

The Enneagram: Nine Gateways to Presence by Tami Simon

What follows is the syndicated transcript of a Sounds True interview between Tami Simon and Russ Hudson. You can listen to the audio version of the interview [here](#).

Tami Simon: You're listening to Insights at the Edge. Today, my guest is Russ Hudson. Russ Hudson has established himself as one of the top teachers and developers of the Enneagram personality typology system. He has coauthored, with Don Riso, five bestselling books on the subject and with Sounds True, he's created a new 11-CD audio learning series, an in-depth program called *The Enneagram: Nine Gateways to Presence*.

When it comes to a subject like the Enneagram, you can learn about it on a lot of different levels, from people who've been studying the Enneagram for just a few years, to people like Russ—and I don't know how many of them there are, actually, who have been deeply immersed in studying and teaching the Enneagram for more than three decades. Russ brings a depth to his approach to the Enneagram. Listen here to my conversation with Russ Hudson, joining us from New York City:

Russ, I think many listeners of Insights at the Edge may be familiar with the Enneagram at different levels, some in a cursory way, some perhaps in a deeper way—as a personality typology system; and yet your new series with Sounds True, the subtitle is, *The Enneagram: Nine Gateways to Presence*. So what's the connection between personality, whatever our personality type might be, and presence, the personality type being a gateway to presence?

Russ Hudson: Yes. Well, I think when we look at where the Enneagram comes from—the origin summit, the original sensibility—it was part of a series of tools or orientations, that were used by people in contemplative life, let's say. They were people involved in ongoing prayer and meditation and so, the underlying basis of these personality patterns were originally seen as habitual distractions or vexations. What sort of screws up your practice when you're trying to get centered or grounded, or come back to yourself in the various ways that we learn to do. So what's really interesting is that those distractions are also kind of a root system of our usual sense of our self. There's a way in which those patterns underlie a lot of our sense of our self.

So naturally, when people learn about this, the first thing they want to know is, which one am I, what describes me? And that's cool. Of course, we're going to want to know that. The intention of it was to help us see how the way we look at ourselves, the way we think about ourselves, the way we experience ourselves is a kind of habit. It's a habit of a way we organize our consciousness, and as such, when we see it for what it is, it opens us to other aspects of our experience. So when we're looking at it in this particular course,

we're looking at what aspects of our personality when we bring awareness to them, open up this bigger picture? That's what I'm interested in.

TS: OK, let's give a personal example and personal, I mean you. So, your pattern of distraction, and how in your life that has been able to function as a gateway to presence?

RH: Sure, well, in Enneagram parlance, I'm an Enneagram Five. My dominant pattern is Five. Well, what does that mean? Well, it means that my attention and my sense of self tends to cluster around my cognitive functions—my thinking center, as we call it in that tradition. Which means my sense of self comes from what I'm thinking about, what I'm focused on in terms of thinking. My sense of value comes from the idea that if I can figure things out for people, well, then I'm a very good boy, indeed.

So there's a way in which my attention habitually runs that way, but when it runs that way too much, other elements of my experience drop out—kinesthetic awareness, kinesthetic intelligence drops out. Emotional intelligence diminishes. So if I get too identified with my Five pattern, very important parts of my human experience are kind of out the window. But it also means that as a conscious person, at least in potentio, when I notice that pattern happening—and if I really am a Five, then I will notice it happening, it's something I do habitually almost every day—the very seeing of it wakes something else up inside me. In seeing the way I'm forgetting myself, I begin to remember that there's more to me here than what I'm identified within that moment.

So it's very congruent in a certain sense with the sensibility of Vipassana, for example. It's a way of—in Vipassana, we're looking at, whatever comes up in our consciousness, but here, we're being trained to notice that certain things that come up in our consciousness take us out of the more full experience of our self, in presence, through these different modalities of our consciousness, through different intelligence that exists within us. So for me, as a Five, there's been this long journey of being more grounded, being more physical, when in the early days of learning about all this, my teacher had me literally chop wood and carry water. I had to work in labor, I was working out in fields, I was working on drywall, and he was trying to develop that body-center intelligence in me.

There's also been a journey of being more emotionally available and vulnerable, and sensitive to people. None of these things were my preset, shall we say. But as I learned about these other parts of myself, and let's say began to integrate them, it also caused a flowering of my cognition, my head center. My mind also became sharper, clearer. The gift of my Enneagram type was able to come forward as I balanced it with other parts of myself. So that was a very real and visceral experience for me, so I kind of know that this medicine actually works, when we do the practices involved with it.

TS: Now, let's talk to that person who's listening, who has a skeptical streak in them and says, "God, you know, whenever I hear about these personality typing systems, new ones are coming up all the time. How do I know that they're based in something real, in the way humans really work, versus some great map someone constructed? How are they actually rooted in real human experience? Why nine types, not ten, not eleven? How did we come up with these nine?" So speak to that person.

RH: Sure. Well, first of all, I think with any system that we're looking at, any map that we might work with, we don't want to promise the moon and suggest it answers every human question. Of course, it doesn't, but it does answer certain questions very well. Again, I think that the Enneagram and this view of humanity has been around for a long time. It has legs. There are roots of this that go back to the roots of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and some even before that.

