

The Enneagram & Spiritual Disciplines

When creating a Rule of Life, many don't know where to start. I hope this helps.

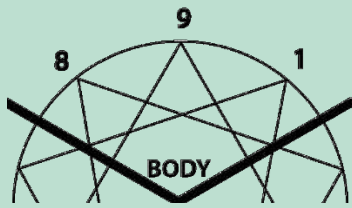
The Enneagram is only a tool, yet it is a powerful one (1). The point is not to type-cast yourself or others. More than revealing a fixed-in-stone you, the Enneagram describes your survival strategy to cope with the perils of this beautiful and brutal place we call earth.

With that said, we all develop strengths that causes us to trend toward specific spiritual disciplines. These come naturally, are good for us, and should be part of our life.

However, if we want to grow in Christ-likeness, we need to also press into the spiritual disciplines that are unnatural for us (2). **If spiritual disciplines are new to you, then start with ones that come naturally. If you're consistent with spiritual practices, then add one unnatural practice for your type to your rule of life** (learn more about a [rule of life](#)).

If you don't know anything about the Enneagram, there's no better place to start than with [The Road Back to You](#) by Ian Morgan Cron and Suzanne Stabile (3).

Enjoy the process and be kind to yourself,
Rusty



The body triad lives from their gut and guilt drives them.

THE EIGHT—The Powerful Person

Question: How am I doing?

Survival Strategy: I must be strong and in control (4).

Vice: Lust for power/control

Virtue for Transformation: Mercy

Natural Practices:

1. **Justice/Mercy.** Eights gravitate toward fighting for the common good and oppressed. Micah 6:8 is a battle cry for eights, "...love mercy and do justice."
2. **Service.** Eights desire to use their strength to serve those in need. They care deeply and show that passion through service.
3. **Bible Study.** Eights also desire truth. Studying God's Word is natural to an eight in that it helps them understand how we are to live in and from God's truth.

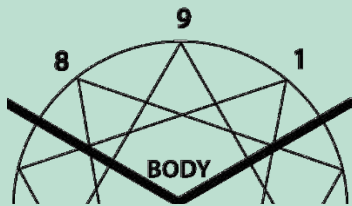
Unnatural Practices:

1. **Prayer of Examen.** Eights are doers and can be clueless about how their presence impacts others. Dedicating time to evaluate their weaknesses and sins before the Lord is essential work.
2. **Accountability.** Eights avoid vulnerability; so, they need trustworthy friends to keep them accountable for their words and actions.
3. **Confession.** Confession feels like weakness, yet the experience grounds eights in their weakness where they discover authentic strength in Christ (2 Cor 12:9).

The gospel and the Eight (5)

The lie Eights believe — If I'm weak, then people will take advantage of me.

The gospel truth — It's okay to be weak. When I'm weak, I'm strong.



The body triad lives from their gut and guilt drives them.

THE NINE—The Peaceful Person

Question: How am I doing?

Survival Strategy: I must maintain peace and calm (6).

Vice: Sloth

Virtue for Transformation: Faith/Action

Natural Practices:

1. **Fellowship.** Nines naturally merge with the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of others. They are naturals at being in relationships with others and are among the most enjoyable of the nine types.
2. **Peacemaking.** Healthy nines are a force to be reckoned with in conflict resolution. Their desire for unity and peace-filled relationships is a gift to be developed for the sake of others.
3. **Silence and Stillness.** Nines can turn off the inner dialogue, unlike any other, and just be. This is a gift as long as they create time to engage with their inner world.

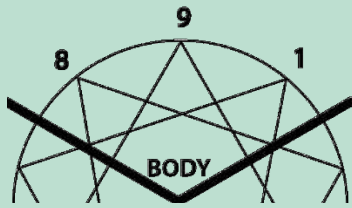
Unnatural Practices:

1. **Bible Study.** Nines are slothful not because they're inherently lazy but because they get overwhelmed with indecision. A structured reading plan is needed to engage in God's Word.
2. **Journaling.** Nines often don't know what they think or feel because they merge with others. Journaling prayers can help them identify what they think/feel.
3. **Fixed hour prayer.** Pausing in the morning, mid-day, and evening to pray reminds nines where their life is found — in Jesus.

