

## **The Energetics of Relationship: The Ways We Lose and Find Ourselves**

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For those of us who are experienced self-observers, we realize that we can get drawn out of our essence in very automatic ways, losing ourselves forward and out in longing, backwards and in in aversion and up and diffuse in overwhelm.

In this paper, we will describe a nuanced map which will reveal exactly how each of the twenty-seven Enneatypes automatically lose themselves energetically, suggest the behavioral concomitants that may follow from such energetic loss, and conclude with a discussion of the benefits of such a map. This is the foundation for rediscovery and integration.

We begin by outlining a three level energetic map that describes the loss of self from the perspective of Subtype (the first level), which concerns our fundamental instinctual drives, Center (the second level), which concerns our fundamental modes of perception, and Points of View (the third level), which concerns our personality structure.

We suggest that each Subtype, Center and Point of View loses the Essential Self in one of three directions – forward and out in longing, back and in in aversion or up and diffuse in overwhelm. When we understand this model, we can begin to witness the ways we automatically lose ourselves in relationship to anything.

#### **SUBTYPES – AN OVERVIEW**

As is true with many other systems, the Enneagram suggests that there are three fundamental human drives: to connect, to be known, (Sexual – One to One), to belong, to have a place and be included (Social), and to survive and matter, to be secure (Self-Preserving). Let's turn now to how people with each of these drives, when they are in their fixation, can lose their Essential Selves.

#### **HOW THE SUBTYPES LOSE THEIR ESSENTIAL SELVES**

##### **SEXUAL**

If I am a Sexual subtype and my fundamental drive is to connect, I automatically lose myself forward and out. My energy lasers out through my eyes and seeks union with whomever or with whatever is my focus. My fundamental experience is, "I connect, therefore I am," so that I reverse the ground of being (Is-ness) with connection. I do this in order to compensate for and bind the anxiety I associate with my subtype fear about myself – that *I am disconnection* with its constant anxiety about being invisible to others and myself.

## SOCIAL

If I am a Social subtype and my automatic drive is to belong, I automatically lose myself up and diffuse. My energy expands and seeks to take in and be taken in by the collective. My fundamental experience is, “I belong, therefore I am,” so that I reverse the ground of being (Is-ness) with belonging. I do this in order to compensate for and bind the anxiety I associate with my subtype fear about myself – that *I am unbelonginess* with its constant anxiety around being left out and ostracized.

## SELF-PRESERVING

If I am a Self-preserving subtype and my automatic drive is to survive/matter, I automatically lose myself back and in. My energy takes in and seeks to incorporate what I and significant other(s) need. My fundamental experience is, “I survive/matter, therefore I am,” so that I reverse the ground of being (Is-ness) with surviving/mattering. I do this in order to compensate for and bind the anxiety I associate with my subtype fear about myself – that *I don’t survive/matter* with its constant anxiety around being insecure.

## SUBTYPES IN RELATIONSHIP

We can see how, given each subtype’s fixated orientation, there is significant opportunity for misunderstanding and judgment. Let’s take one important context – how they are in relationship with each other.

## SEXUAL

A Sexual subtype will love and will experience the love of another predominantly through eye to eye and heart to heart connection. They may experience anything that prematurely breaks this connection as a dilution of the bond and abandonment even when that had nothing to do with the intent or motivation of the other. If, for example, a Social subtype invites another into their sphere, the Sexual subtype might experience this as a desertion into the superficial, whereas the Social subtype may be trying to be loving through including the Sexual subtype into their world. If, for example, a Self-preserving subtype takes action, the Sexual subtype might experience this as a way of being disruptive of the connection and/or trying to fix them, whereas the Self-preserving subtype may be trying to be loving through mattering/being useful to the Sexual subtype.

## SOCIAL

A Social subtype will love and will experience the love of another predominantly through a hand to hand entrance into the social world together. They may experience anything that prematurely inhibits this as constricting, even when that had nothing to do with the intent or motivation of the other. If, for example, a Sexual subtype at a social event tries to maintain exclusive conversation, the Social subtype might experience this as rude and a sign of neediness and/or too much intensity, whereas the Sexual subtype may be trying to be loving through the discovery of the other person. If, for example, a Self-preserving subtype guest begins to clean up the living room before a party game is over, the Social subtype host might experience this as boring and stultifying, whereas the Self-preserving subtype may be trying to be loving by making a contribution.