So people have been looking at human nature a long time. I've almost never encountered a person that when they actually sat down and listened to these distinctions, didn't recognize themselves or other people that they know. It has a certain anecdotal power and a certain immediacy that gets through to people. I've even worked with hardcore academic psychologists who work only with measurable vectors of behavior that they can look at. And they laughed, they chuckled because they did recognize themselves and their wives and their husbands and so forth.

So it has that, but beyond that, I think that it's an invitation to look at ourselves in a fresh way. It's not telling us what we should think about ourselves. It's not making any definitive statement about what reality is. It's an invitation to look at a deeper level of our humanity. And that also, Tami, goes to why nine, because it's based in various combinations of these three fundamental intelligences, which were talked about by the ancient Greeks, for example, but are now being re-examined in modern psychology.

Most people understand now there's a difference between our cognitive intelligence and our emotional intelligence, but then people like Malcolm Gladwell came out with a book, *Blink*, and he's talking about another kind of intelligence. Well, that's kind of our kinesthetic body-based intelligence, what the Greeks would have called "will." So we have these different faculties and the idea is that nobody is exactly the same that way, but that we all live through different combinations in how we organize our attention, let's say.

The other thing I'd say is sometimes people teaching this kind of material go too far, and they make it a kind of final statement about who we are as human beings. I don't find that to be true. I think what we really are is mysterious. I think that what we're describing is a kind of structuring and patterning of our consciousness, through which we learn to get our needs met, deal with traumas and difficulties, survive in the world, and it's such an important thing to know about. But it isn't our ultimate identity. However, it becomes important for people who are seeking a deeper journey in life, because it is the identity that we've assumed. We've taken ourselves to be this pattern and as long as we're doing that, as I was saying before, we tend to miss out on other elements.

So I just invite people, hold it lightly. Don't go crazy with this stuff. It's meant to be a help for us to discover other dimensions of ourselves.

TS: OK, when you talk about the three different intelligences, in my own experience, as someone who did some Qigong practice, and also some embodied meditation practice, I actually discovered, in my own experience, a sense of this processing or awakening—or in the Qigong tradition they call them these elixir fields, in the belly, the heart, and inside the head. So I kind of get that because I think that's built in to our biology, these three kinds of intelligences, if we tune deeply into our body and how it functions. How do those

three centers turn into these nine types? Does everybody really prioritize one aspect of the three centers? Help me understand that.

RH: Well, I think the traditional view is that all of our egoic identities are based in a particular survival-based imbalance of the centers. There's a way that those centers lock into a certain pattern with each other, and that feels like me. So if some of them were mostly leading with our kinesthetic, our will, if it feels right, I do it and that's one way human beings exist; some people are leading with their emotional response to things, and that's another way; and some people are leading with their cognition, with their figuring things out. And of course, we have all of it. Nobody is just one thing, that's silly. But we lead with a certain orientation.

Now, one of the other centers is kind of like the backup to the first one. So you end up with nine different patterns of how we prioritize and sequence these centers. That's rather a complex conversation to get into, but for example, as a Five, as I said, I lead with cognition, my backup center is my emotional center, my heart. But when I'm locked in my pattern, my heart isn't really available for what the heart is for because it's supporting what's going on in my head. So I'm using my emotions to make my thoughts more vivid and real. So, the emotional center is not available for what it's for. It's caught up in another kind of internal loop, you could say.

When that's going on, the third center, the body, just kind of drops out of significance. It's not exactly that I repress it, it just seems irrelevant, like well, what's that for? So you'll often see us Fives kind of walking around as if our body is trailing behind us, but we learn to recognize the pattern, to come back into the centers, and that is kind of similar for all of us. I mean, there's a certain way that we all have to find our true body, our true heart, and our true head. When we do that, there's an organic way that as we learn in Qigong and in other systems, there's a natural way that these things come into a fluidity and a cohesion, you could say.

The other thing that's really interesting about the whole idea of the centers, is that when we're not present, we're not really activating or living in any of them. When my mind is running around in circles, and I'm chattering and I'm doing all that, that doesn't mean I'm stuck in my head, it means my head center is not awake yet. That's a sleeping head center. When I'm emotionally, get my buttons pushed by everything, when I'm just touchy and reactive, and everything is getting my goat, that means my heart center is not awake.

TS: Now, how would you describe the goal of using the Enneagram as a tool in spiritual practice when it comes to the awakensness and the processing of these three centers? What's the goal? I'm going to use this information so that these centers operate like—dot, dot, dot.

RH: Well, I think the goal is, of course, coming to more unity and congruence to the centers, more integration, as we say. There's a way in which they start to naturally support each other when we step out of the usual way that they're locked into a pattern with each other. So it's sort of brushing aside our usual habitual patterns of tension,

reactivity, repetitious thoughts, all the stuff of ego that we don't prefer, actually. But when we do that, although it feels good, it feels kind of weird. So there's some help in seeing, A) that that habit is what I usually take myself to be, and that there's another way of experiencing myself that is more true to who I am and where I'm going to find my gift—my dharma, if you will.

