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FORTY DAYS ON
BEING A FIVE



ENNEAGRAM DAILY REFLECTIONS

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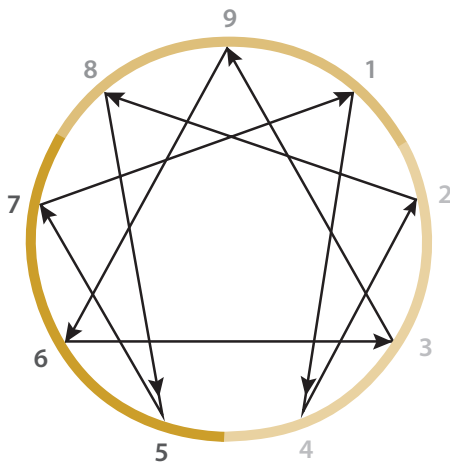


WELCOME TO ENNEAGRAM DAILY REFLECTIONS

Suzanne Stabile



The 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.

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 differences, and they have been influenced by their personal faith commitments. 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.

ON BEING A FIVE



For as long as I can remember, I have felt most comfortable as a wallflower. I enjoy being the observer leaning against the wall, taking everything in from afar. I have long had a natural inclination to retreat into my mind so that I might feel a little more capable and competent in the world. I felt different from others, especially when it came to social situations. As a result, I would compare myself to others and conclude that my way of being in the world was “wrong” and there was in fact something wrong with me.

When I discovered the Enneagram a few years ago, it felt like a map was unfolding. The Enneagram is an ancient tool that helps identify the specific ways we get lost or stuck across the landscape of life and also how we can find our way home, where we can become more and more of who we are meant to be. There are nine different personalities that illuminate different ways of being in the world, and I discovered that I was a Five. I was able to see things about

myself that I had never had language for before. Suddenly, the path before me felt a little less lonely.

As a Five, I show up in the world as an observer. I live in pursuit of knowledge, seeking to learn and prepare myself to be capable and competent in the world. I desire to be useful; however, I tell myself that in order to do this, I must spend time away from others preparing to be in the world.

Seeing the Enneagram as a map was revelatory. Suddenly, I could see the various aspects of myself as a part of a greater landscape. On this map were many terrains—oceans, rivers, canyons, and valleys—and they all worked together. Yes, there were low places, but there were high places too. There were also a thousand places in between.

I discovered that the parts of myself I had previously seen as obstacles that kept me from being “normal” were actually ways I could grow. And not only grow in knowledge about what it meant to be a Five but grow closer to God. I could finally see that I didn’t have to fix myself or have a certain personality that seemed acceptable in the world before I could breathe deep and surrender into grace that gives freedom to journey home—as a Five.

The basic desire of the Five is to be capable and competent. We seek to understand and we fear being helpless. We are driven by a pursuit of knowledge that can at times cause us to live in our heads. We find comfort in our safe places and reading nooks. We can spend a lot of our time thinking, contemplating, and searching for insight.

If this sounds like you or someone you know, I hope that this forty-day journey provides insight and encouragement on how to be present as a Five or with the Five in your life. Because many Fives tend to be a bit more reserved and private, connecting with a Five can be challenging. You may find yourself wanting closeness, but the Five you love doesn't seem to open up. I hope this daily journey provides a window into the soul of a Five—an individual who is deeply in tune, sensitive, and longing to connect in a unique way.

One of the beautiful things about the Enneagram is its diversity, and my journey is one of many ways that the various aspects of the Five are illuminated in the world.

I have written short prayers and reflections for the end of each reading. For some days there is only a prayer and for others only a reflection. Feel free to use them as starting points for your quiet devotional time, daily reflections, or conversations as you carry on your journey as a Five or as you go deeper with the Five in your life.

Along the way you will find a few readings labeled “an invitation.” In these I shift from speaking of my own experience to speaking to you, the reader. So as we begin I want to offer the following invitation for Fives and everyone else.

On this lifelong journey of learning and growing, may we never forget our gifts. May we never forget that amid all of our fears of not having enough energy, of thinking we are helpless, of fearing we are incompetent, there is more

beneath the surface. The waves of life may toss tirelessly against the boat, but beneath the deep blue there is stillness. There is peace. With a Five, there is always much more than what you see.

As we learn to surrender our need to have answers for everything, may we find that by grace there is still room to go deep in the way that comes naturally to us. We may not know what lies ahead, but we know that we have spent time studying and preparing. And even though we can never fully prepare for life's unknown circumstances . . .

Yes, there is time for us to go on the back deck and breathe in the fresh morning air. There are books on the shelves to be read. There is space to be fully present with renewed energy in a living room filled with people we love, and there is also space for contemplation, rest, sleep.

We do not have to be everywhere doing everything at once, and, perhaps, deep within, we know this. When we start to learn that our ability to conceptualize and look at things objectively can actually be the way we begin to let go of things, we move from detachment to non-attachment. We move from staying away from others and keeping them at a distance to bringing what we learned at a distance into the present moment—with others, in community, in the world. We come down from the mountain of mind back down to earth and share what we have found.

