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FORTY DAYS ON  
BEING A TWO



ENNEAGRAM DAILY REFLECTIONS

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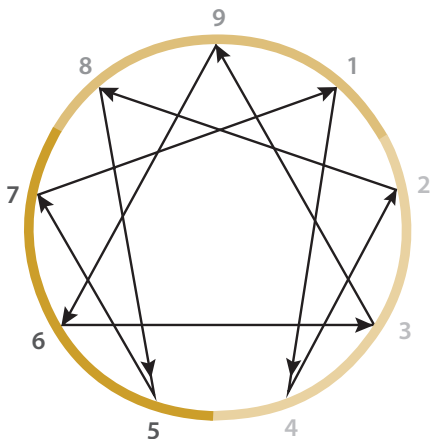


# WELCOME TO ENNEAGRAM DAILY REFLECTIONS

*Suzanne Stabile*



**T**he Enneagram is about nine ways of seeing. The reflections in this series are written from each of those nine ways of seeing. You have a rare opportunity, while reading and thinking about the experiences shared by each author, to expand your understanding of how they see themselves and how they experience others.



I've committed to teaching the Enneagram, in part, because I believe every person wants at least these two things: to belong, and to live a life that has meaning. And I'm sure that learning and working with the Enneagram has the potential to help all of us with both.

Belonging is complicated. We all want it, but few of us really understand it. The Enneagram identifies—with more accuracy than any other wisdom tool I know—why we can achieve belonging more easily with some people than with others. And it teaches us to find our place in situations and groups without having to displace someone else. (I'm actually convinced that it's the answer to world peace, but some have suggested that I could be exaggerating just a bit.)

If our lives are to have meaning beyond ourselves, we will have to develop the capacity to understand, value, and respect people who see the world differently than we do. We will have to learn to name our own gifts and identify our weaknesses, and the Enneagram reveals both at the same time.

The idea that we are all pretty much alike is shattered by the end of an introductory Enneagram workshop or after reading the last page of a good primer. But for those who are teachable and open to receiving Enneagram wisdom about each of the nine personality types, the shock is accompanied by a beautiful and unexpected gift: they find that they have more compassion for themselves and more grace for others, and it's a guarantee.

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The authors in this series, representing the nine Enneagram types, have used that compassion to move toward a greater understanding of themselves and others whose lives intersect with theirs in big and small ways. They write from experiences that reflect racial and cultural difference, and they have been influenced by different faith beliefs. In working with spiritual directors, therapists, and pastors, they identified many of their own habits and fears, behaviors and motivations, gifts and challenges. And they courageously talked with those who are close to them about how they are seen and experienced in relationship.

As you begin reading, I think it will be helpful for you to be generous with yourself. Reflect on your own life—where you’ve been and where you’re going. And I hope you will consider the difference between change and transformation. *Change* is when we take on something new. *Transformation* occurs when something old falls away, usually beyond our control. When we see a movie, read a book, or perhaps hear a sermon that we believe “changed our lives,” it will seldom, if ever, become transformative. It’s a good thing and we may have learned a valuable life lesson, but that’s not transformation. Transformation occurs when you have an experience that changes the way you understand life and its mysteries.

When my Dad died, I immediately looked for the leather journal I had given to him years before with the request that he fill it with stories and things he wanted me to know. He had only written on one page:

*Anything I have achieved or accomplished in my life is because of the gift of your mother as my wife. You should get to know her.*

I thought I knew her, but I followed his advice, and it was one of the most transformative experiences of my life.

From a place of vulnerability and generosity, each author in this series invites us to walk with them for forty days on their journeys toward transformation. I hope you will not limit your reading to only your number. Read about your spouse or a friend. Consider reading about the type you suspect represents your parents or your siblings. You might even want to read about someone you have little affection for but are willing to try to understand.

You can never change *how* you see, but you can change what you *do* with how you see.

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## ON BEING A TWO



In 2014, life gave me an offering: I was seated next to Suzanne and Joe Stabile at a dinner party. A true *happy-stance*, not just happenstance. We were all participating in a weekend gathering at The Gasparilla Inn in Boca Grande, Florida, as part of Telemachus, an intergenerational Christian networking community. Suzanne was leading a pre-conference day on the Enneagram, which I did not attend. I had never heard of the Enneagram. And if I had heard of it from anyone other than this charming, grandmotherly lady with the drawl of Floydada, Texas, on her lips, I'm sure that I would have thought that the word sounded too near to a Pentagon.