I think that when you get past the way that the types become fixations and stuck habits, they also reveal a kind of giftedness. They help us get plugged into the deeper sense of purpose and how we're doing our spiritual practices not just to feel better, although that's not a bad thing, but from that, feeling more whole as a human being, we're more able to step into the world and contribute something, to fulfill a kind of internal sense of our calling, you might say.

TS: OK, I can't wait any longer. Our audience needs to know the nine types. You've told us a little bit about the Five, but if you're going to go through all nine of them and describe them, the pith instruction for how this type expresses itself when it's in its high, evolved, beautiful state, and how it expresses itself when it's more in an unhealthy form of expression, and let's go through all nine with our Enneagram expert, Russ Hudson. Let's do it.

RH: OK. Well, I tend to like to start with Eight, because Eight, Nine, and One all have to do with kinesthetic intelligence, body intelligence. I like to build the house from the foundation up—Jack Kornfield used to always say build your house that way, and I think that's correct. So Eight, Nine and One, the first three types we'll look at are all about embodiment and presence, and coming to presence through our breath, through our sensation, through our relaxation, that we all know takes a while to get the hang of, right? So, the Eight represents the kind of shocking impulse of suddenly landing and being here and awaken yourself, it's like, "Hi, I'm actually here now. Hello." That kind of bracing sense of immediacy and life force, that we have different language for it in different spiritual traditions, Shakti, you see.

Suddenly, when we're more present, we're more alive, we're more vivid, we're more confident and real. We can take our place on planet Earth and fulfill what we're here to do with a kind of loving, energetic quality, and that's the high side of Eight, right? The fixation or the problematic part of eight, all the problems are imitations of the real thing. They're an ersatz version of the gift. So when I'm not present, I kind of know I'm still supposed to be that way, but I try to come to that aliveness and immediacy through tension, through forcing, through assertion, and tend to wear myself and everyone around me out.

That kind of constant need to sort of stress myself is traditionally called lust, which is the passion of point Eight. There's a lot to be said about it, but it's just driving myself and life and pushing, pushing, pushing. Oh my gosh, it's a lot, and it can degrade into aggression.

TS: Before we move on, there is a confession for listeners of this podcast, I have been identified by many as an Eight. OK, let's move on, let's move on.

RH: OK. OK. Yes, Nine is next one in line. Nine sits at the center of this triad of the body-based types. Nine is about the gift of landing, relaxing, letting go into being—what we really aim at, in a lot of meditation is so much described in Nine. It's being itself, presence itself, the groundedness that comes with that, the ability to come from our center. Now, the other really weird and interesting thing about that, that we noticed, it's coming back to where we are here and now. So often in spirituality, we think we're supposed to go somewhere, we're on some journey somewhere. No, it's about getting where we actually are. Eight, Nine, and One all teach us that in different ways but nine sits in the center. I finally come home, and that feeling at home also brings the sense of being connected with everything, that we're part of this fabric of life, of the earth, of consciousness. It's kind of the classic enlightenment experience.

So that is the gift of the Nine and from that, many beautiful things come: the ability to help people land, the ability to invite people back into life through our creativity or through our insights or any number of things. But that, without presence, becomes the part of me that just wants to have peace and ease and relaxation by not dealing with life. Just get the world off my back, leave me alone, Namaste and then some expletives. [Laughs] It's that, that you run into in every spiritual community, where we're all just being very nice and gracious but we're basically saying, leave me alone.

So that has a purpose; you could see there's a sense that a child learns to do that. It's not evil or bad but it's going to cut us off from our gift. It is an imitation of what we're really after, and deep down our heart knows the difference. We know that we're not actually where we want to be. So that can lead to being very shut down, very disengaged. I'm still trying to do my job and show up in my marriage, what have you, but everybody can kind of tell I'm not really there with them. Over time, this can lead to depression and a lot of their problems.

So, the One, moving along with music and song, is also body-based but has more to do with alignment and balance, and when you think about that physiologically, and many of you probably have looked at the journey from the point of view of anatomy, this has a lot to do with our spine. And funny thing, whenever you learn any tradition of contemplation or meditation, there's a lot of focus on getting a good posture. There's a reason for that. When we sit in a balanced way in our self, suddenly everything kind of pops into place. Everything kind of lines up and we know and recognize when we're aligned.

When we're aligned, we're filled with a sense of the sacredness of this life and the goodness of this life, where suddenly—yes, we are not foolish, we know that there's a lot of trouble and problems and injustices in the world, but we're also seeing the deeper truth. We're seeing how to come to those problems from this place of more abundance, balance, less reactivity, more response.

So a lot of times, I'll hear people in spiritual community say, "Everything is fine just the way it is," and that drives Ones crazy. They can't agree with that. So I would say that what we learn here is that when we're present, we have a greater intelligence of how to respond to reality, where we're not reacting to it, you see. Then we become an agent for good things happening in the world, instead of just another shrill voice adding to the cacophony of this world. And I think most of us can recognize that, certainly when we're on the receiving end of it.