## SELF-PRESERVING

A Self-preserving subtype will love and will experience the love of another predominantly through shoulder to shoulder creation and the building of a secure hearth. They may experience anything that threatens this endeavor as potentially destructive, even when this had nothing to do with the intent or motivation of the other. If, for example, a Social subtype invites another into their sphere without asking, the Self-preserving subtype might experience this as an obliviousness to their shared hearth and an unintentional off-loading of burden. The Social subtype simply may be trying to be loving through including the self-preserving subtype into their assumed shared social world. If, for example, a Sexual subtype tries to maintain ongoing connection, the Self preserving subtype might experience this as a way of disrupting them from their fundamental tasks of life, whereas the Sexual subtype may be trying to be loving through maintaining attachment.

Each of the subtypes emphasizes a different room in the house. The Sexual subtype emphasizes the bedroom, the Social the living room and the Self-preserving the kitchen.

## CENTERS – AN OVERVIEW

As is also true with many other systems, the Enneagram suggests that there are three fundamental modes of perception: feeling (Heart Center), thinking (Head Center), and sensing/doing (Belly Center). Let's turn now to how people with each of these perceptual modes, when they are in their fixation, can lose their Essential Selves.

### HEART CENTER

If I am a Heart Center person, when I walk into a room, I want to know what your needs are, how to be successful, how to be special. The answer comes through my Heart Center and my feelings. In order to answer the question of whether someone or something approves of me or likes me for being what they need me to be, for my accomplishments, or for my specialness, I feel the warmth or coldness of their response.

### HEAD CENTER

If I'm a Head Center person, when I walk into a room I want to know who might impose on me, who might threaten me or who might limit me. The answer comes through my Head Center and my thinking and scanning. In order to answer the question of whether someone or something threatens me by imposing on me, attacking me or by limiting me, I think and understand by scanning for potential danger or that which is potentially adversarial to me.

### BELLY CENTER

If I am a Belly Center person, when I walk into a room I want to know who has the power, the degree of tension or peace, whether something is right or wrong. The answer comes through my Belly Center and my sensing. In order to answer the question of whether someone or something is to be reacted to because of its power, its (un)comfortableness or its (im)perfection, I sense the gestalt of the environment.

With this as an overview of the Centers, let's turn now to how Head, Heart, and Belly Center types, when they are in their fixation, can lose their Essential Selves.

## **HOW THE CENTERS LOSE THEIR ESSENTIAL SELVES**

### **HEART CENTER**

If I am a Heart Center person, my fundamental perceptual mode is feeling in the service of whether you approve of me. I lose myself forward and out. I automatically create an image that I perceive you will like. When I am concerned with the approval of others, I lose my capacity to think and be discerning. Losing this capacity, I deceive myself that I am deceiving myself.

My fundamental experiences are "I feel therefore I am," and "I am liked, therefore I am." I reverse the ground of being (Is-ness) with feeling and with the positive response I get from you. I do this in order to compensate for and bind the anxiety and I experience in the face of the center fear about myself – I am/have no head.

### **HEAD CENTER**

If I am a Head Center person, my fundamental perceptual mode is thinking in the service of whether you are threatening to me. I lose myself back and in. I automatically create an adversary and a barrier for safety. When I am afraid there is danger, I lose my capacity to sense and act. Losing this capacity, I doubt the world and doubt my doubt.

My fundamental experiences are "I think therefore I am," and "I am safe, therefore I am." I reverse the ground of being (Is-ness) with thinking and with the sense of safety I get from the barrier. I do this in order to compensate for and bind the anxiety I experience in the face of my center fear about myself – I am/have no body.

### **BELLY CENTER**

If I am a Belly Center person, my fundamental perceptual mode is sensing and doing in the service of distraction from not knowing my true agenda. I lose myself up and diffuse. Even though I am sensate, because I do not know my own heart's desire, I am not fully embodied. Consequently, I automatically create the primacy of the other as a means to define me and a boundary to create a pseudo sense of self. When I forget myself, I lose my capacity to access what I feel and desire. Losing this capacity I forget that I have forgotten myself.

My fundamental experiences are "I perceive, therefore I am," and "I am or am not you, therefore I am." I reverse the ground of being (Is-ness) with sensing and doing and with the perception I have of you. I do this in order to compensate for and bind the anxiety I experience in the face of my center fear about myself – I am/have no heart.

## **CENTERS IN RELATIONSHIP**

We can see how, given each Center's fixated orientation, there is significant opportunity for misunderstanding and judgment of the other. Let's explore how this effects the way they are in relationship with each other.

