

## Chapter 15

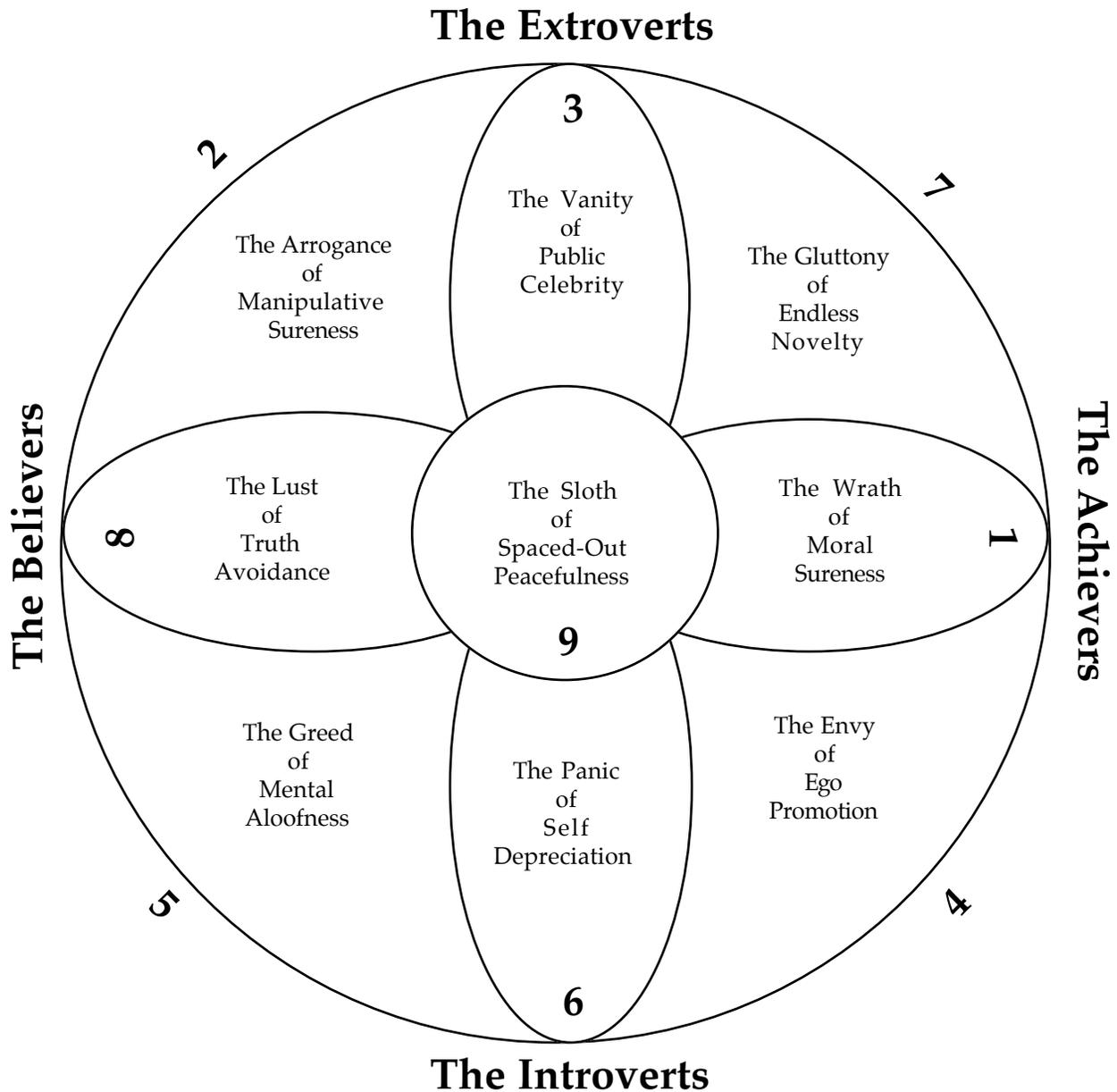
# Nine Habits of Escape from the “I Am”

As we move from infantile immediacy and build our habits of personality, we begin to confuse the habits that we have built with the essence of our nature. The “I Am” is not something we have built or can build or need to build. It is already built with our birth into humanness. Yet as an infant we are only a potential for realizing the “I Am” in a conscious and intentional way. The usual course of development is to confuse our potential to be an “I Am” manifestation with the habits of living we have built to survive. We have learned to call these habits “ourselves.” These habits are what we also call our “personality.” Having a personality is not bad; it is indeed necessary for the practical living of our lives in the societies in which we dwell. The issue for our consciousness is identifying who we are. We are more than our personality. We are the being that built our personality. We are that mysterious, courageous, awe-filled being that I was describing in the last chapter as the essential “I Am.”