So the distortion of that, of course, is becoming angry, rigid, reactive, "This is not

acceptable, this is wrong, it should be this way.” We may even be right about our view, but we’re coming at it in such a way that we’re just bringing more suffering into the situation, not less. So all of those, all three of those together are ingredients of what it’s like when we finally land in our body and we’re here, where we are.

So the next three are the heart-centered types—that’s Two, Three, and Four. It’s not that they don’t have a body or the body types don’t have a heart, of course they do. And the issues are true across the boards. However, there’s a difference of emphasis. So Two, our first stop, is that when I’m present and I start to be present with my heart, it’s very hard to be cruel and it’s hard to be cruel to myself. A natural kind of lovingkindness starts to rise, and a responsiveness. When we see suffering, we want to respond to it. When we see need, we want to respond to it, and it’s natural for us to do so. There’s also a deep human need to meet each other on a heart level.

So this is about you and me meeting on a heart level, like knowing each other through our hearts. So suddenly, our whole journey of awakening is less split off. It’s about we, not just I, you see? So that’s the Two and the gift of the Two, is it’s an intelligence, you can tell it’s an intelligence. When that goes off the track, which it does when we’re trying to get there without presence, it becomes sentimentality, becomes codependency, becomes being clingy and needy and pretending like we’re not. It becomes also a way of really dishonoring and disowning our own needs. It’s a way of trying to override our basic rawness and realness as human beings. Being awake does not cancel out the fact that you’re a human being, and Two is, when we get it, teaches us about that.

Three often gets a weird treatment in Enneagram circles. I think maybe because it’s such a predominant meme or orientation in our contemporary culture, but Three is very important. Three is also heart, but when we’re present with our heart, we discover something I talked about earlier, we discover our sense of meaning and purpose. We feel directly the preciousness of our existence. We feel that we are indeed not only beloved of God, so to speak, but an expression of that love. It’s not a dualistic thing. When we find that, then all the things we do, all of our work is transmuted into sacred work. Everything that we’re doing is a gift of love. And our life becomes integrated in such a way that the skills we’ve acquired, the talents we have, the things we’re doing in this world are not separate, in some sense, from the riches of our inner nature, they’re one thing. It’s a flow and a fabric.

In fact, when we feel the Three, we feel what Csikszentmihalyi called flow, right? That sense of effortlessness in what we’re doing because it’s coming out of love. In every Three I’ve ever known, when that happens, that’s like heaven—and the rest of us too, for that matter.

The distortion of that comes, we lose presence, and we get it backwards. We think that by accomplishing X, Y, and Z, we’re going to finally like ourselves. We’re going to finally feel OK about ourselves. But it doesn’t happen—we do great things, and we still feel empty. This is what we see in the stories of celebrities all the time; people who achieve very significant things in our world, and they still feel this gnawing, empty hunger, right? So then we’ve got to do something else and do something else, and we just never get off that little hamster wheel we put ourselves on, thinking that the next thing we do, we’re going to finally think we’re worth loving.

So, the Three is inviting us come back to your heart and from there, do these good things you’re doing. But as we’ll see, the challenge of that is, when we come back to our heart, we don’t find it right away. We find the fact that we feel empty, right? So the Enneagram

is also showing us some of the crossings that we're going to need to take. So there's something powerful in knowing something about that. People say you don't need to know anything, I don't know what planet those people live on. You do need to know stuff, and it helps a lot. It's like something holding your hand through a challenging process.

TS: When you say it helps to know something, you're talking specifically when you know your type and you know the challenge that you may encounter where that dark night is for you as that type, that having that map is really helpful.

RH: Absolutely, absolutely. There's some of those things that are kind of universal, and there's some that are very specific to type. Just to have the honest understanding that if I embark on this journey, there's going to be some challenging sections, right? Of course, there's going to be challenging sections no matter what I do, but better to choose them consciously than have them come upon me, right? So that's the Three, and so Threes get into workaholicism and they get driven and they burn themselves out, and they get lost in the roles that they think the world expects them to play. So their journey is again, back to the heart.

The Four is probably the favorite type that everybody wants to think they are. [Laughs] I don't know why it is in North America, everybody seems to think they're a Four, and some people are, obviously, but there's a lot of people who aren't. I think that cliché is that Fours are the people who are suffering, and they're sad, or they had childhood issues. Look, if you're suffering and you had childhood issues, that's not a type, that's a human being. That's everybody. Doesn't make you a Four, but what is Four? Four is about, in the depths of the heart, we come to an encounter with our true identity. And our true identity is not a thing, you couldn't draw a picture of it. It's a mystery. You start to understand why in Buddhism, the Buddha said there was no abiding self because what's there is a mystery. Something indeterminate, right? But when we come closer to that mystery, we're filled with the sense of rapture, of communion. We feel like we've not just come home to where we are, but come to our very origin and core. This is often talked about in spiritual tradition as the journey to the beloved.

So here, as we discover that, we're filled with a sense of beauty. Everything is more beautiful, gorgeous, lovely. Even difficult things, we see the beauty in them. and we're also filled with intimacy, we feel intimate with reality. A person who's present and detached, I have some questions about that. A person who is present and truly with their heart is more intimate with everything in the field of their experience, and it becomes this source of richness, expression, creativity, et cetera. Pretty beautiful.

