

4 and 9 more Luckovich.doc

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I learned a lot more about 9s from writing this. I'm a huge nerd.

9s, 4s, and "Nota4".

On another forum, some haters of this group were whining about the distinctions between 9 and 4 (and also between 6s and 3s, but I'm focusing on 9 vs 4 so I don't write a whole novel) that get a lot of airtime from group, so I wanted to address the clarifications that are being called "nota4" is about. I cannot be concise because I don't know how.

Despite a common whine, these clarifications are spearheaded predominantly by folks who aren't 4s (and know it), though those making these distinctions are accused of being a bunch of 4s trying to make themselves feel special. I can't speak for others, and maybe it's my line to 1/Fe here, but a lot of the point of making more refined distinctions and clarifications between 4 and other types is to diminish the idealization/wanking off of 4 and to give other types their due. A lot of chumps think the clarifications being called "Nota4" are about making 4 more exclusive or special when it's the opposite - demystifying 4 and making 3-6-9 great again.

First and foremost, it's apparent to most everyone that there are way too many people typing as 4 that aren't. If you follow any enneagram-meme accounts, their characterizations of 4s are almost entirely not 4ish and oddly positive - both in the sense of warm-hearted and sweet, but also in the sense that somehow being a 4 is cool or makes someone more complex, interesting, or more of an individual. Especially with the recent rise of Christian interest in the Enneagram, the "Christian four" often sounds like a 9 who is easily moved to tears.

In the same vein, if you've spent any time online or among beginners of the Enneagram, people tend to minimize or outright denigrate 6s, 9s, and 3s (I don't think it's an accident that a lot of people who do this are actually those types), even by professional teachers. I remember watching a he-who-shall-not-be-named talking about 6s in incredibly condescending terms at an IEA conference and thinking how shitty that's gotta be for 6s (this fella is a closet 6 in my opinion) and also just inaccurate characterizations. A LOT of this is due to bad teachings rooted in misunderstanding Type itself is and what 6, 9, 3, and 4 are.

This speaks to a need for better teaching, clarifications, and distinctions in terms of four versus types prone to mistype as four, and in terms of what the Enneagram is overall.

The Enneagram of Type is a 'work in progress', it's not complete. These categories are unconscious, and the work of making distinctions can be mental masturbation or it can be a means of true inquiry and illumination of the ways we fall into trances - even if we're making distinctions within a Type that is not our own, if we really know the Enneagram, we know that it is speaking to our own experience.

This is in part due to shorthand being a way people learn and communicate, but even the shorthand tends to betray a lack of grasping the gestalt of different types, but if we're really interested in learning this system in a real way, it seems something is missing in the popular enneagram consciousness and needs clarification.

Inner Work is important to me, so I find all clarifications of ANY type to be useful lenses for self-observation. One thing we can always count on is to have levels of delusion and inability to see reality, so the constant revision and clarification can be nonsense or it can lead to real seeing. Likewise, glorification, idealization, or feeling that whatever type we think we are gives us something by default is a mistake and an obstacle to real seeing.

For now, I want to limit this article to just looking at the contrasts between Nines and Fours "from the inside out".

Sensitivity

A good example of a point of confusing types is the word "sensitive". Often, Type Four is described as the "sensitive" type, but sensitive is a vague word and most people experience themselves as sensitive. Sensitive in what way?

When most people hear the word sensitive, it usually refers to being easily touched and affected by emotion, which is definitely not the sole domain of Four. Type Nine is one of the most sensitive types by virtue of their psychological structure having a quality of "absorbing" people and influences from outside themselves, which can lead to Nines being the most truly empathetic type or it can lead Nines to shutting themselves down due to too much sensitivity (I posted once about Claudio Naranjo's erroneous attribution of "Introjection" as the prime defense mechanism of Type Four being more in line with Type Nine, this dynamic speaks to Introjection as Nineish). This absorbing quality is often alluded to when it is said Nines seek to "merge" with others, but this, too,

is a vague word gesturing toward a poorly-understood but directly felt experience of Nines.

If you can imagine, being unconsciously impacted by so many influences leads to a lot of inner instability and a great deal of struggles around feeling solid, autonomous, and grounded. For this reason, in Type Nine, small things register as big, and there's an attempt to keep a certain psychological equilibrium intact.

This experience of "small things as big" accounts for why some Nines experience themselves as inwardly turbulent or dramatic or even a little emotionally out of control while others around them feel that they are fairly stable and/or serene, steady, or grounded. There is a fear in Type Nine of being "too much" because they themselves are afraid of experiencing "too much" inside that would throw them off and "drown" them in a sea of inner confusion.

Being strongly affected by people and their environment makes Nines highly sensitive and sometimes very emotional people, depending on how they cope with their sensitivity, but it also means that there's something of their inner experience of themselves that remains vague and out of focus. Sloth, the passion of Type Nine, represents the way in which parts of the Nine are shut down or neglected in order to maintain inner stability, being at the mercy of their sensitivity instead of able to rise to use it consciously, but it has the effect of keeping Nines from truly individuating - from developing their capacities and specific identities apart from the relationships and structures they find themselves embedded in. To truly individuate would be to find the autonomy and independence that they as Body Types seek, but the path to individuation means upending their entire inner status quo and subjecting themselves to overwhelm and inner confusion/destabilization.