So when we identify with our personality or with that part of our personality that we are aware of and with which we want to be identified, we have fallen away from our true being. It is this misidentification that is the core flaw we must overcome to be authentically human. It is this misidentification that is the root of our despair, malice, and compulsions. It is an escape from our essential being, from our best-case scenario for living. We call it an escape because we do indeed flee from our true greatness because we find it too demanding, or too grim as opposed to being happy-go-lucky, or too mysterious as opposed to having a more reasoned belief about who we are.

Our functional and dysfunctional personality habits can function as a “place” to which we can escape. The enneagram heritage has depicted nine types of personality. One of the interesting aspects of this model of nine personality types is that they correspond one-to-one with the nine aspects of the “I Am” described in the last chapter. Each personality type of the enneagram heritage is especially an escape from one of these nine aspects of the “I Am.” The following chart is constructed to be an overlay of these nine personality types upon the previous chart of the nine aspects of the “I Am.” In each case the escape is substituting a set of personality habits for the “I Am” essence of our true being. On the following chart you will see the personality numbers of the enneagram heritage and by each one are written a few words of poetic description of the way in which that personality type is a falling away from the home base of the “I Am” essence that occupies that space on the previous chart.

For example, identifying with personality type five can be described as a falling away from **Transparent Attention** into **The Greed of Mental Aloofness**. In order to see all nine of these associations, compare the following chart with the chart in the last chapter. Then read the following paragraphs that describe more fully how a personality type can be a fall from an aspect of our true nature – how each of us, as we attempt to identify who we are, substitute personality habits for the “I Am” of our essential being.



I will describe each of these escapes from the “I Am” essence of profound humanness in the same order that I described the “I Am” aspects in the previous chapter. These will only be short spins. For a more thorough examination of these personality types I recommend *The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram: Nine Faces of the Soul* by Sandra Maitri. (New York, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam: 2000). I also work with the personality types as forms of estrangement in *Jacob’s Dream: A Christian Inquiry into Spirit Realization* (New York, iUniverse: 2008) Chapters 11 through 14.

### **Type 5. The Greed of Mental Aloofness**

As a mode of escape personality type 5 is an escape from the *Transparent Attention* aspect of the “I Am.” Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a gift for it – even a passion for it. Personality type 5 persons are the shy wallflowers, the recluses who are also busy-minded people. Their busy

mindedness can be busy about almost anything. A personality type 5 might be like Howard Hughes busy with airplanes and old movies. A more moderately talented 5 might spend most of his or her waking time with face-in-a-book or scanning six news magazines every month. When challenged to begin an intense, intimate relation these aloof ones experience a discomfiting demand to come out of their shells. This is especially hard if the challenge includes emotional honesty and accurate reporting on their secret lives. The 5's escape has to do with hiding in the forests of the mind. The typical 5 tends to come out energetically only in groups that express interest in whatever is the preoccupation of that 5's mind. Often that mental preoccupation is so specialized or so unorthodox that only a few satisfying companions can be found. And even those companions may feel it necessary to provide most of the initiative to have a real relationship. Type 5 persons may be talkative on many subjects, but they tend to be postponers with regard to putting their talk into action. The exceptions to this, like Howard Hughes or Georgia O'Keeffe, move out into the world in a whirlwind of genius and then retreat almost completely from enjoying the celebrity they may have occasioned.

Having a personality that overemphasizes mental gifts need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their intellectual gifts in compassionate ways. A. H. Almaas is a good example of a 5 with such intelligent compassion. The escape is identifying with the mental gifts and the mental products of those gifts as a substitute for the type of knowing that is transparent to the deeper matters of consciousness. Living in their minds rather than in their whole mysterious being results in being functionally stupid and also cruel thorough a neglect of other people, social concerns, and even one's own self.

*Greed* is a quality of this estrangement because the 5 is hoarding information and because living in the mind requires protection from the slings and arrows of ordinary life. This mode of escape requires some sort of ivory tower in which to retreat from that full round of life that might challenge too deeply some treasured mental construction or perhaps some lack of thoughtfulness in an arena where wisdom was assumed. The 5 personality fears the insecurity of ignorance.