Suzanne won me over before our chicken and potatoes were served. We became instant friends and, as luck would have it, she was traveling two weeks later to my hometown of Nashville to lead a day-long “Know Your Number” workshop—her signature Enneagram introduction—for the staff at Otter Creek Church of Christ. I snuck in, listening with eyes wide and heart open, as she shared eight hours of

wisdom about the nine Enneagram types. I discovered that I am a Two, like her. And from that day on, I have been Suzanne's student and she, my teacher.

Suzanne delivered the Enneagram to me in much the same way that Father Richard Rohr delivered it to her thirty years earlier: as a passing down of wisdom from apprentice to student. My story has been forever changed by Suzanne and by the Enneagram. She and it have been my companions through some of the most formative times in my life so far as a thirty-five-year-old pastor, lawyer, and teacher.

The Enneagram does not exist in a vacuum. It invites you into conversations and awakenings that are theological, relational, and personal. This is why the Enneagram, historically, was rarely taught without a companion faith tradition. In this devotional, I layer the wisdom of the Christian story with the wisdom of the Enneagram. The Enneagram not only describes personality but leads us to discover mysterious places in ourselves that lie beyond personality—namely our souls, or the Christ in you and the Christ in me.

And what a mystery is a soul!

I'm embarrassed to say that after years of serving as a pastor, I still don't have any clear understanding of what a soul is beyond the place in our consciousness that flutters at the sight of truth, beauty, and goodness. A soul is not something that we search for and capture. It is something that we learn to recognize and observe with awe and reverence. The Enneagram helps us to declutter the bulk from our personalities so that our souls can reveal themselves to us.

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The past five years have been good years for the Enneagram. If you have paid attention recently to Instagram or pop Christianity, it is likely that you have bumped up against this old tool in its new moment. And because everything contains its opposite, recent exposure for the Enneagram is both blessing and curse. The blessing has been open doors and open ears for its wisdom. The curse has been the reduction of what traditionally was received as slowly applied wisdom to soundbites and numbered lists. For nearly all of its history, the Enneagram has been delivered in narrative form from teacher to student, either through retreat or through reading long-form descriptions of all nine types. If you learned your Enneagram type through a test, my invitation is to hold that loosely and take some time to read a long-form book about the Enneagram or attend a workshop taught by a master teacher.



As a Tennessean, I was born to love one of the hallmarks of good southern architecture: a gracious front porch. And if you're like me—having spent much of my adult life with stoops and condo welcome mats—you may have pictured a future life with a porch swing, ferns, and fall pumpkins. When I think about how to make sense of the Enneagram as a personality tool, I use the metaphor of a house, with the front porch and living room as personality and the rooms beyond as deeper, soul-ish spots.

In a house, the front porch and living room are the spaces typically most ready to receive guests. We curate these spaces in ways that reflect our values. We turn the porch lights on (or off!) as a way of telling people when we're open for their visit. When we sweep and straighten and clean, it's these spaces that get our first attention. We justify a bit of mess in other rooms because the Halloween trick-or-treater won't be going past the front porch and living room.

In my childhood home, our living room had white carpet, which is something that would have never survived in the den, kitchen, or bedrooms. Our living room could have white carpet because it was reserved for company, not for intimate family gatherings. Christmas mornings and Kentucky basketball viewing parties all happened in rooms that were farther back in the house.

The Enneagram describes nine different front porches and living rooms—nine different ways that the world first meets us. And whether swept up or messed up, our personalities are the most curated parts of ourselves. We've worked on them through the years with intention. Just like our homes' front porches and living rooms, our personalities are the recognizable parts of our beings.

But our homes have depths beyond front porches and living rooms, and so do we. You may encounter kitchens, dens, family rooms, bedrooms, and back porches. And the really good stuff happens in these rooms. Around the

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kitchen table is where we have our late-night intimate conversations. The den is where our closest family huddles up on the couch to watch Netflix. The bedroom is where we allow someone, under low light, to see us in our most unguarded state. Kitchens, dens, family rooms, and bedrooms all represent the places in us that are beyond personality. They represent our souls. They represent our essences. They represent the Christ in you and the Christ in me.

As Twos, our front porches and living rooms look like helpful, attentive, and emotionally intelligent responders. We have well-curated our reputations as people who can be counted on. We're the people of "yes!" But, beyond our front porches and living rooms are a diversity of unexpressed and unmet feelings and needs. Tiredness, loneliness, grief, disappointment, and longing live beside joy, gratitude, and hope in our kitchens, dens, and bedrooms.

This devotional is designed to explore the shadow and light of our front porches and living rooms as Twos so that we can find our way beyond them into the deeper places of our souls. Let's begin today considering what our personalities look like to the outside world. And let's begin using this self-knowledge to help us begin our journeys toward our healthiest selves.

