



## Clear Impact Approach to the Enneagram

The Enneagram has been our self-awareness tool of choice for 20 years. It describes nine different sets of values and filters through which the world can be seen. Our Enneagram approach does not “put people in boxes.” Instead, we assist individuals in recognizing and expanding the boxes they are already in so that they have more freedom to express their deepest gifts and values. It’s a respectful and **dynamic** system that provides a path of healthy development for each type, including how to build on strengths and avoid pitfalls. It assists leaders in understanding themselves, those to whom they report, others in the organization, customers/clients and the organization itself through new eyes. Energy is freed for productivity and creativity that was previously lost in frustration and agitation.

The Enneagram is focused on much more than surface behavior. It instead illuminates what most likely actually drives the surface behavior, the underlying motivations. We refer to these as **governing variables**: the attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, mental models, filters of perception that guide how we act.

Without development, the Enneagram types operate quite unconsciously in us. We don’t notice the assumptions we make, the beliefs we hold, and our particular emotional, mental, and physical patterns. We instead operate on autopilot. When people first learn the Enneagram they tend to be quite surprised at how much of what they considered “spontaneous” behavior is accounted for by the Enneagram type. Later, they are equally surprised at the increase in their ability to lead and perform more effectively.

One of the ways of understanding this is through what Robert Kegan, an esteemed developmental psychologist, called *the movement from subject to object*. He sees individual evolution as occurring as we develop the ability to step back and reflect on something that used to be hidden or taken for granted. Aspects that are “subject” are unseen governing variables. They’re affecting everything we do, yet they can’t be seen because they’re the lenses through which we see, thus they’re unquestioned, seen simply as part of the self. In Kegan’s words, **we don’t have things that are subject – they have us**. We’re at their effect, without even knowing it. When we can step back and these become “object” they can now be seen and considered, questioned, and reflected on. We didn’t even know we were wearing colored glasses—now we can take them off, look at them, understand their impact, see the world more clearly, and make different choices. Instead of those things having us, now **we have them**, along with far more “degrees of freedom” and ability to respond effectively. The more degrees of freedom we have, the more perspectives we can take, the more we can effectively address the contexts in which we work, assisting the evolution of organizations, teams, and individuals.

As a common language and model for talking about differences, the Enneagram greatly assists in eliminating energy-sapping power struggles while facilitating appreciation for diversity of perspective and effective collaborative. We can provide Enneagram training as part of a broader leadership development program or as a stand-alone program.