## HEART

A Heart-centered person will move forward and out in longing to be liked and approved of and will give love by responding to the other in a way they feel the other will be satisfied. All centers can interpret this fixated moving forward and out as a neediness which leads, depending on the center, to a sense of abandonment, lack of safety or discomfort. If the Heart-centered person moves forward and out in such a way, another Heart-centered person may interpret the longing as a neediness that abandons them because it does not recognize their own taking care of needs, their own doing or their own specialness. Then, moving from a longing based absence of heart connection, they may respond by moving forward and out themselves, taking even better care of needs, doing even more or being even more special or out of resentment moving away. A Head-centered person may respond by pulling back and in, interpreting the longing as a neediness that threatens them by making demands, by being a danger or by being a constraint. Moving from an aversion based stance, they may then react by withdrawing further, being even more self-protective or by fleeing to a more pleasant alternative either in imagination or reality. A Belly-centered person may also perceive the Heart-centered person's moving forward as a neediness. They may respond by moving up and diffuse by getting overtly angry at them for not being available; even more compulsively doing for them, zoning out, or getting passive aggressive; or judging them according to some internal standard.

## HEAD

A Head-centered person will move back and in in aversion in reaction to a perceived threat/demand or fear and will give love by aligning (you and me against the world) from a differentiated place. All centers can interpret this pulling back and in as a rejection that leads, depending on the center, to a sense of abandonment, lack of safety or not showing up. If a Head-centered person moves back and in in such a way, a Heart-centered person may move forward and out, interpreting the aversion as an abandoning rejection that has to be overcome. Moving from a longing based absence of a heart connection, they react by taking better care of needs, doing even more or being even more special. Another Head-centered person may interpret the back and in movement as a threat that has to be countered and may respond by moving back and in. Reacting from an aversion based stance, they may withdraw further, become even more self-protective or flee to a more pleasant alternative either in imagination or reality. A Belly-centered person may perceive the Head-centered person's moving back and in as not showing up. They may respond by moving up and diffuse by getting overtly angry at them for not being available; even more compulsively doing for them, zoning out, or getting passive aggressive; or judging them according to some internal standard.

## BELLY

A Belly-centered person will move up and diffuse in response to a sense of overwhelm which comes from not knowing their own heart's desire and passion and will give love by taking action. All centers can interpret this moving up and diffuse as a lack of empathy that leads, depending on the center, to a sense of abandonment, lack of safety or not showing up. If a Belly-centered person moves up and diffuse, a Heart-centered person may respond by moving forward

and out, interpreting the lack of empathy as an abandonment that has to be overcome. Moving from a longing based absence of a heart connection, they react by taking better care of needs, doing even more or being even more special. A Head-centered person may interpret the up and diffuse movement as a threat that has to be countered and they may move back and in. Moving from an aversion based stance, they may react by withdrawing, being even more self-protective or by fleeing to a more pleasant alternative either in imagination or reality. A Belly-centered person may perceive the Belly-centered person's moving up and diffuse as not showing up. They may respond by moving up and diffuse by getting overtly angry at them for not being available; even more compulsively doing for them, zoning out, or getting passive aggressive; or judging them according to some internal standard.

## **POINTS OF VIEW – AN OVERVIEW**

The Enneagram suggests that there are nine Points of View that can be subdivided into three variations of the core theme of the three Centers. In one variation (points Two, Seven and Eight) there is an externalization of the core theme and the associated feeling state. These points lose themselves forward and out. In a second variation (points Four, Five, and One) there is an internalization of the core theme and the associated feeling state. These points lose themselves back and in. In a third variation (points Three, Six and Nine) there is an identification with the core theme and a dissociation of the associated feeling state. These points lose themselves up and diffuse.

### **HOW THE POINTS OF VIEW LOSE THEIR ESSENTIAL SELVES**

#### **POINTS TWO, SEVEN, EIGHT: THE LOSS OF SELF FORWARD AND OUT**

##### **Point Two**

Twos are concerned with image and the associated feeling of despair. Twos externalize in reaction to this concern. They look outside themselves to the particular other to create the image that most takes care of the other's needs as a way of keeping unworthiness at bay. Because they externalize, they deny despair and only feel it when others respond negatively to their image.

##### **Point Seven**

Sevens are concerned with the perception of dangerousness and the associated feeling of fear. Sevens externalize in reaction to this concern. They look outside themselves to fill up with wonderful experiences in order to keep unfulfillability at bay. Because they externalize, they deny fear and only experience/show it when they perceive that something outside the self is trying to constrain them and/or fill them with something negative.

##### **Point Eight**

Eights are concerned with being forgotten and the associated feeling of righteous anger. Eights

externalize in reaction to this concern. They look outside themselves, believing they are choosing to respond to the environment by taking over competently (perceive everyone is floundering), as a way to keep impotence at bay. Because they externalize, they deny righteous anger and only feel and express it when they experience the environment forgets them.