The gospel and the Nine (7)

The lie Nines believe — Asserting myself is unnecessary conflict.

The gospel truth — It's okay to be bold. Jesus went toward conflict to bring peace.



The body triad lives from their gut and guilt drives them.

THE ONE—The Good Person

Question: How am I doing?

Survival Strategy: I must be perfect and good (8).

Vice: Anger

Virtue for Transformation: Patience

Natural Practices:

1. **Meditation on God's Word.** The Bible is the standard of truth of goodness that Ones pursue. Their fixation on goodness translates into mediation on God's Word.
2. **Prayer of Examen.** Ones naturally fixate on self-improvement. Healthy Ones can process their days with the Lord and receive His love and mercy.
3. **Service.** Ones experience a full life when they can help make things better. Healthy Ones can serve with a heart of love and patience as reforms always take longer than we hope.

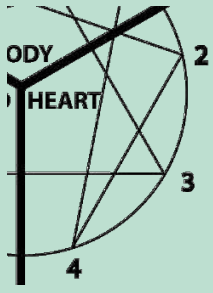
Unnatural Practices:

1. **Journaling Confession.** While writing out imperfections is painful for Ones, the process is healing. Consider even throwing the pages away as a picture of God's forgiveness (Ps 103:12).
2. **Lament.** Ones want the world to be perfect and take the responsibility of perfecting it on themselves. Lament places that weight on God's shoulders.
3. **Prayer Walks.** Walking in the beauty and order of nature can ground Ones in their relationship with God. This experience can assure Ones of God's love for them.

The gospel and the One (9)

The lie Ones believe — No one will accept me if I make mistakes.

The gospel truth — God, who is perfect, is slow to anger and patient with me. Jesus loves me, apart from how good I am.



The heart triad lives from their feelings and shame drives them.

THE TWO—The Loving Person

Question: Who am I?

Survival Strategy: I must be helping and caring (10).

Vice: Pride

Virtue for Transformation: Humility

Natural Practices:

1. **Fellowship.** Twos ooze relationality; so, it should be no surprise that they are great friends. Twos help others see how crucial friendships are to spiritual health.
2. **Service.** Twos see needs and love to help fill them. They are often aware of others' needs before they are.
3. **Hospitality.** Twos serve instinctually. Combine that with their desire for close relationships, and they excel in showing hospitality — love for the stranger — because twos make friends wherever they go.

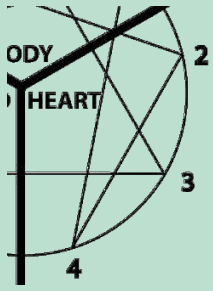
Unnatural Practices:

1. **Silence and solitude.** Twos need to be needed. Take away people their people, and they can struggle. Twos need to create space to be more like Mary and less like Martha (Luke 10:38-42).
2. **Contemplative prayer.** In addition to solitude, twos need to quiet their minds enough to hear what they need. This will be painful, but Jesus' nearness in prayer helps.
3. **Fasting.** Twos can indulge because they feel no one is taking care of them. Fasting (food, social media, from meeting other's needs, etc.) reminds twos of God's sufficient care.

The gospel and the Two (11)

The lie Twos believe — It's not okay to be needy.

The gospel truth — The cross shows how needy I am and yet how unconditionally loved.



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THE THREE—The Effective Person

Question: Who am I?

Survival Strategy: I must be impressive and look successful (12).

Vice: Deceit

Virtue for Transformation: Truth

Natural Practices:

1. **Bible Study.** Threes enjoy the progress of knowledge and personal growth that comes from consistent Bible study.
2. **Fixed hour prayer.** Threes gravitate toward the planned nature of set prayers. Threes also feel refreshed through the achievement of completing this practice throughout the day.
3. **Generosity.** Healthy Threes have a lot to offer and love to share. Threes are energized by helping others succeed. Threes enjoy supporting others to become more effective in life.