The imitation of that is that we're trying to be our true self by being different, by being unique, by differentiating our qualities from other people, even though we often imitate other people to figure out how to be different. Now, the other thing here too, is that we get hung up on trying to find the source of us, without going deep enough into our hearts. So we keep going back over our emotional patterns, over and over and over again—like "This time, I'm going to work through it," but as a Four, I'm right that what I'm looking for is in the heart center, it's in my emotions but without presence, we can't go deep enough. So we stay kind of in the waves, and we never drop into the mystery of the ocean. So that's what we learn in the Four. How do I get to that deeper place and not get caught in my emotional reactions? Big thing for us all to learn.

So, three to go. [Laughs] I got the—

TS: Let's do it.

RH: Yeah! The Five, Six, and Seven. Now we're in my corner; I said a little bit about the Five already, but this is the head center. Just to say briefly that presence in the head center is not about thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking. It's not that. It's the capacity to know, to recognize, to see what's needed, and it is the great silence and stillness that is addressed in mystical traditions of both the East and the West. We all know that if our meditation is working out right, we come to a kind of inner stillness in silence. And that's the head center. That's the head center coming online, right?

So interestingly, usually, you have to be somewhat present in your body and in your heart for the head center to get quiet. It's trying to be a space holder, so it stays busy to try to make us feel like we exist, because we're not feeling our existence through our body and heart. So again, when the centers come into alignment, everything takes its correct place.

So the Five is, as I said it's cognitive, but the part of us that sees and recognizes, discerns deeper truth of reality than what we had hitherto seen. It's the engine of discovery. It's how we peel back the veils and come to deeper recognition of what we are and what's here, and what the other person is, right? The nature of reality. And then also, it's loving to share what we find, what we've discovered, like, "Wow, this is awesome. Check this out."

So there is also in that, that seeing the truth always brings in the heart in the sense of bringing more compassion. I've often thought that Buddhism is very congruent with the Five orientation, that as we see truth, the real truth, we become more compassion, and the compassion liberates more of our capacity to see the truth. So in that sense, the Five is that engine.

It's also the sense of solitude because as I said, the mind is quiet, there's nobody nagging me in here. So once you know that, you can go hang out with people and it's not a problem. But when we lose presence, and we're trying to hold on to that solitude, we think that the solution is to get away from people. That we're going to get away from these people and we'll go somewhere, and there'll be space and time to think and to come to what we're trying to understand. But the people that are crowding me are not the ones out there, they're the ones I'm carrying around in my head, as anybody who goes on a long-term meditation retreat finds out. You can go sit on top of a mountain all by yourself and that does not stop the crowding, because it's an internal crowding.

So the restoration of that also restores the knowing, and the knowing here is restored through our contact with reality. As we try to pull out, contract, disconnect, detach—which is a popular thing to do in spiritual communities—we actually cut off the source of knowing. Then we just—all we can do is memorize stuff. Learning and knowing becomes remembering something that you knew before or that somebody else knew before, and we're not getting the power of our head center.

So the Six, next-door neighbor, another type that I don't think always gets understood very well. The pure place of Six is awakesness. I remember spending years trying to sort this out—the Nine, the Three, and the Six are on a triangle. They're kind of each the center of their respective triad or center. So the Six is something very fundamental, it's about the awakesness that we're trying to wake up into. It's the awakesness that we find—when we're present in our body, heart and mind, our mind becomes vivid, awake. We notice what's in us and around us. We see the actual condition of the moment. We're awake to what's happening. And Sixes, even when they're kind of a little bit stuck, they have that attention. The very idea of being mindful is the expression of this awakesness.

So then, Sixes in their glory, have that beautiful awakesness, they're paying attention, they know what's going on inside them and around them, and they're doing everything with a kind of loving attention. They're dotting their i's. They're making sure the details are handled. They're attending to the vicissitudes of life from this beautiful, loving awakesness and seeing that that's part of the reason I'm here.

So then, when we are not so present, we're still trying to figure out what's going on, where are we, where's everything, we're trying to orient but we don't feel oriented, and then we're like a Looney Tunes cartoon, where our feet are going around in a circle, and there's nothing under us. It feels that way, and what we have is anxiety, fear, dread. We feel like instead of that we're coming out to meet the world, the world feels like it's coming toward us. Everything is coming at us and we feel overwhelmed, and we feel unsure of what to do. So then the ego is trying all the time, "What should I do? How do I handle this? Can I get the kids by five? I need to do this," and our mind is inturbidated just trying to handle our life instead of live our life. That's the Six in all of us. If you take that far enough, it becomes more suspicious, more doubting, more paranoid, even. So all these have a range in them.

Last but not the least is the Seven, and sometimes the Sevens think it's like a torture that I make them wait to last because they want to know. Seven is also head center, but it's the capacity—it's seeing possibility, but it's also the open-endedness of consciousness. Our consciousness is actually not bound by anything. There's no line around it. It's an open-endedness, so that the inner sense of that is freedom. We feel an inner freedom and a lightness of being. It gives us a positivity toward our experience, which is not a negation of difficulty, or sorrow, or sadness. It's the very positivity that moves toward those things and holds them, again, in compassion.