So their path is how to find genuine inner harmony, genuine unshakable presence, that can "be" with anything arising in their consciousness or life.

Fours, too, are sensitive, but in an entirely different, almost opposite, way. Fours have an incredibly sharp "inner eye" directed at the granular nuances, complexities, and contradictions of their inner life, perceptions, and feelings. I think of it as mirroring Type Five's mental perceptiveness, but in the domain of the heart center as introspection. The object of perception is the self, rather than mental phenomenon.

Especially in the "Christian Enneagram", Fours are attributed with empathy, which as I've described is more the domain of Nines (and Twos). Fours can be incredibly empathetic, but it's not natural or habitual, as expressed

by their line to Type Two. That inner focus can be directed powerfully toward another, but the default is self-absorbed introspection. Most Fours have to be routinely shaken out of their excessive self-focus and self-referentiality. In fact, many Fours are often perceived as somewhat "cold" from the outside.

Like Nine, there's also a kind of inner instability, but from an entirely different cause and coped with in an entirely different way. The hyper-focus is almost like "Seeing too much", like zooming in so much on a painting you see only the brushstrokes and lose the image. So Fours try to double-down and put a box around their identity - "This is me". Whereas Nines can over-generalize themselves, Fours overly self-limit. Whereas Nines must individuate, Fours try to over-individuate - "this is me and I'm going to extract and highlight every unique and particular and distinct feature so that I really feel like ME, I need to feel like this is MY OWN". When there seems to be so much going on inside, it's hard to say what is truly "yours" and what's a reaction or the product of an outer influence. Fours typically want to resist outer influences to their experience of self, so as to hyper-differentiate what's unique and particular in themselves to themselves.

In teaching the heart Types, I often compare the heart to a cat. If you walk into a room and directly approach a cat, most of the time they'll ignore you or run away. If you indirectly approach a cat, giving it space and no pressure, generally, most cats will find their way onto your lap. The heart is similar. This principle is most obvious in Type Threes who are deeply heartfelt, but there's a way in which they become so preoccupied with efficiency that they expect their lazy, temperamental cat-like heart to be efficient as well, to meet them when they schedule a meeting - but the heart doesn't show up on time and the three decides they're not coming to the meeting, so better get back to their tasks. Thus, over time, the actions and goals of Three can become out of sync with their hearts real wish.

In the Four, the Four says "I'M GOING TO BE TRUE TO MY HEART NO MATTER WHAT", but like seizing the heart, like grabbing a cat. In that case, you're only going to get the cat's scratches and hissing and flailing about because you're not giving it the room to be subtle and unfold on its own terms - you're going for the big reactions to "Feel your heart". This is the mistake Fours make in trying to be hyper-focused on every impression of their heart, but what results is usually the cultivation of negative reactions and frustration. This adherence to 'sorting themselves out' is why most, if not all, Fours are artistically creative. Fours are typically not particularly self-expressive unless certain conditions are met, but there's a near-requirement that to make sense of

all the conflicting, nuanced, or abstract levels of feeling requires creative self-expression. Characteristic of Four creativity is often emotional contradiction - usually drawing on images of symbols that contain paradox, skewed toward loss or thwarted hope.

Object Relations Theory

Another difference that accounts for these distinct orientations is that via object relations theory, Nines are double attachment types: attached to people and circumstances that provide 1) nurturing (the mothering function) of love, being seen, supported, cared for and 2) protection (fathering function), things that provide or help one to create structure, guidance towards becoming functional and independent, toward being autonomous and self-reliant. As a double attachment type, Nines can become attached to, and even dependent on, things that provide (or seem to provide) these functions. This goes back to their quality of introjection/absorbing/merging, because their psychological structure is such that they unconsciously feel as though they are stuck in the developmental periods in childhood when there was a strong need to internalize and introject what was being offered from parents and environment in order to grow into being independent. So while Nines can be quite capable and functional on the outside, there's a part of the entrenched Nine ego that is outsourcing individuation onto external forces.

Conversely, Fours are double frustration with these same functions, as in, they feel they got inadequate nurturing and inadequate protection. To compensate, they turn inward to "find themselves" in place of having been seen, to see themselves, and they have a very difficult time with practical functioning due to having been unable to internalize the function that would have provided guidance for identifying and creating structure for themselves. This accounts for why Fours have such a difficult time being functional in a basic, practical way, and why it becomes difficult for them to make inner order within the ocean of inner impressions.

In both cases of Nine and Four, you can have a morose or melancholic disposition, but it will have a very different gestalt and affect. As said before, Nines will register small disruptions in a big way, so their sadness can have a kind of heavy, wistfulness because there's both the thing they're sad about and some element of inner suppression, which leads to the classic inability to get out of bed characteristic of depressed Nines. Fours, on the other hand, tend to have a range of fierce hateful frustration or smoldering devastated depression. There's a greater energy involved, even if it's all happening internally.

