

Soften the Shell: Moving from Survival Strategies to Embodied Presence with the Enneagram

Session Two Handout: The Head Center

Paradigms: Our Distorted and Corrected Lenses on the World

The word paradigm, comes from the Greek, 'paradeigma' which means model, pattern or example. Personality style acts like a paradigm; with each style sharing a common sense of assumptions and beliefs about reality, that becomes the preferred way of looking at the world or lens. These paradigms include values, assumptions, and core beliefs that influence our perceptions thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

They are essential to our interpersonal style as they influence how we think and feel about ourselves other people, the world, and the kind of interactions we can or can't allow ourselves to have with others.

These paradigms can be healthy or adaptive based on objective reality, or based on a false interpretation. These are our distorted lenses that we adopt at a very young age.

Perhaps we came into this incarnation with these beliefs. In this lifetime, these patterns originate first from sensory impressions around which our physical self (body center) form. We then develop a sense of me and you, thus internalizing a self-image as separate. This forms our emotional self (heart center). We eventually develop the ability to form concepts and symbols or our cognitive or mental self, (head center). They operate at an unconscious level.

These paradigms or lenses will dictate our thoughts, emotional and defense responses and behavior unless they are made conscious. We can consciously intend to see from the "corrected lens" and bring awareness to how these distorted lenses affect our heart center and the body centers.

Within our type structure we can shift our thoughts/beliefs in an unhealthy or healthy way. You will find those options below. Healthy paradigm shifts help us move out of our distorted lenses. Not helpful shifts keep us stuck.

Type One - The Reformer

Distorted lens - the world is flawed it's not perfect. I'm here to correct it as it should be. I am somebody and worthwhile if I am good and perfect.

Not helpful paradigm shift - *no one understands or appreciates what I do. It's hopeless; I'm overwhelmed. It's all up to me to fix and correct.*

Corrected lens or Essence quality - goodness/integrity. Everything is what it is. Life is unfolding as it should. Wholeness is a process, not a finished product. I am therefore I am good. Goodness flows from being.

Helpful paradigm shift -divergent thinking, playful acceptance of what is, optimism, all in good time. I trust in my spontaneous response to the moment.

Type Two - The Helper/Connector

Distorted lens - codependency. The world is not able to meet our needs. I must put others needs before my own to be loved. I am here to rescue, save, and heal the world. You are nobody until somebody loves appreciates and needs you.

Not helpful paradigm shift - since God and the universe are not all loving I must become so. I'm sad when I'm not appreciated I can easily play the martyr,

Corrected lens or Essence quality - freedom. It is more blessed to give AND receive. The universe is in ebb and flow; true freedom is living within the natural laws of giving and receiving. Being is love and love flows from Being.

Helpful paradigm shift -I can express myself, including my needs. I am creative and can accept my limits and boundaries.

Type Three - The Achiever

Distorted lens - focus on role and image; the smooth running of the world or organization depends on me. My pragmatic approach is more effective than universal principals. I am somebody and admirable if I perform, achieve and am successful.

Not helpful paradigm shift - I am successful. I am what I do therefore, I need to work harder because fear of failure and self doubt can take over.

Corrected lens or Essence quality - hope - the universe is inherently efficient and operates on its own and won't stop if I do. It is most efficient to live in Harmony with these natural processes. Therefore action flows naturally from being.

Helpful paradigm shift - to thine own self be true; I connect with my feelings and preferences, I can slow down and smell the roses.

Type Four -the Individualist

Distorted lens - specialness; because I am lacking and incomplete I must make myself special in order to earn love and belonging. The world abandons and ignores us when we are just being ourselves. I am and worthy of consideration, if I'm special, sensitive and refined

Not helpful paradigm shift -feeling exiled and depressed. I can give up on myself and throw myself into service or hide out.

Corrected lens or Essence quality - originality. I am always connected to myself in the ground of my being. Therefore, I am authentic and I belong. I am not missing anything essential. I'm already connected to my source. Authenticity, and beauty are aspects of being.

Helpful paradigm shift: I am already home. The lover is within. I can take action without feeling overwhelmed, doing ordinary routines.