If you aren't a Two, you are welcome too! You are invited through this journey to discover more about the unspoken wounds, motivations, and longings of your friends and family members who are Twos, the best number on the

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Enneagram—Jesus’ number! *Just kidding!* But, seriously, because the Enneagram invites us all into a story that is larger than our own individual stories, it is my hope that we will all take the time to understand as much as we can about all nine Enneagram types as we grow in compassion for ourselves and for others. Thank you for being our Two ally—we’re grateful!



A forty-day journey carries particular significance in the Christian story. Jesus spent forty days fasting in the desert before his public ministry began. The Gospels detail the forty days that spanned Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. In Genesis’s flood narrative, the rain fell for forty days. For centuries, Christians have spent forty days during Lent to reflect and purify themselves for the celebration of Easter. A lot can happen in forty days!

As you embark on your own forty-day journey, my prayer is that this devotional invites you to discover new things about yourself, leads you into more self-compassion as you realize that you are not alone, and promotes transformation as we discover together how to live into ways of being a Two that are healthy for each of us. Each day ends with reflection questions or a suggested prayer or practice. Use these as you wish, or not at all. The important thing is to follow your own inner lights—the lights of the Spirit stirring in you.

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May the God who balances all things—light and dark, body and soul, spirit and truth, suffering and joy—work a thousand tiny miracles in all of us to call us back to our truest wholeness, beyond personality, where deep cries out to deep.

*Let the journey begin!*

## LET IT GO



**AS TWOS**, we are natural-born helpers and natural-born fixers. People are drawn to us, and we are drawn to them. In a task-oriented culture, Twos have an important role to play in connecting with people. But all of that helping can come at a cost.

We have old patterns of over-saving, over-fixing, and over-rescuing that need to fall away. Old lies that tell you that self-disclosure will lead to people leaving you need to fall away. Old messages that tell you that it isn't okay to express your own needs and feelings need to fall away.

We're masters at gritting our teeth and ignoring our own pain and swirling feelings. We intuitively come to Enneagram work hoping to discover what steps we can take to help ourselves and fix our problems. But what we really need is transformation, not change. We need to open up, allow ourselves to be seen, and let go of old things so that there is room for God's new.

Change is good; change helps us. The spiritual life involves change too. Our spiritual journeys invite us all to change our behaviors at different points in our lives.

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Transformation, however, is less about taking new things on and more about letting old things fall away. We can work our way to change, but we need to open up our hands to transformation. Any transformative work that God has done in me has been God's work, not my own, and it has happened as I let go and allowed God, in mystery, to work inside of me.

The Enneagram is a tool about transformation, not change. The Enneagram invites us to embrace the best and the worst of us. It invites us into non-judgmental self-awareness and compassion. It invites us to discover how our wounds might become, through God's help, sacred wounds.

Let us continue to allow the wisdom of the Enneagram to lead us toward the transformation that comes as old patterns of thinking, feeling, and doing fall away, allowing new growth to bloom. "And we all . . . are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

**How do people first experience you?**

**Do people's first impressions fit what you know to be true of your inner self?**

## WOUNDED HEALERS



**WHEN I AM ASKED** to give a brief explanation of the nine Enneagram types, I focus on the wounds that define each number. The thing that I love the most about the Enneagram is that it doesn't identify personalities based on behaviors—it focuses on our core motivations, which are formed through wounds that we first experience in childhood.

As Twos, our wounds teach us to minimize our own needs and feelings. They teach us to over-identify with the needs and feelings of everyone around us. Our wounds teach us to find love and belonging through being helpful and attentive, and not demanding too much for ourselves.

I picked up these wounds so early that I can't identify all of the places that they emerged from. As a child, I felt like I needed to be "fine" and use all of my energy to help the people around me. I still hesitate to name my own feelings and needs. My strongest defense tactic is asking people endless questions about themselves. If I can fill a lunchtime appointment with conversation about the other person, I can avoid disclosing much at all about myself. I can't tell

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you how many meals and meetups have ended with the other person saying, “Gosh, we didn’t have any time to talk about everything going on with you—let’s make sure we do that next time!”

Our wounds motivate our feelings and actions. My wounds as a Two are what lead me to over-identify with the feelings of the people around me and to over-meddle in friends’ lives.

Our invitation is to discover how our wounds can become sacred wounds. Richard Rohr writes, “All healthy religion shows you what to do with your pain. If we do not transform our pain, we will most assuredly transmit it. . . . If we cannot find a way to make our wounds into sacred wounds, we invariably become negative or bitter.”

The wounds that have caused us as Twos to spend our lifetimes minimizing our own needs and feelings can become our sacred wounds. Our wounds can be redeemed. Our wounds can lead to our healing.

Can you find God in your wounds?

*God, who heals broken things and shines light into every darkness, into our wounds, come. Amen.*