This frustration leads to a life-long feeling of a deep incongruence between outer life and inner life and the impression that they are fundamentally flawed and deficient. As said above, the Four decides to go all-in on inner life, at the expense of outer life.

If you're a Four that doesn't know the Enneagram, then this can lead to a sense of "Why am I like this?" There's this attempt to explain to yourself why the fuck you feel so miserable and why you feel you can see how empty and ugly life is, and how all these idiots are seemingly so shallow that they can just go along with it. So there's a sense of 'something wrong with me', but also a sense that I wouldn't want to give it up. Fours often attempt to explain this situation by assuming that maybe something bad happened to them in the past, or maybe they're deeper than other people, or maybe there's some huge flaw in their programming that makes them unable to get onboard with normal life.

Understanding

This leads to another common point of misunderstanding, which is the idea that Fours just want to be understood. Fours want to be understood like all people, but Fours more than any other type put in a lot of effort to be unique and NOT understood. They're intentionally enigmatic, and to be understood too easily raises fears that maybe they aren't as distinct and individual as they thought. Fours, instead, seek from others to be met on the same emotional level, like hitting similar emotional and aesthetic notes. For example, working with a young Four client struggling with depression and addiction, he went into how bleak his outlook on existence was, and instead of leading him to some other outlook, I agreed with him and mirrored his feeling. He was able to relax because now there was some congruence between inner and outer, he wasn't holding his inner world "against the outer world" all by himself. From there, we were able to find glimmers of hope and work from there.

Nines also wish to be understood and to be seen. Most Nines probably felt somewhat overlooked or underestimated throughout their lives, their sensitivity, dependability, and even talents probably taken for granted. Additionally, sometimes Nines have a hard time seeing themselves clearly, so to be seen by a loved one gives them the bit of hope and encouragement that there may be something worthwhile in the path to individuation. Nines often doubt whether they're worth investing their own time, energy, and attention into. Unconsciously, this sets themselves up to be overlooked by others - that old adage that we have to love ourselves before others can love us. But the Nine is, on some level, holding out that someone will give them that second

look, that extra curiosity, and see the gifts and potential that they know, somewhere, is actually there. There's a "sleeping beauty" archetype in Nine. Nines also have a line to Type Three, which can be experienced as a real craving to be seen and valued. All this contributes to another point of confusion - it is said that Fours want a "rescuer", this is often true, but the same can be said for Nines, based on entirely different dynamics.

This leads to a final distinction.

It's common to see the claim made that Fours fear abandonment above all. There are ways "abandonment" can be interpreted to accord more with Nine, with Six, or with Four. First and foremost, the fear of abandonment and longing for love is universal.

Fours, as double-frustration types, feel "the abandonment" or "something bad" has happened in the past, and we're just living in the wake of it. Fours don't fear abandonment as much as they fear that they aren't distinct, interesting, or capable enough (deficient or fundamentally flawed) to forge and maintain relationships - they are too flawed or freakish -, but it's a secondary fear to their ego project of trying to be themselves. Feeling like someone resonates with their emotional/aesthetic inner world becomes a kind of relief, even a sense of a 'soul mate', of two against the world.

The fear of abandonment is closer to home to Type Six, for the fear of abandonment is both a form of anticipation and it speaks to the Six's need for something reliable, supportive, and real.

In a similar vein, Type Nines have such a fear that may be better described as a fear of separation. The sensitivity of Nine, of introjection, lends itself to a way of taking in the "energetics" of loved ones deeply into their sense of self, almost like there's a part of the loved one within them. This can be, on one hand, a way Nines are deeply and unconditionally loving, and on the other hand, it can mean internalizing idealized representations of people that don't fit that person's actual personality. Thus, to be abandoned is like having a deeply integrated part of oneself ripped out, which further brings up fears that there is no nurturing function and no protective function, that one is fundamentally alone and unloved.

Who Cares?

Why put in all this effort to articulate the differences between Nine and Four? Accurate Typing is nice because it lends to a common language from which to explore our interest in the Enneagram and helps people to genuinely see themselves, but more importantly, when we go deep into the dynamics that lead to these

distinctions, we start to see some of the fundamental tricks the Ego uses in these types to maintain its own trance. We can see more clearly the struggles of these types, and in seeing them, learning what changes and practices will be authentically transformative versus what will be a temporary respite from suffering. We can see how Nines 'absorb' from their environment and the strengths and weaknesses of that - how, on one hand, you can have incredible empathy, sensitivity, and imagination, and on the other, how they outsource valuing themselves and struggle to invest a basic interest in their own experience. We can see how Fours reveal an incredible tapestry of our inner world, but almost look "too closely" at their subjectivity and end up drowning themselves.

Hopefully these and future distinctions contribute to even more effective use of the Enneagram for inner awakening.