## **Type 8. The Lust of Truth Avoidance**

As a mode of escape personality type 8 is an escape from the *Universal Forgiveness* aspect of the "I Am." Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a propensity for it – even an obsession with it. These are the outgoing, often warlike individuals who seem to live a life in constant conflict with other people's wrong-headedness, deemed so from the perspective of "their truth." The type 8's truth may not include the openness to new truth that a complete lover of truth might manifest. These persons are in an estranged state because they insist on being leaders in terms of their all too confident conclusions. They get things done, but on their own terms. It is difficult to oppose them without engaging in some stubborn argumentation. And however great the wreckage they may cause, they tend to have little remorse, for they see themselves as the truthful ones, however deep their lies may be. They can drop one lie and go on to a next lie without ever admitting fully that the abandoned position was tragic. They don't stop to learn fully from their mistakes or to probe to a depth of truth that would make a significant difference in their living.

Having a personality that overemphasizes strong leadership need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their leadership gifts with compassion. Martin Luther King Jr. is an example of an 8 who used his leadership gifts compassionately. Susan Sarandon and Franklin D. Roosevelt may be other examples of

the compassionate 8. The escape means identifying with this personality pattern in order to avoid the Truth of Universal Forgiveness. Personality type 8 tends to avoid experiencing their own flaws seriously enough to need forgiveness. And the very notion of a universal forgiveness for all persons, including the enemies that the 8 is fighting, comes as a special offense.

*Lust* is a quality of this estrangement in the sense that these persons tend to insist upon their success, their pleasure, their way, their goals, their perfection, their leadership, their needs, and so forth.

## **Type 2. The Arrogance of Manipulative Sureness**

As a mode of escape personality type 2 is an escape from the *Effortless Letting Be* aspect of the "I Am." Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a propensity toward it – even an obsession with it. Personality type 2 persons are emotionally sensitive, outgoing persons who typically meddle in other people's business. In a Jane Austin novel one meets these characters who count themselves matchmakers and fixers for other people's lives, but are somewhat blind to their own lives, especially their own needs relative to accessing their more profound potentials. As emotionally powerful and influential persons, 2s make themselves available as helpers of whatever seems to them to need help. They often become trapped in codependent relations in which needy people lean on the 2, even enslave the 2 with a perpetual neediness that tyrannizes by refusing to care for their own selves.

Having a personality that overemphasizes helpfulness and personal relationships need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their interpersonal gifts with a tough-love type of compassion. Florence Nightingale and Desmond Tutu may be examples of the effectively compassionate 2. The escape is in identifying with their being an emotionally sincere and helpful person and thereby avoiding the strength and realism of "Letting Be" the inevitable processes of Reality.

*Arrogance* is a quality that describes this estrangement, for the type 2 personality tends toward a delusory arrogation of their "celebrated" powers – attributing to themselves an illusory capacity to fix what it is not within their ability to fix or their business to fix.

## **Type 4. The Envy of Ego Promotion**

As a mode of escape personality type 4 is an escape from the *Primal Merging* aspect of the "I Am." Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a gift for it – even an obsession with it. Personality type 4 persons are deeply sensitive people almost to the extent of mixing up their own feelings with the feelings of others. They also tend to be creative people – as musicians or artists or anything that requires emotional sensitivity and expressiveness. Not all 4s are talented, but those who are talented often make contributions to the overall culture that we count as treasures. They often lead us into deeper experiences. They tend to see themselves as special people with regard to personal gifts that most people lack. And if they do not have the personal gifts they want, they tend to be envious of those that do have them. "Self," in the sense of ego strengths, is a big deal for these persons.

Having a personality that overemphasizes personal creative potentials need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their sensibilities with effective compassion for others. Judy Garland and Bob Dylan are well known examples of effective and compassionate type 4 personalities. The escape is identifying with one's strong ego strengths and thereby avoiding something very much deeper, namely the

raw freedom that is beyond ego, beyond personality habits, beyond anything that pertains to promoting or defending self worth.

*Envy* is a quality that describes this estrangement, for the type 4 personality tends to so focus upon possessing special gifts that they may be envious of others who seem to possess the wanted gifts in more abundance. This can appear as a sort of over-competitiveness or uncharitableness toward also gifted companions. All this is a distraction from the real issue of accessing one's own deep freedom in order to alter one's own life in the directions desired or needed or called for.