So that is the great power of the Seven, to move through my life with a sense of freedom, joy, seeing possibilities, bringing forth possibilities, but also helping humanity and creatures too, to be held in light and positivity even when times are tough. That's a beautiful thing. When we're not present, the positivity is the avoidance of negativity. It's what we nowadays are calling spiritual bypass. Just think positive thoughts all the time, and then everything will work out. No, you'll be stuck, because you actually have all these negative thoughts that you've thrown into the basement and they didn't leave [Laughs].

So we trap ourselves actually, by trying to be positive without it being the real source of the positivity. We're trying to do it as some kind of wall or hedge against how sad and lonely and hurting we might actually be feeling. So the real positivity rises like inner sunlight and meets that sadness and holds it, and brings us a sense of a kind of love that can be with the greatest joys in life, and the greatest disappointments in life. That's a pretty good place.

So when we learn all nine of them, the idea is to be playing in all of those, not to just have

one, but one of them tends to be our gift.

TS: One of the questions I have for you, Russ, is, is the population evenly distributed among these nine, or in North America, do we have more of this type or more of that type?

RH: Yes, I don't think there's any adequate scientific study to give precise numbers. So any, anything I'd say would be anecdotal and anything other teachers I know of would say would also be anecdotal. It seems that they're fairly evenly distributed. However, it seems like there's a little bit more of those three triangle types, I said, the Nine, the Three, and the six. There tends to be a little bit more of them, but it's not like a huge difference. So there may be some differences, culture to culture. Again, there's never been a conclusive study about this.

I would say, though, that cultures have types, usually more than one, and that there are certain values which predominate in a culture. I teach in countries all over the world and I have to adjust the sensibility of how I'm talking about these things to reflect the values and the sensibility of that culture. So for example, I teach a lot in Japan. Japan is a type-Six culture. They have a smattering of Four in there, but between the ancient days of Japan when they were cooking up a lot of these aesthetic ideas and now, they had these people called the samurai who ruled it for centuries, and they made it a very organized society. So Japanese people are attentive, they have all this—their culture brings the values I was talking about with the Six, but they have different barriers and difficulties than say, US culture, or say Canadian culture, or say English culture, German culture, Indian culture. So there's a kind of what I call a cultural overlay, but that doesn't necessarily mean that there's more people who are that type in the culture.

TS: And the good old US of A, how would you type us?

RH: Classically, I think, certainly when people were first talking about this—when Oscar Ichazo, the guy who brought the idea of the type system with the Enneagram forward and Claudio Naranjo, these people back in the 70s, I think the consensus was that the US was largely a type Three culture, and everything was about, what do you do? What have you accomplished? Are you a winner or a loser, right?

So a lot of Three, but I don't think that's as true now. I think that culture is evolving and shifting and I think certainly the younger folks, the millennial people, and so forth, they're not really interested in that, that Three-ish way of living. So there are other things. I think there's a lot more Seven in the culture now. We certainly—one of the problems of Seven is distractibility, and oh boy, that's a biggie for a lot of us now. Also, we're trying to look and live into positivity and possibility, so there's that. but something as big and complex as the US, there's probably more than one; there's a lot of Six in our culture, there's a lot of Nine in our culture.

TS: You mentioned how a culture could evolve and possibly even change its type and I realize this is big, broad brushstrokes here.

RH: Yes.

TS: Can I as a person evolve in such a way so that the type I was in my 20s and 30s is not the type I am in my 40s and 50s, for example?

RH: Well, the orthodox answer is no, you stay the same type, but what I would say is that if we're really evolving from the fixated patterns of our type into the gift of our type, it looks so different that we might as well be, from an external point of view, a different kind of person. Our personality can change and does. But's also the fact that there are internal lines in the Enneagram, that talk about kind of secret ingredients that help us get out of the box of the type of our identifications.

So there's different elements that come into play and I like to think that as we get free of our identification with those patterns, we're more free to play with the gifts and the energies of all nine of them. We'll indeed see issues from all nine of them. They're all there in some fashion. But more importantly, I think the spectrum or let's say the range of paints that we get to work with, the color palette that we have expands. So yes, from that point of view, we aren't the same as we were when we were younger, but let's say that the root of our personality is what it is, just like our childhood is what it is.

TS: Let's talk about the root of our personality. Nurture, nature, a combination? How did we get to be the type that we are?

RH: Yes, people often have that question and I think there's been an evolution of the understanding of that in the Enneagram field. At first, I think people thought it was mostly nurture and then, they realized, no, it's mostly nature. Now, I think we see it as kind of combination.

A lot of what type is has to do with what psychologists called temperament, and temperament seems to be largely innate. Good old Dr. Daniels, my colleague who worked with my friend Helen Palmer, did a study and he showed how the landmark psychological study of temperament was done by a team of psychologists named Thomas and Chess. It was done in the early 1960s, [and it] found, through just empirical studies, nine vectors of temperament. Isn't that interesting? They didn't know anything about the Enneagram. That's just what they came to. And Dr. Daniels showed how they matched up very nicely with the Enneagram types, which is just to say that the ancient people were not idiots. They actually were seeing something.