#### POINTS FOUR, FIVE, ONE: THE LOSS OF SELF BACK AND IN

##### **Point Four**

Fours are concerned with image and the associated feeling of despair. Fours internalize in reaction to this concern. They look inside themselves to find their “authentic” image in order to project that image of specialness (that they believe will get them the most response) as a way to keep defectiveness at bay. Because they internalize, they are more susceptible to despair and particularly feel it when the world doesn’t respond to them as special.

##### **Point Five**

Fives are concerned with dangerousness and the associated feeling of fear. Fives internalize in reaction to this concern. They look inside themselves for self-sufficiency, believing that if they have no needs and can get enough information, they will be safe and keep the anxiety associated with insufficiency at bay. Because they internalize, they are more susceptible to this anxiety and particularly feel it when they think they are needy and don’t know enough.

##### **Point One**

Ones are concerned with being forgotten and the associated feeling of righteous anger. Ones internalize in reaction to this concern. They look inside themselves for how to do the right thing as a way to keep badness at bay. Because they internalize, they are more susceptible to righteous anger and particularly feel it when they do something wrong or don’t meet a high internal standard or when they perceive that someone else is not living up to expectations.

#### POINTS THREE, SIX, NINE: THE LOSS OF SELF UP AND DIFFUSE

##### **Point Three**

Threes are concerned with image and the associated feeling of despair. Threes dissociate in reaction to this concern. They look outside to the generalized other for what an image of success is and become that image as a way to keep failure at bay. In this way they get to deceive themselves that they are deceiving themselves and others. Because they dissociate, they are out of contact with despair, and they need to focus on putting a successful spin on everything.

##### **Point Six**

Sixes are concerned with dangerousness and the associated feeling of fear. Sixes dissociate in reaction to this concern. They look outside to the generalized other for what is to be considered dangerous and become doubtful and paranoid as a way to keep the humiliation of being a nobody at bay. In this way, they get to doubt that they are doubting themselves and others. Because they dissociate, they are out of contact with their inner fear and need to focus on anticipating what could go wrong as a way to say safe. Because six moves in a continuum from phobic to counter-

phobic, it is important to note that this energetic dissociation does not translate into predictable behavior; six's behavior can move back in cowering, forward in attack or frozen in shock.

### **Point Nine**

Nines are concerned with being forgotten and the associated feeling of righteous anger. Nines dissociate in reaction to this concern. They look outside to the generalized other for an identity to merge with as a way to keep their unlovability at bay. In this way, they get to forget that they are forgetting themselves and others. Because they dissociate, they are out of contact with righteous anger and need to focus on love and peace as a way to remain comfortable.

## **THE LOSS OF THE ESSENTIAL SELF AND THE 27 ENNEASUBTYPES**

With this background of the loss of the Essential Self, of the Subtypes, Centers and Points of View, we can now turn to the twenty-seven Enneasubtypes. Please note that we will be pulling apart processes that are by their very nature holistic, holographic, multi-axial, multi-dimensional and systemic. It is important to re-iterate that these automatic movements don't cancel each other out – they happen simultaneously and sequentially on different axes, much like what happens within a kaleidoscope. As is true in any self-organizing, problem determined system, every part of the system functions both interdependently, dependently and independently. Also, while one can arbitrarily choose a starting place, there is, in reality, no clear starting place, which makes describing the process challenging. To simplify this process, we will describe the following patterns by beginning with subtypes. Having discovered our patterns, we can gain an understanding of how we navigate our worlds and have a good idea of how we are likely to respond in any given situation. Let's take a few examples.

### **SEXUAL SEVEN**

One automatic movement energetically is to lose myself forward in needing to connect (Sexual). Because I fear that I am not enough (no body) and the world is a dangerous place, I move back so I have the space to scan for this danger and think about how to avoid it (Head Center). From the Seven perspective, I move forward as a way to fill myself with pleasant experiences including you (Point of View). The Enneagram characterizes the resulting energetic with the word "fascination" which encompasses a deep longing and fear and a more surface longing. While wanting you to fill me up with good experiences and fearing that you will expect too much of me and give me too little, I connect with you from a place of fantasy.

### **SELF-PRESERVING SIX**

One automatic movement energetically is to lose myself back in securing what matters – me and mine (Self-preserving). Because I fear that I am not enough (no body) and the world is a dangerous place, I move back so I have the space to scan for this danger and think about how to avoid it (Head Center). From the Six perspective, I move up and diffuse as a way not to experience my fear and potential humiliation that "I am a nobody." I therefore compulsively try to be free of uncertainty and expectations (Point of View). The Enneagram characterizes the resulting energetic with the word "warmth" which counter-intuitively encompasses a deep

aversion and overwhelm and a more surface overwhelm. The warmth of which we speak is not intended as a warmth that draws the other in, but the pseudo-warmth that says, “There is no need to notice me,” with the consequent hope that people will experience me as innocuous and not get too close.