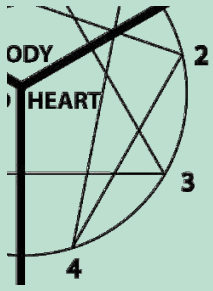
Unnatural Practices:

1. **Silence and solitude.** Threes need to take regular breaks from social settings. Solitude is scary because it reveals Threes' inner emptiness; however, it's here that they most need to meet God.
2. **Confession.** Threes can lose themselves in other's perceptions. Threes need trustworthy friends to share their inner world (wickedness, weaknesses, and wounds). This helps Threes know they're loved apart from what they produce.
3. **Journaling.** In becoming all things to all people, Threes can misplace what they think or feel. Journaling thoughts and feelings can ground Threes in the truth.

The gospel and the Three (13)

The lie Threes believe — It's not okay to fail. Failure will ruin me.

The gospel truth — Jesus loves me apart from what I do. And Christ's victory for me came through defeat.



The heart triad lives from their feelings and shame drives them.

THE FOUR—The Original Person

Question: Who am I?

Survival Strategy: I must be unique and different (14).

Vice: Envy

Virtue for Transformation: Contentment

Natural Practices:

1. **Solitude.** Fours tend to be more introverted. They are more comfortable when they can carve out regular time to get alone with God to read, pray, and journal.
2. **Journaling.** Fours know what they're feeling. Articulating their inner world to God through journaling is helpful for them.
3. **Worship.** Worshiping God allows Fours to tap into their longing for beauty and connect with God's beauty. Worship (singing, art, nature walks, etc.) is an outlet for their desires and feelings.

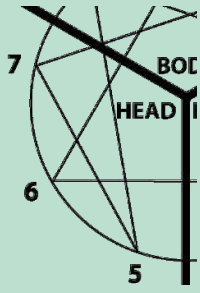
Unnatural Practices:

1. **Fellowship.** Fours long for the extraordinary; so, they can shy away from the mundane of life together. Yet they need ordinary friends and routine to ground them in reality.
2. **Feasting.** Fours trend toward lament and melancholy. Regular feasting with friends to choose joy is helpful — not only expressing gratitude but learning to rejoice with others without envy.
3. **Accountability.** Fours can think the rules don't apply to them. They need trustworthy friends to hold them accountable for what they say or do with their challenging emotions.

The gospel and the Four (15)

The lie Fours believe — It's not okay to be too functional or too happy.

The gospel truth — Jesus sees and delights in me for who I am because He made me who I am.



The head triad lives from their thoughts and fear drives them.

THE FIVE—The Wise Person

Question: Where am I?

Survival Strategy: I must be knowledgeable and equipped (16).

Vice: Greed

Virtue for Transformation: Generosity

Natural Practices:

1. **Solitude.** Fives are comfortable on their own. Fives need alone time to process their life. This time helps them be more present to God and others.
2. **Inductive Bible Study.** Digging deep into what Scripture says and means appeals to Fives. Fives like to know what the Bible says on any given topic.
3. **Curiosity.** While not a formal spiritual discipline, the posture fits with many practices. Fives can pay attention to God, themselves, and others in ways that lead to a lifestyle of worship.

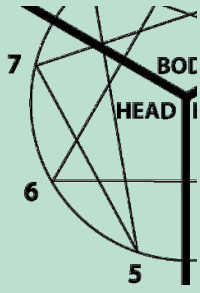
Unnatural Practices:

1. **Fellowship.** Learning to share their full presence in relationships will feel uncomfortable for Fives. Fives will experience transformation as they learn how to live outside of their head.
2. **Service.** Fives have so much to offer but often hold back. Moving towards others in service will liberate Fives.
3. **Giving.** Fives have many resources. Generosity for Fives means learning to consistently and strategically give away their resources of time, talent, and treasure.

The gospel and the Five (17)

The lie Fives believe — I'm capable enough not to need other's help or comfort.

The gospel truth — My needs are not a problem. I'm not all on my own. Jesus is near and delights in helping me.