So I think now, if I was going to talk about this in a kind of Five-ish way, I'd say that we're

going to find some of the answers to this in the field of epigenetics, the way that environment switches on or off genes. You might have the gene and a certain situation might cause it to be expressed or not. If it was only innate and inborn, then all identical twins would be the same type, but we don't find that. So I think there's some room in there for shaping from family, from culture, from crucial experiences, but I would say that it's pretty much set in place by the time the child is a toddler. So say, two or three years old, you're on the road.

TS: OK, so someone is listening to this, they've heard your description of the nine types and they're nominating maybe this, maybe that, then they go online and they say, "I'm going to take one of these online Enneagram assessments," and I've heard from people who have done this, and have come back and said, "Tami, I got equal scores on two different types or relatively equal distribution on three different types. I'm so confused. I don't know what type I am." How can you help someone reliably find their type?

RH: Well, first off, I think that test instruments, online or elsewhere, are just—I think they serve best as an embarkation point for an exploration. They help us focus our questions. They limit it down; you know, some things are clearly not relevant and some are a question. I don't think that the point of the Enneagram is to find your number. I think the process of finding your number awakens a capacity in your consciousness. You start to get to know yourself in a way that a lot of people never really get to know themselves. It turns on the capacity for self-observation, which is not something generally provided by the way we are educated in our society at this stage of history.

So, I think taking a test and then talking with someone, somebody who knows me well, somebody who knows something about the Enneagram, or any combination of things, starts to get me looking at myself from a place beyond only seeing the world through that pattern. It starts to give me a more 3D view of what's going on in me. So, once you have got some questions, you take a course, you get an online program, you read a book, you go hear teachers talk about it, like you're listening to what you and I are talking about now. And it gets clearer.

Again, it isn't meant to be a kind of case-closed, that's who I am, now I don't need to think about it anymore. If you find your dominant type pattern, it's the beginning of discovering what you are beyond your assumptions about yourself. So we hold the tests and the other information that way, it will serve us very well, and then it becomes much more an integral part of our spiritual journey, whatever our practice or faith tradition might be.

TS: Now, Russ, talking about assumptions, one of the things I've experienced is having a friend or someone I work with and thinking they're a certain type, and then a couple years later actually discovering, oh, they're actually a different type, and during the two years that I thought they were the previous type, I had a whole set of notions about that person that actually weren't true. So in a way, the Enneagram proved to bias my view of a person, and I wonder how we avoid that danger when we start learning about other people. Maybe they've done a test, they tell us what type they are, we come up with all these ideas about them, and they didn't even come up with the right conclusion that they shared with us about their type.

RH: Yes. Yes, well, for one thing, my fingers have been burned on the stove enough times that I'm very hesitant to tell anybody who they are; it feels presumptuous to me. I know that that's what people do when we learn this—it's like a new toy, it's very exciting and everybody we know and like, we want to figure out what they are. It's fun. At the same time, as we get more mature with it, we really start to understand that this is primarily about me.

Now, if I'm in a relationship with somebody, and it helps me see where they're coming from, in a way that opens the field of relatedness with them, that's a good thing. If we're using it to write them off, because, "Oh, they're just being such a Two," or something, then that's not so good. That means I'm not using it on myself. Now, if we're using it—I would just put it this way, what I learned from many years of doing this, is I use it primarily to get out of my own way. I use it to see how I'm Fiving out when I'm with people, when I'm not really engaging them, being with them. I'm just maybe talking about something that's interesting to me and not really interested in them and trying to look for the exit. When those impulses are running in me, I know I'm not here.

So, partly—there's a couple of things to what you're saying. There are simple things to understand about all the types, but you can't reduce the types to those simple things. "Well, Sixes have anxiety." Well, you know what, so does everybody else. "Fours have sadness and they get kind of down and they can be drama queens," right? These are your cliches you hear. Well, so can everybody else. I've just heard so many funny things about this, I heard a teacher tell a Nine that they couldn't be a Nine because they were too successful and busy. Well, this is not what it is.

So partly what I'm trying to do with this work is bring a lot of people back to the sensibility that was behind the original expression of it. When the Enneagram came out, it came out so quickly, it got out of the bag so quickly that a lot of people were teaching it and they knew something, but they didn't really know the deeper background of it. So as that background is restored, which is what I'm trying to do here, we use it in a different way. And if such a thing happens, as you describe, and it probably will, with most of us—it's happened to me—it just becomes an opportunity for a kind of good ouchy moment, a good course correction, and another chance to see what I'm caught up in and an opportunity to meet my friend again freshly.

TS: Now, interestingly, you said that what you're trying to do with the Enneagram is present it in terms of the depth of its wisdom roots, and I noticed when you went through the nine types, you describe them in a way that I haven't heard other teachers describe them. You described them in terms of their huge, ultimate giftedness, the gifts they bring, the spiritual gifts that they bring. I wonder if you can say more when you talk about how you want to teach the Enneagram in terms of its ancient roots and the way you presented the nine types to us.