### **Type 1. The Wrath of Moral Sureness**

As a mode of escape personality type 1 is an escape from the *Inherent Purity* aspect of the "I Am." Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a propensity toward it – even an obsession with it. Personality type 1 individuals are principled persons. They may be social reformers. They may stick up for the little guy. Even when they are fairly traditional, they tend to be picky persons who know what is right and do what is right as they understand it. We often count on them; they tend to be persons who get things done and get them done right. Flexibility may not be one of their virtues, or it may be. They are not likely to lie for us, cheat for us, or compromise their core values. They tend to be markedly assertive persons who can seem quite sure about what they are doing. They have no fear about carrying out stern critiques of others. They may be smooth and skilled at promoting what they think is right and true. They may be boring bigots.

Having a personality that overemphasizes moral rightness need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their tough-mindedness with compassion. Perhaps Ralph Nader and Jane Fonda are type 1 examples of tough-minded compassion. The type 1 mode of escape is identifying with a taken-for-granted rightness resident in their superego, their upbringing, or their ethical thoughtfulness. The escape is seeing such rightness as the "real me," a rightness that is substituted for *the inherent purity* of that essential freedom that knows that all choices must be carried out in a world of ambiguities in which good and evil are always relative to chosen contexts.

*Wrath* is a quality that describes this estrangement, for the type 1 personalities tend to be resentful of violations of their principles and they tend to put the energy of anger into their careful or reckless campaigns of living.

### **Type 7. The Gluttony of Endless Novelty**

As a mode of escape personality type 7 is an escape from the *Attuned Working* aspect of the "I Am." Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have an obsession with this mode of escape. Personality type 7 persons are restless activists who fear that they may miss something or need something different from what has become too routine and boring. They tend to be playful, energetic, always in motion, and often charismatic in their outgoing attention and innovative leadership. We tend to like them until we get a sense of how burned out they can become and how needy they may be for something more. Settling into one thing is seldom their choice. They may astonish us with the number of plates they keep spinning in the air. Like an Albert Schweitzer they may do all these things well, but more often each of their many things tend to be superficial and short lived.

Having a personality that overemphasizes enthusiasm for novelty need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their enthusiasm with

compassion. Carol Burnett and Leonard Bernstein are probably type 7 personalities who put their enthusiasm to good use. The escape here is identifying with the style of experiencing fresh activities that excite and charm and foster enthusiasm. This restlessness is an escape from being attuned in one's actions to the Ground of Being that calls for an ongoing consistency through thick and thin. This entails an obedience that seems to crimp the restless style of personality 7, even as it leads toward a truer freedom – a freedom from restless novelty into the creative persistence that knows itself connected to the deep matters of living.

*Gluttony* is a quality that describes this estrangement, for the type 7 personality tends to substitute many novel experiences for the richness of staying in touch with that profound humanness that is always fresh because it is being supported by and called for by the Eternal workings of the cosmos.

## **Type 6. The Panic of Self Depreciation**

As a mode of escape personality type 6 is an escape from the *Autonomous Strength* aspect of the "I Am." Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a obsession for it. Personality type 6 persons are worried and fearful about being inadequate, not being successful, not being liked, not being accepted by their chosen peers. They are sensitive persons, sensitive to others and sensitive to their own gifts and failures. This sensitivity turns up more and more evidence that one is sub par. So persons of personality type 6 tend to make extra efforts toward being loyal and friendly and useful in order to compensate for this underlying panic about self-worth. Some 6 personalities risk dangerous things to prove to themselves and others that they are not fearful, not worthless, but rather bold, unusual, and worthy of attention. So the 6 personality may manifest as a compliant office worker or as a daring mountain climber, stunt driver, or other impulsive risk taker.

Having a personality that overemphasizes self awareness need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their sensitivities with compassion. Perhaps Princess Diana and Jack Lemon show us the outgoing and compassionate 6. The escape is an identification with self images of depreciation, weakness, unsureness, unlovableness, and so on. These perceptions of self are substituted for the autonomous strength that is the true nature of the profound human. What is lacking is allowing the invincible quality of this deep self to undergird the sensitivities about the inevitable weaknesses and foibles had by all of us finite creatures.

