

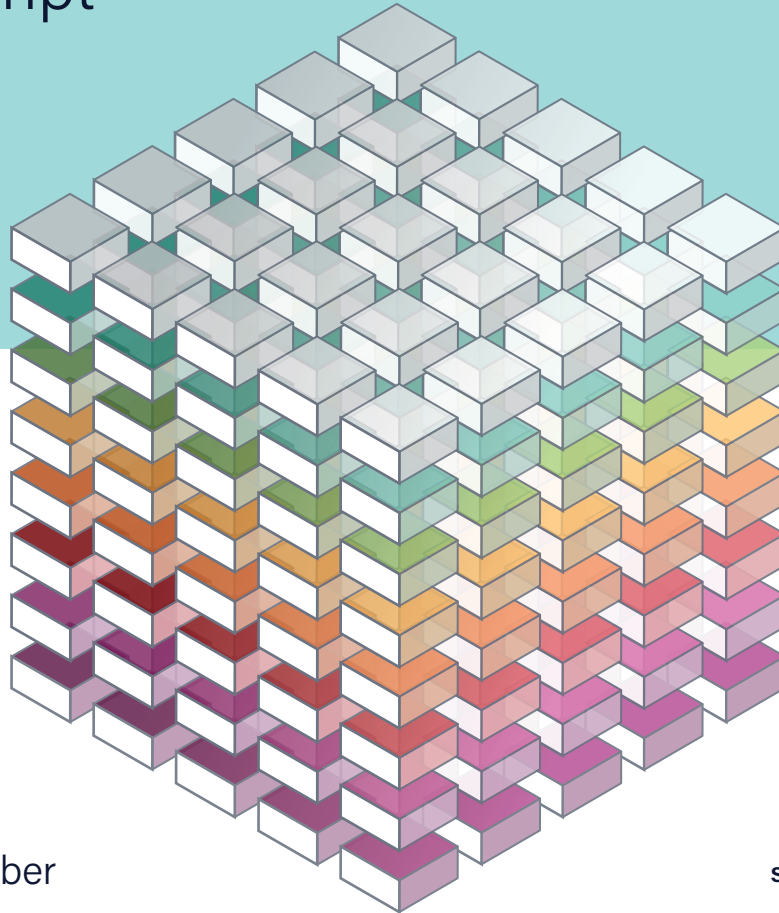


Evolutionary Dynamics PRIMER

Lesson IV
Typologies

Module
Introduction

Transcript



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Understanding our personality type can help make us more aware of our limitations and our strengths, and aid us in balancing them optimally.

LESSON 1: WHAT ARE PERSONALITY TYPES?

What are 'types' and why are they important?

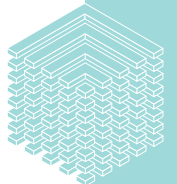
"Types" refers to different classes or kinds of things. For example, there are different types of animals, different types of plants, molecules, and so on. There are different types of economic production: foraging, farming, industrial, or informational. We have various body types: ectomorph, mesomorph, and endomorph. There are different types of cultural structures: tribal, traditional, modern, and post-modern. And yes, there are different types of personalities. According to the Myers-Briggs classification, an extensively researched and widely used description of basic personality types, there are 16 fundamental 'types' of personalities. These are the kinds of types we will be exploring in this portion of the program.

So, what are "personality types" and why do they matter? When it comes to reaching for our highest potential, knowing the personality type that we have, can help us understand and optimize what our particular needs, drives, defenses, and characteristics are, and in doing so can "grease the wheels", so to speak, as we make our way through life's often challenging terrain.

Knowing our personality type is especially important, because although many human characteristics tend to develop and go through significant changes throughout our lives, our **type of personality** tends to remain consistent, with our core characteristics remaining essentially unchanging over time. To paraphrase the American Tibetan Buddhist teacher Lama Surya Das, when asked if he had changed after completing six years of intensive retreat replied, "I was pretty much the same as before — only more so." That's what we mean when we say that our personality type remains constant.

This constancy is important to understand so we don't spend untold, wasted hours trying to change something about ourselves that basically isn't going to change no matter what we do. Plus, if we're engaged in a practice or, for that matter, in a relationship, in a particular job, are engaged in a certain activity, each different personality type will see and react to those situations and stimulus differently and sometimes very differently.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach that we can apply to individual growth and development and thus understanding different personality types and how they react differently in different situations can be illuminating and quite practicable.





How do types relate to levels, lines, and states?

Types are a subset of structures of consciousness, and as such they are part of the lens through which we see, interpret and experience reality, and this includes how we will experience and interpret levels of development, lines of development, and states of consciousness.

Take the Enneagram for example (and if you are interested to learn more about the Enneagram there are many excellent books on the topic, and Helen Palmer's work is especially recommended). We're going to use the Enneagram types here as an illustrative example.

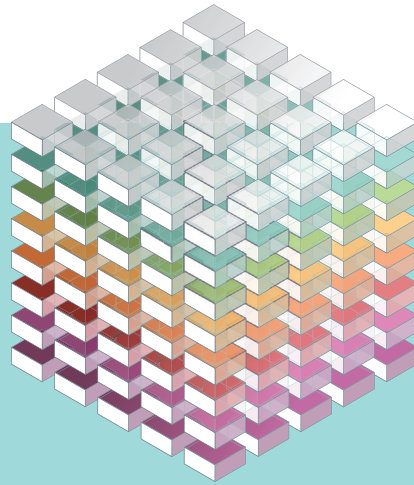
The Enneagram personality system has nine types, and you can tell just by their names how different they are: the Perfectionist, the Giver, the Performer, the Romantic, the Observer, the Questioner, the Epicure, the Boss, and the Peacemaker. You can just imagine how differently each of those types of personalities might experience and interpret the stage levels of the emotional intelligence line, or the moral line, or the spiritual line, or how differently each would respond to gross, subtle, or causal states of consciousness. Indeed, whatever our own particular "type" of personality may be, it will always color — in ways that are both predictable and unique — all of our experience. And as we said, we tend to be born one type, and for the most part remain that type throughout our lives.

This may seem a rather two-dimensional approach to our complex and multi-dimensional selves, but it is an important tool nonetheless. Say you're meditating and have reached the Witness state stage, but with your Enneagram type-five tendency to witness *anyway*, you overdo it and end up in a dissociative state! Knowing you have a baseline tendency to objectify your experience, can help you develop the self-awareness and foresight to anticipate and not just stumble into, such potentially obvious pitfalls.

Understanding our personality type can help make us more aware of our limitations *and* our strengths, and aid us in balancing them optimally.

There are an enormous number of typologies that are concerned with personality, but one or two fairly sophisticated typologies we do recommend learning about, are Myers-Briggs and the Enneagram. This modest set of typologies can cover a multitude of nitty-gritty details generally not specifically addressed in our discussions about other aspects of the Integral system.

Even a brief foray into exploring our personality type can help us learn to better manage some of life's tricky details which — as long as the bigger items like structures, states and lines have been taken into account — can be quite helpful in attaining one's fullest potential.



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Types & Drives

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