RH: Well, there's several parts to that. I mean, I learned the Enneagram through the Gurdjieff Work. My main teacher, big teacher, was a woman named Madame de Salzmann. She lived with Gurdjieff, a long time; she was an Enneagram Eight and a

magnificently kind woman who really explored the questions of mindfulness and presence her whole life. So my original orientation to the Enneagram wasn't about types at all; it was a way of looking at the patterns through which human consciousness perceives reality. I'd say that. Then I found out about Oscar Ichazo's work, and Oscar Ichazo brought the idea of the nine points representing passions and virtues and fixations and holy ideas, and a lot of other things. Then, Claudio Naranjo learned it from Oscar, brought it to California, and started teaching the types, right?

But the types somehow got away from the original sensibility. The original idea of the Enneagram was an interface between what we would call our personality or ego, and what we would call our essence, our being, our Buddha nature. There's something to be understood in the interaction between the two, and that's what it was for.

So originally, what Oscar was drawing upon were the idea of the passions, which is the core of the whole thing, were drawn from the teachings of the desert fathers and the desert mothers who were the first monastics in Christianity back in the early, early days of Christianity, during the Roman Empire. But they were looking at it from the point of view of how they forgot the presence of God—how when they were spending their days in meditation and contemplation, that there were very predictable in repetitious patterns by which they fell away from this sense of God. But when they came back, this journey of coming back, coming back, coming back, awakened in them what were called the virtues. The virtues were the qualities of the transformed human being, the person transformed by spirit, the person who has had some degree of awakening.

So that became what I was interested in. People endlessly yakking about the specifics of different personality types is just kind of interesting, but it doesn't lead anywhere, as far as I can tell. So I was always interested in taking this background I had in the Gurdjieff Work, in studying Zen and Vipassana Buddhism and meditation practice. I had a lot of interest in esoteric roots of Christianity and Judaism. That whole sensibility was behind the Enneagram, but it didn't seem like many people knew that part. So just out of my—I don't know, this kind of corny to say, out of my love for people, I wanted them to get the real thing. That isn't to say there's no value in these other things people are doing. I'm not saying that, but I just felt this particular transmission ought to be available to people.

TS: OK, Russ, I just have two final questions for you.

RH: OK.

TS: The series you created with Sounds True, *The Enneagram: Nine Gateways to Presence*, includes 11 CDs and go through each of the nine types in quite some depth, and you share for each type a wake-up call that's associated with the type. What do you mean by a wake-up call? How does each type have a wake-up call?

RH: Well, the wake-up call is something that we do unconsciously when we're falling into our fixated pattern. So as an example, which I think makes it easier to understand, if I'm a

Two, when I'm present, I'm more aligned, I'm in the dignity of my own being, I'm with my heart. When I fall in the fixation of Two, my attention goes out to you. I sort of [makes a whoosh noise]. I'm not in myself, I'm in you, and if I'm in you, I'm not with my heart. So even if you like me, I won't feel the heart connection. So it becomes this self-fulfilling prophecy.

So I call that leaning in. I'm leaning into the other person. It might even be physical, but certainly it's energetic. It's the movement of the attention, so the wake up call for the two is to see myself doing that. "Oh, there I go doing that again. That means I'm not feeling the heart connection." [Makes whoosh noise] Come back to center, come back to presence. So the things that we do—and this is very Gurdjieffian, but the things that we do that ordinarily make us fall asleep to ourselves, we turn them into alarm clocks. We turn them into a reminder that, "Oops, I'm falling asleep again." It helps us come back to our presence and to our compassion.

TS: OK, and then finally, Russ, what is your hope? You mentioned that out of love for people you've presented the Enneagram, and you've been in this work for three-plus decades and continue to teach it from this wisdom depth perspective. What's your hope, your highest hope for how people will use the teachings on the Enneagram that you're making available?

RH: Well, I think a lot of people, if they really engage the knowledge with the practice, and with the cultivation of their presence and their being, and using it as a tool for that, the minimum I would expect or hope is that people will be kinder to each other. They'll work with more intelligence and vision, they'll be better with their kids and their partner. They'll be better with their pet. Anybody making that little shift helps us weave a better world. Beyond that, some of the people will be moved to help carry a finer ingredient in this world, because the Enneagram is —behind it is this idea of the Fourth Way and this idea that we're here to be in life, and to hold a kind of station that's bringing something finer into the workplace, into the home, into the marketplace, right? Into the internet. Where we're representatives of something inner. And not everybody feels that that's what they're called to do and that's cool, it's not necessary, but some of us will be, and I think this tool will be especially helpful for people who have that kind of calling. I don't think you need a ton of evidence to see that we need a few good souls like that on the planet at this point.

TS: I've been speaking with Russ Hudson. Along with Don Riso, he's the author of several bestselling books on the Enneagram, and with sounds true, Russ has created a new 11-CD audio learning series. It's called the Enneagram: Nine Gateways to Presence. One thing I'd say about the Enneagram is once you get bitten by the Enneagram bug, once you really get interested, it's a super interesting, deep dive to take, and I can think of no better person to take that deep learning dive with than Russ Hudson. Russ, thank you so much.

RH: Thank you so much, Tami. This was really fun.