*Panic* is a quality that describes this estrangement, for type 6 personalities tend to believe they are flawed and limited, weak and poor, and thus not up to the challenges that come to them. What is missing is an enduring experience of that solitary strength for opposing all falseness and genuinely loving the essential, honest, and invincible "I Am" with an affirmation that knows no limits.

## **Type 9. The Sloth of Spaced-Out Peacefulness**

As a mode of escape personality type 9 is an escape from the *Enchantment with Being* aspect of the "I Am." Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a propensity for it – a profound acquiescence to it. Personality type 9 persons are the most other-directed of all persons, not out of fear, but out of an anger toward conflict, toward being challenged to manifest the inner energy to participate in the conflicts and struggles of real life. So they make peace with everyone, and they try to enable peace between other persons and among the persons in their groups. They promote peace at the cost of their own integrity or at the cost of not getting done what

needs doing. Personality type 9 can be capable and effective in their living and appear to be the most agreeable of all persons. But underneath this outward mask is a rage toward the demanding nature of life. When peace cannot be made in a given circumstance, the 9 personality tends to go to sleep or space out into a trance of inattention.

Having a personality that overemphasizes peacemaking need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their interpersonal gifts with compassion. Perhaps Abraham Lincoln and Ingrid Bergman show us the compassionate 9. The escape in this instance is about identifying with a conflict-free existence that does not and cannot exist. The escape is from that seemingly uncomfortable energy that it takes to deal with the full realities that humans face. What is missing is the realization of a profound love for that fullness of Being that includes one's own anger, intensity, and passion for truth, as well as the huge challenges and conflicts that characterize real world living.

*Sloth* is a quality that describes this estrangement, for the type 9 personality tends to "cop out" rather than endure and/or enjoy the full intensity of living.

### **Type 3. The Vanity of Public Celebrity**

As a mode of escape personality type 3 is an escape from the *Out-flowing Compassion* aspect of the "I Am." Everyone can manifest this mode of escape to some extent, but certain people have a strong pull toward it – even an obsession with it. Personality type 3 persons tend to be (or are at least are committed to be) accomplished persons. They see their outward roles in society as having great importance. They strongly seek the good opinion of others and of themselves in relation to others. This can take many forms, as many forms as there are roles in society. But the roles that most capture the dreams of type 3 persons are the roles that have minor or major celebrity. So the role of beautiful movie star would definitely be there for some type 3 personalities. If such extreme celebrity is not feasible, then some form of beautiful, successful, admired, or accomplished can be the type 3's self-required program for living. A type 3 personality wants to be a star in their own perception of themselves. And they do tend to shine. They make waves in a group. They typically make fabulous first impressions, but as you get to know them they may be found to be without inner substance or at least hiding troubling features that have yet to be addressed.

Having a personality that overemphasizes outward roles need not mean that such persons cannot access their profound life and use their gifts for an outgoing presence with remarkable compassion for others. Perhaps Bill Clinton and Barbara Streisand show us some of the gifts of a compassionate 3. The escape is identifying with their outward roles at the expense of an inward integrity and full development of their profound humanness. The escape is from a full inwardness into the shell of some outward role. This escape is a form of self forgetfulness, but it is the forgetfulness of failing to nurture the self in its deep inward aspects and thereby accessing one's authentic out-flowing compassion. When that essential compassion is realized, then their outgoingness can be a self-forgetful flow into the tasks of being "with" others in all their sorrow, happiness, despair, and joy.

*Vanity* is a quality that describes this estrangement, for persons of personality type 3 tend to be vain in the sense of adoring their own outward appearance and the effects they make on others. They do this at the expense of their own inner life and a genuine love for others.

These brief sketches of nine ways of escaping from Reality are only a scratch on the

rock of this boundless topic. Nothing is more involuted and difficult to master than the myriad ways that human being have invented to not be human. And the enneagram model provides only one of the many ways that have been invented to organize the topic of escape from Reality. It is not my aim in this chapter to wrap up this subject, but to convince the reader that this propensity we humans have to escape from the “I Am” of our essential human nature is very deep and has a far-reaching impact on all human living. Certainly, we cannot understand the impulse of humans to invent religions and to pervert the religions they invent, unless we have a firm grasp on the propensity of humans to flee their inherent grandeur – to flee from the full challenge of being a species on this planet that is conscious of being conscious and is conscious of the gift that such consciousness can be to the life of the entire planet.