The head triad lives from their thoughts and fear drives them.

THE SIX—The Loyal Person

Question: Where am I?

Survival Strategy: I must be secure and safe (18).

Vice: Anxiety

Virtue for Transformation: Courage

Natural Practices:

1. **Worship.** Singing specifically for Sixes becomes a pathway to cast their fears on the Lord (1 Peter 5:7).
2. **Lectio Divina.** This slowed down way to read Scripture (read, meditate, pray, contemplate) helps Sixes anxieties as they claim God's promises for themselves.
3. **Journaling.** Sixes naturally translate their concerns into prayers. Perhaps like Ones, it would be helpful for Sixes to throw their journal entries away as a visible picture of casting their cares on Jesus.

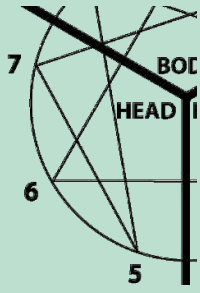
Unnatural Practices:

1. **Scripture Memory.** The chaotic minds of Sixes can struggle to focus on memorizing Scripture, yet the practice grounds their life in God's Word rather than their fears.
2. **Breath Prayers.** Similarly, breath prayers can be hard for Sixes because their minds struggle to focus on the breath. Yet this practice calms the Sixes mind and heart (Ps 46:10).
3. **Fasting.** Fasting reminds Sixes that their life is secure in Christ. He is the One they must look to, and He will not let them down.

The gospel and the Six (19)

The lie Sixes believe — It's not okay to trust myself because I can't protect myself.

The gospel truth — I am safe because Jesus is my anchor and refuge.



The head triad lives from their thoughts and fear drives them.

THE SEVEN—The Joyful Person

Question: Where am I?

Survival Strategy: I must be fun and entertained (20).

Vice: Gluttony

Virtue for Transformation: Sobriety

Natural Practices:

1. **Feasting/Thanksgiving.** Sevens take the party wherever they go. Sevens know how to turn any moment into a moment of gratitude and celebration.
2. **Community.** Often extraverts, Sevens need weekly opportunities to connect with the body of Christ. Sevens instinctually teach others how to engage and enjoy relationships.
3. **Service/Evangelism.** Sevens innate ability to connect with people and their active lifestyle positions them to serve others faithfully and with joy.

Unnatural Practices:

1. **Lament.** Sevens trend toward the positive. Learning how to mourn their losses is essential. Lament gives them a path to not get lost in pain but move through it.
2. **Fasting.** Sevens want more—of everything! Learning to deny themselves to depend on God will benefit them and those they love.
3. **Silence and solitude.** Sevens need to get alone without distractions to feel what they'd rather bury with fun. Silence allows them to prayerfully process the challenging parts of their inner world with Jesus.

The gospel and the Seven (21)

The lie Sevens believe — I won't survive my pain.

The gospel truth — Jesus will take care of me because He already endured pain on the cross to give me everlasting joy.

Endnotes

1. The many sessions under the teaching and personal counsel of Rich Plass and Jim Cofield profoundly shaped my understanding of the Enneagram. The second most influential to my knowledge of the Enneagram is Richard Rohr's book, *Enneagram*.
 2. A.J Sherrill's book, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, greatly influenced this PDF. I gleaned many of the disciplines, survival strategies, and lies/gospel truths from his book.
 3. *The Road Back to You* spoke not only to my mind but also my heart. Their compassionate approach to the complexity of the human soul is a constant example and help to me.
 4. AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 41.
 5. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 42.
 6. AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 43.
 7. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 44.
 8. AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 25.
 9. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 26.
 10. AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 26.
 11. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 28.
 12. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 28.
 13. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 30.
 14. AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 31.
 15. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 33.
 16. AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 33.
 17. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 36.
 18. AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 36.
 19. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 38.
 20. AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 38.
 21. Adapted from AJ Sherrill, *Enneagram & the Way of Jesus*, 40.
- * A huge thank you to Marshall Kent who helped me gather sources for this PDF.