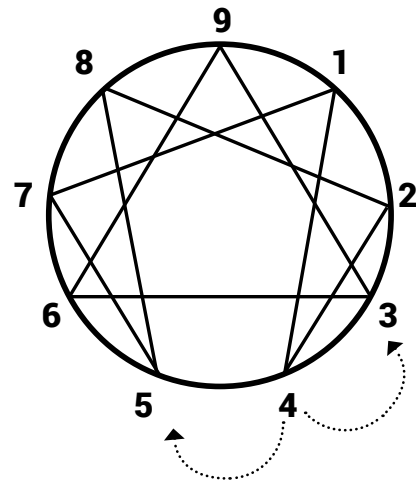
WINGS

Type Four with Three wing — 4w3 "The Aristocrat"

They are more extroverted, competitive, upbeat, ambitious, emotionally volatile, concerned with image, and flamboyant.

Type Four with Five wing — 4w5 "The Bohemian"

They are more introverted, intellectual, withdrawn, reserved, observant, eccentric, have intellectual depth, and depressed.

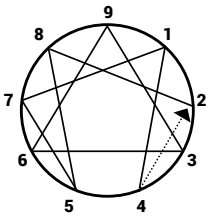


STRESS

What we are like when we are UNDER STRESS

Type 4 moves toward Average to **Unhealthy Type 2**

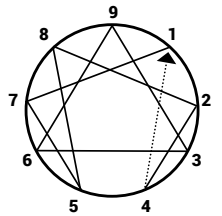
- Aloof Fours suddenly become overly involved and clinging to others.
 - Try to manipulate others into loving them.
- Believe getting attention from others will replace their own emptiness and loneliness.



GROWTH

When the Holy Spirit enables us to begin to transform.

- Type 4 moves toward **healthy side of Type 1**
- Envious, emotionally turbulent Fours become more objective and principled.
 - Become more disciplined and grounded.
 - They are more productive and do what is right.



TYPE FOUR :: LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

The Levels of Development are measuring our capacity to be fully present in our relationships and use our personality and gifts in life-giving ways.²⁸

HEALTHY LEVELS

- **Level 1** (at their best): Profoundly creative, expressing the personal and the universal, possibly in a work of art. Inspired, self-renewing, and regenerating. Able to transform all their experiences into something valuable; self-creative.
- **Level 2:** Self-aware, introspective, on the “search for self,” aware of feelings and inner impulses. Sensitive and intuitive both to self and others; gentle, tactful, compassionate
- **Level 3:** Highly personal, individualistic, “true to self.” Self-revealing, emotionally honest, humane. Ironic view of self and life; can be serious and funny, vulnerable and emotionally strong.

AVERAGE LEVELS

- **Level 4:** Take an artistic, romantic orientation to life, creating a beautiful, aesthetic environment to cultivate and prolong personal feelings. Heighten reality through fantasy, passionate feelings, and the imagination.
- **Level 5:** To stay in touch with feelings, they interiorize everything, taking everything personally, but become self-absorbed and introverted, moody and hypersensitive, shy and self-conscious, unable to be spontaneous or to “get out of themselves.” Stay withdrawn to protect their self-image and to buy time to sort out feelings.
- **Level 6:** Gradually think that they are different from others and feel that they are exempt from living as everyone else does. They become melancholy dreamers, disdainful, decadent, and sensual, living in a fantasy world. Self-pity and envy of others leads to self-indulgence and to becoming increasingly impractical, unproductive, effete, and precious.

UNHEALTHY LEVELS

- **Level 7:** When dreams fail, become self-inhibiting and angry at self, depressed and alienated from self and others, blocked and emotionally paralyzed. Ashamed of self, fatigued, and unable to function.
- **Level 8:** Tormented by delusional self-contempt, self-reproaches, self-hatred, and morbid thoughts; everything is a source of torment. Blaming others, they drive away anyone who tries to help them.
- **Level 9:** Despairing, feel hopeless, and become self-destructive, possibly abusing alcohol or drugs to escape. In the extreme: emotional breakdown or suicide is likely. Generally corresponds to the Avoidant, Depressive, and Narcissistic personality disorders.

²⁸ Riso & Hudson, 78.