Type Five - The Investigator

Distorted lens - intellectualization. the world is confusing/dangerous. It takes too much and gives too little. Therefore safety and self-worth comes through gaining knowledge through the intellect and perception. It is safer to be invisible than seen. I'm here to figure things out for myself and others.

Not helpful paradigm shift - scarcity mentality, withdrawing more, distracting myself, either making light of needs or becoming hostile.

Corrected lens or Essence Quality - understanding; wisdom and understanding come from engagement with the world. I am, therefore I know. Being is true and understanding comes from being.

Helpful paradigm shift- becoming aware of body and feelings, becoming more assertive and direct; reconnecting with play and joy.

Type Six-The Loyalist

Distorted lens-dogma and doubt. the world is dangerous. I'm here to make it safe and secure if it can go wrong, it will. Don't get caught off guard. I am somebody worth including if I'm loyal and do my duty and I'm watchful and careful.

Not helpful paradigm shift- I can become even more fearful or dogmatic, suspicious, hypervigilant. I can escape into a room, performing my duty and becoming loyal to a group.

Corrected lens or Essence quality - faith; the universe is on my side and trustworthy. I can trust my inner compass. I have already proven myself. I am therefore I am secure. Nothing can harm my essence, being cannot go out of existence.

Helpful paradigm shift- I become confident I can take care of business, I allow myself to feel settled and keep things in proportion.

Type Seven -The Enthusiast

Distorted lens- pleasure, pain. The world is unpleasant and filled with limitation and suffering. My plan to maximize pleasure and increase options, and minimize pain is better than any universal plan. I am somebody and fun to be with if I am entertaining, optimistic, and enlightening.

Not helpful paradigm shift - limitation and boredom are worse than death; when in doubt, create more options leading to more fantasizing, thinking and research.

Corrected lens or Essence quality - work; holy work entails a willingness to dwell in the present moment. I can ride with the flow when the wave dips down into darkness or difficulty. I know there is a plan greater than my own. Reality unfold through action in the present. I am therefore I am delighted. Being is light and to be this is to be joyful.

Helpful paradigm shift-I stay focused, going deeper, sticking with it. Accepting the yin and yang and ups and downs of life.

Type Eight -The Challenger

Distorted lens - vengeance /vindication; the world is unfair and hostile. I must create my own truth and take justice into my own hands. Vengeance requires getting even to maintain the balance of power.

Not helpful paradigm shift - in order for me and others to survive, I need to be strong and powerful and provide protection. I am somebody if I get respect and power and control.

Corrected lens or Essence quality - justice/ truth. The laws of the universe are already just. I am therefore I am just and influential. Presence and potencies are my qualities of being.

Helpful paradigm shift - the universe is out to do me right. I can relax my need for control. Reality is here and now. I can experience the truth without expectation or preconception of what ought to happen. My vulnerability can give me true power.

Type Nine - The Peacemaker

Distorted mental lens - the cosmos is cold, indifferent and filled with conflict. Since I don't matter much I'll settle for what I get and not expect much. I won't let anything get to me. if I am agreeable, peaceful and settled I will ensure my belonging.

Not helpful paradigm shift - it's no big deal. Nothing matters. I will obsess and doubt which leads to procrastination and over work. Is my job to mediate others and to ensure my place of belonging.

Corrected lens or Essence Quality - love, the universe is warm and loving, and has given birth to warm and loving beings. I am noticed and cared for so I matter. I am, therefore I am at one with all that is. Being is inclusive oneness.

Helpful paradigm shift - I focus and stay awake to what matters to me. I am aware and express my agenda. I matter, you matter, what we do matters.

Focus of Attention: This focus is a direct consequence of the distorted mental lens.

Body types

- Type eight - power and control
- Type nine - other people agendas
- Type one - what is correct or wrong

Heart types

- Type two - other peoples needs
- Type three -tasks
- Type four - what's missing

Head types -

- Type five - what other people expect or potential intrusions
- Type six - potential hazards

- Type seven - pleasant options

Our energy flows where our attention goes. What we experience is a result of where we choose to focus our attention. With that in mind spend some time with these reflection questions:

1. How does it feel in body mind and heart when your focus of attention goes to the habit of your type?
2. Who would you be without that focus of attention? How would that feel in the body mind and heart?