### **SOCIAL NINE**

One automatic movement energetically is to lose myself up and diffuse as I seek to belong with the larger collective (Social). Because I do not know my own heart’s desire and it is too painful to realize this, I go up and diffuse sensing what is needed in the community of which I am a part and doing whatever is necessary (Belly Center). From the Nine perspective, I move up and diffuse as a way not to experience the overwhelm of inner chaos and unloveability. I therefore compulsively try to create peace and love in the outer world (Point of View). The Enneagram characterizes the resulting energetic with the word “participation” which encompasses a deep level of overwhelm and overwhelm and a more surface level of overwhelm, with the implication of the forgetting of personal identity and the identification with collective identity, e.g. “I *am* my family; I *am* my company.”

### **SELF-PRESERVING TWO**

One automatic movement energetically is to lose myself back in securing what matters - me and mine (Self-preserving). I go forward presenting an image to gain and feel your approval thereby losing my discernment (Heart Center). I go forward to the particular other trying to take care of their needs so that I will feel worthy of existing (Point of View). The Enneagram characterizes the resulting energetic dynamic with the words “Me first” which encompasses a deep aversion and longing and a more surface longing. At the end of the day, having focused so much on getting the approval of and pleasing the other, I am entitled to consider myself first.

## **ENERGETICS AND BEHAVIOR**

It is important to reiterate that we cannot extrapolate behavior from knowing any *particular* energetic. The fluidity of the Enneagram system, with wings, stress and secure points, subtypes and levels of maturity, in and of itself, makes it far too difficult to be certain of what any behavior will be. Also, the system can’t take into account life experience with both its traumatic and affirming events. Knowing the energetics however is suggestive of the most likely fallback behavior of any of the 27 Enneasubtypes. This map is a tool to understand the component parts of a Gestalt that can manifest in any particular behavior which may include all three (forward, back and up). Knowing the component parts deepens our understanding which may allow a greater capacity to witness ourselves as opposed to compulsively acting out. It also allows us a greater possibility for understanding and being empathic with the other, which can manifest as a greater sense of presence in our relationships.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this paper we have outlined the automatic ways we lose ourselves - forward and out in longing, back and in in aversion and up and diffuse in overwhelm, taking into account and applying them to Subtypes, Centers and Points of View. The model provides a simple way to deconstruct complex behaviors from a structural perspective. We believe it leads to deeper understanding of ourselves and others in a way that honors the intricacy and multiple causes that underlie behavior. Our hope is that this will lead to greater understanding and less judgmentalism, and ultimately that it will free us to live with more love, wisdom and presence.

# Energetic Loss of Connection with Essence

## The Energetics of Subtype

Subtype	Energy Direction	Perfectionist #1	Giver #2	Performer #3	Romantic #4	Observer #5	Loyal Skeptic #6	Epicure #7	Boss #8	Mediator #9
<b>Sexual</b>	<b>Forward and Out</b>	Jealous	Seduction	Masculine-Feminine	Competition-Hate	Confidence	Strength/Beauty	Suggestibility-Fascination	Possession	Union
<b>Self Preserving</b>	<b>Back and In</b>	Anxiety	Me First	Security	Reckless-Dauntless	Castle	Warmth	Defenders	Satisfactorily Survival	Appetite
<b>Social</b>	<b>Up and Diffuse</b>	Non-adaptability	Ambition	Prestige	Shame	Totem	Duty	Social Sacrifice	Friendship	Participation

## The Energetics of Centers

Centers	Energy Direction	Points
<b>Heart</b>	<b>Forward and Out</b>	Giver, Performer, Romantic (#2, #3, #4)
<b>Head</b>	<b>Back and In</b>	Observer, Loyal Skeptic, Epicure (#5, #6, #7)
<b>Belly</b>	<b>Up and Diffuse</b>	Boss, Mediator, Perfectionist (#8, #9, #1)

## The Energetics of Point of View

Energy Direction	Points of View		
<b>Forward and Out</b>	Giver (#2)	Epicure (#7)	Boss (#8)
<b>Back and In</b>	Romantic (#4)	Observer (#5)	Perfectionist (#1)
<b>Up and Diffuse</b>	Performer (#3)	Loyal Skeptic (#6)	Mediator (#9)