1 Timothy 4:14 says, “Do not neglect your gift.” Likewise, let us use our gift for good. Let us be the ones who remember that while this life here on earth is temporary, we have the daily opportunity to be present in every moment.

God,

*In a world where it is far too easy to feel that I am
not equipped,*

*help me to remember the ways in which you have
gifted me.*

*Teach me to use my strengths in ways that allow me
to grow in love for you and others.*

Amen.

LOVE OVER FEAR



PERHAPS THE BEST WAY to begin this forty-day journey is to take a loving look at one of the greatest traps in life: fear. The fear that we will not have the energy or capacity to be who we are supposed to be in the world unless we acquire more knowledge and understanding. The fear that we are not as equipped as others. The fear that if we really allow ourselves to feel the depth of our emotions, it will be too much.

Fives are typically drawn to particular interests, and we seek to be well-versed in the things we study. Our fear is being incompetent or incapable, and we try to work through those fears by retreating within, going inside our minds and lingering there for a while. In relationships we can seem secretive or guarded because we fear letting people in too much. Deep within, there's a question of, *What if I'm not enough? What if I don't have enough energy or resources to be who they need me to be?*

That's just the beginning of the list of ways fear can manifest itself in my life. However, this is also true: love is greater than fear. Love comes from God, and "there is no fear in love" (1 John 4:18).

As a Five, I tend to get stuck in my head. Because my head is the part of my body that is furthest from the ground, it can soar up in the clouds, floating in the theoretical. Love is what reminds me that below my endless thoughts, my heart still beats. The ground is still beneath my feet. I am free to be present amid all uncertainty.

Love reminds me that even when I think I am lacking, there is still room to be generous. Despite a tendency to withhold details about myself and the nuances of what I'm studying, I know it is enormously beneficial to be transparent and open.

The Enneagram is teaching me to be open. Open not only to deeper knowledge, but also open to love. And not the kind of love that is conditional and expects me to be someone I'm not, but the love of Christ, which is perfectly capable of leading me and filling my heart when I don't feel capable myself.

The beautiful thing about this kind of love is that I don't have to have words for it. In the moments when I feel loved or am able to show love to someone else, I don't have to know why. I don't have to tell myself it's because I prepared myself with the right amount of knowledge. I can trust that love is infinite. And within infinite love, there is room for me to grow in knowledge, and also to trust that there is life to be lived beyond my fears, right here, right now.



God,
For all of my fears,
even the ones I have yet to fully articulate or find the
words for,
help me to remember that far below my thoughts,
my heart still beats,
the ground is still beneath my feet,
and within your Infinite Love,
despite what I lack
and don't understand,
I am where I need to be.
In your Infinite Love,
I am where I need to be.
Amen.

What does fear look like in your mind?

What does love look like in your life?

EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY



AS A FIVE, I TEND TO focus on *why*. I want to know why things are the way they are. If I observe a problem, I start searching for possibilities as to why it might be a problem in the first place. I often see this as getting to the root. Going beyond the branches, the leaves, and the base of the tree in search of the thing that makes the problem itself make a little more sense. If I want to truly understand something, I want to go below the surface and find out what's really happening.

While this is an incredibly valuable skill in problem solving and troubleshooting, we Fives also need to be careful. We are in a healthier place when we realize that the roots we are digging up are lined with grace. It is okay to make connections and new discoveries, and it is also okay to say, "I don't know. . . . I don't have an answer for this."

It is okay to wonder why. It is also okay to fall in love with the act of digging and searching for answers. But

may we do this while also trying to “love the questions themselves,” as poet Rainer Maria Rilke says. May we realize that in grace, we are free to embrace uncertainty. We can fall in love with searching. Not just searching for answers, but searching for all the ways to fall in love with the mystery. To fall in love with learning whatever it is God wants us to learn. Even though the details have yet to be revealed to us, there is grace for us to be fully present with the questions.

Grace is an unmerited favor that gives us freedom to experience the peace of God even when we fall short of finding a solution. When we reach the inevitable edge of our knowledge and we’ve dug down to the deepest root we can reach, grace reminds us that it is okay if we do not feel we are good enough.

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

On the other side of every question mark, may we continue to remember that grace will meet us there. Whether or not we find answers or get to the bottom of what we are searching for, we are not worth any less in the eyes of God. Our identity has not been lost. Amid all we do not know, this is still true: we are allowed to ask questions and we are still loved—even when we cannot find the answers.

God,
Oh, *what a gift it is*
to bask in your Presence,
a place where there is grace and wide open space
to ask questions my heart so desperately craves to
know the answers to,
and all while I am searching, I get lost in you,
discovering that with or without the answers
I feel like I need to have,
in the arms of your Love, I am free to
experience peace
no matter the distance of my wonder, no matter the
depths of my uncertainty.
In Christ, I am free to embrace the mystery of who
you are
and all of the lessons and beautiful things you will
continue to unfold before me.
Amen.

What question would you love to ask God today?